

22nd December 2016

To: All Member States' Permanent Representatives to the United Nations in New York and Geneva

Excellency,

We the undersigned civil society organizations wish to congratulate the General Assembly for adopting resolution A/RES/71/174 on 19 December 2016, which took note of the report of the Human Rights Council. We are pleased that the Assembly confirmed the authority of the Human Rights Council as the primary UN body responsible for human rights promotion and protection.

However, we deplore attempts by some Member States to block funding from the regular budget for implementation of several decisions of, and mandates created by, the Human Rights Council during 2016, including funding for reporting on the human rights situation in Syria, and Israeli settlements in the occupied Palestinian territories, the creation of a Commission of Inquiry for Burundi and an Independent Expert on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity, and support for the ongoing work of the Special Rapporteurs on Iran and Belarus. These decisions and mandates are contained in the Human Rights Council's report that the General Assembly already took note of in resolution A/RES/71/174. We consider that such attempts are an abuse of the authority of the Fifth Committee that is charged with oversight of administrative and budgetary matters, rather than substantive human rights concerns.

In considering resourcing of the Office of the High Commissioner, we urge member states to ensure that the High Commissioner's Office be adequately funded, that the High Commissioner's independence to determine how best to deliver on his mandate to promote and protect human rights under GA resolution 48/141 be respected, and that the ultimate outcome of budget negotiations not result in any reduction in resources for key human rights programming.

We call on you to support the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and the decisions and mandates of the Human Rights Council in the Fifth Committee.

Please accept the assurance of our highest consideration.

Sincerely,

African Centre for Democracy and Human Rights Studies (ACDHRS)

Amnesty International

Asian Legal Resource Centre

Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development (FORUM-ASIA)

Atrocities Watch- Africa

Bahá'í International Community

Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies (CIHR)

Civicus

Conectas Human Rights

DefendDefenders

Espacio de Mujeres Lesbianas por la Diversidad (ESMULES – El Salvador)

Federation of Action by Christians for the Abolition of Torture (FIACAT)

International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH)

Geneva for Human Rights - Global Training

Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect

Global Initiative for Economic Social and Cultural Rights

Human Rights House Foundation

Human Rights Watch

International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association (ILGA)

Impact Iran

International Commission of Jurists

International Service for Human Rights (ISHR)

OutRight Action International

World Organisation against Torture (OMCT)

Women & Girls Movement for Peace and Security in Burundi (MFFPS)