

## **FOUR VOTINGS AT THE UNITED NATIONS**

**Rosendo Fraga**

**Director of CARI's Foreign Relations and Armed Forces Committee**

On September 30, the United Nations Security Council voted on the proposal to condemn Russia for the annexation of the four Ukrainian provinces: Lugansk, Donetsk, Kherson and Zaporizhia. The UN ignored the validity of the referendums with which Moscow justified this annexation, which made these four provinces part of Russia's territory. It should be noted that the Security Council has fifteen members. The five permanent ones with the right to veto decisions, which are the five victorious powers of World War II: the United States, the United Kingdom, France, China and Russia. The ten non-permanent members are elected periodically, in an attempt to represent the various regions. The only vote against the initiative was that of Moscow, which exercised its right to veto the resolution. Only four countries abstained: China, India, Brazil and Gabon. Politically, it was a support for Russia from the emerging powers that make up the BRICS group. Although without quantitative significance, it did have it in strategic terms. The ten votes in favor of condemning the Russian decision were those of the three Western permanent members (the United States, the United Kingdom and France), Mexico from Latin America, the United Arab Emirates from the Gulf monarchies, Ghana and Kenya from Africa, Albania from the Balkans, Norway - a Nordic country that is part of NATO, but not the EU - and Ireland. Faced with this decision, the president of Ukraine, Volodimir Zelensky, demanded that the right to veto be removed from Russia, a motion that is at least unfeasible in the short and medium term, since it would imply opening a long, complex and conflictive process.

On October 7, the UN Human Rights Council voted to investigate Russia's human rights violations in Ukraine. The project was approved in Geneva and appoints a special rapporteur to investigate the complaints against Russia. The resolution was approved by seventeen votes in favor. Five of them are members of the G7 (United States, France, Germany, United Kingdom and Japan). The remaining twelve were Argentina, Czech Republic, Finland, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Marshall Islands, Montenegro, Netherlands, Paraguay, Poland, South Korea and Ukraine. As for the votes against, they were those of Bolivia, China, Cuba, Eritrea, Kazakhstan and Venezuela. Three of them are allies of

Russia in Latin America and China ratifies once again its political-strategic alliance with this country. The 24 countries that abstained were Armenia and Uzbekistan, former Soviet republics in Central Asia; India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Nepal and Pakistan from Asia; Qatar and the United Arab Emirates from the Gulf monarchies; Brazil, Honduras and Mexico from Latin America; and Benin, Cameroon, Ivory Coast, Gabon, Gambia, Libya, Malawi, Mauritania, Namibia, Senegal, Somalia and Sudan from the African continent, which has a broad representation in this Council.

Also on October 7, the same Council voted on the resolution to investigate human rights violations by China against the Uyghur minority. The initiative did not achieve the number of positive votes necessary to prosper. This population of Muslim faith inhabits the province of Xinjiang. The initiative had 19 favorable votes, led by the United States, the United Kingdom, France, Germany and Japan, the five members of the G7 that make up the Council. They repeated the same vote as in the previous case. In turn, the Czech Republic, Finland, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Montenegro, the Netherlands and Poland in Europe, Honduras and Paraguay in Latin America, the Marshall Islands in Oceania, South Korea in Asia and Somalia in Africa voted affirmatively. As for abstention, Argentina, Brazil and Mexico in Latin America, Armenia in Central Asia, Ukraine in Europe opted for it (this country, on the same day, voted against Russia on human rights, but abstained and avoided condemning China), India and Malaysia in Asia, and Benin, Gambia, Libya and Malawi in Africa. The remaining permanent veto member of the Security Council, China itself, voted against. With it also voted Bolivia, Cuba and Venezuela in Latin America, Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan in Central Asia, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates of the Gulf monarchies, Indonesia, Nepal and Pakistan in Asia, and Mauritania, Namibia, Cameroon, Ivory Coast, Eritrea, Gabon, Senegal and Sudan in Africa.

The third resolution voted that same day in this Council was the request to investigate the report presented by Michelle Bachelet on violations of these rights by the government of Nicolás Maduro. The resolution seeks to extend for 24 months the international mission led by the former President of Chile, which seeks to investigate the alleged human rights violations in the repression of the Venezuelan opposition. The motion was approved by 19 affirmative votes. The five members of the Council that make up the G7 (France, Germany, Japan, the

United Kingdom and the United States), plus Brazil and Paraguay in Latin America, the Czech Republic, Finland, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Montenegro, the Netherlands, Poland and Ukraine in Europe, South Korea in Asia, the Marshall Islands in Oceania, and Gambia and Malawi in Africa. As for the negative votes, they were led by China and followed by Bolivia and Cuba, firm allies of Venezuela in Latin America, Eritrea in Africa (a firm ally of China in the Horn of Africa), and Venezuela itself. The 23 abstentions correspond to Argentina, Honduras and Mexico in Latin America, Armenia and Kazakhstan in Central Asia, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates from the Gulf monarchies, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Nepal and Pakistan from the Asian continent, and Benin, Cameroon, Ivory Coast, Gabon, Libya, Mauritania, Namibia, Senegal, Somalia and Sudan in Africa. On October 10, the partial renewal of the members of this Council was voted. Venezuela, which in 2019 had obtained a bench -even then it generated controversy- was now excluded. Of the 193 members of the UN, there were only two vacant seats representing Latin America, which were obtained by Costa Rica and Chile. The Chilean candidacy obtained 144 votes in favor, the Costa Rican 124 and the Venezuelan 88, thus being excluded. In total, 14 new members (a third) of the 47 that make up the Council were elected. Some 17 countries applied for the 14 seats that were renewed, for the period 2023-2025.

In conclusion: the vote in the UN Security Council rejecting Russia's annexation of Ukrainian territory showed its weakness by being defeated, but also its strength, by abstaining from China, India and Brazil; in the UN Human Rights Council, the defeat of Russia, which could not prevent it from being investigated for violations of these rights in Ukraine, confirmed this weakness, although Beijing ratified its alliance with Moscow; the same day, in the vote of this Council to investigate China for the Uyghur issue, it achieved a victory, by preventing it from going ahead, with Brazil and India abstaining and China itself voting against it. On the other hand, the initiative to continue the investigation of human rights violations in Venezuela prospered. As in the two previous cases, five members of the G7 supported the resolution.