



# General Assembly

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## Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples

### Dissemination of information on decolonization during the period from April 2023 to March 2024

#### Report of the Secretary-General

##### *Summary*

The present report, prepared in response to General Assembly resolution [78/100](#) of 11 December 2023, provides a general overview of the activities undertaken and supported by the Department of Global Communications to disseminate information on decolonization, with particular emphasis on the options for self-determination available for the peoples of the Non-Self-Governing Territories. Unless otherwise mentioned, it covers the period from April 2023 to March 2024.



## **I. Introduction**

1. The General Assembly, in paragraph 2 of its resolution [78/100](#), considered it important to continue and expand its efforts to ensure the widest possible dissemination of information on decolonization, with particular emphasis on the options for self-determination available for the peoples of the Non-Self-Governing Territories. To that end, it requested the Department of Global Communications, through the United Nations information centres in the relevant regions, to actively engage and seek new and innovative ways to disseminate material to the Non-Self-Governing Territories. In paragraph 3 of the same resolution, the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to further enhance the information provided on the United Nations decolonization website and to continue to include the full series of reports of the regional seminars on decolonization, the statements and scholarly papers presented at those seminars and links to the full series of reports of the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples. It also stressed that the Department of Global Communications and the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs continue to be jointly responsible for maintaining and enhancing the United Nations decolonization website. In paragraph 4, the Assembly requested the Department of Global Communications to continue its efforts to update web-based information on the assistance programmes available to the Non-Self-Governing Territories. In paragraph 5, it requested the Department of Global Communications and the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs to implement the recommendations of the Special Committee and to continue their efforts to take measures through all of the media available, including publications, radio, television, the Internet and social media, to publicize the work of the United Nations in the field of decolonization.

2. In fulfilling its mandate, the Department of Global Communications worked closely with the Decolonization Unit of the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, among other relevant United Nations offices and entities.

3. The present report, prepared in response to the above-mentioned resolution, covers the period from April 2023 to March 2024, unless otherwise indicated.

## **II. 2023 Pacific regional seminar on the implementation of the Fourth International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism**

4. The Special Committee held the 2023 Pacific regional seminar in Bali, Indonesia, from 24 to 26 May, within the framework of the Fourth International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism (2021–2030).

5. The theme of the seminar was “Innovative steps to ensure the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals in the Non-Self-Governing Territories”.

6. An information officer was assigned to cover the event for the Department’s Meetings Coverage Section. The information officer issued daily press releases, which were disseminated through the United Nations news and media platforms.

## **III. Coverage of issues before the General Assembly**

7. The Department issued a total of 44 press releases, in English and French, covering meetings and statements relating to the work of the United Nations on

decolonization, including by the General Assembly, its Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee) and the Special Committee.

8. The Department's Media Accreditation and Liaison Unit continued to share with journalists covering the work of the United Nations information about meetings and events related to the subject matter through regular media alerts, and also provided accreditation and liaison support. The Media Documents Centre distributed relevant statements and resolutions related to meetings to journalists and members of the media seeking to cover the work of the United Nations on decolonization.

## A. United Nations websites and social media

9. The "Global issues" section of the United Nations website, maintained by the Department, continued to feature the issue of decolonization in the six official languages of the United Nations ([www.un.org/en/global-issues/decolonization](http://www.un.org/en/global-issues/decolonization)). The pages on that topic received a total of 179,037 views, a 57 per cent increase over the same period the previous year.

10. In the "Observances" section of the United Nations website, the pages for the International Week of Solidarity with the Peoples of Non-Self-Governing Territories in the six official languages (25–31 May; <https://www.un.org/en/observances/non-self-governing-week>) had a total of 14,136 views.

11. The flagship United Nations social media accounts, with more than 70 million collective followers, promoted the subject of decolonization in the six official languages, as well as in Hindi, Kiswahili and Portuguese. The coverage ranged from observances, such as the International Week of Solidarity with the Peoples of Non-Self-Governing Territories, to events and related meetings. Posts directed traffic to United Nations webpages on decolonization and supported the Organization's programme to ensure diverse audiences could be reached with detailed and current information about the work of the Organization in the area of decolonization.

12. The Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs continued to maintain and update the "United Nations and Decolonization" website in the six official languages ([www.un.org/dppa/decolonization](http://www.un.org/dppa/decolonization)). From January to December 2023, the website had a total of 1,536,051 page views, 921,592 sessions and 579,183 users, a 118 per cent, 115 per cent and 96 per cent increase from 2022, respectively.

13. The Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs continued to keep the public informed of activities relating to decolonization, in particular those of the Special Committee, the Fourth Committee, the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly, through the "United Nations and Decolonization" website.

14. In line with the mandate on multilingualism and the principle of parity of official languages on United Nations websites, the message of the Secretary-General to the regional seminar in 2023 was translated and is available in the six official languages on the "United Nations and Decolonization" website. This is a continuation of the initiative launched in 2023 to progressively make the message available in all official languages for past and future seminars, as resources allow. As part of the commitment under the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls, and as the Special Committee on Decolonization has consistently stressed in its annual reports, the dedicated section on the website subtitled "Women in the Territories: Highlights" was updated to provide information regarding the role, contributions and achievements of women in the Non-Self-Governing Territories and the process of decolonization. Furthermore, in support of the Data Strategy of the Secretary-General for Action by Everyone, Everywhere, an infographic entitled "UN decolonization in numbers" highlighting key numbers in

decolonization and an interactive timeline of all regional seminars were produced in the six official languages.

## **B. United Nations News**

15. United Nations News, operating in nine languages, continued to produce multimedia stories and features on issues relating to colonialism and its enduring effects, with a particular focus on racism. The team highlighted discussions in the Permanent Forum on People of African Descent and covered a significant report published by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) that examines the systemic racism, marginalization and exclusion suffered by people of African descent and links these issues to the historical contexts of slavery and colonialism (<https://news.un.org/en/story/2023/09/1140982>). United Nations News also brought significant attention to the 2023 Pacific regional seminar and the International Week of Solidarity with the Peoples of Non-Self-Governing Territories, among other activities. These stories, together with coverage of the deliberations of the Special Committee and relevant OHCHR reports and statements, underscored the ongoing global efforts to confront and resolve the deep-seated impacts of colonialism, slavery and racism.

16. Other coverage included a feature interview on reparations related to the transatlantic slave trade, highlighting perspectives from Nikole Hannah-Jones, best known for the Pulitzer Prize-winning 1619 Project, and Laura Trevelyan, a former journalist for the British Broadcasting Corporation who discussed her family's historical involvement in slavery (<https://news.un.org/en/audio/2023/12/1145187>).

17. In addition, the Kiswahili unit of United Nations News produced numerous stories, interviews and features related to decolonization, including coverage of an event at United Nations Headquarters on 27 March 2023 commemorating the end of the transatlantic slave trade (<https://news.un.org/sw/story/2023/03/1160382>), and coverage of the Permanent Forum on People of African Descent (<https://news.un.org/sw/story/2023/05/1162577>). The unit also spotlighted a unique story featuring musician Robdarius 'Roben X' Brown, who uses his music to raise awareness of racism and xenophobia (<https://news.un.org/sw/story/2023/06/1163057>).

18. The United Nations Video Section continued to cover issues related to decolonization, including the legacy of colonialism, which was addressed in the Secretary-General's video message produced by the team for the International Day of Remembrance of the Victims of Slavery and the Transatlantic Slave Trade.

19. In addition, the Department continued to provide multilingual live and on-demand streaming coverage of United Nations meetings and events on decolonization issues directly to a global audience through the United Nations Web TV website (<https://webtv.un.org/en>). During the reporting period, United Nations Web TV provided live and on-demand streaming coverage of 45 meetings and events related to decolonization, including meetings of the Fourth Committee and the Special Committee. United Nations Photo also continued to cover decolonization issues; over 2,300 images related to the subject were archived in the photo archive system and some 20 images were published online.

20. The Department's news service for broadcasters, UNifeed, also covered the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues and the second Permanent Forum on People of African Descent, highlighting remarks delivered by the Secretary-General. UNifeed also published and distributed a news video package from OHCHR on the report mentioned in paragraph 15 (<https://www.unmultimedia.org/tv/unifeed/asset/3090/3090297/>).

## IV. Visitors' services

21. The Visitors' Services Section in New York continued to share information on decolonization with United Nations visitors through its guided tours, including on the former role of the Trusteeship Council and the work of the Fourth Committee, as well as on the progress made on decolonization over the decades in the light of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples of 1960. During the reporting period, 189,279 visitors took an in-person guided tour at United Nations Headquarters, and an additional 2,340 people took a virtual tour.

22. The in-person Black History Tour, which provides a unique look at the Ark of Return permanent memorial and highlights the contributions of people of African descent to the work of the United Nations in fields such as peace and security and human rights, with a special emphasis on decolonization, was re-launched in February 2023. At the time of writing the present report, 538 visitors had taken an in-person Black History Tour at United Nations Headquarters and an additional 120 people had taken the virtual tour since the start of the reporting period.

23. The Visitors' Service at the United Nations Office at Geneva continued to introduce the theme of decolonization through a description of the mandate and past activities of the Trusteeship Council, reaching around 40,000 visitors. In parallel, the Visitors Service in Vienna continued to highlight the topic to its visitors during the general guided tours, when explaining the increase in United Nations membership over the years. The historical work of the Trusteeship Council was also presented to visitors participating in a lecture programme on the United Nations. In 2023, around 44,050 visitors participated in the guided tour and 2,000 participated in lecture programmes on various topics. The Visitors Service at the United Nations Office at Nairobi also played a pivotal role in informing around 5,000 visitors about the subject through comprehensive briefings and detailed explanations that focused on the work of the Trusteeship Council and the activities of the Fourth Committee. Furthermore, the Service continued to offer an insightful perspective on the historical context of decolonization in the region, which is particularly relevant given the history of Kenya as a former colony.

## V. Dag Hammarskjöld Library

24. During the reporting period, the Dag Hammarskjöld Library digitized a significant collection of historic United Nations parliamentary and normative documents, comprising 17,000 documents (around 170,000 pages). Notably, within this collection, there are 2,700 documents (a total of 42,000 pages) pertaining specifically to decolonization. In addition, the Library analysed more than 61 speeches delivered during the Fourth Committee meetings concerning decolonization.

25. The Library also continued to maintain two research guides on the subject matter, namely UN Documentation: Decolonization Research Guide (<https://research.un.org/en/docs/decolonization>), viewed 2,000 times during the reporting period, and the Research Guide on the Trusteeship Council (<http://research.un.org/en/docs/tc>), viewed 23,129 times.

26. The Library added a collection of 47 files relating to decolonization, dating from 1974 to 1993, to the United Nations Digital Library, including publications and grey literature from the then Department of Political Affairs. The Library also maintained and added new content to its external collection catalogue, which allows United Nations staff to access the latest research and news on the topic. The Library also continued to maintain frequently asked questions on decolonization

(<https://ask.un.org/search/?t=0&q=decolonization>) and assisted researchers in their search for information on this topic.

## **VI. United Nations information centres and services**

27. The global network of 59 United Nations information centres continued to educate the public on the issue of decolonization. The United Nations Information Service in Geneva, for example, marked the International Week of Solidarity with the Peoples of Non-Self-Governing Territories on its social media channels, reaching over 20,000 people. The centres also addressed the issue of decolonization during virtual and in-person briefings, guided tours and Model United Nations.

## **VII. Conclusions**

28. The Department of Global Communications spared no effort in covering the issue of decolonization and the objectives of the Fourth International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism. Working in close cooperation and coordination with the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, the Department utilized its multimedia, multilingual platforms and tools to cover and support the work of the Special Committee, which aims to advance the issue of decolonization and promote the need for the immediate and full implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples.

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