

China dominates the UN. Why should US taxpayers fund it?

written by Asher Fredman | 11.09.2026

As New York prepares for the opening of the UN General Assembly's 81st session on September 8, Washington faces a concrete dilemma: Should it transfer billions of dollars in US taxpayer money to the United Nations in order to avoid the possible loss of its UNGA vote?

Article 19 of the UN Charter provides that a member "shall have no vote in the General Assembly" if its arrears equal or exceed the contributions due for the preceding two years.

The UN says Washington currently owes more than \$5b. The US disputes that calculation, saying that the amount is substantially lower but that it is certainly in the billions.

Paradigm shift

It is time for a paradigm shift in the US approach to the UN. While this organization was founded on noble ideals, it has devolved into an absurdly wasteful and deeply politicized body in which China and other authoritarian regimes largely dominate many of its key decision-making forums.

It has also become a leading engine of anti-Israel delegitimization and demonization, channeling billions of dollars through a vast web of more than 30 UN entities that contribute to the anti-Israel ecosystem.

The Trump administration's own State Department Strategic Plan for Fiscal Years 2026-2030 sets out the correct principle: "The department will no longer fund or support international organizations or conventions that act contrary to America's interests or that erode our sovereignty."

It pledges: "We will not permit international organizations to become weapons in the hands of our adversaries, deployed to target Americans and citizens of partner nations such as Israel."

That is precisely the test the UN should be required to meet.

Exploiting the system

The problem begins with the UN General Assembly's one-country-one-vote system. The US, China, Iran, and the smallest UN member states possess the same formal vote regardless of population, democratic character, human-rights record, or financial contribution.

Votes in the UN General Assembly and related bodies do far more than produce symbolic resolutions. They determine budgets and assessments, create and renew mandates, establish subsidiary entities, elect members of major UN institutions, and help initiate international legal processes.

The Chinese Communist Party has learned to exploit this structure effectively through voting blocs and international pressure. The Group of 77 and China bloc encompasses 134 countries, nearly 70 percent of UN membership, giving Beijing highly significant influence over the outcomes of UN processes and votes.

China has repeatedly used the UN both to advance its preferred norms and to shield itself from scrutiny.

For example, in 2022, weeks after the UN's High Commissioner for Human Rights Office concluded that abuses against Uyghurs and other minorities in Xinjiang could constitute crimes against humanity, Beijing mobilized enough support in the Human Rights Council (UNHRC) to defeat a proposal to merely discuss the issue.

China has used its power at the UN to shape international norms, advance its Belt and Road Initiative, and exclude Taiwan from global forums.

Beijing and other authoritarian regimes have also used the UN to advance initiatives and resolutions that directly undermine US national security interests in areas such as migration, nuclear deterrence, sanctions, and climate.

Anti-Israel ecosystem

At the same time, the UN's one-country-one-vote system has allowed states hostile to Israel to create a vast anti-Israel ecosystem. Meanwhile, the US Department of War's 2026 National Defense Strategy describes Israel as a "model ally."

Notably, the UN has built a sprawling network of more than 30 bodies, mechanisms, offices, commissions, committees, special procedures, and other entities that contribute to the political, economic, and legal campaign against the Jewish state.

General Assembly majorities create mandates and budgets. Secretariat units transform them into bureaucratic infrastructure. Human-rights mechanisms convert political allegations into purported legal findings. Humanitarian and technical agencies supply statistics and institutional authority.

UN communications units then broadcast the accusations against Israel across the globe.

Israel is the only country subjected to a dedicated country-specific Human Rights Council agenda item at every regular session. It faces an open-ended commission of inquiry and a uniquely indefinite special rapporteur mandate.

Permanent institutions including the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, the Division for Palestinian Rights, and the

Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices provide bureaucratic and advocacy infrastructure for one side of the conflict.

Blatant bias

The upcoming 81st session of the UN General Assembly will provide another reminder of this organization's blatant bias. On September 28, the UN General Assembly is scheduled to mark the 25th anniversary of the Durban Declaration.

The 2001 Durban conference helped place the Israeli-Palestinian conflict within a racial framework, fueling subsequent apartheid accusations, boycott campaigns, and legal attacks.

The UN's enduring anti-American, anti-Israel, and pro-China architecture does not diminish the importance of the steps taken by the current US administration to counter UN waste and corruption.

US President Donald Trump has defunded or withdrawn the US from dozens of UN and other international bodies. Mike Waltz, the US ambassador to the UN, and his team have secured over \$1b. in UN budget cuts, the elimination of thousands of UN headquarters positions, and a significant reduction in UN peacekeeping personnel.

These are laudable achievements. Yet greater efficiency does not change the UN's basic decision-making structure. Ultimately, the very states responsible for efforts to undermine US interests, advance authoritarian priorities, and perpetuate the anti-Israel agenda are among those whose consent would be required to fundamentally reform the system.

Indeed, US reform efforts to date have had limited impact on dismantling the anti-Israel ecosystem. The UNHRC's agenda item 7, the open-ended commission of inquiry, the indefinite special rapporteur mandate, and the broader institutional machinery all remain.

That brings Washington back to the UN General Assembly vote dilemma. It must be recalled that American global influence does not derive from possessing one vote out of 193 in the UNGA. It derives from America's military power, economic strength, technological leadership, diplomatic reach, and moral standing.

While US-UN cooperation should continue in specific cases where it serves US interests, American taxpayers should not be expected to provide billions to an organization that is structurally biased against the US and its allies. Published in The Jerusalem Post, September 11, 2026

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