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CENTRE FOR INTERNATIONAL LAW  
National University of Singapore

# International Law at the United Nations: In Brief

July – September 2025

## Issue 3

The Centre for International Law at the National University of Singapore is pleased to launch the third issue in its series of newsletters highlighting updates at the United Nations. This edition explores key thematic areas such as peace and security, human rights and humanitarian law, climate change, ocean governance, global health law, international courts and tribunals, and developments in the wider UN structure.

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## Highlights

1. Between July and September 2025, the United Nations addressed pressing issues in the domain of **peace and security**. The Security Council and other UN agencies raised concerns over conflicts in Sudan, Gaza, Ukraine and Myanmar. The Security Council extended the mandates of peacekeeping mission in Lebanon and the Panels of Experts on the Central African Republic and Sudan, respectively. It also voted to reimpose sanctions on Iran. High-level conferences on Palestine were convened, with ten States recognising Palestinian statehood. However, the Security Council failed to adopt a resolution calling for a ceasefire in Gaza, after such efforts were blocked by a U.S. veto. Other developments included the Council's resolution on cooperation between Iraq and Kuwait in the return of the missing Kuwaiti nationals and property, an Arria-formula meeting on Ukraine, and a resolution concerning gang violence in Haiti and the threats it poses to international peace and security. The Human Rights Council also held an urgent debate on the military aggression by Israel against Qatar.
2. In this period, the UN also sought to address dire **human rights and humanitarian** issues. Reports of the Commission of Inquiry confirmed that Israel committed, and continues to commit, genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity against the Palestinian population in the Gaza Strip. It reiterates the obligations of Israel as well as third States, to bring about an end to the genocide and ensure that its perpetrators are held accountable. Several other UN agencies also called for an immediate and unconditional ceasefire, and access to unimpeded humanitarian assistance for the Gazan population. Special Rapporteurs also urged that the Gaza Humanitarian Foundation be dismantled, noting that its operations violate international law. Finally, UN experts condemned U.S. sanctions against UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights in the occupied Palestinian territories, as violations of international law.
3. The Commission of Inquiry on Syria reported that violence against the Alawite community may amount to war crimes, while the Independent Investigative Mechanism for Myanmar found evidence of systematic torture, including sexual violence, in military detention facilities in Myanmar. The General Assembly also urged the Member States to facilitate the returns of the Rohingya and ethnic minorities to Myanmar.
4. As for developments before **international courts and tribunals**, the ICJ rejected Equatorial Guinea's request for provisional measures against France. Mali filed an application with the ICJ

over a dispute with Algeria concerning the alleged destruction of a reconnaissance drone by Algerian Defence Forces. The ICJ also received an application from Russia, seeking to appeal a decision by the ICAO Council in its dispute against Australia and the Netherlands. The case *Kohler and Paris (France v. Islamic Republic of Iran)*, regarding the alleged hostage policy pursued by Iran against France nationals, was removed from the List at France's request. Finally, the schedule for the public hearings on the *Right to Strike under ILO Convention No.87 (Request for Advisory Opinion)* was released.

5. There were also other initiatives in the fields of **climate change, ocean governance and global health law**. The World Health Organisation and World Meteorological Organisation released a joint report indicating that climate change-driven extreme heat poses severe risks to workers' health and livelihoods. Additionally, the Fifth Global Conference on Climate and Health produced the Belem Health Action Plan. States failed to conclude a treaty to combat plastic pollution. Finally, the *Agreement under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Biological Diversity of Areas beyond National Jurisdiction* (BBNJ Agreement) reached its 60 ratifications threshold and will enter into force in January 2026.
6. Other key developments sought to strengthen the **work of the United Nations**. These included, for example, the Secretary-General's launch of the UN 80 Initiatives to improve efficiency and multilateralism, a resolution to revitalise the work of the General Assembly and initiatives to strengthen cooperation with other organisations and financial institutions.

## Week of 28 July 2025

### **Peace and Security**

The Security Council extends the sanctions regime concerned with individuals and non-state armed groups in the Central African Republic until 31 July 2026. It further extends the mandate of the Panel of Experts on the issue until 31 August 2026.

*Read more [here](#).*

The High-Level Conference for the Peaceful Settlement of the Question of Palestine and the Implementation of the Two-State Solution is held from 28 to 30 July 2025.

*Read more [here](#) and [here](#).*

### **Human Rights and Humanitarian Law**

The Integrated Food Security Phase Classification report confirms that the population of Gaza is trapped in famine, as multiple UN agencies repeat calls for an immediate ceasefire and unhindered humanitarian access to the Gaza Strip.

*Read more [here](#) and [here](#).*

## Week of 4 August 2025

### **Human Rights and Humanitarian Law**

The Security Council adopts a presidential statement concerning the escalation of violence in Suwaida in Syria, reiterating the obligation of the parties to the conflict to respect human rights and humanitarian law while condemning the violence against civilians.

*Read more [here](#).*

A group of UN experts, also referred to as the Special Procedure of the Human Rights Council, decries Israel's ongoing genocide of the Palestinian people in Gaza, the displacement orders on people of Gaza and illegal restrictions on humanitarian aid. They have called on the international community to take measures to protect Palestinians and hold Israel accountable.

*Read more [here](#).*

The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) warns of growing civilian casualties and a worsening humanitarian crisis in Sudan, as the military conflict in the State worsens.

Read more [here](#).

### **The Wider UN Structure**

The UN Conference on Landlocked Developing Countries opens in Turkmenistan, culminating in the adoption of the Awaza Programme of Action and Awaza Political Declaration. States agree to form a common bloc for climate negotiations, in order to advocate for their unique needs.

Read more [here](#), [here](#) and [here](#).

### **Global Health | Human Rights and Humanitarian Law**

The World Health Organisation publishes a compendium highlighting the persistence of abuse during and after childbirth, providing guidance on best practices.

Read more [here](#) and [here](#).

### **Climate Change**

States resume the fifth round of negotiations for a treaty combating plastic pollution. The UNEP warns that, without a legally binding instrument, plastic waste is likely to triple by 2060.

Read more [here](#) and [here](#).

The World Meteorological Organisation reports on the extreme heat facing several regions of the world, the health repercussions of which are exacerbated by wildfires and poor air quality.

Read more [here](#).

### **Human Rights and Humanitarian Law**

UN experts issue a statement on U.S. sanctions against the UN Special Rapporteur on human rights in the occupied Palestinian territories, Francesca Albanese, noting that they undermine the integrity of the human rights system and violate international law, including the 1946 Convention on the Privileges and Immunities of the United Nations.

Read more [here](#).

### **Peace and Security**

The Security Council holds an Arria-formula meeting on Ukraine, convened by Russia.

Read more [here](#).

## Week of 11 August 2025

### **Peace and Security**

The Security Council rejects a declaration by the Rapid Support Forces that purports to establish a rival administration in parts of Sudan. It holds that the move threatens Sudan's territorial integrity and unity, while exacerbating the "already dire humanitarian situation".

*Read more [here](#).*

### **Human Rights and Humanitarian Law**

The Report of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and Israel, finds that Israeli authorities "have demonstrated a clear and consistent intent to establish permanent military control over Gaza and to change its demographic composition while systematically destroying Palestinian life in Gaza." It cautions of possible annexation of these territories, as well as war crimes, the crime against humanity of forcible population transfers, collective punishment, violations of the freedom of movement and enjoyment of private property, and that the Israeli authorities committed "underlying acts of genocide ... [as] part of [their] consistent pattern of conduct to physically destroy the Palestinians, as a group, in Gaza, and, at the same time, maintain long-term military presence and control over the territory."

*Read more [here](#).*

The Independent Investigative Mechanism for Myanmar reports that it has found evidence of "systematic torture", including sexual violence, in military detention facilities.

*Read more [here](#).*

The Secretary-General's Report on Conflict-Related Sexual Violence notes a marked rise in conflict-related sexual violence, amidst unprecedented displacement and growing militarisation.

*Read more [here](#) and [here](#).*

The UN Commission of Inquiry on Syria finds that the violence in the country in March—primarily targeting the Alawite community—may amount to war crimes.

*Read more [here](#).*

The WHO highlights the public health repercussions of armed conflict such as, for example, rising cases of cholera in countries such as Sudan, Chad, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, South Sudan and Yemen.  
*Read more [here](#).*

The UN marks World Humanitarian Day, honouring the record 383 aid workers who were killed in 2024.  
*Read more [here](#).*

Multiple UN Human Rights Special Rapporteurs reject the legitimacy of the Gaza Humanitarian Foundation, describing it as “an utterly disturbing example of how humanitarian relief can be exploited for covert military and geopolitical agendas in serious breach of international law.”  
*Read more [here](#).*

### **Wider UN Structure**

OCHA highlights the dire humanitarian repercussions of funding cuts in the UN, reporting that the absence of essential services and health and nutrition assistance are exacerbating the effects of severe drought and displacement in Somalia.  
*Read more [here](#).*

### **Climate Change**

States fail to conclude a treaty to combat plastic pollution, but express a commitment to continue engaging in negotiations.  
*Read more [here](#).*

### **Global Health | Climate Change**

The Fifth Global Conference on Climate and Health concludes, the key outcomes of which include the creation of the Belem Health Action Plan, to be launched at COP 30.  
*Read more [here](#).*

The WHO announces that rubella is no longer a public health problem in Nepal, advancing the organisation’s goal of eliminating measles and rubella in the region by 2026.  
*Read more [here](#).*

## Week of 18 August 2025

### **Human Rights and Humanitarian Law**

The UN Commemorates the International Day for the Remembrance of the Slave Trade and its Abolition, seeking to remember the atrocities of the slave trade while noting that modern slavery has not been eradicated.

*Read more [here](#).*

### **Courts and Tribunals**

The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights criticises new sanctions imposed by the United States against International Criminal Court personnel, in response to the Court's investigations into the conduct of US and Israeli officials.

*Read more [here](#) and [here](#).*

### **Global Health | Climate Change**

The WHO and WMO (World Meteorological Organisation) release a joint report indicating that climate change-fuelled extreme heat is among the biggest threats to workers' health and livelihood. Rising heat episodes are causing health problems for vulnerable populations in developing countries, including children, the elderly and low-income communities.

*Read more [here](#).*

### **Cyber and Artificial Intelligence**

The UN plans to establish the UN Independent Scientific Panel on AI, and the Global Dialogue on AI Governance, to promote international cooperation in the field.

*Read more [here](#).*

### **Ocean Governance**

The second session of Preparatory Commission for Marine Biodiversity Treaty takes place from 18 to 29 August, discussing funding matter as well as the rules of procedure for meetings of the Conference of Parties.

*Read more [here](#), [here](#), [here](#) and [here](#).*

### **Wider UN Structure**

The Secretary General launches the UN80 Initiatives to improve efficiencies and strengthen multilateralism within the organisation through three workstreams. The reports on the second and third workstreams—titled

“Mandate Implementation Review” and “Changing Structures and Realigning Programmes” respectively, are published.

Read more [here](#) and [here](#).

## Week of 25 August 2025

### **Peace and Security**

The Security Council extends the mandate of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) until 31 December 2026.

Read more [here](#).

### **Human Rights and Humanitarian Law**

Marking eight years since the mass displacement of the Rohingya from the Rakhine State in Myanmar, the Secretary-General highlights the dire conditions faced by members of the community, calling for the protection of all civilians in accordance with international law.

Read more [here](#).

## Week of 1 September 2025

### **Human Rights and Humanitarian Law**

The High Commissioner for Human Rights publishes a report titled “Promotion and protection of the human rights and fundamental freedoms of Africans and of people of African descent against excessive use of force and other human rights violations by law enforcement officers through transformative change for racial justice and equality”. It emphasises that reparatory justice is necessary to confront the legacies of the slave trade, colonialism and systemic racism.

Read more [here](#).

### **Wider UN Structure**

The General Assembly adopts a resolution focused on revitalising its own work.

Read more [here](#).

The General Assembly adopts resolutions on the cooperation between the United Nations and various other organisations, including the African Union, the Economic Cooperation Organisation, the International Francophone Organisation and the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation.

Read more [here](#), [here](#), [here](#) and [here](#).

## Week of 8 September 2025

### Peace and Security

The Security Council extends the mandate of the Panel of Experts on Sudan until 12 October 2025.

Read more [here](#).

The Security Council demands that the Houthis immediately and unconditionally release the United Nations workers they have detained, while ensuring respect for international humanitarian law.

Read more [here](#).

### Courts and Tribunals

The ICJ rejects Equatorial Guinea's request for an indication of provisional measures in *Request relating to the Return of Property Confiscated in Criminal Proceedings (Equatorial Guinea v. France)*.

Read more [here](#).

## Week of 15 September 2025

### Peace and Security

The Security Council adopts Resolution 2792 (2025) on cooperation between Iraq and Kuwait in the return of mission persons and property. It requests the Secretary-General to appoint a Senior Representative to promote, support and facilitate efforts in the reparation or return of all persons and property from Kuwaiti and other third-States.

Read more [here](#).

The Security Council fails to adopt a draft resolution that would continue sanctions relief for Iran, as France, Germany and the United Kingdom seek to reimpose sanctions.

Read more [here](#).

Due to the veto from the United States, the Security Council fails to adopt a resolution demanding an immediate, unconditional and permanent ceasefire in Gaza, the release of hostages and the removal of restrictions on humanitarian aid.

Read more [here](#).

The Security Council convenes an open briefing on Afghanistan.

Read more [here](#).

### **Human Rights and Humanitarian Law**

The UN Commission of Inquiry on the Occupied Palestinian Territory reports that Israel has and continues to commit genocide, as well as fails to prevent or punish genocidal acts, against Palestinians in the Gaza Strip. It urges the Israeli authorities to stop the genocide, while renewing calls for a complete ceasefire, unimpeded access to humanitarian aid and an end to the policy of starvation. It further reminds other States of their obligation to prevent the commission of genocide, recommending that they cease the transfer of arms and other military equipment to Israel, ensure that individuals and corporations within their territories do not aid or assist these acts of genocide, cooperate with the relevant investigations by the International Criminal Court's Office of the Prosecutor and facilitate domestic investigations and proceedings to allow for the imposition of sanctions against those partaking and assisting in the commission of genocide.

Read more [here](#).

The Human Rights Council holds an urgent debate during HRC60 to address the military aggression by Israel against Qatar.

Read more [here](#).

### **Courts and Tribunals**

Mali files an application with the ICJ concerning Algeria's alleged destruction of a reconnaissance drone during a surveillance mission over Malian territory.

Read more [here](#).

Russia appeals a decision of the Council of the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO Council) to the ICJ. The ICAO Council decision in *Decision in the Matter: Australia and the Kingdom of the Netherlands and the Russian Federation (2022)* found that Russia violated its obligations under the Chicago Convention by shooting down Flight MH17.

Read more [here](#).

The ICJ removes *Kohler and Paris (France v. Islamic Republic of Iran)* from its List, after France discontinued proceedings in the case concerning Iran's alleged violations of the Vienna Convention on Consular Relations.

Read more [here](#).

### **Ocean Governance**

The *Agreement under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Biological Diversity of Areas beyond National Jurisdiction* (BBNJ Agreement) reaches the threshold of ratifications to enter into force, as Morocco and Sierra Leone join as the 60<sup>th</sup> and 61<sup>st</sup> parties respectively. The Treaty will take effect in January 2026.

Read more [here](#).

## **Week of 22 September 2025**

### **Peace and Security**

The High-Level International Conference for the Peaceful Settlement of the Question of Palestine and the Implementation of the Two-State Solution resumes. It concludes with 10 participating States recognising Palestinian Statehood.

Read more [here](#).

### **Human Rights and Humanitarian Law**

States and other stakeholders commemorate the 30th anniversary of the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, which seek to advance gender equality.

Read more [here](#) and [here](#).

The Commission of Inquiry on Ukraine provides briefs during HRC60 and notes that Russian forces' widespread drone attacks are making entire localities "unliveable," in violation of international human rights and humanitarian law.

Read more [here](#).

The OHCHR releases its 2025 report on business enterprises linked to settlement activities in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. The database is used by States, investors and other stakeholders to assess complicity risks and ensure compliance with international law obligations.

*Read more [here](#).*

### **Wider UN Structure**

The UN marks 80 years of its founding at the high-level general debate in New York. While noting the organisation's achievements, the Secretary-General also warns that the UN principles are facing unprecedented assault amidst a deepening climate crisis, poverty, hunger and violations of the laws of war that leave "international law trampled."

*Read more [here](#).*

The General Assembly hosts the First Biennial Summit for a Sustainable, Inclusive and Resilient Global Economy, to strengthen ties between international financial institutions and the UN, to support the implementation of the sustainable development goals.

*Read more [here](#).*

### **Cyber and Artificial Intelligence**

The Secretary General launches the Global Dialogue on AI Governance, aimed to help build "safe, secure and trustworthy AI systems" that comply with international law, promote economic cooperation, encourage innovation and are widely accessible.

*Read more [here](#).*

## **Week of 29 September 2025**

### **Peace and Security**

The Security Council adopts a resolution under its Chapter VII powers, seeking to address the "deterioration of the security situation and humanitarian crisis in Haiti", which it regards as a threat to international peace, security and stability.

*Read more [here](#).*

The Security Council holds a high-level open debate on "Artificial Intelligence and International Peace and Security".

*Read more [here](#).*

### **Human Rights and Humanitarian Law**

The President of the General Assembly urges Member States to facilitate the return of Rohingya and other minorities to Myanmar.

Read more [here](#).

### **Courts and Tribunals**

The ICJ adopts a schedule for the public hearings in the *Right to Strike under ILO Convention No.87 (Request for Advisory Opinion)*, which are to be held from 6 to 8 October 2025.

Read more [here](#).