

Israel kills another Palestinian journalist; Bolivian attorney general detained; Entire newsroom arrested in Egypt

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Iran

- **Iranian President says Tehran will pursue U.S. dialogue:** Iranian President Masoud

Pezeshkian said Tehran would continue pursuing dialogue with the United States despite repeated attacks during negotiations. “We have never avoided dialogue and will not do so, although the United States targeted our country three times,” Pezeshkian said, adding that Iran was also seeking to expand land-based trade with Pakistan, Iraq, Turkmenistan and Azerbaijan amid “restrictions at sea.”

- Separately, President Donald Trump [told](#) Time that Iran had made an offer concerning reopening the Strait of Hormuz, but said what he had seen was “simply not enough.” Trump said renewed U.S. attacks after the midterm elections were possible, adding: “What I rejected a year ago, I will not agree to today. Iran could be destroyed, and that’s possible.”

- **Tehran rejects report U.S. ordered its UN delegation to leave New York:** Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi and the Iranian delegation [left](#) New York on Monday evening according to a prearranged schedule that had been communicated to the U.S. State Department on September 17, Iran’s UN mission said.

- The statement came after Axios, citing a source, reported that the U.S. had asked the Iranian delegation to leave New York, while also reporting that Araghchi had already been scheduled to return to Tehran on Monday evening. Iran’s mission called the claim “baseless and worthless.”

- **UK says there are “strong indications” Iran played role in RAF Fairford incident:** The government [believes](#) Iran played a role in an incident at RAF Fairford that led to the arrest of

five UK nationals, British Prime Minister Andy Burnham said, but provided no further details or evidence for the claim.

- Araghchi rejected the allegation, saying the UK was “barking up the wrong tree.”
- The five men, aged between 23 and 25, were arrested Sunday after police were alerted to three suspicious vehicles near the base. Police said petrol was found during searches of the vans but no explosives. All five were later released on bail.
- RAF Fairford has been used by U.S. bombers operating in the Middle East in recent months after the UK approved a U.S. request to use the base for strikes on Iran.
- **IRGC claims six militants killed in southeastern Iran:** Iran’s Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps [said](#) Thursday its forces killed six people in an operation against a group it alleged was planning an attack in the southeastern province of Sistan and Baluchestan.
 - The IRGC’s Quds Base described those killed as members of a “Takfiri terrorist group” and claimed explosive devices were found during the operation.

Yemen

- **Saudi-backed forces, Ansarallah report strikes in Taiz and Saada:**
 - **Taiz, southwestern Yemen:** Saudi-backed forces carried out six airstrikes on Ansarallah positions in Al-Akboosh and on fronts in Haifan district, the government forces said.
 - Saudi airstrikes also targeted Al-Kadhah, Al-Barh, and telecommunications infrastructure in Haifan, according to Ansarallah-run Al-Masirah.
 - **Saada, northern Yemen:** Six Saudi airstrikes hit south of Saada city, three targeted Sahar district, and missile attacks struck Haydan district, according to Al-Masirah. Two civilians were also wounded by a munition dropped from a Saudi drone in Marran, the outlet reported.
 - **Lahj, southern Yemen:** Saudi-backed forces repelled what they described as a “large-scale” Ansarallah attack across the Tur Al-Bahah axis, the axis’s media center said, claiming its forces had “eliminated all its attacking formations” without providing further details.

Palestine

- **Killed and wounded in Gaza:** Over the past 24 hours, eight Palestinians were killed and 26 injured in Israeli attacks across Gaza, according to the Palestinian Ministry of Health.

- The total recorded death toll since October 7, 2023 is now 74,040 killed, with 175,168 injured. Since October 11, 2025, the first full day of the so-called ceasefire, Israel has killed at least 1,439 Palestinians in Gaza and wounded 5,052, while 834 bodies have been recovered.

- **Israeli attacks continue as 105 bodies recovered from Gaza City rubble are buried:** Several Palestinians were [injured](#) on Thursday when an Israeli drone targeted Al-Mawasi in Khan Younis, WAFA reported.

- In Gaza City, the remains of 105 Palestinians recovered from beneath 16 residential buildings in the Yarmouk area bombed on October 25, 2023 were buried in a mass funeral on Thursday. The recovered bodies included 37 children and 38 women.

- More than 8,000 bodies remain beneath rubble across the Strip, according to Gaza's Civil Defense.

- **Israeli strike kills Palestinian journalist in Gaza, bringing journalist death toll to 263:** Palestinian journalist Mohammed Abdul Aziz al-Najjar was [killed](#) Wednesday in an Israeli strike on his hometown of Khuza'a, east of Khan Younis, according to Gaza's Government Media Office, which said his death brought the number of journalists killed by Israeli forces in Gaza to 263. Al-Najjar, a father of three, was returned to his family without his head, according to reports from Gaza.

- **Israeli settlers attack Palestinians, steal olive harvest across the occupied West Bank:**

- **Salfit:** Two Palestinians were [wounded](#) by live fire during a settler attack on homes in Yasuf, east of Salfit, on Thursday, according to WAFA. A 50-year-old man was shot in the abdomen and another person was wounded by a bullet fragment in the waist. Israeli forces, who were present during the attack, detained several Palestinians and obstructed an ambulance by taking its key and throwing it away.

- **Jenin:** Israeli settlers [stole](#) olives from Palestinian-owned land in Kafr Ra'i, Faqu'a, Deir Abu Da'if, Ya'bad and other areas near Israeli settlements, as the annual picking season gets underway, WAFA reported.

- **Nablus:** Settlers [attacked](#) Palestinian farmers picking olives in Odala, south of Nablus, and prevented them from harvesting in the village's plains.

- **Ramallah and Al-Bireh:** Settlers [stole](#) olives from Palestinian land in Al-Mughayyir under the protection of Israeli forces. Confrontations broke out as residents attempted to confront the settlers. In Umm Safa, settler bulldozers razed Palestinian land in Wadi Al-Zaytoun and near the village cemetery.

Lebanon

- **Israeli attacks continue across south Lebanon despite U.S.-brokered agreement:**

- **Nabatieh:** Israeli warplanes [struck](#) the outskirts of Zawtar Al-Sharqiyah on Thursday, Lebanon's National News Agency reported. Overnight, Israeli warplanes also struck the outskirts of Zawtar Al-Sharqiyah, while Israeli artillery intermittently shelled the Ali Al-Taher heights.
- **Tyre (Sour):** Israeli forces [demolished](#) several homes in Al-Mansouri on Thursday. Israeli warplanes also struck Al-Mansouri.
- **Bint Jbeil:** Israeli forces [opened machine-gun fire](#) toward Haddatha on Thursday as Israeli military vehicles moved through the town.

- **Lebanon documents suspected Israeli war crimes:** Israeli attacks on Lebanon since March 2, 2026, included suspected war crimes and crimes against humanity involving attacks on civilians, journalists, medical personnel, and infrastructure, as well as widespread destruction and forced displacement, according to a more than 200-page [report](#) compiled by Lebanon's National Committee for International Humanitarian Law and submitted to Parliament Speaker Nabih Berri.

- The report, according to the New Arab, documents, among other cases, the April 22 killing of journalist Amal Khalil, the April 8 bombardment that killed more than 303 people and wounded over 1,200, and widespread destruction in southern Lebanon, including Bint Jbeil.

- The report comes despite Lebanon agreeing under the June 26 framework ceasefire to end "all hostile or harmful actions in international political or legal forums" against Israel.

- **Syria and Hezbollah hold first known face-to-face talks in Turkey:** Syrian government officials and representatives of Hezbollah [secretly met](#) in Turkey last month in an effort to ease tensions, marking the first known face-to-face talks between the longtime foes, Reuters reported.

- The talks, convened at Turkey's initiative, involved Syrian intelligence and foreign ministry officials and Hezbollah representatives.
- A Syrian official told Reuters that Damascus assured Hezbollah it would not intervene militarily in Lebanon to disarm the group, while asking Hezbollah to help halt cross-border arms smuggling and dismantle alleged remaining cells in Syria.
- Hezbollah representatives reportedly pledged not to interfere in Syrian affairs but did not directly respond to the other requests.
- Iran did not participate, although a Lebanese security source said Hezbollah attended with Tehran's knowledge and that Iran was disappointed at being excluded from the talks.

U.S. News

- **U.S. economy grew 2.2% in Q2, upgraded from earlier estimate:** The U.S. economy [grew](#) at a 2.2 percent annual pace from April through June, the Commerce Department reported Wednesday in its final second-quarter estimate, up from a previous 1.5 percent estimate, surprising economists who had expected little revision. Growth decelerated from 2.5 percent in the first quarter.
 - Consumer spending, which makes up about 70 percent of economic activity, jumped to a 3.8 percent annual pace from just 0.7 percent in the first quarter, while business investment excluding housing rose 9 percent.
- **Tennessee botches second execution this year, governor halts all remaining 2026 executions:** The governor of Tennessee has halted the state's remaining executions for the rest of the year after officials were unable to put **Christa Gail Pike** to death on Wednesday. Pike [continued](#) breathing, talking, and snoring for nearly an hour after receiving two rounds of lethal injection drugs, prompting Tennessee to halt the execution and administer emergency medical care to her. Her attorneys said she was taken to a nearby hospital with no update on her condition
 - **Robin Maher**, the director of the Death Penalty Information Center, called Wednesday night's execution "one of the worst botched executions in the modern death penalty era." Pike's attorneys had argued that her small veins and a blood disorder created heightened risk of a botched procedure.
 - The incident follows a similarly botched May execution attempt of **Tony Carruthers** at the same Nashville prison. Republican Gov. **Bill Lee** halted all

remaining 2026 executions after Pike's failed injection and ordered a third-party review of the incident.

- **Hegseth announces new drone command, 20 percent cut to generals in “State of the Force” speech:** Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth [announced](#) at Quantico Wednesday that he is creating a new four-star drone command to oversee autonomous warfare systems, doubling a previous 10 percent reduction in flag and general officer positions to a 20 percent cut, and launching a future-warfare study led by Elon Musk, Newt Gingrich and Anduril co-founder Palmer Luckey.

- The new Autonomous Warfare Command, or AutoWarCom, whose inception Hegseth attributed to the “lessons” learned in Ukraine, will be created despite the recent shuttering of a similar command in Europe.

- Hegseth also announced plans for a new Office of Religious Affairs and to build a new military base, inviting all 50 states to compete to host the facility, which he estimated could accommodate up to 25,000 service members.

- **FTC launches investigation into OpenAI, Anthropic over AI safety:** The Federal Trade Commission is [investigating](#) OpenAI, Anthropic and other AI companies over potential safety risks, Axios reported on Wednesday, with FTC Chair Andrew Ferguson preparing civil investigative demands to compel executives to turn over documents and testify.

- The probe has reportedly been underway for weeks, and predates OpenAI's disclosure that a model it was testing escaped its sandbox and compromised infrastructure belonging to a startup company, Hugging Face.

- **ICE briefly published, then removed, internal reports showing medical failures in 33 detainee deaths:** Internal ICE mortality reviews briefly posted online over the weekend and quickly removed found that the care administered by the agency deviated from “safe practice limit” in 27 of 33 detainee deaths between September 2019 and January 2026, including 11 that occurred since January 2025.

- In one case, 39-year-old **Ismael Ayala-Uribe** died from septic shock after Adelanto Processing Center staff failed to examine his abscess, respond to his complaints, or adequately document his care.

- In another case, 44-year-old **Marie Ange Blaise** died of a heart attack after staff failed to perform CPR despite finding no pulse.

- The full report from the San Francisco Chronicle, which first reported on these reviews, is available [here](#).

- **DOJ files ethics complaint against nearly all Minnesota federal judges over immigration-surge comments:** Attorney General **Todd Blanche** [announced](#) an ethics complaint Wednesday against nearly all federal district judges in Minnesota, alleging that former Chief Judge **Patrick Schiltz**, Judge **John Tunheim** and others violated judicial conduct rules by speaking to the New York Times about the toll of the Trump administration's immigration crackdown.

- **Senate confirms Keith Sonderling as Labor Secretary:** The Senate [confirmed](#) **Keith Sonderling**, 47-41, as Labor Secretary Wednesday, elevating Sonderling, who had served as acting secretary since April, to the top job.

- Sonderling, a Trump first-term advisor and former Republican EEOC member, succeeds **Lori Chavez-DeRemer**, who left the post following accusations that she abused her position.

- **Sen. Josh Hawley introduces bill to regulate Flock cameras, AI surveillance:** Sen. **Josh Hawley** (R-Mo.) is [introducing](#) the Stop Flock Abuse Act to impose stricter data, security, and search limits on automated license plate readers like Flock cameras.

- The bill would restrict local governments from selling or sharing vehicle data, require data deletion within 10 days absent an active criminal investigation, ban facial recognition on surveillance networks, and mandate written approval and audit logs to prevent unauthorized searches. Data would also need to be encrypted and kept within the U.S.

- **Commerce Secretary Lutnick reports over \$250 million in income from 2025:** Commerce Secretary **Howard Lutnick's** newly released 2025 financial disclosure [shows](#) he reported at least \$250 million in income and proceeds.

- The largest part of this was a \$192 million "tax distribution" from Cantor Fitzgerald, the financial firm he led for decades before stepping down to join the administration.

- He also disclosed \$4.2 million in salary and bonus from the real estate firm Newmark, \$19.6 million from a Newmark partnership exchange, \$14.1 million from the brokerage BGC Group, and over \$5 million from BGC restricted stock units.

- **Judge rules U.S. can deport Milwaukee Muslim leader on national security grounds:** Immigration Judge **Jayne Salinardi** [ruled](#) Wednesday that **Salah Sarsour**, president of the Islamic Society of Milwaukee and a prominent Palestinian rights advocate, can be deported on foreign policy grounds, though she rejected the government's separate claim that he lied

on his green card application. The ruling follows Sarsour's detention in March and a ruling by a federal judge in June ordering his release, which noted that he had made a "substantial" claim that the government had targeted him for his pro-Palestinian activism.

- Sarsour, who called the ruling "deeply disappointing," said he will appeal and that deportation to the occupied West Bank, where he was born and previously imprisoned by Israel, would "mean the end of my life." Sarsour's attorneys say he was tortured and coerced into confessions during his 1988 and 1995 convictions in Israel. Sarsour has lived in the U.S. since 1993.

- During his detention by ICE, Sarsour, who has Type 2 diabetes, lost more than 30 pounds. According to his attorneys, his blood sugar levels were checked only once a month, putting him at risk of organ failure or death.

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

Other International News

- **Bolivian attorney general detained days after U.S. revoked his visa over alleged drug trafficking ties:** Police detained Attorney General Roger Mariaca on Wednesday and **raided** the prosecutor's offices in Sucre.

- Washington imposed visa restrictions on Mariaca and accused him on Monday of accepting bribes to facilitate drug trafficking and help violent criminals evade justice. Mariaca denied the allegations, calling the visa restrictions "interference" and "political pressure" in response to his investigations.

- Mariaca has been involved in **investigations** of Trump-linked figures accused of corruption and violent crimes including Argentinian political consultant Fernando Cerimedo who is facing drug-trafficking charges in addition to the charge of attempted murder after allegedly ordering a hit on his former girlfriend Nadia Beller.

- In response to the visa restrictions imposed on Bolivian officials, Beller published a photo showing Cerimedo in a meeting with Donald Trump Junior and MAGA political operator Brad Parscale. She alleged the raid on Mariana's office was an effort to "disappear" evidence in the Cerimedo case.

- **For more on Cerimedo and President Rodrigo Paz's effort to distance himself from his onetime key adviser, read Joseph Bouchard's report for Drop Site [here](#).**

- **Pakistan says strikes killed 22 fighters in Afghanistan; Kabul claims civilian deaths:**

Pakistan's Ministry of Information [said](#) airstrikes based on "credible intelligence" killed at least 22 fighters from the Pakistani Taliban (TTP) and Balochistan Liberation Army at camps and hideouts in Afghanistan, destroying weapons and ammunition caches.

- A spokesman for the Afghan Taliban said the attacks hit Afghanistan's Kunar and Helmand provinces late Wednesday, and that they killed at least nine people, including women and children, wounded 11 others and destroyed three houses.

- Afghanistan denies harboring armed groups and says recent Pakistani strikes have repeatedly hit civilian homes.

- **Russia warns NATO it would use nuclear weapons if alliance blocks Kaliningrad:**

Russia [sent](#) a diplomatic memo to NATO member states Wednesday warning it is prepared to use its "entire arsenal, including nuclear weapons," if the alliance attempts to blockade the Baltic exclave of Kaliningrad, claiming it has "information that NATO is preparing an air and naval blockade" of the territory.

- NATO Secretary-General Mark Rutte called the document "unhelpful" and said Russia should "stop the nuclear threats," adding that NATO is a defensive alliance and claiming that "Putin knows that he can never win" in a confrontation with the group.

- **Brazil briefs French, German officials on alleged U.S. and Russian election**

interference: Brazil's spy agency Abin [briefed](#) a visiting French and German delegation in Brasilia this month, "confirming the existence of interference from the United States as well as Russia" ahead of Brazil's Sunday election, according to Reuters.

- The agency alleged that U.S. interference ranged "from lawfare to interference that is openly acknowledged"; no details were given related to the alleged Russian activity. A senior Brazilian cyber official present at the briefing also noted that cyberattacks targeting Brazil's president's office have nearly doubled and are "clearly election-related."

- In [North South Notes](#), philosopher Rodrigo Nunes, political scientist Camila Rocha, journalist Piero Locatelli and organizer Stephanie Weatherbee Brito examine the stakes of the election. Their essays assess the resilience of Bolsonarismo, the growing role of U.S. intervention, the weakening of Brazil's left, and the challenges facing popular movements.

· **Gunmen kill 7 on Syrian bus; gas pipeline blast knocks out three power plants:**

Unidentified gunmen [opened fire](#) on a civilian bus carrying workers home in Homs, Syria, Wednesday, killing at least seven people, Syrian state media reported.

· The shooting came hours after an explosion and fire at a gas pipeline in eastern Ghouta near Damascus knocked the Deir Ali, al-Nasiriyah, and Tishreen power plants offline, with Energy Minister Mohammed al-Bashir saying the cause of the explosion remains unclear. “It could be a technical malfunction, an attack or an act of sabotage,” he said.

· Wednesday’s explosion was the third such pipeline incident in six weeks, following two earlier blasts the Syrian Petroleum Company attributed to sabotage, with no group claiming responsibility for any of the attacks.

· **U.S. removes Syria from arms export ban:** The U.S. State Department [removed](#) Syria from its ITAR (“International Traffic in Arms Regulations”) arms export denial list in a notice published Wednesday, effective Thursday. Syrian requests to purchase arms from U.S. companies will now be considered on a case-by-case basis.

· Only seven countries—Belarus, China, Cuba, Iran, Myanmar, North Korea, and Venezuela—remain subject to the policy.

· The move follows President Trump’s easing of decades-old sanctions on Syria last year and Secretary of State Marco Rubio’s August rescission of Syria’s state sponsor of terrorism designation, part of a broader warming toward President Ahmad al-Sharaa’s government.

· **Iraqi armed group suspends military operations after U.S. troop withdrawal:** Kataib Hezbollah, an Iran-backed Iraqi militia and political movement, [announced](#) Wednesday that it was ceasing military activities following the departure of U.S. forces. The withdrawal concludes the U.S.-led military mission in Iraq that began in 2014 to fight the Islamic State.

· The group had previously said it would only discuss giving up its weapons once foreign troops left. Iraq’s government said talks were ongoing to bring armed groups into state institutions, but Kataib Hezbollah’s announcement did not include a commitment to disarm.

· **China builds new military facility in Laos, possibly first full PLA base in Southeast Asia:** China’s defense ministry [announced](#) on Tuesday that the China-Laos Joint Support and Training Center and the China-Laos Friendship Aviation Academy are now operational in Ban Keun, on the outskirts of the Laotian capital of Vientiane.

- Satellite imagery reviewed by Reuters appears to show that the center features a newly constructed airfield, which includes a paved runway, a taxiway, an apron, and new buildings. China's defense ministry said the facility trains air force pilots and is "not directed against any third party."

- Security scholar Collin Koh wrote on X that the base "may not be wrong to conclude this is the first full-fledged PLA overseas base in Southeast Asia," distinguishing it from China's more ambiguous joint training center at Cambodia's Ream naval base.

- The facility adds to China's growing overseas military footprint, which already includes a Djibouti base, artificial island facilities in the Spratly Islands, and reported new construction in the disputed Paracel archipelago.

- **Norway's parliament probes PM Støre, 10 others over Epstein links:** Norway's Parliament [launched](#) a public hearing Wednesday into 11 current and former senior officials, including Prime Minister Jonas Gahr Støre, over ties to Jeffrey Epstein allegedly revealed in the files released by the U.S. Justice Department in January.

- The scrutiny centers on the diplomat Terje Rod-Larsen, who ran the International Peace Institute and who had numerous ties to the financier. It has been alleged that Rod-Larsen secured an illicit loan from Epstein and helped the financier commit visa fraud for the women he trafficked; Epstein also reportedly left millions to Rod-Larsen's children in his will.

- The announcement follows recent reporting that the foreign ministry allocated over 130 million kroner (\$13.5 million) to the Institute while Rod-Larsen was in charge and while he reportedly was engaged with Epstein.

- Støre, who served as foreign minister while Terje Rod-Larsen ran the IPI, has denied he had any relationship with Epstein.

- **Hong Kong journalist arrested on sedition charge over 2019 police clash coverage:**

Hong Kong police [arrested](#) Tang Ho-wing, founder of the outlet Boom News, on Wednesday on suspicion of "incitement by spreading disinformation," after his outlet posted a video featuring a woman's account of a 2019 attack at the Prince Edward rail station, where anti-government protesters say police officers killed some in their cohort. Authorities also arrested another person, identified as activist Lee Ying-chi by the South China Morning Post, alongside Tang on Wednesday.

- **South Africa summons U.S. Ambassador Bozell for third time over "undiplomatic conduct":** South Africa's foreign affairs ministry [summoned](#) U.S. Ambassador Leo Brent

Bozell III on Tuesday for the third time in his nine-month tenure over what officials described as “undiplomatic conduct,” a South African official told Reuters. The precise cause of the demarche is not known.

- The State Department confirmed that Bozell met with his South African counterparts, claiming that they “discussed bilateral ties” and adding that the U.S. is “not interested in diplomatic manoeuvring, procedural delays or dialogue for dialogue’s sake.”
- The summons comes amid deteriorating relations fueled by President Donald Trump’s repeated unsubstantiated claims that white South Africans face systemic persecution; it also follows the U.S.’s announcement of additional visa restrictions on South Africans two weeks ago.
- **French court sentences 13 to prison over 2021 Channel crossing that killed 31 migrants:** A Paris court [sentenced](#) 13 men on Wednesday for organizing the deadliest small-boat migrant crossing attempt to the UK, with six convicted of involuntary homicide (which carries as many as 10 years in prison) and the remaining seven receiving lesser sentences of up to four years; a 14th defendant was acquitted.
 - Prosecutors alleged that the defendants put a vessel to sea that was unfit for the crossing, overloaded the vessel with migrants (primarily Iraqi Kurds), and failed to provide lifejackets for the voyage. The vessel, which attempted a crossing of the English Channel in November 2021, capsized, killing 31 migrants.
 - Seven French military personnel remain under investigation for allegedly failing to assist survivors during the incident.
- **MI5 warns UK academics to sever ties with Chinese research group over alleged spying:** Britain’s MI5 [issued](#) a rare public alert Wednesday accusing the China General Technology Research Institute of having “very strong ties” to China’s Ministry of State Security, adding that the group’s “primary purpose” is funding academic research that enhances Chinese espionage capabilities.
 - The statement warned that more than 100 UK-based academics working in AI, cybersecurity, covert communications and steganography had been targeted by the group, and told academics that, should they continue accepting CGTRI grants, they could be prosecuted under the UK’s 2023 National Security Act.
- **Rwanda open to hosting EU migrant transfer facilities, lawmakers say:** Rwanda has [held](#) preliminary discussions with some EU member states about potentially hosting facilities

for migrants transferred from Europe, European Parliament lawmakers Tineke Strik and Anna Strolenberg said Wednesday after a visit to Kigali, though no agreements have been reached.

- An EU official told Reuters that Rwanda is among the countries being considered by the “Group of Five”—Germany, Austria, Greece, Denmark, and the Netherlands—which announced earlier this month they aim to establish migrant “return hubs” outside the EU this year.
- Rwanda has increasingly positioned itself as a destination for Western deportations, previously receiving up to 250 migrants from the U.S. as part of a 2025 agreement.
- **Entire newsroom arrested in Egypt in significant press crackdown:** Six journalists from the independent Egyptian investigative journalism platform Matsda2sh—comprising the media outlet’s entire newsroom—were arrested by Egyptian security forces overnight on Monday in an escalated crackdown on press freedoms in Egypt, [according](#) to Mada Masr. The condition and whereabouts of their detention remains unknown and they remain forcibly disappeared.
 - The Interior Ministry on Thursday [acknowledged](#) the arrests for the first time and accused Matsda2sh of fabricating lies and spreading rumors to “undermine stability,” and accused the outlet of having ties to the outlawed Muslim Brotherhood. The platform’s founder Abdelrahman Mansour, rejected the accusations in a statement, saying the authorities know the charges—which are commonly levelled by Egyptian authorities against journalists—are false.
 - “I believe this is the first time in the two-century history of Egyptian journalism that an entire newsroom, with all its journalists, has been arrested,” Hossam Bahgat, of the Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights, told Mada Masr.
 - Over 50 civil society organizations and independent media outlets around the world have signed a [joint statement](#) calling for the immediate release of the six journalists.
 - Before the latest arrests, Egypt ranked as the 7th worst jailer of journalists in the world, according to the latest CPJ census. The arrests bring the number of Egyptian journalists held over their work to 26, according to EIPR.