



# General Assembly

Distr.: General  
8 September 2021

Original: English

---

## Seventy-fifth session

Agenda item 171

### Report of the Committee on Relations with the Host Country

#### **Letter dated 31 August 2021 from the Representatives of Cuba, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Nicaragua, the Russian Federation, the Syrian Arab Republic and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General**

Further to our letter of 10 March 2020, and following our meeting with you and the letter dated 16 June 2020, we have the honour to convey the following:

The violations of the obligations under the Agreement between the United Nations and the United States regarding the Headquarters of the United Nations of 1947 and related norms of international law described in the above-mentioned letters continue to persist despite your efforts and those of the Legal Counsel of the United Nations, Miguel de Serpa Soares, for which we are very grateful.

In particular, the host country continues to not issue visas in time for our delegates to participate in United Nations events or to work at the permanent missions. Furthermore, with regard to one delegation's experience in particular, upon receiving notification of completion of issuance of visas, delegates travel to a third country to collect them, but have to wait 10 to 14 days after arrival due to delays in the process of receiving the visas. In other cases, single-entry visas are issued for a limited period of time or with considerable delay. This practice impedes the effectiveness of participation of our States in the work of the Organization and leads to unacceptable hardship for members of our permanent missions who are prevented from visiting their home countries for years, even for humanitarian reasons. There are impediments to obtaining visas for United Nations officials who are citizens of our countries or for persons who are recruited by the United Nations. Travel and movement restrictions on delegates of our States and United Nations officials of our nationalities continue to apply, the illegally seized premises of the Permanent Mission of Russia has not been returned to its rightful owner and even the payment of financial contributions to the United Nations budget continues to be a challenge.

The abolishment of some of the most outrageous movement restrictions on the delegation of Iran, and promises to issue some of the long-pending visas to the Russian delegates and United Nations Secretariat officials, is not a sustainable solution to the problem.

The General Assembly, in its resolution [74/195](#), specified "a reasonable and finite period of time" to resolve these issues, which continue to be a constant



preoccupation of the Committee on Relations with the Host Country. At its current session, the General Assembly, in its resolution 75/146, recommended to the Secretary-General “to now consider and take any appropriate steps under section 21 of the Headquarters Agreement” regarding the issues that were not resolved by the Committee.

This resolution gives you the mandate to act now. We strongly urge you to act without delay and officially invoke section 21 of the Agreement. The Organization, which is based on the principle of the sovereign equality of all its Members, as defined in Article 2, paragraph 1, of the Charter of the United Nations, must not tolerate coercion of and discrimination against a group of its Members. The privilege of hosting the United Nations must not be abused.

We hear objections from the host country to the triggering of this legal procedure or to the scope of future arbitration. But it is not for one party to the Headquarters Agreement to block recourse to the only legal remedy available when the issue of its responsibility arises, or to unilaterally establish its scope. If that were so, the obligatory arbitration procedure prescribed by the Agreement, as well as the resolutions of the General Assembly, which mandated its invocation, would be a dead letter. We are convinced that the establishment of a neutral arbitration tribunal and its legal conclusions on the scope of its powers and the pressing problems of the day-to-day life of delegations would be beneficial for the smooth and effective functioning of the Organization.

We should be grateful if you would circulate the present letter as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 171, and of the Committee.

*(Signed)* Pedro Luis **Pedroso Cuesta**  
Permanent Representative of Cuba

*(Signed)* Zahra **Ershadi**  
Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Islamic Republic of Iran

*(Signed)* Jaime **Hermida Castillo**  
Permanent Representative of Nicaragua

*(Signed)* Vassily **Nebenzia**  
Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation

*(Signed)* Bassam **Sabbagh**  
Permanent Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic

*(Signed)* Samuel **Moncada**  
Permanent Representative of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela

---