

Israel plans to occupy Lebanon south of Litani River; Knesset passes death penalty law targeting Palestinians; Gang massacre kills at least 70 in Haiti

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War on Iran

- **U.S.-Israeli attacks continue to target Iran:**

- U.S.-Israeli airstrikes on Tuesday hit one of the largest pharmaceutical companies in Iran that produces anti-cancer drugs, anesthetic, and other specialized medicines, according to state news agency IRNA. The pharmaceutical company, Tofigh Daru Research & Engineering, is owned by a state-run firm. Iran has long faced chronic shortages of medicines, partly due to sanctions imposed over its nuclear program.

- A U.S.-Israeli airstrike on the city of Mahallat in the Markazi province on Monday night killed 11 people, including three children, and injured 15 others, according to the Tasnim news agency. Four residential units were completely destroyed in the attack. Multiple waves of Israeli strikes also hit Tehran on Monday night, the Israeli military [confirmed](#).

- An uncaptioned [video](#) of a massive explosion shared by President Donald Trump on his Truth Social account appears to be of a major strike conducted outside the central city of Isfahan. According to AP, fire-tracking satellites from NASA suggest the explosions happened near Mount Soffeh, an area believed to have military positions. A U.S. official told [The Wall Street Journal](#) that a large ammunition depot in Isfahan was hit with 2,000-pound bunker buster bombs, and that a large number of the “penetrator munitions” were used in the strike. Iran has not formally acknowledged the attack but Fars news agency reported that US-Israeli attacks on Isfahan province targeted some “military sites.”

- A U.S.-Israeli [airstrike](#) on an orphanage complex in Fardis, west of Tehran, killed at least two people and wounded five others Monday, according to Iranian media. At least 230 children have been killed and 1,800 injured since the war began, according to Iranian officials.
- The northwestern city of Tabriz—near Iran’s border with Armenia and Azerbaijan—was hit at least 13 times on Monday, according to an Iranian Azeri group.
- **Over 90,000 residential units damaged in Iran:** The Iranian Red Crescent [said](#) Tuesday that over 90,000 residential units have been damaged in airstrikes on Iran since the start of the war, including 307 medical facilities and 760 schools.
- **Israel shifts to attacking Iranian economic infrastructure:** Israel has [pivoted](#) toward striking Iran’s economic infrastructure after largely exhausting its initial military target list, entering what Israeli officials are describing as the “completion phase” of the war, the Times of Israel reported Monday. After hundreds of strike waves and more than 13,000 bombs that Israeli officials claim have severely degraded Iran’s missile systems, air defenses, and weapons production capacity, leaders have ordered attacks on the country’s gas infrastructure and major steel plants. Israeli officials framed the shift as a strategy to weaken the Iranian government and “create conditions” for its collapse.
- **Iran strikes Sharjah industrial area:** Iranian missiles and drones [struck](#) the Sharjah industrial area in the United Arab Emirates early Monday, hitting an administrative building belonging to Thuraya Telecommunications. The Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps said the strikes were carried out in retaliation for attacks on Iranian industrial infrastructure, targeting sites it described as linked to U.S. military operations and weapons production, including aluminum facilities.
- **Kuwaiti oil tanker carrying 2 million barrels of crude struck:** A fully loaded Kuwaiti oil tanker was [struck](#) Monday near Dubai. The vessel, the Al Salmi, was carrying approximately 2 million barrels of crude oil. Authorities in Dubai said Tuesday morning the situation has been “contained” and that there was “no oil leakage and no injuries reported.”
- **Trump to allies: “Get your own oil”:** President Donald Trump on Tuesday [said](#) nations upset by high fuel prices should “go get your own oil” as Iran continues to restrict passage through the Strait of Hormuz. Secretary of War Pete Hegseth underlined Trump’s comment in a Pentagon [briefing](#), saying “This Strait of Hormuz situation, we’ve set the conditions for success.”
- **Broker for Hegseth attempted to buy defense fund ahead of Iran strikes:** A broker acting on behalf of U.S. War Secretary Pete Hegseth [attempted](#) to purchase a multimillion-dollar stake in BlackRock’s Defense Industrials Active Exchange-Traded Fund through

Morgan Stanley shortly before U.S.-Israeli strikes on Iran began, the Financial Times reported Monday. The transaction was never completed because the fund was not yet available to Morgan Stanley clients. The Pentagon denied the report, calling it “fabricated.”

· **Trump reportedly willing to end war even if Strait of Hormuz remains closed:**

President Donald Trump has [told](#) aides he is prepared to conclude the U.S. war on Iran even if the Strait of Hormuz remains largely closed, the Wall Street Journal reported Monday, marking a significant shift from earlier U.S. statements that the waterway would reopen “one way or another.” The revised strategy prioritizes degrading Iran’s military capabilities and winding down active operations within Trump’s stated four-to-six-week timeline, with diplomatic pressure on Tehran to restore free navigation as the primary follow-on tool. If diplomacy fails, U.S. officials said Washington would push European and Gulf allies to take the lead on reopening the strait.

· **Rubio says war on Iran is ahead of schedule, could end in weeks without ground troops:**

Secretary of State Marco Rubio [told](#) Al Jazeera Monday that the U.S. war on Iran is progressing “ahead of schedule” and might conclude without the deployment of ground troops. Rubio said ongoing operations aim to substantially reduce Iran’s missile launcher inventory, eliminate its capacity to produce long-range weapons, end its sponsorship of regional armed groups, and ensure it never acquires nuclear weapons. Earlier Monday, Rubio [added](#) the destruction of Iranian factories to the list of U.S. war objectives. On the Strait of Hormuz, Rubio called Iran’s effective control over the waterway a “tollbooth system” that is “unacceptable” and “illegal,” and said the strait will reopen “one way or another.” Rubio said all of these goals could be achieved “in a matter of weeks,” and claimed the Iranian government was weaker than it had been in recent history.

· **Netanyahu says no timetable for ending Iran war, predicts regime will “collapse internally”:**

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu [told](#) Newsmax Monday that there is “no set timetable” for ending the war against Iran, saying he is committed to an open-ended strategy of sustained military and strategic pressure aimed at forcing an internal collapse of the Islamic Republic. Netanyahu also [boasted](#) about the murder of four Iranian nuclear scientists by the Israeli military, and said Israel is examining options to reroute gas and oil pipelines from the Arabian Peninsula westward as a workaround to the disruption from the closure of the Strait of Hormuz.

· **Gulf states reportedly push Trump to continue war:**

Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Kuwait, and Bahrain are privately urging President Donald Trump to press on with the war against Iran, according to a report from [The Associated Press](#), arguing that a monthlong bombing campaign has not sufficiently weakened Tehran and that the moment presents a historic opportunity to cripple Iranian clerical rule. The push comes despite initial

complaints from Gulf governments that they were given inadequate notice before the February 28 strikes and that Washington ignored their warnings about the war's regional consequences. The UAE has reportedly emerged as the most hawkish voice among Gulf states, pushing for a U.S. ground invasion alongside Kuwait and Bahrain, with one Foreign Ministry official [calling](#) for Iran's full disarmament in an article on Monday. Oman and Qatar, which have historically played mediating roles between Iran and the West, favor a diplomatic resolution.

- **Iran plans to consolidate control over Hormuz:** Iran's National Security Commission has [approved](#) a formal plan to codify Iranian control over the Strait of Hormuz, according to Fars News Agency, with a member of the commission confirming the proposal Monday. The plan would establish transit tolls and new "financial arrangements" for vessels passing through the waterway, while banning U.S. and Israeli ships from passage entirely and restricting transit for countries that impose unilateral sanctions on Iran. The proposal also calls for expanded naval enforcement by Iran's armed forces and identifies Oman as a potential partner in shaping the legal framework. The measure still requires a full vote by the Majlis and final ratification by the Supreme National Security Council before taking effect. A senior Iranian official [reiterated](#) to Al Jazeera on Tuesday morning that no cargo vessels belonging to "hostile nations" have passed through the Strait of Hormuz since the war began, and that no transit through the waterway will occur without Iranian authorization.

- **Iran executes MEK members:** Two members of the Iranian exile group Mujahedeen-e-Khalq (MEK) were hanged Tuesday in Iran, according to state media. The United Nations' special rapporteur on Iran denounced the executions. Amnesty International said Iran's Revolutionary Court convicted the men on charges of armed rebellion against the state "following a grossly unfair trial in October 2024." Two other MEK members were hanged Monday over the same case.

- **Dozens arrested in Iran:** Iranian authorities have arrested 54 people, accusing them of planning attacks against Iran or passing information to Israel, according to the Tasnim news agency. The majority of the arrests, over 40, were made in Tehran of people accused of taking pictures of targets attacked by the U.S. and Israel and sending them to "the media headquarters of the Zionist regime," the Ministry of Intelligence said.

- **Average U.S. gas prices jump to over \$4 a gallon:** : U.S. gas prices rose past an average of \$4 a gallon for the first time since 2022 following Russia's invasion of Ukraine. U.S. crude oil settled above \$100 per barrel for the first time since the war on Iran began Monday, with Brent crude rising above \$116 before closing above \$114.

- **Italy refuses permission to U.S. for use of base:** Italy refused permission for the U.S. military to use the Sigonella air base in Sicily for an operation linked to the war on Iran, according to the AP. The refusal was reportedly issued a few days ago and concerned U.S. aircraft that were intended to land at the base before continuing toward the Middle East. According to the AP, the request was denied because Italian authorities were not alerted in time and the U.S. aircraft included bombers, the official said.

Lebanon

- **Israeli attacks continue in Lebanon:** Seven people were killed in Israeli strikes on Lebanon Tuesday, according to the state-run National News Agency. A strike on a car in the al-Wasita al-Qasimiyeh area near Tyre in the south killed two people while another strike on Derikifa killed two more people. An overnight airstrike on the town of Aba killed a young man, Shadi Moallem, after his home was targeted, while another strike on Srifa in the Tyre district left two people dead and three injured. Civil defense personnel and Lebanese Red Cross teams suffered suffocation from chlorine inhalation while carrying out evacuations for wounded individuals Monday night after a leak caused by an Israeli airstrike on a water station in Marj al-Khokh–Marjayoun.

- **Casualty count:** The death toll from Israel’s assault on Lebanon has risen to at least 1268—with 3750 wounded—since March 2, according to Lebanon’s Health Ministry.

- **Israel plans to demolish homes and occupy Lebanon south of Litani River:** Israeli Defense Minister Israel Katz [announced](#) on Tuesday that the Israeli military plans to occupy the entire area south of the Litani River in Lebanon and will not allow hundreds of thousands of residents to return to their homes. “At the end of the operation, the IDF will be positioned in a security area inside Lebanon—in a defensive line against anti-tank missiles—and will have security control over the entire area up to the Litani River, including the remaining bridges,” Katz said in broadcast comments. “The return of over 600,000 residents of the area south of the Litani River will be completely prohibited until the safety and security of residents of the north is ensured, similar to the model of Rafah and Beit Hanoun in the Gaza Strip.”

- **Israel opens new front in Lebanon:** Israel has [opened](#) a new front in its Lebanon campaign by striking roads in the west Bekaa Valley along the Syrian border, an area of strong Hezbollah presence, according to Al Jazeera correspondent Zeina Khodr. Strikes hit routes connecting the towns of Yohmor, Suhmor, and Loubaya, as well as a key road linking the west Bekaa to southern Lebanon. The strikes appear aimed at severing movement corridors and isolating Hezbollah-held areas by disrupting supply lines between eastern and southern Lebanon.

- **Israel confirms four soldiers killed in southern Lebanon Monday:** Israel [confirmed](#) on Monday that four of its soldiers were killed in southern Lebanon, with one additional soldier severely wounded and two others moderately injured and evacuated for treatment, according to Israeli broadcaster N12. It marked the single deadliest incident for the Israeli military since it launched a new ground offensive in Lebanon. A total of ten Israeli soldiers have been killed in southern Lebanon fighting Hezbollah.

- **France calls emergency UN Security Council regarding attacks on peacekeepers:** France has [requested](#) an emergency meeting of the United Nations Security Council following the deaths of three UN peacekeepers in southern Lebanon within 24 hours, with Paris directly blaming Israeli forces for the incidents. French Foreign Minister Jean-Noël Barrot called the violations “unacceptable and unjustifiable,” saying its concerns had been raised directly with Israel’s ambassador in Paris.

The Gaza Genocide, Israel, and the West Bank

- **Casualty count:** Over the last 24 hours, five Palestinians were killed and 14 were injured in Israeli attacks across Gaza. The total recorded death toll since October 7, 2023 has risen to 72,285 killed, with 172,028 injured. Since October 11, the first full day of the so-called ceasefire, Israel has killed at least 709 Palestinians in Gaza and wounded 1,928, while 756 bodies have been recovered from under the rubble, according to the Palestinian Ministry of Health.

- **Israeli strikes kill five Palestinians in Gaza:** An Israeli airstrike on Al-Bureij refugee camp in central Gaza [killed](#) one man and wounded six others Monday, while Israeli gunfire in the nearby Al-Nuseirat camp killed a 27-year-old woman, according to local reports. An Israeli [strike](#) on Jabalia in northern Gaza later on Monday killed three more Palestinians.

- **Israeli Knesset passes death penalty law targeting Palestinians:** Israel’s Knesset [passed](#) a law Monday imposing the death penalty on individuals convicted of killing Israelis in acts of “terror,” in a measure critics say is designed almost exclusively for use against Palestinians. The bill passed 62 to 48, with one abstention, and will go into effect within 30 days across all territory Israel functionally controls, including the occupied West Bank and most of the Gaza Strip. [Advanced](#) by far-right National Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir’s “Jewish Power” party, the law allows courts to impose the death penalty even without a request from the prosecution and without requiring unanimous consent among judges. Because the bill applies only to terrorism “with the intent to deny the state of Israel,” none of its punishments apply to Jewish Israelis. “The law is worded in such a way that it targets only

Palestinians. And it will turn the killing of Palestinians into an accepted and common tool of punishment through several mechanisms,” Israeli human rights group B’Tselem said in response to its passage. The UN Human Rights Office urged Israel to “immediately repeal” its “discriminatory” death penalty law, saying it violates international obligations, while Council of Europe Secretary-General Alain Berset said the Council would closely monitor developments around the law and assess its implications for the conventions Israel is party to.

- **Jordan’s king refuses to meet with Netanyahu amid closure of holy sites:** Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu recently [requested](#) a meeting with Jordanian King Abdullah II and was turned down, Israeli public broadcaster Kan reported on Monday. Jordan on Monday condemned Israel’s closure of Al-Aqsa Mosque and the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in occupied East Jerusalem, calling it a “crime against religious freedom.” Government spokesperson Mohammad al-Momani told Anadolu that Israel, as an occupying power, “has no legal sovereignty over Jerusalem or its holy sites,” adding that the Jerusalem Islamic Waqf under Jordan is the only authority responsible for administering Al-Aqsa. Israel has kept the sites closed since the start of the U.S.-Israeli war on Iran on February 28, citing security concerns.

- **Israeli forces shot and killed an 82-year-old Palestinian woman in Beit Lahia:** Palestinian writer Mosab Abu Toha [told](#) the story on Monday of his 82-year-old neighbor, Yusra al-Ashqar, who Israel forces shot and wounded in Beit Lahia on March 23. Al-Ashqar died days later following surgery. Abu Toha described her as a decades-long fixture in their neighborhood, where she ran a small shop with her husband.

United States

By Julian Andreone, with Ryan Grim. Have a tip on Capitol Hill? Email Andreone at Julian@dropsitenews.com.

- **Trump urges Congress to cut recess short to resolve longest partial government shutdown in U.S. history:** President Donald Trump is [pressing](#) Congress to return early from its two-week recess to resolve a funding impasse at the Department of Homeland Security, now the longest partial government shutdown in U.S. history at more than 40 days, White House press secretary Karoline Leavitt said Monday. Congress is not scheduled to return until mid-April. Though some TSA agents received their first paychecks since the shutdown on Monday, employees at the Federal Emergency Management Agency, the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency, and civilian Coast Guard personnel remain unpaid.

- **Trump administration partially lifts asylum freeze:** The Trump administration [announced](#) Monday it would be scaling back the general pause on asylum adjudications that

had halted hundreds of thousands of immigration applications since late November. The freeze will remain in place, however, for citizens from “high-risk” countries under travel restriction, including Afghanistan, Iran, Somalia, Nigeria, Senegal, Cuba, Haiti, and Venezuela.

· **U.S. embassies to work with Pentagon psychological operations unit and Elon Musk:**

Secretary of State Marco Rubio [signed](#) a cable Monday directing every U.S. embassy and consulate in the world to launch coordinated campaigns against foreign propaganda, endorsing Elon Musk’s X platform as an “innovative” counter-disinformation tool and instructing diplomatic staff to coordinate with the U.S. military’s psychological operations unit, according to The Guardian. Embassies were directed to recruit local influencers, academics, and community leaders to carry counter-propaganda messaging in ways designed to appear locally organic rather than centrally directed by Washington. The cable specifically endorses X’s Community Notes feature as a crowdsourced instrument for countering anti-American propaganda “without compromising free speech or privacy.”

· **Palestinian activist describes being chained to hospital bed during her ICE detention:**

Leqaa Kordia, a 33-year-old New Jersey resident [arrested](#) during protests at Columbia University, told MSNOW that immigration authorities chained her to a hospital bed following a seizure she suffered while in ICE detention, where she was held for more than a year. Her description of her time in ICE custody is available in full [here](#).

· **Trump strips endangered species protections in Gulf of Mexico:** The Trump administration is convening the rarely used Endangered Species Committee—known informally as the “God squad”—to revoke protections for dozens of endangered species in the Gulf of Mexico, according to [The Guardian](#), citing national security concerns. Among the species at risk are Rice’s whales, of which only approximately 51 remain, as well as whooping cranes and sea turtles. Secretary of Defense Pete Hegseth is seeking to exempt all oil and gas industry activities in the Gulf from the act, though neither the military nor the oil and gas industry has proposed a specific project or identified a conflict with existing species protections. The committee has been convened only three times in history, and has overridden the Endangered Species Act only once.

· **New York City launches free on-site child care program for municipal workers:** New York City Mayor Zohran Mamdani announced Monday a pilot program offering free, year-round on-site child care for city workers with children under three at the David N. Dinkins Municipal Building in Manhattan, the first free child care program for municipal employees in the city’s history. The pilot is part of Mamdani’s broader push toward universal child care, which received a boost from New York Governor Kathy Hochul, who agreed to expand the city’s existing universal pre-kindergarten program to include 1,000 new 3-K and 2,000 new

2-K slots beginning this fall, with the goal of making both programs universal and free by the end of Mamdani's first term. David Dayen discusses this policy push, and its potential implications, at The American Prospect; the full article can be found [here](#).

Other International News

- **Gunmen kill more than 70 at South Sudan gold mine:** Unidentified gunmen [killed](#) more than 70 people and wounded many others at a gold mining site at Jebel Iraq in South Sudan's Central Equatoria State, on the outskirts of Juba, the Associated Press reports. The Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army–In Opposition (SPLM/A-IO) blamed government forces, saying that “full responsibility for the massacre rests” with the government. Gold mining in South Sudan is largely unregulated, with state governments operating their own sectors without the involvement of the national government, and Jebel Iraq has previously been the site of violent clashes involving illegal gold miners.

- **Flooding and landslides kill at least 45 across Afghanistan and Pakistan:** At least 45 people have been [killed](#) and more than 100 injured over the past five days as severe flooding and landslides triggered by heavy rainfall swept across Afghanistan and Pakistan. Afghanistan's National Disaster Management Authority reported 28 dead and 49 injured, with more than 100 homes destroyed and 1,140 families affected, with most deaths concentrated in the central and eastern provinces of Parwan, Maidan Wardak, Daikundi, and Logar. In Pakistan's Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, bordering Afghanistan, 17 people were killed and 56 were wounded, according to the Provincial Disaster Management Authority. Afghan authorities closed several highways and warned citizens to avoid rivers and flooded waterways, with further storms forecast for Tuesday.

- **Russian strikes on Ukraine kill two and injure more than 20:** Russian attacks on Monday killed two people and wounded more than 20 others across central and northern Ukraine, according to [Reuters](#). Falling drone debris near Poltava killed one person, injured three, and damaged a high-rise apartment building. In the adjacent Dnipropetrovsk region, drone attacks and artillery strikes near Nikopol killed one person and wounded 14 others across the region.

- **Mexico to raise migrant deaths before regional commission:** Mexican President Claudia Sheinbaum [announced](#) Monday that her government will bring the deaths of Mexican nationals in U.S. immigration detention before the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights and file an amicus brief in a lawsuit challenging conditions at the Adelanto ICE Processing Center in California. The move was prompted in part by the March 25 death of José Guadalupe Ramos, 52, a Mexican citizen who was found unconscious in his bunk at the private facility northeast of Los Angeles. Sheinbaum said Mexico is also expanding its

consular network in the United States to provide detained nationals with legal assistance and closer monitoring.

- **U.S. Embassy in Caracas formally resumes operations:** The United States Embassy in Caracas formally resumed operations on Monday. The embassy had been [closed](#) since March 2019, with U.S. diplomatic engagement conducted through a Venezuela Affairs Unit at the embassy in Bogotá, Colombia. Laura Dogu, who was sent to the country in January as the charge d'affaires, is tasked with a full return of personnel to the embassy and the eventual resumption of consular services "as soon as possible."

- **Jordan and Egypt make cuts to address energy shortages:** Jordan and Egypt announced sweeping austerity measures Monday as regional governments struggle to absorb the economic impact of soaring energy prices driven by the U.S.-Israel war on Iran, [Al Monitor reports](#). Jordanian Prime Minister Jafar Hassan announced a ban on air conditioning and heating in all ministries, government departments, and public institutions, alongside a prohibition on non-essential government vehicle use, a two-month freeze on international travel for officials, and a suspension of spending on official delegations and banquets. Egypt, meanwhile, began enforcing early closing times for cafes, restaurants, shops, cinemas, theaters, and wedding halls as of Saturday night, with most required to shut by 9 p.m. daily. Egyptian authorities are also dimming streetlights, cutting government vehicle fuel allocations by 30%, slowing major state infrastructure projects, and shifting some employees to partial remote work.

- **Somali federal forces seize regional capital:** Somalia's national army [took control](#) of Baidoa, the administrative capital of the country's South West state, on Monday, prompting regional president Abdiiaziz Hassan Mohamed Laftagareen to resign days after being re-elected to a new five-year term. The takeover follows the South West state's declaration two weeks ago that it was severing ties with the federal government in Mogadishu, a dispute rooted in Laftagareen's opposition to constitutional amendments backed by federal authorities.

- **Gang massacre kills at least 70 in Haiti:** At least 70 people were killed and 30 injured in a [gang attack](#) on rural communities near Petite-Rivière in Haiti's Artibonite region that began in the early hours of Sunday and continued into Monday, according to the [Defenseurs Plus](#) human rights group. Gang members stormed communities around Jean-Denis, setting homes ablaze, with [Defenseurs Plus](#) estimating 50 houses were destroyed and approximately 6,000 people displaced. An audio message circulating on social media attributed to Gran Grif leader Luckson Elan suggested the attack was retaliation for a rival armed group's strike on Gran Grif's base in Savien. The United States designated Gran Grif and the Viv Ansanm coalition

as terrorist organizations, and earlier this month offered rewards of up to \$3 million for information on their financial activities.

- **Gunmen kill at least 30 in attack on Nigeria's Plateau state:** Gunmen attacked the Gari Ya Waye community in Angwan Rukuba district of Nigeria's Plateau state late Sunday, killing at least 30 people and wounding an unknown number of others, according to [Reuters](#). The identity of the gunmen remains unknown.

- **British pro-Palestine activist arrested over Instagram post:** Qesser Zuhrah, a 21-year-old pro-Palestine activist who had been released on bail last month after 15 months on remand without conviction, was [arrested](#) again Monday morning by masked police officers who took her from her home in Watford, near London. Hertfordshire Police said she was suspected of intentionally encouraging a crime and "encouragement of terrorism," with supporters saying the arrest stemmed from an Instagram story in which she allegedly encouraged people to take "direct action." Zuhrah is among the group known as the "Filton 24," defendants alleged to have raided an Elbit Systems UK factory in Filton near Bristol in August 2024, which has been linked to Palestine Action. The aggravated burglary charge against the group was dropped last month, and the UK High Court ruled that the government's designation of Palestine Action as a terrorist organization unlawful, but the ban on Palestine Action remains in place.