

Drop Site daily

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Venezuela

- U.S. seizes Russian-flagged oil tanker evading U.S. blockade on Venezuela: The U.S. military [intercepted](#) a Russian-flagged oil tanker in the North Atlantic on Wednesday. The ship had evaded U.S. efforts to crack down on Venezuela's energy exports, U.S. officials said. The operation came after the Marinera had slipped through a U.S. maritime "blockade" of sanctioned tankers going to and from Venezuela and rebuffed US Coast Guard efforts to board it. The U.S. military issued a statement on X saying that U.S. forces had "seized" the vessel for violating U.S. sanctions. The Coast Guard boarded the tanker after a roughly two-week pursuit, according to one U.S. official briefed on the operation. The Coast Guard encountered no resistance or hostility from the crew, the official said, speaking to the New York Times on the condition of anonymity. The Russian Transport Ministry said in a statement that the U.S. seizure was a violation of maritime law.
- Trump announces plans to take up to 50 million barrels of Venezuelan oil: President Donald Trump [announced](#) on Tuesday that Venezuela's interim government will turn over 30 million to 50 million barrels of "high-quality, sanctioned oil" to the U.S. and is to be sold at market prices, while the proceeds will be under the control of his administration. Trump directed energy secretary Chris Wright to execute the plan immediately and said storage vessels would ship the crude directly to U.S. ports. Trump framed the move as one intended "to benefit the people of Venezuela and the United States." The oil could be worth up to \$2.8 billion at current prices, Reuters reported. Wright said on Wednesday that the United States plans "indefinitely" to have control over Venezuela's oil industry.

"Going forward we will sell the production that comes out of Venezuela into the

marketplace,” Wright said at a Goldman Sachs energy conference near Miami.

- Washington spells out additional demands: The Trump administration told interim authorities in Venezuela they must meet its demands before being allowed to expand their own oil production or exports, including severing ties with China, Russia, Iran, and Cuba. The U.S. claimed exclusive partnership and control over oil logistics, according to ABC News. Washington is demanding that Venezuela open its oil sector to U.S. companies, expel Cuban security personnel, curb northward migration and narcotics flows, and end its cooperation with Iran, with U.S. officials warning of additional punishment if it fails to comply.
- Cabello facing threats from U.S., Reuters reports: Intermediaries from the Trump administration [notified](#) Venezuelan Interior Minister Diosdado Cabello that unless he cooperates with interim President Delcy Rodríguez, he could be a U.S. target, according to Reuters. Officials reportedly fear that acting against Cabello directly could spark unrest from pro-government armed groups known as colectivos.
- More oil tankers attempt to slip the U.S. blockade: At least 16 sanctioned oil tankers [appear](#) to have tried to evade the U.S.-enforced naval blockade on Venezuela’s oil exports over the past two days, The New York Times reported. Satellite imagery and shipping data show the tankers had been docked in Venezuelan ports, but departed after President Nicolás Maduro’s capture. Four tankers sailed east using fake names and spoofed positions, while 12 others turned off their tracking signals entirely. 15 of the 16 ships are part of a sanctioned “ghost fleet” previously used to ship Iranian and Russian oil.
- Rodríguez says Venezuela is not under foreign control: Responding directly to Trump’s warning that she would “pay a higher price than Maduro” if she failed to comply, Rodríguez [said](#): “My fate is not decided by anyone but God. That is my response.”
- The U.S. operation in Venezuela killed at least 56 Venezuelan and Cuban defense personnel: U.S. forces [killed](#) at least 56 Venezuelan and Cuban military and security personnel during the operation to kidnap President Nicolás Maduro, according to official tolls released by authorities in Venezuela and Cuba. Venezuela’s armed forces said 24 service members were killed in the U.S. assault, while Havana said 32 Cuban military and interior ministry personnel—many assigned to Maduro’s security detail—were killed, including senior officers. Venezuela’s Defense Minister Vladimir Padrino López says Maduro’s security detail was almost entirely wiped out. Venezuelan authorities have not yet released an official civilian casualty count, but U.S. officials estimate between 67 and 80 people were killed during Saturday’s U.S. military raid.
- Cabello says Cilia Flores insisted U.S. forces detain her as well: Venezuela’s Minister of Interior Diosdado Cabello [said](#) that First Lady Cilia Flores intervened during the U.S. military

operation that captured her husband President Nicolás Maduro, with Flores telling U.S. forces that “if they were taking Maduro, they should take her as well.” Flores appeared yesterday in federal court in New York with visible bandages and bruising, and her lawyers said she suffered “significant injuries,” including possible damage to her ribs.

The Genocide in Gaza

- Catastrophic lab and blood bank shortages in Gaza: Shortages of laboratory and blood bank supplies in Gaza have reached catastrophic levels, according to Gaza’s Ministry of Health. Ninety percent of blood testing and transfusion supplies have been completely depleted; 75% of chemistry testing materials are unavailable; essential tests, including for patients with endocrine disorders, cancer, kidney transplants, and blood electrolyte imbalances, have been suspended; and 72% of bacterial culture testing materials are unavailable, the ministry said in a statement on Wednesday. Israel continues to severely restrict the amount of aid allowed into Gaza in violation of the ceasefire agreement.
- Israel kills a 14-year-old in Khan Younis: Israeli forces [killed](#) a 14-year-old boy, Hamad, in a tank shelling in Khan Younis this morning, according to Al Araby. The attack occurred west of the so-called “yellow line,” in an area not under Israeli control.
- Food aid stocks can meet minimum caloric needs for the first time since 2023, UN says: The United Nations [reported](#) Tuesday that food aid stocks in Gaza are sufficient to meet 100% of minimum daily caloric needs for the first time since October 2023, after more than two years in which rations covered only 50–75% of those needs at best. Current daily aid provision includes about 170,000 bread bundles and more than 1.5 million hot meals, though the UN said continued Israeli restrictions on humanitarian operations have limited access to food, hygiene supplies, winter clothing, and bedding in the Strip.

Israel, the West Bank, and Lebanon

- Israel’s apartheid discrimination has intensified, UN says: The United Nations human rights office released a 42-page [report](#) on Wednesday saying decades of systematic discrimination against Palestinians across the occupied territories has “drastically deteriorated” in recent years. “There is a systematic asphyxiation of the rights of Palestinians in the West Bank,” UN Human Rights Chief Volker Türk said in a statement. “This is a particularly severe form of racial discrimination and segregation that resembles the kind of apartheid system we have seen before.” The report marks the first time a UN human rights chief has accused Israel of apartheid. “Since 7 October 2023, the Government of Israel further expanded the use of unlawful force, arbitrary detention and torture, repression of civil society and undue restrictions on media freedoms, severe movement

restrictions, settlement expansion and related violations in the occupied West Bank, which has marked an unprecedented deterioration of the human rights situation there,” the report said.

- Bus runs over anti-draft Haredi protesters in Jerusalem: One ultra-Orthodox Israeli was killed and three others wounded in Jerusalem, after a [bus](#) ran over demonstrators during a large Haredi protest against conscripting yeshiva students into the Israeli military, Haaretz reported. An estimated 15,000 people were protesting. The bus driver, who has yet to be publicly identified, reportedly told police he was trying to leave the area when protesters blocked the road. Journalists covering the protests were attacked by protesters, with demonstrators throwing rocks at a film crew from the Israeli Public Broadcasting Corporation.
- Israeli drone bombs excavator in Nabatieh, Lebanon: An Israeli quadcopter drone dropped an [explosive](#) on an excavator in Mais al-Jabal on Tuesday, according to a Drop Site contributor in Lebanon. Israel attempted a second strike on the excavator, but the missile failed to explode.
- Israel moves to launch its E1 settlement project: Israel has [cleared](#) the final procedural hurdle to begin construction of the highly contentious E1 settlement project issuing a government tender for 3,401 housing units, according to reporting from the Associated Press. The move would enable construction within weeks. The E1 project is slated to be in an area east of Jerusalem, and would effectively sever the northern and southern West Bank.

U.S. News

- U.S. escalates threats to annex Greenland by purchasing it: The White House said Tuesday that President Trump is discussing “a range of options” to acquire Greenland, including possible military action, calling the move a U.S. “national security priority.” Secretary of State Marco Rubio told lawmakers in a closed briefing that recent threats aimed at Greenland do not signal an imminent invasion and that the administration would prefer to purchase the island from Denmark, according to a [report](#) from the Wall Street Journal. The U.S.’s threat to annex the territory was met with reproaches from European allies and from Danish Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen, who warned that any U.S. attack on Greenland would effectively end NATO.
- Trump administration officials brief legislators on Venezuela: Senior Trump administration officials, including Marco Rubio, Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth, Joint Chiefs Chairman Dan Caine, and Attorney General Pam Bondi met late Monday with the “Gang of Eight,” a bipartisan group of congressional leaders with access to classified intelligence information,

in a classified [briefing](#) on the raid that kidnapped Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro. Lawmakers pressed the administration about casualty count, troop injuries, potential costs, next steps, and why Congress was notified late, ABC News and the Associated Press reported. Rubio reportedly told the group that Washington believes it can work with acting president Delcy Rodríguez and that it has a number of means to exert pressure on the country's leadership.

- “Difference is that Bush didn’t keep the oil”: President Donald Trump [told](#) Joe Scarborough that “the difference is that Bush didn’t keep the oil,” during a phone call discussing a comparison between U.S. intervention in Venezuela and the Iraq war. Trump told Scarborough that the United States plans to rebuild Venezuela’s oil facilities and keep the oil under U.S. control.
- Trump administration plans to freeze \$10 billion in subsidies: The Trump administration is [planning](#) to freeze roughly \$10 billion in federal funding for child care subsidies, social services, and cash assistance for low-income families in Minnesota, New York, California, Illinois, and Colorado, accusing the Democratic-led states of widespread welfare fraud without substantiating their allegations. The Department of Health and Human Services said it would withhold Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, Child Care and Development Fund, and social services grants until states submit additional documentation, a move critics say could jeopardize aid for hundreds of thousands of children.
- 150 arrested in Minneapolis: The Department of Homeland Security [said](#) it arrested 150 people in Minneapolis after it deployed up to 2,000 Homeland Security personnel to the Minneapolis-St. Paul area in what is called a “30-day surge.” Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem accompanied ICE officers during one of the arrests.
- Palantir founder agrees that “commies” should be “blown up”: Joe Lonsdale, a co-founder of Palantir, [agreed](#) with a post on X calling for the extermination of “commies,” replying “Exactly.” Lonsdale added, “What did you think founding Palantir was supposed to be about?” Palantir’s software is widely used by the U.S. military, the Israeli military, both countries’ intelligence agencies, police departments, and foreign security forces.
- Trial begins for Stanford students charged over pro-Palestine protest: Five Stanford University students go on [trial](#) this week for felony charges stemming from a June 2024 pro-Palestinian protest, the most severe criminal case to emerge from last year’s nationwide campus demonstrations against Israel’s genocide in Gaza. The students stand accused of felony conspiracy to trespass and felony vandalism. During the protest, they occupied the university president’s office for one hour as part of a demand to divest from Israel. Charges were filed nearly a year later by Santa Clara County District Attorney Jeff Rosen. If convicted,

they face more than three years in prison and over \$300,000 in restitution, despite Stanford officials testifying that actual damages were under \$10,000. The defendants call the prosecution politically motivated and say it is an attempt to deter future protests.

- Texas teachers' union challenges the state's attempt to discipline educators over Kirk comments: The Texas American Federation of Teachers filed what appears to be the first legal challenge to a state policy investigating educators' speech after the killing of conservative activist Charlie Kirk, according to the Washington Post. The union argues Texas officials violated teachers' First Amendment rights by encouraging complaints and discipline over social media posts. The lawsuit says the policy led to doxing, suspensions, and firings despite most complaints later being dismissed, and amounted to politically selective enforcement. Texas Education Agency Commissioner Mike Morath instituted the policy with backing from Governor Greg Abbott.
- Christian legal group changes school district policy on books, LBGTQ+ across the state of Pennsylvania: At a 2025 Harrisburg, Pennsylvania school board meeting, a last-minute anti-trans bathroom motion triggered a procedural fight and allegations that the district violated Pennsylvania's open meetings law. The move was connected to the Independence Law Center (ILC), a Pennsylvania-based Christian legal advocacy group, whose policies have spread across Pennsylvania school districts. At least 21 Pennsylvania school districts have formal relationships with ILC, and others appear to have adopted near-identical policies and book restrictions without acknowledging ILC's role, an investigation by In These Times and The Hechinger Report found. "I think we need to do a better job at being clever as serpents," an ILC leader said about their strategy. Read more about this clandestine takeover in a new report from In These Times [here](#).
- Oil companies, creditors, and crypto concerns lobbied the U.S. for regime change in Venezuela: In the year before the Trump administration invaded Venezuela, corporate actors spent heavily on lobbying the government for sanctions, carve-outs, and access to Venezuelan assets. Shell, Phillips 66, and Chevron lobbied the Treasury Department over Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) licensing, while Ireland-based Mare Finance Investment Holdings disclosed \$240,000 in lobbying tied for securing an OFAC license that would enforce an arbitration award against Venezuelan assets. These corporations stand to benefit from U.S.-backed regime change in Venezuela. Read the latest from the Lever [here](#).
- Warner Bros. board rejects updated Paramount bid: Warner Bros. Discovery's board on Wednesday unanimously rejected Paramount Skydance's latest takeover offer, arguing that the deal is inferior given significant costs, risks, and uncertainties, as compared to the Netflix merger. The announcement presents another obstacle to the hostile takeover bid of Warner Bros. by Paramount Chief Executive David Ellison and his father, Larry Ellison, who

proposed to personally guarantee \$40 billion in equity for the deal.

International News

- Fighting between SDF and Syrian government kills at least 8: At least eight people, including seven civilians, were killed Tuesday in Aleppo as part of [renewed](#) hostilities between Syrian government forces and the Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces, Al Jazeera Arabic reported. Both sides accuse the other of shelling that struck residential neighborhoods in the area. The Syrian army has declared Aleppo's Kurdish areas "closed military zones" and ordered civilians to leave, announcing a military operation in the area. Authorities also suspended flights at Aleppo International Airport for 24 hours. This escalation follows a missed deadline to integrate SDF forces into the state, a critical facet of a peace agreement between the two groups signed last year.
- Syria and Israel agree to share intelligence: Syria's new government and Israel agreed to establish a U.S.-supervised joint mechanism for sharing intelligence, and have committed to military de-escalation, following their talks in Paris, according to a State Department [statement](#). Disputes persist over Israel's military presence and the establishment of a demilitarized zone in southern Syria.
- STC leader faces treason allegations: Yemeni separatist leader Aidarous al-Zubaidi, head of the UAE-backed Southern Transitional Council, was denounced by the internationally-recognized Yemeni government for "high treason" after reportedly [skipping](#) talks in Saudi Arabia aimed at de-escalation. The Saudi-backed faction of the ruling government accused al-Zubaidi of mobilizing his troops for a last stand near the city of Aden after STC-aligned units also allegedly escalated attacks in Hadramawt and Al-Mahrah. Al-Zubaidi's forces favor separatism for southern Yemen and were largely routed by a Saudi-backed offensive last week, though they retain support from the UAE.
- AU calls upon Israel to revoke its recognition of Somaliland: The African Union Peace and Security Council [demanded](#) that Israel revoke its unilateral recognition of Somaliland, strongly condemning the move in a statement on X following a visit to the region by Israeli Foreign Minister Gideon Sa'ar. Israel became the first United Nations member state to recognize Somaliland ten days earlier, prompting backlash from the African Union, Middle Eastern states, and Somalia, who say the decision violates Somalia's sovereignty and territorial integrity.
- More on the Palestine Action hunger strike: At least three prisoners [linked](#) to Palestine Action remain on hunger strike in UK prisons, with Heba Muraisi on day 65 without food and Kamran Ahmed on day 58, and with their health rapidly deteriorating, supporters told the Irish Times. A third prisoner, Lewie Chiaramello, who has type 1 diabetes, is fasting

every other day and has reached 44 days, while five others have paused or ended their strikes. Campaigners say the hunger strike, which began on November 2, protests prolonged pre-trial detention, communication bans, and the country's proscription of Palestine Action.

- Cambodia says potential ceasefire violation was "accidental": Thailand accused Cambodia of violating a 10-day-old truce on Tuesday after alleged cross-border mortar fire wounded a Thai soldier in Ubon Ratchathani province, while Phnom Penh said an explosion from a "pile of garbage" injured two of its own troops in Preah Vihear, according to reporting from the [AFP](#). The incidents threaten the ceasefire agreed to on December 27. Concerning yesterday's incident, Thai Prime Minister Anutin Charnvirakul said his country lodged a formal protest with Cambodia but was told at the military level that the incident was accidental.

More From Drop Site

- "BlackNest: Inside Canary Mission's Secret Web of Unlisted Sites": The notorious pro-Israel doxing group Canary Mission operates a network of unlisted internal websites, including a platform called BlackNest. Canary Mission has developed BlackNest to track arrests, firings, and deportations attributed to its work, and categorizes their actions as "company impact" metrics, according to more than 100GB of backend data accessed by Drop Site. The materials show that Canary Mission likely operates out of Israel and coordinates with the U.S. State Department to see Israel's opponents arrested or deported. "Dismantle the anti-Israel network by attacking the messenger, not the message," a Canary Mission mission statement says. Read Drop Site's new report from Jacqueline Sweet [here](#).

- Drop Site Livestream Highlights

- "No fracture" within Venezuela's governing base: Drop Site [spoke](#) with Carlos Ron, Venezuela's former deputy minister of foreign affairs for North America, who said anger and indignation over American aggression have "served to bring together the Venezuelan population." Ron told Drop Site there is "no fracture" within the governing base and no visible opposition available to capitalize on the attack.

- On CIA involvement in the U.S. abduction of Maduro: No U.S. deaths have been [reported](#) following the kidnapping of Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro, after a U.S. raid that killed members of his security forces. Our guest, investigative journalist and former U.S. Army Ranger Jack Murphy, discussed how the operation resulted in no American troop casualties. "There were a couple of key defections that were very instrumental in helping the CIA understand who and how to work in Venezuela, because they were having some difficulties previously," Murphy said, explaining how those defections enabled a "local support network" to operate on the ground and "do

things on the ground that they weren't able to do themselves."

- Was Delcy Rodríguez "in on it"? Carlos Ron, Venezuela's former deputy foreign minister, **rejected** U.S. media speculation that newly sworn-in President Delcy Rodríguez was complicit in President Nicolás Maduro's abduction, arguing that claims of internal betrayal are meant to fracture the movement. Pointing to Rodríguez's revolutionary family history, Ron said the governing bloc remains unified. "I don't see any validity to that. What we have is a cohesive movement."