

Suspension of Russia from UNHRC

April 10, 2022

In news– Recently, the United Nations General Assembly(UNGA) voted on a resolution to suspend Russia's membership in the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC).

Key updates-

- **The resolution titled 'Suspension of the rights of membership of the Russian Federation in the Human Rights Council' was adopted with 93 votes in favor, 24 against and 58 abstentions, including India.**
- **With this, Russia became the second country to have its membership rights stripped at the rights council, which was established in 2006.**
- **In 2011, Libya was suspended by the assembly** when upheaval in the North African country brought down longtime leader Moammar Gadhafi.
- Since January this year, India has abstained on procedural votes and draft resolutions in the UN Security Council, the General Assembly and the Human Rights Council that disapproved of Russian aggression against Ukraine.
- The resolution expressed "grave concern" over the ongoing human rights and humanitarian crisis in Ukraine, particularly over the reports of violations and abuses of human rights and violations of international humanitarian law by Russia.
- Russia's current membership on the Council expires in December 2023.

About UNHRC-

- It is a United Nations body whose mission is to promote and protect human rights around the world.

- **It was established by the UNGA on 15 March 2006** to replace the United Nations Commission on Human Rights (UNCHR, herein CHR)
- **The headquarters** of the Council are at the United Nations Office at **Geneva in Switzerland.**
- **The Council consists of 47 Member States,** elected directly and individually by secret ballot by the majority of the UNGA members for staggered three-year terms on a regional group basis. And no member may occupy a seat for more than two consecutive terms.
- **The seats are distributed among the United Nations regional groups as follows:** 13 for Africa, 13 for Asia, six for Eastern Europe, eight for Latin America and the Caribbean (GRULAC), and seven for the Western European and Others Group (WEOG).
- **The previous CHR had a membership of 53** elected by the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) through a majority of those present and voting.
- **The UNGA, with its two-thirds majority of the members present and voting, “may suspend the rights of membership in the Council of a member of the Council** that commits gross and systematic violations of human rights”. Abstentions do not count.
- **The Council investigates allegations of breaches of human rights in United Nations member states.**
- It addresses thematic human rights issues like freedom of association and assembly, freedom of expression, freedom of belief and religion, women’s rights, LGBT rights, and the rights of racial and ethnic minorities.
- **The Council works closely with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)** and engages in the United Nations special procedures.