

Multilateralism, UN Reforms Dominate UNGA General Debate



United Nations General Assembly President Annalena Baerbock delivers a speech during the opening ceremony of the General Debate of the 80th session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) at the UN headquarters in New York, Sept 23, 2025.

UNITED NATIONS (Dispatches) - Over 30 heads of state and government have delivered speeches at the UN headquarters, at the 80th session of the UN General Assembly (UNGA), focusing on such issues as Palestinian statehood, climate change, multilateralism and Security Council reform.

“Multilateralism is at a new crossroads,” with the authority of the United Nations “in check,” said Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva, the first speaker to address the UNGA.

Noting that “there is a clear parallel between the multilateralism crisis and the weakening of democracy,” the president said attacks on sovereignty, arbitrary sanctions and unilateral interventions “are becoming the rule.”

In Gaza, hunger is used as a weapon of war while the forced displacement of populations goes on unpunished, Lula noted, warning that “the Palestinian

people are at risk of disappearing” and “will only survive with an independent state integrated into the international community.”

Lula’s call for strengthening multilateralism was echoed by Peruvian President Dina Boluarte, who said that Peru is committed to an open multilateral system based on international law and the principles of the UN Charter and urges reforms that restore the UN’s representativeness and effectiveness to solve such global problems as attacks on democracy and the rule of law, climate change and socioeconomic issues.

Highlighting a “crisis of trust” in multilateral institutions, Kazakh President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev called on the international community to empower the United Nations to act, adding that a comprehensive reform of both the United Nations and its Security Council is necessary.

In his speech, Indonesian President

Prabowo Subianto underscored the importance of addressing climate change. “As the world’s largest island state, we testify before you that we are already experiencing the direct consequences of climate change, particularly the threat of rising sea levels.”

Indonesia is shifting decisively from fossil-fuel-based development towards renewable-based development. The country aims to achieve net-zero emissions by 2060, said Prabowo.

While U.S. President Donald Trump, the second speaker at the general debate, attacked climate policy and renewable energy, calling the carbon footprint “a hoax,” Chilean President Gabriel Boric stated that claiming global warming is nonexistent is not an opinion but a lie.

Tajik President Emomali Rahmon spotlighted the environmental challenges faced by his country: “Of Tajikistan’s 14,000 glaciers, more than 1,300 have completely melted, and the rate of melting is accelerating.”

Cyril Ramaphosa, president of South Africa, emphasized the need to “act decisively to silence all the guns everywhere to realize the goals of sustainable development and global peace.”

Africa is a continent “irreversibly on the rise,” he said. However, many of the Sustainable Development Goals remain elusive due to a lack of financial resources, with many developing countries spending more on debt servicing than on health or education, he said.

Representatives from UN member states, including some 150 heads of state and government, will take turns at the podium of the UNGA to address major global issues during the general debate, which started Tuesday and will conclude on Sept 29.

Typhoon Ragasa Bears Down on Southern China After Killing 17 in Taiwan



HONG KONG (AP) - Typhoon Ragasa, one of the strongest in years, whipped waves taller than lampposts onto Hong Kong promenades and turned seas rough on the southern Chinese coast on Wednesday after leaving deadly destruction in Taiwan and the Philippines.

In Taiwan, 14 people died in a flooded township, and 10 deaths were reported in the Philippines.

Nearly 1.9 million people were relocated across Guangdong province, the southern Chinese economic powerhouse. A weather station in Chuandao town recorded maximum gusts of 241 kph (about 150 mph) at noon, a high in Jiangmen city since record-keeping began. Huge waves battered Zhuhai city’s coastline and strong winds buffeted trees under intense rain. Fallen branches were scattered on the streets. The national weather agency forecast the severe typhoon would make landfall between the cities of Yangjiang and Zhanjiang on Wednesday evening. Schools, factories and transportation services were suspended in about a dozen cities.

The fierce winds, brought by Ragasa, once a super typhoon, woke Hong Kong residents in the early hours, and many went online to describe scenes like a kitchen ventilation fan being blown down and a crane swaying.

Strong winds blew away parts of a pedestrian bridge’s roof and knocked down hundreds of trees across the city. A vessel crashed into the shore, shattering a row of glass railings along the waterfront. Areas around some rivers and promenades were flooded, including cycling lanes and playgrounds. At several promenade restaurants, furniture was scattered chaotically by the

winds. Over 60 injured people were treated at hospitals.

A video that showed waves of water crashing through the doors of a hotel and flooding its interiors went viral in the financial hub. The hotel has not immediately commented on the incident. But staff were seen cleaning up the lobby, with parts of its exterior damaged.

Hong Kong and Macao, a nearby casino hub, canceled schools and flights, with many shops closed. Hundreds of people sought refuge in temporary centers in each city. Streets in Macao turned into streams with various debris floating on the water. Rescue crews deployed inflatable boats to save those who were trapped. The gambling city’s local electricity supplier suspended its power supply in some flooded, low-lying areas for safety.

As winds gradually weakened in the afternoon, a few cities distant from the expected landfall location were preparing to resume normal operations.

Hong Kong’s observatory said Ragasa had maximum sustained winds near the center of about 195 kph (120 mph) and skirted around 100 kilometers (62 miles) to the south of the financial hub. It was forecast to continue moving west or west-northwest at about 22 kph (about 14 mph).

The city categorizes cyclones with sustained winds 185 kph or stronger as super typhoons to make residents extra vigilant about intense storms.

The government previously said the rise in water levels could be similar to those recorded during Typhoon Mangkhut in 2018 — estimated to have caused the city direct economic losses worth 4.6 billion Hong Kong dollars

(\$592 million).

Ragasa earlier caused deaths and damage in Taiwan and the Philippines after the typhoon took a path between them.

In Taiwan, heavy rain caused a barrier lake in Hualien County to overflow Tuesday and torrents of muddy water destroyed a bridge, turning roads in Guangfu township into churning rivers that carried vehicles and furniture away. Guangfu has about 8,450 people, more than half of whom sought safety on higher floors of their homes or on higher ground. Local authorities said 14 people died and contact was lost with 124 others in the township. Taiwan’s Central News Agency said rescuers were going door-to-door to check on these residents.

Separately, 34 people were injured across the self-ruled island.

At least 10 deaths were reported in the Philippines, including seven fishermen who drowned after their boat was battered by huge waves and fierce wind and flipped over on Monday off Santa Ana town in northern Cagayan province. Five other fishermen remained missing, provincial officials said.

Nearly 700,000 people were affected by the onslaught in the main northern Philippine region of Luzon, including 25,000 people who fled to government emergency shelters.

And also in the eastern Indian city of Kolkata, at least 12 people died as heavy rain lashed and surrounding areas ahead of a major festival, flooding streets, disrupting transport and leaving residents stranded for hours, officials said on Wednesday.

Most of the rain, as much as 251.6 mm (9.9 inches) in 24 hours, fell during the early hours of Tuesday and was the heaviest witnessed in the city since 1988, said HR Biswas, the regional head of India Meteorological Department (IMD) in Kolkata.

Police said nine people died in Kolkata, with most of the deaths due to electrocution. Two people drowned, they added.

The rains brought the state capital to a standstill, seriously hampering preparations for the upcoming Durga Puja - the biggest annual festival of Hindus in West Bengal state.

****Flooding caused by Super Typhoon Ragasa in Hualien, Taiwan, on Sept 24, 2025.

Colombia’s President Calls for Criminal Investigation Against Trump Over Caribbean Strikes



President of Colombia Gustavo Petro Urrego addresses the 80th session of the United Nations General Assembly, Tuesday, Sept. 23, 2025, at UN headquarters.

BOGOTA, Colombia (AP) — Colombian President Gustavo Petro has called for a criminal investigation against U.S. President Donald Trump and other officials involved in this month’s deadly strikes on boats in the Caribbean.

Petro repudiated the three attacks in his speech at the annual meeting of the UN General Assembly during which he also accused Trump of criminalizing poverty and migration.

“Criminal proceedings must be opened against those officials, who are from the U.S., even if it includes the highest-ranking official who gave the order: President Trump,” Petro said of the strikes, adding that boat passengers were not members of the Venezuelan Tren de Aragua gang as claimed by the Trump administration after the first attack.

If the boats were carrying drugs as alleged by the U.S. government, Petro said, their passengers “were not drug traffickers; they were simply poor young people from Latin America who had no other option.”

Petro’s comments came shortly after Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro announced that his government is preparing a series of constitutional decrees to defend the country’s sovereignty in the event of an “attack” from U.S. forces.

Few details are known about the deadly strikes, the first of which took place Sept. 2 and killed 11 people, according to the Trump administration. U.S. officials have said that boat and another vessel targeted Sept. 16 had set out to sea from Venezuela. Three people died in the second attack.

The U.S. military struck a third boat Friday, killing three people.

China Ends Developing-Nation Status to Strengthen WTO Amid Trump Tariffs

BEIJING — China has said it would no longer seek the special treatment given to developing countries in World Trade Organization agreements — a change long demanded by the United States.

Commerce Ministry officials said Wednesday the move was an attempt to boost the global trading system at a time when it is under threat from tariff wars and protectionist moves by individual countries to restrict imports.

They did not mention the United States by name or President Donald Trump’s imposition of tariffs on many other countries this year, including China.

The U.S. has long argued China should give up the developing-country status because it is the world’s second-largest economy. The advantages of that designation at the WTO include lower requirements to open their

markets to imports and longer transition periods to implement such market-opening steps.

The WTO provides a forum for global trade talks and enforces agreements but has become less effective, prompting calls for reform.

The head of the Geneva-based organization described the Chinese move as “major news key to WTO reform” and applauded and thanked the country’s leaders in a post on X.

“This is a culmination of many years of hard work,” wrote Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, the WTO director-general.

Chinese Premier Li Qiang announced the change in a speech in New York on Tuesday to a China-organized development forum at the annual meeting of the U.N. General Assembly.

China is a middle-income country, and the Commerce Ministry officials emphasized that it remains part of the developing world.

Multiple Fatalities, Injuries in Texas Shooting at Immigration Facility



Police are seen near the scene of a shooting at an ICE facility in Dallas on Wednesday.

DALLAS (Reuters) - Multiple people were wounded and two were killed in a shooting on Wednesday at an Immigration and Customs Enforcement field office in Dallas, and the shooter died from a self-inflicted gunshot wound, federal officials said.

Police responded to reports of the shooting at the office in northwest Dallas at about 7:30 a.m. local time, local media reported.

Department of Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem said in an X post that there were multiple injuries and fatalities and the shooter was dead.

The field office is where people are processed and where agents decide whether to release individuals or hold them, according to ICE.

The victims were being led into the building to be processed and repatriated,

Fox News reported, citing Dallas police Department sources.

Two people were transported to the hospital with gunshot wounds. One victim died at the scene. The suspect is deceased, the Dallas Police Department said on X.

Footage from local news showed heavy law enforcement response around the facility.

The shooter was found dead on the roof of a nearby building, local ABC affiliate WFAA reported, citing sources.

“Preliminary information is a possible sniper,” ICE acting Director Todd Lyons told CNN.

Some media accounts said at least some of the victims were in critical condition.

Dallas police responded to Reuters inquiries and a spokesman said “This is an active scene and information is limited.”

News in Brief

PARIS (Reuters) - French unions will hold another day of strike and protests on October 2 to put pressure on new Prime Minister Sebastien Lecornu over their demands to scrap his predecessor’s austerity fiscal program, union leaders said. Union leaders who met with Lecornu on Wednesday said they were not satisfied by his response to their last day of protest, attended by hundreds of thousands of people on September 18. “The prime minister did not provide any clear answers to the workers’ demands, so for the unions, it’s a missed opportunity. It doesn’t add up,” said Marylise Leon, the head of CFDT, France’s largest union. Just over two weeks after President Emmanuel Macron appointed Lecornu as his fifth prime minister in less than two years, the 39-year-old loyalist has yet to pull together a government or a draft budget for 2026. He has to deal with a divided parliament and pressure to fix France’s finances.

PARIS (AP) — Former French president Nicolas Sarkozy faces up to 10 years in prison if a Paris court convicts him of secretly using funds from the Libyan government of late dictator Moammar Gadhafi to finance his presidential campaign in 2007. The verdict is expected on Thursday. If convicted, the 70-year-old Sarkozy would be the first former French president found guilty of accepting illegal foreign funds to win office. Sarkozy, who was elected in 2007 but lost his bid for reelection in 2012, has denied all wrongdoing during a three-month trial earlier this year that also involved 11 co-defendants, including three former ministers.

WASHINGTON (Reuters) - President Donald Trump’s approval ticked slightly lower in recent weeks as Americans worried about the health of the U.S. economy and the Republican’s ability to contain rising prices, according to a new Reuters/Ipsos poll. The three-day poll, showed 41% of respondents approved of Trump’s performance as president, down from 42% in a September 5-9 poll. Some 54% of people surveyed said the national economy was on the wrong track, up from 53% in an August poll and 52% in July. Only 35% of poll respondents approved of Trump’s stewardship over the economy, and 28% gave him a thumbs up on his handling of their cost of living, with both readings slightly lower than in previous polls. Trump returned to the White House this year after promising in his election campaign last year to fix the economy.

PARIS (AFP) - A man in his 40s has been arrested in southern England over an alleged cyberattack that caused disruption at several European airports in recent days, including at London Heathrow, law enforcement officials said Wednesday. The UK’s National Crime Agency said the suspect was held in West Sussex on Tuesday on suspicion of offenses involving the misuse of computers. The man has been released on conditional bail. Although this arrest is a positive step, the investigation into this incident is in its early stages and remains ongoing,” said Paul Foster, head of the NCA’s national cyber crime unit. “Cyber-crime is a persistent global threat that continues to cause significant disruption to the UK.”

SEOUL (Reuters) - Kim Keon Hee, the wife of South Korea’s ousted former president Yoon Suk Yeol, appeared in court on Wednesday at the start of her corruption trial, part of a criminal probe that has ensnared high-profile political and religious figures. Kim, who faces charges including bribery and stock manipulation, arrived at the Seoul Central District Court in southern Seoul wearing a black suit, making her first public appearance since her arrest in August. In brief remarks to the court she confirmed her personal information and asked for a trial by judge, rather than a jury, but did not address any of the charges.