

The United Nations in April 2026

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Editor's Note: The UN Report will begin a 4-month hiatus until the September report. My gratitude to student editor Trisha Yadu. RR



UNITED NATIONS INTERNATIONAL OBSERVANCE DAYS

There are [218 International Days](#) selected by the UN General Assembly. Significant International days in September and October:

05 April - [International Day of Conscience](#)

14 April - [World Chagas Disease Day](#)

22 April - [International Mother Earth Day](#)

24 April - [International Day of Multilateralism and Diplomacy for Peace](#)

03 May - [World Press Freedom Day](#)

08 May - [Time of Remembrance and Reconciliation for Those Who Lost Their Lives During the Second World War](#)

16 May - [International Day of Living Together in Peace](#)

31 May - [World No-Tobacco Day](#)

NEWS

UN MANAGEMENT

The Trump administration seeks further cuts in UN budget

The Trump administration has [threatened](#) to withhold hundreds of millions of dollars in funding to the United Nations unless it agrees to a slate of nine “quick win” reforms - ranging from deeper cost cuts to measures that would block China from channeling tens of millions of dollars each year to a discretionary fund housed in the office of the U.N. secretary-general. Those conditions include overhauling the U.N. pension system, ending long-distance business class travel, and imposing additional cuts in the U.N.’s senior ranks.

Repressive states secure most seats on UN’s NGO Committee

On 8 April, ECOSOC, [elected](#) the 19 countries that will serve on the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations for a four-year term beginning in 2027. The Committee decides on applications by civil society for consultative status. 13 of the 19 elected members are rated by

[CIVICUS](#) as having either “closed” or “repressed” civic space. China and Cuba, who have taken the lead in rejecting applicants that promote democracy and human rights, were re-elected.

Race intensifies for next UN Secretary-General

[1 for 8 Billion published](#) a snap reaction following the interactive dialogues held at the United Nations with candidates for the position of Secretary-General. The piece captures key takeaways from sessions with [Michelle Bachelet](#), [Rafael Grossi](#), [Rebeca Grynspan](#), and [Macky Sall](#), reflecting growing debate over transparency and calls for a more open, merit-based selection process. Common [themes](#) across the dialogues included restoring trust in the UN, reform of senior appointments, climate and development financing, and a more proactive approach to peace and security, while geopolitical interests and regional expectations continue to [shape](#) the race behind the scenes. It is not impossible that other candidates may emerge after the deadline.

UN General Assembly adopts landmark resolution to strengthen the UN system

On 31 March 2026, the UN General Assembly [adopted](#) a landmark resolution under the UN80 Initiative to strengthen how mandates are created, implemented, and reviewed across the system. The resolution [aims](#) to reduce duplication and inefficiency, with Secretary-General António Guterres describing it as a major step toward making the UN more effective and coherent.

HUMAN RIGHTS

The Epstein Files: UN Rights experts call for accountability

On 16 April 2026, the UN [Human Rights Council](#)-appointed experts [called](#) for a full and transparent investigation into credible allegations of systematic trafficking of young women and girls contained in the Epstein files. The experts warned of a culture of impunity perpetuated by inadequate responses from governments and law enforcement, and urged states to ensure victims' [access](#) to justice, reparations, and trauma-informed support.

UN rights chief urges action to end impunity and address disappearances in Mexico

On 23 April 2026, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Volker Türk, following an official visit to Mexico, [called](#) on authorities to intensify efforts to end impunity, protect journalists and human rights defenders, and address the country's crisis of enforced disappearances. He also expressed concern over persistently high levels of gender-based violence and femicides, while lauding Mexico's vibrant civil society and advances on indigenous rights and gender equality.

Commission on Population and Development, Fifty-Ninth Session

From 13-17 April, the United Nations [convened](#) the fifty-ninth session of the Commission on Population and Development, focused on population, technology and research in the context of sustainable development. The session ended without an [agreed](#) outcome document, as deeply polarized negotiations — particularly over sexual and reproductive health and rights, gender equality, and gender-based violence — prevented consensus among member states, mirroring similar setbacks at the Commission on the Status of Women earlier that year.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Countries pledge \$3.9 billion to GEF for climate and biodiversity action

Governments [announced](#) a \$3.9 billion funding pledge to the Global Environment Facility ([GEF](#)) to [support](#) environmental protection and sustainable development efforts. The funding will help address interconnected challenges including climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution, particularly in developing countries. The initiative underscores continued international commitment to multilateral environmental action, although experts note that significantly greater resources remain needed to meet global targets.

HEALTH

Two-thirds of global hunger concentrated in 10 conflict-hit countries

On 24 April 2026, the Global Report on Food Crises [reported](#) that 266 million people across 47 countries faced acute food insecurity in 2025, with two-thirds concentrated in just ten conflict-affected nations. Famine was confirmed simultaneously in Gaza and Sudan for the first time in the report's history, while funding for nutrition responses fell to its lowest level in a decade.

Africa: Nearly 20 million measles deaths averted since 2000

On 15 April 2026, a joint WHO and Gavi [analysis](#) found that measles vaccinations have saved nearly 20 million lives in Africa since 2000, halving measles deaths and protecting over 500 million children. Despite this progress, the continent remains [off track](#) toward the 2030 immunization targets, with coverage uneven and many children still unreached.

SECURITY COUNCIL

Security Council warned of escalating risks to humanitarian workers in conflict zones

On 8 April, the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs [briefed](#) the Security Council about the increasing dangers faced by humanitarian personnel operating in conflict-affected areas. The briefing [highlighted](#) rising attacks, detentions, and restrictions on aid workers, undermining the delivery of life-saving assistance.

The Political Economy of Bangladesh's LDC Graduation

On 7 April, Inter Press Service [published](#) an analysis arguing that Bangladesh's resistance to graduating from least developed country status is driven by business interests, particularly the ready-made garments sector. The piece urges newly elected policymakers to treat the transition as an opportunity for structural reform rather than a threat to be deferred.

MEDIA

Peacebuilding Fund plays growing role in supporting UN peace operations

On 21 April, the International Peace Institute [published](#) an analysis on the role of the United Nations Peacebuilding Fund in supporting United Nations peace operations. The report [highlights](#) how the Fund provides rapid, flexible financing to sustain peace efforts, particularly in fragile and conflict-affected settings where traditional funding is limited or delayed

Can Deep Learning Predict War, and Should It?

On 20 April, the UN University [published](#) a short paper arguing that progress in deep learning neural networks is moving conflict prediction from guesswork to more precise, data-driven forecasts. The focus is no longer on whether machines can predict conflict, but on how this predictive ability should be utilized and regulated.

UPCOMING EVENTS AND CONFERENCES

- 04 May: Diplomacy's Public Turn: Prospects for Theory and Practice
 - Theme: diplomacy, public policy, international studies
 - Host: The Public Diplomacy Council of America
 - Location: 1957 E St NW room 602 Washington, DC
 - Attendance:
 - In-person registration and more information in this [link](#)

- 07 May: Café Democracy
 - Theme: Civic Responsibility and participation
 - Host: Eagleton Institute of Politics
 - Location: 191 Ryders Lane, New Brunswick, NJ
 - Attendance:
 - In-person registration and more information in this [link](#)

- 6-7 May: 11th Multi-stakeholder Forum on Science, Technology and Innovation
 - Theme: Sustainable Development Goals
 - Host: UN
 - Location: UN HQ New York
 - Attendance:
 - Information on participation in this [link](#).

- 11-15 May: UN Forum on Forests
 - Theme: policy guidance and implementation of agreed forest-related commitments
 - Host: UN
 - Location: UN HQ New York
 - Attendance:
 - Information on participation in this [link](#).