

Jonathan Masters and Andrew Chatzky, “[The IMF: The World’s](https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/imf-worlds-controversial-financial-firefighter)

[Controversial Financial Firefighter](https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/imf-worlds-controversial-financial-firefighter).”

A brief introduction to the International Monetary Fund and the role it has played in a number of crises. (2,500 words)

Jonathan Masters and Andrew Chatzky, “[The World Bank Group’s Role in](https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/world-bank-groups-role-global-development)

[Global Development.](https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/world-bank-groups-role-global-development)”

A brief introduction to the World Bank that considers both its critics and its successes. (2,050 words)

James McBride and Andrew Chatzky, “[What’s Next for the WTO?](https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/whats-next-wto)”

A brief introduction to the World Trade Organization that considers its precarious position in the face of criticism from President Donald

J. Trump and others. (2,200 words)

“[The Role of the UN General Assembly.](https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/role-un-general-assembly)”

A brief introduction to the structure and functioning of the UN General Assembly. (1,800 words)

“[The Role of the UN Secretary-General.](https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/role-un-secretary-general)”

A brief introduction to the position of UN secretary-general. (1,700 words)

“[The UN Security Council.](https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/un-security-council)”

A brief introduction to the structure and powers of the United Nations Security Council as well as an examination of criticisms the organization faces and its prospects for reform. (2,400 words)

“[What Does the World Health Organization Do?](https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/what-does-world-health-organization-do)”

A brief introduction to the functioning of the World Health Organization and a guide to criticisms of the institution. (2,050 words)



Damien Cave and Isabella Kwai, “[China Is Defensive. The U.S. Is Absent.](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/05/11/world/australia/coronavirus-china-inquiry.html) [Can the Rest of the World Fill the Void?](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/05/11/world/australia/coronavirus-china-inquiry.html)” New York Times, August 31, 2020.

A look at how Australia and other smaller countries are adapting as the United States and China change their stances toward global governance. (1,550 words).

Richard N. Haass, “[The UN’s Unhappy Birthday,](https://www.cfr.org/article/uns-unhappy-birthday)” Project Syndicate,

September 10, 2020.

An op-ed by CFR’s president that details the shortcomings and failures of the United Nations. It provides a counterpoint to Tijjani Muhammad-Bande’s article. (1,000 words)

Tijjani Muhammad-Bande, “[The UN General Assembly: A 75-Year Journey](https://www.un.org/en/un-chronicle/un-general-assembly-75-year-journey-towards-future-we-want) [Towards the Future We Want](https://www.un.org/en/un-chronicle/un-general-assembly-75-year-journey-towards-future-we-want),” UN Chronicle, July 6, 2020.

An op-ed by the president of the seventy-fourth session of the UN General Assembly and permanent representative of Nigeria to the United Nations that details the successes and promise of the United Nations. It provides a counterpoint to Richard N. Haass’s article. (1,300 words)

“[Omar al-Bashir: Sudan Agrees Ex-President Must Face ICC](https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-51462613),” BBC News,

February 11, 2020.

A comprehensive look at a recent International Criminal Court case against Omar al-Bashir, the former president of Sudan. (800 words)

Elian Peltier, “[U.N. Peacekeepers in Haiti Said to Have Fathered Hundreds of](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/12/18/world/americas/haiti-un-peacekeepers.html) [Children](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/12/18/world/americas/haiti-un-peacekeepers.html),” New York Times, December 19, 2019.

A New York Times story on a report that found that UN peacekeepers stationed in Haiti fathered and then abandoned hundreds of children. (1,200 words)

Samantha Power, “[The Envoy](https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2008/01/07/the-envoy),” New Yorker, December 31, 2007.

A profile of an important UN official at a pivotal time in the organization's history. An excerpt from Power's book listed below. (11,200 words)

“[Rohingya Crisis: The Gambian Who Took Aung San Suu Kyi to the World](https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-51183521) [Court](https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-51183521),” BBC News, January 23, 2020.

A comprehensive look at a recent International Court of Justice case over the genocide of the Rohingya people in Myanmar. (1,500 words)

Jacob M. Schlesinger, “[How China Swallowed the WTO](https://www.wsj.com/articles/how-china-swallowed-the-wto-1509551308),” Wall Street

Journal, November 1, 2017.

A story, with some excellent graphs, about how the World Trade Organization has changed since China joined it. (2,600 words)

Somini Sengupta, “[What Is the United Nations? Its History, Its Goals and Its](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/09/24/world/americas/what-is-the-united-nations.html) [Relevance](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/09/24/world/americas/what-is-the-united-nations.html),” New York Times, September 24, 2019.

An explainer on the United Nations that includes analysis of the

organization’s challenges. (1,400 words)



Elizabeth Borgwardt, *A New Deal for the World: America’s Vision for Human Rights* (2005).

A history of how the modern systems of global governance came to be in the wake of World War II, with a particular focus on the Bretton Woods Conference, the founding of the United Nations, and the Nuremberg trials. (437 pages)

Jussi M. Hanhimäki, *The United Nations: A Very Short Introduction, Second Edition* (2015).

An introduction to the United Nations that explains its history and functioning as well as examines its successes, failures, and challenges. (192 pages)

Paul Kennedy, *The Parliament of Man: The Past, Present, and Future of the United Nations* (2006).

A comprehensive history of the United Nations that argues it is a flawed but indispensable institution. (384 pages)

Roger Lipsey, *Hammarskjöld: A Life* (2013).

A detailed biography of the United Nations’ most famous and most

effective secretary-general. (760 pages)

Amrita Narlikar, *The World Trade Organization: A Very Short Introduction*

(2005).

An introduction to the World Trade Organization that explains its history, structure, and purpose in an effort to contextualize controversies about the organization. (155 pages)

Samantha Power, *Chasing the Flame: Sergio Vieira de Mello and the Fight to Save the World* (2008).

A biography of a senior UN official that illuminates a number of crises in which the UN intervened. (622 pages)

Benn Steil, *The Battle of Bretton Woods: John Maynard Keynes, Harry Dexter White, and the Making of a New World Order* (2013).

A detailed but readable look at the dynamics of negotiations at the Bretton Woods Conference. (464 pages)



Aslı Ü. Bâli, Michael Wahid Hanna, and Thanassis Cambanis, “ [What’s the](https://tcf.org/content/commentary/world-podcast-whats-price-giving-human-rights-international-law/?agreed=1) [Price of Giving Up on Human Rights and International Law?](https://tcf.org/content/commentary/world-podcast-whats-price-giving-human-rights-international-law/?agreed=1)”TCF World Podcast, Century Foundation, February 11, 2020.

A podcast episode that argues the United States has abandoned some elements of international law and discusses the practical effects of this abandonment. (38 minutes)

Sarah Gonzalez and Robert Smith, “[Showdown at the WTO,](https://www.npr.org/sections/money/2018/05/18/612078121/episode-842-showdown-at-the-wto)” Planet Money, NPR, May 18, 2018.

An approachable introduction to the World Trade Organization centered on a handful of incisive questions about the institution. (19 minutes)



[About the UN,](https://www.un.org/en/about-un/) United Nations.

The United Nations’ own website, which has a wealth of information

about the organization.