

How Saudi Arabia Makes a Mockery of Human Rights and the UN

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When one thinks of beheadings for things which in most of the world are perfectly legal, when one thinks of treating foreign low-paid workers like slaves, when one thinks of treating women worse than animals, when one thinks of nepotism, bribery, a total lack of democracy, meddling in foreign elections, random justice, the export and funding of radical Islamic terrorism, belligerence towards one's neighbours, ideological warfare and corrupt arms deals; which of the following first comes to mind, Human Rights or Saudi Arabia?

The answer is of course Saudi Arabia where the aforementioned events are all in a day's work in the creepy Kingdom. The fact that Saudi Arabia just got re-elected to the UN Human Rights Council is just another reason why this important institution is in [serious need of reform](#) and democratisation, in order for it to better live up to the noble and crucial principles of its founding charter.

Putting Saudi Arabia in charge of anything remotely related to human rights is a bit like putting a serial arsonist in charge of a metropolitan fire brigade. It's clear that the Saudis bought votes from the regional block which re-elected the Kingdom to the Council. By contrast, Russia lost an election where votes are cast by countries who themselves do not have a sterling record of human rights. Ascending to Russia's former regional bloc is Croatia, a country where unapologetic neo-Nazis hold power in high office and where business practices remain thoroughly corrupt. The whole thing is rather farcical.

But beyond the farce is something quite serious. The UN needs reform at all levels. The UNHRC in particular should set basic standards of human rights which countries must adhere to in order to even be considered for a position on the Council. If this were the case countries like Croatia and Saudi Arabia wouldn't be let near such an organisation.

The Saudis have continually abused their vested position on the Council to block any investigations into the atrocities they are responsible for in Yemen and the wider Middle East. By allowing a criminal to be his own judge, it is no wonder that a conviction is impossible.

Whilst Saudi Arabia and Turkey compete to see who can carve up the Middle East more rapidly, it is Russia who listens to the authentic voices of ordinary Arabs in their struggle to have a life free of terrorism, theocracy and medieval government. The UNHRC may not recognise this, but the history books shall.

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