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# Topic wise content



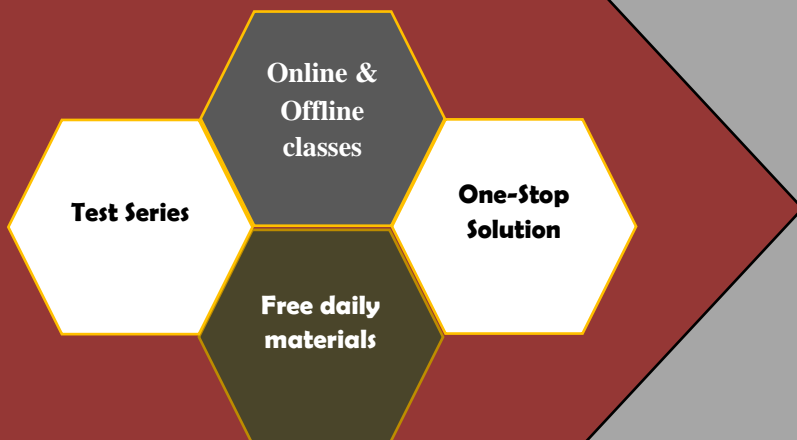
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## UN Human Rights Council

Notes for civil services preparation



UPSC

General Studies

## UN Human Rights Council

### About:

- The Human Rights Council is an inter-governmental body within the United Nations system responsible for strengthening the promotion and protection of human rights around the world.

### Formation:

- The Council was created by the United Nations General Assembly in 2006. It replaced the former United Nations Commission on Human Rights.
- The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) serves as the Secretariat of the Human Rights Council.
- OHCHR is headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland.

### Members:

- It is made up of 47 United Nations Member States which are elected by the UN General Assembly (UNGA).
  - The UNGA takes into account the candidate States' contribution to the promotion and protection of human rights, as well as their voluntary pledges and commitments in this regard.
- The Council's Membership is based on equitable geographical distribution. Seats are distributed as follows:
  - African States: 13 seats


- Asia-Pacific States: 13 seats
  - Latin American and Caribbean States: 8 seats
  - Western European and other States: 7 seats
  - Eastern European States: 6 seats
- Members of the Council serve for a period of three years and are not eligible for immediate re-election after serving two consecutive terms.

### Procedures and Mechanisms:

- Universal Periodic Review: UPR serves to assess the human rights situations in all United Nations Member States
- Advisory Committee: It serves as the Council's "think tank" providing it with expertise and advice on thematic human rights issues.
- Complaint Procedure: It allows individuals and organizations to bring human rights violations to the attention of the Council.
- UN Special Procedures: These are made up of special rapporteurs, special representatives, independent experts and working groups that monitor, examine, advise and publicly report on thematic issues or human rights situations in specific countries.

### Issues:

- Related to the Membership: A key concern for some critics has been the composition of Council membership, which sometimes includes countries widely perceived as human rights abusers.

- China, Cuba, Eritrea, Russia and Venezuela, all of which have been accused of human rights abuses.
- Disproportionate Focus: USA pulled out of the Agency in 2018 due to its disproportionate focus on Israel, which has received by far the largest number of critical council resolutions against any country.
-  India and UN Human Rights Council:
- Recently, a group of Special Rapporteurs to the United Nations (UN) has written to the Indian government expressing concerns over the draft Environment Impact Assessment (EIA) notification 2020.
- In 2020, India's National Human Rights Commission submitted its mid-term report to the Council as a part of the third round of the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) process.
- India was elected to the Council for a period of three years beginning 1st January 2019.