The push to replace Schumer as Senate leader; 94% of Gaza's population needs shelter assistance; Paraguay's president resigns

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Iran

· **Trump threatens to "destroy what is left" of Iran, says decision on new strikes coming soon:** President Donald Trump said on Thursday that he would soon decide whether to launch another round of U.S. strikes on Iran, threatening to "destroy what is left of the country."

  · Speaking to reporters in the Oval Office, Trump said that the U.S. must decide whether to "go further" to prevent Iran from rebuilding its military and nuclear capabilities, claiming that the country will already need "25 years" to recover from the destruction the U.S. and Israel inflicted on it. "I would prefer not to destroy what is left of the country, if possible, but I may have to do so. You will know very soon," he said.

  · Trump also said that after more than eight months of war, the U.S. controls "everything that we've wanted to control" in Iran, and that Tehran cannot take action on its nuclear program "without approval."

· **Iran says two oil tankers caught fire after striking mines in Strait of Hormuz:** Two oil tankers caught fire and were immobilized after striking naval mines in the Strait of Hormuz, according to Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC). Both vessels had switched off their navigation and identification systems, the IRGC claimed, and were attempting to exit the strait through a prohibited passage, with U.S. military support.

  · The IRGC said that the strait would "remain closed" until the U.S. meets Iran's seven conditions for a peace deal, adding that attempts by the U.S. military Central Command to force tankers through mined, unauthorized routes would result in "successive defeats."

  · Separately, the United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations agency (UKMTO) reported an explosion aboard a tanker transiting the strait, approximately 16 nautical miles east of Khasab, Oman, at 1 a.m. local time Friday. It was unclear whether the incident involved either tanker

reported by Iran. UKMTO said the vessel continued its voyage, with all crew members accounted for.

Palestine

· **Two Palestinians die from wounds sustained in Israeli airstrikes on Gaza:** A female medical student at the Islamic University of Gaza died on Friday from injuries sustained in an Israeli strike on the university about a week ago, WAFA reported. A man died from wounds sustained in an Israeli attack on the Al-Shati refugee camp several days earlier.

· **94% of Gaza's population needs shelter assistance, UN says:** 1.98 million Palestinians in Gaza, or 94% of the population, need shelter assistance as winter approaches, with 270 displaced families living in four UN shelters at very high risk of collapse, according to a new report from the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, known as UNRWA. Meanwhile, 84% of Gaza's population faces frequent disruptions to clean water supplies, while 89% of households lack basic hygiene items.

  · Israeli restrictions have prevented UNRWA from directly bringing aid into Gaza since March 2025, leaving food and shelter supplies for hundreds of thousands of Palestinians stranded outside the territory.

  · Read Drop Site News contributor Abdel Qadder Sabbah's latest report from Gaza: Displaced Palestinians are living in tents, without proper shelter, as winter approaches.

· **Israel destroys 100,000 olive trees this year in the occupied West Bank; Gaza faces "ecocide":** Israeli forces and settlers carried out 760 environmental attacks across the West Bank in the first nine months of 2026, destroying approximately 100,000 olive trees and causing an estimated $67 million in losses, according to the Palestinian Environmental Quality Authority. The attacks targeted farmland, water sources, irrigation networks, and natural reserves, while Israeli forces and settlers also dumped hazardous waste and demolished infrastructure.

  · In Gaza, the authority said Israeli attacks have left up to 68 million tons of rubble, including four million tons of hazardous waste, and destroyed 82% of agricultural land, 97% of fruit and olive trees, and 84% of water and sanitation infrastructure. The authority described the destruction as "ecocide."

· **Israeli forces arrest 17 during olive harvest as settlers attack Palestinians across West Bank:**

  · **Ramallah:** Israeli forces detained 17 people, including 12 international solidarity activists, two foreign journalists, and three Palestinians, after settlers attacked farmers and volunteers harvesting olives in Kafr Ni'ma on Friday, according to WAFA.

- **Nablus:** Settlers stole olives from a farm in Al-Masoudiya, cut electricity poles supplying a home housing three families in Burin, and set fire to residential tents in Duma.
- **Hebron:** Israeli forces arrested a Palestinian man in Yatta after he and his son confronted settlers who had released livestock onto Palestinian farmland. In Hebron city, Israeli forces raided homes in Jabal Jawhar and Jabal al-Rahma, converting one into a military post, and fired tear gas at residents and traders attending a weekly livestock market.
- **Occupied East Jerusalem:** Israeli authorities forced two Palestinian families to demolish their own homes in Jabal Mukabber, displacing 18 people. The two homes, each measuring approximately 50 square meters, were built in 2020.

· **Netanyahu calls Trump's decision to end U.S. military aid a shift toward "partnership":** Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's office portrayed President Donald Trump's decision to end U.S. military aid to Israel at the end of this year as a transition from aid to partnership, claiming the move demonstrates the "strength and sophistication" of U.S.-Israel relations. In a statement on X, Netanyahu's office said that Israel had used decades of American military assistance "both to defend itself and to confront enemies who threaten America and the West," describing the funding as a longstanding bipartisan commitment.

- Netanyahu's spokesperson Doron Spielman told Fox News that the Israeli leader had been working with Trump to replace aid with "partnership and mutual investment."

Yemen

· **Yemen's Saudi-backed government claims 440 Ansarallah fighters killed or wounded; strikes on Taiz market cause over 30 casualties:** Yemen's Saudi-backed forces claimed they "neutralized" 440 Ansarallah fighters and destroyed or disabled 132 military vehicles and heavy weapons in nearly 1,300 attacks since launching Operation Dawn of Yemen on October 5.

- Meanwhile, Saudi-coalition airstrikes hit a market three times in al-Wazi'iyah, Taiz governorate, on Friday morning, Ansarallah-run Al Masirah TV reported. The attacks killed or wounded more than 30 people, with rescue teams still searching for missing victims.

· **Saudi-led coalition intercepts two Ansarallah attacks over Saudi Arabia:** The Saudi-led coalition intercepted and destroyed two ballistic missiles launched by Ansarallah toward Najran in southwestern Saudi Arabia, as well as a drone over the Mecca region, the coalition said on Friday.

· **Turkish parliament approves trilateral defense pact with Saudi Arabia and Pakistan:** Turkey's parliament voted 279–119 on Thursday to ratify the "Mecca Agreement on Joint Defense" with Saudi Arabia and Pakistan, clearing the way for the trilateral security pact, signed in August, to take effect. The

agreement aims to strengthen collective security and expand military cooperation among the three countries. During Turkey's parliamentary debate, ruling Justice and Development Party lawmaker Ziya Altunyaldiz said that the pact was not directed against any third country and was intended to prevent further conflicts, not produce them.

Lebanon

· **Israeli forces fire on olive-pickers, detain resident amid new ceasefire violations in southern Lebanon:**

  · **Marjeyoun:** Israeli forces advanced from Kfar Kila toward the outskirts of Deir Mimas, firing near residents harvesting olives and forcing them to flee. The troops blocked entry and exit from the village and detained a resident, taking him to an unknown location.

  · **Bint Jbeil:** Israeli forces carried out a massive explosion on the outskirts of Beit Yahoun, toward Konin.

  · **Nabatieh:** Israeli forces shelled the outskirts of Mifdoun.

U.S. News

· **Michigan Sen.-elect Abdul El-Sayed backs Chris Van Hollen over Chuck Schumer for Senate majority leader:** In an interview with CNN on Thursday, **Abdul El-Sayed** said he supports Maryland Sen. **Chris Van Hollen** for Senate Majority Leader. El-Sayed said he would look at other options if Van Hollen did not run for the position, adding that he will support a leader who intends to pass legislation. Newly elected Democratic senators in Kansas, Illinois, and Maine—**Adam Hamilton**, **Juliana Stratton**, and **Troy Jackson**—have said they will not back Sen. **Chuck Schumer** for the post.

· **Sen. Chuck Grassley denies rumor of resignation during the lame-duck session:** Sen. **Chuck Grassley** rejected rumors that he would resign before the new Congress is sworn. If Grassley remains in office, he would prevent the incoming Democratic Gov. **Rob Sand** from appointing a successor. Grassley's chief of staff said on Thursday that the 93-year-old Iowa Republican "remains committed to delivering for the people of Iowa, who overwhelmingly elected him to a six-year term in 2022." Grassley has not said whether he will seek a ninth term in 2028.

· **Trump says votes cast for Alaska's "Fake Dan Sullivan" should go to Sen. Dan Sullivan:** President Trump said on Thursday that the votes cast for **Daniel J. Sullivan Jr**. "should be immediately given to the REAL Dan Sullivan." As of Friday morning, 75% of the votes were counted, and Democratic candidate **Mary Peltola** maintains a close lead over Sen. **Dan Sullivan**. The DOJ has sought to intervene in the election, citing voter confusion over the addition of Daniel J. Sullivan to the ballot.

· **In the Mississippi Senate race, Scott Colom widens lead by 1,800+ votes:** Democratic candidate **Scott Colom** widened his lead over Sen. **Cindy Hyde-Smith** in Mississippi's Senate race to more than 1,800 votes on Thursday, according to Decision Desk HQ. Earlier in the week, Colom was in a virtual dead heat with Hyde-Smith, at one point leading the incumbent by just 28 votes. Mississippi is awaiting 3,600 outstanding mail ballots.

· **Aggressive DOJ civil rights director Harmeet Dhillon resigns: Harmeet Dhillon** resigned as head of the DOJ civil rights division, Attorney General **Todd Blanche** announced on Thursday. In her official capacity, Dhillon aggressively attacked left-wing groups, universities, and state election apparatuses. She ran the DOJ's largest ever election-monitoring operation, which did not produce a single announced finding of voter fraud. She reportedly intends to return to the law firm she founded, Dhillon Law Group.

· **Calif. Gov. Gavin Newsom commutes sentences of all 548 death-row inmates, rejecting "state-sanctioned killing":** California Gov. **Gavin Newsom** reduced the death sentences of every prisoner in the state to life without parole on Thursday. "State-sanctioned killing is incompatible with California's values," he said. With the sweep of his pen, Newsom cancelled about 25% of the nation's current death sentences. The incoming Gov.-elect **Xavier Becerra** has pledged to maintain a moratorium on executions that Newsom signed earlier in his term.

· **Bloomberg: Secretary of State Marco Rubio reportedly considering exit from Trump administration:** Secretary of State **Marco Rubio** is weighing a possible departure from the Trump administration, Bloomberg reported. The White House reportedly asked him to remain in the role. Rubio dismissed the Bloomberg report, telling the New York Times that it has "always been my plan" to stay until Trump's second term ends.

📥 Have a tip on Capitol Hill? Email DC Correspondent Julian Andreone at Julian@dropsitenews.com

Other International News

· **Paraguayan president Santiago Peña resigns, following collapse of Ueno bank and alleged corruption:** On Thursday, President of Paraguay Santiago Peña announced his resignation from the presidency. He said, in a recorded address, that he was stepping down with "the stability of our country, social peace, and the need to preserve our democratic institutions in mind." His resignation comes amid the collapse of the digital bank Ueno, which has left nearly half of Paraguayans unable to access their accounts. Minutes after resigning, he was impeached in a unanimous vote in the lower house of parliament. Lawmakers accused Peña of corruption, which he denies. Until March 2025, he was a shareholder of Ueno's parent company, Grupo Vázquez. The collapse of Ueno has already led to the resignation of the head of the Central Bank; led to the detention of eight Ueno bank executives; and sent Paraguay's sovereign-bond price tumbling. Ueno administered almost $850 million in public funds.

· **U.S. imposes new sanctions on Cuba:** Secretary of State Marco Rubio announced new sanctions on Cuban industries on Thursday, targeting its "crude oil shipping network," state-owned entities, and "China-based suppliers of Cuba's military forces." Rubio accused Cuban military officials and "regime insiders" of profiting from "opaque offshore networks" and reiterated an unsubstantiated allegation that the island serves as "a staging ground for a global coalition of hostile anti-American actors." The Trump administration has repeatedly imposed sanctions on the island's industries and its political leaders, and it has maintained its suffocating blockade of fuel to the country.

· **Russia launches attacks on Ukraine's energy infrastructure; death toll from earlier attack on Ukrainian aid center rises to 50+:** Russian attacks on Ukraine's energy infrastructure caused new power outages in seven regions, Reuters reported. Strikes late Thursday and early Friday hit Vinnytsia, Dnipropetrovsk, Zhytomyr, Zaporizhzhia, Kyiv, Kharkiv, and Chernihiv.

  · Separately on Friday, the death toll from a Monday attack on an aid center in Ukraine's Zaporizhzhia rose to 53, according to Ukraine's emergency service. Local police said earlier this week that as many as 39 people could still be trapped under the rubble.

· **Indonesian police accuse a fourth official in alleged wiretapping of President Prabowo Subianto:** In an investigation into the wiretapping of Indonesian President Prabowo Subianto, police named a fourth suspect on Friday, who they referred to by his initials, SU. Local media identified the suspect as Slamet Uliandi, who led the Criminal Investigation Agency's information and technology unit from 2021 to 2026. Earlier this week, police arrested three senior officers in connection with the wiretapping case, including Prabowo's chief of staff Listyo Sigit Prabowo.

· **Macau pro-democracy activist sentenced to 12 years in prison:** A court in Macau, a special administrative region of China, sentenced the pro-democracy activist and former lawmaker Au Kam-san to 12-and-a-half years in prison on Friday. After a national-security trial that was held behind closed doors, Au, 69, was found guilty of "subverting state power by spreading false information" during Macau's leadership elections in 2024. The court said that he worked with "hostile organizations" abroad and leaked confidential information to overseas groups. Human Rights Watch condemned the sentence, and urged the European Union and Portugal, which formerly controlled Macau, to push for Au's release.

· **Tanzania sentences opposition leader Tundu Lissu to four years in prison:** On Friday, a three-judge panel in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, ruled against Tundu Lissu, leader of the political opposition, convicting him of incitement for statements he made before the 2025 elections. The panel dropped a treason charge that carried a possible punishment of death. Lissu, the leader of the Chadema Party, called the trial "political persecution," and accused the judges of coordinating with the government. "I was not charged with incitement but you judges are convicting me with it just to impress the person who gives you the titles," he told the court. "I believe these were directives." He was arrested before the elections of October 2025, which the ruling President Samia Suluhu Hassan went on to win with 98% of the vote.

His near-total victory prompted mass protests, which the government subdued by killing thousands of people, according to the political opposition and human-rights groups. British and EU lawmakers said that the case against Lissu was politically motivated and demanded his release.

· **Egyptian soldiers killed in operation on Sudan border:** Two Egyptian army officers were killed during a military crackdown on illegal gold mining along the border with Sudan, Reuters reported. One of the dead was a high-ranking officer. The Egyptian military began its campaign against illegal gold mining in June.