

To:

All Permanent Missions to the United Nations in Geneva and New York

Cc:

UN Secretary General  
UN High Commissioner for Human Rights  
Chairpersons of the Human Rights Treaty Bodies  
Coordination Committee of UN Special Procedures

28 May 2019

**Open NGO letter regarding the critical funding gap affecting UN human rights mechanisms and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights**

It is with a sense of urgency that we convey our deep concern regarding the critical funding situation affecting the UN's human rights mechanisms and OHCHR. We understand that the combination of delays in payments of UN member states' assessed contributions to the regular budget and the 25% cut to travel of UN representatives, including treaty body experts and Special Procedure mandate holders, and other budget cuts (2018-2019) may adversely impact on the capacity of various human rights mechanisms to carry out their mandates effectively.

In April, the Chairpersons of the 10 human rights treaty bodies were informed that due to the financial situation, the autumn 2019 sessions of six treaty bodies may need to be cancelled.<sup>1</sup> Not only is the cancellation of treaty body sessions deeply worrying as it may involve cancellation of reviews already scheduled and delay decisions on individual communications pending before the Committees but it also sends a troubling message ahead of the 2020 treaty body strengthening discussions. This unprecedented development would come as we celebrate the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women.

We understand that other independent expert mechanisms such as the Special Procedures, and other mechanisms created by the Human Rights Council such as Fact-Finding Missions and Commissions of Inquiry, may also be hampered in carrying out their mandates to monitor and investigate human rights violations.

As of 10 May, only 44 UN member states had paid all their assessments due to the UN. We would like to commend Armenia, Australia, Austria, Bahrain, Bhutan, Brunei Darussalam, Canada, China, Cuba, Cyprus, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Gabon, Georgia, Germany, Guyana, Hungary, Iceland, India, Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Malawi, Malaysia, Monaco, Nauru, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Norway, Poland, Rwanda, Samoa, Singapore, Slovakia, Solomon Islands, Sweden, Switzerland and Tuvalu for having done so.<sup>2</sup> 98 member states had paid their regular budget assessments by 20 May 2019.

The failure to pay assessed contributions is only the latest in a worrying trend of shortfalls and cuts affecting the UN budget allocated to its human rights mechanisms. In the 2018-2019 budget the General Assembly made adjustments to reduce the resources for experts by 15 per cent, reduce the travel of representatives by 25 per cent, and reduce resources for travel of staff by 10 per cent<sup>3</sup>, all without taking into account the disproportionate effect these decisions would have on the UN's human rights mechanism. Only 3.7 per cent of the total UN regular budget is currently allocated to OHCHR<sup>4</sup>. We are extremely concerned by reports that the funding gap may affect the functioning of OHCHR and the human rights mechanisms in 2020 and beyond.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=24621&LangID=E>

<sup>2</sup> <http://undocs.org/en/A/73/443/Add.1>, para. 26 and <https://www.un.org/en/ga/contributions/honourroll.shtml> accessed on 27 May 2019.

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.un.org/press/en/2017/gaab4270.doc.htm>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/AboutUs/Pages/FundingBudget.aspx>

Against the worrying background of a global pushback against the promotion and protection of human rights, we urge all UN member states to:

- Pay their assessed contributions without further delay, unless they have already done so, in order to assure the functioning of the UN's human rights mechanisms.
- Prioritise securing adequate funding for the UN's human rights pillar, with the promotion and protection of human rights being also indispensable to development, peace and security.
- Initiate, in due time ahead of the 2020-2021 budget negotiations, discussions on how to reverse the trend of reduced regular budget for OHCHR and assuring that the UN's human rights mechanisms are not disproportionately affected by over-all cuts to the UN budget, including by restoring the budget allocation for travel of representatives for these mechanisms.

Signatories:

A 11 - Initiative for Economic and Social Rights	Action on Child, Early and Forced Marriage	American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU)
Abogados y abogadas del Noroeste argentino en derechos humanos y estudios sociales (Andhes)	ActionAid International	Amnesty International
ACADHOSHA (Action des Chrétiens Activistes des Droits de l'Homme à Shabunda)	Activist	ALQST for Human Rights
ACAT	Adalah - The Legal Center for Arab Minority Rights in Israel	Arab Women Network for Parity and Solidarity
ACAT Belgium	Addu women's Association (AWA)	Articulación Feminista Marcosur
ACAT Canada	Adska ong	ASEAN SOGIE Caucus
ACAT Congo	Advocacy for women in peace and security- Africa	Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development (FORUM-ASIA)
ACAT Ghana	Afghan Women Network	Asian Legal Resource Centre (ALRC)
ACAT Italia	Afghan Women News Agency Organization	Asian Migrants' Coordinating Body (AMCB-IMA)
ACAT Luxembourg	Afghan women Skills Development Center	Asociace romskych predstavitelu Libereckeho kraje z.s.
ACAT Tchad	Agir Ensemble pour les Droits de l'Homme (AEDH)	Asociación Ciudadana ACCEDER
ACAT- Benin	Aid Organization	Asociación de Mujeres Afrodescendientes de Yolombo - ASOMUAFROYO.
ACAT- NIGER	Al-Zahraa: Organization for the Advancement of Women	Asociación de Mujeres Afrodescendientes del Norte del Cauca- ASOM
ACAT-Brasil	Alhaq	Asociacion Tesai Reka Paraguay
ACAT-Burundi	All Okinawa Council for Human Rights	assiwar--the feminist arab movement
ACAT-Cameroun	Allamin Foundation for Peace and Development	Associace Romskych Rodicu z.s.
ACAT-France	Alliance Globale contre les Mutilations Génitales Féminines	
ACAT-Switzerland		
ACAT-USA		
Action femme de valeur		
Action Jeunesse pour le Développement		

Association "MARTA Centre"	Blind Women Association, Nepal (BWAN)	Centro de Derechos Humanos Fray Bartolomé de Las Casas AC
Association for Civil Rights in Israel	Botswana Watch Organization	Centro de Derechos Humanos Miguel Agustín Pro Juárez
Association for Cultural and Media Activism QUEER SQUARE Skopje	Breakthrough Trust	Centro de derechos humanos pasó del Norte
Association for Emancipation, Solidarity and Equality	Bridgebuilders Trust	Centro de estudios de la mujer
Association for the Prevention of Torture	Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies	Centro de Estudios Legales y Sociales (CELS)
Association for Women's Rights in Development (AWID)	Cambodian Center for Human Rights ("CCHR")	Child Rights International Network
Association of Parents of Disappeared Persons	Canadian Coalition for the Rights of Children	CHOICE for Youth and Sexuality
Association for Progressive Communications (APC)	Canadian Feminist Alliance for International Action	Church of Norway Council on Ecumenical and International Relations
Association of War Affected Women	Canadian HIV/AIDS Legal Network	CIDEM
Association of Women for Action and Research	CBM	CISCESA
ASTRA-Anti trafficking action	Center for Justice and International Law	CIVICUS: World Alliance for citizen participation
ATFD	Center for Legal Civic Initiatives	Civil Rights Defenders
ATTA LKER	Center for Media, Data and Society, Central European University	CKLP
AUDF	Center for Reproductive Rights	CNRS
Avocats Sans Frontières France	Center for Women's Global Leadership (CWGL)	Coalition Burkinabe des Défenseurs des Droits Humains (CBDDH)
Awen Amenca z.s.	Centre Catholique International de Genève	COALITION CEDEF ET LES ANGES DU CIEL
Bahamas Crisis Centre	Centre for Civil and Political Rights	Coalition for Sexual and Bodily Rights in Muslim Societies
Bahrain Center for Human Rights	Centre for Indigenous Cultures of Peru	Coast Education Centre (COEC)
Baidarie	Centre for Migration, Refugees and Belonging, The University of East London	COC Nederland
Bairo Pite Clinic Lanud, Timor-Leste	Centre for Social Concern and Development (CESOCODE)	Colectiva Ciudad y Género ac
Balance Promoción para el Desarrollo y Juventud AC	Centro de Derechos Humanos de las Mujeres (CEDEHM)	Collectif des Associations Contre l'Impunité au Togo CACIT
Better World Campaign		COLLECTIF DES AVOCATS POUR LA DEFENSE DES VICTIMES DES CRIMES DE DROIT

INTERNATIONAL  
COMMIS AUX BURUNDI

CoMensha

Comisión de Derechos  
Humanos - COMISEDH

Comisión Mexicana de  
Defensa y Promoción de  
los Derechos Humanos

Comité de América Latina  
y el Caribe para la  
Defensa de los Derechos  
de las Mujeres

Comité Víctimas Lesa  
Humanidad y Graves  
Violaciones DDHH  
Ecuador

Committees for the  
defense of democracy  
freedoms and Human  
Rights in Syria(C.D.F)

Commonwealth Human  
Rights Initiative (CHRI)

Community Work Ireland

Conectas Direitos  
Humanos

CONGCOOP

Congregation of Our Lady  
of Charity of the Good  
Shepherd

Congrès Mondial  
Amazigh

Consorcio para el Diálogo  
Parlamentario y la  
Equidad Oaxaca A.C.

Continental Network of  
Indigenous Women of the  
Americas

Contra Nocendi  
International

Cook Islands National  
Council of Women

cooperation committee  
for Cambodia (CCC)

Coordinadora de la Mujer

Coordinadora Lesbica y  
de Hombres Trans-  
Republika Libre

Corte suprema de justicia

Cotidiano Mujer, Uruguay

CROISADE-NIGER

Czech Women's Lobby /  
Česká ženská lobby

Dalit NGO Federation  
(DNF), Nepal

Damascus Center for  
Human Rights Studies

Darfur Network for  
monitoring and  
Documentation

Defence for Children  
International

DefendDefenders (the  
East and Horn of Africa  
Human Rights Defenders  
Project)

Dejusticia

Democracy Today

Democratic Party, Hong  
Kong

Director, Comparative  
Governance and Policy  
Research Cente,  
Department of  
Government &  
International Studies,  
Hong Kong Baptist  
University

DIVA for Equality

Dóchas

Dominicans for Justice  
and Peace

Dublin Rape Crisis Centre

Dutch CEDAW Network

Earthjustice

Echoes of Women in  
Africa Initiatives

ECPAT France

Edmund Rice  
International

Education Coalition

Equality Now

European Center for Not-  
for-Profit Law

European Network of  
People of African Descent  
- ENPAD

European Roma Rights  
Centre

Fédération Euro-  
Méditerranéenne contre  
les Disparitions Forcées -  
FEMED

Feminist Legal Clinic Inc.

Femmes et Droits  
Humains

FIACAT

First Nations Child and  
Family Caring Society of  
Canada

FOKUS

Fondazione Pangea onlus

Foundation Ultimate  
Purpose

FRANCISCANS  
INTERNATIONAL

Freelance

Fundación Arcoiris

Fundación de Mujeres  
Luna Creciente

Fuuse

Gender Alliance for  
Development Centre

Gender and Sociology

Gender Equality Network

Geneva for Human Rights  
(GHR)

Geten, Center for  
LGBTIQA People's Rights

GIN-SSOGIE

Global Detention Project

Global Initiative for  
Economic, Social and  
Cultural Rights

Global Network of Sex  
Work Projects

GQUAL Campaign

Greek Helsinki Monitor

Groupe d'action pour les droits de la femme	Independent Medico-Legal Unit	investigacion para el desarrollo
Gulf Centre for Human Rights (GCHR)	Indigenous Movement for Peace Advancement and Conflict Transformation(IMPACT)	Irish Council for Civil Liberties
Gypsy Cooperative Uk	Iniciativa Mesoamericana de Defensoras de Derechos Humanos (IM-Defensoras)	Jacob Blaustein Institute for the Advancement of Human Rights
Gypsy Council	İnsan Hakları Derneği / Human Rights Association - Turkey	Jammu Kashmir Coalition of Civil Society
Hazte Visible A.C.	Instituto de liderazgo Simone de Beauvoir AC	JANANEETHI
HCLU	International Action Network for Gender Equity & Law	Justice for Iran (JFI)
Health and Human Rights Info	International Association for Human Rights Advocacy in Geneva	Karapatan Philippines
HELP Resources	International Civil Society Action Network (ICAN)	Kenya Human Rights Commission
HK Human Rights Monitor	International Commission of Jurists	Klagsverband/Litigation Association of NGOs against discrimination
Honduras Forum Switzerland	International Council of Women	LA VOIX DES SANS VOIX POUR LES DROITS DE L'HOMME (VSV)
Hong Kong Unison	International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH)	Las Reinas Chulas Cabaret Y Derechos Humanos AC
Human Rights Alert	International Federation of Settlements and Neighborhood Centers	Latvian Human Rights Committee (FIDH)
Human Rights Center of Azerbaijan	International Indigenous Women's Forum	League for the Defence of Human Rights in Iran (LDDHI)
Human Rights Committee, Norwegian Psychological Association	International Justice Resource Center	Legal Resources Centre
Human Rights Commission of Pakistan	International Movement Against All Forms of Discrimination and Racism (IMADR)	Ligue Algerienne de Defense des Droits de l'Homme
Human Rights Defenders Network-SL	International Rehabilitation Council for Torture Victims (IRCT)	LIGUE DES DEFENSEURS REGIONAUX
Human Rights House Foundation	International Women's Rights Action Watch Asia Pacific	Lutheran World Federation
Human Rights in China	Intersex Human Rights Australia	MADRE
Human Rights Law Centre		Maharat Foundation
Human Rights Watch		MARUAH
Humanists International		Masimanyane Women's Right's International
IBAHRI		MASUM
IDHEAS, Litigio Estratégico en Derechos Humanos-México		MEDITERRANEAN WOMEN MEDIATORS NETWORK
ILGA World		
ILGA-Europe		
Ilsb		
IM Swedish Development Partner		
Independent		

Member of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues	Norwegian Humanist Association	Plataforma Internacional contra la Impunidad
MENA Rights Group	Odhikar, Bangladesh	Positive Women (Ukraine)
MenEngage Global Alliance	ODRI intersectional rights	Pro Sentret
Minority Rights Group - Greece	Okogun Odigie Safewomb International Foundation (OOSAIF)	Proceso de Comunidades Negras
Minotenk - minoritetspolitisk tenketank	Omega Research Foundation	Project on Organizing, Development, Education and Research (PODER)
Mongolia	OMOD	Promo LEX Association, Moldova
Moroccan association for human rights	Organisation Marocaine des Droits Humains	PUBLIC COMMITTEE AGAINST TORTURE IN ISRAEL
Movilización de Mujeres Negras por el Cuidado de Vida y los Territorios Ancestrales. Premio Goldman 2018	Oslo Metropolitan University (Oslomet)	Radha Paudel Foundation
Mujeres Transformando el Mundo	Østsamene	RCMD
Musawah	OutRight Action International	Reacción Climática
Muslim Women's Network UK	Oxfam	Reactor - Research in Action
National Council of Women New Zealand	Pacific Partnerships on Gender, Climate Change and Sustainable Development (PPGCCSD) -Regional	REAMA Network network for the empowerment of women and self help support
NATIONAL UNION OF DOMESTIC EMPLOYEES	PACIFICWIN	REd de Educación Popular entre Mujeres REPEM -LAC
National Women's Council of Ireland	PAIMAN	Red Nacional de Mujeres - Colombia
Nauru Island Association of NGOs	Palestinian Center for development And Media Freedoms-MADA	Red Nacional de Organismos Civiles de Derechos Humanos Todos los Derechos para Todas y Todos (conformada por 87 organizaciones de 23 entidades federativas de México)
NGO Committe for CSW Latin America and the Caribbean	Partido Revolucionario Febrerista	REDRESS Trust
NGO Women for Development	PARTNERSHIP FOR WOMEN'S HEALTH AND WELLBEING	Rescue Me-crime prevention
NGO-Coordination post Beijing Switzerland	PathFinders Limited	Réseau International des Droits Humains (RIDH)
Noon Center for Women and Family Issues	Peace Brigades International	RESPECT Network
North Wales Regional Equality Network	Peace Foundation Pakistan	RFSL - The Swedish Federation for LGBTQ Rights
Norwegian Centre against Racism	People's Watch - INDIA	
Norwegian Helsinki Committee	Philippine Alliance of Human Rights Advocates ( PAHRA)	
	Piattaforma CEDAW Italia Lavori in corsa	
	Plan International	

Rights for All Women	The Canada OPCAT Project	University Of The West Indies
Rivers without Boundaries International Coalition	The Egyptian initiative for personal rights (EIPR)	UPR Info
Roma Future z.s.	The MiRA Resource Center for black, migrant and refugee women	US Human Rights Network
ROMEA	The MiRA Resource Center for black, migrant and refugee women in Norway	Uthema Maldives
Saami Council	The Negev Coexistence Forum	Validity Foundation - Mental Disability Advocacy Centre
Sayoni, Singapore	The Norwegian Bar Association Human Rights Committee	Vision Spring Initiatives
Secretary	The Norwegian Confederation of Trade Unions	Vzájemně soužití (Life Together)
Shah-Aiym Network	THE NORWEGIAN HUMAN RIGHTS FUND	Wenshe Centre for Human Rights Education
Shirkat Gah Women's Resource Centre	The Norwegian Support Committee for Western Sahara	Wi'am
Sistren Theatre Collective	The Regional Diversity Roundtable	Woman Inc (Woman Incorporated)
SOLIDARITE FEMININE POUR LA PAIX ET LE DEVELOPPEMENT INTEGRAL, Ong	The YP Foundation	Women Against Rape Inc.
Solidarity Network with Migrants Japan	Think Young Women	WOMEN AGAINST VIOLENCE
SOS Children's Villages International	Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy	Women and Media Collective
Spatium Libertas AC	TRIAL International	Women Peace Network (32701)
Spiralis z.s.	Trócaire	Women's Active Museum on War and Peace(WAM)
STIR: Stop Institutional Racism	Tunisian Human Rights League	Women's Human Rights Education Institute
Success Capital Organisation	UN Association of the United States of America (UNA-USA)	Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF)
Swedish Muslims in Cooperation Network	UNFPA	Women's Rights Center
Syrian Center for Media and Freedom of Expression (SCM)	Unidad de Protección a Defensoras y Defensores de Derechos Humanas - Guatemala	Women's International Solutions for Equality (A WISE Network)
Syrian Network for Human Rights	United Nations Association of Norway	Women's Link Worldwide
Tafawuq Consulting Center for Development	University	World Organisation Against Torture
Tais Plus	University of Kent	XUMEK
Taternes Landsforening		Youth Initiative for Human Rights in Bosnia and Herzegovina
TEDS Trust		YWCA Canada
Teresian Association		جمعية الحقوقيات المصريات
Terra Mater		
The Advocates for Human Rights		

