

**The Islamic Bloc at the United Nations Human Rights  
Council.**

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## **ABSTRACT**

Uncertainty as to the future of the liberal international order and the position of the United States within an international system in which it is not the hegemon remains a topic of debate amongst scholars of International Relations (Acharya: 2017; Duncombe and Dunne: 2018; Ikenberry: 2009, 2011, 2014; Nye: 2012 and Monteiro: 2011/2012). Fukuyama's (1989: 4) "end of history" has not happened and a resurgence of populist leaders within established liberal democratic countries has contributed to a rapid decline of moral and ethical leadership and has further compromised the future of the liberal international order (Duncombe and Dunne, 2018: 27). As the relative power of the United States declines and the future of the liberal international order becomes increasingly uncertain, support for its future must be sought from outside the West (Duncombe and Dunne, 2018: 25 and Ikenberry: 2009). This thesis seeks to locate where potential non-Western support for the future liberal international order may be found. It does so through an analysis of how Islamic states who are part of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation vote on the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC). The OIC has a significant presence at the UNHRC and can influence the direction of the liberal international human rights regime. The evidence examined in this research project suggests that the future liberal international order and human rights regime can indeed expect some form of cooperation from the OIC. However, the OIC, and by extension Islamic states, would likely offer more support at least for human rights, if a more common understanding were to be found.

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## **ABBREVIATIONS**

European Union.....	EU
Organisation of Islamic Cooperation.....	OIC
United Nations.....	UN
United Nations Human Rights Council....	UNHRC

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## Chapter 1: Introduction.

### 1.1 Introduction.

Uncertainty as to the future of the liberal international order and the position of the United States within an international system in which it is not the hegemon remains a topic of debate amongst scholars of International Relations (Acharya: 2017; Duncombe and Dunne: 2018; Ikenberry: 2009, 2011, 2014; Nye: 2012 and Monteiro: 2011/2012). Fukuyama's (1989: 4) "end of history" has not happened and a resurgence of populist leaders within established liberal democratic countries has contributed to a rapid decline of moral and ethical leadership and has further compromised the future of the liberal international order (Duncombe and Dunne, 2018: 27).

As the relative power of the United States declines and the future of the liberal international order becomes increasingly uncertain, support for its future must be sought from outside the West (Duncombe and Dunne, 2018: 25 and Ikenberry: 2009).<sup>1</sup> For instance, the future liberal international order may be supported by democracies from the geopolitical South,<sup>2</sup> or it may receive support from historically illiberal sources.

Thus, this thesis will examine the voting trends of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) at the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) from the first regular session in 2006 to the final regular session at the end of 2017.<sup>3</sup> In so doing, this research project will analyse empirical evidence regarding the level of support shown for the future liberal international order and its human rights regime from Islamic state actors at the UNHRC (Ibrahim, 2019: 1).

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<sup>1</sup> The West being the United States and its European allies.

<sup>2</sup> E.G. African or South American democracies.

<sup>3</sup> For this research project, voting trends refers to how the individual OIC member states tend to vote.

The OIC is an influential bloc on the UNHRC. On average, fourteen members of the OIC are present on the UNHRC at any given time.<sup>4</sup> The substantial presence of the OIC at the UNHRC places it in a unique position in which its members can greatly influence the outcome of resolutions, amendments and decisions.

A key theme throughout this research project is the need for a mutual understanding of human rights which both the OIC, and by extension Islamic states, and the UNHRC as the pre-eminent liberal human rights forum can subscribe to. The OIC uses Sharia law to guide its understanding of human rights, which is not compatible with modern liberal human rights regarding gender, sexuality and religious freedom.<sup>5</sup>

This research project interrogates the voting records of OIC member states on the UNHRC with emphasis on resolutions and amendments concerning civil and political rights.<sup>6</sup> However, this research project does not have the capacity to examine all UNHRC resolutions on civil and political rights

As such, this research project focuses on the promotion and protection of civil and political rights with regards to civil society space, combating defamation of religions, protection of the family and sexual orientation, the rights of women and the promotion and protection of human rights in the context of peaceful protests.

As well as UNHRC resolutions on civil and political rights, this research project examines OIC voting trends on country-specific resolutions which fall under Item 4 and Item 10 of the UNHRC

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<sup>4</sup> There are forty-seven members of the UNHRC that are elected to serve terms by the UN General Assembly.

<sup>5</sup> This thesis uses the UN definition of human rights, “Human rights are rights inherent to all beings regardless of race, sex, nationality, ethnicity, language, religion, or any other status. Human Rights include the right to life and liberty, freedom from slavery and torture, freedom of opinion and expression, the right to work and education, and many more. Everyone is entitled to these rights, without discrimination” (United Nations, 2019: 1).

<sup>6</sup> The selected civil and political rights are explored in greater detail in Chapter 4 on page 48.

agenda. Item 4 resolutions are country-specific resolutions that require the UNHRC's immediate attention (Human Rights Council, 2007: 1). Item 4 resolutions are concerned with the rapid and grave deterioration of human rights in a specific society, such as in Syria, or the sustained violations of a people's human rights by their own governments, such as in North Korea.

Item 10 resolutions are concerned with providing technical-assistance and capacity-building to governments who have requested aid from the UNHRC to better improve the human rights situation of their peoples (Heasley, 2018: 1), such as is the case with the governments of the Ukraine and Georgia.

By examining how OIC member states vote at the UNHRC on the above resolutions and amendments, this research project aims to find a trend in how Islamic states vote on human rights resolutions and amendments which challenge how human rights are interpreted, promoted and protected in Islamic states and societies.

The evidence examined in this research project suggests that the future liberal international order can indeed expect some form of cooperation from the OIC. However, the OIC would likely offer more support, at least for human rights, if human rights were redefined to include a more Islamic understanding of what constitutes human rights, as well as their limitations.

## 1.2 Content of Chapters.

### 1.2.1 Chapter 1: Introduction.

The aim of this chapter is to provide a brief discussion on the uncertainty of the future of the liberal international order and the importance of the OIC as a means by which this research project can determine support for the future liberal international order from Islamic states.

### 1.2.2 Chapter 2: The Future of the Liberal International Order.

In this chapter, Ikenberry's (2009) essay "Liberal Internationalism 3.0: America and the Dilemmas of the Liberal World Order" will be used as a framework to discuss the uncertain future of the liberal international order in light of the continued relative decline of United States power and leadership. Ikenberry's (2009) essay is part of a wider debate amongst International Relations scholars as to who will defend the liberal international order in place of its founding hegemon. Furthermore, a rise in populist rhetoric and leaders in established liberal democracies has accelerated the rate at which the liberal international order continues to decline.

### 1.2.3 Chapter 3: The Organisation of Islamic Cooperation.

The focus of this chapter is the formation of the OIC, its relationship to the United Nations (UN) as the pre-eminent liberal international institution and the adoption of liberal reforms in its own internal mechanisms. This chapter emphasises that while the OIC has adopted liberal reforms, it is still an illiberal organisation relying on its interpretation of Sharia law as its guiding point of reference. Furthermore, a mutual understanding of human rights must be reached by the OIC, and by extension Islamic states, and the UNHRC.

#### 1.2.4 Chapter 4: The Islamic Bloc on Civil and Political Rights Resolutions.

This chapter provides a quantitative analysis of how OIC member states have voted on civil and political resolutions and amendments while present on the UNHRC.<sup>7</sup> The timeframe for this analysis is from the first regular session of the UNHRC in 2006 until the final regular session of the UNHRC in 2017. Because of the limited scope of this thesis, a selection of civil and political rights focused on civil society space, combating defamation of religions, protection of the family and sexual orientation, the rights of women and the promotion and protection of human rights in the context of peaceful protests have been selected. Islamic states and societies use the Quran and Sharia law to guide their understanding of human rights as well as how to structure society.<sup>8</sup> UNHRC resolutions on civil and political rights tend to challenge this Islamic understanding of human rights and societal roles and thus, Islamic states on the UNHRC use amendments to weaken resolutions on civil and political rights.

#### 1.2.5 Chapter 5: The Islamic Bloc on Country-Specific Resolutions.

Chapter 5 uses the same methodology as found in chapter 4. This chapter examines how Islamic states on the UNHRC voted on country-specific resolutions from 2006-2017. How OIC member states voted on Item 4 resolutions on the human rights situations in The Islamic Republic of Iran, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, the Syrian Arab Republic and Belarus are examined. The second section of this chapter deals with how OIC member states voted on resolutions

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<sup>7</sup> Please note that this chapter uses footnotes for in-text references regarding UNHRC resolutions and amendments on civil and political rights.

<sup>8</sup> This point is covered in more detail in Chapter 3 of this thesis.

pertaining to two Item 10 resolutions on providing technical-assistance, capacity-building and cooperation to the Ukraine and Georgia.<sup>9</sup>

### 1.2.6 Chapter 6: Conclusion.

The conclusion of this thesis provides a summation of the main points and arguments found throughout this research project. For instance, while there is agreement amongst scholars that the liberal international order is in decline, there remains disagreement about the future of the liberal international order. Furthermore, the evidence examined in this research project indicates that the OIC, and by extension Islamic states, support elements of the liberal international order and its human rights regime; however, it would better support the liberal international order and future human rights if a mutual understanding of human rights is reached.

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<sup>9</sup> Please note that this chapter uses footnotes for in-text references regarding UNHRC resolutions and amendments on country-specific votes.

## **Chapter 2: The Future of the Liberal International Order.**

### 2.1 Introduction.

The liberal international order is defined by Ikenberry (2014: 83-84) “as a hierarchical order with liberal characteristics or as a liberal international order with hegemonic characteristics.” As such, the survival of the liberal international order relies on the maintenance of a balance of power, a vertical hierarchy of states, and a willingness from states to accept international rules and norms determined by the order’s hegemon and allies (Ikenberry, 2014: 88).

The liberal international order is at a crossroads. Leading International Relations (IR) scholars agree that the post Second World War international order led by the United States is experiencing a “crisis of authority” (Duncombe and Dunne, 2018: 27); a crisis made worse by a decline in both the hard and the soft power of the United States as well as an absence of moral leadership (Duncombe and Dunne, 2018: 25).

A resurgence of populist leaders in established democratic states has gained significant domestic support for illiberal policies. Such policies see states withdraw from intergovernmental economic groups and restrict the movement of people through aggressive anti-immigration legislation. For Duncombe and Dunne (2018: 30) this is an indication that the liberal international order is nearing the end of its cycle.

Donald Trump’s election as President of the United States indicates beyond doubt that the future of the liberal international order is indeed in jeopardy (Duncombe and Dunn, 2018: 42). Populist leaders, however, should not be considered the reason for the decline of the liberal international order. Rather, the resurgence of populist leaders and the divisive rhetoric they often choose to employ should be viewed as a symptom of a liberal international order suffering from a systemic lack of moral leadership.

Trump's threats to reduce funding to the United Nations (UN) and the United States' decision to leave the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) are illiberal actions against liberal institutions. The Trump administrations stated desire to reduce its financial contribution to the UN stems from a position that the United States shoulders an "unfair" financial burden in relation to other UN members (Nichols, 2017: 1), while the United States' decision to leave the UNHRC is premised on a perceived anti-Israeli bias (Morello, 2018: 1).

In 2017, the United States threatened to cut aid to UN countries who are reliant on United States support should they oppose the United States' decision to recognise Jerusalem as the capital of Israel (Rampton and Nichols, 2017: 1). The UN and UNHRC are institutions that encourage interstate cooperation and dialogue. However, should the Trump administration continue to reduce funding, the UN's ability to foster international cooperation will be limited.

Ikenberry's (2009) essay, "Liberal Internationalism 3.0: America and the Dilemmas of the Liberal World Order," will be used to chart the evolution of the liberal international order. The different stages of the liberal international order are intimately linked to the role of the United States within the international community.

United States industry helped rebuild Europe after the end of World War Two (WWII) and its military has actively shaped both regional and international spheres of influence through open conflict with both state and non-state armed actors, regardless of whether this took place in Vietnam, Africa or the Middle East.

Throughout the twentieth century the United States had the power to act independently or to use its legitimacy and strength as leader of the liberal international order to coerce liberal institutions such as the UN to act on its behalf. This, however, may no longer be the case. As the United States

continues to decline in relative power, its position within the international arena will be called into question. Not only is the liberal international order under threat, but so is the United States position as hegemon.

Ikenberry (2009: 80) argues that the United States, as the international order's hegemon, while not falling into irrelevance, will be forced to concede the privileges it currently enjoys to new challengers seeking to create an international order better suited to their needs. The rate at which this may happen is impossible to estimate.

The decline of the liberal international order and its deteriorating relationship with the United States is important to the field of IR.<sup>10</sup> It affects world economic systems as well as accepted norms which promote and protect human rights. If liberal countries like the United States no longer have the desire and capacity to promote the current international order, political will for its survival must be sought from non-Western, illiberal sources.

The aim of this chapter is to discuss how the liberal international order was created, and how the role of the United States has shifted from liberal norms enforcer to increasingly illiberal actor, and the subsequent consequences this may have for the future of the liberal international order. It will conclude that without support from historically illiberal, non-Western sources, the liberal international order will likely become less relevant and the liberal human rights regime will suffer.

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<sup>10</sup> This point will be discussed more thoroughly in section 2.3 *The Crisis of the Liberal International Order* of this chapter.

## 2.2 Liberal Internationalism.

The aim of this section is to discuss the history of liberal internationalism as postulated by Ikenberry (2009). Of interest to this study is how liberal internationalism has changed since the end of the Cold War, and how the liberal international order adapts to survive in what Ikenberry (2009) views as a changing international arena in which the United States is no longer regarded as an unchallengeable power.

To trace the history and evolution of the liberal international order, this section will first discuss five core components of liberal internationalism and how they have changed over time. These are scope, sovereign-independence, sovereign-equality, rule-of-law and policy domain (Ikenberry, 2009: 73).

How international actors interact with the five components identified above indicates which version of Ikenberry's (2009) liberal internationalism<sup>11</sup> was present in the international system at that time.

Lastly, this section will argue that the onset of liberal internationalism 3.0 is indeed an indication of the decline of the liberal international order and a shift in state power relations away from a Western state hegemony towards a post-hegemonic state system.

Liberal internationalism has developed as an "open, rule-based system in which states trade and co-operate to achieve mutual gains" (Ikenberry, 2009: 72). Or as Posen (2018a: 29) states, "The best way to think about the rules based order is as a club that promotes a common set of beliefs to which its members adhere." The statements by Ikenberry (2009) and Posen (2018a) emphasise the

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<sup>11</sup> 1.0, 2.0, or 3.0.

need for interstate cooperation amongst international actors who wish to be included in the liberal international order.

The evolution of the liberal international order should not be viewed in isolation. The characteristics of the order reflect the international climate and power dynamics between states. For example, liberal internationalism 1.0 was a response to the destruction caused by World War One (WWI). A focus on state sovereignty and a narrow view on shared policy did little to reinforce norms of cooperation and interdependence. The United States' refusal to join the League of Nations undoubtedly handicapped the initiative. Not only because the League required United States' military personnel, but because the role of the United States in ending WWI positioned it as a leader and norms enforcer of liberal democratic principles (Pell Jr., 1919: 46-47).

### 2.2.1 Scope.

The first component of liberal internationalism as identified by Ikenberry (2009) is scope. Should the scope of the liberal international order be considered universal, then all states would be encouraged to participate, thereby fostering a mutually beneficial international community. However, should the scope be regional or exclusive – as seen with liberal internationalism 2.0, the liberal international order would be limited to a region of states operating within the confines of liberal cooperation (Ikenberry, 2009: 73).<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> One could envisage Europe during the Cold War. Western Europe was a region in which liberal cooperation was the status quo while Eastern Europe sat behind the iron curtain.

How the five core components of liberal internationalism change over time is shown in table 2.1 below.

<b>The Three Forms of Liberal Internationalism</b>					
<b>Liberal Internationalism</b>	<b>Scope</b>	<b>Sovereign-Independence</b>	<b>Sovereign-Equality</b>	<b>Rule-of-Law</b>	<b>Policy Domain</b>
1.0	Universal	Autonomous	Equal	Legally-Binding	Narrow
2.0	Exclusive	Shared	Hierarchical	Ad-Hoc	Expansive
3.0	Universal	Shared	Post-Hegemonic Hierarchy	Legally-Binding	Expansive

**Table 2.1**

### 2.2.2 Sovereign-Independence.

Sovereign-independence is the measure of a states' un/willingness to relinquish power and authority to a supranational entity. As illustrated in Table 2.1 above, liberal internationalism 1.0 allowed states operating within the liberal international order to maintain a mostly sovereign existence. States operating under liberal internationalism 2.0 and 3.0, while maintaining aspects of their sovereignty, willingly submit elements of their authority to supranational bodies such as the UN, International Criminal Court (ICC), International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Bank (WB) and World Trade Organization (WTO) (Ikenberry, 2009: 74). The more states subscribe to international institutions, the stronger the liberal international order becomes.

### 2.2.3 Sovereign-Equality.

Sovereign-equality defines the power dynamics between international actors in the liberal international order. Liberal internationalism 1.0 sought to create a horizontal hierarchy of states in which no individual state would dominate the system (Ikenberry, 2009: 74). Liberal internationalism 2.0 was heavily reliant on a set state hierarchy in which the United States and its Western allies dictated the norms and rules of the liberal international order.

Sovereign-equality in liberal internationalism 3.0 differs from both previous configurations of liberal internationalism. States would not be considered as equal, as is the case in liberal internationalism 1.0, nor would there be one prominent power, as is the case in liberal internationalism 2.0. Instead, the United States will be forced to cede power and privileges as the liberal international order is reformed and multiple powerful states assume control over separate geopolitical spheres of influence (Ikenberry, 2009: 80).

### 2.2.4 Rule-of-Law.

Linked to sovereign-equality is the rule of law. Under liberal internationalism 1.0 and 3.0 state actors view the rule of law as a legally binding norm within the international system, which all state actors seeking to participate in the international order must abide by (Ikenberry, 2009: 74). Whereas in liberal internationalism 2.0, a hierarchical system, rule-of-law becomes ad hoc, and the system's hegemon creates and ignores rules of the international order as it sees fit in order to promote its own self-interest (Ikenberry, 2009: 74).

### 2.2.5 Policy Domain.

Finally, the policy domain of the liberal international order must be determined. Policy domain is closely linked to the level of sovereign-independence within the international order. If the international order places greater emphasis on sovereign-independence, states will more likely address problems of high politics individually.<sup>13</sup>

For example, states operating under liberal internationalism 1.0 would rather not involve additional state actors, if at all possible; thus there is a limited degree of cooperation between state actors. This in turn creates a narrow policy domain in which states focus more on their immediate geopolitical regions and the potential problems found therein.

Should the international order, however, place more value on state cooperation and less on sovereign-independence, policy domain does not remain narrow, but becomes expansive. States which are part of an international order during liberal internationalism 2.0 and 3.0 willingly submit elements of their domestic authority<sup>14</sup> to supranational bodies in which intergovernmental cooperation is encouraged above individualistic state behaviour (Ikenberry, 2009: 73). As a result, states accept an expansive policy domain in which state cooperation is the preferred method for high politics.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> High politics is when states act within the international arena.

<sup>14</sup> This can be through accepting international norms on human rights to join the UN.

<sup>15</sup> States would no longer only be concerned with issues in their geopolitical regions, rather, they would be concerned with any major issue facing the international community, regardless of the region in which this may take place.

### 2.2.6 The United States and Liberal Internationalism 2.0.

While liberal internationalism 1.0 was a response to WWI, liberal internationalism 2.0 can be viewed as a balance of power order created by the United States and its Western European allies to limit the growth of the Soviet Union and the spread of communistic ideology, the antithesis of liberalism (Ikenberry, 2014: 83-84).<sup>16</sup>

If an international order is to be successful it must be led by powerful states, have legitimacy, and all members of the order must receive some form of benefit (Ikenberry, 2014: 84-85).<sup>17</sup> The Cold War gave the United States and its allies the justification they required to continually increase their hard power capabilities. The United States won legitimacy to lead because it was the only Western ally left after WWII which had the hard power to resist the strength of the Soviet Union.

The collapse of the Soviet Union was seen as the ultimate victory for the liberal international order and the “end of history” (Fukuyama. 1989: 4).<sup>18</sup> Liberalism would become the ideological gold standard and would dictate how states would interact with one another in the international arena (Posner, 2017: 4).

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<sup>16</sup> While liberal internationalism 1.0 is indeed important to the field of IR, it is not the focus of this research project. Thus, it has only received brief attention when compared to liberal internationalism 2.0 and 3.0.

<sup>17</sup> For instance, weaker states would need to benefit from the United States either economically or militarily. If weaker states do not benefit from a hegemonic power, they may wish to support the hegemon’s rival in order to maximise their potential gains.

<sup>18</sup> Fukuyama (1989) posited that liberalism would become the dominant ideology and would not be replaced by another, and thus, history had ended.

### 2.2.7 Liberal Internationalism 3.0.

Yet, nearly three decades after the Cold War ended and without the threat of the Soviet Union, the liberal international order has weakened. Ikenberry (2009: 80) argues that a post-hegemonic hierarchical system of states<sup>19</sup> will govern the liberal international order of the future. As such, Ikenberry (2009) does not view the decline of the United States as the end of the liberal international order, but rather a shift in leadership from the United States to a new set of hegemonic actors.

Unlike Ikenberry (2009), Acharya (2017) views the future of the liberal international order not only as a matter of leadership, but one which includes competition between many international orders operating simultaneously in the international community. A post-hegemonic international order will no longer be a purely liberal international order, but rather “just one of many crosscutting systems, and it will have to compete or enmesh with other ideas in a world of growing complexity and interconnectedness” (Acharya, 2017: 283). Ikenberry (2009) and Acharya (2017) may agree that the liberal international order is indeed changing; however, consensus as to what form it may adopt remains unclear.

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<sup>19</sup> A system in which there is no single hegemonic power, but rather a coalition of states that are comparable in strength.

### 2.3 The Crisis of the Liberal International Order.

This section will argue that the strength of the liberal international order is directly linked to the hard and soft power of the United States (Alcaro, 2018: 153). The evolution of the liberal international order, while mirroring changes in the international arena, also reflects the rise and subsequent relative decline of United States power. This decline is not only within the international arena, it is also domestic.

The historic strength of the United States is a combination of hard and soft power grounded in military supremacy, economic dominance and ideational appeal. As the leader of the liberal international order, the United States has spread liberal democratic norms and values through liberal international institutions such as the UN and its organs. In addition, the United States created and fostered a liberal global economy which is interlinked and dependent on interstate cooperation to function successfully.

As hegemon of the liberal international order, the United States has protected the norms of the system it helped to create. Through upholding these norms, the United States created stability which encouraged non-liberal state actors to adopt the United States led order and its principles of liberal democracy, human rights and open trade (Peterson, 2018: 30). This is what made the liberal international order so attractive to states at the end of WWII and throughout the Cold War.

### 2.3.1 Non-State Armed Actors and the Liberal International Order.

The United States was well equipped for an ideological war in a bi-polar international arena against communist doctrine. However, the main actor of the liberal international order was ill-equipped and wholly unprepared to prevent non-state armed actors assuming roles of mass aggression typically reserved for states conducting interstate warfare (Peterson, 2018: 31).

The attacks against the United States on September 11<sup>th</sup> 2001 contributed to the systematic erosion of the liberal international order as the United States began to disregard the rules and norms it had helped to create, in favour of unilateral surveillance and military action as it attempted to defend itself from both real and perceived non-state threats to its stability (Peterson, 2018: 31).

The invasion of Iraq in 2003 and the subsequent “war on terror” damaged the international prestige of the United States. Former United States President, George W. Bush, polarised and galvanised the international community by creating a mentality where state actors were either “with” or “against” the United States (Peterson, 2018: 31).

The United States’ heavy handed and aggressive response left a lasting legacy of mistrust amongst developing countries, particularly in the Middle East and Africa where the United States increased its military presence in “troubled” regions (Peterson, 2018: 32).

While some may argue that such a response was justified, by adopting a policy of open aggression against both state actors<sup>20</sup> and non-state armed actors<sup>21</sup> the United States became the antithesis of the rules and norms of its own international order as it ignored international procedures and institutions and began its global war on terror (Peterson, 2018: 31).

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<sup>20</sup> Iraq and Afghanistan.

<sup>21</sup> Any group the United States has classified as a terrorist or extremist organization.

The actions of the United States in both the Middle East and Africa has fostered an anti-American culture and support for illiberal states like Russia and China (Peterson, 2018: 32). The United States was once a symbol of morality, leadership and legitimacy. Now the United States, the once staunch symbol of liberalism, is constrained by a liberal international order as it becomes increasingly more illiberal in its actions (Alcaro, 2018: 154).

This is not to say that the United States had not previously violated the rules of the liberal international order before the global war on terror. It had. One only needs to look at the Vietnam War and the weapons employed by the United States military against civilians and combatants. Napalm, chemical weapons, and pesticides like Agent Orange not only caused extensive environmental damage and physical harm but were also responsible for causing life threatening illnesses such as cancer in the Vietnamese population and the United States military personnel who were exposed to them (History, 2019: 1).

### 2.3.2 A Return to Isolationism?

The disregard the United States has displayed for the rules and norms of liberal international institutions is placing it at odds with its historic Western allies who see its actions as immoral and illegitimate (Wohlforth, 2012: 416). This has been made worse by the United States' current "America first" rhetoric and the accusations that its allies do not contribute adequately towards the UN, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and other coalitions and international institutions requiring substantial multilateral support (Posen, 2018b: 20).

While this is indeed true, as hegemon of the liberal international order the United States must provide goods and services when others cannot. This in turn provides economic growth and

security benefits to states, generating support for the liberal international order and legitimacy for United States leadership.

The crisis facing the United States and the liberal international order is indeed one of leadership and commitment. Not only commitment from the political and economic elites governing the United States, but also political will from its citizenry; a political will which is rapidly evaporating. Surveys have found that a growing number of United States citizens support the United States taking a less active role in the international community (Fontaine, 2017: 96-97).

Desire to withdraw from the international community, especially in matters of trade, are worsened by a decline in United States domestic employment as factories continue to replace workers with automated facilities (Fontaine, 2017: 96-97).

Trump's withdrawal from the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) and the North Atlantic Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) in favour of bilateral trade agreements in a zero-sum game is reminiscent of pre-Great Depression United States isolationist policy (Dudar and Shesgreen, 2018: 1 and Cohen, 2016: 1).

The liberal international order is built on the premise of interdependence and shared values, of cooperation and reciprocity, mutual benefit and not exclusive gain. The drifting of the United States away from the liberalism of the international order has contributed to a crisis of authority and leadership.

The mistrust much of the developing world has for the United States (Bialik, 2018: 1),<sup>22</sup> as well as its recent disregard for trade agreements and complete lack of responsibility toward combating

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<sup>22</sup> See graph 4 in (Bialik, 2018: 1)

climate change under the Trump administration, has increased the rate at which the United States has lost legitimacy to lead the liberal international order.<sup>23</sup>

The power of the United States helped the liberal international order develop in a post WWII international arena. However, since the end of the Cold War, the power of the United States has weakened. Alleged interference in the United States' 2016 general election (Mayer, 2018: 1) by illiberal sources indicates just how vulnerable the United States has become.

Since the end of the Cold War, bipartisanship in the United States has suffered. The decay of the “vital centre” – cooperation between the Democratic and Republican parties against external threats to the United States – has eroded domestic democratic institutions (Kupchan and Trubowitz, 2007: 8-9).

The United States created a post WWII liberal international order by combining elements of a liberal hegemonic order based on “rule through rules” and an imperialistic order grounded in “rule through relationship” (Ikenberry, 2011: 90). By doing so, the United States maximised its authority and legitimacy.

In creating and abiding by norms and rules set forth in international institutions<sup>24</sup> the United States placated the fears of less powerful international actors. In creating a “predictable and cost-effective environment” (Ikenberry, 2011: 91) the United States established stability and economic growth. Thus, its power was recognised as legitimate by the rest of the liberal international order.

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<sup>23</sup> This is not to say that Trump is responsible for the problems facing the United States and/or the liberal international order but rather his presidency has hastened the decline of both.

<sup>24</sup> Rule through rules.

However, the United States also cultivated a hub and spoke web of bilateral relations with its closest allies (Ikenberry, 2011: 90).<sup>25</sup> During the Cold War, rule through relationship allowed the United States to develop specific relationships with states in the Middle East and Asia in order to maximise its influence in the region, while simultaneously limiting the influence of the Soviet Union (Ikenberry, 2011: 91).

Rule through rules and rule through relationships gave the United States a dominant position within and a high level of control over the liberal international order (Ikenberry, 2011: 92). As long as less powerful international actors continued to view international institutions and bilateral trade with the United States as cost effective, and as long as the United States continued to respect international rules in which it willingly limited aspects of its power, the United States would continue to remain the legitimate leader of the liberal international order.

However, the United States has lost elements of its legitimacy through its deteriorating international image and prestige. Attacks against international institutions from the United States do little to alleviate the fears of less powerful international actors who may now view the United States as less of a benevolent hegemon, but rather one that seeks to exploit weaker nations.

Where previously the United States had sought to cultivate strong bilateral relationships with its closest allies, it now plays a zero-sum game.<sup>26</sup> The cost for United States allies may soon outweigh

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<sup>25</sup> Hub and spoke refers to how individual bilateral relationships stem from one central power or hub, outwards to many secondary powers or spokes. Thus, it mimics the image of a bicycle wheel. Both the hub nation and spoke nations benefit from one another, however it is the hub nation which has the power to dictate the terms of the relationship.

<sup>26</sup> See Kynge, J. (2019). "US-China Trade War Data Belie Donald Trump's Bragging". *Financial Time*. pp. 1 [Online] Found at <https://www.ft.com/content/4f5cb6de-ba91-11e9-96bd-8e884d3ea203> Smith, E. (2019). "European Stocks Close Sharply Lower After Trump Reignites China Trade War". *CNBC*. pp. 1 [Online] Found at <https://www.cnbc.com/2019/08/02/european-stocks-trump-reignites-china-trade-was.html> and McHugh, D. (2019). "New Figures Show U.S.-China trade War is Hurting Germany – Europe's Economic Monitor". *Global News*. pp. 1 [Online] Found at <https://globalnews.ca/news/5754153/us-china-trade-war-germany/>

the benefit. As positive perceptions of the United States decrease, so too does support for its liberal international order.

As the United States seemingly continues to withdraw support for the liberal international order, support must be sought from non-Western illiberal sources if the current international order is to survive.

### 2.3.3 Rising Powers and Debates on the Future of the Liberal International Order.

The deteriorating international prestige of the United States benefits rising challengers seeking to grow their spheres of influence. Rising powers such as India and China continue to uphold notions of globalisation and free trade (Acharya, 2017: 278-279). Their support for the continuation of the liberal economic aspects of the current international order is an inadvertent bid for leadership.

Geopolitically speaking, China and India have the territory, population size, military capability,<sup>27</sup> and potential economic strength to become future hegemons. Not necessarily hegemons like the United States, but hegemons within a post-hierarchical liberal international order where regions, instead of states compete and cooperate in a multipolar setting.

The liberal international order is indeed in crisis; and there is still uncertainty as to its future. Acharya (2017: 283) envisages the creation of a new multiplex international order accommodating many systems of integration. Others like Nye (2012) argue that we should not view the decline of United States' power in absolute terms, but as relative.

Using China as the pre-eminent challenger to the United States' authority, Nye (2012: 216) argues that it will take decades for China to truly surpass the United States' economic and military

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<sup>27</sup> Including access to nuclear weapons.

strength. Furthermore, China's geographical location, surrounded by United States' allies such as Japan and India, prevent it from rapid expansion and allows the United States to maintain influence in the region (Nye, 2012: 216). Thus, the United States is unlikely to lose its position as norms enforcer in the near future.

Monteiro (2011/2012), however, argues that as the United States' power declines, the likelihood for hegemonic war increases. Monteiro (2011/2012: 12) states that there are three distinctly different conflicts a hegemon may instigate to regain control of its international order.

The first is an offensive war in which the hegemon seeks to defeat challengers to its system preemptively. Secondly, the hegemon may seek a defensive war in which it allows a challenger state to initiate conflict. Finally, a hegemon can withdraw from the international order creating conflict as states seek to fill the resultant power vacuum. After the conflict, the hegemon may attempt to re-enter a weakened international order to regain control (Monteiro, 2011/2012: 12).

The United States can no longer take its position as leader of the liberal international order for granted. Nor can the United States assume that other states view its leadership as legitimate. The United States is losing its ad hoc ability to dictate the rules and norms of the international order as it is held increasingly accountable for violations of international law without justification. The moral authority of the United States has long since been called into question (Acharya, 2017: 282-283).

The crisis of the liberal international order is not comprised of a single element, it is a quagmire of external and domestic events which has eroded its core. The core being the United States, with its power and moral status according it the legitimacy and authority of leadership.

The threat from the Soviet Union and the containment of the spread of communism unified the liberal world under the protection of the United States. A bi-polar international theatre suited the liberal international order, as did ideational and proxy warfare against a conventional armed state actor.

The global war on terror fragmented the liberal international order as not all states within the international community faced the same level of threat. The United States used its position as global hegemon to polarise the international community as state actors were forced either to join the United States in its war, or risk being seen as complicit with its enemies.

A resurgence of isolationism and protectionism is a consequence of liberal economic systems and globalisation. Multinational companies are able to choose which states to operate in. The United States' employment market has suffered as factories become more automated or move to states with cheaper labour in order to maximise profits.

While there is disagreement as to how and when the liberal international order will end, there is consensus that it is under threat. The future of the liberal international order remains unclear as does its international human rights regime.

#### 2.4 Human Rights, Populism, and the Liberal International Order.

The success and strength of the liberal international order is the adoption of liberal values through human rights. The right to vote, run for political office and equality between peoples are three such examples of rights protected by states in the liberal international order (Glaser, 2014: 30).

In the late 1970s, then United States President, Jimmy Carter, publicly included the promotion and protection of human rights as he changed United States' foreign policy (Poole, 2012: 1). President Carter's speech brought the issue of human rights to a wider public audience, "the moral world had changed" (Moyn, 2010: 4). People were given a greater awareness of their rights and what would constitute violation.

Human rights are intended to be universal and unwavering. Regardless of their grounding in Western philosophy, research shows that certain fundamental human rights are indeed universally accepted (Donnelly, 2013: 29). Developing and non-Western states adopt liberal human rights within their own constitutions as well as through their membership to the UN and its Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) (Ibhawoh, 2000: 846-847).<sup>28</sup>

Since its inception at the end of WWII, the United States has sought to use the liberal international order to create and maintain interstate relations between like-minded liberal democratic countries. The promotion of liberal human rights by the United States helped create support for the liberal international order. When states and their citizens have a common understanding of liberal rights, the chance of interstate conflict decreases, and the liberal international order maintains its stability.

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<sup>28</sup> This can extend to regional bodies like the Southern African Development Community or continental groups such as the African Union.

For instance, protection from torture, degrading punishment, or inhumane and unnecessary forms of interrogation is a universal commitment by all states that are part of the liberal international order to respect the rights of peoples regardless of national or ideological loyalty (Beeher, 2006: 1 and Howard-Hassman, 2012: 95).<sup>29</sup>

Yet, we know that peoples of both state and non-state armed groups regularly have this right violated – not only by illiberal states, but by the United States and its allies.<sup>30</sup> It is common knowledge that human rights abuse regularly takes place in offshore United States facilities such as Guantanamo Bay. This erodes support for the international human rights regime in favour of a “ends justify the means” mentality and approach to national security.

Opened in 2002 by then United States President, George W. Bush, Guantanamo bay has functioned as a black site prison for the United States in its war on terror (Worthington, 2018: 1). During his tenure as Commander-in-Chief, President Obama attempted to close the facility, however, President Obama faced opposition from a Republican Congress and was unsuccessful (Herb, 2017: 1).<sup>31</sup> The facility has remained open under President Trump.

By prioritising the collective national security of its citizens, the United States consequently damages the international human rights regime. The liberal international order is designed around inclusivity and universal standards and norms. National security influences which rights are seen to be important and which rights are expendable, according to the needs of the state. Thus, in its attempt to protect its citizens from external threats, the United States demonstrates which

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<sup>29</sup> This is reaffirmed in article 5 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights which can be found at <https://www.un.org/en/universal-declaration-human-rights/>.

<sup>30</sup> This is not limited to combatants. Civilians who are perceived to support or have knowledge of non-state armed actors also risk violation of their rights.

<sup>31</sup> Despite President Obama’s unsuccessful attempts to close the offshore facility, he was successful in reducing the number of detainees to forty-one (Herb, 2017: 1).

individual rights can be ignored, are simply rhetoric and not grounded in practice (Howard-Hassman, 2012: 106).<sup>32</sup>

Human rights violations viewed through a humanist moral lens remain unjustifiable. However, for the liberal international order, they create a status quo. The actions of the United States are a benchmark for what is, and what is not acceptable state behaviour. The United States' growing disregard for liberal international institutions and ratified treaties sets a dangerous precedent for others to follow.

Alston (2017: 4-5) outlines why the liberal international order and its human rights regime is facing the above challenges, not only from non-Western state actors, but also from within established liberal democratic states themselves.

First: the events of September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2001 shook the foundations of the liberal international order and supremacy of the United States. What has followed can best be described as a rapid resurgence of populist leaders amidst legitimate and illegitimate fears. An "us" versus "them" mentality has developed in which citizens out of fear of the "other" have become less concerned with what is "right" and more concerned with what is "safe"; regardless of whether the need for safety is warranted (Alston, 2017: 4-5).

Second: civil society space in developing countries is increasingly restricted by governments in favour of state sponsored NGOs (Alston, 2017: 5-6). Civil society is a key check for practices of good governance and accountability. However, if civil society is censored, its mouthpiece becomes

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<sup>32</sup> Increased regulation of the movement of people under the guise of National Security can result in the violation of a migrant's human rights that a citizen within their own country may not be subject to.

a channel for government propaganda, so that the development of liberal norms and respect for human rights is hindered.

As American power continues to wane, civil society in developing countries is invaluable for the continuation of the liberal international order and its promotion and protection of human rights as leadership shifts away from the West to other regions.

Third: a repercussion of liberal market economics is the growing inequality between classes. While this may seem to diverge from human rights, as class inequality grows and human rights groups maintain focus on violations within high politics, the plight of refugees, asylum seekers, political prisoners and the most impoverished members of society is neglected (Alston, 2017: 6).

Apathy towards human rights coupled with a shrinking civil society space creates a platform in which citizens of countries become ever more desperate for relief, often resulting in a turning to populist leaders who offer short term solutions to long term problems.

Fourth: the breaking of international law and norms by powerful state actors who should be safeguarding the liberal international order. This point has been covered above, but it is fundamental to the future of the liberal international order. The United States' aggressive global pursuit of terrorist organisations has opened the floodgates for other states to do likewise (Alston, 2017: 6-7).

Whether through overt use of force - as in the United States' invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq - or covert operations involving targeted killing, the United States has displayed a brazen disregard for the norms and institutions it helped create. It follows then that when non-Western states act in a similar manner, the United States and its allies do not have the moral authority to intervene (Alston, 2017: 6-7).

Fifth: the sustained absence of strong liberal leadership has left international institutions ineffectual in the maintenance of the liberal international order (Alston, 2017: 7). Not only is the UN floundering, but other institutions such as the ICC are facing criticism and threats of withdrawal from non-Western states. African states have accused the ICC of the disproportionate targeting of African leaders and war criminals (Duncombe and Dunn, 2018: 34).<sup>33</sup>

Humanitarian aid agencies have occupied an increasingly important and relevant role within the international sphere as the liberal international order weakens. Support from Western liberal states to protect the rights and dignity of refugees, asylum seekers and persons fleeing domestic upheaval is waning.

One such example is how Syrian President, Bashar al-Assad forced UN aid convoys to redirect, adding days to their journey to reach medical clinics and refugee camps with much needed supplies. The UN was unable to force Assad's regime to allow the convoys passage along their designated routes due to a lack of support from the United States and its allies on the United Nations Security Council (Duncombe and Dunn, 2018: 37).

The UN's inability to fulfil its mandate effectively, coupled with a lack of interest from Western states to intervene, has forced international aid agencies and watchdogs like Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International and The Red Cross to provide humanitarian assistance and aid although ill equipped to do so (Duncombe and Dunn, 2018: 42).

The action of these NGOs must be commended. However, it is not their function to act in the capacity of state and liberal institutional entities. Groups such as these are important for

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<sup>33</sup> While this is not to say that those targeted by the ICC in Africa do not deserve to face prosecution for their crimes, it is a criticism of the ICC's seeming lack of will to prosecute Western leaders for similar acts.

maintaining checks and balances within the international system in which they bring to the fore the plight of peoples so that those with the true capacity to act, can act.

As states shift focus towards security and away from the protection and promotion of liberal human rights, well established democracies become vulnerable as populist leaders and groups seek to divide society based on racial, ethnic, cultural or classist lines.

Populist leaders do not gain support overnight. The rise of populism is a reflection of sustained anti-government, anti-immigrant and pro-authoritarian thought within a populace. For the United States, the resurgence of populism begins, at least in the eyes of Abromeit (2018: 13), when Barack Obama was elected President at the end of 2008.

Obama's campaign commitment to protect the poor amidst the great recession was interpreted as an attack on the American way of life by ultra-conservative, ultra-wealthy Americans. Furthermore, Obama's race and religious identity was deliberately used as means to convince the people of the United States that his presidency was a threat to the very foundation on which the country was built (Abromeit, 2018: 14 and Lopez, 2017: 1).<sup>34</sup>

The United States is a key actor within the liberal international order. Yet its legitimacy to lead is in question. Research conducted by Berman (2017: 1) found that the United States has the weakest electoral integrity amongst developed Western democracies. The electoral process of the United States allowed Trump to be elected as President, despite Hillary Clinton winning more of the popular vote.

The decay of the vital centre is made worse as Trump has threatened to cut aid to developing countries should they not vote in line with American interests at the UN (Gerber, 2018: 1), as well

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<sup>34</sup> Falsely claiming his adherence to Islam.

as diminished funding to the UN should it not support the United States (Nichols, 2017: 1). The United States has withdrawn from the UNHRC (Aljazeera, 2018: 1) and has also threatened to withdraw from NATO should NATO members not increase their funding proportionally to match the expenditure of the United States (Herszenhorn and Bayer, 2018: 1).

Trump's threats are symptomatic of the United States' declining leadership ability and are a concern for the liberal international order (Duncombe and Dunne, 2018: 27). His attacks on some of the United States' oldest allies and supporters during the Cold War as well as the UN, which has its headquarters in the United States and is a direct result of United States hegemony, indicates a troubled future for the liberal international order.

### 2.5 Conclusion.

The liberal international order and international human rights regime benefitted from the power of the United States after the end of WWII. The United States' led liberal international order reinforced by a liberal understanding of human rights helped the United States project its power in a bi-polar international arena.

The strength of the United States and liberal international order prevented further Soviet expansion through Europe and South East Asia. The collapse of the Soviet Union was viewed as the ultimate victory for liberalism and the United States. Yet, since the end of the Cold War, the power of the United States has declined. Thus, the future of the liberal international order is no longer certain.

The global war on terror has seen the United States ignore the rules of its own system as well as commit gross human rights violations against peoples it deems a threat to its security. The United States is losing its moral credibility and legitimacy as hegemon of its own international order

United States citizens are growing increasingly concerned with their country's role in the international order. Decreased employment opportunities have seen push back against the liberal economic system employed by the international order. In response to this, populist leaders are gaining support for isolationist and protectionist trade policies.

While leaders like President Trump are not the cause for the decline of the liberal international order, they do increase the rate at which it decays. Divisive rhetoric and an "us" versus "them" mentality spread further social discord and are antithetic to the tenets of liberalism, cooperation and interdependence.

In response to the decline of United States power, the liberal international order must receive support from non-Western, historically illiberal sources to survive. This needs to be through established liberal international institutions such as the UN and crucially its Human Rights Council. The future of the liberal international order and the international human rights regime remains uncertain.

## Chapter 3: The Organisation of Islamic Cooperation.

### 3.1 Introduction.

Since the end of WWII, the liberal international order has depended on the power and prestige<sup>35</sup> of the United States to defend the rules and norms which govern the order.<sup>36</sup> The United States has provided the Western community of states with a sense of security and economic stability. However, the relationship between the United States and its historic Western allies is deteriorating (Patrick, 2018: 1). The future of the liberal international order is uncertain.<sup>37</sup>

The decline of United States' power means that support for the future of human rights must be forthcoming from non-Western, historically illiberal sources. One such source is the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC). The OIC is an intergovernmental group that has, for the better part of its existence, remained on the periphery of the international community. However, this no longer seems to be the case (Petersen, 2012: 12-13).

This chapter will first discuss the history of the OIC, its membership policies, and its relationship to the UN. Its history and ability to function effectively are important indicators of its cohesiveness. The size of the OIC is both a strength and a weakness (Bacik, 2011: 602).

Second, the OIC's charter as well as the mandate of its Independent Permanent Human Rights Commission (IPHRC) will be discussed. How the OIC understands and promotes human rights internally as an intergovernmental organisation will impact how members of the OIC vote on

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<sup>35</sup> For more on prestige in the international system see Gilpin, R (1988). "The Theory of Hegemonic War." *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, 18 (4). pp. 591-613 [Online] Accessed 14 October 2019.

<sup>36</sup> For instance, the United States' attempts to stop the spread of communism or its promotion, and its protection of the international human rights regime as found in the universal declaration.

<sup>37</sup> This point is extensively covered throughout chapter 2 of this thesis.

human rights issues at the UNHRC. The relationship between Islam and liberal human rights are of particular importance.

The chapter will conclude that while the OIC has indeed accepted elements of liberalism, it remains at its core illiberal. The size of the OIC makes it a necessary ally for the Western world as the liberal international order continues to decline.

### 3.2 The Formation of the OIC.

As the second largest intergovernmental organisation, the OIC may come to play an important role in the international order of the future. Support for the UN from the OIC can strengthen the future liberal international order and its human rights regime.

After 1945, Middle Eastern opinion of the United States was high. Islamic leaders viewed the United States as a power which would check the colonial ambitions of the British and the French in the region, as well as maintain the qualities of independence and sovereignty which were so respected by the members of the liberal international order.

Iraq, Syria, Saudi Arabia, and Egypt are all founding members of the UN. Furthermore, Lebanese diplomat, Charles Malik, was directly involved with the creation of the UDHR as a member of the drafting committee under former United States' First Lady, Eleanor Roosevelt (Salem, 2018: 125).

Yet, recognition and support for the creation of the state of Israel in 1948 alienated future key members of the OIC from supporting the United States and its Western allies in their struggle against the Soviet Union. (Salem, 2018: 125).

The OIC was formed in 1969 in response to the continued defeats of Middle Eastern, Islamic states at the hands of Israel, as well as in response to attacks against the Al-Aqsa Mosque (Bacik, 2011:

596). Since then, the OIC has grown to become the second largest intergovernmental organisation after the UN, representing a population estimated at over 1.8 billion people (Ibrahim, 2019: 1).<sup>38</sup>

The United States struggled to regain influence in the region until conflict between Israel and its Islamic neighbours in the 1960s and regime change in Iran in 1979 forced Middle Eastern powers such as Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Syria back into the liberal international order (Salem, 2018: 126).<sup>39</sup>

Despite this new found support for the liberal international order from key Islamic state actors,<sup>40</sup> anti-United States and anti-liberalist sentimentality persisted in the region, contributing to a rise in tension between Islamic states which rejected the liberal international order,<sup>41</sup> and those that sought to benefit from it (Salem, 2018: 126).<sup>42</sup>

The OIC has grown substantially since its creation in 1969. However, its rapid growth and size has contributed to the OIC's inability to function as efficiently as or utilise its resources as well as other intergovernmental organisations like the European Union (EU).

The EU was created to foster material growth and development in a Europe that was almost destroyed by war. The European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) ensured a pooling of resources with a common and clear goal for states to work towards. The OIC, on the other hand,

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<sup>38</sup> Both Muslim and non-Muslim.

<sup>39</sup> The Egyptian, Saudi Arabian and Syrian regimes needed US funding and support to remain in power and prevent populist uprisings. For more information see Jones, T.C. (2006). "Rebellion on the Saudi Periphery: Modernity, Marginalization, and the Shi'a Uprising of 1979." *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 38 (2). pp. 213-233 [Online] Accessed 14 October 2019.

<sup>40</sup> The regimes of the above mentioned Middle Eastern countries were not as openly hostile to the United States as they had previously been.

<sup>41</sup> Iraq and Iran.

<sup>42</sup> Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and Syria.

is not driven by a material need. Unlike the secularism of the EU, the OIC depends on religious identity to foster cooperation (Bacik, 2011: 599-600).

A state petitioning to join the EU needs to meet a very strict set of requirements. The state must be geographically located in Europe, promote the Western norms and values of democracy and human rights, and share the Union's political and economic objectives (European Commission, 2016: 1). This is not the case for states wishing to join the OIC.

From 1972-2008, the OIC had a porous membership policy. States wishing to join the OIC simply submitted a request for membership. That request was then voted on and if successful the state was accepted into the organisation. This enabled states with minority Muslim populations to become members of the OIC (Bacik, 2011: 604).<sup>43</sup>

Its membership represents a diverse range of countries from the Middle East, Africa, Europe, and Southeast Asia. Yet, this can place member states at odds with one another. Members of the OIC are part of regional bodies such as the African Union (AU) or the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) as well as economic coalitions like the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC).

Membership of multiple coalitions and regional blocs may result in a crisis of allegiance, as states are forced either to vote along OIC lines or to prioritise the needs of their region and vote in accordance with their geographically closest allies.

By including a wide variety of cultures in its membership, the OIC sought to create a sense of Islamic inclusivity at the expense of a clear and directive mandate. The EU is very clearly

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<sup>43</sup> One such example is Uganda. Uganda is a predominantly Christian African state, yet it is a fully recognised member of the OIC.

European. However, the inclusion of states with minority Muslim populations calls into question the founding principle of the OIC to unite the Islamic world; especially when states like India with a Muslim population estimated in excess of one hundred and fifty million people are denied membership (Zissis, 2007: 1).

Despite India's large Muslim population, its troubled history with Pakistan has seen its neighbour continually deny India's requests to join the OIC. Pakistan utilised the OIC's decision making protocols based on consensus to deny India a seat at the table. However, India's improving bilateral relationships with large Islamic countries in Asia, such as Indonesia, as well as support from Turkey has seen the OIC extend an invitation to the sub-continental giant (Chaudhury, 2019: 1).

India was invited to attend the forty-sixth session of the Council of Foreign Ministers of the OIC, which was then boycotted by Pakistan. As a key founding member of the OIC, Pakistan has traditionally enjoyed a higher degree of influence and coercion in the OIC (Mahmood, 2019: 1).

India's presence at the insistence of more moderate members of the OIC<sup>44</sup> may be the beginning of a shift in internal power dynamics away from more traditional Islamic states towards Islamic states which seek a fuller participation in the international community.

Pakistan's opposition to India joining the OIC does little to support the founding premise of the OIC that it seeks to create a unified global Islamic community. India has the second largest Muslim population in the world, while Pakistan has the third (Pew Research Centre, 2019: 1).<sup>45</sup> The complex and violent history between Pakistan and India does make any form of cooperation between the two states unlikely at worst, and difficult at best.

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<sup>44</sup> Turkey, Malaysia, and Indonesia.

<sup>45</sup> Estimates place India's Muslim population at 194 810 000 and Pakistan's at 184 000 000. By 2060 India is expected to have the largest Muslim population while Pakistan will have the second largest.

Pakistan's resistance to India joining the OIC is a fundamental contradiction of the OIC's stated goal. As two of the largest Muslim countries, India and Pakistan are obliged to seek reconciliation; without which the legitimacy of the OIC can be called into question.<sup>46</sup>

### 3.3 The OIC and the UN.

As the two largest intergovernmental organisations, cooperation between the OIC and the UN improves the likelihood for the survival of the liberal international order. The UN has repeatedly reaffirmed its commitment to improving cooperation.

In 2002, the then Secretary-General of the UN, Kofi Annan, expressed the need for the UN and the OIC to “share a commitment to tolerance, equality, the peaceful resolution of conflict and the promotion of economic and social development” (UN News, 2002: 1). Annan's successor, Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon, reiterated the need for cooperation between the UN and the OIC when facing threats at the hands of terrorist organisations (UN News, 2008: 1).

Secretary-General Ban again affirmed the need for cooperation between the two organisations when he addressed leaders of the OIC at the twelfth session of the Islamic Summit Conference in 2013 (UN News, 2013: 1). Espousing the OIC's proximity to conflicts in North Africa and the Middle East, Secretary-General Ban called on the OIC to uphold international standards of “democratization, good governance, the rule of law, and human rights” (UN News, 2013: 1).

The United Nations Security Council (UNSC) echoed the sentiments of the Secretary-General and called on the OIC to play an active role in “peace making, preventative diplomacy, peacekeeping

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<sup>46</sup> The OIC cannot claim to represent the Islamic world while simultaneously denying membership to Muslims living in India.

and peacebuilding” (UN News, 2013: 1) throughout the Middle East and North Africa as the effects of the Arab Spring continue to be felt.

However, the relationship between the OIC and the UN is complex and by no means without disagreement. One key point of contention between the two organisations is how religious freedom and defamation of religion is defined and enforced by the UN and liberal states.

Marshall (2011: 1) defines religious freedom as the right of the individual to subscribe to any religion of their own choosing. However, the OIC argues that religious freedom is not to do with an individual’s choice, but rather should protect religion from any form of criticism and satire, both real and perceived (Marshall, 2011: 1).<sup>47</sup>

The OIC’s suggested redefinition of religious freedom would clearly impact human rights.<sup>48</sup> For one, freedom of expression and opinion would be threatened. The freedom for one to criticise any organisation, regardless of whether it is an NGO, government, or religion, is protected in liberal constitutions so long as the criticism is not tantamount to hate speech (Grossman, 2017: 1).<sup>49</sup>

Islamophobia has grown since the attacks against the United States on September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2001. This has manifested, for example, in threats to burn the Quran by Terry Jones, a United States pastor (Peralta, 2013: 1),<sup>50</sup> as well as cartoons that are viewed as offensive to Islam for their depictions of the Prophet Mohammed.

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<sup>47</sup> More specifically Islam.

<sup>48</sup> The OIC’s call to protect Islam through redefining what constitutes religious freedom has increased substantially since 9/11 and the global war on terror (Marshall, 2011: 1).

<sup>49</sup> Please see Aguilera-Carnerero, C. and. Azeez, A-H. (2016). “‘Islamonausea, not Islamophobia’: The Many Faces of Cyber Hate Speech.” *Journal of Arab and Muslim Media Research*. 9 (1). pp. 21-39 [Online] Accessed 3 September 2019 for a wider debate on what constitutes hate speech.

<sup>50</sup> Who was subsequently arrested.

In 2015, *Charlie Hebdo*, a French satirical magazine, responsible for publishing cartoons of the Prophet Mohammed, was attacked: an action that resulted in the deaths of seventeen people (CNN, 2018: 1). The OIC needs to work towards reducing the threat posed by extremist organisations and the UN and the OIC must reach a common understanding of human rights.<sup>51</sup>

### 3.4 Human Rights, The Charter of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation, and the Independent Permanent Human Rights Commission.

Since the early 1990s, the OIC has adopted liberal norms into its internal mechanisms and frameworks. The OIC should still be considered an illiberal organisation however, its adoption of the Cairo Declaration, the updated Charter of the OIC as well as the creation of the IPHRC indicate a shift within the OIC towards liberal norms and practice.

Historically, the OIC has been at odds with the liberal international order, and liberal human rights as found in the UDHR. However, the 1990 Cairo Declaration on Human Rights in Islam was an attempt to marry Sharia law, as understood by members of the OIC, with a liberal understanding of human rights.

For example, the Cairo Declaration argues that human rights are only acceptable when they are in complete accordance with traditional Sharia law, therefore people only have a right to life in so long as Sharia law is not violated in such a way that the death penalty can be enforced (The Organisation of the Islamic Conference, 1990: 3-4).

Equally, the Cairo Declaration states that marriage will not be denied to any persons on the basis of race, nationality or ethnicity, yet there is no mention of human rights protection for interreligious

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<sup>51</sup> This is not a statement advocating for a restriction on freedom of expression or opinion. This study does not claim to offer a solution, but rather recognises that both the OIC and the liberal international order must accept responsibility and strive for common ground.

marriage. People may express their opinions how they deem fit; however, they lose the right to do so if Sharia law is violated. Sharia law is the only point of reference for the Cairo Declaration (The Organisation of the Islamic Conference, 1990: 5 & 10).

The Cairo declaration was not only a problem for the liberal human rights regime; it also caused fractures within the OIC. Restrictions of freedom of opinion and expression limited any criticism against Islamic leaders (Kayaoglu, 2012: 1). Furthermore, by failing to define what exactly is meant by Sharia law, states and state officials could claim that human rights violated their understanding of Sharia law and were therefore inapplicable within an Islamic state (Kayaoglu, 2012: 1).

The wording of the Cairo Declaration empowered member states to act against their citizenry and clamp down on human rights activists. Its failure to mention the rights of religious minorities living in Islamic states, or the freedom of people to convert from Islam to other religions received strong criticism from the international community, it being a fundamental violation of the liberal human rights regime as set out in the UDHR (Kayaoglu, 2012: 1).

By the early 2000s, power dynamics within the OIC that had been present since its founding began to change. Saudi Arabia and Iran who had historically dominated the policymaking of the OIC were now limited by the rise of more moderate Islamic states; Turkey, Malaysia, Morocco, and Indonesia sought to balance the religious principles of the OIC with the liberal international order (Petersen, 2012: 10).

The election of Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu, a Turkish diplomat, as the first democratically elected Secretary-General of the OIC was seen by some in the international community as an adoption of liberal principles which had previously been ignored (Petersen, 2012: 12-13). The election of

Ihsanoglu saw changes made to the Charter of the OIC as well as the creation of new, “human rights” promoting organs.

Four important additions to the Charter of the OIC were made under Ihsanoglu’s leadership. First, a declaration geared towards promoting gender equality “in all spheres of life” (The Organisation of Islamic Cooperation, 2008: 3). Second, commitment to improving the protection of fundamental freedoms for “women, children, youth, elderly, and people with special needs” (The Organisation of Islamic Cooperation, 2008: 5). Third, the promotion and protection of “good governance, democracy, human rights and fundamental freedoms, and the rule of law” (The Organisation of Islamic Cooperation, 2008: 6). And fourth, its declaration “to reaffirm its support for the rights of peoples as stipulated in the UN Charter and international law” (Petersen, 2012: 16).

The Charter of the OIC uses language which on the surface indicates support for liberal human rights. However, it remains firmly grounded in Sharia law. The Charter of the OIC continues to promote the rights of the state above that of the individual, as states are only compelled to act “in accordance with the laws and legislation of Members states” (The Organisation of Islamic Cooperation, 2008: 3). Effectively, the OIC provides minimal oversight over the conditions of human rights within its member states.

The changes made to the Charter of the OIC do not fully support the human rights regime of the liberal international order. Human rights as presented in the UDHR are encompassing and without restriction, regardless of the laws and legislation of the state.

Historically, the OIC has found itself on the periphery of the international community. The creation of the IPHRC is an effort by the OIC to rebrand itself to key international actors who are part of the liberal international order as a new partner and ally. The IPHRC is a reflection of the OIC’s

desire to adopt and internalise key liberal principles and norms of liberalism as well as a desire to accept more completely the nature of the international human rights regime and the UDHR (Petersen, 2012: 9-10).

Yet, the IPHRC has had little impact in improving human rights conditions in OIC states (Petersen, 2012: 22). The very limited authority and scope of the IPHRC contradicts the OIC's claim that it is indeed an organ to promote and protect human rights. Rather, the IPHRC fulfils a role more in line with that of an advisory committee (Petersen, 2012: 22).

The IPHRC is very much a bid by the OIC to adopt<sup>52</sup> liberal norms which are consistent with other intergovernmental organisations.<sup>53</sup> However, unlike other human rights protective organs, the IPHRC holds little real power.

The OIC must cede to the IPHRC the necessary authority to promote and protect effectively the human rights of peoples living in OIC states, if it is to be accepted as a defender of the norms which underpin the liberal international order - norms of good governance, democracy and the promotion and protection of human rights.

Qatar, for example, has repeatedly violated the rights of women by refusing to grant equal rights regardless of gender. Using Sharia law as justification, the government of Qatar discriminates against women both in home and public spheres, denying women rights to custody of children, the right to divorce or the right to marry (Human Rights Watch, 2019: 1).

Qatar further refuses to acknowledge the universality of human rights set forth in the UDHR by limiting the applicability of human rights conventions against cruel, inhumane or degrading

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<sup>52</sup> At least on the surface.

<sup>53</sup> For example, the European Commission of Human Rights which is mandated to promote and protect human rights of all peoples living in the EU. For more information please see <https://www.coe.int/en/web/commissioner>

punishment, if not in line with the definitions set out under Sharia law (Human Rights Watch, 2019: 1).

Similarly, Saudi Arabia is also known for committing human rights abuses against its own people. A recent example of their contempt for the international human rights regime - and the inability of the IPHRC to investigate and hold the Saudi government accountable - is the extrajudicial killing of United States based Saudi journalist, Jamal Khashoggi, in Saudi Arabia's Turkish embassy in October of 2018 (UN News, 2019: 1). The nature of Khashoggi's death has been described as "a premeditated extrajudicial execution" by UN Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary, or arbitrary executions, Agnes Callamard (UN News, 2019: 1).

The human rights violations committed by Qatar and Saudi Arabia have not been included to suggest human rights violations only happen in illiberal states. Indeed, human rights abuses are committed by Western liberal democracies. It is not only Islamic countries which run counter to gender equality, for example, orthodox Catholic States have also attempted to prevent women gaining equal rights with men in all forms of private and public life (Petersen, 2012: 30-31).<sup>54</sup>

The Cairo Declaration, Charter of the OIC, and the creation of the IPHRC does indicate a willingness from the OIC to include elements of liberalism in its framework. However, regular abuse of human rights still happens.<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> For more information see Kizenko, N. (2013). "Feminized Patriarchy? Orthodoxy and Gender in Post-Soviet Russia." *Springs*, 38 (3). pp. 595-621 [Online] Accessed 25 September 2019 and Salazar, A.M .and. Lipka, M. (2017). "On Gender Issues, Many in Orthodox Christian Countries Have Conservative Views." *Pew Research Center*. pp. 1 [Online] Found at <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2017/05/16/on-gender-issues-many-in-orthodox-christian-countries-have-conservative-views/> Accessed 25 September 2019.

<sup>55</sup> This is not unique to Islamic states. Human rights abuse does happen in established Western democracies which have more robust human rights protecting organs.

### 3.5 Conclusion.

The OIC has had a troubled history with the liberal international order and its human rights regime. Member states of the OIC are founding members of the UN and participated in the drafting of the UDHR.

However, conflict between the OIC and Israel placed member states at odds with the leader of the liberal international order and one another as the region fractured along proxy lines as the Cold War continued.

Since the early 2000s, the UN has emphasised the need for cooperation between itself and the OIC. As the second largest intergovernmental organisation, the OIC represents over 1.8 billion people. However, the OIC has struggled to act cohesively as weak membership requirements have allowed states who are not predominantly Islamic to join the organisation. Furthermore, the OIC cannot fulfil its original mandate to unify the Islamic world in so long as Pakistan is able to block India's admission.

The adoption of the Cairo Declaration, liberal amendments to the Charter of the OIC and the creation of the IPHRC indicate a growing liberalisation within the OIC, but it still remains at its core an illiberal organisation.

## Chapter 4: The Islamic Bloc on Civil and Political Rights Resolutions.

### 4.1 Introduction.

The United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) is the pre-eminent international forum on human rights. The UNHRC has a membership of forty-seven states.<sup>56</sup> Also present at UNHRC meetings are a number of observer states and international human rights watchdogs which engage with the UNHRC but cannot vote. On average, fourteen states from the OIC are members of the UNHRC at any given time.<sup>57</sup>

The composition of the UNHRC and the OIC's share of the membership fosters an environment in which the OIC can greatly influence the outcome of UNHRC votes. The OIC, and by extension Islamic states, can influence the direction and future of the international human rights regime from within an established liberal institution.

A quantitative analysis examining how OIC member states have voted at the UNHRC will provide insight into the level of influence Islamic states have on the UNHRC and on the international civil and political human rights regime.<sup>58</sup> How Islamic states act while on the UNHRC can provide further insight into the degree of support the liberal international order may expect from non-Western, illiberal states and sources.

The time frame for this analysis will be from the first session of the UNHRC on the 29<sup>th</sup> of June 2006 to the end of the thirty-sixth session on the 11<sup>th</sup> of November 2017. Resolutions, amendments and decisions adopted by the UNHRC without a vote, or that were adopted/rejected outside of the

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<sup>56</sup> States elected to the UNHRC from the UN General Assembly.

<sup>57</sup> References referring to amendments on UNHRC resolutions may either read as '1<sup>st</sup> Amendment to L.27' or 'Amendment 1 to L.27'. This is done in accordance with how each amendment has been individually captured on the UN official website.

<sup>58</sup> All data pertaining to how each individual OIC member state voted on each resolution and amendment analysed in this chapter may be found in the relevant table in Appendices A.

above timeframe are of no significant contribution to the research value of this study and will therefore be ignored. All tables detailing how OIC member states voted on civil and political resolutions while on the UNHRC can be found in Appendices A of this thesis.

This chapter examines how the OIC voted at the UNHRC on resolutions and amendments regarding civil and political rights.<sup>59</sup> Votes on civil society space, combating defamation of religions, protection of the family and sexual orientation, the rights of women and the promotion and protection of human rights in the context of peaceful protests will provide some indication as to the support Islamic states have for accepted liberal norms and human rights.<sup>60</sup>

The civil and political rights that are examined in this chapter were selected as they are key points of disagreement between Islamic and liberal states and institutions. Equal rights between men and women, the right to choose one's own religion without fear of discrimination or persecution, the right to sexual self-determination, as well as the right to protest and express one's opinion are found in liberal societies. However, Islamic states are resistant to promoting and protecting human rights that are not defined in the Quran.

This chapter will conclude that the voting trend of the OIC at the UNHRC does indicate some support for the liberal international order. However, the OIC does attack human rights resolutions which are considered to undermine Sharia law or to promote and protect the rights of minority groups or religions. The OIC does this through amendments to draft resolutions.<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> This thesis uses the ICCPR's and UN's definitions for civil and political rights which can be found at the following address <https://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/ccpr.aspx>

<sup>60</sup> This thesis does not have the capacity to examine all votes of the OIC on civil and political rights at the UNHRC. The five civil and political rights chosen to be examined have been selected as they target a people's right to protest against their government, have freedom of choice with regards to religion and have their human rights protected regardless of gender or sexual orientation.

<sup>61</sup> Please note that the dates given alongside draft resolutions and amendments are the dates of adoption. To make the reading of this chapter less cumbersome, references to UNHRC documents can be found in footnotes where necessary.

#### 4.2 Civil and Political Rights.

Liberal interpretations of civil and political rights as written about in the UDHR and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR),<sup>62</sup> and civil and political rights as interpreted by member states of the OIC are not always the same.<sup>63</sup>

Freedom to choose one's religion, take part in peaceful protests without fear of retaliation, a free and impartial civil society, protection of the family and the promotion and protection of gender based human rights in the pursuit of an equal society are integral to liberal human rights and the liberal international order (The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, 1985: 133).

#### 4.3 Combating Defamation of Religions.

Resolutions on combating defamation of religions were first voted on by the UNHRC in 2007,<sup>64</sup> but have been frequently criticised by Western nations. The wording of the resolutions aims to protect Islam and prevent any form of criticism against this religion and Islamic Sharia law.<sup>65</sup>

The first resolution on combating defamation of religions was adopted in 2007.<sup>66</sup> Sixteen of the seventeen members of the OIC present voted in favour of the resolution while Nigeria abstained. The second resolution was adopted in 2008.<sup>67</sup> Gabon was the only OIC member state not to vote in favour of the resolution, but chose to abstain.

The third resolution was adopted in 2009.<sup>68</sup> Burkina Faso abstained from voting while Gabon changed its stance to vote in favour of the resolution. The final vote on combating defamation of

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<sup>62</sup> The ICCPR was adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1966 and came into force in 1976 (United Nations Treaty Collection, 2019: 1).

<sup>63</sup> Please refer to Chapter 3 of this thesis for more detail.

<sup>64</sup> See table 4.1 in Appendices.

<sup>65</sup> All resolutions on combating defamation of religions were submitted by Pakistan on behalf of the OIC.

<sup>66</sup> 'Combating Defamation of Religions', 30 March 2007, UN Doc. A/HRC/4/L.12.

<sup>67</sup> 'Combating Defamation of Religions', 27 March 2008, UN Doc. A/HRC/7/L.15.

<sup>68</sup> 'Combating Defamation of Religions', 26 March 2009, UN Doc. A/HRC/10/L.2/Rev.1.

religions was adopted by the UNHRC in 2010.<sup>69</sup> Cameroon abstained from the vote while the rest of the OIC voted in favour. The final resolution for combating defamation of religions was closely contested with twenty states voting for, seventeen against and eight abstaining.

Resolutions on combating defamation of religions show the strength of Islamic states on the UNHRC. If the OIC did not vote as a bloc, the four resolutions may well have been rejected by the UNHRC. Combating defamation of religions is illiberal in its scope and limits rights of expression and opinion.

The OIC voted consistently on each resolution on combating defamation of religions. Each resolution received near unanimous support from OIC member states. However, one African OIC member state per resolution abstained from the vote.<sup>70</sup>

#### 4.4 Civil Society Space.

The first resolution on civil society space was adopted without a vote by the UNHRC in 2013.<sup>71</sup> UNHRC resolutions on civil society space emphasise the importance and need for a strong civil society to promote and protect human rights.<sup>72</sup>

While the resolution was adopted without a vote, two amendments to the resolution were voted on. The first amendment sought to prevent a future panel discussion on how states can better protect civil society space and human rights.<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> ‘Combating Defamation of Religions’, 15 April 2010, UN Doc. A/HRC/13/L.1.

<sup>70</sup> These were Nigeria, Gabon, Burkina Faso and Cameroon.

<sup>71</sup> See table 4.2 in Appendices A.

<sup>72</sup> ‘Civil Society Space: Creating and Maintaining, in Law and in Practice, a Safe and Enabling Environment’, 19 September 2013, UN Doc. A/HRC/24/L.24.

<sup>73</sup> ‘Amendment 2 to L.24’, 24 September 2013, UN Doc. A/HRC/24/L.51.

The second amendment aimed to include the right to development while simultaneously weakening human rights that seek to prevent the exploitation of a person by a state or corporation, as well as any form of discrimination based on race, gender, or religion.<sup>74</sup> Both amendments were rejected and the OIC was divided. Nine of the sixteen members voted for the first amendment and seven for the second, while the rest either voted against or abstained.

The UNHRC's second resolution on civil society space was also adopted without a vote.<sup>75</sup> The second resolution was submitted to the UNHRC by a group of five states which included two members of the OIC: Sierra Leone and Tunisia. However, the second resolution on civil society space faced strong opposition. Nine amendments were proposed and all rejected.<sup>76</sup> States opposed to the resolution sought to limit the scope of human rights protection in civil society as well as oversight by the UNHRC.

The OIC was again split in its support. Between six to eight of the fourteen members of the OIC present voted in support of each amendment, while the rest voted against or abstained. Notably, the African states of the OIC - bar Algeria who voted for each amendment and Gabon who continually abstained - voted against any proposed changes to the resolution.

The final UNHRC resolution on civil society space was in 2016. Unlike the previous times the resolution was brought before the UNHRC, the third resolution was adopted by a vote.<sup>77</sup> Seven of the thirteen OIC states voted in favour, one voted against and five abstained. As with the second

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<sup>74</sup> 'Amendment 3 to L.24', 24 September 2013, UN Doc. A/HRC/24/L.52.

<sup>75</sup> 'Civil Society Space', 18 September 2014, UN Doc. A/HRC/27/L.24.

<sup>76</sup> '1<sup>st</sup> Amendment to L.24', 23 September 2014, UN Doc. A/HRC/27/L.34, '2<sup>nd</sup> Amendment to L.24', 23 September 2014, UN Doc. A/HRC/27/L.35, '3<sup>rd</sup> Amendment to L.24', 23 September 2014, UN Doc. A/HRC/27/L.36, '5<sup>th</sup> Amendment to L.24', 23 September 2014, UN Doc. A/HRC/27/L.38, '6<sup>th</sup> Amendment to L.24', 23 September 2014, UN Doc. A/HRC/27/L.39, '7<sup>th</sup> Amendment to L.24', 23 September 2014, UN Doc. A/HRC/27/L.40, '8<sup>th</sup> Amendment to L.24', 23 September 2014, UN Doc. A/HRC/27/L.41, '9<sup>th</sup> Amendment to L.24', 23 September 2014, UN Doc. A/HRC/27/L.42, and '10<sup>th</sup> Amendment to L.24', 23 September 2014, UN Doc. A/HRC/27/L.43.

<sup>77</sup> 'Civil Society Space', 1 July 2016, UN Doc. A/HRC/32/L.29.

vote on civil society space, the third was met with resistance. Twelve amendments were submitted by Russia and all were rejected.<sup>78</sup> On average, six members of the OIC voted in support of each amendment while the majority either abstained or voted against.

The quantity of amendments submitted by Russia can be seen as an attempt to influence key liberal human rights. The OIC, while having some states support the amendments, by and large did not support Russia which consequently helped strengthen the UNHRC's position on civil and political rights.

The OIC has remained split on resolutions and amendments regarding civil society space. Roughly half of the OIC members present at the time of a vote will support each resolution and amendment while the rest of the OIC either vote against or abstain from voting. The voting records examined in this research project indicate that OIC member states, and by extension, Islamic states, do not have a unified position as to whether they support or resist the protection of human rights in civil society.

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<sup>78</sup> '2<sup>nd</sup> Amendment to L.29', 1 July 2016, UN Doc. A/HRC/32/L.52, '3<sup>rd</sup> Amendment to L.29', 1 July 2016, UN Doc. A/HRC/32/L.53, '4<sup>th</sup> Amendment to L.29', 1 July 2016, UN Doc. A/HRC/32/L.54, '5<sup>th</sup> Amendment to L.29', 1 July 2016, UN Doc. A/HRC/32/L.55, '6<sup>th</sup> Amendment to L.29', 1 July 2016, UN Doc. A/HRC/32/L.56, '9<sup>th</sup> Amendment to L.29', 1 July 2016, UN Doc. A/HRC/32/L.59, '10<sup>th</sup> Amendment to L.29', 1 July 2016, UN Doc. A/HRC/32/L.60, '11<sup>th</sup> Amendment to L.29', 1 July 2016, UN Doc. A/HRC/32/L.61, '12<sup>th</sup> Amendment to L.29', 1 July 2016, UN Doc. A/HRC/32/L.62, '13<sup>th</sup> Amendment to L.29', 1 July 2016, UN Doc. A/HRC/32/L.63, '14<sup>th</sup> Amendment to L.29', 1 July 2016, UN Doc. A/HRC/32/L.64, and '15<sup>th</sup> Amendment to L.29', 1 July 2016, UN Doc. A/HRC/32/L.65.

#### 4.5 Protection of the Family and Sexual Orientation.

As societal acceptance of non-heterosexual, non-gender conforming and non-binary peoples grows,<sup>79</sup> concepts such as the structure of a family have changed.<sup>80</sup> For the OIC this is problematic.<sup>81</sup> When the UNHRC votes on resolutions for the protection of the family and/or the promotion and protection of human rights for sexual minorities, the OIC is likely to challenge the resolution if it proposes the acceptance of non-traditional family units.

The first resolution on sexual orientation was adopted by the UNHRC in 2011 and was met with substantial opposition from the OIC.<sup>82</sup> Fifteen of the sixteen OIC members present on the UNHRC voted against, while Burkina Faso abstained. The resolution was narrowly adopted by four votes.

The resolution called on the international community to put an end to violence against people based on their sexual orientation or identification; it also called for a panel discussion to be convened for the purpose of using the human rights agenda to contest discriminatory laws against peoples based on their sexual orientation.<sup>83</sup>

The first resolution on protecting the family was adopted by the UNHRC in June 2014 and received unanimous support from OIC members.<sup>84</sup> Unlike the resolution on sexual orientation, it did not mention non-traditional families and therefore was not in opposition to the OIC member states' concept of family. Support from the OIC for resolutions supporting the traditional understanding of family should not be viewed as support for the liberal international order.

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<sup>79</sup> See table 4.3 in Appendices A.

<sup>80</sup> This is not discounting the substantial violence still faced by the LGQTB+ community or claim that all peoples accept non-heterosexual citizens in their communities.

<sup>81</sup> Please refer to chapter 3 of this thesis. The OIC views the family as only including a husband, wife, and children.

<sup>82</sup> 'Human Rights, Sexual Orientation, and Gender Identity', 17 June 2011, UN Doc. A/HRC/17/L.9/Rev.1.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid.

<sup>84</sup> 'Protection of the Family', 26 June 2014, UN Doc. A/HRC/26/L.20/Rev.1.

A second resolution on sexual orientation was adopted in September 2014.<sup>85</sup> However, as it was a resolution that once again sought to protect the human rights of minority sexual groups, it did not receive support from the OIC. Ten out of the thirteen OIC members voted against the resolution while three abstained.

In addition to the OIC's refusal to support the second resolution on sexual orientation, a number of OIC and African states submitted amendments which would fundamentally alter the resolution.<sup>86</sup> Each amendment was rejected.

The amendments sought to change the content of the resolution and replace any mention of violence against persons as a result of their sexual orientation or gender identity to acts of violence "committed against individuals because of their race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or status."<sup>87</sup> Kazakhstan and Sierra Leone were the only two members of the OIC at the UNHRC who did not vote in favour of the amendments, choosing to abstain.

The second resolution on protecting the family was adopted by the UNHRC and once again reinforced the traditional understanding of the structure of a family unit, while expanding on previous resolutions which highlighted the role of the family in promoting social and economic

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<sup>85</sup> 'Human Rights, Sexual Orientation, and Gender Identity', 26 September 2014, UN Doc. A/HRC/27/L.27/Rev.1.

<sup>86</sup> '1<sup>st</sup> Amendment to L.27', 26 September 2014, UN Doc. A/HRC/27/L.45, '2<sup>nd</sup> Amendment to L.27', 26 September 2014, UN Doc. A/HRC/27/L.46, '3<sup>rd</sup> Amendment to L.27', 26 September 2014', UN Doc. A/HRC/27/L.47, '4<sup>th</sup> Amendment to L.27', 26 September 2014, UN Doc. A/HRC/27/48, '5<sup>th</sup> Amendment to L.27', 26 September 2014, UN Doc. A/HRC/27/L.49, '6<sup>th</sup> Amendment to L.27', 26 September 2014, UN Doc. A/HRC/27/L.50, and '7<sup>th</sup> Amendment to L.27', 26 September 2014, UN Doc. A/HRC/27/L.51.

<sup>87</sup> '3<sup>rd</sup> Amendment to L.27', 26 September 2014, UN Doc. A/HRC/27/L.47.

development.<sup>88</sup> All members of the OIC on the UNHRC voted in favour and the resolution was adopted.

A further two resolutions were adopted by the UNHRC in 2016. The first resolution, protection against violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity was adopted in June, despite its unanimous rejection by the OIC.<sup>89</sup>

Eleven amendments to the resolution were submitted by Pakistan on behalf of the OIC and all received full support from the OIC members present at the UNHRC. Of the eleven amendments, four were rejected, and seven were adopted

The four rejected amendments attempted to change the wording of the resolution to remove any mention of violence or discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity. This is in keeping with the OIC's previous position on non-traditional interpretations of the family and sexual self-determination.<sup>90</sup>

The seven adopted amendments attacked the universality of the resolution on the protection against violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity, by including new paragraphs calling for the respect of religious principles and the domestic laws of individual countries.<sup>91</sup> The adoption of amendments which target the protection of human rights for minority groups is of concern for liberal human rights.

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<sup>88</sup> 'Protection of the Family: Contribution of the Family to the Realization of the Right to an Adequate Standard of Living for its Members, Particularly Through its Role in Poverty Eradication and Achieving Sustainable Development', 3 July 2015, UN Doc. A/HRC/28/L.25.

<sup>89</sup> 'Protection Against Violence and Discrimination Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity', 30 June 2016, UN Doc. A/HRC/32/L.2/Rev.1.

<sup>90</sup> '1<sup>st</sup> Amendment to L.2/Rev.1', 30 June 2016, UN Doc. A/HRC/32/L.71, '2<sup>nd</sup> Amendment to L.2/Rev.1', 30 June 2016, UN Doc. A/HRC/32/L.72, '10<sup>th</sup> Amendment to L.2/Rev.1', 30 June 2016, UN Doc. A/HRC/32/L.80, and '11<sup>th</sup> Amendment to L.2/Rev.1', 30 June 2016, UN Doc. A/HRC/32/L.81.

<sup>91</sup> '3<sup>rd</sup> Amendment to L.2/Rev.1', 30 June 2016, UN Doc. A/HRC/32/L.73, '4<sup>th</sup> Amendment to L.2/Rev.1', 30 June 2016, UN Doc. A/HRC/32/L.74, '5<sup>th</sup> Amendment to L.2/Rev.1', 30 June 2016, UN Doc. A/HRC/32/L.75, '6<sup>th</sup>

The second resolution was adopted in July 2016 and the final resolution on protection of the family was adopted in 2017. Both called for the promotion and protection of human rights for families supporting persons with disabilities, as well as older persons.<sup>92</sup> All members of the OIC voted in favour of both resolutions.

The OIC's approach to resolutions and amendments regarding protection of the family as well as sexual orientation demonstrate a clear position in which member states of the OIC do not accept any redefinition of the family unit, nor attempts to better improve human rights protection for persons based on their sexual orientation. However, the OIC has continually offered resounding support for resolutions and amendments in which traditional family units are protected.

#### 4.6 The Rights of Women.

Between 2006 and 2017, the UNHRC adopted four resolutions aimed at protecting women and girls from violence and discrimination.<sup>93</sup> All four resolutions were adopted without a vote, yet were challenged through proposed amendments.

The first resolution adopted by the UNHRC in 2015 specifically targeted the high levels of domestic abuse against women.<sup>94</sup> Bahrain, Egypt, Iran, Kuwait, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) are all members of the OIC and challenged the resolution through

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Amendment to L.2/Rev.1', 30 June 2016, UN Doc. A/HRC/32/L.76, '7<sup>th</sup> Amendment to L.2/Rev.1', 30 June 2016, UN Doc. A/HRC/32/L.77, '8<sup>th</sup> Amendment to L.2/Rev.1', 30 June 2016, UN Doc. A/HRC/32/L.78, and '9<sup>th</sup> Amendment to L.2/Rev.1, 30 June 2016, UN Doc. A/HRC/32/L.79.

<sup>92</sup> 'Protection of the Family: the Role of the Family in Supporting the Protection and Promotion of Human Rights of Persons with Disabilities', 1 July 2016, UN Doc. A/HRC/32/L.35 and 'Protection of the Family: Role of the Family in Supporting the Protection and Promotion of Human Rights of Older Persons', 22 June 2017, UN Doc. A/HRC/35/L.21.

<sup>93</sup> See table 4.4 in Appendices A.

<sup>94</sup> 'Accelerating Efforts to Eliminate all Forms of Violence Against Women: Eliminating Domestic Violence', 30 June 2015, UN Doc. A/HRC/29/L.16/Rev.1.

four amendments.<sup>95</sup> Each of which was rejected. Furthermore, of the fourteen members of the OIC on the UNHRC, an average of nine members supported each amendment.

If the amendments had been accepted, a resolution aimed at protecting women from domestic violence would have been ineffective. Partner violence, intimate violence and marital rape would have been replaced with “spousal and non-spousal violence.”<sup>96</sup> This in turn would reinforce unequal gender roles in OIC states and protect the abusers instead of the rights of the abused.

Two resolutions on women’s rights were adopted by the UNHRC in June 2016. The first resolution addressed the systemic discrimination against women along gender lines. The resolution called upon the international community to promote and protect women’s rights in all spheres.<sup>97</sup> Three amendments were submitted by Russia to the UNHRC and received limited support from the OIC.<sup>98</sup> The amendments were rejected

The second resolution on women’s rights adopted in June 2016, expanded on the first resolution on violence against women to include “violence against women and girls, including indigenous women and girls.”<sup>99</sup> Four amendments were submitted by Russia and rejected by the UNHRC. The amendments were supported by a majority of OIC states present.<sup>100</sup>

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<sup>95</sup> ‘1<sup>st</sup> Amendment to L.16/Rev.1’, 29 Jun 2015, UN Doc. A/HRC/29/L.26, ‘2<sup>nd</sup> Amendment to L.16/Rev.1’, 29 June 2015, UN Doc. A/HRC/29/L.27, ‘3<sup>rd</sup> Amendment to L.16/Rev.1’, 29 June 2015, UN Doc. A/HRC/29/L.28, and ‘4<sup>th</sup> Amendment to L.16/Rev.1’, 29 June 2015, UN Doc. A/HRC/29/L.29.

<sup>96</sup> Ibid.

<sup>97</sup> ‘Elimination of Discrimination Against Women’, 28 June 2016, UN Doc. A/HRC/32/L.7/Rev.1.

<sup>98</sup> ‘1<sup>st</sup> Amendment to L.7/Rev.1’, 28 June 2016, UN Doc. A/HRC/32/L.67, ‘3<sup>rd</sup> Amendment to L.7/Rev.1’, 28 June 2016, UN Doc. A/HRC/32/L.69, and ‘4<sup>th</sup> Amendment to L.7/Rev.1’, 28 June 2016, UN Doc. A/HRC/32/L.70.

<sup>99</sup> ‘Accelerating Efforts Eliminate all Forms of Violence Against Women: Preventing and Responding to Violence Against Women and Girls, Including Indigenous Women and Girls’, 28 June 2016, UN Doc. A/HRC/32/L.28/Rev.1.

<sup>100</sup> ‘1<sup>st</sup> Amendment to L.28’, 28 June 2016, UN Doc. A/HRC/32/L.36, ‘2<sup>nd</sup> Amendment to L.28’, 28 June 2016, UN Doc. A/HRC/32/L.37, ‘7<sup>th</sup> Amendment to L.28’, 28 June 2016, UN Doc. A/HRC/32/L.42, and ‘8<sup>th</sup> Amendment to L.28’, 28 June 2016, UN Doc. A/HRC/32/43.

The final resolution on women's rights adopted by the UNHRC in 2017 promoted the need for "engaging men and boys in preventing and responding to violence against all women and girls."<sup>101</sup> Russia submitted four further amendments using the resolution on the promotion and protection of women's rights to weaken the protection of human rights defenders who work to promote the rights of women in countries which discriminate against persons along gender lines.<sup>102</sup> The amendments received strong support from the OIC.

Over the years, OIC member states on the UNHRC have, at least on the surface, supported the promotion, protection and expansion of human rights for women and girls. However, each resolution on the rights of women was challenged by either Islamic states or illiberal states like Russia through proposed amendments.

The wording of said amendments sought to reinforce biased gender norms. Much like the OIC member states' resistance to resolutions and amendments on sexual orientation and non-traditional family units, UNHRC resolutions promoting the rights of women and girls challenges Islamic societies in which the Quran and Sharia law are used to reinforce an asymmetrical power relationship between men and boys, and girls and women.

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<sup>101</sup> 'Accelerating Efforts to Eliminate all Forms of Violence Against Women: Engaging Men and Boys in Preventing and Responding to Violence Against all Women and Girls', 15 June 2017, UN Doc. A/HRC/35/L.15.

<sup>102</sup> '1<sup>st</sup> Amendment to L.15', 22 June 2017, UN Doc. A/HRC/35/L.39, '2<sup>nd</sup> Amendment to L.15', 22 Jun 2017, UN Doc. A/HRC/35/L.40, '3<sup>rd</sup> Amendment to L.15', 22 June 2017, UN Doc. A/HRC/35/L.41, and '4<sup>th</sup> Amendment to L.15', 22 June 2017, UN Doc. A/HRC/35/L.42.

#### 4.7 The Promotion and Protection of Human Rights in the Context of Peaceful Protest.

The UNHRC has voted on,<sup>103</sup> and adopted two resolutions on peaceful protest action.<sup>104</sup> The right to protest peacefully is an important aspect of any healthy civil society, “peaceful protests can contribute to the full enjoyment of civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights.”<sup>105</sup> The UNHRC has further recognised that peaceful protest action is the expression of numerous human rights simultaneously such as “the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly, of expression and of association”,<sup>106</sup> and must be protected.

The first resolution promoting human rights in the context of peaceful protest was adopted by the UNHRC in 2014.<sup>107</sup> Of the fourteen OIC members present, nine voted for, one against, and four abstained. Four amendments were submitted and all were rejected.<sup>108</sup>

The four amendments to the first resolution targeted the UNHRC’s ability to ensure adequate respect for the human rights of peaceful protestors. The amendments wished to limit the authority of the resolution by arguing that governments should have the right to determine whether or not a protest is peaceful, or a threat to national security, as well as to have the authority to arrest or detain the organisers of a protest should it be deemed violent or unlawful.<sup>109</sup>

An average of seven OIC states voted in favour of the amendments while the rest either voted against or abstained. Had the amendments been adopted, the protection of human rights for

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<sup>103</sup> The UNHRC has indeed passed more than two resolutions on the promotion and protection of human rights in the context of peaceful protests, however, said resolutions were passed without a vote or amendments and therefore offer no value to this research project.

<sup>104</sup> See table 4.5 in Appendices A.

<sup>105</sup> ‘The Promotion and Protection of Human Rights in the Context of Peaceful Protests’, 28 March 2014, UN Doc. A/HRC/25/L.20.

<sup>106</sup> Ibid.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid.

<sup>108</sup> ‘Amendment 1 to L.20’, 28 March 2014, UN Doc. A/HRC/25/L.48, ‘Amendment 2 to L.20’, 28 March 2015, UN Doc. A/HRC/25/L.49, ‘Amendment 3 to L.20’, 28 March 2014, UN Doc. A/HRC/25/L.50, and ‘Amendment 5 to L.20’, 28 March 2014, UN Doc. A/HRC/25/L.52.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid.

peaceful protesters would be threatened. There would be limited oversight from the UNHRC and alleged abuse of human rights by the government could be rejected on the basis that the state views the protest as either illegal or violent.

The second resolution on the promotion and protection of human rights in the context of peaceful protest was adopted by the UNHRC in 2016. It sought to reaffirm the commitments of states to ensure the protection of human rights for peaceful protestors as agreed upon in the UNHRC's first resolution.<sup>110</sup> Half of the OIC members on the UNHRC voted in favour of the resolution, while the remaining states abstained.

Pakistan, Iran and Egypt contributed to six amendments against the second resolution on human rights in the context of peaceful protest.<sup>111</sup> Once more, the amendments aimed to give more control to governments while reducing the protection of the human rights of peaceful protestors. The amendments received some support from the OIC, however, the majority of OIC states voted against, or abstained from voting on each proposed amendment.

Similar to how OIC member states voted on the protection of human rights in civil society space, member states of the OIC do not have a uniform position on the promotion and protection of human rights in the context of peaceful protest. Generally, Middle Eastern and Southeast Asian member states of the OIC challenge UNHRC resolutions and amendments that do protect human rights in the context of peaceful protest, while African member states of the OIC are likely to abstain or vote against resolutions targeting peaceful protest.

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<sup>110</sup> 'The Promotion and Protection of Human Rights in the Context of Peaceful Protests', 24 March 2016, UN Doc. A/HRC/31/L.21.

<sup>111</sup> '1<sup>st</sup> Amendment to L.21', 24 March 2016, UN Doc. A/HRC/31/L.72, '3<sup>rd</sup> Amendment to L.21', 24 March 2016, UN Doc. A/HRC/31/L.74, '4<sup>th</sup> Amendment to L.21', 24 March 2016, UN Doc. A/HRC/31/L.75, '5<sup>th</sup> Amendment to L.21', 24 March 2016, UN Doc. A/HRC/31/L.76, '7<sup>th</sup> Amendment to L.21', 24 March 2016, UN Doc. A/HRC/31/L.78, and '8<sup>th</sup> Amendment to L.21', March 2016, UN Doc. A/HRC/31/L.9.

#### 4.8 Conclusion.

Civil and political rights are important for liberal societies. The promotion and protection of the rights of women and girls, peaceful protestors, civil society and minority groups whether they are sexual, religious, ethnic, cultural or racial minorities aims to promote a fair and equal society in which all persons have the opportunity to live freely and without fear of undue prosecution.<sup>112</sup>

Since the UNHRC's first regular session in 2006, the OIC has maintained a consistent trend when voting on resolutions and amendments that target the promotion and protection of civil and political rights.<sup>113</sup>

As discussed in chapter three of this thesis, the OIC -and by extension Islamic states- rely on the Quran and Sharia law as their guiding point of reference when interpreting and understanding human rights. This is clearly reflected in how OIC states have voted while on the UNHRC. Civil and political rights that challenge the Quran's conceptualisation of society and societal roles are challenged by OIC states through resolutions and amendments.

Freedom of opinion, expression and association are all protected rights in liberal societies. However, the OIC has consistently sought to limit a states', or persons, right to criticise or reject Islam through combating defamation of religions resolutions. Resolutions which seek to limit expressions of opinion and free speech are inherently illiberal and in contradiction to the norms and practices found in the liberal international order.<sup>114</sup>

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<sup>112</sup>This thesis does not claim that these human rights are always protected or equally enforced in liberal societies. One only needs to think of the Black Lives Matter and #MeToo movements to see that they are not. Yet, this does not detract from the overall point made in this chapter which is states supporting the promotion and protection of necessary human rights at the UNHRC.

<sup>113</sup> Note that this claim is made with particular reference to the civil and political rights examined in this research project and not all UNHRC resolutions and amendments on civil and political rights.

<sup>114</sup> Free speech does not mean organisations or persons may say whatever they choose. Freedom of speech offers protection from undue prosecution by either state institutions, which in the case of the OIC includes Islam, or persons in so long as what has been said/written/expressed does not constitute hate speech or the incitement to

Unlike resolutions on combating defamation of religions, UNHRC resolutions on civil society space did not receive near unanimous support from members of the OIC. Rather, through examining how the OIC member states voted, it is clear that the OIC does not have a uniform position on the promotion and protection of human rights in civil society space. African member states of the OIC tend to support the promotion and protection of civil society space more so than OIC members from the Middle East and Southeast Asia.<sup>115</sup>

Islamic states rely on the Quran and Sharia law to structure their societies and societal roles.<sup>116</sup> Families are very clearly defined as consisting of a husband, wife(s), children and extended family members.<sup>117</sup> However, as the acceptance for non-binary, transgendered, LGBTQ+ peoples grows, the family unit as understood in liberal societies has changed. As a result, the UNHRC has expanded its promotion and protection of human rights for non-traditional family units and sexual minorities.

OIC member states are very clearly against supporting rights that protect non-traditional family units or persons who identify as LGBTQ+. OIC member states regularly seek to weaken human rights protection for the LGBTQ+ community through amendments to resolutions on sexual orientation. Furthermore, OIC member states unanimously support any resolution that promotes a traditional family unit. Islamic states will likely continue to oppose LGBTQ+ rights in so long as the Quran and Sharia law are used as guiding principles through which Islamic society is governed.

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violence. Combating defamation of religions would create a situation of Islamic exceptionalism at the expense of this basic and necessary right.

<sup>115</sup> Offering a solution as to why this may be the case is beyond the scope of his research project. However, a tentative claim may be made that due to Africa's unique colonial experience, African states whether liberal or illiberal, Christian or Islamic, place a greater emphasise on the need for civil society.

<sup>116</sup> See chapter three.

<sup>117</sup> Uncles, aunts, cousins, grandparents etc...

On the surface, the OIC supports resolutions that promote the rights of women and girls. However, OIC member states use amendments to limit the protection of UNHRC resolutions that target domestic abuse and marital rape. As well as the protection for human rights defenders investigating instances in which women's rights are violated.

The final civil and political resolution examined in this chapter is the promotion and protection of human rights in the context of peaceful protest. OIC member states have continually targeted the organisers of protests through amendments to resolutions. OIC amendments towards resolutions on peaceful protest would grant governments increased powers while also increasing the risk of organising and/or participating in any protest not explicitly sanctioned by the government.

How OIC member states have voted on the promotion and protection of civil and political rights at the UNHRC demonstrates a clear trend. A trend where in should a proposed resolution or amendment challenge Islam or an Islamic understanding of human rights as guided by the Quran and Sharia law, it is likely to face strong opposition from Islamic states. Thus, it would be beneficial for the future liberal international order and human rights regime if the OIC and the UNHRC could reach a mutually accepted understanding of what constitutes civil and political rights and how best to promote and protect the rights of the most vulnerable members and groups in society.

## **Chapter 5: The Islamic Bloc on Country-Specific Resolutions.**

### 5.1 Introduction.

Chapter 4 of this thesis examined OIC voting trends in relation to civil and political rights on the UNHRC, chapter 5 focuses on how member states of the OIC have voted on resolutions relating to country-specific allegations of human rights abuse. Chapter 5 utilises the same methodology as found in chapter 4 which is an empirical analysis of OIC member states voting records while present on the UNHRC. All tables regarding country-specific resolutions can be found in Appendices B of this thesis.

This chapter will examine how the OIC has voted in relation to country-specific resolutions and amendments. The Syrian Arab Republic and Islamic Republic of Iran are two members of the OIC which have been subject to Item 4 resolutions. Item 4 resolutions are country-specific resolutions adopted by the UNHRC against governments which continually abuse and violate the human rights of their peoples and must be held to account by the international community.<sup>118</sup> How the OIC votes on resolutions regarding Syria and Iran indicates the extent of support for liberal human rights in opposition to two Islamic governments.

The last two Item 4 resolutions examined in this chapter are UNHRC votes with regards to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK/North Korea) and Belarus. North Korea is a pariah of the international community, for its government regularly abuses the human rights of its own citizens (Human Rights Watch, 2019: 1).

The Belarusian government regularly violates and restricts the rights of people in a manner similar to that of authoritarian regimes in the Middle East and Africa. Restrictions to the right to protest

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<sup>118</sup> Peoples, in this instance, refer to all persons living within the geopolitical territory of a state.

as well as government controlled media and judicial systems means Belarus shares many similarities to states in the OIC (Freedom House, 2019: 1). Support from the OIC in targeting human rights abuse by the Belarusian government can foster cooperation between the OIC and the established liberal international order.

Second: this chapter will examine resolutions and amendments on two countries under Item 10 of the UNHRC. Item 10 resolutions provide technical-assistance and capacity-building means to a country's government in order to improve the human rights of its citizens (Heasley, 2018: 1). The Item 10 resolutions mentioned in this chapter are ones which focus on the human rights situation in Ukraine and Georgia.

The annexing of the Crimea Peninsula by Russia in 2014 has had significant implications for the liberal international order. It is a direct challenge to the power of the United States and its Western European allies. How the OIC votes on resolutions concerning the Ukraine is an indication of its support for either the liberal international order or support for challengers to the established system, such as Russia.

Similar to the Ukraine, the human rights situation in Georgia is another contest between Russia and the United States led liberal international order. Russia continues to challenge the status quo of the post-Cold War era. Support from the OIC for the liberal international order and its international human rights regime is necessary to limit Russian re-expansion.

The voting patterns analysed throughout this chapter indicate that the OIC prefers to abstain from voting on UNHRC resolutions when said resolutions are country-specific and target Islamic states, or states that share similarities to how human rights are promoted and protected in Islamic

countries.<sup>119</sup> However, this should not be viewed as a lack of support for the liberal international order, or the international human rights regime. Rather, the OIC's hesitancy to condemn country-specific instances of human rights abuse may be a result of Islamic states' unwillingness to be embroiled in a new conflict between the United States and challengers to its order.

Furthermore, in supporting country-specific resolutions which seek to promote and protect liberal human rights, OIC member states would be, by extension, condemning Islamic countries who are accused of committing similar acts against their own peoples.

### 5.2 Country-Specific Resolutions and Amendments: Iran, North Korea, Syria, and Belarus.

Item 4 resolutions of the UNHRC are classified as "human rights situations that require the Council's attention" (Human Rights Council, 2007: 1). These are often country-specific situations which target the violation of the rights of peoples by their own governments. These violations could be systemic and ingrained into the fabric of the society,<sup>120</sup> or the country in question may have devolved into a civil war or is emerging from a state of internal conflict in which allegations of human rights abuses have been made.

This section will concern itself with votes taken by the UNHRC on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, the Syrian Arab Republic and Belarus.

Iran and Syria are members of the OIC. How the OIC votes on its own members is of importance to this study. Should the OIC vote in line with the rest of the UNHRC in resolutions and

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<sup>119</sup> Voting patterns refers to the consistency of how OIC member states vote on amendments/resolutions/decisions.

<sup>120</sup> For example, states such as North Korea.

amendments which condemn human rights violations against fellow members, the OIC would be supporting norms of the liberal international order.

### 5.2.1 Situation of Human Rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Since the revolution that overthrew the Iranian Shah, Mohammed Reza Pahlavi in 1979,<sup>121</sup> the Islamic Republic of Iran has had a troubled relationship with the liberal international order and its leader, the United States (Ansari, 2019: 1). The UN Security Council, EU and United States have all imposed sanctions on Iran.

These sanctions have included the freezing of Iranian assets, limiting capital investment allowed by foreign companies in Iranian resource sectors,<sup>122</sup> and sanctions designed to limit Iran's capacity for the production of nuclear weapons by restricting how much enriched uranium Iran may produce per annum (Sen, 2018: 1).

The UNHRC has expressed its concern for the plight of Iranian citizens and the potential violation and abuse of human rights, adopting six resolutions from 2011 to 2017.<sup>123</sup> Item 4 resolutions on Iran have three outcomes.

The first is the appointment and continuation of the Special Rapporteur's mission to Iran for another year. Second: the UNHRC calls on the government of Iran to cooperate with the Special Rapporteur and provide all necessary access and information for the fulfilment of their mission.

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<sup>121</sup> See table 5.1 in Appendices B.

<sup>122</sup> Namely Iranian oil production.

<sup>123</sup> 'Situation of Human Rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran', 24 March 2011, UN Doc. A/HRC/16/L.25/Rev.1, 'Situation of Human Rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran', 22 March 2012, UN Doc. A/HRC/19/L.22, 'Situation of Human Rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran', 28 March 2014, UN Doc. A/HRC/25/L.9, 'Situation of Human Rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran', 27 March 2015, UN Doc. A/HRC/28/L.17, 'Situation of Human Rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran', 23 March 2016, UN Doc. A/HRC/31/L.27, and 'Situation of Human Rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran', 24 March 2017, UN Doc. A/HRC/34/L.17.

Third: the UNHRC requests resources from the office of the UN Secretary-General to continue to monitor the human rights situation in Iran.<sup>124</sup>

All six resolutions on Iran were adopted. However, they did not receive any substantial support from members of the OIC. On average, two OIC states voted in support of each resolution, four voted against and seven abstained.<sup>125</sup>

### 5.2.2 Situation of Human Rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

From 2009 to 2015, the UNHRC adopted five resolutions on the situation of human rights in North Korea.<sup>126</sup> Each of the five resolutions adopted expressed the UNHRC's deep concern for the continued abuse of human rights by the North Korean government. Since 2009, the UNHRC has mandated a Special Rapporteur to investigate instances of human rights abuse; however, the North Korean government continually refuses to cooperate with UNHRC investigators.<sup>127</sup>

Support from OIC states on the UNHRC for resolutions condemning the situation of human rights in North Korea have been divided. Resolutions adopted in 2009, 2010 and 2011 received support from less than half of the OIC member states on the UNHRC. The majority of OIC members chose to abstain.<sup>128</sup>

The fourth resolution on North Korea was adopted by the UNHRC in 2014. It was the first resolution on North Korea that saw more than half the OIC member states present vote in favour

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<sup>124</sup> Ibid.

<sup>125</sup> The exact voting figures for each draft resolution can be found in table 5.1.

<sup>126</sup> See table 5.2 in Appendices B.

<sup>127</sup> 'Situation of Human Rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea', 20 March 2009, UN Doc. A/HRC/10/L.27, 'Situation of Human Rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea', 18 March 2010, UN Doc. A/HRC/13/L.13, 'Situation of Human Rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea', 24 March 2011, UN Doc. A/HRC/16/L.3, 'Situation of Human Rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea', 28 March 2014, UN Doc. A/HRC/25/L.17, and 'Situation of Human Rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea', 27 March 2015, UN Doc. A/HRC/28/L.18.

<sup>128</sup> Ibid.

of adoption. Eight of the fourteen member states voted in favour of the resolution, two voted against and five abstained.

North Korea's limited engagement with international human rights forums and resistance to the presence of UN investigators led to a UN Commission of Inquiry in 2014 which found gross violations of human rights by the North Korean government which include, but are not limited to "crimes against humanity, including extermination, murder, enslavement, torture, imprisonment, rape and other forms of sexual violence and forced abortion" (Human Rights Watch, 2019: 1).

However, the final vote on North Korea in 2015 saw a decrease in support from the OIC. Seven states voted for and seven abstained. As a pariah of the international community and a destabilising regional state actor, North Korea is a threat to norms of the liberal international order. Yet, OIC member states on the UNHRC do not offer substantial support for UNHRC resolutions condemning the North Korean government. Instead, OIC member states prefer to abstain from votes involving the Southeast Asian dictatorship.

### 5.2.3 Situation of Human Rights in the Syrian Arab Republic.

The Syrian civil war has been on-going since it began in 2011 as a result of pro-democratic protests which swept the region.<sup>129</sup> By 2019, President Bashar al-Assad has, with Russian support, pushed anti-government forces to the brink of capitulation (Human Rights Watch, 2019: 1).<sup>130</sup>

Eight years of civil war have contributed towards excessive violations of human rights against peoples caught in the conflict by the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) and anti-government forces belonging to a plethora of rebel factions (Syrian Network for Human Rights, 2019: 1).

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<sup>129</sup> More commonly referred to as the Arab Spring.

<sup>130</sup> See table 5.3 in Appendices B.

Of the human rights abuses taking place, citizens trapped in the conflict are subject to “extrajudicial killings, arrests, torture and enforced disappearances” (Syrian Network for Human Rights, 2019:

1). They are further subject to the use of illegal weapons of war such as “cluster munition, chemical weapons, barrel bombs, incendiary weapons” (Syrian Network for Human Rights, 2019: 1).

In addition to indiscriminate attacks from both government and rebel forces, peoples caught in the conflict or who have fled the area are unable to receive humanitarian and medical aid as both sides of the civil war hinder humanitarian efforts (Human Rights Watch, 2019: 1). Any medical facilities which are still operational face regular attack.

In 2018, the SDF with Russian military support sieged East Ghouta in the city of Damascus from 18 February to 21 March. More than one thousand civilians were killed while twenty-five hospitals and clinics and eleven schools were indiscriminately bombed (Human Rights Watch, 2019: 1).

As the pre-eminent group monitoring instances in which human rights violations occur during the Syrian civil war, the Syrian Network for Human Rights (2019: 9) found that “attacks continue to be directed against civilian and civilian objects” as well as the observation that the “coordinated approach of these attacks leads to the inescapable conclusion that these acts are wholly deliberate and based on high level orders.” Ending the human rights abuses of the Syrian people by their own government and so called “freedom fighters” must be considered a priority for the UNHRC.

From the start of the Syrian civil War in 2011 to the final regular session in 2017, the UNHRC has adopted twenty resolutions on human rights in Syria.<sup>131</sup> The first resolution was adopted in April

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<sup>131</sup> ‘The Current Situation of Human Rights in the Syrian Arab Republic in the Context of Recent Events’, 29 April 2011, UN Doc. A/HRC/RES/S-16/1, ‘The Human Rights Situation in the Syrian Arab Republic’, 2 December 2011, UN Doc. A/HRC/RES/S-18/1, ‘The Human Rights Situation in the Syrian Arab Republic’, 23 March 2012, UN Doc. A/HRC/19/L.38/Rev.1, ‘The Human Rights Situation in the Syrian Arab Republic’, 28 September 2012, UN Doc. A/HRC/21/L.32, ‘The Human Rights Situation in the Syrian Arab Republic’, 22 March 2013, UN Doc. A/HRC/22/L.31/Rev.1, ‘The Deterioration of the Situation of Human Rights in the Syrian Arab Republic, and the

2011 at a special session of the UNHRC. Originally, the OIC did not support intervention. Only four members of the OIC voted in favour of a resolution condemning the actions of the Syrian government. The remaining ten members were split between voting against or abstained from voting.<sup>132</sup>

The second UNHRC resolution was adopted in December of 2011. It received significantly more support from the OIC as eleven of the fourteen member states present voted in favour while only three members abstained.<sup>133</sup>

The UNHRC adopted eight resolutions on Syria between March 2012 and September 2014.<sup>134</sup> These resolutions targeted the continued violations of human rights against non-combatants by both government and non-government forces. They further criticised the Syrian regime for impeding UNHRC investigators and the mission of the Special Rapporteur.<sup>135</sup>

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Need to Grant Immediate Access to the Commission of Inquiry', 14 June 2013, UN Doc. A/HRC/23/L.29, 'The Continuing Grave Deterioration of the Human Rights and Humanitarian Situation in the Syrian Arab Republic', 27 September 2013, UN Doc. A/HRC/24/L.38, 'The Continuing Grave Deterioration of the Human Rights and Humanitarian Situation in the Syrian Arab Republic', 28 March 2014, UN Doc. A/HRC/25/L.7, 'The Continuing Grave Deterioration of the Human Rights and Humanitarian Situation in the Syrian Arab Republic', 27 June 2014, UN Doc. A/HRC/26/L.4/Rev.1, 'The Continuing Grave Deterioration of the Human Rights and Humanitarian Situation in the Syrian Arab Republic', 25 September 2014, UN Doc. A/HRC/27/L.5/Rev.1, 'The Continuing Grave Deterioration of the Human Rights and Humanitarian Situation in the Syrian Arab Republic', 27 March 2015, UN Doc. A/HRC/28/L.6, 'The Grave and Deteriorating Human Rights and Humanitarian Situation in the Syrian Arab Republic', 2 July 2015, UN Doc. A/HRC/29/L.4, 'The Grave and Deteriorating Human Rights and Humanitarian Situation in the Syrian Arab Republic', 1 October 2015, UN Doc. A/HRC/30/L.5/Rev.1, 'The Human Rights Situation in the Syrian Arab Republic', 23 March 2016, UN Doc. A/HRC/31/L.5, 'The Human Rights Situation in the Syrian Arab Republic', 30 September 2016, UN Doc. A/HRC/33/L.30, 'The Deteriorating Situation of human Rights in the Syrian Arab Republic, and the Recent Situation in Aleppo', 21 October 2016, UN Doc. A/HRC/RES/S-25/1, 'The Human Rights Situation in the Syrian Arab Republic', 24 March 2017, UN Doc. A/HRC/34/L.37, 'The Human Rights Situation in the Syrian Arab Republic', 23 June 2017, UN Doc. A/HRC/35/L.9, and 'The Human Rights Situation in the Syrian Arab Republic', 29 September 2017, UN Doc. A/HRC/36/L.22.

<sup>132</sup> Ibid.

<sup>133</sup> Ibid.

<sup>134</sup> Ibid.

<sup>135</sup> Debate as to the mandate of the Special Rapporteur to Syria lies beyond the scope of this thesis.

The OIC overwhelmingly supported each of the eight resolutions, with only Algeria voting against two resolutions in June and September of 2014. Uganda and Kazakhstan abstained from all votes on Syria while they were present on the UNHRC and Pakistan and Gabon each abstained intermittently.

Resistance from the OIC to UNHRC resolutions involving the human rights situation in Syria began in 2015. Where previously, on average, two OIC member states were abstaining, the average from March 2015 to September 2017 was four OIC abstentions per UNHRC resolution.<sup>136</sup>

In addition to the increase in OIC states abstaining, Algeria, Burundi, Iraq and Kyrgyzstan continued to vote against any new resolutions. All UNHRC resolutions in 2017 on the human rights situation in Syria were supported by less than half of the OIC states present at the UNHRC.

How OIC states voted on UNHRC resolutions on Syria changed from 2015-2017. From 2011-2014, OIC member states voted in favour of resolutions condemning the regular violations of human rights by both government and non-government forces. However, as the Syrian civil war continued and Russia and the United States became increasingly more involved, OIC member states support for UNHRC resolutions on Syria decreased.<sup>137</sup>

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<sup>136</sup> Ibid.

<sup>137</sup> One can think of the Syrian civil war as a post-Cold War proxy war. Much like the Russian invasion of Afghanistan in the 1980s and the United States' support for the Mujahideen. The Syrian civil war shares characteristics similar to how the Middle East was divided along proxy lines.

#### 5.2.4 Situation of Human Rights in Belarus.

Gaining sovereignty in 1990 and independence in 1991 from the then Soviet Union, Belarus enjoyed three years of democratic rule,<sup>138</sup> until President Stanislav Shushkevich was removed from office by his own parliament and replaced by Alexander Lukashenko who has ruled the Eastern European state since then (Boucart, 2019: 1).

Lukashenko's regime heavily regulates national media and routinely arrests and fines journalists. There is little to no freedom of expression or of association and assembly. Police are readily accused of intimidation and abuse, arresting journalists who are reporting on protests or the protestors themselves (Amnesty International, 2019: 1).

Much in the same way as the Belarusian regime uses the police to intimidate and silence journalists, they are also used to intimidate human rights defenders (Human Rights Watch, 2019: 1). For example, in March of 2018 police raided the offices of Belarusian human rights group, Vyasna. Fifty-seven people were arrested and then released after being held for three hours (Amnesty International, 2019: 1).

The regime's tight control on information as well as its strict limitations on public gatherings has prevented civil society from developing, which in turn has made it easier for the Belarusian government to violate the human rights of its citizens. The similarities between the state of Belarusian civil society and that of the old Soviet Union has led journalists like Boucart (2019: 1) to label President Lukashenko a "neo-Soviet" authoritarian.

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<sup>138</sup> See table 5.4 in Appendices B.

Since 2011, the UNHRC has adopted six resolutions with regards to the human rights situation in Belarus,<sup>139</sup> none of which received strong support from the OIC. UNHRC resolutions adopted in 2011, 2013, 2014 and 2015 saw limited support from the OIC. On average, four members of the OIC supported the resolutions while nine abstained. Nigeria voted against the first resolution while Kazakhstan voted against each of the subsequent resolutions.<sup>140</sup>

The final two UNHRC resolutions on human rights in Belarus were adopted in 2016 and 2017. Both votes were abstained by the OIC with the exception of Nigeria which opposed the 2016 resolution and Egypt which opposed the 2017 resolution.

The UNHRC resolutions on Belarus have regularly criticised the government's use of the death penalty, strict control of the judiciary and use of state-run media.<sup>141</sup> Belarus shares many similarities with member states of the OIC. Should member states of the OIC condemn violations of human rights in Belarus, it follows that they must also condemn these violations in their own states.

### 5.3 Technical-Assistance and Capacity-Building to Ukraine and Georgia.

Resolutions classified under agenda Item 10 of the UNHRC are items which seek to provide “technical-assistance and capacity-building” to states which so require the UNHRC's assistance (Human Rights Council, 2007: 1).

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<sup>139</sup> ‘The Situation of Human Rights in Belarus’, 17 June 2011, UN Doc. A/HRC/17/L.20/Rev.1, ‘The Situation of Human Rights in Belarus’, 13 June 2013, UN Doc. A/HRC/23/L.18, ‘Situation of Human Rights in Belarus’, 27 June 2014, UN Doc. A/HRC/26/L.14/Rev.1, ‘Situation of Human Rights in Belarus’, 2 July 2015, UN Doc. A/HRC/29/L.12, ‘Situation of Human Rights in Belarus’, 1 July 2016, UN Doc. A/HRC/32/L.10/Rev.1, and ‘Situation of Human Rights in Belarus’, 23 June 2017, UN Doc. A/HRC/35/L.16.

<sup>140</sup> Ibid.

<sup>141</sup> Ibid.

### 5.3.1 Cooperation with and Technical-Assistance to Ukraine in the Field of Human Rights.

The annexing of the Crimean Peninsula by Russian forces in 2014 and the subsequent war with Ukraine has led to a continual deterioration of human rights in the Eastern European state.<sup>142</sup> Peaceful protests that followed the immediate aftermath of the Russian annexation were noted by a UN monitoring team in Ukraine to turn violent as opposition protestors initiated violent counter protests. Such groups would violently engage peaceful protestors while police did nothing to stop the violence or else actively participated on the side of the aggressors (UN News, 2014: 1).

Estimated deaths from the ensuing conflict have exceeded ten thousand and more than one million seven hundred thousand Ukrainians have been displaced as the conflict between the Ukrainian army, elements of the Russian armed forces and Russian backed rebel groups destroy infrastructure and homes (Pifer, 2018: 1). The Minsk agreements of 2015 are regularly ignored, placing the wellbeing of the citizens of Eastern Ukraine at risk (Human Rights Watch, 2018: 1).

Since 2014, the UNHRC has adopted four resolutions which aim to improve the Ukrainian government's ability to ensure the promotion and protection of all human rights for peoples living within its territories, including currently disputed territories.<sup>143</sup> Each resolution extends the UNHRC's monitoring mission to the Ukraine.

The four resolutions received limited support from the OIC. On average, only three members of the OIC on the UNHRC voted in favour of adopting the resolutions. The rest of the OIC states on

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<sup>142</sup> See table 5.5 in Appendices B.

<sup>143</sup> 'Cooperation and Assistance to Ukraine in the Field of Human Rights', 27 June 2014, UN Doc. A/HRC/26/L.15/Rev.1, 'Cooperation and Assistance to Ukraine in the Field of Human Rights', 3 July 2015, A/HRC/29/L.9, 'Cooperation and Assistance to Ukraine in the Field of Human Rights', 1 July 2016, UN Doc. A/HRC/32/L.21, and 'Cooperation and Assistance to Ukraine in the Field of Human Rights', 16 June 2017, UN Doc. A/HRC/35/L.10.

the UNHRC abstained from all four of the votes while Saudi Arabia was the only OIC state to oppose any of the resolutions.<sup>144</sup>

Russia's annexing of the Ukraine is a challenge to the United States and the norms of the liberal international order. The OIC is likely unwilling to oppose either Russia or the United States and thus its members prefer to abstain from voting on resolutions regarding Ukraine

### 5.3.2 Cooperation with Georgia.

The UNHRC has passed one resolution in 2017 on cooperation with Georgia which falls within the time frame of this thesis.<sup>145</sup> The resolution commended the government of Georgia for its attempts to improve democratic procedures and human rights enforcement for all peoples within its geopolitical territory.<sup>146</sup> However, Georgia's lack of cooperation with the UNHRC has limited the extent to which the UNHRC can provide technical-assistance.<sup>147</sup>

Togo was the only member of the OIC to vote on the 2017 resolution, the rest of the OIC states abstained. Similar to the situation in Ukraine, Georgia has become a concern for the liberal international order as tensions between Russia and Georgia rise (Ragozin, 2019: 1).

### 5.4 Conclusion.

The OIC has displayed a resistance to condemning human rights violations under Item 4 of the UNHRC's agenda. Iran and Syria are members of the OIC, so should OIC states vote to adopt UNHRC resolutions against the two Middle Eastern states, they would be supporting liberal interpretations of human rights in Islamic countries.

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<sup>144</sup> Ibid.

<sup>145</sup> 'Cooperation with Georgia', 24 March 2017, UN Doc. A/HRC/34/L.13.

<sup>146</sup> See table 5.6 in Appendices B.

<sup>147</sup> Ibid.

Support from the OIC for resolutions condemning human rights violations in Iran and Syria would be strong indications of support for human rights norms of the liberal international order and a willingness from the OIC, and by extension Islamic states, to support liberal human rights even when doing so would challenge the sovereign power of a fellow member.

When voting on Item 4 resolutions against Iran, OIC member states did not offer any substantial support. On average, only two of the OIC member states present on the UNHRC at the time of voting supported each resolution, four OIC member states opposed each resolution and the remaining OIC member states abstained.

From the start of the Syrian civil war in 2011 until the final regular session in 2017,<sup>148</sup> the UNHRC adopted twenty resolutions on the grave and deteriorating situation of human rights for peoples caught in the conflict. From 2011-2014 OIC member states offered more support for the necessary UNHRC resolutions. However, from 2015-2017 UNHRC resolutions on the human rights situation in Syria saw a decrease in support for, and an increase in abstentions from OIC member states. Where previously an average of two OIC member states abstained, this increased to four OIC abstentions per resolution.

The OIC's unwillingness to vote in favour of resolutions against human rights abuses in North Korea and Belarus are of concern for the future of the liberal international order. The OIC, as the Islamic bloc, holds significant influence at the UNHRC, and their hesitancy to condemn human rights abuse in states which share similarities to themselves weakens the liberal human rights regime.

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<sup>148</sup> This research project only examines UNHRC resolutions up until the 36<sup>th</sup> regular session of the UNHRC in November 2017.

OIC member states preferred to abstain from votes condemning the Southeast Asian and Eastern European dictatorships, as North Korea and Belarus share many similarities with Islamic states. Extreme judicial punishment, limited freedom of speech, opinion, expression and state controlled media are not unique to North Korea or Belarus but are shared with many members of the OIC.

The OIC's hesitancy to support Item 10 resolutions on technical-assistance and capacity-building in the Ukraine and Georgia in the field of human rights is likely a result of the OIC's reluctance to be involved in any potential new conflict between hegemonic challengers and actors of the liberal international order. In particular, the United States.

The OIC's approach to country-specific resolutions is one that aims to protect Islamic states. Some OIC members do indeed support country-specific resolutions, however, the majority of Islamic states at the UNHRC either oppose or abstain from voting. This is likely due to their own domestic human rights situations,<sup>149</sup> or a desire to not become embroiled in disputes between the United States and international actors who have hegemonic aspirations.<sup>150</sup>

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<sup>149</sup> OIC member states on supporting Item 4 resolutions.

<sup>150</sup> OIC member states on supporting Item 10 resolutions.

## **Chapter 6: Conclusion.**

The aim of this thesis is to identify potential support for the future liberal international order and its international human rights regime from Islamic state actors at the United Nations Human Rights Council. However, before the OIC's position at the UNHRC could be discussed, the uncertainty of the future liberal international order needed to be explored.

Ikenberry (2009) argues that the future of the liberal international order is uncertain because the United States is no longer perceived by the international community as an unchallengeable power. The unipolar moment has passed, and the end of history has not happened (Fukuyama, 1989: 4).

The relative decline of United States' hard and soft power has contributed to a decay of moral leadership, leaving the liberal international order vulnerable to non-Western, illiberal state actors and sources which have the capability to compete for leadership within the international community.

The instability of the current liberal international order has been further undermined by a rise in populist leaders touting divisive rhetoric within established liberal democratic countries - rhetoric which strikes at the core norms and practices of the liberal international order, namely: interstate cooperation, respect for liberal international institutions, the promotion of peace over conflict and the protection and promotion of a set of universal human rights for all persons regardless of race, gender, ethnicity, culture, religion or place of birth.

The decline of the relative power of the United States is beyond doubt. However, scholars disagree as to how rapidly this nation will lose its position as hegemon, or indeed what will happen to the liberal international order under the leadership of a new hegemon(s).

Ikenberry (2009) holds the position that the United States' continued relative decline will force the current hegemon to concede elements of its authority and the privileges it currently enjoys to rising powers. Thus, the United States will no longer be the sole hegemon of the international order, but rather, it will be one of many international actors sharing leadership of the international community. However, Acharya (2017) argues that the liberal international order will not disappear completely but will be one of many international orders operating in the same international system.

On the other hand, Nye (2012), views the discussion on the decline of the United States as premature, arguing that while it has lost a degree of power to rising challenges, it will be some decades before other international actors surpass the United States in both economic and military spheres.

Regardless of the rate at which the United States' power declines, support for the future liberal international order must be found from historically illiberal sources, if the current system is to survive in any recognisable form.

The OIC is the second largest intergovernmental organisation after the UN and has for most of its existence challenged the norms of the liberal international order and its hegemon, the United States. The universality of the UN's Universal Declaration of Human Rights has regularly been questioned by the OIC, for when the former's liberal interpretation of human rights is seen to be at odds with the interpretation based on the Quran and followed by OIC member states, then the OIC has challenged the UDHR.

The OIC's adoption of the Cairo Declaration on Human Rights in Islam in 1990 was its first major liberal reform. The second came in 2004 when Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu was appointed as the first democratically elected Secretary-General of the OIC.

Mr Ihsanoglu encouraged the adoption of the new OIC Charter in 2008 which contained provisions for the creation of the Independent Permanent Human Rights Commission of the OIC, and which formally began its work in 2011.

The OIC is by no means a liberal organisation, but it has increasingly adopted liberal norms within its framework and internal processes. Should the OIC, and by extension Islamic states, continue to adopt liberal reforms, the liberal international order can only strengthen.

The OIC has supported and attacked liberal human rights through its voting behaviour at the UNHRC.<sup>151</sup> The OIC will support resolutions, amendments and decisions so long as they are not perceived to threaten the sovereignty of Islamic states or criticise the religion.

Of concern for the liberal international order is the use of amendments at the UNHRC intended to weaken human rights' resolutions which were put in place to protect the rights of minority groups, religions and women. However, the OIC should not be considered a threat to the liberal international order or its human rights regime.

When given the opportunity to vote on resolutions which strengthen the position of challengers to the United States, the OIC will often abstain from the vote. The OIC's record at the UNHRC is consistent with its core commitment to Islam.

The OIC, and the Islamic states it represents, can be an influential international actor in support of the liberal international order and its human rights regime if the definition and universality of human rights can be clarified and agreed upon. Re-evaluation is essential if a common ground with a common understanding is to be achieved.

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<sup>151</sup> Voting behaviour refers to how the OIC has voted as a collective organisation.

The future of the liberal international order is uncertain, as is the future of liberal human rights. However, the OIC has displayed a desire to support liberal international institutions and mechanisms. The OIC and the Islamic states it represents do not seek to undo the work of the current international human rights regime and will likely support human rights in the future, should human rights not be seen as exclusively liberal, but truly universal and inclusive.

Thus, it is the conclusion of this thesis that the OIC, and Islamic states will offer support for the future liberal international order and its human rights regime in so long as OIC member states continue to benefit. However, should the future liberal international order desire more support from Islamic states and organisations, then it needs to remove the ambiguity surrounding the conceptualisation of human rights in order to reach a mutual understanding which can be accepted by both the liberal international order and the OIC.

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**Appendices A: Voting Tables on Civil and Political Rights.**

<b>Combating Defamation of Religions</b>					
<b>Draft Resolution</b>	<b>Amendment</b>	<b>Result</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Abstained</b>
A/HRC/4/L.12 (30 March 2007)		ADOPTED (24-14-9)	Algeria, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Cameroon, Djibouti, Gabon, Indonesia, Jordan, Malaysia, Mali, Morocco, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Tunisia		Nigeria
A/HRC/7/L.15 (27 March 2008)		ADOPTED (21-14-10)	Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Cameroon, Djibouti, Egypt, Indonesia, Jordan, Malaysia, Mali Nigeria, Pakistan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Senegal		Gabon
A/HRC/10/L.2/Rev.1 (26 March 2009)		ADOPTED (23-11-13)	Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Cameroon, Djibouti, Egypt, Gabon, Indonesia, Jordan, Malaysia, Nigeria, Pakistan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Senegal		Burkina Faso
A/HRC/13/L.1 (15 April 2010)		ADOPTED (20-17-8)	Bahrain, Bangladesh, Burkina Faso, Djibouti,		Cameroon

			Egypt, Indonesia, Jordan, Kyrgyzstan, Nigeria, Pakistan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Senegal		
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**Table 4.1**

<b>Civil Society Space</b>					
<b>Draft Resolution</b>	<b>Amendment</b>	<b>Result</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Abstained</b>
	A/HRC/24/L.51 (24 September 2013)	REJECTED (12-28-7)	Indonesia, Kuwait, Libya, Malaysia, Mauritania, Pakistan, Qatar, Uganda, UAE	Benin, Burkina Faso, Cote D'Ivoire, Maldives, Sierra Leone	Gabon, Kazakhstan
	A/HRC/24/L.52 (24 September 2013)	REJECTED (11-28-8)	Libya, Malaysia, Mauritania, Pakistan, Qatar, Uganda, UAE	Benin, Burkina Faso, Cote D'Ivoire, Maldives, Sierra Leone,	Gabon, Indonesia, Kazakhstan
	A/HRC/27/L.34 (23 September 2014)	REJECTED (12-25-7)	Algeria, Kuwait, Maldives, Morocco, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, UAE	Benin, Burkina Faso, Cote D'Ivoire, Sierra Leone	Gabon, Indonesia, Kazakhstan
	A/HRC/27/L.35 (23 September 2014)	REJECTED (12-25-4)	Algeria, Indonesia, Kuwait, Morocco, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, UAE	Benin, Burkina Faso, Cote D'Ivoire, Maldives, Sierra Leone	Gabon, Kazakhstan
	A/HRC/27/L.36 (23 September 2014)	REJECTED (17-26-4)	Algeria, Indonesia, Kuwait, Morocco, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, UAE	Benin, Burkina Faso, Cote D'Ivoire, Maldives, Sierra Leone	Gabon, Kazakhstan
	A/HRC/27/L.38 (23 September 2014)	REJECTED (14-27-6)	Algeria, Kuwait, Morocco, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, UAE	Benin, Burkina Faso, Cote D'Ivoire, Maldives, Sierra Leone	Gabon, Indonesia, Kazakhstan
	A/HRC/27/L.39 (23 September 2014)	REJECTED (14-27-6)	Algeria, Kuwait, Morocco, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, UAE	Benin, Burkina Faso, Cote D'Ivoire, Maldives, Sierra Leone	Gabon, Indonesia, Kazakhstan,

	A/HRC/27/L.40 <sup>152</sup> (23 September 2014)	REJECTED (15-26-5)	Algeria, Indonesia, Kuwait, Morocco, Pakistan, UAE	Benin, Burkina Faso, Cote D'Ivoire, Maldives, Sierra Leone	Gabon, Kazakhstan,
	A/HRC/27/L.41 (23 September 2014)	REJECTED (19-24-4)	Algeria, Indonesia, Kuwait, Maldives, Morocco, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, UAE	Benin, Burkina Faso, Cote D'Ivoire, Sierra Leone	Gabon, Kazakhstan
	A/HRC/27/L.42 (23 September 2014)	REJECTED (15-27-5)	Algeria, Indonesia, Kuwait, Morocco, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, UAE	Benin, Burkina Faso, Cote D'Ivoire, Maldives, Sierra Leone	Gabon, Kazakhstan,
	A/HRC/27/L.43 (23 September 2014)	REJECTED (15-27-5)	Algeria, Kuwait, Morocco, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, UAE	Benin, Burkina Faso, Cote D'Ivoire, Maldives, Sierra Leone	Gabon, Indonesia Kazakhstan
A/HRC/32/L.29 (1 July 2016)		ADOPTED (31-7-9)	Algeria, Bangladesh, Cote D'Ivoire, Indonesia, Maldives, Morocco, Togo	Nigeria	Burundi, Kyrgyzstan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, UAE
	A/HRC/32/L.52 (1 July 2016)	REJECTED (12-22-12)	Bangladesh, Burundi, Nigeria, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, UAE	Maldives, Morocco, Togo	Algeria, Cote D'Ivoire, Indonesia, Kyrgyzstan
	A/HRC/32/L.53 (1 July 2016)	REJECTED (12-23-12)	Indonesia, Kyrgyzstan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, UAE	Maldives, Morocco, Togo	Algeria, Bangladesh, Burundi, Cote D'Ivoire, Nigeria
	A/HRC/32/L.54 (1 July 2016)	REJECTED (11-13-23)	Bangladesh, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, UAE	Maldives, Togo	Algeria, Cote D'Ivoire, Indonesia, Kyrgyzstan,

<sup>152</sup> Saudi Arabia did not vote.

					Morocco, Nigeria
	A/HRC/32/L.55 (1 July 2016)	REJECTED (17-21-9)	Bangladesh, Burundi, Indonesia, Kyrgyzstan, Nigeria, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, UAE	Cote D'Ivoire, Maldives, Togo	Algeria, Morocco
	A/HRC/32/L.56 (1 July 2016)	REJECTED (16-22-9)	Bangladesh, Burundi, Indonesia, Kyrgyzstan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, UAE	Cote D'Ivoire, Maldives, Togo	Algeria, Morocco, Nigeria,
	A/HRC/32/L.59 (1 July 2016)	REJECTED (19-22-15)	Bangladesh, Burundi, Indonesia	Maldives, Togo	Algeria, Cote D'Ivoire, Kyrgyzstan, Morocco, Nigeria, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, UAE
	A/HRC/32/L.60 (1 July 2016)	REJECTED (13-22-12)	Bangladesh, Indonesia, Kyrgyzstan, Morocco	Maldives, Togo	Algeria, Burundi, Cote D'Ivoire, Nigeria, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, UAE
	A/HRC/32/L.61 (1 July 2016)	REJECTED (15-22-10)	Bangladesh, Burundi, Kyrgyzstan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, UAE	Maldives	Algeria, Cote D'Ivoire, Indonesia, Morocco, Nigeria, Togo
	A/HRC/32/L.62 (1 July 2016)	REJECTED (15-22-10)	Bangladesh, Burundi, Kyrgyzstan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, UAE	Maldives, Togo	Algeria, Cote D'Ivoire, Indonesia, Nigeria
	A/HRC/32/L.63 (1 July 2016)	REJECTED (13-22-12)	Bangladesh, Kyrgyzstan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, UAE	Cote D'Ivoire, Maldives	Algeria, Burundi, Indonesia, Morocco, Nigeria, Togo
	A/HRC/32/L.64 (1 July 2016)	REJECTED (11-23-13)	Bangladesh, Indonesia, Kyrgyzstan	Cote D'Ivoire, Maldives, Togo	Algeria, Burundi, Morocco, Nigeria, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, UAE
	A/HRC/32/L.65 (1 July 2016)	REJECTED (9-22-15)	Bangladesh, Burundi,	Cote D'Ivoire,	Algeria, Morocco, Nigeria, Qatar,

			Indonesia, Kyrgyzstan	Maldives, Togo	Saudi Arabia, UAE
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**Table 4.2**

<b>Protection of the Family and Sexual Orientation</b>					
<b>Draft Resolution</b>	<b>Amendment</b>	<b>Result</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Abstained</b>
A/HRC/17/L.9/Rev.1 (17 June 2011)		ADOPTED (23-19-3)		Bahrain, Bangladesh, Cameroon, Djibouti, Gabon, Jordan, Malaysia, Maldives, Mauritania, Nigeria, Pakistan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Uganda	Burkina Faso
A/HRC/26/L.20/Rev.1 (26 June 2014)		ADOPTED (26-14-6)	Algeria, Benin, Burkina Faso, Cote D'Ivoire, Gabon, Indonesia, Kazakhstan, Kuwait, Maldives, Morocco, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, UAE		
A/HRC/27/L.27/Rev.1 <sup>153</sup> (26 September 2014)		ADOPTED (25-14-7)		Algeria, Cote D'Ivoire, Gabon, Indonesia, Kuwait, Maldives, Morocco, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, UAE	Burkina Faso, Kazakhstan, Sierra Leone
	A/HRC/27/L.45 (26 September 2014)	REJECTED (16-21-7)	Algeria, Burkina Faso, Cote D'Ivoire, Gabon, Indonesia, Kuwait, Maldives,		Kazakhstan, Sierra Leone

<sup>153</sup> Benin did not vote on draft resolution A/HRC/27/L.27/Rev.1 or any of the subsequent amendments in relation to draft resolution 27/L.27/Rev.1.

			Morocco, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, UAE		
	A/HRC/27/L.46 (26 September 2014)	REJECTED (16-21-7)	Algeria, Burkina Faso, Cote D'Ivoire, Gabon, Indonesia, Kuwait, Maldives, Morocco, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, UAE		Kazakhstan, Sierra Leone
	A/HRC/27/L.47 (26 September 2014)	REJECTED (17-21-6)	Algeria, Burkina Faso, Cote D'Ivoire, Gabon, Indonesia, Kuwait, Maldives, Morocco, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, UAE		Kazakhstan, Sierra Leone
	A/HRC/27/L.48 (26 September 2014)	REJECTED (17-21-6)	Algeria, Burkina Faso, Cote D'Ivoire, Gabon, Indonesia, Kuwait, Maldives, Morocco, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, UAE		Kazakhstan, Sierra Leone
	A/HRC/27/L.49 (26 September 2014)	REJECTED (16-21-7)	Algeria, Burkina Faso, Cote D'Ivoire, Gabon, Indonesia, Kuwait, Maldives, Morocco, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, UAE		Kazakhstan, Sierra Leone
	A/HRC/27/L.50 (26 September 2014)	REJECTED (16-22-6)	Algeria, Burkina Faso, Cote D'Ivoire, Gabon,		Kazakhstan, Sierra Leone

			Indonesia, Kuwait, Maldives, Morocco, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, UAE		
	A/HRC/27/L.51 (26 September 2014)	REJECTED (16-22-6)	Algeria, Burkina Faso, Cote D'Ivoire, Gabon, Indonesia, Kuwait, Maldives, Morocco, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, UAE		Kazakhstan, Sierra Leone
A/HRC/29/L.25 (3 July 2015)		ADOPTED (29-14-4)	Algeria, Bangladesh, Cote D'Ivoire, Gabon, Indonesia, Kazakhstan, Maldives, Morocco, Nigeria, Pakistan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Sierra Leone, UAE		
A/HRC/32/L.2/Rev.1 (30 June 2016)		ADOPTED (23-18-6)		Algeria, Bangladesh, Burundi, Cote D'Ivoire, Indonesia, Kyrgyzstan, Maldives, Morocco, Nigeria, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Togo, UAE	
	A/HRC/32/L.71 (30 June 2016)	REJECTED (17-18-9)	Algeria, Bangladesh, Burundi, Cote D'Ivoire, Indonesia, Kyrgyzstan, Maldives, Morocco,		

			Nigeria, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Togo, UAE		
	A/HRC/32/L.72 (30 June 2016)	REJECTED (17-18-9)	Algeria, Bangladesh, Burundi, Cote D'Ivoire, Indonesia, Kyrgyzstan, Maldives, Morocco, Nigeria, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Togo, UAE		
	A/HRC/32/L.73 (30 June 2016)	ADOPTED (24-17-4)	Algeria, Bangladesh, Burundi, Cote D'Ivoire, Indonesia, Kyrgyzstan, Maldives, Morocco, Nigeria, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Togo, UAE		
	A/HRC/32/L.74 (30 June 2016)	ADOPTED (23-17-5)	Algeria, Bangladesh, Burundi, Cote D'Ivoire, Indonesia, Kyrgyzstan, Maldives, Morocco, Nigeria, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, UAE		
	A/HRC/32/L.75 (30 June 2016)	ADOPTED (20-18-6)	Algeria, Bangladesh, Burundi, Cote D'Ivoire, Indonesia, Kyrgyzstan, Maldives, Morocco, Nigeria, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Togo, UAE		

	A/HRC/32/L.76 (30 June 2016)	ADOPTED (21-17-7)	Algeria, Bangladesh, Burundi, Cote D'Ivoire, Indonesia, Kyrgyzstan, Maldives, Morocco, Nigeria, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Togo, UAE		
	A/HRC/32/L.77 (30 June 2016)	ADOPTED (23-18-4)	Algeria, Bangladesh, Burundi, Cote D'Ivoire, Indonesia, Kyrgyzstan, Maldives, Morocco, Nigeria, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Togo, UAE		
	A/HRC/32/L.78 (30 June 2016)	ADOPTED (18-17-9)	Algeria, Bangladesh, Burundi, Cote D'Ivoire, Indonesia, Kyrgyzstan, Maldives, Morocco, Nigeria, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Togo, UAE		
	A/HRC/32/L.79 (30 June 2016)	ADOPTED (22-17-5)	Algeria, Bangladesh, Burundi, Cote D'Ivoire, Indonesia, Kyrgyzstan, Maldives, Morocco, Nigeria, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Togo, UAE		
	A/HRC/32/L.80 (30 June 2016)	REJECTED (16-20-8)	Algeria, Bangladesh, Burundi, Cote D'Ivoire,		

			Indonesia, Kyrgyzstan, Maldives, Morocco, Nigeria, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Togo, UAE		
	A/HRC/32/L.81 (30 June 2016)	REJECTED (17-19-8)	Algeria, Bangladesh, Burundi, Cote D'Ivoire, Indonesia, Kyrgyzstan, Maldives, Morocco, Nigeria, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Togo, UAE		
	A/HRC/32/L.35 (1 July 2016)	ADOPTED (32-12-3)	Algeria, Bangladesh, Cote D'Ivoire, Indonesia, Kyrgyzstan, Maldives, Morocco, Nigeria, Qatar, Saudi Arabi, Togo, UAE		
	A/HRC/35/L.21 (22 June 2017)	ADOPTED (30-12-5)	Bangladesh, Cote D'Ivoire, Egypt, Indonesia, Iraq, Kyrgyzstan, Nigeria, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Togo, Tunisia, UAE		

**Table 4.3**

<b>The Rights of Women</b>					
<b>Draft Resolution</b>	<b>Amendment</b>	<b>Result</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Abstained</b>
	A/HRC/29/L.26 (29 June 2015)	REJECTED (13-24-7)	Bangladesh, Indonesia, Maldives, Morocco, Nigeria, Pakistan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, UAE	Kazakhstan, Sierra Leone	Algeria, Cote D'Ivoire, Gabon,
	A/HRC/29/L.27 (29 June 2015)	REJECTED (13-23-7)	Bangladesh, Indonesia, Morocco, Nigeria, Pakistan Qatar, Saudi Arabia, UAE	Kazakhstan, Sierra Leone	Algeria, Cote D'Ivoire, Gabon, Maldives,
	A/HRC/29/L.28 (29 June 2015)	REJECTED (14-21-9)	Bangladesh, Indonesia, Maldives, Morocco, Nigeria, Pakistan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, UAE	Kazakhstan, Sierra Leones	Algeria, Cote D'Ivoire, Gabon,
	A/HRC/29/L.29 (29 June 2015)	REJECTED (12-24-8)	Bangladesh, Indonesia, Morocco, Pakistan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, UAE	Kazakhstan, Sierra Leone	Algeria, Cote D'Ivoire, Gabon, Maldives, Nigeria
	A/HRC/32/L.36 (28 June 2016)	REJECTED (12-22-13)	Kyrgyzstan, Morocco, Nigeria	Maldives	Algeria, Bangladesh, Burundi, Cote D'Ivoire, Indonesia, Saudi Arabia, Togo, UAE
	A/HRC/32/L.37 (28 June 2016)	REJECTED (15-22-9)	Algeria, Bangladesh, Burundi, Indonesia, Kyrgyzstan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Togo, UAE	Maldives	Cote D'Ivoire, Morocco, Nigeria
	A/HRC/32/L.42 (28 June 2016)	REJECTED (14-23-10)	Bangladesh, Indonesia, Kyrgyzstan, Nigeria, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, UAE	Maldives, Morocco	Algeria, Burundi, Cote D'Ivoire, Togo

	A/HRC/32/L.43 (28 June 2016)	REJECTED (10-24-12)	Algeria, Bangladesh, Burundi, Indonesia, Nigeria, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, UAE	Kyrgyzstan, Maldives	Cote D'Ivoire, Morocco, Togo
	A/HRC/32/L.67 (28 June 2016)	REJECTED (16-20-11)	Bangladesh, Indonesia, Kyrgyzstan, Morocco,	Maldives	Algeria, Burundi, Cote D'Ivoire, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Togo, UAE
	A/HRC/32/L.69 (28 June 2016)	REJECTED (16-21-9)	Bangladesh, Indonesia, Kyrgyzstan, Nigeria, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, UAE	Maldives	Algeria, Burundi, Cote D'Ivoire, Morocco, Togo
	A/HRC/32/L.70 (28 June 2016)	REJECTED (14-23-9)	Bangladesh, Indonesia, Kyrgyzstan, Nigeria, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, UAE	Maldives	Algeria, Burundi, Cote D'Ivoire, Morocco, Togo
	A/HRC/35/L.39 (22 June 2017)	REJECTED (13-25-8)	Bangladesh, Burundi, Egypt, Iraq, Nigeria, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, UAE	Togo, Tunisia	Cote D'Ivoire, Indonesia, Kyrgyzstan
	A/HRC/35/L.40 (22 June 2017)	REJECTED (16-25-4)	Bangladesh, Burundi, Cote D'Ivoire, Egypt, Indonesia, Iraq, Nigeria, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, UAE	Kyrgyzstan, Tunisia	Togo
	A/HRC/35/L.41 (22 June 2017)	REJECTED (14-26-6)	Bangladesh, Burundi, Egypt, Iraq, Nigeria, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, UAE	Cote D'Ivoire, Togo, Tunisia	Indonesia, Kyrgyzstan
	A/HRC/35/L.42 (22 June 2017)	REJECTED (17-25-3)	Bangladesh, Burundi, Cote D'Ivoire, Egypt, Indonesia, Iraq, Nigeria, Qatar, Saudi	Kyrgyzstan, Tunisia	

			Arabia, Togo, UAE		
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**Table 4.4**

<b>The Promotion and Protection of Human Rights in the Context of Peaceful Protests</b>					
<b>Draft Resolution</b>	<b>Amendment</b>	<b>Result</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Abstained</b>
A/HRC/25/L.20 (28 March 2014)		ADOPTED (31-9-7)	Benin, Burkina Faso, Gabon, Indonesia, Cote D'Ivoire, Kazakhstan, Morocco, Pakistan, Sierra Leone	Maldives	Algeria, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, UAE
	A/HRC/25/L.48 (28 March 2014)	REJECTED (16-22-9)	Algeria, Kazakhstan, Kuwait, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, UAE	Benin, Maldives	Burkina Faso, Cote D'Ivoire, Gabon, Indonesia, Morocco, Sierra Leone,
	A/HRC/25/L.49 (28 March 2014)	REJECTED (17-22-8)	Algeria, Indonesia, Kazakhstan, Kuwait, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, UAE	Benin, Maldives	Burkina Faso, Cote D'Ivoire, Gabon, Morocco, Sierra Leone
	A/HRC/25/L.50 (28 March 2014)	REJECTED (19-23-5)	Algeria, Gabon, Indonesia, Kazakhstan, Kuwait, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, UAE	Benin, Maldives,	Burkina Faso, Cote D'Ivoire, Morocco, Sierra Leone
	A/HRC/25/L.52 (28 March 2014)	REJECTED (20-23-4)	Algeria, Indonesia, Kazakhstan, Kuwait, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Sierra Leone, UAE	Benin, Maldives	Burkina Faso, Cote D'Ivoire, Gabon, Morocco
A/HRC/31/L.21 (24 March 2016)		ADOPTED (31-5-10)	Algeria, Cote D'Ivoire, Indonesia, Kyrgyzstan, Maldives, Morocco		Bangladesh, Nigeria, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Togo, UAE
	A/HRC/31/L.72 (24 March 2016)	REJECTED (12-23-11)	Bangladesh, Burundi, Saudi Arabia, UAE	Algeria, Maldives, Morocco	Cote D'Ivoire, Indonesia, Kyrgyzstan, Nigeria, Qatar, Togo
	A/HRC/31/L.74 (24 March 2016)	REJECTED (12-23-10)	Bangladesh, Burundi, Kyrgyzstan,	Algeria, Maldives, Morocco	Cote D'Ivoire, Indonesia, Nigeria, Togo

			Qatar, Saudi Arabia, UAE		
	A/HRC/31/L.75 (24 March 2016)	REJECTED (17-23-6)	Bangladesh, Burundi, Indonesia, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, UAE	Algeria, Cote D'Ivoire, Maldives, Morocco	Kyrgyzstan, Nigeria, Togo
	A/HRC/31/L.76 (24 March 2016)	REJECTED (13-24-9)	Bangladesh, Burundi, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, UAE	Algeria, Maldives, Morocco	Cote D'Ivoire, Indonesia, Kyrgyzstan, Nigeria, Togo
	A/HRC/31/L.78 (24 March 2016)	REJECTED (13-23-10)	Bangladesh, Burundi, Nigeria, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, UAE	Algeria, Maldives, Morocco	Cote D'Ivoire, Indonesia, Kyrgyzstan, Togo
	A/HRC/31/L.79 (24 March 2016)	REJECTED (13-22-11)	Bangladesh, Burundi, Kyrgyzstan, Saudi Arabia, UAE	Algeria, Maldives, Morocco	Cote D'Ivoire, Indonesia, Nigeria, Qatar, Togo

**Table 4.5**

## Appendices B: Voting Tables on Country-Specific Issues.

### *Item 4: Country-Specific Draft Resolutions and Amendments.*

<b>Situation of Human Rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran</b>					
<b>Draft Resolution</b>	<b>Amendment</b>	<b>Result</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Abstained</b>
A/HRC/16/L.25/Rev.1 <sup>154</sup> (24 March 2011)		ADOPTED (22-7-14)	Maldives, Senegal	Bangladesh, Mauritania, Pakistan	Cote D'Ivoire, Nigeria, Togo, Tunisia
A/HRC/19/L.22 (22 March 2012)		ADOPTED (22-5-20)	Benin, Maldives, Mauritania, Senegal	Bangladesh, Qatar	Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Djibouti, Indonesia, Jordan, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Libya, Malaysia, Nigeria, Saudi Arabia, Uganda
A/HRC/25/L.9 <sup>155</sup> (28 March 2014)		ADOPTED (21-9-16)		Indonesia, Kazakhstan, Pakistan	Algeria, Benin, Burkina Faso, Gabon, Cote D'Ivoire, Kuwait, Morocco, Saudi Arabia, Sierra Leone, UAE
A/HRC/28/L.17 (27 March 2015)		ADOPTED (20-11-16)	Gabon	Bangladesh, Indonesia, Kazakhstan, Pakistan	Algeria, Cote D'Ivoire, Maldives, Morocco, Nigeria, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Sierra Leone, UAE
A/HRC/31/L.27 (23 March 2016)		ADOPTED (20-15-11)	Qatar, Saudi Arabia, UAE	Algeria, Bangladesh, Indonesia, Kyrgyzstan	Cote D'Ivoire, Maldives, Morocco, Nigeria, Togo
A/HRC/34/L.17 (24 March 2017)		ADOPTED (22-12-13)	Qatar, Saudi Arabia, UAE	Bangladesh, Egypt, Indonesia, Iraq, Kyrgyzstan	Cote D'Ivoire, Togo, Tunisia

**Table 5.1**

<sup>154</sup> Kyrgyzstan and Qatar did not vote while Libya was suspended from the UNHRC.

<sup>155</sup> The Maldives did not vote on this resolution.

<b>Situation of Human Rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea</b>					
<b>Draft Resolution</b>	<b>Amendment</b>	<b>Result</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Abstained</b>
A/HRC/10/L.27 (20 March 2009)		ADOPTED (26-6-15)	Bahrain, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Jordan, Saudi Arabia	Egypt, Indonesia, Nigeria	Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Djibouti, Gabon, Malaysia, Pakistan, Qatar, Senegal
A/HRC/13/L.13 <sup>156</sup> (18 March 2010)		ADOPTED (28-5-13)	Bahrain, Burkina Faso, Djibouti, Jordan, Saudi Arabia	Egypt, Indonesia	Bangladesh, Cameroon, Kyrgyzstan, Nigeria, Pakistan, Qatar, Senegal
A/HRC/16/L.3 <sup>157</sup> (24 March 2011)		ADOPTED (30-3-11)	Burkina Faso, Djibouti, Gabon, Jordan, Malaysia, Kyrgyzstan, Maldives		Bangladesh, Cameroon, Mauritania, Nigeria, Pakistan, Qatar, Senegal, Uganda
A/HRC/25/L.17 (28 March 2014)		ADOPTED (30-6-11)	Benin, Burkina Faso, Cote D'Ivoire, Kazakhstan, Maldives, Morocco, Sierra Leone, UAE	Pakistan	Algeria, Gabon, Indonesia, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia
A/HRC/28/L.18 (27 March 2015)		ADOPTED (27-6-14)	Cote D'Ivoire, Kazakhstan, Maldives, Morocco, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, UAE		Algeria, Bangladesh, Gabon, Indonesia, Pakistan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia

**Table5.2**<sup>156</sup> Gabon did not vote.<sup>157</sup> Bahrain and Saudi Arabia did not vote.

<b>Situation of Human Rights in the Syrian Arab Republic</b>					
<b>Draft Resolution</b>	<b>Amendment</b>	<b>Result</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Abstained</b>
A/HRC/RES/S-16/1 <sup>158</sup> (29 April 2011)		ADOPTED <sup>159</sup> (26-9-7)	Burkina Faso, Kyrgyzstan, Maldives, Senegal,	Bangladesh, Gabon, Malaysia, Mauritania, Pakistan,	Cameroon, Djibouti, Nigeria, Saudi Arabia, Uganda
A/HRC/RES/S-18/1 (2 December 2011)		ADOPTED (37-4-6)	Benin, Burkina Faso, Djibouti, Indonesia, Jordan, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Libya, Malaysia, Maldives, Mauritania, Nigeria, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Senegal		Bangladesh, Cameroon, Uganda
A/HRC/19/L.38/Rev.1 (23 March 2012)		ADOPTED (41-3-2)	Bangladesh, Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Djibouti, Indonesia, Jordan, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Libya, Malaysia, Maldives, Mauritania, Nigeria, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Senegal		Uganda
A/HRC/21/L.32 (28 September 2012)		ADOPTED (41-3-3)	Bangladesh, Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Djibouti,		Uganda

<sup>158</sup> Document numbers that contain S- are UNHRC resolutions from special sessions. A special session is called if there is a sudden and extreme threat to human rights that demands the UNHRC to meet outside of its regular annual sessions.

<sup>159</sup> Bahrain, Jordan, and Qatar did not vote.

			Indonesia, Jordan, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Libya, Malaysia, Maldives, Mauritania, Nigeria, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Senegal		
A/HRC/22/L.31/Rev.1 (22 March 2013)		ADOPTED (41-1-5)	Benin, Burkina Faso, Cote D'Ivoire, Gabon, Indonesia, Kuwait, Libya, Malaysia, Maldives, Mauritania, Pakistan, Qatar, Sierra Leone, UAE		Kazakhstan, Uganda
A/HRC/23/L.29 (14 June 2013)		ADOPTED (37-1-9)	Benin, Burkina Faso, Cote D'Ivoire, Indonesia, Kuwait, Libya, Malaysia, Maldives, Mauritania, Qatar, Sierra Leone, UAE		Gabon, Kazakhstan, Pakistan, Uganda
A/HRC/24/L.38 (27 September 2013)		ADOPTED (40-1-6)	Benin, Burkina Faso, Cote D'Ivoire, Gabon, Indonesia, Kuwait, Libya, Malaysia, Maldives, Mauritania, Pakistan, Qatar, Sierra Leone,		Kazakhstan

			Uganda, UAE		
A/HRC/25/L.7 (28 March 2014)		ADOPTED (32-4-11)	Benin, Burkina Faso, Cote D'Ivoire, Gabon, Indonesia, Kuwait, Maldives, Morocco, Saudi Arabia, Sierra Leone, UAE		Algeria, Kazakhstan, Pakistan
A/HRC/26/L.4/Rev.1 <sup>160</sup> (27 June 2014)		ADOPTED (32-5-9)	Benin, Burkina Faso, Cote D'Ivoire, Gabon, Indonesia, Kuwait, Maldives, Morocco, Saudi Arabia, Sierra Leone, UAE	Algeria	Pakistan
A/HRC/27/L.5/Rev.1 (25 September 2014)		ADOPTED (32-5-10)	Benin, Burkina Faso, Cote D'Ivoire, Gabon, Indonesia, Kuwait, Maldives, Morocco, Saudi Arabia, Sierra Leone, UAE	Algeria	Kazakhstan, Pakistan
A/HRC/28/L.6 <sup>161</sup> (27 March 2015)		ADOPTED (29-6-12)	Cote D'Ivoire, Gabon, Indonesia, Maldives, Morocco, Qatar, Saudi Arabia,		Bangladesh, Kazakhstan, Nigeria, Pakistan

<sup>160</sup> Kazakhstan did not vote.

<sup>161</sup> Algeria did not vote.

			Sierra Leone, UAE		
A/HRC/29/L.4 (2 July 2015)		ADOPTED (29-6-12)	Cote D'Ivoire, Gabon, Maldives, Morocco, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Sierra Leone, UAE	Algeria	Bangladesh, Indonesia, Kazakhstan, Nigeria, Pakistan
A/HRC/ 30/L.5/Rev.1 (1 October 2015)		ADOPTED (29-6-12)	Bangladesh, Cote D'Ivoire, Gabon, Maldives, Morocco, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Sierra Leone, UAE	Algeria	Indonesia, Kazakhstan, Nigeria, Pakistan
A/HRC/31/L.5 (23 March 2016)		ADOPTED (27-6-14)	Cote D'Ivoire, Maldives, Morocco, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Togo, UAE	Algeria	Bangladesh, Indonesia, Kyrgyzstan, Nigeria
A/HRC/32/L.9 (1 July 2016)		ADOPTED (27-6-14)	Cote D'Ivoire, Maldives, Morocco, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Togo, UAE	Algeria	Bangladesh, Indonesia, Kyrgyzstan, Nigeria
A/HRC/33/L.30 (30 September 2016)		ADOPTED (26-7-14)	Cote D'Ivoire, Maldives, Morocco, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, UAE	Algeria,	Bangladesh, Indonesia, Kyrgyzstan, Nigeria
A/HRC/RES/S-25/1 (21 October 2016)		ADOPTED (24-7-16)	Cote D'Ivoire, Maldives, Morocco, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Togo, UAE	Algeria, Burundi	Bangladesh, Indonesia, Kyrgyzstan, Nigeria
A/HRC/34/L.37 (24 March 2017)		ADOPTED (27-7-13)	Cote D'Ivoire, Qatar, Saudi	Iraq, Kyrgyzstan	Bangladesh, Egypt, Indonesia, Nigeria, Tunisia

			Arabia, Togo, UAE		
A/HRC/35/L.9 (23 June 2017)		ADOPTED (27-8-12)	Cote D'Ivoire, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Togo, UAE	Iraq, Kyrgyzstan,	Bangladesh, Egypt, Indonesia, Nigeria, Tunisia,
A/HRC/36/L.22 (29 September 2017)		ADOPTED (27-7-13)	Cote D'Ivoire, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Togo, UAE	Iraq	Bangladesh, Egypt, Indonesia, Kyrgyzstan, Nigeria, Tunisia

**Table 5.3**

<b>Situation of Human Rights in Belarus</b>					
<b>Draft Resolution</b>	<b>Amendment</b>	<b>Result</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Abstained</b>
A/HRC/17/L.20/Rev.1 (17 June 2011)		Adopted (21-5-19)	Gabon, Jordan, Maldives	Nigeria	Bahrain, Bangladesh, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Djibouti, Kyrgyzstan, Malaysia, Mauritania, Pakistan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Uganda
A/HRC/23/L.18 (13 June 2013)		ADOPTED (26-3-18)	Benin, Burkina Faso, Cote D'Ivoire, Gabon, Maldives	Kazakhstan	Indonesia, Kuwait, Libya, Malaysia, Mauritania, Pakistan, Qatar, Sierra Leone, Uganda, UAE
A/HRC/26/L.14/Rev.1 (27 June 2014)		ADOPTED (24-7-16)	Benin, Gabon, Maldives, Sierra Leone	Kazakhstan	Algeria, Burkina Faso, Indonesia, Cote D'Ivoire, Morocco, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, UAE
A/HRC/29/L.12 (2 July 2015)		ADOPTED (21-8-18)	Gabon, Maldives, Sierra Leone	Kazakhstan	Algeria, Bangladesh, Cote D'Ivoire, Indonesia, Morocco, Nigeria, Pakistan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, UAE
A/HRC/32/L.10/Rev.1 (1 July 2016)		ADOPTED (15-9-23)		Nigeria	Algeria, Bangladesh, Cote D'Ivoire, Indonesia, Kyrgyzstan, Maldives, Morocco, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Togo, UAE
A/HRC/35/L.16 (23 June 2017)		ADOPTED (18-8-21)		Egypt	Bangladesh, Cote D'Ivoire, Indonesia, Iraq, Kyrgyzstan, Nigeria, Qatar, Saudi Arabia,

					Togo, Tunisia, UAE
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**Table 5.4**

*Item 10: Technical-assistance and Capacity Building.*

<b>Cooperation with and Technical-Assistance to Ukraine in the Field of Human Rights</b>					
<b>Draft Resolution</b>	<b>Amendment</b>	<b>Result</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Abstained</b>
A/HRC/26/L.15/Rev.1 <sup>162</sup> (27 June 2014)		ADOPTED (23-4-19)	Benin, Cote D'Ivoire, Maldives, Sierra Leone		Algeria, Burkina Faso, Gabon, Indonesia, Kazakhstan, Kuwait, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, UAE
A/HRC/29/L.9 (3 July 2015)		ADOPTED (21-6-20)	Cote D'Ivoire, Maldives, Sierra Leone	Saudi Arabia	Algeria, Bangladesh, Gabon, Indonesia, Kazakhstan, Morocco, Nigeria, Pakistan, Qatar, UAE
A/HRC/32/L.21 (1 July 2016)		ADOPTED (22-6-19)	Cote D'Ivoire, Nigeria, Togo		Algeria, Bangladesh, Indonesia, Kyrgyzstan, Maldives, Morocco, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, UAE
A/HRC/35/L.10 (16 June 2017)		ADOPTED (22-6-19)	Cote D'Ivoire, Iraq, Nigeria		Bangladesh Egypt, Indonesia, Kyrgyzstan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Togo, Tunisia, UAE

**Table 5.5**


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<sup>162</sup> Morocco did not vote.

<b>Cooperation with Georgia</b>					
<b>Draft Resolution</b>	<b>Amendment</b>	<b>Result</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Abstained</b>
A/HRC/34/L.13 (24 March 2017)		ADOPTED (18-5-24)	Togo		Bangladesh, Cote D'Ivoire, Egypt, Indonesia, Iraq, Kyrgyzstan, Nigeria, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Tunisia, UAE

**Table 5.6**

### Appendices C: Years in Which OIC Members Were on the UNHRC.

Member	19 June 2006 – 18 June 2007	19 June 2007 – 18 June 2008	19 June 2008 – 18 June 2009	19 June 2009 – 18 June 2010	19 June 2010 – 18 June 2011	19 June 2011 – 31 Dec 2012	01 Jan 2013 – 31 De 2013	01 Jan 2014 – 31 Dec 2014	01 Jan 2015 – 31 Dec 2015	01 Jan 2016 – 31 Dec2016	01 Jan 2017- 31 Dec 2017
Algeria	X							X	X	X	
Azerbaijan		X	X								
Bahrain	X		X	X	X						
Bangladesh	X	X	X	X	X	X			X	X	
Benin						X	X	X			
Burkina Faso			X	X	X	X	X	X			
Cameroon	X	X	X	X	X	X					
Djibouti	X	X	X	X	X	X					
Egypt		X	X	X	X						X
Gabon	X	X	X	X			X	X	X		
Indonesia	X	X	X	X		X		X	X	X	
Iraq											X
Ivory Coast							X	X	X	X	X
Jordan	X	X	X	X	X	X					
Kazakhstan							X	X	X		
Kuwait						X	X	X			
Kyrgyzstan				X	X	X				X	X
Libya					X	X	X				
Malaysia	X	X	X		X	X	X				
Maldives					X	X	X	X	X	X	
Mali	X	X									
Mauritania					X	X	X				
Morocco	X							X	X	X	
Nigeria	X	X	X	X	X	X		X			X
Pakistan	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X		
Qatar		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Saudi Arabia	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X
Senegal		X	X	X	X	X					
Sierra Leone							X	X	X		
Togo										X	X
Tunisia	X										X
UAE							X	X	X	X	X
Uganda					X	X	X				

