

UNGA72 | Third Committee advocacy update

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Following up on our [GA Alert](#) for the 72nd session of the UN General Assembly, we collected the most important updates on upcoming resolutions of the Third Committee.



The Third Committee has been in session for four weeks, engaged in dialogues with UN Special Procedures, the High Commissioner for Human Rights as well as in general dialogue on a range of human rights issues. In parallel, Committee members have been participating in 'informals' – negotiations on a wide range of texts. Negotiations will conclude when the Third Committee 'takes action' on the texts in a public session before or on the final day of session, 22 November.

The draft resolution on human rights defenders

The draft resolution on human rights defenders has received a full reading, and some changes have been made to accommodate concerns of certain delegations.

The draft resolution focuses on encouraging implementation of the Declaration on Human Rights Defenders, through activities including:

- the promotion of the Declaration at national and regional levels
- the preparation of a report, by the Secretary-General, on the ways in which UN bodies can give due consideration to the Declaration in their work, and good practices related to provision of technical assistance and capacity building by UN system
- the convening of a high-level plenary meeting of the UN General Assembly in 2018 to give impetus to the promotion of the Declaration

The draft resolution also encourages all stakeholders – including civil society – to report on activities to raise awareness of the Declaration and its implementation to the General Assembly in 2018. The Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) is asked to prepare a compilation of this input for the high-level plenary meeting.

To read the full draft resolution, click [here](#).

A second round of 'informal' negotiations to discuss the text will take place in early November.

ISHR considers the focus on implementation of the Declaration on Human Rights Defenders to be a very positive one. We have long emphasised the need for better systems to measure, monitor and report on implementations, as a means to encourage increased and more effective action by States to safeguard the work of human rights defenders.

It is important that the envisaged high-level plenary meeting allows for the greatest degree of civil society participation possible. Negotiations of the modalities for the event must be avoided, as they generally result in restrictions of access and participation for civil society.

Strong cross-regional support for this resolution will be important to signal global support of action to promote and protect the work of human rights defenders.

The draft resolution on national human rights institutions

The last General Assembly resolution on national human rights institutions (NHRIs) two years ago was a considerable step forward. UN mechanisms and processes were encouraged to enhance the participation of 'A' status national human rights institutions in their work. This year's resolution welcomes all progress made in regard to NHRIs' participation and encourages their participation in further UN bodies.

The previous resolution was passed by consensus, with 91 co-sponsors. Hopes are that this year's resolution can keep up or increase this level of support. This would be a key signal to the important and unique work of NHRIs and the value of NHRIs' expertise to global normative and policy discussions.

Burundi - suspension from the UN Human Rights Council

The report of the Commission of Inquiry on the Human Rights Situation in Burundi is chilling. The Commission believes that there are reasonable grounds to believe that crimes against humanity have been - and continue to be - carried out by State officials at the highest level. Meanwhile, Burundi is a member of the world's global human rights body - the Human Rights Council - with which it has consistently failed to cooperate.

It is time for UN General Assembly members to suspend Burundi from the Human Rights Council. Burundi's attitude toward members of the Commission of Inquiry during the presentation of the Commission's report to the Third Committee simply underlined their unsuitability for Council membership. The member States of the General Assembly must defend the standards and ideals of the United Nations and suspend Burundi urgently.

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