

UN GA votes to fund three additional staff in the Office of the Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide

25 January 2011

On 24 December 2010, the Fifth committee of the General Assembly voted to fund three additional posts in the Office of the Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide (OSAPG): a Senior Political Affairs Officer (P-5), a Political Affairs Officer/Analyst (P-4) and an Information Officer (P-3). The P5 and P3 positions will carry out the functions of the current P5 and P2 which were previously supported through extra-budgetary resources. The P4 position will reportedly be focused on assisting with the emergency convening mechanism (as described in the SG's report on Early Warning, Assessment and the Responsibility to Protect). The Office will also incorporate all four crimes and violations (genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity and ethnic cleansing) into its method of work, signaling the integration of the Responsibility to Protect into the work of the Office. These developments are in line with the SG's [2009 report](#) and [2010 report](#) to establish a Joint Office that would integrate the prevention of genocide and RtoP mandates.

The Fifth Committee is the Committee of the General Assembly with responsibilities for administration and budgetary matters. Based on the reports of the Fifth Committee, the General Assembly considers and approves the budget of the Organization in accordance with Chapter IV, Article 17 of the UN Charter. For more background on the Fifth Committee process, click [here](#)

. The funding for the OSAPG falls under Section XIII of the budget A/C.5/65/L.22, and deals with "special political missions, good offices and other political initiatives authorized by the General Assembly and/or the Security Council, and strengthening the Department of Political Affairs." In budget for the 2011-2012 biennium, the Assembly authorized the appropriation in the coming year of \$643.1 million for 29 special political missions, including everything from the Secretary-General's Special Adviser on Cyprus to the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI).

As outlined in the UN Department of Public Information summary of the discussions (see excerpt below), there was some controversy over whether the logical framework of analysis, used by the OSAPG to determine whether there is a risk genocide, should be expanded to include the four crimes under RtoP (genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity and ethnic

cleansing). Venezuela led the charge against the inclusion of the four crimes and proposed an amendment to the budget which would have limited the logical framework to cover only genocide. This amendment was ultimately rejected.

In the end, three main votes were taken.

The Committee, by a recorded vote of 68 against to 17 in favor, with 51 abstentions, rejected the amendment submitted by the representative of Venezuela.

The Committee approved section XIII of draft resolution L.22 by a recorded vote of 130 in favor to 9 against (Bolivia, Cuba, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Ecuador, Myanmar, Nicaragua, Venezuela, Zimbabwe), with 4 abstentions (Solomon Islands, Sudan, Syria and Yemen).

The Committee approved the entire budget A/C.5/65/L.22 as a whole by a recorded vote of 144 in favor to 1 against (Iran), with 3 abstentions (Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Myanmar, Syria). (Annex V)

To see how governments voted on each of these votes, please see the breakdown [here](#). For additional analysis on the vote, please see the Global Centre for R2P's report [here](#).

Sixty-fifth General Assembly Fifth Committee 27 December 2010 Meeting (Night)

Department of Public Information

Harmonizing Staff Working Conditions, Strengthening UN Information Technology

The Fifth Committee (Administrative and Budgetary) today wrapped up the main part of a sixty-fifth session that aimed to boost the Organization's efficiency by overhauling how tens of thousands of staff around the globe are hired, trained and paid, while continuing to modernize its outdated information and communications technology system.

(...) During informal consultations, Venezuela had expressed concerns that the Office of the Special Adviser of the Secretary-General on the Prevention of Genocide had sought to include concepts that did not enjoy international agreement. That was a serious failure, she said, requesting a review of the logical framework of the Office of the Special Adviser. Just over a year ago, she said, the first substantive debate on the responsibility to protect had been held in the General Assembly. Delegates had agreed on only one point — the need to continue to consider the responsibility to protect. The presentation of a logical framework by the Special Adviser implemented the recommendations from the Secretary-General's report (document A/64/874), which had not received any action by the Assembly. Venezuela was concerned that that was included as a *fait accompli*, and presumed the existence of concepts regarding the responsibility to protect. There must be a "detailed and profound debate" that distinguished the work of the General Assembly and the United Nations. Venezuela reiterated that the primary responsibility to protect lay with the States.

The representative of

Canada

said he was against the proposed amendment and requested a recorded vote. He urged all Member States to vote against the proposed amendment.

The representative of the

Netherlands

said she was against the proposed amendment and wanted a recorded vote. The Fifth Committee was charged with budget and administration issues and the substance of the proposed amendment went beyond those responsibilities.

The delegate of

Cuba

said that section XIII of draft resolution A/C.5/65/L.22 contained proposals for resources for special political missions that his delegation could not support, as had been reiterated repeatedly. He was dissatisfied with the way he had been compelled, possibly, to adopt those proposals. During consultations, some delegations had focused on lobbying developing countries to adopt those proposals, he said. Further, in no existing Assembly resolution had there been agreement that the responsibility to protect was part of the Office of the Special Adviser. That responsibility could easily fall into the hands of manipulative delegations, he said.

Nicaragua

's delegate said he joined Venezuela and Cuba in denouncing the "trampling" on the part of the Secretariat of the legislative and intergovernmental mandates of the United Nations Organization. The report of the Secretary-General under consideration had not been the subject of action by the Assembly, he said, adding that the Secretariat was therefore "self-mandating". For that reason, he supported the amendment presented by the delegation of Venezuela.

The representative of
Belgium

, again on behalf of the European Union, said the discussions in the Fifth Committee should refrain from topics that belonged in other United Nations forums. The European Union considered the activities of the Office of the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on the Prevention of Genocide, as outlined in the Secretary-General's report, were fully justified based on both Assembly and Security Council actions. The European Union would therefore vote against the amendment, and requested other delegations to do the same.

The Committee then, by a recorded vote of 68 against to 17 in favour, with 51 abstentions, rejected the amendment submitted by the representative of Venezuela.

(Annex III)

Cuba

's delegate then requested a recorded vote on the whole section XIII of the draft resolution.

In explanation of position before the vote, the representative of
Brazil

said the Office of the Special Adviser of the Secretary-General on the Prevention of Genocide corresponded to the mandate given by the Assembly. Brazil shared the concerns on the framework of the political missions and the lack of review by intergovernmental processes. It was necessary to formulate an adequate framework. There should be more consistency for the budgets of all special political missions.

Nicaragua

's delegate said he would vote against section XIII because of the non-adoption of Venezuela's amendment. Nicaragua was in favour of the rest of the budget items.

The representative of
Venezuela

said she would vote against section XIII because it did not include a review of a logical framework of the Office of the Special Adviser of the Secretary-General on the Prevention of Genocide. It was not against the other political missions.

The Committee then approved section XIII of draft resolution L.22 by a recorded vote of 130 in favour to 9 against (Bolivia, Cuba, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Ecuador, Myanmar, Nicaragua, Venezuela, Zimbabwe), with 4 abstentions (Solomon Islands, Sudan, Syria and

Yemen). (Annex IV)

Speaking after the vote, the representative of Iran asked to take a recorded vote on the entire draft resolution.

The Committee then approved draft resolution A/C.5/65/L.22 as a whole by a recorded vote of 144 in favour to 1 against (Iran), with 3 abstentions (Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Myanmar, Syria). (Annex V)

Speaking after the vote, the representative of Israel disassociated himself from the section XIII of the resolution.

Cuba's representative said its support of resolution A/C.5/65/L.22 did not mean that Cuba supported the mandate of the Office of the Special Adviser of the Secretary-General on the Prevention of Genocide.