



By: TA | AP Insight

Despite the challenges, the UN General Assembly has the chance to be the centre of global politics



The annual high-level gathering at the U.N. General Assembly this week will see more than 140 world leaders descend upon New York City in an effort to secure global peace and security despite growing divides on how to do that.

Nearly 90 heads of state, 43 heads of government and one crown prince are among the dignitaries to appear on the U.N. stage beginning on Tuesday to make their case for how to bring an end to regional conflicts in Europe and the Middle East, while addressing the growing climate crisis and the dangers posed by the rapid development and use of artificial intelligence.

Looming over the weeklong summit is the internal financial turmoil plaguing the United Nations as it celebrates the 80th anniversary of its founding, which emerged from the rubble of World War II.

Questions about the U.N.'s relevancy and efficiency have sharpened from supporters and critics alike.

Recent U.S. **cuts** to foreign assistance and the reevaluation of humanitarian contributions by other countries have forced a **reckoning** for the world body.

Here are five things to look out for this week:

Outcome of the two-state solution conference

The week began with a high-profile meeting chaired by France and Saudi Arabia focused on garnering **support** for a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

The hours-long conference ended late Monday with several countries, including France, Belgium, Luxembourg, Malta, and Monaco, announcing or confirming their **recognition** of a Palestinian state, a day after the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia and Portugal did. Germany, Italy and Japan took part in the conference but did not recognize such a state.

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The U.S. and Israel boycotted the event, saying the international push for a Palestinian state rewards Hamas and makes it harder to reach a deal to halt the war and return the remaining hostages.

It came as several U.S. allies, including Canada and the United Kingdom, announced recognition of an independent Palestinian state over the weekend.

The meeting and expanded recognition of Palestinian statehood will likely have little if any actual impact on the ground, where Israel is waging another major offensive in the Gaza Strip and expanding **settlements** in the occupied West Bank.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who has long opposed Palestinian statehood, has threatened to take even further unilateral action in response.

But proponents of the effort, including top U.N. officials, remain unpersuaded that recognition of Palestine is crucial at this stage of the conflict.

As the US isolates, other world powers reaffirm climate pledges

More than 110 world leaders will speak at a special U.N. climate summit on Wednesday, designed to get nations to strengthen their required but already late plans to wean themselves from coal, oil and natural gas that cause climate change.

Dozens of business leaders are in New York networking in various conferences aimed at greener and cleaner energy.

“Don’t believe the doomsters and the

gloomsters and the naysayers who say that somehow the world is moving away from climate action, clean energy,” United Kingdom climate chief Ed Miliband said.

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The nations of the world were all supposed to come up with new five-year plans for curbing carbon emissions by February, leading into the Brazil negotiations.

But only 47 of the 195 nations — responsible for less than a quarter of global emissions — have done so.

U.N. officials said they really need to be submitted by the end of this month so experts can calculate how the world is doing in its emission reduction efforts.

The world's biggest emitter, China, and another top polluter, the European Union, are expected to announce their plans or rough sketches of their plans this week. The United Nations session this week is designed to cajole countries to do more.

Trump returns to UN after retreating US from world stage

President Donald Trump will be the second leader to speak when the General Assembly kicks off its debate Tuesday morning. Trump will be returning to the U.N. for the first time since beginning his second term in January.

His speech will be among the most anticipated as America's allies and adversaries wait to see what the president will say about ongoing efforts to end the wars in Gaza and Ukraine.

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U.N. officials will be holding their breath to see if more funding cuts from the U.S. — their largest donor — are on the horizon after Trump and his allies spent the first few months in office **slashing** international aid spending.

He issued a first-day executive order **withdrawing** the U.S. from the U.N.'s World Health Organization.

That was followed by ending U.S. participation in the UN Human Rights Council, and ordering up a review of U.S. membership in hundreds of intergovernmental organizations aimed at determining whether they align with the priorities of his “America First” agenda.

“There are great hopes for it, but it's not being well run, to be honest,” Trump told reporters last week as he prepared for his address to the General Assembly.

Eyes on Syria and Iran's presidents at high-stakes moment

Following Trump's remarks, the two other headline speakers come from the Middle East, where various conflicts have thrown the region into further tumult over the last several years.

On Wednesday, Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian will appear on the U.N. stage at a moment of great magnitude for his country, as a 30-day window to stop the reimposition of sanctions on Tehran is closing at the end of this week.

The clock started when France, Germany and the United Kingdom on Aug. 28 **declared** Iran wasn't complying with its 2015 nuclear deal

with world powers.



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It also comes after a series of last-ditch diplomatic talks to avoid reimposing U.N. sanctions appeared to break down in recent days, with European leaders accusing Iran of not being serious about the conditions outlined.

Pezeshkian and his foreign minister, Abbas Araghchi, have the next few days to meet with their European counterparts in New York to come to a resolution that would avoid the series of financial penalties that would push the already crippling Iranian economy into further disarray.

A few hours later, Iran's once strategic ally, Syria, will debut its new leader, the first head of state to represent the war-torn country at the U.N. in nearly six decades.

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Al-Sharaa has spent nine months seeking to restore ties with Arab countries and the West, where officials were initially wary of his past ties with the al-Qaida militant group.

His speech on Wednesday will also be watched closely by the U.S., which previously designated Hayat Tahrir al-Sham, the rebel

group al-Sharaa formerly led, as a terrorist group.

All the meetings you won't see

Some of the most tantalizing and impactful diplomacy conducted during the U.N. General Assembly will likely happen behind the scenes during embassy receptions and at private dinners and drinks at some of Manhattan's most exclusive restaurants and clubs.

The high-level week, noted by some U.N. watchers as the World Cup of diplomacy, is jam-packed with official and unofficial gatherings between heads of state and government, where complex trade deals, sensitive peace negotiations, and even normalization efforts between allies and adversaries alike could see breakthroughs.

Officials state that more than 1,600 bilateral meetings are scheduled to take place inside the sprawling U.N. campus that oversees the East River.