

U.S. deploys another carrier to the Middle East; Putin escalates Kaliningrad threats; Mass funeral in Gaza

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Iran

- **U.S. sending third carrier, up to 10,000 more troops to Middle East:** The Pentagon is [deploying](#) a third aircraft carrier strike group, the USS Theodore Roosevelt, to the Middle East, officials told the Wall Street Journal.

- The fleet reportedly left San Diego Sunday, alongside the USS Makin Island Amphibious Ready Group. The latter will carry Marines from the 13th Marine Expeditionary Unit, adding 9,000 to 10,000 troops to a region that already has more than 50,000 U.S. personnel.

- These additional U.S. forces are expected to arrive in the region by the end of November. President Donald Trump reportedly told aides he expects to resume bombing Iran that same month.

- **U.S. deploys Patriot batteries to Saudi Arabia, Qatar:** The U.S. military [sent](#) two additional Patriot missile-defense batteries to Saudi Arabia and Qatar to protect key oil and gas facilities against potential Iranian retaliation if Trump resumes major strikes on Iran, Axios reported.

- The deployments come as Trump said Thursday he was considering renewed attacks in the coming weeks. “Now I have to make a decision: either Iran signs the deal, or it won’t exist any longer,” Trump said.

- **Treasury issues new round of sanctions on Iran’s auto and rail sectors:** The Treasury Department [announced](#) sanctions on Iran’s rail and auto sectors and their foreign suppliers as part of Operation Economic Outcast.

- The sanctions affect Iran’s two premier automotive companies, Iran Khodro and SAIPA, which together account for over 90% of the country’s domestic market, as well

as Iran's state-owned Islamic Republic of Iran Railway Company and two major passenger and freight rail firms.

- The new round of sanctions also targets foreign firms that supply Iran's auto companies, with affected firms in Indonesia, the UAE, and Turkey.
- **Iran strikes fifth tanker in Hormuz within three days:** Iran [appears](#) to have struck a fifth tanker in less than three days, according to recent incident reports from United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations.
 - Between the evening of September 28 and October 1, five vessels were reported "struck by projectiles" while transiting the Strait of Hormuz, the British maritime security body said.
 - IRGC adviser Ali Balil claimed on Thursday that Iran achieved a longstanding goal of using a long-range ballistic missile to strike a moving target. Balil said the capability had been demonstrated "in the past few days," without identifying the target or providing further details.
- **Gulf oil exports double since early August:** Oil exports from the Persian Gulf and Gulf of Oman [reached](#) a seven-day average of around 20 million barrels per day, roughly double the early August amount, with Strait of Hormuz transits driving the rebound, according to Kpler data.
 - The seven-day average of regional exports climbed from about 10 to 12 million barrels per day in early August to a peak of roughly 22 million in late September. Daily volumes briefly topped 27 million around September 19.
 - Trump told reporters on Thursday the U.S. may ask European countries to release diesel reserves as U.S. diesel hit \$6.53 per gallon.
- **UK-Iranian national arrested over RAF Fairford incident:** UK counter-terrorism police [arrested](#) a 25-year-old British-Iranian dual national in London on suspicion of preparing terrorist acts in connection with Sunday's incident near RAF Fairford, a U.S. Air Force-operated base.
 - Five British men arrested near the base remain on police bail after gas, but no explosive devices, was found in vehicles.
 - Police said they are investigating "all possible angles," including potential foreign-state involvement. Iran has strongly denied involvement.

- RAF Fairford has recently been used by U.S. bombers after Britain approved its use for strikes on Iran.

Yemen

· **Saudi-led coalition accuses Ansarallah of attack on power station serving holy city of Medina:** The Saudi-led coalition [accused](#) Yemen's Ansarallah of carrying out a drone attack on the Taiba electricity distribution station in Islam's holy city of Medina, on September 29, saying an investigation and drone debris indicated the group was responsible.

- The attack knocked one transformer out of service but did not disrupt the electricity grid. The coalition previously accused Ansarallah of attempting to target Mecca, another Islamic holy site, allegations the group has denied.
- This comes amid continued fighting in Yemen. Saudi-backed government forces [said](#) they carried out 20 air strikes over three hours targeting Ansarallah reinforcements across several fronts in Taiz, claiming the strikes destroyed military equipment and caused casualties. Government forces also said they downed Ansarallah drones over Aden and hit targets in the Ansarallah-held capital of Sana'a.
- Six people were killed and 35 wounded in overnight clashes between Ansarallah and government forces in residential areas of eastern Taiz, according to The Associated Press.

· **Trump says Saudi Arabia “wouldn’t be here” without him as defense chiefs hold call:** Trump said Saudi Arabia “wouldn’t be here right now” without him, claiming in a [Time magazine](#) interview that both the kingdom and Israel would otherwise have been “wiped off the face of the planet.” Trump said his relationship with Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman remained “very good” and emphasized that the U.S. protects Saudi Arabia despite recent reporting that Trump denied MBS's request to enter its war against Ansarallah.

- Saudi Defense Minister Khalid bin Salman held a phone call with U.S. War Secretary Pete Hegseth on Thursday to discuss the U.S.-Saudi defense coordination, according to the Saudi Press Agency. More than 100 U.S. military advisers are [reportedly](#) in Saudi Arabia providing intelligence, geospatial targeting support and battlefield technology for the kingdom's campaign against Ansarallah in Yemen.

Palestine

· **Israeli fire wounds three Palestinians in Khan Younis, including child:** Two Palestinians, including an elderly woman, were [wounded](#) by Israeli fire in Khan Younis early

Friday, while a child was shot as Israeli forces fired toward tents east of Hamad City, according to WAFA.

- Civil Defense crews also recovered remains of a Palestinian killed in an Israeli drone strike in southern Gaza overnight.

· **Israeli forces and settlers continue to attack olive harvesters across the occupied West Bank:**

- **Nablus:** Three Palestinians were [injured](#) as Israeli settlers, backed by Israeli forces, attacked olive harvesters in Beita, Jamma'in, Urif, Asira al-Qibliya, Beit Furik, and Deir Sharaf on Friday, WAFA reported.

- Israeli forces also fired stun grenades and tear gas at Palestinian farmers and foreign solidarity activists.

- In a separate attack in Beita, settlers opened live fire toward farmers harvesting olives in the Jabal Al-Arma area, with no injuries reported.

- **Salfit:** Israeli forces and settlers [prevented](#) farmers from harvesting olives west of Deir Istiya and forced others off their land in Farkha and Haris. Israeli forces also detained three farmers while they were harvesting olives on their land.

- **Bethlehem:** Israeli settlers [broke](#) a number of olive trees belonging to a Palestinian resident in the Abu Njeim area, southeast of Bethlehem.

- **Jenin:** Israeli forces [arrested](#) a Palestinian after raiding and searching homes in Zababdeh, south of Jenin, and detained dozens of Palestinian workers in Barta'a, southwest of the city.

- **Ramallah:** Israeli settlers, accompanied by Israeli forces, [attacked](#) homes south of Al-Mughayyir, northeast of Ramallah, and stole a vehicle from the outskirts of the village.

- **Over 2,000 Israeli attacks on Palestinians in West Bank in September:** Israeli forces and settlers carried out over 2,000 attacks against Palestinians and their land and property in the month of September in the occupied West Bank, [according](#) to the Wall and Settlement Resistance Commission.

- 1,404 of the attacks were carried out by Israeli military forces and 647 by Israeli settlers, while Ramallah and Al-Bireh recorded the most attacks.

- Settler attacks killed three Palestinians, bringing the total number of Palestinians killed by settlers in 2026 to 29.
- Attacks also damaged 14,600 trees, including 9,334 olive trees.

· **Gaza families bury 105 Palestinians nearly three years after Israeli massacre:**

Hundreds gathered in Gaza City on Thursday for the mass funeral of 105 Palestinians killed on October 25, 2023, when Israeli forces dropped at least 20 bombs on the Al-Taj residential block and surrounding buildings in Yarmouk Square.

- Journalist Mahmoud Haniyeh, whose wife, journalist Doaa Sharaf, and their one-year-old son Obaida were killed in the Israeli attack, held up the child's belongings. "This is his baby bottle. This is his toy. And that is his shroud. I want to ask the world: What threat did this pose to Israel?" Haniyeh asked.

- Some 8,000 victims remain beneath destroyed buildings across Gaza, Civil Defense spokesperson Mahmoud Basal told Drop Site's Mohamed Ahmed. Basal called for the entry of equipment and logistical support needed to recover them. "If things remain as they are, we are talking about many years in which these families will remain beneath the rubble."

- **Watch the dispatch from Mohamed Ahmed [here](#) and [here](#).**

· **Hamas denies Israeli report on rebuilding military capabilities:** Hamas denied an Israeli Channel 12 report claiming the group is accelerating efforts to rebuild its military apparatus, repair tunnels, and continue smuggling operations in Gaza. Spokesperson Hazem Qassem called the report "false" and said it was intended to justify continuing the war and cover up Israeli ceasefire violations.

- Qassem said Hamas remained committed to the ceasefire agreement and urged Trump's "Board of Peace" to adhere to the ceasefire plan and its associated roadmap, warning that providing Israel with "pretexts" would make the Board "a partner in the crimes committed in Gaza."

· **Kushner firm holds \$1 billion stake in Israeli company invested in Gaza war**

suppliers: Jared Kushner's investment firm is the [largest shareholder](#) in an Israeli financial company with at least \$456 million invested in nine firms supplying Israel's military, CNN reported.

- Kushner's Affinity Partners holds a 7.4% stake in Phoenix Financial—worth over \$1 billion. Phoenix's holdings include: \$265 million in Elbit Systems, Israel's largest

arms maker, \$40 million in Reshef Technologies, which makes fuses for shells used in Gaza, and \$68 million in Next Vision, which makes cameras for military drones.

- Phoenix also holds stakes in Caterpillar, whose D9 bulldozers are used by the Israeli military to ethnically cleanse communities in Gaza, other parts of occupied Palestine, and Lebanon.
- Kushner sits on the Board of Peace overseeing Gaza and Trump's "peace" plan. The White House called the conflict-of-interest concerns a "tired narrative."

Lebanon

· **Israeli forces carry out strikes, demolitions and shelling across south Lebanon amid "ceasefire":**

- **Tyre (Sour) district:** Israeli forces [carried out](#) two air strikes on Al-Mansouri and large explosions in Majdal Zoun on Friday, Lebanon's National News Agency reported. Israeli artillery also shelled Al-Mansouri and Wadi Zibqin.
- **Bint Jbeil district:** Israeli forces [carried out](#) a large explosion in Aitaroun, shelled Beit Yahoun and Wadi al-Salouqi, and fired machine guns toward Hadatha and the outskirts of Bra'shit.

U.S. News

· **Supreme Court to hear challenge to Trump's mandatory immigration detention policy:** The Supreme Court [agreed](#) Thursday to hear the Trump administration's appeal of a 2nd Circuit ruling against a July 2025 DHS policy subjecting millions of immigrants in deportation proceedings to mandatory detention without bond hearings.

- The case, involving Brazilian national **Ricardo Aparecido Barbosa da Cunha**, who was denied a bond hearing after his September 2025 arrest in Massachusetts, will be argued in the court's new term beginning Monday.
- The policy has sparked more than 73,000 lawsuits—roughly a quarter of all federal civil cases filed this year—and judges have ruled over 4,400 times that detentions under the policy were unlawful, according to analysis from Reuters.

· **South Korea denies finalizing funding for Trump's Alaska pipeline:** South Korea [pushed back](#) on President Trump's Oval Office announcement claiming Seoul had committed \$54 billion to a long-stalled LNG pipeline in Alaska, with President **Lee Jae Myung** posting that the project "will proceed to working level under the preconditions that 1) its commercial

viability is confirmed and 2) it complies with the legal procedures of the Republic of Korea,” and the Korean government issuing a statement saying only that the two countries “have agreed to begin reviewing the project.”

- Trump had made the announcement alongside Republican Alaska Sen. **Dan Sullivan**, who is presently seeking reelection in a contested race. Trump claimed that Sullivan was “totally responsible for this pipeline” and explicitly tied the funding push to Sullivan’s electoral prospects.
- **Trump administration diverts \$52M from Europe, Iraq to Latin America:** The Trump administration **defied** a hold placed by Sen. **Jeanne Shaheen** (D-N.H.) and Rep. **Gregory Meeks** (D-N.Y.), notifying Congress late Wednesday that it would move forward with diverting \$52 million in military assistance originally approved for Slovakia, North Macedonia, Tunisia, and Iraq to Panama, Peru, Ecuador, and Colombia instead.
 - In a letter to Secretary of State **Marco Rubio**, Shaheen and Meeks said the move violated statutory requirements, noting that the Slovakia and North Macedonia funds came from a Ukraine supplemental bill specifically intended for countries affected by Russia’s invasion.
 - The State Department defended the reallocation as consistent with the National Security Strategy’s focus on the Western Hemisphere, saying it would “combat narco-terrorism” and help “secure the Panama Canal.”
- **Microsoft-linked NJ data center ran unpermitted generators for nearly a year, emitting hundreds of tons of pollution:** DataOne, a New Jersey data center with ties to Microsoft that was recently fined \$1 million for running unpermitted generators, **operated** 62 gas-fired generators for more than 46,000 combined hours starting in July 2025 before state regulators intervened, according to reporting from The Guardian.
 - An analysis by Rutgers professor **Xiaomeng Jin** estimated the generators emitted about 140 tons of NOx, a class of dangerous, smog-producing gases, enough to rank DataOne among New Jersey’s top five NOx polluters in 2025.
 - The company’s CEO had told a January town hall the site would be “polluting less than a farm.”
- **Trump meme coin firm offers “most exclusive dinner” to top holders, raising fresh ethics concerns:** GetTrumpMemes.com, the firm behind Trump’s “\$TRUMP” meme coin, **launched** a new competition Wednesday promising its 185 largest coin holders an invitation to a gala “evening with 3 Legends and President Donald J. Trump,” with the top 29

purchasers getting a VIP reception and the top four receiving an 18-karat Trump-branded gold watch.

- Trump has earned \$635 million from the meme coin since it was created last year, part of \$1.4 billion in disclosed earnings from business ventures in 2025; purchasers of the coin have collectively lost an estimated \$4.7 billion, according to the watchdog group Public Citizen.
- **Housing Finance agency guts its own inspector general: Bill Pulte**, the director of the Federal Housing Finance Agency, [announced](#) plans to cut staffing at agency's inspector general office by 70-80% in fiscal year 2027, which staff told Congress would force the office to "discontinue essentially all criminal investigations" and effectively "wind down its operations."
- The move follows the November removal of the agency's acting inspector general **Joe Allen** after Democrats had asked him to investigate Pulte's "troubling and unprecedented politicization" of the agency's investigative powers against Trump's perceived political enemies, including Sen. **Adam Schiff** and New York Attorney General **Letitia James**.
- **Treasury releases rules for nation's first federal school voucher program**: The Treasury Department [released](#) rules Thursday governing the Federal Scholarship Tax Credit, the first federally funded school voucher program, which offers taxpayers up to \$1,700 in reimbursement for every dollar donated to "scholarship-granting organizations," which will then pass along the money to families. It is projected to cost \$26 billion in lost federal revenue over 10 years.
- States have until January 1 to opt in, with 30 mostly Republican-led states already announcing their intention to join in the program.
- American Federation of Teachers President **Randi Weingarten** urged governors to reject the program, calling it "a poison pill for the 90% of American children who attend public schools."
- **Senators respond to Collins corruption allegations**: A ProPublica investigation published on September 22 found that the Department of Justice's public corruption unit, just before it was gutted by President Donald Trump, was circling Maine Republican Senator **Susan Collins** after her campaign solicited illegal contributions from a Hawaii-based defense contractor.

- The company, Navatek, sent \$150,000 to Collins's super PAC through a shell company; \$32 million in federal contracts were funneled to the company shortly after.
- Drop Site's Julian Andreone asked senators on Capitol Hill about this reporting.

His interviews are available [here](#).

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

Other International News

- **Eritrea severs diplomatic ties with Ethiopia:** Eritrea [announced](#) Thursday it is breaking diplomatic relations with Ethiopia after Addis Ababa expelled 10 Eritrean diplomats, including the chargé d'affaires, declaring them personae non gratae because they had participated in "activities that pose a direct threat to Ethiopia's national security."
 - Eritrea's foreign ministry called Ethiopia's accusations "astounding," countering that "it is Ethiopia which has been pursuing an agenda of incessant hostility" and accusing Addis Ababa of waging war to gain Red Sea access and training Eritrean opposition groups.
 - Ethiopia separately expelled an Egyptian diplomat; Egypt reciprocated by expelling an Ethiopian embassy official in Cairo. Addis Ababa has accused Eritrea, Sudan, and Egypt of backing the opposition alliance, led by the Tigray People's Liberation Front, now fighting its federal forces.
- **Ethiopian government-allied force claims to have wiped out TPLF forces in Tigray:** A commander in the Tigray Peace Forces, which is allied with Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed's government, [declared](#) late Thursday that TPLF forces had been "wiped out" from the province as government forces closed in on the regional capital, according to Reuters.
 - The TPLF acknowledged federal forces had occupied parts of the region but said his forces would "counter-attack in due course."
- **U.S. waives human rights conditions for \$320 million in aid to Egypt after the country's "helpful role" in Iran war:** The State Department [waived](#) human rights certification requirements for \$320 million in annual military financing to Egypt, citing Cairo's "helpful role" in the U.S.'s war on Iran, according to a September 21 letter to Congress signed by Secretary of State Marco Rubio and reported on by Reuters. The memo did not elaborate on the details of that "help."

- Egypt is the second largest recipient of U.S. military aid in the world, receiving roughly \$1.3 billion annually since the 1980s following its 1979 peace treaty with Israel.

- While small portions of aid to Egypt have been withheld in the past, granting a national security waiver to override human rights concerns is now routine. In September 2024, the Biden administration issued a waiver to grant the full \$1.3 billion allocation, citing Egypt's assistance to the U.S. around Israel's war on Gaza.

- **Brazil's Lula, Bolsonaro skip final debate ahead of Sunday vote; Supreme Court bomb scare proves false alarm:** Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva and his rival Flavio Bolsonaro both [skipped](#) a planned TV Globo debate Thursday, the last before Sunday's first-round presidential election, with Lula instead appearing on a popular podcast and Bolsonaro blaming "censorship imposed by the electoral court" after a ruling barred the broadcaster from leaving Lula's seat empty onstage. TV Globo said the cancellation stemmed from "legal uncertainty" created by conflicting rulings from Brazil's electoral and supreme courts.

- Brazilian police also arrested a suspect who tried to jump the Supreme Court's fences and threw a backpack onto a bus stop, believing that he may have been carrying an explosive. The backpack contained only personal belongings, authorities said, and the man remains in custody.

- **Congo displacement camp abandoned after military raid, heightening fears of Ebola outbreak:** Thousands of residents [fled](#) DRC's Kigonze camp in the Ituri province, home to about 19,000 displaced people, Congolese and UN officials reported on Thursday, after soldiers searching for weapons entered the site last week and clashes broke out. The camp now lies abandoned, officials said, and a facility where Ebola cases were isolated and treated was burned down.

- Health officials said roughly 1,000 Ebola contacts had been living in the camp, and that roughly a fifth of these have been traced since the exodus began.

- Congo's Ebola outbreak has recorded over 4,000 deaths, according to the latest figures, making up nearly half of the 8,300 confirmed cases, in the fastest-growing Ebola outbreak in history.

- **Ousted Sudanese President Bashir, 82, wanted for genocide, needs treatment abroad:** Omar al-Bashir, who ruled Sudan for three decades before being toppled in 2019, has been [transferred](#) from military custody in Merowe to a military-run hospital in Khartoum for medical tests, his lawyer Mohamed Alhassan Alameen told Reuters on Thursday, saying that

symptoms he has exhibited require diagnosis and treatment outside Sudan. His family echoed the calls for him to be transported out of the country, and noted that they had not yet received permission to do so; it remains unclear what condition he is suffering from.

- Bashir, who was convicted on charges of corruption and illicit financing after his ouster in 2019, is wanted by the International Criminal Court on charges of genocide; in addition to these, he faces several open cases in Sudan.

· **Putin rules out ceasefire on long-range strikes, reiterates nuclear threat over**

Kaliningrad: Russian President Vladimir Putin [dismissed](#) a ceasefire on long-range strikes with Ukraine at Moscow's Valdai forum Thursday, calling the idea "simply ridiculous" days after Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said Kyiv was ready to halt strikes on Russian refineries if Moscow reciprocated on Ukrainian energy infrastructure.

- Putin repeated his warning that Russia would deploy "all the weapons at our country's disposal" if NATO attempted to cut off the Kaliningrad exclave, following a diplomatic note Moscow sent NATO this week threatening nuclear action in such a scenario and cautioned against "the logic of escalating," in which "increasingly harsh retaliatory measures [lead] to a fatal point of no return."
- NATO has not made overt threats to sever Russian access to Kaliningrad though recent military exercises near the territory and naval patrols in the Baltic Sea have raised concerns in Moscow.
- In Putin's speech, he reiterated his preference for ending the war through talks, and for a "neutral Ukraine." He also suggested that, under a "favorable scenario," Russia might return the assets of Western companies which it seized at the beginning of the war.

· **Greece pushes EU to allow asylum suspensions during migration emergencies:** Greece [urged](#) the European Union to let member states temporarily suspend asylum applications during periods of mass migration. The country's Migration Minister, Thanos Plevris, argued at a meeting of interior ministers in Luxembourg that the bloc's migration pact, in effect since June, has "not gone far enough" and that emergencies warrant "enhanced border surveillance and suspension of asylum."

- Plevris was backed by Dutch Migration Minister Bart van den Brink, who argued that recent surges like the July incident in Spain's Ceuta exclave should be "treated as a border management issue rather than an asylum issue."

- Ministers also approved a new regulation allowing member states to establish migrant “return hubs” outside the EU, with recent reports suggesting that the “Group of Five” nations (Greece, the Netherlands, Germany, Austria and Denmark) were considering Rwanda to host such a site.

- **India’s “cockroach” party renews protests, demands election commissioner’s resignation over voter roll dispute:** India’s Gen Z-led Cockroach Janata Party, alongside a separate coalition of student and activist groups, is [staging](#) fresh protests Friday in Mumbai and New Delhi, demanding the resignation of Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar over allegations that his commission manipulated voter rolls to favor Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s right-wing Bharatiya Janata Party. The commission and government deny the allegations.

- Pressure intensified after India’s Indian Express newspaper reported Kumar’s two deputies had formally raised concerns at least 14 times over the past 10 months regarding revisions to voter lists and the commission’s digital systems.

- The CJP, led by Abhijeet Dipke, gained prominence earlier this year after forcing the resignation of India’s education minister, who was embroiled in a scandal involving leaked exam papers and was blamed for rising unemployment in the country.

- **Hundreds of schools remain closed in France as student protests grow:** Student protests across France over a host of grievances including teacher shortages and dilapidated school buildings, have continued to grow forcing the closure of some 400 schools on Friday.

- Police have cracked down on the protests, arresting nearly 3,000 people, 90% of them minors, [according](#) to France24.

- Around 170 students and 65 staff members—including 40 school principals—have been injured. Over 100 high schools have suffered severe damage.

- Prime Minister Sébastien Lecornu called a crisis cabinet meeting on Thursday and told ministers to cancel travel plans to deal with the demonstrations.

- **Hungary signals easing opposition to Ukraine’s EU membership:** The Hungarian government said that it [welcomed](#) draft Ukrainian legislation Friday that would strengthen Hungarian-language education for Ukraine’s roughly 100,000 ethnic Hungarians, as part of talks to lift its objections to possible Ukrainian integration into the European Union.

- Hungarian Prime Minister Peter Magyar has adopted a less confrontational approach toward Kyiv than predecessor Viktor Orbán, but still conditions support for Ukraine’s EU accession on stronger minority protections.

