

United Nations to Cut \$700M as U.S. Reevaluates Support

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The United Nations is preparing to cut over \$700 million from its core budget and eliminate approximately 3,000 jobs as the United States, its largest financial contributor, reassesses its support for the global body.

UN Secretary-General António Guterres has introduced a reform package that includes a 20% reduction in spending and staffing. The changes would reduce the UN's operating

budget to its lowest level since 2018. While the reforms are being formally linked to the UN's upcoming 80th anniversary, the significant cuts reflect shifting priorities under the current U.S. administration.

The United States has historically covered around 22% of the UN's regular budget. President Donald Trump has already halted funding to several UN agencies and withdrawn from key programs, reinforcing his administration's policy of focusing on American interests first.

"We're not going to be part of organizations that pursue policies that hamper the United States," said Deputy State Department spokesman Tommy Pigott during a Thursday briefing.

In line with its America-first strategy, the Trump administration has also reduced foreign aid by tens of billions of dollars. Meanwhile, global crises from conflicts in Ukraine and the Middle East to instability in parts of Africa have placed additional burdens on international institutions like the UN.

Earlier this year, Guterres warned of a "full-blown liquidity crisis." Spending across the broader UN system is now projected to drop by as much as \$20 billion compared to its 2023 peak, marking the most significant decline in a decade.

Eugene Chen, senior fellow at the New York University Center on International Cooperation, stated, "UN 80 is in large part a reaction from the Secretary-General to the kind of challenges posed by the second Trump administration."

The full details of the restructuring will be revealed in the UN's September budget. In addition to the main body, affiliated organizations such as UNICEF and UNESCO are also facing budget pressures and are preparing their reductions.

The United States has already ceased funding to the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees, exited the UN Human Rights Council, and withdrawn from UNESCO under the Trump administration.

The restructuring plan has received mixed responses. Some conservative voices argue that a strategic reassessment is long overdue. Brett Schaefer, a senior fellow at the American Enterprise Institute, said, "There are some things that the UN does that arguably should be

increased in terms of resources. And then there are some things that the UN shouldn't be decreasing but eliminating."

Schaefer highlighted the International Atomic Energy Agency and the World Food Programme as examples of effective bodies that align with U.S. interests. In contrast, he pointed to the Human Rights Council and the Food and Agriculture Organization as having agendas that may conflict with American policy goals.

Inside the UN, the reform plans have sparked dissent. Last week, staff in Geneva passed a symbolic motion of no confidence in Secretary-General Guterres. Ian Richards, president of the UN Staff Union in Geneva, shared on LinkedIn, "Staff felt its slash-and-burn approach lacked focus, had no strategic purpose, and was making the UN more top-heavy and bloated."

Despite the criticism, Chen noted that Guterres's proactive approach may better prepare the institution for further changes ahead. "Guterres' efforts to get ahead of the inevitable cuts that reductions in U.S. support will bring could help the UN adapt," he said.