US Withdrawal from UNHRC

Why in news?

\n\n

The United States has recently withdrawn from the United Nations Human Rights Council.

\n\n

How has US's HRC membership been?

\n\n

\n
- Under President Obama, the US was elected for a maximum of 2 consecutive terms by the UNGA.
\n
- After a year off, it was re-elected in 2016 for the third term.
\n
- The US is half-way through a three-year term.
\n
- It would now be the first member to withdraw from the council.
\n

\n\n

What is the rationale?

\n\n

\n
- **Israel** - The council recently voted to probe killings in Gaza and accused Israel of using excessive force.
\n
- The US and Australia cast the only “no” votes.
\n
- US's current move comes as a response to the alleged bias of UNHRC against Israel.
\n
- The disproportionate focus and unending hostility are cited as proof for the Council's political bias.
\n

- **Immigrants** - It is also a response to the intense criticism against US for detaining children at the US-Mexico border.
\n
- UN human rights chief called on Washington to halt its “unconscionable” separation policy.
\n
- **Council** - Trump administration had long threatened to quit if council reforms were not undertaken.
\n
- The US perceives the council's membership as disrespect for the most basic rights.
\n
- The US wants to make it easier to expel member states with poor rights records.
\n
- Currently, two-thirds majority of UN General Assembly is needed to suspend a member state.
\n
- US expressed dissatisfaction at Russia, China, Cuba and Egypt for thwarting US efforts to reform the council.
\n
- The US has maintained that the withdrawal was not any retreat from its human rights commitments.
\n

\n\n

What are the implications?

\n\n

\n
- **Agreements** - Washington’s withdrawal is the latest US rejection of multilateral engagement.
\n
- The earlier ones are withdrawal from the Paris climate agreement and Iran nuclear deal.
\n
- **Reforms** - HRC reform discussions are going on, with engagement by states and human rights organisations.
\n
- It thus shows US's impatience to stay on course a multilateral process.
\n
- **Rights** - It signals that US is not making human rights a priority in its foreign policy.
\n

- By giving up its role at the HRC, it reduces its ability to influence the human rights agenda.
  \n
- **Global** - Withdrawal would make it more difficult to advance human rights priorities around the world.
  \n
- It could bolster countries such as Cuba, Russia, Egypt and Pakistan.
  \n
- These countries resist UN's authority citing it as interference in their sovereign issues.
  \n
- Many countries are now advocating withdrawal.
  \n

\n\n

\n\n

Source: The Hindu, The Wire

\n

