

RCIL

# International Law News Coverage



December 16th - 31st, 2024

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## Secretary-General's Message for the New Year

*“Make 2025 New Beginning,  
Not as World Divided but as  
Nations United”*

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# The International Court of Justice

On 24 December 2024, **Ireland**, and on 16 December 2024, **Belgium**, filed a **declaration of intervention** in the case concerning *Application of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (The Gambia v. Myanmar: 7 States intervening)* under **Article 63 of the Statute of the Court**. Pursuant to Article 63, whenever the construction of a convention to which States other than those concerned in the case are parties is in question, each of these States has the right to intervene in the proceedings.

On 23 December 2024, the President of the Court made an **Order** organizing the proceedings and fixing the time-limits for the presentation of written statements in the request for an advisory opinion on the *Obligations of Israel in relation to the Presence and Activities of the United Nations, other international organizations and third States in and in relation to the Occupied Palestinian Territory*.

On 19 December 2024, the **General Assembly** of the United Nations adopted resolution A/RES/79/232, and **requested an advisory opinion** from the Court on the “*obligations of Israel in relation to the presence and activities of the United Nations, other international organizations and third States*” in and in relation to the *Occupied Palestinian Territory*.

By an Order dated 17 December 2024, the Court has **suspended the proceedings** in the case - *Questions of Jurisdictional Immunities of the State and Measures of Constraint against State-Owned Property (Germany v. Italy)* - pending notification from one of the Parties.

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## **The United Nations and International Law**

### **Top Political, Peacebuilding Official Points to ‘Escalatory Turn’ in Israeli-Houthi Conflict and Urges Action to Reverse Dangerous Trajectory**

Millions in Yemen, Israel and throughout the region continue to bear the brunt of military escalations, the Assistant Secretary-General for Middle East, Asia and the Pacific in the Departments of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs and Peace Operations told the Security Council as its members stressed the importance of protecting humanitarian workers and civilians.

### **Security Council Adopts Resolution 2767 (2024) Endorsing New African Union Support Mission in Somalia**

The Security Council has endorsed the African Union Peace and Security Council’s decision to replace the African Union Transition Mission in Somalia (ATMIS) with the African Union Support and Stabilisation Mission in Somalia (AUSSOM). This marks a further step in transitioning national security responsibilities to that country’s own forces. The Council also welcomed the progress made by Somalia in assuming progressively greater responsibility for its national security, including the Somali security forces taking over responsibilities from the ATMIS forces since 2022.

### **Fifth Committee Approves \$3.72 Billion Budget for 2025, Formula for Determining Member States’ Financial Contributions to the United Nations**

The Fifth Committee (Administrative and Budgetary) wrapped up the main part of its seventy-ninth session by sending the General Assembly a 2025 regular budget of \$3.72 billion. In a year of ongoing fiscal constraints, delegates completed the crucial step of approving new scales of assessment (the complex financial mechanism that the Secretariat uses to establish the annual contributions of each Member State) for both regular and peacekeeping budgets.

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# The United Nations and International Law

## General Assembly Adopts 10-Year Action Plan for Landlocked Developing Countries, Cybercrime Treaty, \$3.72 Billion UN Budget for 2025

Concluding the main part of its seventy-ninth session, the General Assembly adopted a 10-year action programme to address the unique challenges faced by landlocked developing countries, a historic cybercrime convention and the \$3.72 billion United Nations budget for 2025.

Adopting the draft resolution titled Programme of Action for Landlocked Developing Countries for the Decade 2024-2034, the Assembly called upon all relevant stakeholders to commit to implementing the instrument, which outlines a series of commitments for action across five priority areas, namely: structural transformation and science, technology and innovation; trade, trade facilitation and regional integration; transit, transport and connectivity; enhancing adaptive capacity, strengthening resilience and reducing vulnerability to climate change and disasters; and means of implementation.

The Assembly also adopted the 2025 regular budget of \$3.72 billion, recommended by the Fifth Committee.

Also adopted were two texts forwarded by the Third Committee (Social, Humanitarian and Cultural), including a text on “United Nations Convention against Cybercrime; Strengthening International Cooperation for Combating Certain Crimes Committed by Means of Information and Communications Technology Systems and for the Sharing of Evidence in Electronic Form of Serious Crimes” and another regarding ‘Preventing and combating corrupt practices and the transfer of proceeds of corruption, facilitating asset recovery and returning such assets to legitimate owners, in particular to countries of origin, in accordance with the United Nations Convention against Corruption’.

The delegate from Vietnam observed that the Convention against Cybercrime is the first international legal instrument that governs cyberspace and exemplifies the UN’s multilateral approach to tackling global challenges. Further, the Convention bridges the divide by fostering collaboration between nations.

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## The United Nations and International Law

### **US Disarmament Chief Calls Out ‘Unacceptable Levels’ of Civilian Fatalities in Ukraine**

Meeting to discuss the Western arms supplies to Ukraine, the Security Council heard that civilians there continue to be killed and injured by a panoply of deadly munitions, while the organ’s members alternately urged a diplomatic end to the violence and condemned Moscow’s initial - and continued - aggression. The High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, Izumi Nakamitsu, urged all concerned to refrain from any steps that may lead to further spillover and intensification of the conflict, as well as any further harm to civilians.

### **Security Council Debates Use of Artificial Intelligence in Conflicts, Hears Calls for UN Framework to Avoid Fragmented Governance**

Rapidly evolving artificial intelligence (AI) is outpacing human ability to govern it, even threatening human control over weapons systems, the Secretary-General has warned during a Security Council briefing, urging Member States to swiftly establish “international guard-rails” to ensure a safe, secure and inclusive AI future for all. He pointed out that recent conflicts have become testing grounds for AI military applications, noting that algorithms, from intelligence-based assessments to target selection, have reportedly been used in making life-and-death decisions. He warned that “Artificial intelligence without human oversight would leave the world blind - and perhaps nowhere more perilously and recklessly than in global peace and security”.

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# The United Nations and International Law

## **Democratic People's Republic of Korea Faces Security Council Scrutiny Over Military Aid to Russian Federation amid Reports of Troop Deaths**

Following reports of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's troops killed in the Russian Federation's war against Ukraine, the Security Council examined growing military ties between Pyongyang and Moscow amid ongoing disputes over sanctions on the North-East Asian country.

## **General Assembly Adopts 47 Third Committee Resolutions, including Texts on Nazi Glorification, Children's Rights, Palestine Statehood**

The General Assembly has adopted 47 draft resolutions, covering a wide range of issues, from countering violence against children and combating the glorification of Nazism to protecting the rights of Indigenous Peoples and ensuring the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination.

## **As Expiry of the Iran Nuclear Deal Approaches and Regional Tensions Flare, Security Council Hears Calls for Return to Diplomacy**

With the expiration of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action approaching and as conflicts proliferate in the Middle East, nuclear diplomacy is needed now, the Security Council heard from the Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, Rosemary Dicarolo. She noted that 10 months remain until the termination day of resolution 2231 (2015) which set out restrictive measures pertaining to nuclear activities and transfers, and said that the impasse on restoring the plan persists while the regional context has deteriorated. She called on all participants in the Plan and the United States to prioritize multilateralism and diplomacy and stated that these were the principles that made the agreement possible in 2015.

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# United Nations Peacekeeping

## **Secretary-General Mourns Passing of Amitabh Jha, Commander of the United Nations Observer Force in Golan, and Extends Condolences to Family, India**

The Secretary-General was deeply saddened by the sudden passing of Brigadier General Amitabh Jha of India, who served as Deputy Force Commander of the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF) from April 2023, and recently served as acting Force Commander of UNDOF in complex circumstances, following the fall of the Assad Government in Syria. He stated that the Brigadier General will be remembered for his leadership and unwavering commitment to UN peacekeeping, including in the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) as a Military Observer from 2005 to 2006. The Secretary-General extended his heartfelt condolences to the family and to the Government of India for their loss.

## **Security-Council Extends Mandate of United Nations Observer Force in Golan for Sixth Months through Resolution 2766 (2024) amid Reports of Israel Incursion**

The Security-Council has renewed the mandate of the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF) in the Golan for sixth months until 30 June 2025 and requested the Secretary-General to ensure that the Force has the required capacity and resources to fulfill its mandate “in a safe and secure way”. The UNDOF was established immediately following the 1974 Disengagement of Forces Agreement between Israel and Syria, with a mandate to maintain the ceasefire and supervise the area of separation - a demilitarized zone - as well as the area of limitation - where Israeli and Syrian troops and equipment are restricted - in the Golan. The adoption of resolution 2766 follows reports of Israeli troops entering the demilitarized zone after the fall of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad.

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# United Nations Peacekeeping

## **Security Council Renews Mandate of Stabilization Mission in Democratic Republic of Congo, Unanimously Adopting Resolution 2765 (2024)**

The Security Council has extended the mandate of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO), expressing grave concern over the ongoing offensive by the 23 March Movement (M23) in North Kivu, in violation of the ceasefire, and the unauthorized presence of external forces from a neighbouring State in the eastern part of the country. The Council unanimously adopted resolution 2765 (2024) and decided that the new mandate expires on 20 December 2025. The mandate includes, on an exceptional basis and without precedent to peacekeeping's basic principles, its Force Intervention Brigade. The text also decided to retain the Mission's key strategic priorities - protecting civilians, supporting the stabilization and strengthening of State institutions and key governance and security reforms.

## **Adopting Resolution 2764 (2024), Security Council Underscores Importance of Preserving Child Protection Capacities in UN Mission Transitions**

The Security Council has adopted a resolution highlighting the need for sustainable child protection capacities in United Nations peace operations and the importance of their smooth, responsible transfer to the Organization's country teams during mission transitions or withdrawals. The Council adopted the resolution unanimously and condemned all violations of applicable international law involving the recruitment and use of children by parties to armed conflict, as well as their re-recruitment, killing and maiming, rape and other forms of sexual violence, abductions and attacks against schools and hospitals.



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## The United Nations Treaty Collection Depositary Notifications

**Ghana signs** the United Nations Convention on the International Effects of Judicial Sales of Ships on 30 December 2024.

**Zambia accedes** to the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, Aiming at the Abolition of the Death Penalty on 19 December 2024.

**Grenada signs** 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 on 19 December 2024.

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# The International Criminal Court

## **ICC OTP Launches Second Public Consultation on a Policy Initiative to Advance Accountability for Environmental Crimes**

The ICC Prosecutor Mr. Karim A.A. Khan KC has invited a second round of comments on a new policy initiative by the Office of the Prosecutor to advance accountability for environmental crimes under the Rome Statute.

The initiative will culminate in a new comprehensive policy paper that aims to guide the Office in ensuring a systematic approach to dealing with environmental crimes from the outset of the preliminary examination process to investigations and prosecutions. The initiative was launched in February 2024 and has benefited from an initial round of more than 80 submissions. The new round of consultations aims to solicit more specific and focused feedback on the text of the draft policy itself.



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