

Challenges Annual Forum 2026



Pakistan
United Nations
Security Council
2025-2026



Permanent Mission of Sweden
to the United Nations, New York



DENMARK
United Nations
Security Council
2025-2026

Challenges Annual Forum

8 October 2026, United Nations Headquarters, New York

"Turning the Tide: Building Momentum for Peace Operations in a Demanding World"

PROGRAMME

09:00 –

11:30

*By invitation
only*

Pre-Forum Breakfast: A Closer Look at the Review

The Review of All Forms of UN Peace Operations offers a blueprint for resetting peace operations in a new geopolitical era. This exclusive pre-Forum discussion will bring together partners for an informal exchange on the Review's strengths, gaps, and implications, while raising concerns and questions that warrant further examination.

Welcome Address:

Per Olsson Fridh | Chair of the Challenges Forum Partners' Meeting and Director General, Folke Bernadotte Academy

13:15

ECOSOC
Chamber

CAF26: Opening remarks

Charlotte Kugelberg | Permanent Representative of Sweden to the United Nations

Christina Markus Lassen | Permanent Representative of Denmark to the United Nations

Guy Ryder | Under-Secretary-General for Policy, United Nations

Benoît Pylyser | Director, Challenges Forum International Secretariat

13:30

ECOSOC
Chamber

Turning the Tide: Peace Operations at a Crossroads

Over the past year, peace operations have been forced to downsize due to shrinking resources. By providing a 360-degree view of the realities facing missions today and the trade-offs increasingly shaping their

priorities, this session aims to have a candid discussion about what can realistically be expected of peace operations under current conditions. It will examine the consequences for mandates and mission postures, and highlight what is at stake for women, men, girls and boys when multilateral responses are constrained.

Asim Iftikhar Ahmad | Permanent Representative of Pakistan to the United Nations

Jeff Bartos | US Representative for UN Management and Reform, Permanent Mission of the United States to the UN (TBC)

Anita Kiki Gbeho | Special Representative for South Sudan and Head of the UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS)

David Anetey Akrong | Commandant, Kofi Annan Peacekeeping Training Center

Lotte Vermeij and **Roger Hughes** | Experts on UN Peace Operations, NORCAP-Norwegian Refugee Council

Facilitator: **Jenna Russo** | Director of Research and Head of the Brian Urquhart Center for Peace Operations, International Peace Institute

14:30

Break

15:00

ECOSOC
Chamber

Host Country Consent: Towards Shared Accountability

Host country consent has become more contested in recent years. This session will explore how accountability can be strengthened and more effectively shared across all actors involved, and how clearer mutual expectations and responsibilities can help sustain consent over time, creating the conditions for future peace operations to build more reciprocal and politically grounded partnerships.

Jean-Pierre Lacroix | Under-Secretary-General for Peace Operations, United Nations (video message)

Lewis G. Brown II | Permanent Representative of Liberia to the UN (TBC)

Miroslav Jenča | Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Colombia and Head of the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia (TBC)

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Fatima Maiga | Founding Member and President, Coalition des Femmes Leaders Nord, Sud et Centre du Mali (NSC)

Maya Ragab | Head of Programs, Cairo International Center for Conflict Resolution, Peacekeeping and Peacebuilding (CCCPA)

Charles Hunt | Professor of International Relations, RMIT University and Senior Fellow (non-resident), United Nations University Centre for Policy Research.

Facilitator: **Benoît Pylyser** | Director, Challenges Forum International Secretariat

16:30

Coffee

16:45

ECOSOC
Chamber
(subject to final
approval)

Looking ahead: A vision on Peace Operations for the Next Secretary-General

This concluding session will explore how the incoming Secretary-General, with the support of Member States, can reaffirm the central role of peace operations as an indispensable tool for maintaining international peace and security. It will consider the strategic role that peace operations should play in the future and what will be required to realise that vision, while also examining how the incoming Secretary-General can make more proactive and effective use of the UN's unique peace and security toolbox.

Gregor W. Koessler | Permanent Representative of Austria to the United Nations in New York

Ramazan Erdag | Chairman, Center for Strategic Research (SAM), Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Republic of Türkiye

Jean-Marie Guéhenno | Arnold A. Saltzman Professor of Practice in International and Public Affairs; Director of the Kent Global Leadership Program in conflict resolution at the School of International and Public Affairs, Columbia University; and Patron of the Challenges Forum

Aditi Gorur | Campaign Coordinator, 1 for 8 Billion

Final Reflections by the United Nations Secretary General Candidates (TBC)

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Facilitator: Per Olsson Fridh | Chair of the Challenges Forum Partners' Meeting and Director General, Folke Bernadotte Academy

17:50

ECOSOC
Chamber

CAF26: Closing Remarks

Asim Iftikhar Ahmad | Permanent Representative of Pakistan to the United Nations

Benoît Pylyser | Director, Challenges Forum International Secretariat

18:30

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only

Reception: 30 Years of Turning Challenges into Opportunities

DRAFT