Oil tankers burning in Hormuz; Senate leadership battle; Mexican journalist found dead, 6th this year

Drop Site Daily: November 16, 2026

Iran

· **Iran claims six-drone strike on U.S. radar system in Bahrain:** Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) said Sunday that it launched six drones successfully targeting a U.S. air defense radar system at Bahrain's Al-Rifaa helicopter base, describing the operation as the second phase of its response to U.S. military actions in the Strait of Hormuz. Bahrain's military, however, said its air defenses intercepted and destroyed the Iranian attacks before they reached their targets.

  · The strikes followed an earlier Iranian drone attack on Bahrain on Friday, the first targeting a Gulf country since September, when the IRGC also claimed to have destroyed a U.S. early-warning radar system.

· **U.S. deploys third aircraft carrier to Middle East:** The United States deployed a third aircraft carrier strike group to the Middle East amid heightened tensions with Iran. The USS Theodore Roosevelt entered the U.S. Central Command area of responsibility on Sunday, joining the USS George Washington and USS George H.W. Bush.

  · Meanwhile, the European Union Aviation Safety Agency extended its warnings for airlines operating in Middle Eastern airspace until January 31, citing continued risks from the U.S.-Israeli war on Iran. The advisory covers Iran, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Lebanon, Iraq, and the wider Gulf region.

· **Six oil tankers struck mines, caught fire in Strait of Hormuz, Iran says:** Iran's IRGC Navy claimed Monday that two more oil tankers struck naval mines overnight while attempting to cross the Strait of Hormuz through a "prohibited" southern route, triggering explosions and fires. The IRGC claimed the vessels were operating under U.S. military guidance, bringing the number of tankers it claims to have sunk since Sunday to six.

  · Iran's regular navy reported that another tanker caught fire after striking a mine east of the strait. The reports have not been independently verified.

- Separately, UK Maritime Trade Operations reported Monday that a tanker was struck by an unidentified projectile while transiting outbound through the Strait of Hormuz, sparking a fire in its engine room. All crew members were accounted for, while the extent of the damage and environmental impact remain unknown.

· **IRGC claims capture of eighth intact U.S. drone in Hormuz:** The IRGC Navy said Monday that it forced a U.S. MQM-170 drone to land intact using electronic warfare systems in the Strait of Hormuz. The IRGC said it was the fourth MQM-170 and the eighth U.S. drone captured intact by its forces in the strait. The force also claimed to have intercepted, captured, or destroyed several other types of U.S. drones, including MQ-9s, MQ-1s, and LUCAS attack drones, since the start of the U.S.-Israeli war against Iran.

· **Israel reportedly warns U.S. of Iranian drone plot targeting Trump; Tehran denounces "disinformation":** Israel's Mossad intelligence agency provided the CIA with information suggesting Iran was planning drone attacks targeting President Donald Trump and senior administration officials, Israel Hayom reported Saturday. The newspaper said the warnings prompted heightened security in Washington, including the relocation of some officials to protected facilities and a reduction in Trump's public appearances.

- Homeland Security Secretary Markwayne Mullin said U.S. officials receive "aspirational threats from Iran" daily, adding that Washington was already aware of the threats and was prepared to respond.

- Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesperson Esmaeil Baghaei rejected the allegations, accusing Israel of orchestrating a disinformation campaign to build Western public support for escalating the war. "Fear must be manufactured to push the public into backing an escalation of the war," he said.

· **Bahrain sentences convicts 69 defendants over alleged ties to Iran, confiscates $21.2 million:** A Bahraini court on Monday sentenced 64 defendants to life imprisonment and five others to 15 years in prison over accusations of establishing a group linked to Iran's IRGC and seeking to overthrow the government, according to the Britain-based Bahrain Institute for Rights and Democracy. Bahrain's public prosecution said the court also ordered the confiscation of more than $21.2 million and imposed fines of approximately $265,000 on some defendants.

Palestine

· **Israeli forces kill one Palestinian, wound five others across Gaza:** A young Palestinian man was shot and killed by Israeli forces in the Al-Qassasib neighborhood of Jabalia,

northern Gaza, on Monday, according to WAFA. Two other Palestinians sustained gunshot wounds in the nearby town of Beit Lahia.

- In southern Gaza, Israeli forces shot and wounded three Palestinians, including a child, inside a school south of Khan Younis.

- **Israeli forces detain 13 Palestinians in occupied West Bank raids:**

  - **Hebron:** Israeli forces detained 11 Palestinians, including journalist Yasser Jaradat, during a raid on Sa'ir, on Monday, according to WAFA. In nearby Al-Shuyukh, soldiers closed the town's entrance, seized vehicles, and turned homes into military posts. Schools in both towns suspended classes due to the military presence.
  - **Jenin:** Israeli forces detained two Palestinians after raiding their homes in Jenin city. Soldiers also raided Al-Fandaqumiya, Burqin, and Rummana, firing tear gas in the latter and causing several cases of suffocation. On Sunday, an Israeli military jeep ran over two Palestinians riding a motorcycle east of Jenin, leaving one with a broken foot and the other with a head injury, according to the Palestine Red Crescent Society.
  - **Nablus:** Israeli forces raided Beit Furik, east of Nablus, and Beita, south of the city. In Beit Furik, soldiers stormed several businesses, destroyed equipment in one shop, and assaulted residents, according to WAFA. In Beita, Israeli forces entered Palestinian homes and fired live ammunition and tear gas canisters.
  - **Tubas:** Israeli settlers fired live ammunition toward Palestinian herders in northern Yarza, east of Tubas, forcing them to abandon grazing areas.

- **Palestinian prisoners suffer severe weight loss and scabies in Israeli prison:** Palestinian prisoners held at Israel's Naqab Prison are suffering deteriorating health conditions amid medical neglect, poor sanitation, and a lack of treatment, the Palestinian Commission of Detainees and Ex-Detainees Affairs reported Monday. Mustafa Abu Al-Fiya, 39, from Tulkarm, suffers from spinal disc problems and heart disease and has lost approximately 14 kilograms without receiving necessary medical care. Qais Al-Habal, 25, from west of Ramallah, has lost 39 kilograms, and suffers from severe scabies and boils. Two other prisoners from Jerusalem are also suffering from scabies.

- **Australia, Canada, UK, and Italy urge Israel to allow 150,000 tents into Gaza amid deadly winter storms:** The foreign ministers of Australia, Canada, the UK, and Italy issued a joint statement Monday urging Israel to immediately allow 150,000 tents and other essential supplies held at the border into Gaza, warning that the humanitarian situation is "dire" as winter storms devastate displacement camps. "The crossings must be opened, and the tents

allowed in," the ministers said without threatening any repercussions or sanctions, calling for "immediate, rapid and unimpeded humanitarian access." Recent flooding has damaged or submerged tens of thousands of tents, while at least four children and a woman have been killed.

· **Guardian: Israel uploaded millions of photos of Palestinians to Amazon's facial recognition platform:** The Israeli military uploaded 3.5 million photos to Amazon's cloud platform in order to use the company's facial recognition technology to analyze images of Palestinians, according to an exclusive report by the Guardian.

  · The vast catalogue of images was moved into Amazon's cloud in the early months of the Israeli genocide in Gaza that began in October 2023. The large set of images was moved into an Amazon data center near Tel Aviv.

  · The Israeli military informed Amazon of the decision to upload the images in early 2024 so it could use Rekognition, Amazon's AI-powered image analysis platform.

  · An Israeli military source told the Guardian that Amazon's cloud infrastructure was used due to the "very large scale" of images collected at checkpoints in Gaza that Palestinians were made to pass through after being forcibly displaced by the Israeli assault.

· **Palestinian lawmaker elected deputy speaker of Israeli Knesset:** Ahmed Tibi, chairman of the Joint List faction and leader of the Ta'al Party, has been elected deputy speaker of Israel's parliament, the Knesset. His appointment follows historic gains by parties representing Palestinian citizens of Israel in last month's elections, with the Joint List and United Arab List (Ra'am) securing a combined 19 seats.

Yemen

· **Ansarallah seizes over 2,000 square kilometers in southern Yemen, takes control of Bab al-Mandab front:** Ansarallah captured over 2,000 square kilometers of the Al-Madaribah Wa Ras Al-Arah district of the Lahij governorate in a single day with its forces now controlling all of the Bab Al-Mandab front.

  · The Ansarallah offensive in Lahij Governorate in southern Yemen effectively encircled the remaining forces loyal to the Saudi-backed Presidential Leadership Council in the Bab al-Mandab area on Sunday.

- Ansarallah forces reached Al-Kharaz camp at the southern foot of Jabal Kharaz in the Al-Madaribah Wa Ras Al-Arah district and established fire control over the last remaining road out of Bab al-Mandab.
- Saudi-backed forces said they are withdrawing from positions overlooking the strait to reinforce defenses around their interim capital, Aden.
- The UN Refugee Agency warned that fighting is approaching a displacement camp housing 9,600 people in Lahij governorate.

· **Three Yemenis, including child, killed in strikes on Sana'a and Amran:** Three Yemenis, including a child, were killed and 15 others wounded in separate strikes on Ansarallah-controlled areas of Yemen on Monday, according to the Associated Press citing health authorities. A drone strike on a home in the Al-Sarar neighborhood of Sana'a killed a child and wounded seven people, while airstrikes on a privately owned fuel station in Harf Sufian district of Amran governorate killed two people and wounded eight others. Ansarallah blamed Saudi Arabia for the attacks.

· **Ansarallah claims strikes on Riyadh airport, financial center, and Saudi oil pipeline:** Ansarallah launched two ballistic missiles targeting King Khalid International Airport and a financial center in the Saudi capital, Riyadh, military spokesperson Yahya Saree said Sunday. Saree also claimed that two drones struck pumping stations 5 and 6 along Saudi Arabia's East-West oil pipeline in the Riyadh region. He said both operations successfully hit their targets. The claims have not been independently verified.

· **Ansarallah releases 600 detainees in Sana'a, bringing unilateral releases to 2,612:** Ansarallah unilaterally released 600 detainees in the capital, Sana'a, on Sunday, according to the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). The organization said its delegates interviewed detainees privately before their release and provided assistance for their return home, but did not participate in selecting those freed. Abdul Qader al-Murtada, head of Ansarallah's National Committee for Prisoners' Affairs, said the latest release brought the total number of detainees unilaterally freed by the group since the war began to 2,612. Last month, the ICRC reported that Ansarallah had released another 159 detainees.

· **Armed men approach oil tanker east of Yemen's Socotra island:** A tanker was approached by a suspicious ship and a small boat carrying four armed men approximately 430 nautical miles east of Yemen's Socotra island, the UK Maritime Trade Operations reported Monday. The tanker's captain reported seeing a ladder aboard the smaller vessel during the incident.

Lebanon

· **Israeli forces abduct two Lebanese brothers in Shebaa, strike southern Lebanon despite ceasefire:** Israeli forces advanced into the outskirts of Shebaa in southern Lebanon on Monday, raided a home, and abducted two brothers, before withdrawing, according to Lebanon's National News Agency. The Khiam Rehabilitation Center for Victims of Torture condemned the abductions, noting that a third brother, Maher, was abducted by Israeli forces in June 2025 while herding goats near the town.

  · Elsewhere, Israeli warplanes struck Kfartabnit in the Nabatieh district, while intermittent artillery shelling targeted the Ain Al-Samahiyah area between Zawtar Al-Sharqiyah and Mifdoun.

  · Two Israeli drones also exploded over the Al-Rajm area of Mifdoun within 15 minutes of each other.

· **Israel strikes Syria-Lebanon border, claims weapons shipment destined for Hezbollah:** The Israeli military said Monday that it struck a weapons shipment allegedly destined for Hezbollah along the Syria-Lebanon border, accusing the Lebanese group of using areas across Lebanon for weapons smuggling and military activities. Israel said it would continue operations to "remove threats."

U.S. News

· **Van Hollen accuses Schumer of attempting to rush Senate election:** Sen. **Chris Van Hollen**, the Maryland senator challenging Schumer for the job of majority leader, charged New York's Sen. **Chuck Schumer** with pushing for a "coronation," but told Politico he had the support to block any attempt to move the election to this week. Schumer's camp denied any such plan exists, emphasizing his confidence that he retains at least majority support inside the caucus and will be re-elected leader.

  · Van Hollen addressed his challenge to Schumer on ABC's "This Week" on Sunday, saying that he thinks he has "a very open lane" in the race, and accusing Schumer's team of spreading "misinformation" and trying to "instill fear" in senators who may back him. He argued that midterm voters rejected Trump's policies, wars, corruption, and costs but "haven't fully hired the Democrats," so "going back to business as usual and status quo" won't earn their trust. Schumer has said he has the votes to continue serving as Democratic leader.

· **Senate permitting reform, energy bill headed for final passage:** The so-called Bipartisan American Affordability and Jobs Act is undergoing final negotiations as environmental lawyers push to add ways to challenge energy projects and tribal advocates look to tighten tribal participation provisions. The clean energy industry remains in lockstep support of the bill, as does the fossil fuel industry.

· **U.S. loses measles elimination status:** The U.S. lost its measles elimination status, an expert panel from the Pan American Health Organization announced last week. The organization made the widely expected decision after a three-day meeting in Washington, concluding the virus has been transmitted continuously for more than 12 months. The CDC counts 5,412 confirmed cases this year versus 2,289 in all of 2025, the highest since 1991's 9,643, with Pennsylvania's outbreak accounting for more than 1,500 cases and six deaths. These are likely undercounts. Vaccine skepticism accounts for much of this rise, with distrust in vaccines fueled by ranking officials, including Health Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr. Canada and the UK have also lost their status over the past year.

· **Alaska continues counting votes, with Peltola increasing her lead over Sullivan:** Democrat **Mary Peltola** now leads in Alaska's Senate contest by nearly 4 points, more than 11,000 votes, after the latest batch of votes was counted and results were released on Saturday. She netted nearly 2,000 votes from the latest batch. Decision Desk HQ shows her at 49.8% with 91% counted, just shy of the majority she needs to avoid ranked-choice tabulation. Her campaign again declared victory, saying "there is no mathematical path for Sullivan to win," though no major outlet has called the race as of Monday. All votes must be reported by Nov. 18.

    · Democrat **Jonathan Kreiss-Tomkins** won the state's gubernatorial race, with the AP calling the race in his favor on Friday. Kreiss-Tomkins, 37, will replace Republican **Mike Dunleavy**, who is term-limited and has held the post since 2018. He described himself as a "man of the middle" who would work in a "bipartisan" fashion during the campaign and said he would pay special attention to "unsexy and non-glamorous" issues like wait times for state permits and government benefits like Medicaid. He will be the state's first Democratic governor since 2002.

· **Trump's portfolio likely held $13 million to $62 million in Nvidia stock as of August, the Washington Post finds:** President Donald Trump, whose portfolio has logged tens of thousands of stock trades in his second term, held between $13 and $62 million in Nvidia stock as of the end of August, according to a review of his financial disclosures from that month. The actual value range may have been higher, the Post noted, citing Nvidia's rising share price. During his second administration, Trump has given the company's leadership

major concessions, allowing its former CEO **Jensen Huang** extraordinary access to his administration. The White House maintains that "the President does not pick or trade individual stocks" and that independent managers handle his portfolio. Nvidia reportedly donated $25 million to Trump's White House ballroom, which it says was "independent of business interests."

· **International student enrollment falls at U.S. colleges**: New international student enrollment at U.S. universities fell 15% this fall after an 18% drop last year, according to a survey of more than 800 universities released by The Institute of International Education on Monday. The survey shows that total international enrollment is down 9%, following a 3% drop last year. The administration's trade war with China and immigration crackdown are likely causes for this decline, as are the budget cuts at major research universities.

· **Incoming Rep. Don Leonard backing Ayanna Pressley:** Ohio's **Don Leonard**, who made headlines by saying that he had been threatened by senior Democrats over his reluctance to back Hakeem Jeffries for speaker, appeared on Breaking Points Monday morning and said that he was leaning toward voting for **Ayanna Pressley**, who has not announced a campaign but has been drawing support regardless. The leadership election is scheduled for Wednesday, and Jeffries still has no official opponent.

· **Federal prosecutor accuses Warren of preparing "to target private individuals close to" Trump and orders her to preserve documents:** U.S**.** Attorney for the Southern District of Texas **Aaron Reitz**, a former chief of staff to Sen. **Ted Cruz** (R-Texas), wrote Sunday that Senator Elizabeth Warren (D-Mass.), in line to chair the Senate Banking Committee, appears "eager to wield" the gavel "like a tomahawk, hunting for the scalps of President Trump's private associates," one of several barbed references made to Native Americans made in the letter, alluding to attacks made on Warren over her past claims of Native ancestry. He gave "formal notice" to preserve documents on oversight efforts, warning of "sanctions, adverse-inference instructions, or other penalties," and said he asked the same of Sens. **Richard Blumenthal** (D-Conn.) and **Elissa Slotkin** (D-Mich.).

· **Duffy declines to apologize for Friday's nationwide ground stop:** A router being repaired by an FAA contractor in Arkansas overwhelmed the nation's aviation communication network, leading the agency to ground all flights on Friday. The delay stranded hundreds of thousands of travelers and caused thousands of cancellations through the weekend. Transportation Secretary **Sean Duffy** told NBC's "Meet the Press" on Sunday that Friday's nationwide ground stop "happened on my watch," but "I can't apologize for what was passed off to us." He told the program that operations should normalize by Monday, but that he can't guarantee it won't recur until an investigation is completed.

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

Other International News

· **UAE remains major hub for gold smuggled from war zones despite new regulations**: The United Arab Emirates (UAE) remains a key trading hub for gold smuggled from war zones despite new regulations imposed on the Emirati government under international pressure, according to a new report by Swissaid.

  · At least 591 tons of such illicit gold valued at $74 billion was imported into the UAE, mostly in 2024, the report found.

  · Much of the smuggled gold was conflict-related and smuggled out of Africa—including Guinea, Mali, and Sudan—as well as other countries including Russia and Yemen.

  · "The UAE remains by far the main destination for gold linked to armed conflicts in Africa. And it continues to be a major destination for gold exports from countries subject to international sanctions," the report said.

  · Switzerland was the leading importer of gold from the UAE and does not appear to be scaling back its trade with Dubai. Between January and September 2026, more than 400 tons of Emirati gold were imported into Switzerland.

· **Saudi Arabia executes two men:** Saudi Arabia executed two men, Jawad Abdullah Qureiris and Fadel Hassan al-Safwani, on Saturday, according to the European Saudi Organization for Human Rights (ESOHR).

  · One of the charges against Qureiris concerned his participation in a 2011 protest in the eastern city of Qatif calling for civil rights and the release of detainees when he was just 16 years old. Safwani, who also took part in protests in Qatif and was tried on terrorism-related charges, EOSHR said.

  · Both men were detained in 2020 and were among 210 people executed in Saudi Arabia so far this year, according to ESOHR.

· **Imran Khan details inhumane treatment, asks for urgent medical care in letter to justices:** Pakistan's former Prime Minister Imran Khan, imprisoned for more than three years, has written to the chief justices of Pakistan's three top courts detailing inhuman treatment he has received in solitary confinement and asking for urgent medical care for himself and his

wife, Bushra Bibi. Khan says he has been isolated for up to 22 hours daily since December 2025, denied regular family visits and access to lawyers, books, and television.

- In the letter delivered through his lawyer, Khan says he has lost 85 percent of the vision in his right eye and that dangerously high blood pressure has left him at risk of brain hemorrhage or cardiac arrest. He says Bushra Bibi faces permanent blindness if she does not get urgent surgery. Khan alleges that authorities ignored a Supreme Court order requiring hospitalization. "I will only remain able to prove my innocence if I stay alive," he wrote.
- Khan and his wife were sent to jail on various charges by the military-backed regime more than three years ago after his government was removed with American approval in April 2022. More recently, his three sisters were also jailed in September ahead of a planned opposition march. Noreen Niazi and Uzma Khan were released November 12, after 53 days without charge, while Aleema Khan remains in jail.

· **About 4.5 million people have returned to Sudan, UNHCR says:** Since 2024, about 4.5 million Sudanese have returned to their home country, according to a Monday report from the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights. The returnees are 51% male and 49% female, and 72% intend to go back to their area of origin. The largest numbers came from Egypt (943,000) and South Sudan (225,000).

· **Africa CDC says the Ebola outbreak in the DRC is still not under control:** The ongoing Ebola outbreak in central and Eastern Africa is "still not under control," the Director-General of the Africa Center for Disease Control, Jean Kaseya, told Reuters Sunday. "If we don't stop this outbreak now, it would be the worst Ebola outbreak that the world will have," he added. More than 11,200 cases and 5,500 deaths have been reported since May 15, with over 80% of new cases emerging outside contact lists. Only $1.3 billion of the $2.9 billion pledged by donors has been released for use, and some health workers haven't been paid for months. The recent outbreak is the second-largest and second-deadliest Ebola outbreak on record.

· **Somaliland's intelligence agency says it briefly detained five U.S. nationals it accused of threatening national security:** Five U.S. nationals were briefly detained in the breakaway republic of Somaliland, its intelligence agency announced late Sunday, claiming it had monitored them since arrival and conducted a "lengthy investigation." The announcement provided no details regarding their identities or alleged actions. A source told Reuters that they work for Parallel Black, a company registered in Delaware less than two months ago, and a Nov. 4 letter seen by Reuters shows Somaliland's foreign minister invited them to

conduct investment feasibility studies. The source also told the wire service those detained left the country on an Ethiopian Airlines flight Monday afternoon.

· **Ecuador's President Noboa denies the U.S. has a military base near Guayaquil:** Ecuadorian President Daniel Noboa said Sunday that U.S. personnel at Taura Air Base are there only for "temporary activities" under bilateral cooperation, and that "it's not an American base. It's an Ecuadorian base." He did not address the U.S. aircraft present at the site, nor did he respond to a journalist's request to visit the base. Last month, the AFP documented at least 20 U.S. military flights there from June to mid-October, as well as the installation of dozens of tents and infrastructure work. Ecuadorian air force commander Gen. Mauricio Salazar, who asked the armed forces to clarify the deployment's legality in a September letter, was removed and reassigned. Human Rights Watch calls the U.S.-Ecuador partnership "perilous," saying both governments have committed serious rights violations by framing their fight against organized crime as a war.

· **Guatemala declares state of emergency in its eastern provinces after lawmakers killed:** Guatemalan authorities declared a state of emergency in the eastern provinces of Zacapa and Izabal, a week after the shooting of a lawmaker Julio Cesar Portillo in Rio Hondo, who later died, and three police officers also killed in the attack. Authorities did not say who was responsible for the shooting. Last week, the U.S. State Department designated several crime groups operating in Zacapa as terrorist organizations, accusing them of ties to Mexican cartels.

· **Mexican journalist found dead in Guerrero:** The body of Eduardo Flores, a journalist who covered security, social issues, and missing persons, was found on the outskirts of Acapulco on Saturday, according to his employer, Enfoque Informativo. Guerrero authorities announced an investigation into the killing on Sunday. Article 19 has documented 181 journalist killings in Mexico since 2000, including six in the first seven months of 2026, and Reporters Without Borders ranked Mexico second-most dangerous for reporters last year after Gaza, with murders of journalists rarely solved.

· **Martine Moise, widow of Haiti's assassinated president Jovenel Moise, registers as a presidential candidate:** Martine Moise registered to run in Haiti's first presidential election in a decade, the country's electoral council website showed Sunday. She is one of 33 registered candidates, three of them women, including former presidents Michel Martelly and Jocelerme Privert, former prime minister Claude Joseph, and former foreign minister Dominique Dupuy. A first-round vote is set for July. Moise was wounded in the 2021 attack by Colombian mercenaries that killed her husband and is a key witness in the Miami case against dozens of suspects.