

Israel responsible for 2/3 of press killings worldwide; Hegseth threatens Anthropic; Omar and Tlaib heckle Trump at SOTU

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The Gaza Genocide, West Bank, and Israel

- **Casualty counts:** Over the past 24 hours, nine Palestinian bodies arrived at hospitals—three killed in new Israeli attacks and six recovered from under the rubble—and at least six Palestinians were injured in Israeli attacks across Gaza. The total recorded death toll since October 7, 2023 has risen to 72,082 killed, with 171,761 injured. Since October 11, the first full day of the so-called ceasefire, Israel has killed at least 618 Palestinians in Gaza and wounded 1,663, while 732 bodies have been recovered from under the rubble, according to the Palestinian Ministry of Health.
- **Israel strikes southern Gaza, two Palestinians killed:** A Palestinian was killed and several others were injured after an Israeli strike in Al-Mawasi area of Khan Younis in the southern Gaza Strip on Wednesday, according to Al Jazeera. Israeli aircraft carried out three strikes in the south of the Strip in Rafah and Khan Younis, with artillery shelling areas east of Gaza City. Two Palestinians were also injured by Israeli gunfire in the Shujaiya neighborhood. An Israeli strike [targeted](#) the Ard al-Laymoun area south of Khan Younis on Tuesday evening, killing at least one Palestinian, according to Civil Defense officials.
- **Israel expands administrative detention to the highest levels in decades:** Israeli authorities have sharply [increased](#) the use of administrative detention, issuing more than 1,400 new or renewed orders without formal charges in the first two months of 2026, according to the Palestine Center for Prisoner Studies. Administrative detention allows Israeli authorities to detain Palestinians indefinitely without charge or trial. The number of administrative detainees held by Israel has risen from about 1,300 before October 7, 2023 to more than 3,500 in February 2026, with the group saying activists, students, journalists, lawmakers, women, and children are being increasingly targeted.
- **U.S. embassy to offer passport services inside West Bank settlement for first time:** The United States Embassy in Jerusalem [announced](#) on Tuesday that American consular officers will provide on-site passport services this week in Efrat, an illegal Israeli settlement in the

occupied West Bank, according to Reuters. This marks the first time such services have been offered inside an Israeli settlement. The U.S. embassy also announced that similar services are planned for the Palestinian city of Ramallah and Beitar Illit, another illegal Israeli settlement near Bethlehem. Hamas called the move a “dangerous precedent” and a “blatant alignment” with Israeli settlement and annexation policies, adding that it exposes a “stark contradiction” in Washington’s stance of opposing West Bank annexation while taking steps that reinforce it.

- **Israel detains 18 Palestinians as settler and military attacks continue across the West Bank:** Israeli forces arrested 18 Palestinians, including several minors, during raids across the occupied West Bank on Wednesday, according to the Prisoners’ Media Office. Israeli settlers, under the protection of Israeli forces, [stormed](#) the village of al-Mughayyir northeast of Ramallah, while soldiers fired tear gas inside the community, Wafa reported. In Nahalin, west of Bethlehem, Israeli authorities issued demolition notices for 23 inhabited homes. For the second consecutive day, Israeli troops raided areas south of Nablus, storming and damaging dozens of homes and conducting field interrogations. Meanwhile, armed settlers, also under army protection, attacked the home of detainee Khalil al-Manasra in Masafer Bani Naim east of Hebron, stealing and killing livestock and vandalizing property.

- **Aid groups petition Israeli court to allow them to keep working:** A group of leading international aid organizations have petitioned the Israeli Supreme Court to allow them to keep working in the Gaza Strip, the West Bank, and East Jerusalem. Israel is set to ban 37 aid groups by March 1 for refusing to comply with new rules announced last year that require aid groups to register the names and contact information of employees and to provide details about their funding and operations. In a [joint statement](#) on Tuesday, the groups said: “The demand to transfer personal data raises acute security and legal risks. It exposes national staff to potential retaliation and undermines established data protection and confidentiality safeguards.” The groups, which include prominent NGOs such as Doctors Without Borders, the Norwegian Refugee Council, Oxfam, and Medical Aid for Palestinians, have appealed for an urgent interim order that would halt the process until a final ruling.

- **Israel responsible for 2/3 of all press killings worldwide in 2024 and 2025, according to CPJ report:** The killings of journalists and media workers reached an all-time high in 2025, according to a special [report](#) by the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ), with Israel responsible for two-thirds of all press killings. “This marks back-to-back record years for press fatalities due to Israel’s continued and unprecedented targeting of journalists and media workers. More than 60% of the 86 members of the press killed by Israeli fire in 2025 were Palestinians reporting from Gaza, where human rights groups and U.N. experts agree a genocide is taking place,” CPJ said. This is the second consecutive year-on-year record for

press deaths since CPJ began collecting data more than three decades ago. The Israeli military has committed more targeted killings of journalists than any other government's military since CPJ began documentation in 1992. The report also noted that drone killings of press members are on the rise, from two in 2023 to 39 in 2025. The report highlighted specific cases of Palestinian journalists killed, including Hossam Shabat, a 23-year-old correspondent for Al Jazeera Mubasher and a contributor to Drop Site, who was assassinated on March 24, 2025 in an Israeli strike on his car in Beit Lahia, in northern Gaza. You can read Hossam Shabat's last article [here](#).

- **Indian PM Modi arrives in Israel for official visit:** Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi arrived in Israel Wednesday as part of a two-day visit to the country. Modi is scheduled to hold talks with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Israeli President Isaac Herzog, address the Knesset, and visit the Yad Vashem Holocaust memorial center. Netanyahu's office said that the two leaders would sign a number of economic, security, and political cooperation agreements. India and Israel have deepened ties under Modi, a Hindu nationalist who became the first Indian prime minister to travel to Israel in 2017. India historically supported Palestinians and did not establish full diplomatic ties with Israel until 1992.

Iran

- **Iranian foreign minister signals nuclear deal possible:** Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi [said](#) on Tuesday that Iran will “under no circumstances ever develop a nuclear weapon,” while insisting it will not relinquish its right to pursue peaceful nuclear technology, adding that a deal with the United States is “within reach.” Araghchi framed the upcoming Geneva talks as a “historic opportunity” for a fair and rapid agreement.

- **U.S. stealth fighters deploy toward Israel as regional military buildup accelerates:** Twelve U.S. F-22 stealth fighters [departed](#) RAF Lakenheath in the United Kingdom for an Israeli Air Force base in southern Israel on Tuesday, as President Donald Trump weighs possible military action against Iran. Open-source analysts say dozens more U.S. fighter jets, refueling aircraft, and hundreds of cargo flights have surged into the region since mid-February.

- **Top U.S. political leaders discuss Iran strikes and a potential deal:** Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer [said](#) regarding a potential strike on Iran that the administration “has to make its case to the American people as something as important as this.” Schumer made his remarks before attending a briefing on Iran alongside the other members of the so-called “Gang of Eight,” given by CIA Director John Ratcliffe and Secretary of State Marco Rubio.

ABC also reported that earlier in the afternoon, Trump [said](#) “Iran wants a deal more than I do,” but that it refuses to say the “magic words,” namely, that it “won’t build a bomb.”

- **Campus clashes in Iran:** Confrontations [escalated](#) at universities in Tehran and other major cities on Tuesday, according to the Wall Street Journal, as anti-government protests on campus entered their fourth consecutive day. Protesters chanted against Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei and revived Iran’s pre-1979 flag, while footage from a WSJ source showed fistfights at the Iran University of Science and Technology between the anti-government and pro-government contingents.

- **CIA publicly solicits contacts inside Iran:** The CIA’s verified X account [posted](#) a Persian-language message urging Iranians to contact the agency securely using tools such as Tor and VPNs, saying it could “hear your voice,” an unusually open appeal for sources. The outreach reflects the United States’ long-standing efforts to cultivate intelligence assets inside Iran, as Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei has repeatedly accused the United States and Israel of fueling unrest earlier this year.

United States

- **State of the Union highlights:**

- **Trump discusses Iran:** During his address, Trump [accused](#) Iran of “again pursuing their sinister nuclear ambitions,” claiming that despite the June 2025 U.S. strikes he said “obliterated” Iran’s nuclear program, Tehran is now trying to rebuild its weapons capabilities. He echoed almost verbatim the comments earlier reported by ABC regarding his willingness to pursue a deal and Iran’s refusal to say the “secret words.” Iran’s foreign minister Araghchi said those exact words earlier today on Twitter.

- **Tlaib and Omar heckle Trump during State of the Union over immigration and Epstein files:** Reps. Rashida Tlaib (D-Mich.) and Ilhan Omar (D-Minn.) repeatedly [interrupted](#) Trump, shouting accusations that his immigration policies were “killing Americans” and calling his claims about fraud in Somali-American communities “a lie.” Tlaib also heckled Trump to “release the Epstein files,” while Omar fired back “you should be ashamed” after Trump criticized Democrats for not standing in applause.

- **Trump endorsed a ban on congressional stock trading:** Trump lauded proposed legislation to ban individual stock trading among members of Congress. Sen. Elizabeth

Warren (D-Mass.), who has been trying to pass an individual stock trading ban for more than a decade, stood up to clap, exclaiming, “Let’s pass it!”

· **Trump administration sues UCLA over alleged antisemitic workplace environment:**

The Trump administration [filed](#) a lawsuit against the University of California, Los Angeles, on Tuesday, alleging the school created a “severe and pervasive” hostile work environment for Jewish and Israeli employees after October 7 by failing to address antisemitism complaints linked to pro-Palestinian protests on campus. Attorney General Pam Bondi accused UCLA of allowing “virulent anti-Semitism to flourish.” The university said it has taken concrete steps to combat antisemitism and will defend its record.

· **Wiener continues to take AIPAC-associated money, report says:** Scott Wiener, running to replace Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.) in Congress, has sworn off money from AIPAC after declaring Israel has committed genocide in Gaza. According to a review of his campaign finance disclosures, however, he has taken in tens of thousands of dollars from major donors to AIPAC, as well as donors who serve on AIPAC’s national and regional boards, including from donors like Jeff Farber who usually donate only to right-wing causes (such as the Heritage Foundation, the David Horowitz Freedom Center, and the Federalist Society). Asked if AIPAC executives counted when it came to the bar on AIPAC money, a spokesman for Wiener said, “Senator Wiener has taken the Reject AIPAC pledge—he has not and will not take money from AIPAC or from AIPAC-aligned PACs. He’s held to that and will continue to do so. ...Scott has been clear he won’t support U.S. funding for the destruction of Palestinian communities.”

· **Democratic leadership quietly works to delay Iran war powers vote:** Democrats in the House Foreign Affairs Committee have been working behind the scenes to stall a bipartisan war powers resolution from Reps. Ro Khanna (D-Calif.) and Thomas Massie (R-Ky.) that would require explicit congressional authorization before any United States military action against Iran, according to a new report from Capital and Empire. According to multiple sources cited in the report, a senior committee staffer has inflated projections of Democratic defections to sap momentum. Critics say Democratic leaders are avoiding a recorded vote that would expose divisions and force members to take a public position on a conflict many privately expect but fear openly backing. Read the full report from Aída Chávez [here](#).

· **Ro Khanna renews call for public debate on Iran war as war powers vote nears:**

Khanna has again [challenged](#) Reps. Josh Gottheimer (D-N.J.) and Mike Lawler (R-N.Y.) to publicly debate whether the United States should go to war with Iran, as he works with Massie on their war powers resolution. Khanna told Breaking Points he expects to have the votes by early next week after delaying a floor push to avoid losing 20 to 30 Democrats, and

argued that “powerful interests” seeking regime change are pressuring lawmakers who fear alienating major donors and entrenched lobbying groups.

- **Harris says she is considering running again in 2028:** On a video call with author Sharon McMahon, former Vice President Kamala Harris left the [door open](#) to another presidential run, responding to McMahon’s rapid-fire question “Will you run again?” with a concise, “I might.”

- **Anthropic-backed super PAC pours funds into North Carolina primary to boost Valerie Foushee:** An “artificial intelligence safety” super PAC largely [funded](#) by AI-firm Anthropic has raised nearly \$700,000 in North Carolina’s Fourth Congressional District to support incumbent Valerie Foushee (D-N.C.) over her challenger, the progressive Nida Allam. Foushee sits on House Democrats’ artificial intelligence task force and previously received major backing from the now-imprisoned FTX founder Sam Bankman-Fried.

- **Pentagon pressures Anthropic to loosen AI restrictions or risk losing contract:** On Tuesday, War Secretary Pete Hegseth [gave](#) Anthropic CEO Dario Amodei an ultimatum to remove safeguards on Anthropic’s advanced AI systems—including bans on mass domestic surveillance and autonomous lethal use—or face termination of its military contract, according to the Associated Press.

International News

- **Quad proposal pushes 90-day ceasefire in Sudan:** A proposal backed by the U.S., UAE, Egypt, and Saudi Arabia—known as the “Quad”—and presented to Sudan’s warring parties [calls](#) for a 90-day nationwide ceasefire in Sudan as well as for open corridors, according to a senior European Union diplomat speaking to the Ayin Network. The ceasefire would freeze both Rapid Support Forces and the Sudanese Army in their current positions, establish demilitarized zones in the country, and necessitate withdrawals from El Fasher and parts of Kordofan to allow humanitarian aid corridors to be re-established. Sudanese Army chief Abdel Fattah al-Burhan has signaled resistance to any truce short of a full RSF withdrawal in recent days, and his army has separately submitted its own 50-page ceasefire proposal.

- **Sheinbaum discusses Cuba, tariffs, and Musk:** During a press conference on Tuesday, Mexican President Claudia Sheinbaum [addressed](#) a U.S. Supreme Court decision that removed the threat of tariffs on Mexico should it resume oil exports to Cuba, adding that her government is reviewing the ruling before deciding whether to continue shipments. Canada separately announced it is preparing a humanitarian aid package for Cuba as fuel shortages and blackouts strain hospitals and basic services, following recent United States measures targeting countries that supply the island with oil. Sheinbaum also [said](#) her government is

considering taking legal action against Elon Musk after he accused her without evidence of taking orders from “cartel bosses.” Sheinbaum dismissed the claim as absurd and reiterated her opposition to a militarized “war on drugs,” arguing that past crackdowns fueled state breakdown and bloodshed.

- **Honduras ends Cuban medical mission under U.S. pressure:** Honduras will [terminate](#) its Cuban medical brigade this week as contracts for about 130 doctors and nurses expire, according to Bloomberg. The shift follows President Nasry Asfura taking office and moving the country closer to the United States, which has aggressively cut revenue streams to Havana. Similar pressure prompted Guatemala to phase out its program as well.

- **RSF leader bought property in Dubai and gave it to sanctioned financier, report says:** Rapid Support Forces commander Mohamed “Hemedti” Hamdan Dagalo purchased three Dubai apartments in 2020 that were later transferred to a real estate firm owned by financier Abozer Habib, according to [a new report](#) by The Sentry. Habib was sanctioned by the United States in 2025 for funding and supplying the RSF with weapons, despite the Emirati government’s denials that it has provided the group, accused of genocide in Darfur, with any backing. The properties are located near Al Minhad airbase and are valued at roughly \$1.7 million; according to the Sentry’s estimates, they have generated at least \$80,000 annually in rent since 2023.

- **Pakistan and Afghan forces exchange fire along their shared border:** Pakistani and Afghan troops [traded fire](#) in multiple sectors along the Pakistan–Afghanistan border on Tuesday, with each side accusing the other of initiating the clash, Reuters reports. Islamabad said its forces responded to what it called unprovoked Taliban fire near Torkham and Tirah, while Afghan officials said Pakistani troops opened fire first in areas of Nangarhar Province, adding that fighting later subsided with no Afghan casualties reported.

- **Militant attacks kill police officers in northwest and central Pakistan:** Militants [ambushed](#) a police patrol in Kohat in Pakistan’s Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, killing five officers and later two civilians, while a separate suicide bombing at a checkpoint in Bhakkar district of Punjab killed two police officials and wounded five others, including polio workers, according to reporting from Reuters. The Tehreek-e-Taliban claimed responsibility for the attacks.

- **Bolivia restores cooperation with U.S. drug agency after 17-year break:** Bolivia resumed its operational cooperation with the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) on Tuesday, resuming collaboration after a 17-year break, according to a statement from its government reported on in [Reuters](#). Interior Minister Marco Oviedo confirmed DEA officials are again working with Bolivian authorities, reversing the 2008 expulsion ordered by former

president Evo Morales, saying President Rodrigo Paz's government intends to tighten border surveillance and dismantle trafficking networks in the country, alongside American and European law enforcement agencies.

- **M23 spokesperson killed in drone strike in eastern Congo:** On Tuesday, Willy Ngoma, a senior spokesperson and officer for the Rwanda-backed M23 rebels, was [killed](#) in a predawn drone strike near the mining town of Rubaya in North Kivu Province, according to reporting from Associated Press. The attack comes weeks after the announcement of a ceasefire agreement and amid continued clashes following the group's 2025 advances into Goma and Bukavu.
- **Sierra Leone and Guinea trade accusations after border forces detained:** Sierra Leone [accused](#) neighboring Guinea of capturing several members of its army and police on Tuesday, allegedly detaining the security forces while they were building a border post in the frontier town of Kaliyereh, and called for their unconditional release, according to a government statement reported by Reuters. Guinea's defense ministry said dozens of Sierra Leonean soldiers had crossed into its territory without authorization, prompting the detention of 16 personnel and the seizure of weapons.

Drop Site on the Hill

Send any congressional tips to Drop Site's Capitol Hill correspondent Julian Andreone via email at julian@dropsitenews.com or via Signal at [julianandreone.2003](https://t.me/julianandreone.2003)

· **Here's what members of Congress said about voting for the Khanna-Massie War Powers Resolution:**

- **Rep. Chris Pappas (D-N.H.)** [signaled](#) he may vote in favor of the Khanna-Massie War Powers resolution on Iran. "I think it's an important moment for us to make sure that the people, through their elected representatives, are the ones making decisions about war and peace." Pappas is running for the Senate seat being vacated by Jeanne Shaheen in this year's midterm elections.
- **Rep. Steny Hoyer (D-Md.)** said Iran is "certainly subject to a war powers action by the Congress." Pressed on American interventionism, he rejected the framing, saying the U.S. remains "the single power in the world that can hopefully bring stability and security," and that he doesn't think "we're playing that role very well."
- **Rep. Ritchie Torres (D-N.Y.)** [refused](#) to answer how he'll vote on the war powers resolution, saying he would not respond because he "does not recognize Drop Site

News.” Torres, who regularly comments on matters related to Israel, has previously taken questions from Drop Site’s Julian Andreone.

- **Rep. Mike Lawler (R-N.Y.)** [said](#) he opposes the war powers resolution, arguing it would “tie the president’s hands” in responding to Iran. Pressed on how attacking Iran would benefit Americans in his district, Lawler pointed to Iran’s support for Hamas, Hezbollah and the Houthis, and repeated unsubstantiated claims that the groups are operating in Venezuela and posing a threat across the Western hemisphere.
- **Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.)** [joked](#) with our correspondent Julian Andreone when he brought up the Trump administration’s claims that Iran’s uranium reserves, which it claimed it destroyed in last summer’s attacks, justify another set of attacks. “You can’t destroy them twice?”
- **Rep. Chris Deluzio (D-Pa.)** [said](#) Trump has “not made any kind of case to the American people for why Americans should go fight in Iran,” and said those “beating the war drum” have also failed to make their argument. Deluzio also called for banning super PAC spending and overturning Citizens United.
- **Rep. Sara Jacobs (D-Calif.)** [stated](#) that negotiations to end the war in Sudan are ongoing but argued there will be no agreement “until the Trump administration actually holds the UAE accountable for funding and enabling this genocide, and arming this genocide.”
- **Sen. Elizabeth Warren (D-Mass.)** [remarked](#) that Trump is “all talk” and “no action” on all policies except those that benefit the ultra wealthy. “Donald Trump has promised to get private equity out of housing for over a year now. And what has he done? Zero.”

More from Drop Site

Weekly Livestream: Yesterday, Drop Site’s Jeremy Scahill, Sharif Abdel Kouddous, Ryan Grim, and Murtaza Hussain discussed the lead-up to Trump’s State of the Union, the seemingly impending American war with Iran, and Drop Site’s reporting on how Iranian officials view the conflict and upcoming negotiations with the United States. The full livestream is available here: