



Organizational session for the 20th cycle of the Human Rights Council

Statement by Nada Al-Nashif
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8 December 2025
Geneva, Palais des Nations, Assembly Hall

Mr. President,
Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates,

Good morning. As the President has just recalled, I am here today pursuant to decision 59/115 of the Council.

On 5 November, the Director-General of the United Nations Office at Geneva and the High Commissioner for Human Rights participated in an informal conversation with Members and Observers of this Council. On that occasion, they both briefed extensively on the severe financial pressures confronting the United Nations and their profound impact on the Human Rights Council and the wider human rights system.

Since my last update to the Council on August 25th, we continue to operate on a reduced allotment.

On a positive note, all the mandated activities postponed pursuant to Council decision 55/115 of 3 April 2024 have been or will be implemented before the end of the year, albeit in a reduced form.

However, regarding the activities identified as non-deliverable in Annex I to the High Commissioner's letter of 16 June and my update of 25 August, I regret to inform you that, given the unchanged budgetary situation, OHCHR remains unable to implement a number of them. For the same reasons, the **Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and Israel** continues to be unable to implement the mandates assigned to it by Council resolutions 55/32 and 55/28, which had already been postponed once this year by resolutions 58/28 and 58/2, respectively.

I would further like to highlight the following regarding non-deliverable activities in follow-up to my previous update:

- As anticipated, the **biennial panel discussion on unilateral coercive measures and human rights** was held, albeit in at reduced cost and form, during the Council's 60th session due to procedural considerations. As indicated then, the summary of the discussion will not be delivered.
- As informed in the High Commissioner's letter of 16 June, the report on best practices, challenges and lessons learned concerning integrated approaches to the promotion and protection of human rights and the implementation of the **2030 Agenda** at the global level, to be presented to the Council at its sixtieth session pursuant to resolution 52/14, would be submitted after that session. I can confirm that this report will be submitted at the Council's sixty-first session.

Concerning the **Commission of inquiry on the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo**, no regular budget resources have been made available to support the onboarding of the secretariat staff. Allow me to recall that Council resolution 60/22 modified the Commission's reporting schedule, initially mandated under resolution S-37/1. Therefore, the Commission is now requested to deliver an oral update at the Council's sixty-second session within the framework of an enhanced interactive dialogue, and to submit a comprehensive written report, to be followed by an enhanced interactive dialogue, at the Council's sixty-fourth session, as well as to report to the General Assembly at its eighty-second session.

The Office remains hopeful that the 2026 regular budget allotment will enable implementation of the adjusted reporting schedule, though most probably in a significantly reduced form if the liquidity crisis persists.

In parallel, OHCHR has initiated preparatory work, including the onboarding of the three commissioners appointed by the President of the Council on 27 October. The recruitment process for the Secretariat of the Commission has commenced, **on the understanding that selections will be finalized upon receipt of the 2026 regular budget allotment**, and with all positions presently advertised as unfunded. OHCHR is also liaising with the United Nations presence in Kinshasa to identify appropriate office space for the Commission once it is operational.

Let me go back to the **other mandated activities** contained in Annex I to the High Commissioner's letter of 16 June and my update of 25 August. In this regard, OHCHR, as I said, will not be able to implement a number of those mandates, with the exception of those that included budgeted staffing resources for 2026, pending confirmation of the allotment and most likely in a reduced form.

There are four mandates adopted in 2024 for which work was intended to start in 2025 and continue in 2026 with resources budgeted accordingly.

We have reviewed those mandates to determine what portion of the activities could be implemented utilizing only the 2026 resources and are discussing with the sponsors how best to proceed. In each case, we will aim to deliver a reduced version of the mandated activities relying on the 2026 regular budget allotment as and when it is received.

These resolutions are:

- Resolution 57/24, on **education as a tool to prevent racism**, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance;
- Resolution 56/21, on the **prevention of adolescent girls' pregnancies**; given the delay in commencing the work, the report which is due for HRC62 will likely be available only in advanced edited version; and
- Regarding resolution 56/6 on the **safety of the child in the digital environment**, given that we are relying on resources only available as of 1st January 2026 for work under this resolution, we request that the Council defer submission of the report and ensuing interactive dialogue to the 64th session.
- Regarding resolution 55/17 on a **culture of peace**, as noted in my previous update, OHCHR will not be able to deliver the two half-day workshops and ensuing summary report. However, as this mandate has budgeted resources spanning two years, subject to the 2026 budget allotment, the interactive expert panel discussion will be held during the Council's upcoming 61st session for procedural reasons. OHCHR is exploring options for implementing this mandate at a reduced cost – like all others - while ensuring that the event remains substantive, inclusive and aligned with the Council's standards.

Mr. President,

I want to emphasize that OHCHR remains fully committed to implementing all Council mandates. However, significant funding deficits continue to jeopardize such implementation.

According to the HRC Mapper – updated until HRC58 – over the next three years, there are over 600 mandated activities to be completed stemming

from nearly 130 adopted texts – ranging from reports, workshops, and dialogues to supporting Council mechanisms and the delivery of technical assistance. The Council will therefore appreciate that the vast majority of mandates are being implemented by the Office.

In 2025 alone, the Human Rights Council adopted a total of 93 resolutions. Out of these, 79 resolutions had PBIs amounting to approximately \$96.3 million dollars, including \$29.9 million in additional resource requirements distributed across three years. Fifty resolutions with resource requirements are to be implemented in 2026, with the total requirements amounting to \$14.5 million, of which \$13 million corresponds to Section 24.

Mr. President,

Let me reiterate: the liquidity crisis has affected every aspect of our work. All mandated activities, both thematic and country-specific, have been or are being delivered in a reduced form. The consequences are real and far-reaching.

The Council's own mechanisms are feeling the strain:

- Funding and staff projections for 2026 will drastically limit the Universal Periodic Review Secretariat's ability to deliver reviews as scheduled;
- The sessions scheduled for August 2025 of the Council's Advisory Committee and the Complaint Procedure's Working Group on Communications could not be held;
- More than 50 per cent of special procedure activities for 2025 have been cut, including half of the country visits and one-third or more of the working group sessions;

- Investigative bodies had to scale back investigations, and the hiring restrictions have limited staffing to 50-60%, depriving some of them from essential expertise;
- Council-mandated technical cooperation and capacity-building activities have also been reduced.

The liquidity crisis has also hit the Council's own secretariat, with an impact on its ability to provide substantive and technical advice and support to the Bureau, Member States, and other stakeholders.

As the High Commissioner noted during his update on 5 November, the financial outlook for 2026 remains deeply concerning, compounding an already critical situation.

Let me reiterate: the Office remains fully committed to transparency. That is why we have been regularly engaging with this Council and delegations, both formally and informally, on the implementation of mandated activities in the context of the ongoing liquidity situation, including on the criteria used for delivery. With respect to these criteria, I would like to refer to the detailed OHCHR information note circulated on 4 July, which is available on the Council's extranet.

I note with interest the invitation to provide regular updates in 2026 included in the draft President's statement on efficiency to be considered later today. OHCHR will of course remain available to brief the Council on the implementation of mandated activities on these and any other opportunities, as needed.

Mr. President,

As previously noted, every step taken by States to streamline, merge, or conclude mandates will make a real difference, enhancing efficiency, effectiveness, and impact, while easing the strain on over-stretched and under-resourced capacities.

OHCHR welcomes the progress accomplished at the Council's latest session in this regard, including the merging of two thematic special procedure mandates, the biennialization of the panel discussion on technical cooperation and capacity-building, and the biennialization of reporting to the General Assembly by the Special Rapporteur on the human rights to safe drinking water and sanitation.

We also welcome the specific measures outlined in the draft President's statement to be considered later today, which aim to advance rationalization and efficiency in the Council's work.

These are all significant signals of this Council's commitment to innovation and effectiveness, and we encourage further and concrete progress in this direction.

I encourage delegations to continue to make use of the preliminary version of the "**HRC Mapper**", which provides an evidence base for assessing all Council mandates, mechanisms, and reports, particularly those addressing similar or overlapping subjects.

The Office remains fully available to advise on practical options: channeling priorities through existing forums, debates, and panels; reviewing the frequency of long-standing recurring activities; and exploring the merging of reports on similar topics from different mandates. These steps, though technical, are essential to ensure that every resource is used as and where it matters most: delivering mandates that can truly make a difference in the lives of people everywhere.

Mr. President,
Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates,

Rest assured: the High Commissioner and every OHCHR staff member remain fully committed to our crucial mandate to promote, protect, and fulfill the human rights of all. But commitment alone cannot replace resources. Without adequate funding, we cannot deliver.

This year has been particularly difficult. We had to further scale back activities that could change the reality of those who need us the most, and we also had to see many valuable colleagues go, in particular those who were on temporary appointment.

Human rights are not optional. They are essential. That is why we are one of the three pillars of the United Nations. Yet the regular budget does not reflect this reality.

This situation must be a wake-up call for all of us, especially as the General Assembly has entered into the last phase of the adoption of the regular budget for 2026. This is a moment to reaffirm that human rights are life-saving, life-changing, and an investment for collective security and prosperity. Let us ensure that this pillar stands strong, not only in words but with the necessary material means.

While recalling the repeated appeals from the Secretary-General to Member States to pay their assessed contributions in full and on time, I wish also to reiterate the High Commissioner's call for all States to:

- Engage fully in the Fifth Committee negotiations to prevent further cuts to the human rights programme;
- Increase voluntary contributions, especially unearmarked; and
- Continue exploring ways to make the Council's work more impactful and strategic.

Failing to invest in human rights is failing people everywhere. Today, I urge all States to act decisively and without delay. I also reiterate our call for solidarity. This is a highly interdependent and integrated human rights ecosystem. We must stand together if we are to stand at all, to deliver on our mandate, to promote and protect human rights for everyone, everywhere.

I look forward to the ensuing exchange of views with delegations and will be happy to reply to any questions or comments.

Thank you.