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Archbishop Christophe-Zakhia el-Kassis, seen in an undated photo, is the Holy See's new per

Archbishop Christophe-Zakhia el-Kassis, seen in an undated photo, is the Holy See's new permanent observer to the United Nations in New York, appointed to the post by Pope Leo XIV July 25, 2026. (OSV News photo/Courtesy Holy See's Permanent Observer Mission to UN)

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Vatican City — July 25, 2026

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Pope Leo XIV has appointed Archbishop Christophe-Zakhia el-Kassis, apostolic nuncio to the United Arab Emirates and Yemen, as the Holy See's new permanent observer to the United Nations in New York.

The Lebanese-born archbishop, who is also apostolic delegate to the Arabian Peninsula, succeeds [Archbishop Gabriele Caccia](#), who is now the papal nuncio to the United States. Caccia had been U.N. nuncio from 2019 until he was named to his new post by the pope on March 7.

The appointment of el-Kassis was announced July 25 by the Holy See Press Office.

El-Kassis was appointed nuncio to the United Arab Emirates Jan. 3, 2023, and was named apostolic nuncio to Yemen and apostolic delegate to the Arabian Peninsula July 22, 2024. Prior to those assignments, he had been the nuncio to Pakistan since Nov. 24, 2018.

Born in Beirut Aug. 24, 1968, he was ordained a priest on May 21, 1994, and incardinated in the Maronite Archeparchy of Beirut. He has doctorates in civil law and canon law.

Then-Fr. el-Kassis entered the Vatican's diplomatic service June 19, 2000, serving in the Apostolic Nunciatures in Indonesia, Sudan and Turkey, and in the Section for Relations with States of the Secretariat of State in Rome. He was ordained an archbishop in Rome Jan. 19, 2019, with Cardinal Pietro Parolin, Vatican secretary of state, as the principal consecrator.

A nuncio is a Vatican diplomatic representative with the rank of ambassador. He acts as both the Holy See's ambassador to the government and its representative to the Catholic Church in the host country, maintaining ties between local bishops and Rome.

El-Kassis is fluent in Lebanese, Arabic, English, Spanish, French, Italian, German and Indonesian.

The Holy See became a permanent observer state at the United Nations on April 6, 1964, and this status enables it to participate in the work of the U.N. General Assembly and other U.N. bodies.

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