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## **Israel escalates deadly strikes in Gaza; U.S. seizes another oil tanker in the Caribbean; ACLU sues Trump admin for racial profiling in Minnesota**

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DROP SITE NEWS

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### **The Gaza Genocide, West Bank, and Israel**

- Casualty counts in the last 24 hours: Over the past 24 hours, the bodies of 14 Palestinians arrived at hospitals in Gaza, including 12 killed in new Israeli attacks and two recovered from under the rubble, while 18 Palestinians were injured, according to the Gaza Ministry of Health. The total recorded death toll since October 7, 2023 is now 71,455 killed, with 171,347 injured.
- Total casualty counts since ceasefire: Since October 11, the first full day of the ceasefire, Israel has killed at least 463 Palestinians in Gaza and wounded 1,269, while 712 bodies have been recovered from under the rubble, according to the Ministry of Health.
- Multiple deadly strikes reported across Gaza: Israeli attacks on Thursday [killed](#) up to 15 Palestinians across Gaza. Here are additional details on Thursday's attacks:
  - Israeli airstrikes kill Hamas commander, family members: Israel assassinated Mohammed al-Holy, a local commander in Hamas's armed wing, in an attack in Deir al-Balah, killing six members of the al-Holy family when their home was hit, including a 16-year-old.
  - More airstrikes in Deir al-Balah and Rafah: Two Palestinians were killed in a separate strike on a home belonging to the Jarro family, Shehab News reported. Another two Palestinians were killed by Israeli fire near the al-Alam intersection in Rafah.

- Gaza City strike kills three: Three Palestinians were killed after Israeli reconnaissance aircraft **targeted** a group of people at the Nabulsi junction on Rashid Street, southwest of Gaza City, according to Al-Qastal News and Shehab News Agency.
- Israeli gunfire kills woman in al-Mawasi: Israeli gunfire **killed** Sabah Ahmed Ali Abu Jam'a, a 62-year-old woman, in al-Mawasi, west of Khan Younis, with others injured in the same attack, Al Jazeera reported.
- Attack on Halawa displacement camp: Six Palestinians were **injured**—one critically—after Israeli forces opened fire on the Halawa displacement camp east of Jabalia refugee camp, according to Shehab News Agency.
- Israeli army orders evacuation in central Deir al-Balah: After Thursday's strikes, the Israeli army **ordered** the evacuation of a densely populated residential area in the heart of Deir al-Balah, where tens of thousands of displaced Palestinians are sheltering. Residents began evacuating around 1 a.m., amid fears of an imminent attack on a home in the area, Al Araby reported.
- Hamdan says killing may derail ceasefire: Senior Hamas official Osama Hamdan **told** Al Jazeera Mubasher that Israel's assassination of Hamas leader Mohammed al-Holy marks a serious escalation and demonstrates an intent to undermine the ceasefire agreement. Hamdan said Israel has continued to violate the ceasefire and deliberately obstruct humanitarian aid, placing responsibility on President Donald Trump and U.S. envoy Steve Witkoff to compel Israel to implement the deal, while insisting the resistance has fully adhered to the agreement and is prepared to hand Gaza's administration to the independent Palestinian committee agreed upon by all factions.
- Gaza's government outlines recent ceasefire violations: The Gaza Government Media Office said it **documented** 1,244 Israeli violations during the first 95 days of the ceasefire, including 402 incidents of direct fire on civilians, 581 cases of shelling or targeting of homes, 195 demolitions, and 66 military incursions into residential areas. The office reported 449 Palestinians killed, 1,246 wounded, and 50 unlawfully detained, while only 24,611 of 57,000 aid trucks (43 percent) and 601 of 4,750 fuel trucks (12 percent) were allowed in, severely impairing hospitals, water systems, and bakeries. It added that the shelter crisis has worsened, with mobile homes and tents put out of commission by recent storms, which have in turn contributed to the rise of winter deaths among displaced families.
- Trump announces next phase of Gaza "20-Point Peace Plan": President Donald Trump **announced** the launch of the "second phase" of the U.S. plan for Gaza's governance amid ongoing Israeli attacks and a continuing humanitarian crisis. Trump falsely claimed his administration delivered "record levels" of aid since the ceasefire—calling the effort

“unprecedented.” Trump also claimed those conditions enabled the National Committee for the Administration of Gaza to transition toward a U.S.-led “Board of Peace.” Trump claimed Washington will pursue a “comprehensive” demilitarization deal with Hamas, demanding the surrender of all weapons, dismantling of all tunnels, and the immediate return of what he described as the final hostage’s body to Israel.

- Contentious PA security figure tapped for Gaza transitional post: As part of Gaza’s phase-two transitional arrangements, Sami Nasman, a retired senior officer from the Palestinian Authority security forces, has been [named](#) to oversee internal security under the new Gaza technocratic committee, Reuters reported. Nasman is originally from Gaza but has lived in the West Bank since 2007. Palestinian analyst Muhammad Shehada says Hamas has long accused Nasman of intelligence-gathering, running destabilization networks inside Gaza, and involvement in assassinations and bombings, sentencing him in absentia to 15 years in prison.

- Israel delays Gaza technocratic chair at Allenby Crossing: Israeli authorities [held](#) Ali Shaath, the newly appointed chair of the Palestinian technocratic committee for Gaza, for more than six hours at the Allenby Crossing, before allowing him to depart from the West Bank to Egypt, where the Gaza-governing panel held its first meeting, a Palestinian Authority official told the Times of Israel. A Palestinian official said the delay seemed like an attempt to sabotage the technocratic committee. Israel’s Population and Immigration Authority declined to comment.

- Israeli forces raid West Bank village and kill a Palestinian teenager: Israeli forces shot dead a 14-year-old Palestinian boy in the village of al-Mughayyir, east of Ramallah on Friday, according to the Wafa news agency. The boy, identified as Mohammed Saad Na’san, was shot in the back and chest after Israeli forces raided the village.

- West Bank raids, detentions, and attacks: Israeli incursions in the West Bank continued on Thursday, with settler attacks on a home on the outskirts of Sinjil, harassment of a young man in Hebron’s Jaber neighborhood, raids in Al-Mughayyir and Beita, movement restrictions and forced shop closures in Kafr Malik, checkpoints and vehicle inspections at the entrance to Deir Jarir, and the detention of a vehicle between Kafr Malik and Abu Falah—as [reported](#) by Al Qastal News and Shehab News Agency.

## Iran

- Iranian state TV claims extensive property damage during protests: Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting [released](#) an assessment saying the nationwide unrest that began December 28 caused trillions of tomans (tens of millions of USD) in damage, including roughly 3 trillion tomans (approximately 70 million USD) of damage to Tehran’s municipal services. It reported

widespread destruction of banks and ATMs, hundreds of shops damaged, and impacts on ambulances, schools, mosques, cinemas, and heritage sites across dozens of provinces. The figures have not been independently verified.

- U.S. and Iran exchange accusations at Security Council meeting: The Trump administration renewed threats against Iran at the UN Security Council on Thursday, with U.S. ambassador to the UN Mike Waltz saying, “President Trump is a man of action, not endless talk like we see at the United Nations...He has made it clear that all options are on the table to stop the slaughter. And no one should know that better than the leadership of the Iranian regime.” Meanwhile, Iran [accused](#) Washington of fomenting unrest inside the country. Iran’s Deputy Ambassador to the UN Hossein Darzi said the U.S. was invoking concerns about human rights in the country to lay the groundwork for political destabilization and a possible military intervention.

- U.S. imposes new Iran sanctions over protest crackdown and evasion: The U.S. [announced](#) a new round of sanctions on Iran, blacklisting five senior officials—including the secretary of Iran’s Supreme National Security Council and commanders from the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps and law enforcement—over the violent suppression of nationwide protests. It also sanctioned 18 individuals and entities tied to “shadow banking” networks used to launder oil and petrochemical revenues. The measures freeze any U.S. assets and bar Americans from doing business with those individuals or entities listed. Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent said they are part of the U.S.’s continued pressure campaign against Tehran.

- Gulf states and Israel urged delay on Iran strike: Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and Oman [urged](#) President Donald Trump to give Iran “another chance” as he was considering strikes on the country, helping to delay military action, a Saudi official told Agence France-Presse. Separately, The New York Times reported that Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu pressed Trump in a January 14 call to postpone any strike, citing a senior U.S. official who said Israel feared it was not ready for Iran’s response.

## **U.S. News**

- House bill boosts Israel aid, bars funds for UNRWA: The House [passed](#) a funding bill on Thursday that provides an additional \$3.3 billion for Israel and blocks U.S. funding for international bodies investigating Israel’s actions in Gaza, including the International Criminal Court, the International Court of Justice, and the UN Commission of Inquiry on the Occupied Palestinian Territory. The legislation also cuts funding to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA), the UN agency responsible for aid in Gaza and the West Bank, as well as for Palestinian refugees in Jordan and elsewhere. The bill was applauded by the American Israel Public Affairs Committee.

- Appeals court clears path to re-detain Mahmoud Khalil: A federal appeals court [ruled](#) Thursday that a lower court lacked jurisdiction to block the detention and deportation of Mahmoud Khalil, a U.S. permanent resident and prominent pro-Palestine campus activist. The ruling clears the way for immigration authorities to detain him again. The panel did not address whether the Trump administration's effort to deport Khalil is unconstitutional, holding that he must first exhaust immigration court proceedings. Khalil's lawyer, Baher Azmy, called the decision "disappointing" and said Khalil will remain free while appeals continue, which could take months. New York Mayor Zohran Mamdani [responded](#) to the announcement and called Khalil's arrest last year "a chilling act of political repression" and "an attack on all of our constitutional rights," adding that "Mahmoud is free" and "must remain free."

- Machado meets Trump, offers him her Nobel Prize: Venezuelan opposition figure María Corina Machado [met](#) President Donald Trump at the White House on January 15, saying she "presented" him her 2025 Nobel Peace Prize medal as recognition of his role in Venezuela's "freedom." In response, the Norwegian Nobel Committee and the Norwegian Nobel Institute said in a statement, "Once a Nobel prize is announced, it cannot be revoked, shared or transferred to others. The decision is final and stands for all time." As the meeting took place, White House Press Secretary Karoline Leavitt reiterated Trump's view that Machado lacks sufficient domestic support to lead Venezuela in the near term.

- ACLU sues Trump administration over Minnesota ICE raids: The American Civil Liberties Union filed a lawsuit against the Trump administration on Thursday accusing federal immigration authorities in Minnesota of racial profiling and unlawful arrests in its campaign of ICE raids. The lawsuit, filed on behalf of three US citizens, names the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and its secretary, Kristi Noem, as defendants, along with several other Customs and Border Protection officers. "Masked federal agents in the thousands are violently stopping and arresting countless Minnesotans based on nothing more than their race and perceived ethnicity irrespective of their citizenship or immigration status, or their personal circumstances. At the center of DHS's campaign are Somali and Latino people, who are being targeted for stops and arrests based on racial profiling motivated by prejudice," the lawsuit said.

- ICE's tear gas and flash-bang munitions send Minneapolis children to the hospital: Three children, including a 6-month-old infant, were [hospitalized](#) after federal agents deployed tear gas and flash-bang munitions hitting a family van during clashes in Minneapolis late Wednesday, local station FOX 9 reported. The baby briefly stopped breathing and was given CPR by a parent before being taken to the hospital. The family says the devices were deployed by law enforcement responding to protests against ICE, with officers rolling a tear

gas canister under their vehicle and detonating flash-bangs nearby, filling the van with gas and triggering its airbags.

- ICE detainee death may be ruled homicide, medical examiner says: The death of Geraldo Lunas Campos, a 55-year-old Cuban immigrant who died in ICE custody on January 3 at the Camp East Montana detention site in El Paso, may be [classified](#) as a homicide, according to an El Paso County medical examiner. ICE said Lunas Campos died after attempting to take his own life during a struggle with staff, but an eyewitness detainee said guards choked him as he repeatedly said, “I can’t breathe.” The examiner reportedly told his daughter the preliminary cause was asphyxia due to neck and chest compression, corroborating the eyewitness account of a choking.
- ICE agents ate at a Mexican restaurant, then later arrested its workers: Federal immigration enforcement [agents](#) ate lunch at a family-run Mexican restaurant in Minnesota earlier this week and later returned and arrested some of the restaurant’s employees, according to the Minnesota Star Tribune. The arrests reportedly happened after the restaurant had closed. Last month, immigration agents also visited a Brooklyn Park, MN cafe as customers before detaining a cook.

## **Other International News**

- Israeli strikes in Lebanon kill two: Two people have been killed in separate Israeli attacks in southern Lebanon, according to the Lebanese Health Ministry. One person was killed in an Israeli attack on a truck in the town of al-Mansouri on Friday, while another was killed in an attack on a car in Mayfadoun overnight.
- Israeli strikes hit eastern and southern Lebanon amid ceasefire strains: Israeli forces carried out additional [attacks](#) on villages in Bekaa Valley and the hills of Hermel in southern and eastern Lebanon on Thursday. Israeli Military Spokesperson Avichay Adraee issued evacuation threats to residents of Sohmor and Mashghara ahead of strikes on what Israel said—without providing evidence—were Hezbollah-linked sites. Multiple residential buildings were hit, L’Orient Today reported. Hermel was later struck without warning, and a separate Israeli drone strike targeted a car on the outskirts of Mayfadoun.
- U.S. military seizes another oil tanker: The U.S. military seized a sixth oil tanker in recent weeks as part of President Donald Trump’s sanctions against Venezuela, military officials announced on Thursday in a [post](#) on X. The operation was conducted in cooperation with the U.S. Coast Guard, homeland security department, and justice department, the Southern Command post said. It published black-and-white aerial footage appearing to show service members descending on to the tanker’s deck from a helicopter. It is the sixth known boarding and seizure by the US military of a foreign-flagged oil tanker. The Trump

administration has squeezed Venezuela's oil industry after the kidnapping of Nicolás Maduro earlier this month, an operation that included air strikes on Caracas killing more than 100 military personnel and civilians.

- U.S. retains over one-third of first Venezuelan oil sale proceeds: About \$300 million of the reported \$500 million garnered from the first sale of Venezuelan oil is [expected](#) to be distributed inside Venezuela for public spending, meaning Washington will retain a little over one-third of the funds from this first shipment of 30–50 million oil barrels. The arrangement necessary to get the funds to Venezuela, which involves its central bank, carries legal implications, with economists noting that U.S. banks can only process transactions involving Venezuela's central bank if the U.S. State Department certifies its representatives, which could entail de facto recognition of the interim Venezuelan government.

- Venezuela proposes reforms to its hydrocarbons law: Venezuela's interim president Delcy Rodríguez has [submitted](#) a proposal to reform the country's hydrocarbons law that would enable greater foreign investment—particularly from the U.S.—in undeveloped and underdeveloped oil fields. The text of the bill has not been made available but the proposed reform may loosen rules requiring state oil company PDVSA to hold majority stakes in joint ventures, signaling a shift toward opening the energy sector and strengthening legal protections for foreign investors, the Associated Press reported. Rodríguez also urged renewed U.S.–Venezuela engagement in a speech to the Venezuelan Congress, calling for diplomacy over “hatred and intolerance.”

- Rodríguez insists Venezuela can maintain broad international ties: Delcy Rodríguez [said](#) Venezuela “has the right to relations with China, Russia, Iran, Cuba and all the peoples of the world, and with the United States as well,” pushing back against reported U.S. demands that Caracas cut ties with those states and align itself exclusively with Washington.

- Iceland pushes back after Trump envoy joke sparks backlash: Thousands have [signed](#) a petition in Iceland to reject the appointment of Billy Long, Trump's nominee for ambassador to the country, after he reportedly joked that Iceland should become the 52nd U.S. state. The remarks—made as Washington faces criticism over Trump's threats toward Greenland—prompted Iceland's foreign ministry to seek clarification from the U.S. embassy and led more than 3,200 people to urge Foreign Minister Þorgerður Katrín Gunnarsdóttir to sign the petition. Long later apologized, saying the comment was made in jest.

- Sudan Updates:

- RSF drone strike kills civilians in South Kordofan: At least 12 civilians were [killed](#) and more than 16 injured when the Rapid Support Forces carried out a drone strike on a market in Dilling, according to Sudan Tribune. Medical staff said the area's hospitals



are overwhelmed and short of medicines; the Sudan Doctors Network reported three major hospitals in Dilling are out of service, while Dilling's civilians flee toward North Kordofan.

- UN rights chief visits Sudan amid deepening humanitarian crisis: UN Rights Chief Volker Türk [began](#) a visit to Sudan on Wednesday—his first since 2022—meeting governing authorities, civil society representatives, and the UN's Sudan team in Port Sudan, as fighting between the Sudanese army and the RSF has killed tens of thousands and displaced an estimated 13.6 million people. Türk traveled on Thursday to the Northern State, visiting the Al Afad displacement site, which shelters roughly 24,000 internally displaced people. Many of those detained are from El Fasher, where ethnic-cleansing massacres have been documented since the city fell to the RSF in October. The Sudanese American Physicians Association says 35–40 new families arrive at the camp daily. Türk's visit comes as aid operations in the country face a funding collapse: the World Food Programme (WFP) says it has reduced assistance to maintain “minimum survival levels” starting January 2026—70 percent rations in famine-hit areas and 50 percent in communities at risk—reaching more than 4 million people monthly, but with funding sufficient for only three more months. Without new support, WFP warns operations could “fall off a cliff” by April and says nearly \$700 million is needed to sustain emergency food assistance over the next six months.
- M23 again announces withdrawal from Uvira: The Congolese rebel group M23 [said](#) that it is withdrawing from the strategic eastern Congolese city of Uvira for a second time, placing the city “under the full responsibility of the international community,” according to a letter signed by the group's leader, Corneille Nangaa Yobeulo, and sent to Secretary-General of the United Nations António Guterres. The group said the pullback, dated to December 15, 2025, is intended as a trust-building gesture but is conditioned on the deployment of a neutral protection force to the city. Uvira fell to M23 in early December displacing large numbers of civilians.
- Honduras begins disputed power transition: Outgoing Honduran president Xiomara Castro [began](#) the transfer of power to Trump-backed Nasry Asfura, who was declared the winner of Honduras's November 30, 2025 election. Asfura was elected after a prolonged and contested vote count, and his ascension was initially resisted by Castro's government and other candidates in the election after credible allegations of fraud emerged.
- Carney signals reset with China amid U.S. trade pressure: Mark Carney [told](#) Chinese officials that Canada seeks closer ties in the “new world order” during his first visit to Beijing—the first by a Canadian leader in nearly eight years. The trip aims to repair strained relations between the countries and to diversify Canada's trade economy, with a particular



eye to reducing reliance on the United States, Reuters reported. The U.S. buys nearly 80 percent of Canadian exports at present, though it has been subject to Trump's recent tariff hikes, and despite repeated threats to make Canada the "51st state" of the U.S.

- Yemen appoints new prime minister amid Gulf tensions: Yemen's Saudi-backed Presidential Leadership Council [accepted](#) the resignation of Prime Minister Salem bin Breik and directed Foreign Minister Shaya Mohsen Zindani to form a new cabinet, the state news agency Saba News Agency reported. Drop Site's latest report on Yemen outlines the dimensions of this conflict, particularly the rivalry between the UAE and Saudi Arabia, which has given it its present shape. That report can be read [here](#).

- Pakistan says a trilateral defense pact with Saudi Arabia and Turkey is in the works: Pakistan's minister for defense production Raza Hayat Harraj [told](#) Reuters that a Pakistan–Saudi Arabia–Turkey mutual defense agreement is "already in the pipeline," with draft texts circulating among the three countries. Harraj said the arrangement would be separate from—but likely build on—a bilateral defense deal Pakistan and Saudi Arabia reached last year. The pact could potentially signal a notable regional realignment, particularly between Riyadh and Ankara, while also advancing Islamabad's fast-growing arms industry, now an important source of revenue for the country.

- Ethiopia accuses Eritrea of arming Amhara rebels: Ethiopian federal police [said](#) they seized 56,000 rounds of ammunition allegedly sent by Eritrea to rebels in Ethiopia's Amhara region, escalating a rapidly deteriorating feud between the two countries, Reuters reported. Eritrea's Information Minister Yemane Gebremeskel rejected the claim as a "false flag," accusing Abiy Ahmed's Prosperity Party of seeking a pretext for war. The countries signed a peace deal in 2018, though the process has been undermined by later disputes over Ethiopia's access to the Red Sea and Eritrea's exclusion from Ethiopia's Tigray peace process.

- Haitian forces bomb homes linked to gang leader: Haitian security forces [bombed](#) three houses belonging to top gang leader Jimmy Cherizier, also known as "Barbecue," in Port-au-Prince, according to Gazette Haiti, after footage showed a large explosion in the capital. Police said the operation targeted Cherizier's longtime stronghold in the Delmas 6 neighborhood and involved the army, a UN-backed gang suppression force, the prime minister's task force, and a private military company—Vectus Global, run by U.S. mercenary Erik Prince—which has participated in explosive drone operations on the Island. It remains unclear whether anyone was killed or arrested. The operation comes just weeks before Haiti's current transitional government is scheduled to step down.

## More from Drop Site

- Winter storms kill displaced children in Gaza: On Tuesday, one-year-old Mohammed Bassiouni died of exposure to the cold in Deir al-Balah on his first birthday, after winter storms battered Gaza with rain and high winds. During the storm, Bassioni's family, which was displaced after fleeing Beit Lahia, was sheltering in a damaged tent. Gaza's Health Ministry said Mohammed is the seventh child to die from hypothermia since winter began. Another 25 Palestinians have been crushed to death as storms caused damaged buildings and walls to collapse on families seeking shelter inside or in tents nearby, with Israel's continued restrictions on shelter materials and essential supplies leaving over a million Palestinians exposed to the elements. Read Abdel Qader Sabbah's latest dispatch for Drop Site [here](#).

- Leaked emails link Epstein to UAE power broker, Abraham Accords: The Young Turks highlighted Drop Site News' recent reporting on leaked emails showing Jeffrey Epstein maintained a decade-plus relationship with Sultan Ahmed bin Sulayem, the longtime head of Dubai Ports World and one of the most powerful businessmen in the United Arab Emirates. The correspondence indicates bin Sulayem served as a conduit for Epstein as he cultivated ties between Israeli and Emirati elites—efforts that later culminated in the Abraham Accords—and suggests the relationship continued until Epstein's death. Watch the clip from the Young Turks [here](#), and read our reporting [here](#).