Drop Site daily

Pentagon’s Iran war costs top $48 billion; Saudi strikes Hodeidah port, Ansarallah vows response; Haitian police kill 34 gang members

Drop Site Daily: November 20, 2026

Iran

· **Trump says no decision on renewed Iran strikes amid Israeli pressure:** President Donald Trump told Axios on Thursday that he would not decide on his next steps in the war against Iran until the new year. “I am not rushing into any decision [on Iran]. We will see what happens after the beginning of the year,” Trump said, amid pressure from Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to launch a new bombing campaign. According to Axios, the White House has requested Pentagon and intelligence assessments of potential Iranian responses to several U.S. strike scenarios, including whether attacks could trigger Iranian strikes on Gulf oil and gas facilities.

    · Mossad director Roman Gofman reportedly visited Washington and Miami last week to press for renewed attacks, presenting Israeli intelligence claims about Iranian chemical weapons development.

· **Iranian Navy says another tanker caught fire after striking mines in Hormuz:** Iran’s Navy said Thursday that an oil tanker caught fire after striking naval mines in the eastern Strait of Hormuz. According to the Navy, the vessel ignored warnings, switched off its navigation systems, and entered a prohibited area before hitting the mines.

Palestine

· **Israeli attacks kill one Palestinian in Nuseirat, wound several in Gaza City:** An Israeli drone strike killed one Palestinian north of the Nuseirat refugee camp in central Gaza early Friday, WAFA reported. Several Palestinians were wounded in another drone strike in Gaza City's Sabra neighborhood.

· **Israeli settlers shoot Palestinian olive harvester, assault residents across the occupied West Bank:**

  · **Ramallah:** Israeli settlers shot a Palestinian man in the back while attacking olive harvesters in Nabi Saleh on Friday, according to WAFA. Israeli forces also demolished a Palestinian home in the Harasha area of Al-Mazra'a Al-Gharbiya, while settlers dumped garbage at the entrance of a mosque in Burqa.

  · **Bethlehem:** Settlers attacked homes in Tuqu', smashing windows and damaging three vehicles. In al-Minya, settlers beat a Palestinian man and his wife with clubs and sprayed them with pepper spray.

  · **Jericho:** Israeli forces shot a Palestinian man in the foot during a raid on the Bayader neighborhood.

  · **Hebron:** Armed settlers assaulted olive harvesters in Birin before Israeli forces arrested several Palestinians. Israeli soldiers also beat and injured a young man during a raid on Al-Fawwar refugee camp.

· **Israel imprisons 350 Palestinian children, over 2,000 arrested since October 2023:** Israeli authorities are holding approximately 350 Palestinian children in prisons under conditions involving torture, starvation, medical neglect, and deprivation of family visits and education, according to a joint statement by the Palestinian Prisoners' Society and the Commission of Detainees and Ex-Detainees Affairs marking World Children's Day. This excludes children detained in Gaza whose exact numbers remain unknown due to enforced disappearance and restrictions on visits. Dozens of children are held under administrative detention without charge or trial.

  · The organizations also highlighted the death of Palestinian teenager Walid Ahmad in Megiddo Prison in March 2025, with an autopsy identifying starvation, dehydration, and other medical complications as contributing factors. Israeli authorities subsequently closed the investigation into his death without holding anyone accountable, the groups said.

· **Israeli violence drives 70% of mental health cases among MSF patients in occupied West Bank:** Violence accounted for approximately 70% of mental health cases treated by Doctors Without Borders (MSF) in the occupied West Bank between October 2022 and April 2026, according to a new report. Anxiety and depression-related symptoms represented roughly two-thirds of reported mental health conditions, as Palestinians faced escalating Israeli settler attacks, movement restrictions, home demolitions, and forced displacement.

- "People in the West Bank have little choice but to live under relentless settler attacks, institutional violence, and permanent threat," said MSF head of mission Filipe Ribeiro. Despite growing mental health needs, MSF said Israeli restrictions have forced it to close operations in Jenin and Tulkarem and sharply reduce medical services in Hebron and Nablus.

Yemen

· **Saudi-backed airstrikes kill 15 people, wound 14 in Yemen:** Airstrikes killed 15 people and wounded 14 others in Yemen's port city of Mokha and Taiz province on Thursday, according to the Sana'a-based Health Ministry. A strike on a rest stop in Mokha killed 10 people and wounded nine, while another targeting road repair workers in Taiz killed five and wounded five. Authorities blamed Saudi-backed forces for the attacks.

· **Coalition starts operation targeting Hodeidah port and Sana'a; Ansarallah warns of strikes on Saudi Red Sea ports:** The Saudi-led coalition announced a military operation to "neutralize sources of threats used to target civilians in Yemen and the Kingdom" on Friday, covering the Yemeni governorates of Saada, Taiz, and Sana'a—the Ansarallah-held capital. The coalition also targeted Yemen's Hodeidah port, claiming to have hit capabilities used in "smuggling operations and the transport of weapons," following an evacuation order issued three hours prior to the attack.

- Ansarallah military spokesperson Yahya Saree warned that the Red Sea ports of Jizan, King Fahd Industrial Port, Jeddah, and Yanbu would become targets if Hodeidah is bombed.
- Saree also threatened to strike Saudi's Shuqaiq power station "in the coming hours" in response to reported Saudi airstrikes on power stations in Saada and Mocha, and declared Riyadh's financial center a military target.
- The exchange of threats comes amid escalating hostilities, with Saudi Arabia reporting the interception of five drones and a ballistic missile on Friday.

Lebanon

· **Israeli airstrikes and shelling target towns across southern Lebanon amid "ceasefire":**

  · **Nabatieh:** Israeli warplanes carried out two successive airstrikes on Kfartabnit on Friday, Lebanon's National News Agency reported.

  · **Bint Jbeil:** Israeli forces shelled the outskirts of Hadatha and opened machine-gun fire toward Wadi Baraachit.

  · **Tyre (Sour):** Forces shelled Mansouri and Majdal Zoun.

· **Israeli military claims it struck Hezbollah weapons facility in Beqaa Valley:** The Israeli military said it struck the entrances to a site allegedly used by Hezbollah for "missile production and weapons storage" in the Janta area of Lebanon's Beqaa Valley. The military said the site had been targeted several times during the war and that Hezbollah members were recently seen arriving there, prompting strikes "to prevent its restoration."

U.S. News

· **Slotkin says she will back Van Hollen over Schumer for Senate Democratic leader:** Sen. **Elissa Slotkin** (D-Mich.) announced in a video Thursday that she would support Sen. **Chris Van Hollen** (D-Md.) over Sen. **Chuck Schumer** (D-N.Y.) for Senate majority leader. She had previously announced her opposition to Schumer without committing to an alternative. Slotkin likened the moment to the 2018 pressure from younger members that eventually led **Nancy Pelosi** to step down from leadership, and said voters want "not marginal change. Not small nibbling at the edges." She is the fifth caucus member to publicly back Van Hollen, who says he has about 15 public and private commitments, short of the 28 he needs in addition to his own vote.

· **More House Democrats elected to leadership posts:** Rep. **Debbie Dingell** (Mich.) won another term as DPCC chair of the Democratic Policy and Communications Committee, and Reps. **Maxwell Frost** (Fla.), **Sarah McBride** (Del.), a**nd Sydney Kamlager-Dove** (Calif.) were elected DPCC co-chairs on Thursday. Rep. **Morgan McGarvey** (Ky.) won the "caucus leadership representative" post, and Rep. **Kristen McDonald Rivet** (Mich.) was elected "battleground leadership representative." The incoming freshmen also elected "class co-presidents," including Reps.-elect **Dan Koh** (Mass.), **Donna Miller** (Ill.), and **Fred Wellman** (Mo.).

· **Senate Republicans block Iran war powers resolution 48-51:** Senate Republicans voted down another war powers resolution on Thursday, which would have directed President

Trump to end hostilities in Iran. Republican Sens. **Susan Collins** (Maine), **Lisa Murkowski** (Alaska) and Rand Paul (Ky.) joined almost the entire Democratic caucus in supporting the resolution; Sen. **John Fetterman** (Penn.) was the only Democrat to vote against the bill. Sen. **Thom Tillis**, who voted for a similar resolution in September, voted against this one. The House passed a complementary resolution 220-204 in mid-September, led by Rep. **Seth Moulton** (D-Mass.), with seven Republicans joining Democrats.

· **Iran war costs rise to $48.3 billion:** The Pentagon's **Arthur Miller** told Sen. **Richard Blumenthal** at a Senate Armed Services Committee hearing Thursday that the Iran war's cost had risen to $48.3 billion as of Nov. 13, up from just over $47 billion in October and excluding damages to U.S. military facilities in the Middle East. Blumenthal demanded that the Pentagon release estimates of the damage to U.S. bases.

· **Centrist Democrats refuse to shut down government to end Iran war:** Centrist Democrat Reps. **Brad Schneider** (D-Ill.)**, Scott Peters** (Calif.), and **Greg Landsman** (Ohio) said on Thursday that they would not shut down the government to end the Iran war, despite increasing calls from the party's progressive wing to use all tools at their disposal. Federal funding is set to run out on Dec. 11, a little less than a month before the Democratic majority is sworn in on Jan. 3. Republicans will need a significant number of Democratic votes to pass a funding patch using a "fast-pass" vote, which requires a two-thirds majority.

· **Anthropic raises $93.5 billion in IPO, the largest ever**: Anthropic raised $93.5 billion in its initial public offering, the company announced Friday, with an estimated market value of $1.6 trillion. Anthropic shares declined early Friday, Reuters reported, and were trading about 9% below Thursday's close. The previous record for an IPO was held by SpaceX, which raised $75 billion in June.

· **Trump reports 751 stock and bond trades in September, including Nvidia, L3Harris and General Dynamics:** President Donald Trump made tens of millions of dollars in personal trades across 751 transactions in September, according to a Thursday filing with the Office of Government Ethics. One Nvidia trade, worth $100,000 to $250,000 on Sept. 2, came a day before the company announced its $12.9 billion acquisition of Hugging Face. Trump sold L3Harris stock twice, the contractor blamed for the FAA upgrades behind last week's nationwide ground stop. He also bought General Dynamics stock two days after the Pentagon announced munitions deals with the firm, and added to holdings in SpaceX, Tesla, Palantir, and Intel, in which the government took a 10% stake during 2025. Some of his trades were reported past the 45-day STOCK Act deadline. The White House maintains that Trump has no say in the trades made in his name, and that all investment decisions are made by "independent managers."

· **Army unit offers soldiers a four-day weekend to play "Grand Theft Auto VI" in exchange for reenlisting:** 43 soldiers from the 9th Brigade Engineer Battalion at Fort Stewart, Georgia re-enlisted for two to six more years of service in exchange for a four-day weekend to play the newly released "Grand Theft Auto VI" video game, Task & Purpose reported. An Army counselor pitched the idea to her battalion commander after seeing another Army counselor mention the idea on TikTok. The game, which was released on Thursday, has generated more than $1 billion in pre-order sales.

· **NBC: NSA classified internal network still down for a third day, forcing some employees to work from home:** An internal classified computer network used by the National Security Agency, down since Tuesday, remained out Thursday, leading some of the agency's non-essential staff to work from home, according to NBC News. Sources told the outlet that the outage has not affected the NSA's electronic intelligence collection or cybersecurity work, though it did reportedly affect a Georgia site that handles Middle East signals intelligence.

· **FCC votes to bar Chinese telecom firms from direct access to U.S. phone numbers:** The Federal Communications Commission voted Thursday to bar China Mobile, China Telecom, China Unicom, and other IP-enabled service providers from direct access to U.S. phone numbers, citing national security as a pretext. The FCC previously barred the three Chinese carriers from providing international telecom services to the U.S. The decision extends a broad Trump administration crackdown that includes last month's FCC vote to ban all Chinese labs from testing U.S. electronics starting in December 2028 and Hong Kong carrier HKT's agreement to halt U.S. operations by September 2027. Beijing has threatened "necessary countermeasures" if the U.S. "persists in acting unilaterally."

· **USDA proposes limiting SNAP eligibility rule:** A new rule proposed by the Agriculture Department on Thursday would restrict "broad-based categorical eligibility," which lets families receiving certain public benefits automatically qualify for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), a change that the USDA estimates could drop 6.3 million people from the program. Because SNAP recipients are automatically eligible for free school meals, the families of more than 1.7 million affected children would have to complete paperwork to keep them. If the paperwork is not completed, school districts end up being responsible for the costs of these meals. The second Trump administration has already stripped SNAP benefits from more than 5 million people.

· **Federal judge rules Agriculture Secretary violated the Constitution with Christian messages sent to department employees:** Judge Trina Thompson of the U.S. District Court in Northern California ruled Thursday that Agriculture Secretary Brooke Rollins' Christmas and Easter emails to all department employees went "too far" and amounted to coercion in

violation of the First Amendment's ban on laws "respecting an establishment of religion." Rollins' Christmas email included a reference to "our savior Jesus Christ, who came to free us from our sins and open the door to eternal life," and her Easter email called the resurrection "the greatest story ever told."

· **Guardian: Attorney General's wife marketed supplements with unproven health claims: Kristine Blanche**, a licensed physician assistant and the wife of Attorney General **Todd Blanche**, peddles supplements on a section of her website called "Dr. Blanche's personal dispensary," one of which she suggested could treat Epstein-Barr virus and another which she suggested could treat HPV, the Guardian reported. No FDA-approved drug treats Epstein-Barr, and the product itself does not claim to. Blanche also sells roughly $600 "Man Up" and "Girlfriend" cleanse programs and a $595 treatment claiming to boost men's testosterone. Blanche was appointed in April to the advisory council of the National Center for Complementary and Integrative Health, which has a $170 million annual budget.

· **GAO: Pentagon lacks a department-wide plan to fix munitions shortages worsened by the Iran war:** A Government Accountability Office report released Thursday found the War Department has taken steps to grow its munitions inventory but "doesn't have an overarching plan that identifies long-term goals, strategies, or ways to measure its progress." The watchdog said the Pentagon has no dedicated office with authority over inventories, which makes it harder to know whether production efforts meet department-wide needs and leaves the military services "reactive to global events rather than driven by total requirements." The GAO said the 2026 conflict with Iran, which began Feb. 28, "only reinforced" the problem, noting reports that U.S. forces used at least 850 Tomahawks in the first month and that the Army used up "virtually all" of its long-range missile stockpile.

· **Army plans to detonate tons of toxic lead in Iowa:** The Army rescheduled its plans to detonate 68 barrels of degrading, volatile lead explosive at the Iowa Army Ammunition Plant in Middletown, announcing that it would carry out the explosion on Monday instead of Friday after public concern that the lead dust could cause environmental contamination and health problems. The Defense Department and EPA had known since at least April that the Army was holding the explosives, according to The Washington Sun, though several communities potentially affected by the explosion first became aware of it on Sunday as a result of a public advisory.

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

Other International News

· **Thousands protest across Colombia against proposed tax changes and rising living costs:** In the second nationwide protest since he took office in August, trade unions, students, and opposition groups marched in Bogotá and other major cities Thursday against proposals to lower the income tax threshold, raise healthcare contributions, and cut corporate taxes. Under the plan, Colombians earning more than about $985 a month would pay income tax, down from the previous threshold of about $1,419. Former President Gustavo Petro urged Colombians to mobilize, while de la Espriella said peaceful protest is allowed but that he would not tolerate road blockades or "urban terrorism." Riot police used tear gas and water cannons against protesters in some cities.

· **Iraq reaches compromise with Kataeb Hezbollah to set up joint operations center in Jurf al-Sakhar:** Prime Minister Ali al-Zaidi said late Thursday that Iraqi security forces will open a joint operations center in Jurf al-Sakhar, south of Baghdad, on Friday morning, defusing a standoff after the government announced plans to send in forces amid allegations that the Shia armed group Kataeb Hezbollah was smuggling oil. He said the new combined force will include an Iraqi army brigade, a federal police brigade, an energy police regiment to protect oil pipelines, and two brigades from the Popular Mobilization Forces, which are officially part of Iraq's security forces and include some Kataib Hezbollah fighters.

· **Haitian police claim they killed 34 alleged gang members:** Haiti's national police said that a Thursday operation in the southern Port-au-Prince neighborhood of Martissant killed 34 alleged gang members without a single police or civilian casualty. The area is reportedly under the influence of the Gran Ravine, Ti Bwa, and 5 Segond gangs, which belong to the Viv Ansanm alliance that Washington has designated a terrorist organization. Police said the operation was run with the government's Task Force, which has used explosive drones supported by a private military contractor led by Blackwater founder Erik Prince. The UN estimates that more than 2,250 people were killed in security operations in the first nine months of the year, including more than 300 civilians.

· **Hasina supporters in Bangladesh clash with government:** Supporters of ousted Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina tried to shut down businesses and public transport in Bangladesh on Thursday, with success mostly in southern districts where her outlawed Awami League is strongest, ending a week of protests against the government's rejection of her request for a new passport that would allow her to return. Ninety-seven platoons of paramilitary Border Guard Bangladesh were deployed across the country, and Dhaka police arrested 107 suspected Awami League-linked people in 24 hours, including former education minister Nurul Islam Nahid. Police claimed protesters killed two members of the ruling Bangladesh

Nationalist Party on Wednesday night, set the houses of two BNP lawmakers in Hasina's home district on fire, and burned at least six buses, pickup vans and a section of railway line. Interim leader Muhammad Yunus' ancestral home in Chattogram was also reportedly set on fire. Prime Minister Tarique Rahman blamed "the country across the border" (referring to India) for the unrest.

· **RSF seizes Blue Nile municipality:** The paramilitary Rapid Support Forces said Thursday that forces of its Founding Sudan Alliance captured the strategic Bau locality in Sudan's Blue Nile State, leading thousands of residents to flee to Ed Domain. The RSF said it took the town after a fight with the Sudanese army, which claimed the RSF took the municipality without a fight. Fighting in Blue Nile has escalated since the RSF and an allied SPLM-N faction led by Abdelaziz al-Hilu launched an offensive early this year that captured Kurmuk and Geissan. Sudan's government accuses neighboring Ethiopia of letting the RSF launch cross-border operations from its territory into the state.

· **Nayib Bukele planning to run for a third term:** Right-wing Salvadoran President Bukele, 45, formally registered on Thursday to run for a third presidential term. The Supreme Court overturned the country's ban on immediate re-election in 2021, and a 2025 constitutional amendment allowing a third term lengthened presidential terms from five to six years. Bukele's challengers in the February 2027 election include Maytee Iraheta of the right-wing Nationalist Republican Alliance and Rafael Aguirre of the left-wing FMLN. Bukele has overseen a "state of emergency," under which his security forces have arrested more than 1 percent of the country's population with little due process, according to rights groups.

· **Myanmar's government rejects ICJ genocide ruling as "unfair":** A spokesperson for Myanmar's military government told a news conference Friday that "our country was unjustly accused" of genocide against its Rohingya population, and that the ICJ's Friday decision "is not a unanimous decision by everyone; it is not fair." The ICJ ruled 9-6 on Thursday that Myanmar committed genocide against the Rohingya in its 2017 crackdown, including mass executions, widespread sexual violence, and the burning of hundreds of villages. China, which is allied with Myanmar's military government, joined Myanmar in its criticism on Friday, with a foreign ministry spokesperson saying that such rulings by the UN's top court are "not conducive to the settlement of disputes."

· **Spanish court grants conditional bail to U.S. philanthropist James "Fergie" Chambers**: A court in Spain granted conditional bail to James "Fergie" Chambers, an American pro-Palestine philanthropist the U.S. accuses of money laundering in support of Hamas. Chambers left Aranjuez prison near Madrid on Friday after being held in Spanish custody for nearly five months. His release follows U.S. authorities' acknowledgment of "substantial" and "unintentional" errors in the Spanish translation of an FBI agent's sworn

statement supporting its extradition request. The court said the translation errors could delay a final extradition decision, and his lawyer said these “raise grave concerns that the evidence was manipulated.” Chambers denies wrongdoing and has applied for political asylum in Spain.

· **South Korea’s Supreme Court overturns former prime minister’s 15-year sentence:** South Korea’s Supreme Court overturned former Prime Minister Han Duck-soo’s 15-year prison sentence on Thursday. Han was one of several top officials sentenced over President Yoon Suk Yeol’s December 2024 martial law declaration. On Friday, the court said it was difficult to establish whether Han intended to legitimize that declaration when he called a cabinet meeting in response to it, and sent the case back to the Seoul High Court for a retrial. Han, 77, was sentenced to 23 years in January for insurrection, which an appeals court reduced to 15 years in May.

· **Xi tells Trump the U.S. should do the “right thing” on Taiwan to avoid setbacks in ties**: Chinese President Xi Jinping told Trump during Thursday talks in Shenzhen that the U.S. should do “the right thing” with respect to Taiwan, according to Xinhua’s readout from the meeting. It did not elaborate on this comment, nor did it mention U.S. arms sales to Taipei, which Beijing has repeatedly demanded Washington end. Xinhua called the meeting, the third between the two leaders this year, “positive and constructive” and said they agreed to formulate an action plan for their “constructive, strategically stable relationship.”