

# A year of conflict, the heroes who give us hope and those we lost

**We look forward and back in this, our final edition of 2023,** a year overshadowed by war and conflict. In a special essay, Patrick Wintour reflects on how a perception of US double standards over Ukraine and Gaza has damaged the west in the minds of the global south, and whether it might lead to a reckoning of sorts for Washington in 2024. **A world in flux** [Page 22](#)→

**Still, there are plenty of reasons for hope.** Having been expected to deliver little, the Cop28 climate summit turned out to be full of surprises - but was the final deal on fossil fuels just a ruse, asks Fiona Harvey.

Writers from the Guardian's global development team reflect on the inspirational figures they met in 2023, from leaders to dancers to dads, who proved that humanity still has much to give. And leading conservationists and scientists tell us about the mysteries of the planet they wish they better understood.

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**The review of 2023 continues with the Observer's selection of those we lost,** recalled with affection by their friends. There's also a dazzling range of images courtesy of the agency photographers of the year.

And last but not least, the Guardian critics' top 10 rundowns of the best film and music of 2023, topped off with the Guardian Weekly team's now-legendary television selections of the year.

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**The Guardian Weekly now takes a short break** - we'll be back in 2024 with our 5 January edition. If you mark a holiday at this time of year, we hope it is a peaceful one.



**On the cover** "I wanted to illustrate chaos and destruction as testaments of war," writes Israel G Vargas, on his artwork for this week's cover. "Two conflicts shaking and reshaping the world, and world leaders taking decisions on the lives of innocent people. The US not giving a clear stance on these two conflicts, condemning one war and embracing the other."  
*Illustration: Israel G Vargas*



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