

15 elected to U.N. Human Rights Council

by UPI

UNITED NATIONS -- The U.N. General Assembly in New York elected 15 members to the organization's Human Rights Council, including nations opposed by human rights groups. Sri Lanka, with a record of human rights abuses, lost its bid for re-election to the panel, The Washington Post reported Thursday. However, Pakistan, Bahrain, Gabon and Zambia -- all with alleged poor human rights records -- won three-year terms. "Sri Lanka's defeat is a victory for the Human Rights Council," said Lawrence Moss, Human Rights Watch special counsel. Twenty countries from five regions competed for the 15 seats on the council, established two years ago to replace the Human Rights Commission, which came under fire for including countries with poor human rights records, the Voice of America said. British Ambassador to the United Nations John Sawers says his government plans to use its second term to make the council more effective. "The point of the Human Rights Council is to raise the standards of adherence to human rights across the world," he told VOA. "I think membership on the Human Rights Council is a spur to all countries to ensure that they have good defensible records on human rights."

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