

# **US Withdrawal from UNHRC**

## Why in news?

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The United States has recently withdrawn from the United Nations Human Rights Council.

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## How has US's HRC membership been?

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• Under President Obama, the US was elected for a maximum of 2 consecutive terms by the UNGA.

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- After a year off, it was re-elected in 2016 for the third term.
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- The US is half-way through a three-year term.
- It would now be the first member to withdraw from the council.  $\n$

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## What is the rationale?

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- **Israel** The council recently voted to probe killings in Gaza and accused Israel of using excessive force.
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- The US and Australia cast the only "no" votes.  $\slash n$
- US's current move comes as a response to the alleged bias of UNHRC against Israel.

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• The disproportionate focus and unending hostility are cited as proof for the Council's political bias.

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- Immigrants It is also a response to the intense criticism against US for detaining children at the US-Mexico border. \n
- UN human rights chief called on Washington to halt its "unconscionable" <u>separation policy</u>.

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• **Council** - Trump administration had long threatened to quit if council reforms were not undertaken.

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• The US perceives the council's membership as disrespect for the most basic rights.

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• The US wants to make it easier to expel member states with poor rights records.

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• Currently, two-thirds majority of UN General Assembly is needed to suspend a member state.

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- US expressed dissatisfaction at Russia, China, Cuba and Egypt for thwarting US efforts to reform the council.
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- The US has maintained that the withdrawal was not any retreat from its human rights commitments.  $\ensuremath{\sc vn}$

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## What are the implications?

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• Agreements - Washington's withdrawal is the latest US rejection of multilateral engagement.

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• The earlier ones are withdrawal from the Paris climate agreement and Iran nuclear deal.

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- Reforms HRC reform discussions are going on, with engagement by states and human rights organisations.  $\n$
- It thus shows US's impatience to stay on course a multilateral process.  $\gamma_n$
- **Rights** It signals that US is not making human rights a priority in its foreign policy.

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- By giving up its role at the HRC, it reduces its ability to influence the human rights agenda.  $\$
- Global Withdrawal would make it more difficult to advance human rights priorities around the world.  $\n$
- It could bolster countries such as Cuba, Russia, Egypt and Pakistan.  $\space{\space{1.5}n}$
- These countries resist UN's authority citing it as interference in their sovereign issues.
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- Many countries are now advocating withdrawal.  $\space{\space{1.5}n}$

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## Source: The Hindu, The Wire

