

## [UNGA72 | Funding cut threatens audit of effectiveness of UN support to defenders](#)

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**A UN Third Committee decision for the Secretary General to produce a comprehensive report on how the UN works to protect human rights defenders is threatened by funding cuts. The UN Fifth Committee - the finance committee - must recommend full funding for this project, fulfilling the expectation of those supportive of maximizing support to defenders globally.**



The UN General Assembly Third Committee was of one mind when it passed a resolution on human rights defenders one month ago - more needs to be done to implement human rights commitments and to maximize the impact of UN agencies on the protection of human rights defenders.

'The Third Committee resolution is an important first step in pushing for more effective responses to protect defenders', said ISHR's Eleanor Openshaw.

One of the key activities the [Third Committee resolution](#) envisages is a report, in the name of the Secretary General, to assess the ways in which UN bodies incorporate the promotion and protection of human rights defenders in their work.

Production of the report requires funding. This is the first time the Third Committee has requested financial support for their political ambitions regarding defenders. The Committee requested funds for a 6-month UN post, allowing for comprehensive research and the preparation of well founded recommendations.

'We understand that the request for funding of a 6 month post was already on the conservative side. The task envisaged in researching and producing the report is considerable,' said ISHR's Tess McEvoy.

However, the request for funds has run into an obstacle. Funding for UN activities needs to be approved by the UNGA Fifth Committee - the finance committee. It, in turn, receives recommendations from a body of experts, the ACABQ. The ACABQ has requested a 50% cut in funding for production of the report.

Whilst the Fifth Committee generally accepts recommendations of the ACABQ, there is no requirement that it do so.

'The report the Third Committee has requested focuses on maximizing UN impact. It makes sense to invest in increasing UN effectiveness,' said Openshaw. 'The Fifth Committee must not follow the recommendation of the ACABQ.'

Norway's lead negotiator for the resolution, Geir Sjoberg, emphasized the importance of ensuring full funding.

**Geir Sjoberg** @GeirSjoberg · 1h

#HRDefenders work around the world to make society better. In return they're criminalized, curtailed, killed. Unacceptable. UN Budget Committee must now approve funds to move unanimously agreed UN work forward!  
@UNHumanRights

Debate on the funding of human rights activities, including [the work of treaty bodies - which is also under pressure](#) - is being held in a context of discussions of [large scale funding cuts](#). This context combined with exhaustion of Fifth Committee experts, could contribute to consensus outcomes where small ticket items fall by the wayside.

'The funding of the production of the report is small fry in comparison to some of resourcing issues the Fifth Committee is currently considering,' said McEvoy. 'This is why States must pay attention to all items before

them and to the human rights impact of their decisions.’

Shepherding the Third Committee resolution through to completion requires going through a couple more hoops. The Fifth Committee decision, expected any time, will then need to be approved by the UN General Assembly Plenary. In light of decisions on funding, the General Assembly Plenary will then return to consider the original Third Committee resolution. They have until the end of day Friday, 22 December 2017 to complete their work.

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