

# SCOTUS rules against Trump tariffs; Board of Peace's sweeping plans for Gaza "redevelopment"

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DROP SITE NEWS

## Board of Peace

- **Trump announces \$7 billion in pledges for Gaza reconstruction:** President Donald Trump announced Thursday at the first meeting of the Board of Peace (BoP) that nine members have agreed to pledge \$7 billion toward Gaza's reconstruction. The countries that made pledges include Kazakhstan, Azerbaijan, the United Arab Emirates, Morocco, Bahrain, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Uzbekistan, and Kuwait, Trump said. Trump also announced the U.S. would pledge \$10 billion for the Board of Peace without specifying where the money would come from or what would be used for.
- **Board of Peace unveils long-term reconstruction and governance plan for Gaza:** A video opening the meeting [outlined](#) a 20-point blueprint to rebuild Gaza, with plans to reconstruct Rafah within three years, sharply cut unemployment, and link the Strip to the global economy by means of a regional corridor (the "Abrahamic gateway"). Within ten years, the video said, Gaza would be self-governed and economically integrated, with "thriving industries" and housing for its residents. It also promised a new education curriculum promoting "tolerance, dignity, and peace." All of this hinges on Gaza's full disarmament under "one authority, one law, and one weapon," according to the video.
- **Plans for the "Stabilization Force":** U.S. Special Operations Command's Maj. Gen. Jasper Jeffers [outlined](#) the BoP's plan for an International Stabilization Force (ISF). The force will be organized into five sectors, each anchored by a brigade, and will begin its operations in Rafah. Over time, the mission is expected to field roughly 20,000 ISF troops alongside 12,000 Palestinian police officers. Indonesia, Morocco, Kazakhstan, Kosovo, and Albania pledged personnel, with Indonesia's military set to serve as deputy to the U.S. command. Egypt and Jordan will oversee the training of the Palestinian police force.

· **Mladenov says disarmament plans finalized with mediators:** President Donald Trump stated that he believes Hamas will “give up their weapons. If they don’t, it’ll be, you know, they’ll be harshly met.” Nickolay Mladenov, the Board’s High Representative for Gaza, [said](#) a weapons decommissioning framework has been “fully agreed [to]” with mediators Qatar, Egypt, and Turkey. Mladenov said the Board will now attempt to implement its plan by enlisting the cooperation of the armed Palestinian factions, and stressed that the Board’s plans for reconstruction will only proceed when the Strip is completely demilitarized. Read Drop Site’s [exclusive coverage](#) with senior Hamas official Basem Naim saying the group will not accede to sweeping demands that the Palestinian resistance unilaterally disarm.

· **Hamas responds:** In response to billions pledged towards Trump’s vision for a new Gaza at the inaugural meeting of the BoP—amid ongoing Israeli violations of the ceasefire agreement—Hamas [said](#) any political arrangements concerning Gaza must begin with a “complete halt to the aggression, the lifting of the blockade,” and guaranteeing Palestinians’ “right to freedom and self-determination.” The group said convening talks while Israel’s crimes and ceasefire violations continue places an obligation on participating states to take “concrete steps” to compel Israel to stop attacks, open crossings, allow aid without restrictions, and immediately begin reconstruction. It added that any “genuine international effort” to stabilize Gaza must address the “root cause” of the crisis—the occupation—and ensure Palestinians obtain their rights in full.

· **Basic services in Gaza:** Ali Shaath, head of the National Committee for the Administration of Gaza (NCAG), [discussed](#) the Board’s priorities for early-stage policing and reconstruction. Five thousand Palestinian police officers will be trained and deployed within 60 days, Shaath said, as part of the new civilian administration. Shaath closed his speech by turning to Trump and saying, “Blessed is the peacemaker.”

· **Real estate investors eye reconstruction opportunities:** Marc Rowan, chief executive of Apollo Global Management, [said](#) the Strip’s coastline alone could be worth \$50 billion “on a conservative basis,” and proposed to consolidate Gaza’s “productive assets” under a unified management structure. Rowan discussed a plan in which the Board would oversee the construction of homes, beginning in Rafah, where 100,000 homes would be built for 500,000 residents, and \$5 billion would be set aside for infrastructure. This would serve as a blueprint for expanding construction to 400,000 homes, and for the allocation of more than \$30 billion in total infrastructure investment. Rowan estimated that the total value of investment would exceed \$115 billion. World Bank Group President Ajay Banga said the Bank has already established a Gaza Reconstruction and Development Fund, which it will administer as trustee, using its AAA credit rating to raise additional capital and help de-risk private investment.

- **Israeli real estate billionaire pitches “Mediterranean Riviera”:** Israeli-Cypriot developer Yakir Gabay [presented](#) a 10-year plan at the inaugural Board of Peace meeting in Washington, D.C. to transform Gaza into a tourism and business hub with 200 hotels, potential artificial islands, and major infrastructure spanning housing, transport, energy, and industry—contingent on the full disarmament of Hamas.
- **Israeli tech executive pitches digital reconstruction plan:** Liran Tancman, an Israeli cyber intelligence figure and technology executive, [discussed](#) plans to “reconnect Gaza.” By July, he claimed, Gaza’s 2G network will be upgraded and essential services will be available with “free, high-speed access.” When sketching designs for a new “digital backbone for the Strip,” he promised “user control over data,” which contrasts starkly with recently published investigative [reporting](#) in +972. According to the report, Israel has developed an extensive digital surveillance system in Gaza and the West Bank and has used data it accessed through phone and metadata tracking to facilitate targeted attacks on civilians.
- **Trump announces FIFA partnership:** President Trump [said](#) FIFA will bring “the greatest stars in the world” to Gaza as part of a newly announced partnership with the Board of Peace. FIFA President Gianni Infantino is reportedly committing \$75 million toward stadium construction, training academies, and dozens of new football pitches. Trump also thanked Infantino for the peace prize that FIFA awarded to him. “I got screwed by Norway, and they said ‘Let’s give him a peace prize.’”

## The Gaza Genocide, West Bank, and Israel

- **Israel strikes continue across Gaza:** The Israeli army announced that it had killed a Palestinian in southern Gaza, claiming he had crossed the “yellow line.” A child was wounded by Israeli gunfire in the Halawa camp in Jabalia al-Balad in the northern Gaza Strip, according to Al-Araby TV. In Beit Lahia in the northern Gaza Strip, several people were injured in an Israeli airstrike.
- **Palestinian journalists describe systematic torture in Israeli detention:** The Committee to Protect Journalists [reports](#) that Israel has detained at least 94 Palestinian journalists since October 7, 2023, with 30 still held in Israeli prisons—including 25 without charges. In its latest report, it found that 58 of 59 former detainees it interviewed experienced torture or severe abuse while in Israeli custody. Testimonies from these reporters detailed beatings, starvation, sexual violence, “strappado” stress positions, prolonged sensory assault, medical neglect, and rape, with detainees losing an average of 54 pounds due to extreme hunger. Further arrests were reported Friday, with Israeli forces detaining journalist Hammam Atili, alongside four other Palestinians, after raiding homes in Tulkarem in the occupied West Bank, according to Wafa.

- **Israeli settlers cross into Gaza:** Dozens of Israelis crossed the security fence into Gaza on Thursday night before being detained by the Israeli military and returned to Israeli territory, the Israeli military said in a [statement](#). The group included parliament member Limor Son Har-Melech and members of Nachala, a radical organization that promotes Jewish settlement in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank. In a social media post, Har-Melech wrote that the group had entered Gaza “together with the Nachala movement and dozens of other families, women, men, and children,” adding, “Gaza is ours forever. Only in this way will we ensure victory and true security for the people of Israel.” The Israeli military said the group was “safely returned to Israeli territory.”

## U.S. News

- **SCOTUS rules against Trump tariffs:** The Supreme Court ruled on Friday that Trump overstepped his authority by invoking the International Emergency Economic Powers Act to impose aggressive tariffs at the start of his second term. The tariffs, now deemed illegal, have become a cornerstone of Trump’s foreign policy, as the starvation of Cuba relies on tariff threats to Mexico and the rest of the world. Trump is likely to try to reapply the tariffs using the Smoot-Hawley Act, Depression-era legislation that allows tariffs when countries are found to have “discriminatory” commerce practices against the U.S. Bloomberg [lays out Trump’s options here](#).

- **Trump signals escalation is possible within 10 days amid U.S.-Iran nuclear talks:** At the BoP meeting, President Donald Trump [said](#) a decision on whether to escalate military action against Iran could come within “probably 10 days,” while claiming “good talks are being had” but insisting Tehran must reach a “meaningful deal.” He reiterated that Iran “can’t have a nuclear weapon,” warning the United States could “take it a step further” if diplomacy collapses as Washington continues a major military buildup in the region.

- **Iran tells United Nations that U.S. bases would be targeted if Washington attacks:** Iran [warned](#) the United Nations that U.S. military bases would become “legitimate targets” if Washington carries out any strikes on its territory. In a letter sent to Secretary-General António Guterres and the Security Council, Iran’s delegation cited President Trump’s recent threats, which have referenced military facilities such as Diego Garcia and RAF Fairford. Tehran said it remains committed to diplomacy, but maintains it will respond if attacked, and warned that any U.S. assets used in a strike would be met with “decisive and proportionate” retaliation.

- **New York City budget gap sparks fight over taxes and spending cuts:** New York City Mayor Zohran Mamdani [unveiled](#) a preliminary \$127 billion FY 2027 budget that includes a \$5.4 billion shortfall, warning that the city’s property taxes would need to rise by up to 9.5%

to close the gap. City Council Speaker Julie Menin refused to countenance any hike in property taxes, arguing instead that the gap should be closed by cutting costs, pointing to the nearly \$11 billion in public sector and retiree health care spending and calling its growth “unsustainable.” Alternatively, additional taxes could also be levied at the state level.

- **Union membership ticks up in the U.S. despite challenges:** American union membership rose for the first time in years, increasing by 463,000 workers and nudging overall union density from 9.9% to 10.0%. Gains were concentrated in the public sector, while manufacturing—the sector Trump has pledged to revive—lost 80,000 jobs and saw continued union decline. The public still supports organized labor, with Gallup reporting 68% approval for unions in its recent polling, though weakened labor law and employer resistance remain major barriers to broader unionization. A full rundown on the state of Labor in the U.S. is available from Harold Meyerson at The American Prospect [here](#).

- **University of Texas System adopts vague rule limiting “controversial” coursework:** The University of Texas System Board of Regents unanimously approved a policy requiring campuses to ensure students can graduate without taking courses in what it deems “unnecessary controversial subjects.” The rule also requires faculty to pre-declare course topics and present disputed issues in a “broad and balanced” way, terms which it does not define. Civil rights advocates warned that the change will chill teaching on race, gender, and politics and invite viewpoint discrimination. Read more about the crisis in Texas higher education in the latest from The Texas Tribune, available [here](#).

- **GOP bill would curb states’ interest-rate caps:** Sen. Bernie Moreno and Rep. Warren Davidson, both Republicans from Ohio, introduced the American Lending Fairness Act of 2026 to override a recent U.S. Court of Appeals for the Tenth Circuit ruling that upheld states’ authority to enforce their own usury caps on out-of-state lenders. The bill would effectively codify the “rent-a-bank” model—often used by institutions based in states like Delaware and South Dakota with no rate limits—allowing lenders to bypass stricter caps elsewhere. Both lawmakers have received millions in donations from finance, insurance, and real estate interests and industry groups including the American Financial Services Association. Critics say it would undercut state efforts such as Colorado’s 2023 law targeting high-cost lending and could enable a new surge in triple-digit interest loans. More on this can be found in the latest from The Lever, available [here](#).

## Africa Update

- **South Africa:** On Thursday, South African police arrested Bellarmine Chatunga Mugabe, the youngest son of former Zimbabwean president Robert Mugabe, after he allegedly shot an employee at his home in Johannesburg, leaving the victim in critical condition. Authorities

said Mugabe was taken into custody alongside another man suspected of assisting in the attack and will face attempted murder charges. Robert Mugabe ruled Zimbabwe for 37 years before being deposed in a 2017 coup. He died in 2019 at the age of 95.

- **Kenya:** A Kenyan intelligence report found more than 1,000 Kenyans had been recruited to fight for Russia in its war against Ukraine, with at least 89 still on the front lines as of February 2026. The report alleges that a network of rogue officials and trafficking syndicates—including airport staff, immigration officers, police units, and employment authorities—have worked with recruitment agencies to facilitate travel and enlistment, and have secured recruits with false promises of jobs in Russia. Parliament majority leader Kimani Ichung’wah called the operation “deeply disturbing,” and accused the staff at the Russian embassy in Nairobi and the Kenyan embassy in Moscow of helping recruits obtain visas.

- **Rwanda:** Rwanda signed a three-year memorandum of understanding with Anthropic to deploy artificial intelligence across its education and healthcare sectors, as well as in its public sector. This is the firm’s first formal multi-sector government partnership in Africa. Information and communications technology minister Paula Ingabire said the initiative aims to strengthen learning and improve healthcare outcomes and governance. The agreement builds on a 2025 education partnership that provided 2,000 Claude Pro licenses for Rwandan educators, AI literacy training for public servants, and rollout of a Claude-powered learning companion across a total of eight African countries, according to the company.

- **U.S. sanctions RSF commanders for El-Fasher atrocities:** The U.S. announced sanctions on Thursday against three commanders of the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) for their actions in El-Fasher. “These individuals were involved in the RSF’s 18-month siege of and eventual capture of El-Fasher, in which the RSF perpetrated a horrific campaign of ethnic killings, torture, starvation, and sexual violence,” the Treasury Department said in a [statement](#). “Since the beginning of Sudan’s civil war in April 2023, the RSF and its aligned militias have committed widespread atrocities, including war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide.”

- **Three killed in RSF bombing of aid convoy:** At least three aid workers have been killed and four others wounded in a drone attack by the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) on an aid convoy in Sudan’s South Kordofan state, according to the Sudan Doctors Network. The convoy was targeted while travelling through the Kartala area on its way to the cities of Kadugli and Dilling on Thursday, the group said.

- **Madagascar:** President of Madagascar, Michael Randrianirina, met President Vladimir Putin on Thursday in Russia, where the two leaders are set to discuss expanded cooperation and regional and international issues, according to the Kremlin.
- **Nigeria:** At least 34 people were killed Tuesday when suspected Lakurawa Islamist militants launched coordinated assaults on rural villages in Kebbi State, according to a security report seen by [Reuters](#). The attacks targeted multiple communities in a remote border district, including the villages of Mamunu, Awashaka, and Masama. Survivors described highly organized, indiscriminate gunfire during the attacks, which forced residents to flee from their houses. Lakurawa, a relatively new insurgent group operating in the Kebbi and Sokoto states, staged similar simultaneous raids in recent months, overwhelming local defenses. Nigerian security forces have reportedly deployed to the region.

## Other International News

- **Private Cuban firms begin importing limited fuel:** Small private companies in Cuba have [started](#) receiving imported diesel despite a United States oil blockade that has halted shipments of Venezuelan oil, according to EFE. Deliveries are arriving in ISO tanks via state importers at the Port of Mariel, with some shipments reportedly operating under licenses from the Office of Foreign Assets Control, though volumes remain far below Cuba's national demand. Separately, a tanker carrying fuel reportedly docked this week in Matanzas Bay—potentially the first crude delivery since early January, when a shipment arrived from Mexico—as Cuba continues to produce only about a third of the 110,000 barrels per day it needs.
- **Turkey objects to Chevron-led gas exploration south of Crete:** Turkey [announced](#) its opposition to what it called Greece's "unilateral activities" in energy fields south of Crete, after a consortium led by Chevron signed exclusive lease agreements to explore for natural gas in the area, according to Reuters. Ankara said the move violates a 2019 maritime jurisdiction memorandum it signed with Libya and infringes on Libyan maritime claims, while Greece responded that its policies fully comply with international law.
- **U.S. in talks to route Venezuelan oil to India amid trade and tariff deal:** The United States is in "active negotiation" over facilitating Venezuelan crude sales to India to help New Delhi diversify away from Russian oil, said U.S. ambassador to India Sergio Gora as Washington and Indian continue to pursue a final trade agreement. The talks come after President Donald Trump agreed to cut tariffs on Indian goods to 18% under an interim deal and lift a 25% punitive levy following India's commitment to halt Russian oil purchases, which the U.S. says fund Moscow's war in Ukraine.

- **Peru’s Congress installs José Maria Balcázar as interim president ahead of April elections:** Peru’s Congress [voted](#) Wednesday to appoint former judge and left-wing lawmaker José Maria Balcázar as interim president, replacing José Jeri a day after his removal. Balacázar will be the country’s ninth president in a decade, and will serve only until elections are held on April 12. Depending on the outcome of the election, there may be a runoff in June.

## More from Drop Site

- **“Hard to See Anything But a Massive Military Campaign Against Iran”:** Jeremy Scahill interviewed Robert Malley, former U.S. special envoy for Iran and a lead negotiator of the 2015 nuclear deal. Malley [told Drop Site](#) that, given what is “undeniably” the largest U.S. military mobilization since 2003, it is “hard to imagine” this is merely to exert pressure on Iran. He sees little chance Iran will accept the sweeping demands reportedly under discussion, leaving “a massive military campaign against Iran” as the likeliest result — one he notes would be “illegal, unlawful, unjustified.” [Watch or listen to the full interview here.](#)