Program on International Law and Armed Conflict
HARVARD LAW SCHOOL

International Law and State Allegations of Double Standards

A Conceptual Analysis

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Legal Concept Paper • April 2025

Executive Summary

Allegations of "double standards" abound in contemporary international relations. States frequently claim unequal application of legal norms, selective enforcement, and institutional bias cloaked in legality. Far from new, such accusations span areas from human rights and armed conflict to sanctions and counterterrorism — at times targeting the very foundations of the international legal system. The frequency and breadth of these invocations, especially amid rising geopolitical tensions, arguably warrant closer scrutiny.

In this paper, I offer elements of an analytical framework to help evaluate these claims more precisely, not by judging their truth or motive but by assessing whether they may merit legal or institutional engagement. I examine how States have made allegations of double standards within multilateral practice, with particular attention to the legal stakes that such claims may entail. Drawing on more than 900 statements made by United Nations Member and Observer States in the General Assembly between 2000 and late 2024, I seek to clarify how these contentions have been framed, what legal implications they may carry, and how concerned actors might assess them.

Treating such allegations as forms of normative contestation, I highlight their implications both for international legal norms and for the perceived legitimacy of legal institutions. The evidentiary base includes both express and implied references — such as appeals to selectivity, politicization, and hypocrisy — across a wide range of thematic and regional contexts.

I identify certain rhetorical strategies that States have used to frame these allegations, including expressions of critique, grievance, and normative reaffirmation. I also categorize several axes along which such claims have been made, including the politicization of legal mechanisms, unequal application of rules, and institutional shielding.

I examine concepts such as bias and exceptionalism as related notions that have been invoked to suggest, illustrate, or reinforce allegations of double standards. Other ideas, such as fairness and universality, appear to have functioned as countervailing reference points, serving to ground critiques or reaffirm existing legal and institutional commitments.

To support more deliberate and attuned engagement with double-standards allegations, I introduce two analytical models. The first centers on the type of legal engagement: whether a claim functions as normative reproach, diagnostic signal, structural attribution, or assertion of instrumentalization. The second focuses on the area of legal impact: doctrinal, procedural, structural, or symbolic. These models aim to help clarify the intended function of a claim and its potential salience with respect to international law.

I conclude by cautioning against a uniform presumption of bad faith in relation to all such allegations. Doing so may obscure certain meaningful signals of critique or calls for reform. I offer a set of orienting questions to assist States in determining whether — and, if so, in what form — a particular allegation may merit engagement. I also suggest that future investigation might build on this foundation through comparative institutional study, legal analysis, or empirical inquiry.

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About the Author

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Acknowledgments

The author gratefully acknowledges: Prof. Naz K. Modirzadeh, a Professor of Practice at HLS and the Founding Director of HLS PILAC, for extensive conceptual and editorial assistance; the team of HLS PILAC research assistants who prepared the evidentiary base — namely, Syed Qasim Abbas, Edith Amoafoa-Smart, Camila Castellanos, Liyu Feng, Ravi Prakash Vyas, Sima Sweidat, and Dominique Virgil; Taha Wiheba, a Program Fellow of HLS PILAC, for providing editorial assistance and critical comments; and the participants in the workshop — co-organized by the Berlin Potsdam Research Group on the International Rule of Law: Rise or Decline? and HLS PILAC — on "Double Standards and International Law" at the Freie Universität Berlin on July 15–16, 2024, for providing thought-provoking draft papers and wide-ranging discussion on certain relevant themes and issues. HLS PILAC expresses its gratitude for the generous financial support for independent research provided by the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

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1. Introduction

Allegations of "double standards" abound in contemporary international relations. On a seemingly daily basis, accusations proliferate of unequal application of norms, selective enforcement, hypocrisy cloaked in legality, and institutional bias masked by formal process.

These kinds of contentions are far from new. Indeed, States have long leveled them in connection with perceptions of disparate approaches to incidents, situations, and themes stretching across a wide range of subject-matter areas. Those fields have recently spanned from human rights to war to sanctions to terrorism to arms control and beyond. Sometimes, they have even included the normative commitments, institutional arrangements, or structural pillars of the international legal system itself. The frequency and breadth of State allegations of double standards — together with their potential legal and institutional ramifications — suggest that such claims warrant attention, perhaps especially amid heightened geopolitical tensions and mistrust among certain sets of States.

Another motivation for this inquiry at this time is the observed difficulty that many States and institutions appear to face in engaging with such allegations. In many instances, the underlying assumption appears not only to be that such claims are made in bad faith but also that they are either irrelevant to legal doctrine and institutional development or are intentionally deployed to discredit international law and its institutions altogether. Yet, arguably, at least some invocations of double standards may reflect legitimate frustration with perceived structural inequalities embedded in the international legal system. They may also illustrate concerns pertaining to enduring colonial legacies that certain States consider essential to address.

Against that backdrop, many common contemporary responses to double-standards allegations often appear insufficient. Some of these responses — ranging from silence, to categorical denials, to abstract appeals to universality — may rest on a presumption that the claim is made in bad faith. Yet that premise, if globally applied, may preclude more nuanced assessment of what the allegation is seeking to do, including whether it signals an effort to deflect criticism, to reframe accountability, to assert institutional critique, or to call for reconsideration of legal baselines. To be certain, some claims may indeed be strategic or instrumental. But others may have a diagnostic

character, in the sense that they aim to identify and highlight deeper structural or systemic problems underlying inequities or legitimacy concerns. Similarly, some may express normative aspirations about coherence, equity, or legitimacy in legal or institutional practice.

In this paper, I offer elements of an analytical framework to help parse certain State allegations of double standards. I do not seek to determine the veracity or intent behind any given invocation. Nor do I aim to validate, refute, or render judgment on any particular assertion. Instead, I aim to assist in more structured assessment of whether a given accusation might warrant legal or institutional engagement. To that end, I seek to make such claims more legible, including by identifying practices, categorizing expressions, and offering a framework to support principled consideration of their potential significance. Ultimately, I suggest that an allegation's form, function, and normative referent may help indicate whether it warrants legal or institutional attention — and, if so, of what kind.

I approach these questions through a structured analysis of more than 900 statements issued by United Nations Member and Observer States in the context of the General Assembly between 2000 and late 2024. The institutional scope of the evidentiary base is intentionally bounded. The General Assembly remains a principal site of multilateral expression, not least for States that may have limited access to other forms of institutional influence. Drawing on that base, I proceed to outline provisional definitional contours; to identify rhetorical approaches; to articulate categories; to examine associated and countervailing concepts; and to introduce two models — one focused on legal engagement and another on legal impact — to help support more attentive and structured assessment of State double-standards allegations.

1.1. Evidentiary Base

The evidentiary base for this paper was developed by research assistants[1] through a targeted review of United Nations records, with particular attention to State statements delivered in the General Assembly between 2000 and late 2024, inclusive. As the U.N. Secretariat had not yet published the official records for the 79th session (2024) at the time the evidence was developed, the

[1] Syed Qasim Abbas, Edith Amoafoa-Smart, Camila Castellanos, Liyu Feng, Ravi Prakash Vyas, Sima Sweidat, and Dominique Virgil.

research team extended its analysis to include press releases and coverage documents issued up to 28 October 2024. With respect to the General Assembly, the team focused on plenary sessions and meetings of the First, Second, Third, and Sixth Committees. This institutional scope was selected to capture instances in which States articulated or contested allegations of double standards across a range of thematic and legal contexts. Readers are encouraged to refer to the annex throughout this paper as a complementary resource, offering illustrative excerpts that exemplify the variety of ways that States have framed and articulated allegations of double standards in the General Assembly.

The identification process began by researchers isolating statements in those forums that included express references to the terms "double standard" or "double standards." To account for instances of implied or indirect invocation, the team also applied a curated list of associated terms — such as "hypocrisy," "selectivity," "impunity," "politicization," and "preferential treatment" — that, in context, appear to function analogously or relationally to allegations of double standards. After identifying potentially responsive documents, researchers reviewed the statements qualitatively to assess whether they met the scope of the inquiry: namely, whether they involved a contention regarding differential treatment of similar actors or situations in ways that may bear implications for international law or legal institutions.

The compilation comprises more than 900 instances in which States made claims that may arguably be interpreted as alleging double standards. This evidentiary base provides a foundation for the formulation of the definitional elements, rhetorical mapping, conceptual reflection, and analytical models developed in the paper.

1.2. Working Definition

Given the frequency, intensity, and variability of allegations of double standards in the multilateral practice under review, I considered it analytically useful to develop a composite provisional working definition. My aim in formulating such a definition is to help clarify how notions of double standards appear to be employed by States in this context and to support more structured assessment of the legal and institutional stakes that such claims may entail.

Rather than treating such claims solely as rhetorical assertions, I approach them as potential forms of normative contestation — that is, as expressions that may engage questions of coherence, fairness, and legitimacy in the

development, interpretation, and application of international legal norms and institutional arrangements. The definition is designed to help clarify certain underlying dynamics of such claims, including whether they implicate differential treatment of comparable actors or situations and whether they raise concerns about the principled application of legal standards. For those engaged in multilateral diplomacy, legal interpretation, or institutional design, greater understanding of how such claims operate may assist in informing more structured and attuned engagement.

This definition was developed through inductive and interpretive review of the evidentiary base. It is not derived from any treaty provision or other authoritative legal source or secondary material. Nor is it intended to assert the existence of a rule or principle under international law.

> *Composite provisional working definition:*
>
> In the context of international law and institutional multilateral practice, an allegation of double standards may be understood as a claim involving unequal or inconsistent treatment of similarly situated actors, actions, or circumstances — whether in the development, interpretation, implementation, justification, or enforcement of international legal norms or institutional mandates — where such treatment is asserted to lack a principled basis and to undermine a commitment to equality, impartiality, consistency, or universality.

This definition does not assess the substantive validity, sincerity, or legal accuracy of any given allegation. Nor does it presume agreement among States or commentators as to whether notions of double standards are best understood as legal, political, rhetorical, or some combination thereof. It is also contextually bounded, drawing principally from the practice observed within the General Assembly between 2000 and late 2024.

Finally, this composite provisional working definition draws upon doctrinal, institutional, and rhetorical perspectives. It is deliberately capacious, so as to encompass the varied ways in which States appear to deploy notions of double standards in practice, including as critique, diagnostic tool, structural attribution, or assertion of instrumentalization.

1.3. Structure

Following this introduction (section 1), I briefly identify rhetorical approaches that States have employed in articulating allegations of double standards (section 2). These methods encompass references to the invocation, application, manifestation, or instrumentalization of double standards, as well as normative or figurative framings, such as grievances and specters. Taken together, these formulations illustrate the diversity of expressions through which States have made such claims.

I then examine categories that reflect how States have formulated, situated, or substantiated allegations of double standards across various subject-matter areas (section 3). Through interpretive engagement with the evidentiary base, I distill concerns about politicization, asymmetrical application, institutional shielding, and legitimacy. These categories are not mutually exclusive and frequently engage shared normative anchors, such as equality, impartiality, universality, and non-selectivity. In this way, the analysis highlights how such allegations may operate as forms of contestation directed at the application of international legal norms and the structural configurations of associated institutions.

Next, I identify and analyze notions that may be interpreted as analogous, corroborative, or countervailing in relation to allegations of double standards (section 4). On one side, I outline concepts that States have invoked in ways that appear to reflect relational proximity to double standards, including politicization, hypocrisy, and inconsistency. On the other side, I identify concepts that seem to have been meant to operate as contrasting or corrective invocations, such as impartiality, universality, and fairness. This typology may help clarify how States frame their concerns and which legal or normative principles are being asserted, reaffirmed, or challenged. It may also aid States and other actors in assessing how such claims may be received or analyzed in multilateral practice.

I then briefly set out two analytical models that may assist in parsing certain legal implications of such invocations (section 5). The first model centers on the type of legal engagement: whether the claim was apparently cast as critique, diagnostic tool, structural attribution, or assertion of instrumentalization. The second focuses on the area of potential legal impact, whether doctrinal, procedural, structural, or symbolic. These models are intended to support structured assessment, including by offering orientation points for

discerning the stakes of a given allegation and considering whether — and, if so, how — to respond.

In the final section (section 6), I reflect on how the framework may support more intentional engagement with these claims. I suggest that rather than presuming that all such allegations are necessarily made in bad faith or are inherently unsuitable for legal or institutional consideration, States may benefit from approaching at least some of them as potentially significant expressions. I also offer a set of questions to aid in assessing what such claims may be seeking to do and whether they might warrant engagement. I close by identifying avenues for future research, including comparative institutional study, legal analysis, and empirical inquiry.

The annex includes a selection of verbatim excerpts from the evidentiary base. These examples are offered for ease of reference and to support analysis regarding how States have framed and expressed allegations of double standards in the General Assembly. These excerpts are illustrative rather than comprehensive, aiming to reflect the range of ways such claims have been articulated.

1.4. Caveats

Some States and other observers may question whether allegations of double standards properly fall within the scope of international legal analysis. It may be asserted, for example, that the normative architecture of international law precludes unequal application of legal standards to similarly situated cases, rendering any such allegation an external or political claim. Others may contend that these allegations lack legal salience and should instead be treated as forms of political expression. While such positions may be defensible in certain procedural or adjudicative contexts (for example, where a party withdraws from proceedings due to alleged bias), they do not preclude inquiry into the legal or (other) institutional implications such claims may carry. In this paper, I do not adopt a position on whether double standards constitute a legal category in a doctrinal sense. Rather, I take as a starting point the fact that States have often invoked the notion of double standards in multilateral settings, and I examine how such invocations may relate to, or otherwise implicate, legal norms, institutional practices, and the perceived legitimacy of international legal arrangements.

Several additional caveats apply to my analysis. First, this is not a formal empirical study. I do not employ quantitative methods. Nor do I make statistical claims about frequency or distribution beyond the evidentiary base reviewed. Second, asnthe scope is institutionally bounded. The analysis is limited to statements made by U.N. Member and Observer States in the context of the General Assembly from 2000 through late 2024, including official records and publicly available summaries as of 28 October 2024. As such, the study does not address practice in other forums, including the Security Council, regional organizations, or treaty bodies. Third, my approach is not historical-comparative in orientation; that is, I do not trace the evolution of the concepts of double standards over time or across institutional settings. Fourth, the review is not exhaustive. While the compilation includes over 900 statements, I do not claim to have captured every relevant expression by States, even within the defined forum. Fifth, my analysis is limited to the content of State statements themselves. I did not conduct a systematic review of secondary literature or commentary on the subject.

Finally, this paper does not assess the legal accuracy, evidentiary basis, or good faith of any individual allegation. Rather, I consider how such allegations have been framed, situated, and mobilized by States — and what international-law-related implications may be drawn from that practice.

2. Rhetorical Approaches

In this section, I briefly identify a range of rhetorical approaches — that is, forms of expression and modes of articulation — through which States have made allegations of double standards. This section demonstrates how notions of double standards have been deployed within statements at the level of sentence structure and speech act. The following examples reflect part of the breadth of such rhetorical forms:

- A State has referred to double standards as having *eroded* credibility;[2]
- States have referred to *manifestations of* double standards;[3]
- States have referred to *applications of* double standards;[4]

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[2] *See, e.g.*, Annex 44 — Palestine (2019).

[3] *See, e.g.*, Annex 48 — Russia (2020).

[4] *See, e.g.*, Annex 58 — Tunisia (2024); Annex 35 — Kuwait (2010); Annex 9 — Cuba (2008); Annex 34 — Jordan (2002); Annex 39 — Libya (2001).

- States have referred to double standards *in the application of laws or regulations*;[5]
- States have referred to *policies of* double standards;[6]
- States have referred to discriminatory policies *based on* double standards;[7]
- States have referred to double standards *as pretexts*;[8]
- States have referred to double standards as being *used for some process or to some end*;[9]
- States have referred to applications of legal norms as being *indicative of* double standards;[10]
- at least one State has referred to a *specter of* a system of double standards based on ideological or political motivations;[11]
- States have referred to double standards as *examples of shortcomings*;[12]
- States have made appeals to *minimize the risk of* double standards;[13]
- States have raised the unacceptability of *permitting* or *condoning* double standards;[14] and
- at least one State has referred to double standards *as grievances*.[15]

3. Categories

In this section, I formulate a series of categories through which States have framed or situated allegations of double standards. These categories are meant to reflect certain recurring modes of articulation with potential implications concerning the application and perceived legitimacy of international legal norms and institutions.

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[5] *See* Annex 5 — China (2024).

[6] *See, e.g.*, Annex 1 — Benin (2009); Annex 55 — Syria (2003).

[7] *See, e.g.*, Annex 43 — Pakistan (2010).

[8] *See, e.g.*, Annex 8 — Cuba (2022); Annex 18 — Egypt (2009).

[9] *See, e.g.*, Annex 46 — Russia (2024); Annex 2 — Bolivia (2021).

[10] *See* Annex 25 — Indonesia (2011).

[11] *See* Annex 38 — Libya (2010).

[12] *See* Annex 21 — Ethiopia (2024).

[13] *See, e.g.*, Annex 57 — Tanzania (2010).

[14] *See, e.g.*, Annex 42 — Nepal (2023); Annex 14 — Ecuador (2020); Annex 24 — India (2003).

[15] *See* Annex 37 — Lebanon (2023).

3.1. Allegations of Politicization

States have raised concerns that international legal mechanisms — perhaps especially those concerned with accountability, human rights, and enforcement — have, in their view, been unduly shaped or influenced by political agendas.[16] These concerns have arisen in relation to, among other forums, the Human Rights Council, international-criminal-law bodies, and issue-specific mechanisms. Allegations in this category have often suggested that legal processes may be experienced as uneven or subject to forms of discretionary engagement that depart from expectations of impartiality and universality.

3.2. Assertions of Unequal Application

States have highlighted what they contend have been disparities in how legal norms and institutional processes have been applied to similar or analogous situations.[17] Such contentions have arisen in diverse areas, including international humanitarian law (IHL), the threat or use of force, sanctions regimes, terrorism-related designations, and Security Council decision-making. Allegations of this kind have often centered on concerns that legal frameworks are not being implemented in a manner consistent with the principles of universality and of equality before the law.

3.3. Concerns about Shielding Certain Actors

States have suggested that scrutiny or enforcement under international law may have been limited or withheld in situations involving particular States or

[16] Indicative examples may be said to include: Annex 46 — Russia (2024); Annex 12 — DPRK (2023); Annex 6 — China (2022); Annex 8 — Cuba (2022); Annex 13 — DPRK (2021); Annex 2 — Bolivia (2021); Annex 41 — Myanmar (2015); Annex 3 — Brazil (2014); Annex 4 — Chile (2010); Annex 38 — Libya (2010); Annex 18 — Egypt (2009); Annex 9 — Cuba (2008); Annex 29 — Iran (2007); Annex 61 — Venezuela (2007); Annex 30 — Iran (2006); Annex 10 — Cuba (2006); Annex 62 — Venezuela (2005); Annex 7 — China (2003); Annex 11 — Cuba (2000).

[17] Indicative examples may be said to include: Annex 5 — China (2024); Annex 21 — Ethiopia (2024); Annex 36 — Lebanon (2024); Annex 58 — Tunisia (2024); Annex 37 — Lebanon (2023); Annex 42 — Nepal (2023); Annex 23 — India (2022); Annex 44 — Palestine (2019); Annex 60 — United States (2018); Annex 16 — Egypt (on behalf of the Group of African States) (2013); Annex 26 — Iran (2013); Annex 25 — Indonesia (2011); Annex 1 — Benin (2009); Annex 17 — Egypt (2009); Annex 22 — Gambia (2009); Annex 27 — Iran (2009); Annex 29 — Iran (2007); Annex 33 — Israel (2007); Annex 59 — Türkiye (2006); Annex 19 — Egypt (2006); Annex 31 — Iraq (2002); Annex 40 — Mexico (2002).

their partners.[18] These claims have emerged in contexts such as disarmament, arms transfers, and conflict mediation. In many of these statements, States have pointed to what they view as asymmetries in institutional attention and legal accountability, raising broader questions about the impartiality and credibility of the relevant mechanisms.

3.4. Rejection of Selective Scrutiny in Human-Rights Contexts

States have registered concern about particular forms of international-human-rights scrutiny, especially where such scrutiny was perceived to conflict with principles of sovereignty, non-intervention, or self-determination.[19] Allegations in this category have tended to focus on country-specific mandates, monitoring procedures, and thematic mechanisms. In making these claims, States have contended that certain practices may fall short of impartiality or may not be administered in accordance with universally applied standards.

3.5. Linkages to Institutional Credibility and Trust

States have drawn connections between allegations of double standards and broader concerns about institutional credibility and trust.[20] These concerns have been directed toward various bodies, including the Security Council, the Human Rights Council, and international criminal tribunals. Claims in this category have typically underscored perceived inconsistencies in practice and their implications for legitimacy, compliance, and institutional participation.

3.6. Use of Analogical or Inversion-based Techniques

States have deployed rhetorical techniques that highlight perceived

[18] Indicative examples may be said to include: Annex 58 — Tunisia (2024); Annex 48 — Russia (2020); Annex 43 — Pakistan (2010); Annex 27 — Iran (2009); Annex 53 — Syria (2009); Annex 52 — Sudan (2000).

[19] Indicative examples may be said to include: Annex 12 — DPRK (2023); Annex 6 — China (2022); Annex 8 — Cuba (2022); Annex 41 — Myanmar (2015); Annex 9 — Cuba (2008); Annex 10 — Cuba (2006); Annex 30 — Iran (2006).

[20] Indicative examples may be said to include: Annex 46 — Russia (2024); Annex 58 — Tunisia (2024); Annex 14 — Ecuador (2020); Annex 38 — Libya (2010); Annex 1 — Benin (2009).

inconsistencies between the norms espoused by particular actors and those actors' conduct.[21] These contentions have often included analogies, *tu quoque* (you too) claims that attempt to invert responsibility by accusing the accuser of similar conduct, or moral comparisons — drawing on themes ranging from electoral standards to disarmament to legal interpretation. This kind of invocation often appears aimed at exposing perceived inconsistencies and challenging the credibility of normative claims.

3.7. Reaffirmation of Normative Baselines

States have restated commitments to foundational principles — such as sovereign equality, universality, and non-selectivity — as necessary preconditions for credible international legal engagement.[22] These invocations have appeared across such areas as treaty interpretation, jurisdictional reach, and institutional mandates. In some cases, such restatements may function as normative anchoring; in others, they may operate as implied or express critiques of practices alleged to deviate from those principles.

3.8. Disagreement over Legal Development or Interpretation

States have questioned the basis or trajectory of certain legal developments, particularly in fields marked by normative contestation.[23] Examples include divergent interpretations concerning terrorism, crimes against humanity, and the "responsibility to protect". In voicing such concerns, States have at times emphasized perceived imbalances in norm elaboration, participation, or implementation.

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[21] Indicative examples may be said to include: Annex 47 — Russia (2023); Annex 32 — Israel (2017); Annex 49 — Saint Lucia (2010); Annex 52 — Sudan (2000).

[22] Indicative examples may be said to include: Annex 5 — China (2024); Annex 3 — Brazil (2014); Annex 16 — Egypt (on behalf of the Group of African States) (2013); Annex 26 — Iran (2013); Annex 25 — Indonesia (2011); Annex 4 — Chile (2010); Annex 57 — Tanzania (2010); Annex 17 — Egypt (2009); Annex 29 — Iran (2007).

[23] Indicative examples may be said to include: Annex 5 — China (2024); Annex 37 — Lebanon (2023); Annex 48 — Russia (2020); Annex 28 — Iran (2009); Annex 34 — Jordan (2002).

3.9. Critiques concerning the Configuration and Authority of the Security Council

States have raised structural critiques of the Security Council, including the existence or use of the veto, permanent membership, and procedural asymmetries.[24] These concerns have often been situated in discussions of Council action (or inaction) on matters of peace and security. In this category, States have suggested that structural arrangements may contribute to selective legal enforcement or undermine perceptions of multilateral accountability.

3.10. Contestation of Targeted Measures and Mechanisms

Finally, States have voiced concerns regarding the deployment of country-specific measures — such as sanctions, special procedures, or monitoring mandates — perhaps especially when such mechanisms were said to lack widespread agreement.[25] These statements have expressed doubts about the impartiality or consistency of such efforts and have often linked the critique to broader concerns about politicization and normative coherence.

4. Potentially Similar or Countervailing Notions

In this section, I identify certain concepts that States have employed in articulating allegations of double standards. Some appear to have functioned in ways that were analogous or conceptually adjacent to notions of double standards. Others seem to have been meant to operate as countervailing or corrective invocations. Through this analysis, I aim to help illuminate the content and operative logic of double-standards allegations and to clarify certain legal stakes that may be implicated by their use.

Both types of concepts operate relationally. The first set tends to affirm or substantiate a double-standards allegation. The second group may function to resist, temper, or redirect the claim. In practice, these two kinds of concepts

[24] Indicative examples may be said to include: Annex 1 — Benin (2009); Annex 22 — Gambia (2009); Annex 61 — Venezuela (2007); Annex 45 — Qatar (2007); Annex 51 — Sudan (2006); Annex 11 — Cuba (2000).

[25] Indicative examples may be said to include: Annex 12 — DPRK (2023); Annex 6 — China (2022); Annex 41 — Myanmar (2015); Annex 25 — Indonesia (2011); Annex 57 — Tanzania (2010); Annex 59 — Türkiye (2006); Annex 56 — Syria (2000).

often appear together or in close proximity. Taken together, they may help to signal what is being alleged to have failed — or what is being asserted to warrant reaffirmation — in respect of international legal norms and institutions.

4.1. Concepts Potentially Analogous or Referential to Allegations of Double Standards

In analyzing the evidentiary base, I identified a set of concepts that, in context, appear to have been meant to serve as analogous, corroborative, or otherwise functionally related to allegations of double standards. These include:

- bias[26] (including political bias[27]);
- complacency;[28]
- discretionality;[29]
- discrimination/discriminatory approaches;[30]
- equivocation;[31]
- exceptions/exceptionalism;[32]
- extraneous considerations;[33]
- hegemony;[34]
- hypocrisy;[35]
- impunity;[36]
- inconsistency;[37]
- partiality;[38]

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[26] *See, e.g.*, Annex 13 — DPRK (2021); Annex 31 — Iraq (2002).

[27] *See, e.g.*, Annex 7 — China (2003).

[28] *See, e.g.*, Annex 59 — Türkiye (2006).

[29] *See, e.g.*, Annex 15 — Ecuador (2009).

[30] *See, e.g.*, Annex 43 — Pakistan (2010); Annex 27 — Iran (2009); Annex 59 — Türkiye (2006).

[31] *See, e.g.*, Annex 40 — Mexico (2002).

[32] *See, e.g.*, Annex 50 — Saudi Arabia (2009).

[33] *See, e.g.*, Annex 30 — Iran (2006).

[34] *See, e.g.*, Annex 31 — Iraq (2002).

[35] *See, e.g.*, Annex 47 — Russia (2023); Annex 32 — Israel (2017); Annex 33 — Israel (2007); Annex 52 — Sudan (2000).

[36] *See, e.g.*, Annex 17 — Egypt (2009); Annex 22 — Gambia (2009); Annex 53 — Syria (2009).

[37] *See, e.g.*, Annex 62 — Venezuela (2005).

[38] *See, e.g.*, Annex 54 — Syria (2003).

- politicization;[39]
- political manipulation/motivations;[40]
- prevalence of political criteria;[41]
- privilege;[42]
- selective/selectivity;[43]
- selective compliance;[44]
- selective indignation;[45] and
- unilateralism.[46]

These concepts were not necessarily employed as synonyms for double standards. Rather, in many instances, States appear to have invoked them in tandem with, or as supporting grounds for, allegations of double standards. In that respect, these concepts seem to have been meant to operate as:

- descriptive indicators, in the sense of pointing to perceived features of institutional practice or norm application deemed inconsistent with principles of equality or impartiality (for example, selectivity and inconsistency);
- causal explanations, in the sense of attributing alleged double standards to underlying structures or dynamics (for example, politicization and hegemony); or
- normative reproaches, in the sense of expressing disapproval of practices perceived to violate principles of the legal system (for example, hypocrisy and discrimination).

From this analysis, at least five sets of legal stakes may be discerned:

1. equality before the law, in the sense of comparable treatment in like

[39] *See, e.g.*, Annex 3 — Brazil (2014); Annex 61 — Venezuela (2007); Annex 39 — Libya (2001).

[40] *See, e.g.*, Annex 38 — Libya (2010); Annex 9 — Cuba (2008).

[41] *See, e.g.*, Annex 55 — Syria (2003).

[42] *See, e.g.*, Annex 45 — Qatar (2007); Annex 39 — Libya (2001); Annex 11 — Cuba (2000).

[43] *See, e.g.*, Annex 5 — China (2024); Annex 12 — DPRK (2023); Annex 3 — Brazil (2014); Annex 26 — Iran (2013); Annex 17 — Egypt (2009); Annex 28 — Iran (2009); Annex 50 — Saudi Arabia (2009); Annex 61 — Venezuela (2007); Annex 10 — Cuba (2006); Annex 51 — Sudan (2006); Annex 20 — Egypt (2000).

[44] *See, e.g.*, Annex 29 — Iran (2007).

[45] *See* Annex 36 — Lebanon (2024).

[46] *See, e.g.*, Annex 15 — Ecuador (2009).

circumstances;[47]

2. impartial application of norms, in terms of even-handed interpretation and enforcement;[48]
3. institutional legitimacy, particularly with regard to procedural fairness and political independence;[49]
4. norm coherence and stability, in the sense of consistent doctrinal interpretation;[50] and
5. accountability structures, in terms of legal responsibility and enforcement practices.[51]

4.2. Concepts Positioned as Countervailing to Allegations of Double Standards

I also identified a set of concepts that, in context, appeared to have been meant to function in contrast to, or as responses to, allegations of double standards. These include:

- consistency;[52]
- democratic;[53]
- equity/equitable;[54]
- equality;[55]
- fair/fairness;[56]
- impartiality;[57]

[47] Potentially implicated related notions include discrimination, selective compliance, and selectivity.

[48] Potentially implicated related notions include bias, inconsistency, and partiality.

[49] Potentially implicated related notions include discretionality, prevalence of political criteria, and politicization.

[50] Potentially implicated related notions include complacency, equivocation, and exceptionalism.

[51] Potentially implicated related notions include impunity, selective compliance, and unilateralism.

[52] *See, e.g.*, Annex 44 — Palestine (2019).

[53] *See, e.g.*, Annex 61 — Venezuela (2007).

[54] *See, e.g.*, *id.*

[55] *See, e.g.*, Annex 16 — Egypt (on behalf of the Group of African States) (2013); Annex 39 — Libya (2001).

[56] *See, e.g.*, Annex 5 — China (2024); Annex 49 — Saint Lucia (2010).

[57] *See, e.g.*, Annex 12 — DPRK (2023); Annex 8 — Cuba (2022); Annex 41 — Myanmar (2015); Annex 31 — Iraq (2002); Annex 39 — Libya (2001).

- inclusive;[58]
- justice;[59]
- non-politicization;[60]
- non-selectivity;[61]
- objectivity;[62]
- political will;[63]
- transparent;[64] and
- universal/universality.[65]

States seemed to have invoked these concepts both as principled commitments and as reference points for assessing institutional credibility or legal fidelity. In some instances, these terms were apparently deployed defensively, as rebuttals to double-standards allegations. In others, these notions were arguably meant to function aspirationally, as articulations of the principles that should govern international legal practice. These concepts appear to have operated along a number of axes, including as:

- normative anchors, articulating standards whose breach gives rise to the perception or assertion of double standards (for example, impartiality and universality);
- procedural and structural benchmarks, in relation to institutional configurations and legal process design (for example, non-selectivity and transparency); or
- prescriptive guideposts, setting out how States and institutions ought to proceed in order to avoid the appearance or actuality of selective or biased conduct (for example, fairness and objectivity).

From this set of concepts, at least four categories of legal stakes can arguably be discerned:

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[58] *See, e.g.*, Annex 4 — Chile (2010).

[59] *See, e.g.*, Annex 31 — Iraq (2002); Annex 39 — Libya (2001).

[60] *See, e.g.*, Annex 12 — DPRK (2023); Annex 6 — China (2022).

[61] *See, e.g.*, Annex 8 — Cuba (2022).

[62] *See, e.g.*, Annex 12 — DPRK (2023); Annex 8 — Cuba (2022); Annex 23 — India (2022); Annex 41 — Myanmar (2015).

[63] *See, e.g.*, Annex 19 — Egypt (2006).

[64] *See, e.g.*, Annex 4 — Chile (2010).

[65] *See, e.g.*, Annex 36 — Lebanon (2024); Annex 8 — Cuba (2022); Annex 41 — Myanmar (2015); Annex 4 — Chile (2010).

1. formal equality, in terms of the uniform application of legal norms;[66]
2. procedural fairness, not least in fact-finding, monitoring, and adjudication;[67]
3. non-discrimination, perhaps especially in relation to human rights and IHL;[68] and
4. general principles of justice, including equal protection under law and legal integrity.[69]

5. Two Analytical Models

In the two preceding sections, I aimed to clarify the grammar of double standards — specifically, how States have deployed notions rhetorically and what related meanings States have apparently ascribed in connection with the term. In this section, I turn to the question of legal relevance. In doing so, I seek to illustrate how such claims might be better understood, categorized, or assessed in relation to forms of legal reasoning or appeals to legal outcome. In other words, I briefly explore what potential implications an allegation of double standards may carry with respect to international legal norms and institutions.

5.1. Type of Legal Engagement

The first model centers on the type of legal engagement involved. I detected at least four modes of such invocations.

5.1.1. Normative critique of legal inconsistency

In some instances, States have framed their allegations as normative critiques of what they asserted to be failures to uphold foundational principles of international law, such as equality, impartiality, and non-discrimination.[70] These claims often appeared to have been aimed at reaffirming the authority

[66] Potentially implicated countervailing conceptions include consistency and non-selectivity.

[67] Potentially implicated countervailing conceptions include impartiality and objectivity.

[68] Potentially implicated countervailing conceptions include equality and universality.

[69] Potentially implicated countervailing conceptions include fairness.

[70] Potentially implicated rhetorical approaches include: the unacceptability of permitting or condoning double standards; appeals to minimize the risk of double standards; and double standards as grievances.

of legal norms by registering disapproval of conduct perceived to be at odds with those standards.

5.1.2. Diagnostic engagement with legal application

In other instances, States have used the allegation to point to specific practices or institutional outputs — such as enforcement, interpretation, or adjudication — as indicative of inconsistency or bias.[71] Such claims appeared to have operated diagnostically, treating the alleged double standard as a symptom of deeper institutional or doctrinal irregularity.

5.1.3. Structural attribution to legal arrangements

Some States have asserted that alleged double standards were not episodic but instead attributable to certain systemic features of the legal system itself — for example, geopolitical asymmetries, politicization, or institutional design.[72] These claims appeared to have challenged not only outcomes but also underlying architectures of legal authority.

5.1.4. Allegations of instrumentalization

States have also framed their allegations in terms of strategic manipulation, portraying legal instruments and procedures as tools used to justify action that departed from the norms that those instruments and procedures purported to reflect.[73] In this mode, the law has typically been presented as a vehicle for selective condemnation or as a pretext for partial application, undermining its credibility through what was claimed to be its co-optation for ulterior ends.

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[71] Potentially implicated rhetorical approaches include: manifestations of double standards; applications of double standards; double standards in the application of laws or regulations; applications of legal norms being indicative of double standards; and double standards as examples of shortcomings.

[72] Potentially implicated rhetorical approaches include: double standards that erode credibility; policies of double standards; discriminatory policies based on double standards; and specters of systems of double standards based on ideological or political motivations.

[73] Potentially implicated rhetorical approaches include: double standards as pretexts and double standards used for some process or to some end.

5.2. Area of Legal Impact

The second model focuses on the principal site or domain of legal impact implicated in the claim. Here, too, I identified at least four forms.

5.2.1. Doctrinal implications

Some claims have turned principally on doctrinal concerns, asserting that legal rules or standards have been applied inconsistently or distorted in ways that impaired norm fidelity and eroded interpretive clarity.[74]

5.2.2. Procedural implications

Other contentions have foregrounded concerns about legal process, including enforcement and investigative mechanisms.[75] Here, allegations have often centered on perceived procedural asymmetries or the selective activation of legal tools or use of legal institutions.

5.2.3. Structural implications

In some cases, States have contended that double standards were not merely reflected in legal outputs but had arisen from the structural conditions of the legal system itself — for example, the composition of bodies, decision-making arrangements, or embedded hierarchies of authority.[76]

5.2.4. Symbolic and legitimacy implications

Finally, some claims have emphasized concerns about how such disparities may have affected the symbolic authority or legitimacy of the international legal system.[77] In this mode, double standards were alleged to have contributed to the erosion of trust or the delegitimization of international legal norms.

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[74] Potentially implicated rhetorical approaches include: applications of double standards; double standards in the application of laws or regulations; and applications of legal norms being indicative of double standards.

[75] Potentially implicated rhetorical approaches include: manifestations of double standards; double standards as pretexts; and double standards used for some process or to some end.

[76] Potentially implicated rhetorical approaches include: double standards that erode credibility; policies of double standards; discriminatory policies based on double standards; specters of systems of double standards based on ideological or political motivations; and double standards as examples of shortcomings.

[77] Potentially implicated rhetorical approaches include: the unacceptability of permitting or condoning double standards; appeals to minimize the risk of double standards; and double standards as grievances.

6. Conclusion: Reflections for States and Suggestions for Further Research

One potential contribution of attempting to clarify the legal contours and rhetorical functions of State allegations of double standards is to move beyond presuppositions that often accompany such claims. At times, these allegations may be received not as openings for legal or institutional engagement but, instead, as expressions presumed to reflect politicized motives or as indications of institutional deficiencies seen as beyond repair. By articulating a conceptual lexicon and introducing an analytical frame, I have sought to support States and other concerned actors in engaging with such claims in a more structured and attentive manner — not necessarily to validate or dismiss them but to better consider their possible legal and institutional significance.

I do not — and, indeed, could not — claim to analyze the full range of complexities implicated in such invocations. Some claims may operate primarily as vehicles to deflect scrutiny or reconfigure legal responsibility. Others may reflect diagnostic attempts to engage questions of coherence, fairness, or institutional legitimacy. Still others may fall along a spectrum between these poles or serve multiple purposes at once. Across these possibilities, an a priori assumption of insincerity may risk missing the functional diversity of these claims and foreclosing opportunities to understand their potential significance.

In that context, a challenge for States is how to assess whether a given invocation of double standards warrants further consideration, response, or engagement. The framework developed here does not purport to adjudicate matters of authenticity or legal satisfactoriness. Rather, it may assist in discerning the apparent function of an allegation, including whether it centers on a doctrinal, procedural, structural, or symbolic concern; whether it references a particular normative anchor; and whether it appears to gesture toward some form of institutional outcome or reform. These inquiries may provide a structured basis for developing and implementing responses that are more deliberate.

In certain instances, the act of invoking double standards may serve not only as critique but also as an expression of discontent, an articulation of demand, or a call for legal or institutional recalibration (or some combination). Where such dimensions are present, States may be positioned to consider whether — and, if so, in what form — such concerns could be substantively

addressed, such as, for example, through clarification, reconsideration, or reaffirmation of legal commitments. That process need not presuppose agreement with the allegation. But it might, in some circumstances, help foster more constructive forms of multilateral engagement.

In light of this analysis, States and other stakeholders might find it useful to consider a set of orienting questions:

- Is the claim directed at a specific legal norm or institutional arrangement?
- Does it articulate or imply a normative basis?
- Does it register a critique of interpretation, implementation, or institutional configuration?
- And does it appear aimed at reaffirming legal principles or pressing for normative or institutional change?

Grappling with such questions need not entail validation. Rather, doing so may reflect a posture of principled attentiveness to the legal, political, and normative work that certain claims may perform.

Future research might extend this investigation along several lines of inquiry. Comparative institutional studies might help elucidate how allegations of double standards have been addressed — or ignored — across various forums, including the Security Council, treaty bodies, and international courts. Legal analysis might examine how such allegations interact with processes of norm development, institutional practice, and contestation. Empirical work might assess whether (and, if so, how) such claims have shaped negotiation dynamics, interpretive practices, or institutional responses. Collectively, such efforts could contribute to a deeper understanding of how the international legal system contends with normative disagreement and how States and other stakeholders seek to safeguard — or recalibrate — the authority, coherence, and legitimacy of the system's constitutive elements.

ANNEX: VERBATIM EXCERPTS

Republic of Benin

- Annex 1 — Benin: U.N. GAOR, 63d Sess., 100th plen. mtg. at 26–27, U.N. Doc. A/63/PV.100 (July 28, 2009): "We should welcome the commitment expressed by the international community to overcome the hazards that the implementation of the [United Nations] Charter has encountered to date in terms of protecting populations and human lives. This is the meaning of paragraphs 138 and 139 of the 2005 World Summit Outcome Document, which we must implement. This is the work that we need to get down to, bearing in mind our historic responsibility. These hazards reflect a lack of will to act on the part of those with the capacity to do so and who thus exert discretionary power over decisions in this matter by putting their own current interests first. This does not include only the permanent members of the Security Council. The resulting policy of double standards has significantly harmed the credibility of the United Nations."

Plurinational State of Bolivia

- Annex 2 — Bolivia: U.N. GAOR, 76th Sess., 24th plen. mtg. at 26, U.N. Doc. A/76/PV.24 (Oct. 29, 2021): "Like all countries that are members of the [Human Rights] Council, we face challenges in the attempt to build a fairer world, which is why we would like to appeal for the Council not to be used as a political forum to destabilize democratically elected Governments through foreign policy agendas. We hope that the double standard used to judge some countries will no longer be the habitual practice of some Powers."

Federative Republic of Brazil

- Annex 3 — Brazil: U.N. GAOR, 68th Sess., 45th mtg. at 5, U.N. Doc. A/C.3/68/SR.45 (Jan. 15, 2014): "The [Human Rights] Council should be able to promote and protect human rights without selectivity, North-South schisms, politicization or double standards and in a manner that enhanced human dignity throughout the world."

Republic of Chile

- Annex 4 — Chile: U.N. GAOR, 65th Sess., 42nd plen. mtg. at 24, U.N. Doc. A/65/PV.42 (Nov. 3, 2010): "The first five years of the [Human Rights] Council's life have shown clear progress in ways that human rights can be dealt with by Member States, in particular through the Universal Periodic Review mechanism, to which all Member States are subject. That is a universal, transparent and inclusive process that avoids double standards and selectivity."

People's Republic of China

- Annex 5 — China: U.N. GAOR, 78th Sess., 45th mtg. at 10, U.N. Doc. A/C.6/78/SR.45 (June 28, 2024): "Existing laws and regulations must be applied in a fair and uniform manner. Although there was currently no dedicated convention on crimes against humanity, most States had criminalized acts constituting crimes against humanity as such, or specific elements thereof, in their national laws. Specific acts constituting such crimes were also prohibited under international humanitarian law and international human rights law. Double standards and selectivity in the application of relevant laws and regulations must be prevented and the existing legal tools must be used to the fullest extent to combat impunity."
- Annex 6 — China: U.N. GAOR, 77th Sess., 36th mtg. at 11, U.N. Doc. A/C.3/77/SR.36 (Oct. 27, 2022): "Certain countries had pushed for the establishment of special procedure mechanisms, without the consent of the countries concerned, and had used human rights as a political tool against developing countries, which only intensified confrontation and was not conducive to solving problems. Those countries should uphold the principles of non-selectivity and non-politicization, abandon double standards and respect the path of development and human rights that had been chosen by the Burundian people."
- Annex 7 — China: U.N. GAOR, 58th Sess., 9th mtg. at 12, U.N. Doc. A/C.6/58/SR.9 (Oct. 20, 2003): "Time would test the [International Criminal] Court's ability to adhere strictly to the principle of complementarity, to prosecute within its limited resources the most serious international crimes set out in the Statute and to carry out its mandate fairly without political bias and double standards, particularly in its treatment of the crime of aggression."

Republic of Cuba

- Annex 8 — Cuba: U.N. GAOR, 77th Sess., 39th mtg. at 10, U.N. Doc. A/C.3/77/SR.39 (Oct. 31, 2022): "Human rights should not be politicized or double standards used as a pretext for interference in the internal affairs of independent States. Issues related to Xinjiang, Hong Kong and Tibet were China's internal affairs. All parties should abide by the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, adhere to the principles of universality, impartiality, objectivity and non-selectivity and respect the right of the people of each State to choose their own path for development in accordance with their national conditions."
- Annex 9 — Cuba: U.N. GAOR, 63d Sess., 7th plen. mtg. at 38, U.N. Doc. A/63/PV.7 (Sept. 24, 2008): "We strongly oppose political manipulation and the application of double standards in the matter of human rights, and we reject the selective imposition of politically motivated resolutions against the member countries of the Non-Aligned Movement."

- Annex 10 — Cuba: U.N. GAOR, 61st Sess., 81st plen. mtg. at 26, U.N. Doc. A/61/PV.81 (Dec. 19, 2006): "We believe that the draft resolution submitted by the United States is not based on a genuine interest in cooperation on human rights issues. In our opinion, it exploits the issue of human rights for political purposes on the basis of selectivity and double standards, as evidenced by the selective treatment of this matter."
- Annex 11 — Cuba: U.N. GAOR, 55th Sess., 64th plen. mtg. at 17, U.N. Doc. A/55/PV.64 (Nov. 16, 2000): "The veto holds a central place in the Council reform. The anachronistic and undemocratic veto privilege should disappear and the double standard should end."

Democratic People's Republic of Korea

- Annex 12 — DPRK: U.N. GAOR, 78th Sess., 37th mtg. at 9, U.N. Doc. A/C.3/78/SR.37 (Oct. 25, 2023): "[H]is delegation reaffirmed its rejection of country-specific mandates, as they were based on politicization, selectivity and double standards. Human rights issues should be addressed in a manner consistent with the principles of impartiality, objectivity, non-selectivity and non-politicization and in accordance with the needs and interests of the States concerned."
- Annex 13 — DPRK: U.N. GAOR, 76th Sess., 12th mtg. at 3, U.N. Doc. A/C.4/76/SR.12 (Oct. 27, 2021): "The failure to address the question of Palestine was a result of the bias and double standards shown by the United States."

Republic of Ecuador

- Annex 14 — Ecuador: U.N. GAOR, 75th Sess., 18th plen. mtg. at 26, U.N. Doc. A/75/PV.18 (Nov. 2, 2020): "[T]he gradual universalization of the Rome Statute and the jurisdiction of the International Criminal Court remains a crucial objective. Above and beyond considerations of political expediency, we must strive for genuine universal criminal justice that effectively combats impunity and enables perpetrators to be punished without permitting double standards or favouring political or economic interests that can lead to different standards being applied to similar situations."
- Annex 15 — Ecuador: U.N. GAOR, 63d Sess., 98th plen. mtg. at 9, U.N. Doc. A/63/PV.98 (July 24, 2009): "We must act, but we should do so in strict compliance with international law and its principles of non-intervention and respect for sovereignty, and within the framework of normative agreements and clear policies that completely eliminate discretionality, unilateralism and double standards."

Arab Republic of Egypt

- Annex 16 — Egypt (on behalf of the Group of African States): U.N. GAOR, 68th Sess., 7th mtg. at 2, U.N. Doc. A/C.6/68/SR.7 (Oct. 10, 2013): "The fundamental principle of equality before the law must be strictly respected, with no double standards."
- Annex 17 — Egypt: U.N. GAOR, 64th Sess., 36th plen. mtg. at 4, U.N. Doc. A/64/PV.36 (Nov. 4, 2009): "In view of the procedural nature of the draft resolution and its compliance with the rules of international law, international humanitarian law and international human rights law against the waves of impunity, selectivity and double standards, we, the sponsors, believe that all States members of the General Assembly will be in a position to support the draft resolution."
- Annex 18 — Egypt: U.N. GAOR, 64th Sess., 14th plen. mtg. at 7, U.N. Doc. A/64/PV.14 (Oct. 6, 2009): "In spite of the steps taken within the multilateral framework to promote respect for human rights, and the radical reforms represented in the establishment of the Human Rights Council and the introduction of the periodic review mechanism, there are still attempts by some to politicize human rights issues, through selectivity and double standards, as a pretext for interfering in countries' internal affairs, contrary to the United Nations Charter."
- Annex 19 — Egypt: U.N. GAOR, 61st Sess., 6th mtg. at 7, U.N. Doc. A/C.6/61/SR.6 (Oct. 16, 2006): "[T]he [UN] Organization's continuing inability to formulate a clear and comprehensive policy on the peaceful settlement of disputes was attributable, inter alia, to a lack of political will, double standards in handling disputes of the same nature and lack of respect for the principles established under the Charter to address such disputes."
- Annex 20 — Egypt: U.N. GAOR, 55th Sess., 21st mtg. at 13, U.N. Doc. A/C.1/55/PV.21 (Oct. 23, 2000): "All States that are parties to the NPT [Treaty on Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons] and that participated in the 2000 Review Conference are urged to support this draft resolution. To do otherwise would be a mockery of the Final Document adopted by them in May 2000, and would give the message that selectivity should be the norm in arms control activities. We urge all Members of the United Nations as well as States parties to the NPT to transmit a clear and forceful message through the General Assembly affirming their commitment to the world of nuclear non-proliferation, a message that would also reflect that the consensus achieved only five months ago at the Review Conference is respected and that there will be no double standards when it comes to addressing the risk of nuclear proliferation."

Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia

- Annex 21 — Ethiopia: U.N. GAOR, 78th Sess., 18th mtg. at 7, U.N. Doc. A/C.6/78/SR.18 (Oct. 18, 2024): "Serious shortcomings in the rule of law at the international level and in global institutions remained, including unilateral coercive measures, inequitable international cooperation, the biased interpretation and application of international norms and treaties, systemic double standards and the indisposition to serve justice."

Republic of the Gambia

- Annex 22 — Gambia: U.N. GAOR, 64th Sess., 6th plen. mtg. at 27, U.N. Doc. A/64/PV.6 (Sept. 24, 2009): "Unfortunately, there are some Member States that block well-meaning resolutions necessary for the maintenance of world peace and even question or disregard with impunity resolutions adopted by this body. As long as this continues to be the order of the day, the United Nations will remain united in name only, unable to achieve in full the fundamental objectives for which it was established. The modus operandi of the Organization therefore needs urgent reforms to ensure that such impunity is eliminated and that the principle of equality among nation States, irrespective of their geopolitical size, location, economic circumstances, race or religion is safeguarded. Double standards have no place in the United Nations."

Republic of India

- Annex 23 — India: U.N. GAOR, 77th Sess., 2d mtg. at 12, U.N. Doc. A/C.6/77/SR.2 (Oct. 3, 2022): "Listing and delisting individuals and entities under the United Nations sanctions regimes must be done objectively, free from double standards and not for political or religious considerations. Linkages between terrorism and transnational organized crime must be fully recognized and addressed vigorously."
- Annex 24 — India: U.N. GAOR, 58th Sess., 6th mtg. at 7–8, U.N. Doc. A/C.6/58/SR.6 (Oct. 15, 2003): "Lastly, no State should be allowed to profess partnership with the global coalition against terror while continuing to aid, abet and sponsor terrorism: condoning such double standards would merely mean increasing terrorism."

Republic of Indonesia

- Annex 25 — Indonesia: U.N. GAOR, 66th Sess., 13th mtg. at 4, U.N. Doc. A/C.6/66/SR.13 (Oct. 12, 2011): "The principle of universal jurisdiction was ambiguous, and its application had been selective and indicative of double standards."

Islamic Republic of Iran

- Annex 26 — Iran: U.N. GAOR, 68th Sess., 7th mtg. at 4, U.N. Doc. A/C.6/68/SR.7 (Oct. 10, 2013): "International law must be respected equally by all States, and selectivity and double standards in the application and enforcement of international treaties rejected."
- Annex 27 — Iran: U.N. GAOR, 64th Sess., 33d plen. mtg. at 12, U.N. Doc. A/64/PV.33 (Nov. 2, 2009): "The same countries claiming to be guardians of the NPT [Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons] are expanding their cooperation with non-NPT parties and exempt them from such restrictions. The nuclear cooperation of a few nuclear-weapon States with the Zionist regime is a clear manifestation of their non-compliance with both the letter and the spirit of the NPT. This is an example of their paradoxical policies towards the NPT. Such double standards and discriminatory approaches will only undermine the reliability and integrity of the NPT and IAEA [International Atomic Energy Agency]."
- Annex 28 — Iran: U.N. GAOR, 63d Sess., 100th plen. mtg. at 11, U.N. Doc. A/63/PV.100 (July 28, 2009): "Thirdly, the responsibility to protect populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity, as a humanitarian notion should not, then, be misused or indeed abused to erode the principle of sovereignty and undermine the territorial integrity and political independence of States or intervene in their internal affairs. States need to be highly alert against any ad hoc interpretation of this rather vague notion to destabilize the Charter-sanctioned principles of international law, particularly respect for the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of States and the principle of non-use of force in international relations and non-interference. The Secretary-General himself acknowledges the danger of misusing this notion for inappropriate purposes. That authenticates the concern of many Member States that have long warned against political manipulation of new and loose concepts, as well as against selective application and double standards in invoking them."
- Annex 29 — Iran: U.N. GAOR, 62d Sess., 16th mtg. at 10, U.N. Doc. A/C.6/62/SR.16 (Oct. 26, 2007): "Buttressing the rule of law in international relations encompassed the sphere of lawmaking and the acceptance of international law. All States must therefore have the chance to participate in standard-setting processes and all States, irrespective of their size, must honour their obligations under international law. The adoption of a policy of compliance only when it was expedient, double standards and arbitrary enforcement undermined the very foundations of the international rule of law."
- Annex 30 — Iran: U.N. GAOR, 61st Sess., 81st plen. mtg. at 29, U.N. Doc. A/61/PV.81 (Dec. 19, 2006): "Resolution 61/166, entitled 'Promotion of equitable and mutually respectful dialogue on human rights', just adopted by this

body, stresses, inter alia, […] the need to avoid politically motivated and biased country-specific resolutions on the situation of human rights, confrontational approaches, exploitation of human rights for political purposes, selective targeting of individual countries for extraneous considerations and double standards in the work of the United Nations on human rights issues."

Republic of Iraq

- Annex 31 — Iraq: U.N. GAOR, 57th Sess., 12th mtg. at 7, U.N. Doc. A/C.6/57/SR.12 (Oct. 10, 2002): "If the International Court of Justice were given a more active role, that would increase the confidence of the Member States in the Organization and would mitigate the bias, double standards and hegemony that characterized the Security Council and would promote peaceful settlement based on international law and on the principles of justice and impartiality exemplified by the Court."

State of Israel

- Annex 32 — Israel: U.N. GAOR, Emergency Spec. Sess., 37th mtg. at 7, U.N. Doc. A/ES-10/PV.37 (Dec. 21, 2017): "So, today, I will tell members about another unbreakable bond — the unbreakable bond of hypocrisy between the Palestinians and the United Nations. Some have cautioned that the United States decision is one-sided and harmful to peace. The opposite is true. It is the one-sided steps of the Palestinians and the United Nations that have pushed peace away for years. With every anti-Israel resolution and every attack against my people, the United Nations has perfected its double standards."
- Annex 33 — Israel: U.N. GAOR, 62d Sess., 5th mtg. at 11, U.N. Doc. A/C.6/62/SR.5 (Oct. 11, 2007): "No true democracy allowed armed militias or groups with violent agendas to participate in elections; yet some demonstrated double standards, promoting abroad what they would not accept at home, thus empowering those who used democratic means to advance anti-democratic ends."

Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan

- Annex 34 — Jordan: U.N. GAOR, 57th Sess., 8th mtg. at 7, U.N. Doc. A/C.6/57/SR.8 (Oct. 2, 2002): "It was important to establish a precise definition of terrorist acts which would exclude the application of double standards and exploitation for political purposes".

State of Kuwait

- Annex 35 — Kuwait: U.N. GAOR, 65th Sess., 3d mtg. at 5, U.N. Doc. A/C.6/65/SR.3 (Oct. 5, 2010): "His delegation opposed the application of double standards in combating terrorism, as such standards contravened international humanitarian law, human rights law and the rule of law."

Lebanese Republic

- Annex 36 — Lebanon: U.N. GAOR, 78th Sess., 19th mtg. at 3, U.N. Doc. A/C.6/78/SR.19 (Oct. 19, 2023): "[T]he current situation in Gaza continued to test the humanity of the international community, its so-called 'universal' values and its respect for the rules of international law. The events of recent days in Gaza, and the experiences of the Palestinian people over past decades, laid bare the selective indignation and double standards with which international law was applied."
- Annex 37 — Lebanon: U.N. GAOR, 78th Sess., 2d mtg. at 14, U.N. Doc. A/C.6/78/SR.2 (Oct. 2, 2023): "Terrorist groups and recruiters often sought to exploit grievances, such as protracted conflicts, double standards in the application of international law, political instability, socioeconomic disparities, poverty and exclusion. Such grievances should therefore be addressed through preventive efforts."

State of Libya

- Annex 38 — Libya: U.N. GAOR, 65th Sess., 32d mtg. at 7, U.N. Doc. A/C.3/65/SR.32 (Oct. 27, 2010): "Lack of consistency on the part of the international community with regard to human rights violations created uncertainty, undermined the credibility of the justice system and created the spectre of a system of double standards based on ideological or political motivations."
- Annex 39 — Libya: U.N. GAOR, 56th Sess., 25th mtg. at 6, U.N. Doc. A/C.6/56/SR.25 (Nov. 12, 2001): "To that end, it was essential that international instruments should be implemented on the basis of justice, equality and impartiality, with due regard for cultural diversity and respect for the legitimate interests and recognized rights of peoples, and without selectivity, politicization or the application of double standards."

United Mexican States

- Annex 40 — Mexico: U.N. GAOR, 57th Sess., 7th mtg. at 4, U.N. Doc. A/C.6/57/SR.7 (Oct. 2, 2002): "Compliance with humanitarian standards did not allow for double standards or equivocation."

Republic of the Union of Myanmar

- Annex 41 — Myanmar: U.N. GAOR, 70th Sess., 33d mtg. at 11, U.N. Doc. A/C.3/70/SR.33 (Oct. 29, 2015): "[C]ountry-specific mandates and resolutions were contrary to the principles of non-selectivity, universality, impartiality and objectivity. The [Third] Committee's deliberations should be guided by those principles and exclude double standards and politicization."

Nepal

- Annex 42 — Nepal: U.N. GAOR, 78th Sess., 2d mtg. at 12, U.N. Doc. A/C.6/78/SR.2 (Oct. 2, 2023): "It was unacceptable to condone double standards in dealing with terrorism."

Islamic Republic of Pakistan

- Annex 43 — Pakistan: U.N. GAOR, 65th Sess., 10th mtg. at 20, U.N. Doc. A/C.1/65/PV.10 (Oct. 14, 2010): "Equally important, the entire edifice of disarmament and arms control and non-proliferation is being gravely undermined through the pursuit of discriminatory policies based on double standards. In embracing notions of balance of power and containment and seeking monetary gain, certain major Powers have blatantly violated the so-called non-proliferation norms that they themselves put into place. South Asia is the first region to confront this policy of discrimination and double standards."

State of Palestine

- Annex 44 — Palestine: U.N. GAOR, 73d Sess., 79th plen. mtg. at 42, U.N. Doc. A/73/PV.79 (Apr. 24, 2019): "To be just and to be efficient, multilateralism must be based on international law. It requires consistency, as double standards erode the credibility of the international system."

State of Qatar

- Annex 45 — Qatar: U.N. GAOR, 62d Sess., 51st plen. mtg. at 13, U.N. Doc. A/62/PV.51 (Nov. 14, 2007): "In our vision, a reformed Security Council should represent regional dynamics. Its composition should be flexible and better able to respond to global changes and to the new power structures. It should be a Council that does not support privilege or double standards."

Russian Federation

- Annex 46 — Russia: Press Release, General Assembly, With Judicial Duty Ongoing, Mechanism for Closed Rwanda, Former Yugoslavia Criminal Tribunals Has 'Still Important Work to Conclude' President Tells General Assembly, U.N. Press Release GA/12646 (Oct. 16, 2024): stating, with respect to the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia, that "[d]ouble standards were used to prosecute some while 'turning a blind eye' to other 'monstrous acts'."
- Annex 47 — Russia: U.N. GAOR, 78th Sess., 5th mtg. at 30, U.N. Doc. A/C.1/78/PV.5 (Oct. 5, 2023): "On the other hand, it would be wrong not to comment on such a clear and striking illustration of beholding the mote in thy brother's eye while ignoring the beam in thine own eye — in other words, double standards."
- Annex 48 — Russia: U.N. GAOR, 75th Sess., 13th mtg. at 38, U.N. Doc. A/C.1/75/PV.13 (Nov. 6, 2020): "While the Convention merely declares a complete ban on cluster munitions, in reality it is aimed at reorganizing the market for such weapons based on banning so-called bad cluster munitions but permitting a specific high-tech type, to the benefit of a specific group of munitions-producing States, which we view as a manifestation of a double standard."

Saint Lucia

- Annex 49 — Saint Lucia: U.N. GAOR, 65th Sess., 15th plen. mtg. at 49–50, U.N. Doc. A/65/PV.15 (Sept. 24, 2010): "When the World Trade Organization (WTO) ruled against our preferential regime on bananas, we were told that we had to comply. Now that the WTO has ruled in favour of our efforts in the services sector — I am speaking here of the favourable ruling we received on the gaming dispute referred to the WTO by Antigua and Barbuda — there is reluctance to comply. We cannot have double standards. We therefore urge all parties to agree on mutually agreed principles that govern the conduct of relations among States, large or small, in order for everyone to be treated fairly."

Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

- Annex 50 — Saudi Arabia: U.N. GAOR, 64th Sess., 51st plen. mtg. at 24, U.N. Doc. A/64/PV.51 (Nov. 30, 2009): "Whatever the complexity of details and differences in interests and positions with respect to the question of Palestine, the solutions must meet one sole criterion — namely, comprehensive compliance with international legitimacy, international law and international justice that allows no exception, double standard or selectivity."

Republic of Sudan

- Annex 51 — Sudan: U.N. GAOR, 61st Sess., 20th mtg. at 4–5, U.N. Doc. A/C.6/61/SR.20 (Nov. 6, 2006): "At the national level, there were rules to ensure the equality of rights and obligations, but at the international level the sovereign equality of States was no more than an abstract principle, because the Security Council frequently interfered in matters within the purview of the General Assembly. Its decision-making was selective and often based on double standards."
- Annex 52 — Sudan: U.N. GAOR, 55th Sess., 13th mtg. at 6, U.N. Doc. A/C.1/55/PV.13 (Oct. 13, 2000): "Israel's continued defiance of the international community, the encouragement it receives from a super-Power and that super-Power's silence in the face of Israel's aggressive intentions and practices and its refusal to participate in disarmament efforts reflect the policies of hypocrisy and double standard practised by that Power, which pressures vulnerable States to accede even to conventions that are less important than the NPT [Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons] while shamelessly placing all its nuclear and military expertise at Israel's disposal."

Syrian Arab Republic

- Annex 53 — Syria: U.N. GAOR, 64th Sess., 53d plen. mtg. at 6, U.N. Doc. A/64/PV.53 (Dec. 1, 2009): "The impunity and double standards that Israel enjoys, despite its crimes, must come to an end."
- Annex 54 — Syria: U.N. GAOR, 58th Sess., 9th plen. mtg. at 5, U.N. Doc. A/C.6/58/SR.9 (Oct. 20, 2003): "The danger of State terrorism demanded joint international action, free of partiality and double standards."
- Annex 55 — Syria: U.N. GAOR, 58th Sess., 5th mtg. at 6, U.N. Doc. A/C.6/58/SR.5 (Oct. 10, 2003): "[E]xtremely concerned at the policy of double standards and the prevalence of political criteria in implementation of the sanctions regime."
- Annex 56 — Syria: U.N. GAOR, 55th Sess., 7th mtg. at 8, U.N. Doc. A/C.6/55/SR.7 (Oct. 13, 2000): "The double standard used to impose sanctions was disturbing. For example, Israel, which threatened peace and security in the Middle East through the use of its weapons of mass destruction and its occupation of Arab territories in violation of Security Council resolutions, was sanction-free."

United Republic of Tanzania

- Annex 57 — Tanzania: U.N. GAOR, 65th Sess., 11th mtg. at 8, UN doc. A/C.6/65/SR.11 (Oct. 13, 2010): "[A]lthough the principle of universal jurisdiction was well established, there were divergent views on the conditions for its

exercise both in principle and in practice. It was therefore important for the international community to define the concept and clarify its scope, application and limitations. The issue was a sensitive one, and Member States must reach a common understanding in order to guide national courts. The obligations of States must be clarified in order to minimize the risk of double standards or politically motivated misuse."

Republic of Tunisia

- Annex 58 — Tunisia: U.N. GAOR, 78th Sess., 18th mtg. at 3, U.N. Doc. A/C.6/78/SR.18 (Oct. 18, 2024): "The international community must ensure universal respect for international humanitarian law and should emphatically condemn war crimes, such as the bombing of a hospital in Gaza which had killed hundreds of sick and injured civilians. The application of double standards undermined trust between States, further deepened divisions, increased polarization and weakened the rule of law."

Republic of Türkiye

- Annex 59 — Türkiye: U.N. GAOR, 61st Sess., 4th mtg. at 2, U.N. Doc. A/C.6/61/SR.4 (Oct. 13, 2006): "[T]he full and effective implementation of the [UN Global Counter-Terrorism] Strategy was an even more demanding challenge, in the face of which there was no room for complacency, discrimination or double standards."

United States of America

- Annex 60 — United States: U.N. GAOR, 73d Sess., 47th plen. mtg. at 3, U.N. Doc. A/73/PV.47 (Dec. 6, 2018): "Since coming to the United Nations, everyone in this Hall has heard me talk about double standards and the fact that we need fairness in the United Nations. We take on heavy concerns and issues, and the answers are not always easy. But if we do not exercise fairness, we have nothing else. This is not about a motion; it is about doing what is right. The General Assembly has never said anything — not one thing — about Hamas, even when we all agree that the behaviour of Hamas undermines any prospects for peace. The General Assembly has never uttered the word 'Hamas' in any resolution."

Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela

- Annex 61 — Venezuela: U.N. GAOR, 62d Sess., 16th mtg. at 4, U.N. Doc. A/C.6/62/SR.16 (Oct. 26, 2007): "At the international level, the realization of a system in which the rule of law prevailed would remain a utopian aspiration until a democratic regime was established within the United Nations. Excessive

politicization of the Security Council had often hindered implementation of the mandates of the General Assembly, giving rise in recent years to repeated violations of the sovereignty of States, interference in their internal affairs and military occupations that were in clear violation of international law. The United Nations had thus far been unable to prevent the application of double standards with respect to compliance with internationally agreed rules, which had resulted in discrimination and selectivity, generating a climate of injustice and damaging the Organization's credibility. Only by democratizing and strengthening the United Nations would it be possible to ensure that international law was equitably applied and enforced."

- Annex 62 — Venezuela: U.N. GAOR, 60th Sess., 6th mtg. at 5, U.N. Doc. A/C.6/60/SR.6 (Oct. 10, 2005): "[I]n the interests of brevity he would refer to the portion of the statement made by his delegation under the agenda item in the 5th meeting, which denounced the inconsistencies and double standards inherent in the counter-terrorism policy of the United States Government as manifested by its response to the request for extradition of Luís Posada Carriles."

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