

Rights groups call on States to #PayYourDues

The failure of States to pay their membership dues to the United Nations (UN) in full and on time is causing a [financial liquidity crisis](#) for the organisation. [According to the UN Secretary-General](#), the UN faced the highest level of arrears in its history at the end of 2023, the impacts of which are being felt by victims and survivors of human rights violations and abuses. As of 10 April 2024, [only 100 UN member States](#) have paid their dues in full. Human rights groups call on all member States to pay their contributions in line with their legal obligations under the UN Charter (article 17, paragraph 2)

The UN as a whole, and the Human Rights Council and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights specifically, have deliberated various [measures](#) and [proposals](#) to conserve cash, including through freezing the recruitment of staff to mechanisms created by States, and postponements and partial fulfilment of key mandated activities. We remind States that what is being traded off are priorities brought to the UN by human rights defenders and affected populations and agreed to by governments themselves. On the global level, as [repeatedly highlighted](#) by the UN Secretary-General, the international human rights system is indispensable to ensure stability by promoting conflict prevention and sustainable development.

The cuts to Special Procedures' activities, including limitations to the number of country visits and the cancellation of the annual meeting, severely restrict the possibilities for rights holders to directly engage with what has typically been one of the UN's most accessible mechanisms. It also reduces mandate holders' access to situations on the ground and the engagement with authorities at the domestic level for positive human rights change and to promote the rights of victims and rights holders.

Decisions forced by the liquidity crisis, among them the announcement of some treaty bodies to [cancel pre-sessional working groups](#) and threats to further cancellations including of sessions, are of great concern. Not only would crucial assessments of compliance with the treaties be put on hold, but it would also lead to increased backlogs of both state-party reports for review and exacerbate existing backlogs of individual communications. Attention also needs to be paid to ensuring increased and continuous funding for accessibility for persons with disabilities to allow for their effective participation in all UN treaty bodies¹.

Investigative mechanisms created to respond to mass atrocities in places including [Sudan](#), Myanmar, Syria, Ukraine, Iran and Israel/OPT, particularly in supporting criminal prosecutions of perpetrators, are already or will be severely hindered in their ability to collect witness and victim testimonies and first-hand accounts through cuts in travel budgets as well as staffing. Many such mechanisms were created following sustained calls for accountability from affected communities themselves, and barriers to their functioning will not only make accountability more remote but will damage the UN's credibility in addressing such atrocities.

¹ In line with the 2023 Conclusions of the Chairs of the human rights treaty bodies on the OHCHR working paper and the UN Disability Inclusion Strategy.

There are real risks that the cash flow crisis will be instrumentalised to impose unnecessary restrictions, particularly on civil society access and participation at the UN. Online and hybrid modalities for participation do not require heavy financial investments, and the gains are meaningful, especially considering factors such as environmental impact, costs of travel, visa restrictions, accessibility for persons with disabilities and the increased risks of reprisals against individuals engaging with the UN.

Finally, the human rights pillar of the UN remains significantly underfunded, receiving only 4% of the regular UN budget. By exacerbating these deficiencies, the UN member States are sending a clear message that human rights and their implementation are optional and not inalienable. Resolving the cash flow problems this year will not meaningfully or sustainably address the financial challenges of the system's human rights bodies, mechanisms and processes that are so important to rights holders.

We call on all States to:

1. Pay their dues to the UN in full and without delay, both now and in future years;
2. In their deliberations on cost-cutting measures, ensure that all stakeholders are consulted and that a victim-centred approach is taken when considering prioritisation for funding; and
3. Strengthen the human rights pillar of the UN by substantially increasing its regular budget.

We invite OHCHR to regularly provide civil society with a detailed, accurate and comprehensive picture of the crisis and its impact, as the situation evolves.

Signatories:

1. 4Métrica
2. AbibiNsroma Foundation
3. Action Canada for Sexual Health and Rights
4. ActionAid International
5. African Centre for Democracy and Human Rights Studies
6. Albinism Society of Eswatini (ASESWA)
7. American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU)
8. Amnesty International
9. Anti-Slavery International
10. Ararteko-Ombudsman of the Basque Country
11. Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development (FORUM-ASIA)
12. Asociación Aquarius Supervivientes
13. Asociación La Ruta del Clima
14. Association du Développement et de la Promotion du Développement et de la Promotion de Droits de l'Homme

15. Association for the Prevention of Torture
16. AsyLex
17. BIO VISION AFRICA (BiVA)
18. Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies (CIHRS)
19. CAN Latin America (CANLA)
20. Caribbean Association for Youth Development (CAYD)
21. Center for International Environmental Law (CIEL)
22. Center for the Human Rights of Children, Loyola University Chicago
23. Centre for Citizens Conserving Environment & Management (CECIC)
24. Centre for Civil and Political Rights (CCPR-Centre)
25. Centre for Human Rights and Development (CHRD), Mongolia
26. Centro de Estudios Legales y Sociales (CELS)
27. Centro de Promoción y Defensa de los Derechos Sexuales y Reproductivos - Promsex
28. Child Rights Connect
29. Child Rights International Network (CRIN)
30. Children's Rights Alliance for England, part of Just for Kids Law
31. CHOICE for youth and sexuality
32. CIVICUS
33. CNCD-11.11.11 (Belgium)
34. Colectivo de Derechos de Infancia y Adolescencia de Argentina
35. Collective Campaign for Peace (COCAP)
36. Comité/Club UNESCO Universitaire pour la Lutte Contre la Drogue et autres pandémies (CLUCOD)
37. Conectas Direitos Humanos
38. Convention against Enforced Disappearances Initiative (CEDI)
39. Defence for Children International
40. Equality Now
41. European Network on Statelessness
42. FIAN International
43. Franciscans International
44. Fundación Cónclave Investigativo de las Ciencias Jurídicas Y Sociales (CIJYS)
45. Geneva Human Rights Platform
46. Global Detention Project
47. Global Initiative for Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
48. Greek Helsinki Monitor
49. Green Development Advocates (GDA)
50. Human Rights Defenders Network- Sierra Leone
51. Human Rights Watch
52. Institute on Statelessness and Inclusion
53. International Commission of Jurists
54. International Disability Alliance
55. International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH)
56. International Institute on Race, Equality and Human Rights
57. International Play Association - Canada

58. International Service for Human Rights
59. Irídia - Center for the Defence of Human Rights
60. Just Fair
61. Justiça Global
62. Legal Literacy - Nepal
63. LGBT CENTRE MONGOLIA
64. MENA Rights Group
65. Minority Rights Group - Greece
66. Namibia Diverse Women's Association (NDWA)
67. NGO for Children Confederation
68. Omega Research Foundation
69. Oyu Tolgoi Watch
70. Privacy International
71. PROMSEX, Centro de Promoción y Defensa de los Derechos Sexuales y Reproductivos
72. Psychological Responsiveness NGO, Mongolia
73. Rede Nacional de Mulheres Negras no Combate à Violência
74. Réseau des ONG ACTIVES pour le Contrôle du Tabac en Côte d'Ivoire (ROCTA-CI)
75. Réseau des Organisations de la Société Civile pour l'Observation et le Suivi des Elections en Guinée - ROSE
76. Rivers without Boundaries Coalition
77. Save the Children
78. Sayanaa Wellbeing Association
79. Sexual Rights Initiative
80. Sounds of the Silenced
81. Southern Africa Region Climate Action Network
82. Tanzania Child Rights Forum
83. Terre des Hommes International Federation
84. The Oil Refinery Residents Association
85. Transbantu Association Zambia
86. Unen khatamj NGO
87. Universal Rights Group
88. West African Human Rights Defenders' Network
89. Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF)