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DEVEX CAREER ADVICE AND INSIGHTS

ASSESSING THE TRUMP EFFECT ON UN AGENCIES

JUNE 2025

INTRODUCTION

MAKING SENSE OF THE NEW NORMAL

This guide is an overview of the United Nations recruitment landscape to help professionals navigate a drastically altered job market.

The fallout from the U.S. foreign aid cuts and additional shifts in policy under President Donald Trump has created a new normal for much of the global development sector. As the Devex news team continues to report, the U.N. and its many agencies have not been spared from the detrimental effects of these changes.

To help development professionals make sense of the current U.N. recruitment landscape, we've put together this comprehensive guide featuring exclusive Devex job board data insights on key hiring trends across the system. The following pages will also dig deeper into the state of affairs at some of the U.N.'s most significant entities, including UNICEF, WHO, and UNHCR.



OVERVIEW

TRUMP EFFECT WEIGHS HEAVILY ON UN WORKFORCE



> *I have been dealing with humanitarian crises for more than 40 years. I have never, ever seen such a challenge due to the lack of resources, cuts, freezes, and uncertainty.*
>
> **— Filippo Grandi, U.N. high commissioner for refugees**

President Donald Trump and his new administration's unprecedented order to freeze U.S. foreign aid on Jan. 24, 2025, sent shock waves throughout the global development sector. Its effect on USAID was soon apparent, with tens of thousands of people losing their jobs and thousands of contracts canceled within weeks.

How the aid freeze and other U.S. policy shifts would impact the United Nations and its agencies was less clear, outside of the World Health Organization's decision to freeze hiring shortly after Trump's Jan. 20 executive order to withdraw the U.S. from the WHO.

But the weeks and months that followed included a steady stream of bad news, with job cuts hitting agencies such as UNHCR, the World Food Programme, the International Organization for Migration, UNAIDS, and many others. The hardest-hit agencies included UNHCR, which saw 83.4% fewer roles advertised. In late April, UNHCR chief Filippo Grandi communicated to staff that it was moving ahead with a significant downsizing effort, capping the number of senior leadership positions and preparing to close some country offices as part of broader efforts to cut spending.

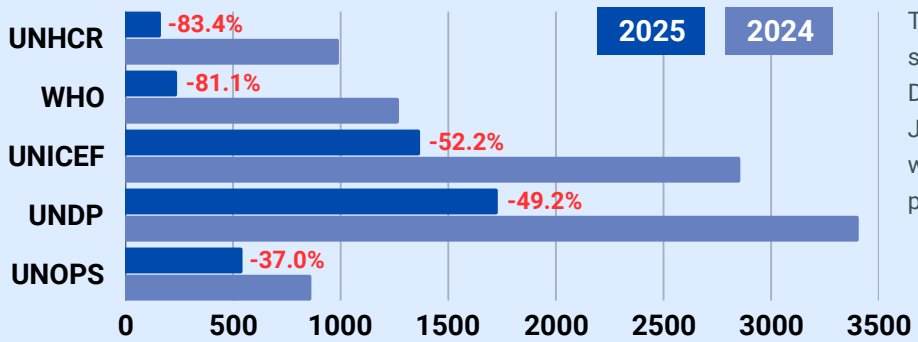
8,927

UN jobs posted since Jan. 24.

-43.3% compared to 2024.

The Trump administration's policies on refugees also led to IOM cutting 3,000 employees working

UN JOB POSTINGS: 2025 VS. 2024



The U.N. agencies that have seen the steepest decline in Devex job postings from Jan. 24 to June 16, 2025, when compared to the same period in 2024.

UN JOB LOCATIONS: HARDEST-HIT COUNTRIES

1. **Jordan** | -63% (202 fewer).
2. **Ukraine** | -61% (182 fewer).
3. **Ethiopia** | -51% (150 fewer).
4. **Switzerland** | -38% (272 fewer).
5. **U.S** | -36% (431 fewer).
6. **Italy** | -32% (103 fewer).
7. **Thailand** | -24% (79 fewer).



The countries with the most significant year-on-year decline in U.N. job postings from Jan. 24 to June 16, 2025. Only countries that were among the top 10 in 2024 U.N. job postings were considered.

on a U.S. resettlement program. While the agency was one of just three U.N. entities to have posted more positions overall on Devex in 2025 than 2024, a closer look at the numbers paints a less rosy picture.

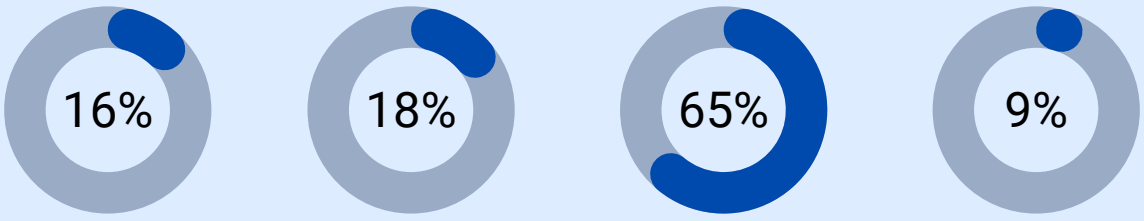
Like many U.N. agencies have done in recent months, IOM shifted much more work to short-term contracts while significantly reducing long-term consulting opportunities.

Elsewhere, UNICEF, which saw roughly a 50% decrease in job postings, instructed managers in its headquarters and regional offices to reduce their core funding by 25%. Looking ahead, UNICEF estimated that it will face a 20% reduction in donor funding in 2026, compared to 2024.

Geographically, among the top 10 locations for U.N. roles in 2024, the steepest drops in available jobs compared to 2025 have been seen in Jordan (-62.5%), Ukraine (-60.7%), and Ethiopia (-51.4%). In the US, 431 fewer roles have been advertised, or a decrease of roughly 36%.

The loss of U.N. job opportunities has been steep across all contract types analyzed, with long-term consulting assignments taking the biggest hit with a 66.8% decrease. There have also been 44.5% fewer full-time staff positions advertised, with short-term contracts seeing the least amount of disruption, with a 31.7% decrease.

UN JOB TYPES SINCE JAN. 24



The percentage of U.N. job postings per contract type advertised on Devex from Jan. 24 to June 16, 2025.

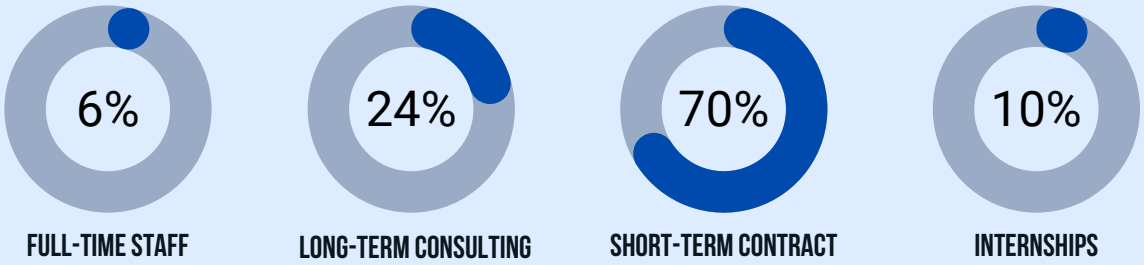
WHO IS STILL HIRING?

TOP UN EMPLOYERS SINCE JAN. 24

01 UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME (UNDP)

Jobs posted: 1,730 (-49.2% vs. 2024).
Top locations: U.S., Brazil, Mexico
View current job openings.

JOB TYPES: UNDP SINCE JAN. 24



The percentage of various job types for the UNDP jobs advertised on Dexex from Jan. 24 to June 16, 2025.

02 UNITED NATIONS CHILDREN'S FUND (UNICEF)

Jobs posted since Jan. 24: 1,369 (-52.1% vs. 2024).
View current job openings.

03 INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR MIGRATION (IOM)

Jobs posted since Jan. 24: 777 (+70.8 vs. 2024).
View current job openings.

04 FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION (FAO)

Jobs posted since Jan. 24: 688 (-28.0% vs. 2024).
View current job openings.

WHO IS STILL HIRING?

TOP UN EMPLOYERS SINCE JAN. 24

05 WORLD FOOD PROGRAMME (WFP)

Jobs posted since Jan. 24: 663 (-4.2% vs. 2024).
View current job openings.

06 U.N. OFFICE FOR PROJECT SERVICES (UNOPS)

Jobs posted since Jan. 24: 544 (-37.0% vs. 2024).
View current job openings.

07 U.N. ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME

Jobs posted since Jan. 24: 348 (+126.0% vs. 2024).
View current job openings.

08 WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION (WHO)

Jobs posted since Jan. 24: 240 (-81.1% vs. 2024).
View current job openings.

09 U.N. HUMAN SETTLEMENTS PROGRAMME (UN-HABITAT)

Jobs posted since Jan. 24: 197 (+212.7 vs. 2024).
View current job openings.

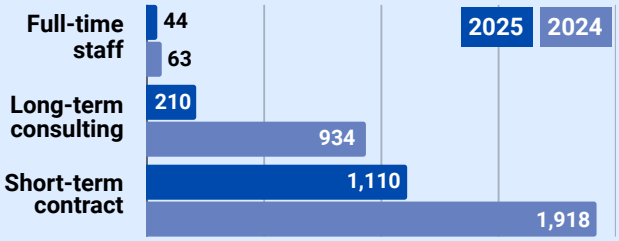
10 U.N. HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES (UNHCR)

Jobs posted since Jan. 24: 165 (-83.4% vs. 2024).
View current job openings.

TOP UN EMPLOYERS

IN FOCUS: UNICEF

UNICEF CONTRACTS: 2025 VS. 2024



Contract types for UNICEF roles posted on Devex from Jan. 24 to June 16, 2025, compared to 2024.

1,369

UNICEF jobs posted since Jan. 24

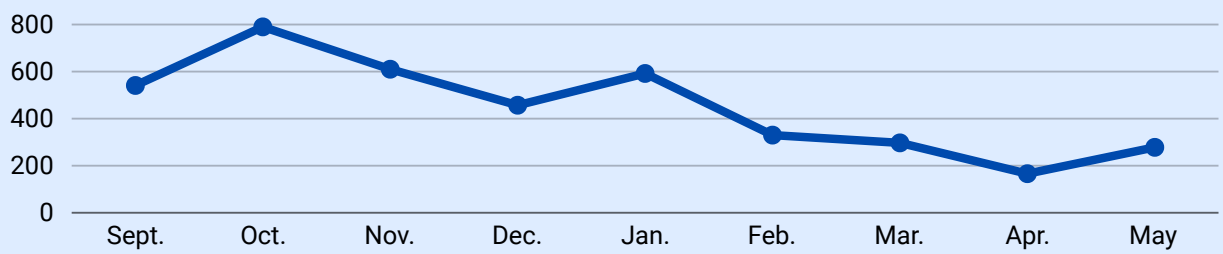
-52.1% compared to 2024.

What's happened and what's ahead: In late May UNICEF leadership outlined its plans to impose at least 25% cuts in its core budget and to fold programming in its seven regional offices into four so-called Centers of Excellence, based in Amman, Jordan; Bangkok, Thailand; Nairobi, Kenya; and Panama City. UNICEF programming would be phased out in high-income countries in Europe. Offices in Sudan and Djibouti would be absorbed into the eastern and southern Africa regional office.

On Devex's job board, over 50% fewer opportunities have appeared since Jan. 24 compared to 2024, when the children's agency posted the second most opportunities of any U.N. entity.

UNICEF's retrenchment reflects a financing retreat by traditional donors, particularly in Europe, and has accelerated as the Trump administration has sought draconian reductions in its own foreign aid budget, projecting steep cuts across the U.N. system.

UNICEF JOBS POSTED PER MONTH

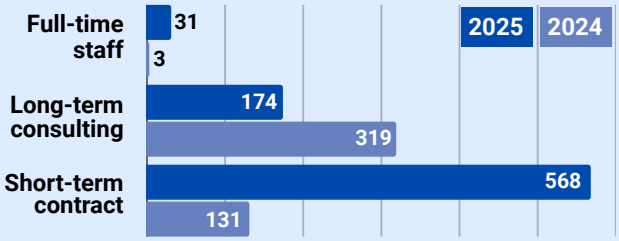


The number of UNICEF roles posted on Devex per month since Sept. 2024.

TOP UN EMPLOYERS

IN FOCUS: IOM

IOM CONTRACTS: 2025 VS. 2024



Contract types for IOM roles posted on Devex from Jan. 24 to June 16, 2025, compared to 2024.

777

IOM jobs posted since Jan. 24

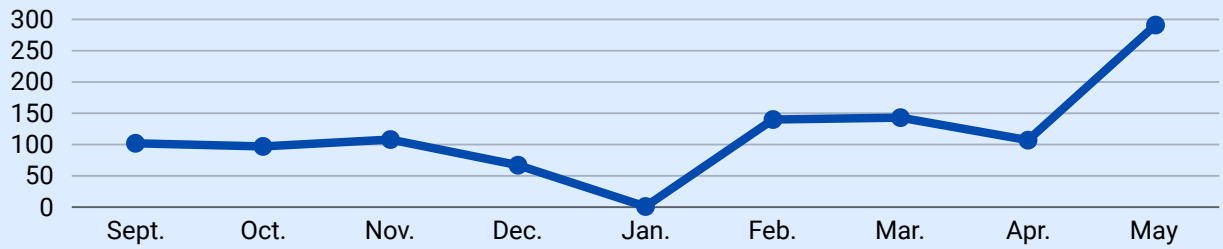
+70.8% compared to 2024.

What's happened and what's ahead: In early February, IOM sent notices of dismissal to 3,000 employees working on a United States resettlement program, the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program, or USRAP. The move came shortly after Trump's executive order declaring "that entry into the United States of refugees under the USRAP be suspended."

More recently, the agency began reducing around 20% of its staff — more than 250 employees — at its headquarters in Geneva and an undisclosed number in the field. More dismissals are expected, according to Devex reporting.

Despite the cuts, the agency has posted over 300 more jobs overall since Jan. 24, 2025, compared to last year. However, of the 777 IOM jobs advertised on Devex, 568 of them are short-term contracts, over 400 more than they sought last year. Long-term consulting roles have also been cut significantly, from 319 in 2024 to 174 this year.

IOM JOBS POSTED PER MONTH

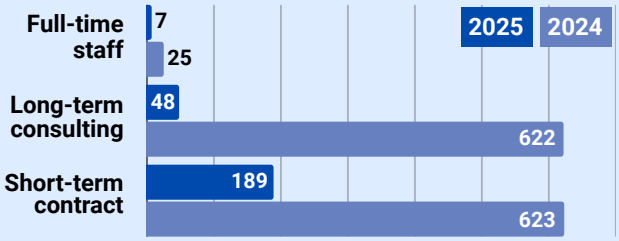


The number of IOM roles posted on Devex per month since Sept. 2024.

TOP UN EMPLOYERS

IN FOCUS: WHO

WHO CONTRACTS: 2025 VS. 2024



Contract types for WHO roles posted on Devex from Jan. 24 to June 16, 2025, compared to 2024.

240

WHO jobs posted since Jan. 24

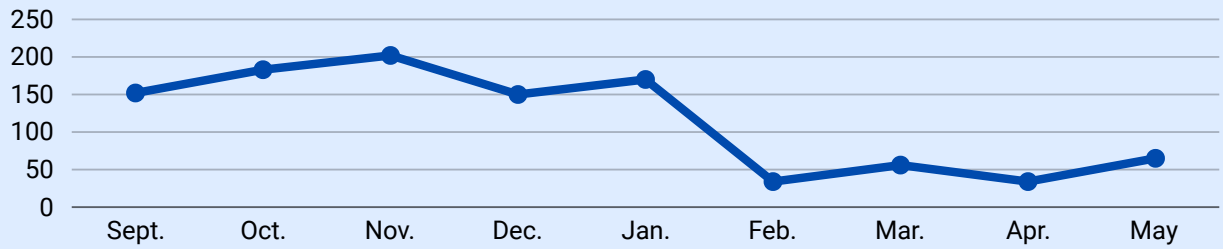
-81.1% compared to 2024.

What's happened and what's ahead: On the same day that the U.S. froze its foreign aid — Jan. 24, 2025 — WHO enacted a broad hiring freeze. This came just days after Trump issued an executive order withdrawing the U.S. from WHO, a move that Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said "made our financial situation more acute."

On Devex's board, WHO opportunities plummeted by 80% from January to February. Since Jan. 24, the vast majority of the 240 WHO opportunities have been short-term contracts, with just seven full-time jobs being offered.

Since its hiring freeze, WHO has proceeded with a sweeping restructuring plan, which includes slimming down its senior leadership and cutting the number of departments to nearly half at its headquarters in Geneva. WHO has also further slashed its budget ambitions for 2026-2027 to $4.2 billion.

WHO JOBS POSTED PER MONTH

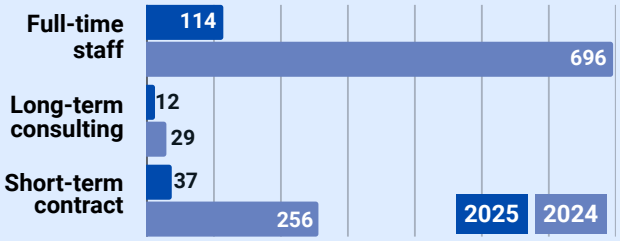


The number of WHO roles posted on Devex per month since Sept. 2024.

TOP UN EMPLOYERS

IN FOCUS: UNHCR

UNHCR CONTRACTS: 2025 VS. 2024



Contract types for UNHCR roles posted on Devex from Jan. 24 to June 16, 2025, compared to 2024.

165

UNHCR jobs posted since Jan. 24

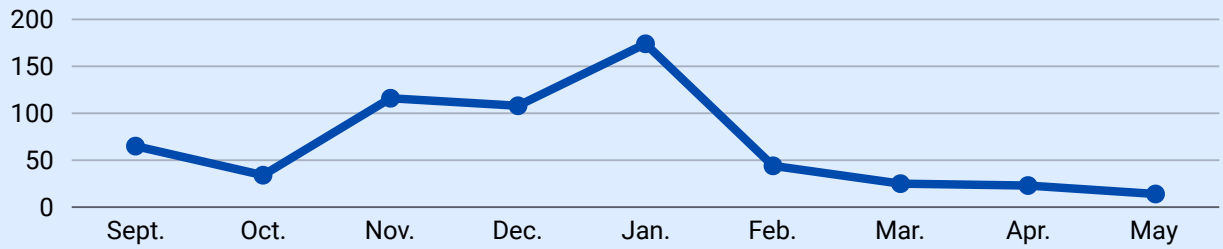
-83.4% compared to 2024.

What's happened and what's ahead: In late April, UNHCR announced plans for a major downsizing effort that would cut costs at its Geneva headquarters by 30% and lead to around a 50% reduction across senior-level position grades. This news came just weeks after Devex reported that the agency was preparing for the loss of as many as 6,000 jobs, as donor funding — already under strain from the U.S. aid freeze — continued to dwindle.

"There is no doubt that the next few months will be very difficult. We have no choice but to take decisive action which will leave no part of our organization or our work untouched. Refugees will be impacted. Our operations will be impacted. Many colleagues will be impacted," Filippo Grandi, the U.N. high commissioner for refugees, wrote to his staff.

In the months leading up to the announced cuts, available UNHCR positions posted on Devex had already significantly dropped, with just 44 appearing in February after 174 were advertised the month before. Since Jan. 24, UNHCR has seen the largest reduction in available roles on Devex than any other major U.N. entity (-83.4%).

UNHCR JOBS POSTED PER MONTH



The number of WHO roles posted on Devex per month since Sept. 2024.



Are you a development job candidate looking to stand out to recruiters?

Our in-house recruitment specialists are currently compiling talent pools based on specific global development skill sets, including communications and food systems experts, and many more.

Candidates can update their Devex profiles to be considered, and employers can learn more here.

We hope you found this guide helpful. For more insights aimed toward global development professionals, visit our Career Center.

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