

# GLOBAL UP-TO-DATE

A Monthly Newsletter by Centre for Governance Studies



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## A CGS Publication

The world around us is changing rapidly. Wars, new turn in global politics, human rights issues are occurring every day, posing new challenges and concerns. Global Up-to-Date is an initiative by Centre for Governance Studies (CGS) which will work as a hub for explaining the contemporary global issues.

The regular briefs will focus and explain the issues related to International Politics, Economy, Security, Human Rights, and Development. There will be a monthly printed version newsletter containing briefs of all the contemporary global important issues. The online version contains regular updates of the pressing issues along with the PDF version of the news letter.

*Note: The views expressed in this newsletter are solely those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the policies of CGS.*



# The 2025 UN General Assembly: A Clash of Orders, West vs. Global South

*Md. Saiful Islam Shanto*



In September 2025, the 80th session of the United Nations General Assembly convened in New York under the theme, “Better together: 80 years and more for peace, development and human rights.” Despite this hopeful framing, the atmosphere inside the General Assembly Hall reflected deep global divisions rather than unity. The proceedings revealed a world increasingly fractured by geopolitics. What unfolded was not a celebration of multilateral cooperation, but a confrontation between two competing visions of global order. On one side, Western-aligned states led by the United States and major European powers emphasized the importance of existing alliances, deterrence, and the defense of the so-called rules-based international order. On the other, a broad coalition from the Global South and the East, including China, Türkiye, and many nations from Africa and Latin America, called for a fundamental restructuring of global governance. They demanded fair representation, respect for sovereignty, and a shift away from militarization toward development. Together, these debates revealed an international system under intense strain.

The Western bloc centered its arguments on the war in Ukraine, framing it as an existential challenge to the UN Charter. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy delivered one of the most somber speeches of the session, reflecting Europe’s deepening insecurity. He argued that institutions meant to safeguard peace had failed, declaring that “there are no security guarantees except friends and weapons.” According to Zelenskyy, international law and cooperation no longer protect nations, leaving military strength as the deciding factor for survival. He warned that the world was entering the most dangerous arms race in history, intensified by artificial intelligence and autonomous weapons.



Leaders from the European Union and the United Kingdom echoed these concerns, arguing that failure to stop Russia would invite aggression elsewhere. This Western position, however, was complicated by the address of former and current US President Donald Trump. While criticizing global instability, Trump presented a different diagnosis, asserting that peace had existed during his earlier leadership and had since collapsed. His emphasis on “America First” and peace through strength reinforced national interest over multilateralism, creating a mixed and sometimes contradictory Western message.

In contrast, leaders from the Global South and the East focused less on individual conflicts and more on structural injustice within the international system. Türkiye’s President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan emerged as a leading voice, repeating his widely known declaration that “the world is bigger than five.” This statement directly challenged the legitimacy of the UN Security Council’s permanent membership and veto system, which Erdoğan and others described as outdated and unrepresentative. Leaders from South Africa, Brazil, and several Arab states linked this critique to ongoing conflicts in Gaza, Sudan, and the Horn of Africa, arguing that the UN’s responses were selective and shaped by power politics. They highlighted the stark contrast between swift Western support for Ukraine and long-standing inaction elsewhere. Chinese Premier Li Qiang reinforced this criticism by calling for rejection of Cold War style bloc politics and urging cooperation through development-focused initiatives. He promoted China’s Global Security and Global Development Initiatives as alternatives to Western-led frameworks that many see as conditional and exclusionary.

These contrasting positions exposed three major fault lines within the international community. The first concerned war and peace. Western states emphasized territorial sovereignty in Ukraine, while many Global South nations questioned why similar principles were applied unevenly across conflicts. The second fault line involved institutional reform. Calls to expand the UN Security Council grew louder, with countries such as India, Brazil, Japan, and Germany pressing for permanent seats, alongside broader demands to reform the World Bank and IMF. Developing nations argued that current financial institutions fail to address debt crises and climate vulnerability. Yet the permanent members of the Security Council showed little willingness to relinquish power. The third fault line was ideological. Western nations promoted liberal democracy and human rights, while others prioritized sovereignty, non-interference, and alternative development paths, often viewing Western advocacy as politically motivated.

For smaller and middle-power states, particularly in South Asia, the 80th UNGA underscored growing risks and limited opportunities. Pressure to align with either the United States or China has intensified, testing long-standing non-aligned principles. Countries like Bangladesh, guided by the idea of friendship to all and malice to none, now face challenges in keeping issues such as climate finance, migration, and humanitarian aid separate from great power rivalry. At the same time, this polarization opens space for diplomatic maneuvering. By engaging multiple blocs and building issue-based coalitions, South Asian states can amplify their voices on reform, climate justice, and development.

Ultimately, the 80th UN General Assembly concluded without a sense of shared purpose. Instead, it reflected a world in transition. The Western-led multilateral order that dominated after the Cold War is increasingly contested by rising powers and a more assertive Global South. The divide is not simply East versus West, but rather an old order confronting demands for reform. Critical questions remain unresolved. Can the UN adapt to shifting power realities and restore its legitimacy?



Will the accelerating arms race define the coming era? And will global governance ever move toward a system where justice outweighs power? The 80th UNGA made clear that without meaningful reform, global divisions will deepen, leaving the world less stable and more insecure.

# Sudan and UAE: From Cooperation to conflict

*Tasfia Rahman*



Photo: Mark Kerrison/In Pictures via Getty Images

Sudan has filed a case against the United Arab Emirates (UAE) at the International Court of Justice (ICJ), alleging that the UAE has been aiding the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) in the country's ongoing civil war, both financially and politically. While many nations have been drawn into this conflict, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) stands out as the most active player. When the war began, the Sudanese armed forces had around 200,000 combatants, nearly twice the size of the Rapid Support Forces' (RSF) 100,000 fighters. Despite this huge difference in the number of fighters, the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) has managed to maintain a strong position on the battlefield, which is attributed to foreign support. Reports from Middle East Eye suggest that the UAE has been funneling weapons to the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) through supply routes that extended outside of government authority. Amnesty International has also revealed that the UAE has been sending cutting-edge weapons into Darfur. Apart from that, the UAE has also increased its supply of Chinese drones and other weaponry to the Rapid Support Forces (RSF), according to The Wall Street Journal.

What now appears to be a bitter rivalry was once a relationship grounded in partnership and shared economic interests. For many years UAE has played a significant role in shaping Sudan's economic landscape. Research conducted by the French institute Gulf States: A Paradoxical Economic Lifeline for Sudan revealed that the UAE has significantly engaged in the country's economic activities and invested an ample amount of money in developing the country's industries, including trade, banking,



and agriculture, when the country was under international sanctions during the regime of former president Omar al-Bashir. The Emiratis' investment helped Sudan to maintain its vital economic activities. Sudan's political history has long been turbulent, and it has often been plagued by its regional problems. After gaining independence from Egypt and Britain in 1956, Omar Hassan Al Bashir ruled Sudan for nearly three decades. Between 2003 and 2005, his government was accused of committing atrocities in Darfur, including mass killings, sexual violence, and looting. After the International Criminal Court (ICC) charged him with genocide, growing protests and a military intervention in 2019 led to the fall of Bashir's regime. Despite all the effort, Sudan's fragile democratic transition was short-lived; In October 2021, General Abdel Fattah al-Burhan led a coup that overthrew the government, ending Sudan's precarious democratic transition. General Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo (Hemedti), on the other hand, rose to prominence as the Leader of the Rapid Support Forces (RSF). The relationship between the two leaders soon deteriorated due to varying opinions over time, and by 2023, the rivalry had plunged Sudan into a full-fledged war.

Sudan's importance to the UAE, however, goes beyond politics. It is Africa's third-largest gold producer and has fertile agriculture, natural gas, and considerable gold deposits. For over a decade, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) has served as the main purchaser of Sudan's gold. The UAE imported around USD\$2.29 billion worth of gold from Sudan in 2022. The real value is believed to be far higher. Around 90 percent of Sudan's gold, worth an estimated USD \$13.4 billion, is smuggled through neighboring countries such as Chad, Egypt, Ethiopia, Uganda, and South Sudan before arriving in the UAE.

Sudan also holds a significant importance for the UAE as the emirates rely on imports for 90% of their food due to constrained agricultural land and water resources. To establish food security, the UAE has established a global agricultural network of 1 million hectares, predominantly situated in Africa, especially in Sudan. Their investment mainly focuses on animal feed, agricultural crops, and livestock production.

Prior to the conflict, Major Emirati companies such as International Holding Company (IHC) were farming more than 50,000 hectares. Just before the war, International Holding Company secured an agreement with the Dal group to develop a further 162,000 hectares in northern Sudan. However, some of the UAE's attempts to expand land deals were blocked by the Sudanese government. They argued that the nation was being used unfairly - the UAE was disproportionately profiting, whereas it was of little benefit to the locals. As the tension grew UAE allegedly turned its support towards the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) seeking to protect its economic interests and maintain access to Sudan's vast natural resources. The UAE, however, denied any allegation of supplying arms to the RSF, dismissing them as an attempt by Sudan to divert the world's attention from the brutality of its ongoing civil war.

The Story of Sudan and UAE thus reflects a dramatic shift from cooperation to confrontation. What was built on economic partnership and mutual benefit is now plagued with suspicion and conflict.



# Seventy-Five Years of Cease-Fires and Suffering: Palestine's Unending Struggle for Freedom

*Tohfatur Rabbi Piyal*



“They make a desert and call it peace.” Tacitus’s words echo powerfully across Gaza after the cease-fire declared on 10 October 2025, presented globally as a fragile pause after nearly two years of relentless bombardment. Diplomats welcomed the announcement, headlines expressed relief, and humanitarian corridors briefly reopened. To many outside, it appeared as a return to calm. For Palestinians, however, it felt like another short pause within a much longer siege, a silence learned to be met with caution rather than comfort. The question remains unresolved: whether this truce signals a path toward justice or simply marks another interval in a familiar cycle of destruction.

Within weeks, that fragile calm collapsed. Israeli strikes killed more than a hundred Palestinians, including many children. Hospitals and tent camps were heavily damaged, laying bare how humanitarian assurances failed to translate into real safety on the ground. Promised measures such as aid delivery, prisoner exchanges, and the return of displaced families stalled amid renewed devastation. Frantz Fanon’s warning rings true here, that when justice is absent, peace becomes only a pause between wars. This cease-fire once again followed a familiar pattern, restoring the rhythms of occupation rather than producing any meaningful structural change.

Palestine’s modern history has long unfolded through recurring episodes of displacement and domination. Since the Nakba of 1948, when more than 700,000 Palestinians were driven from their homes,



each truce has simply shifted the contours of suffering. What began as mass expulsion gradually evolved into an enduring process of erasure, from the occupation of 1967 to the blockade of Gaza and the repeated assaults of 2008 to 2009, 2012, 2014, 2021, and 2023 to 2024. Every so-called cease-fire followed the same sequence: devastation, global outrage, limited restraint, and then renewed violence.

Human Rights Watch has described this reality as a system of systematic oppression and domination, while B'Tselem has named it apartheid. These temporary pauses rarely move society closer to justice. Instead, they allow political and territorial consolidation by the occupying power. Angela Davis's reminder that freedom is a constant struggle remains painfully relevant here. Desmond Tutu's warning about neutrality in the face of injustice also applies, as global inaction continues to sustain this cycle, a pattern that appears deliberate rather than accidental.

Israel's military campaigns are not sudden reactions to isolated provocations. They function as tools for maintaining an entrenched system of control. Each assault is justified through the language of security, yet that language masks a broader project of regulating land, movement, and Palestinian lives. Since 1967, more than two hundred settlements have been constructed across occupied territories, alongside near-total control over borders, water resources, and airspace. In this framework, security becomes an excuse for domination. Edward Said cautioned that peace itself can become the most effective disguise for occupation.

This logic is reinforced politically through settlement expansion and restrictive policies that severely limit Palestinian development. Under Netanyahu's far-right coalition, shaped by ultranationalist ideology, siege and retaliation have become central political tools. Gaza's blockade, which restricts electricity, food, and medicine, functions as collective punishment against civilians. When resistance inevitably emerges from this reality, it is immediately labeled illegitimate, providing justification for further assaults. Ilan Pappé's observation captures this dynamic clearly: Israel does not seek peace but quiet, a quiet occupation. As long as peace is defined by dominance, it remains nothing more than enforced silence.

For people in Gaza, every truce is experienced as a brief breath between bombardments, a silence filled with grief. The October cease-fire, like those before it, did not heal wounds. It merely allowed families to bury their dead and assess their losses. Gaza remains largely in ruins, with hospitals destroyed, neighborhoods erased, and survivors caught between trauma and the struggle to endure. United Nations reports estimate that more than 37,000 people have been killed since October 2023, most of them civilians, while over 80 percent of the population has been displaced. These outcomes are not accidental. They reflect a deeper structure of dehumanization. As Arundhati Roy observed, dissent may be the only thing worth globalizing, yet in Gaza it is buried beneath rubble and official rhetoric.

Despite this, life persists. As Mahmoud Darwish wrote, there remains on this earth what makes life worth living. Daily acts of rebuilding, learning, and survival become quiet forms of resistance. Still, when political rights are ignored, humanitarian aid becomes a temporary patch rather than a real



solution. Without justice following cease-fires, Gaza's population remains suspended between repeated destruction and fragile survival.

Every attempt at peace collapses under entrenched geopolitical interests, ideology, and unequal power dynamics. Strategic alliances, military support, and diplomatic protection make the status quo both profitable and politically convenient for powerful actors. As Noam Chomsky noted, Israel is treated as a strategic asset rather than a moral question. More than 700,000 settlers now live in the West Bank and East Jerusalem, fragmenting the land and steadily erasing the foundation of a viable Palestinian state. When cease-fires are treated as acceptable management of violence instead of a demand for rights, meaningful change becomes unlikely.

Beyond the checkpoints exists a broader web of global complicity. Powerful states continue to arm and shield Israel diplomatically, offering statements of concern without consequences, while normalization proceeds quietly. Internal Palestinian political divisions weaken collective resistance, while external military and diplomatic backing strengthens Israeli expansion. Fanon described colonialism as violence in its natural state. In Palestine, that violence has been formalized as policy. Cease-fires then become diplomatic performances, stabilizing injustice just enough for it to endure.

The most recent cease-fire, like many before it, provided a short reprieve rather than real transformation. More than 66,000 Palestinians have been killed in the latest extended assault, Gaza remains devastated, and humanitarian needs are overwhelming. Children grow up recognizing sirens more readily than lullabies, and families rebuild only to face loss again. These pauses do not allow healing. They deepen exhaustion. Darwish once wrote that even what makes life worth living is continually stolen by the guns of occupation, and hope itself must learn to survive amid ruins.

Each truce is celebrated as progress yet ultimately serves as recovery time for the occupying power. Settlements expand, the blockade tightens, and the world's attention fades until the next catastrophe. Martin Luther King Jr. reminded us that peace is not the absence of tension but the presence of justice. True peace will not emerge from repeated pauses in violence, but from dismantling the structures that sustain oppression. Until that moment arrives, when cease-fires no longer substitute for freedom, Palestine's struggle will remain unending, striving to turn mere survival into sovereignty.