

Rev. Jesse Jackson dies; Second round of Iran talks conclude amid major U.S. military buildup; 60 killed across Sudan

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The Gaza Genocide, West Bank, and Israel

- **Seventeen killed in Israeli strikes across Gaza:** Israeli airstrikes and shootings across the Gaza Strip killed 17 Palestinians over the weekend, including 11 people killed on Sunday morning. Civilians were struck near the “yellow line” in northern Gaza, and the tents of displaced families were hit west of Jabaliya camp. Among the dead was Sami al-Dahdouh, identified as a commander in Saraya al-Quds, the armed wing of Palestinian Islamic Jihad.
- **Critically ill Palestinian man dies in Gaza as Israel continues to restrict travel through Rafah:** Muhammad Dhaban died in Gaza Monday after an eight-month battle with Stevens-Johnson syndrome, a life-threatening condition that requires specialist care—care that he was unable to get as Israel’s military assault has systematically destroyed Gaza’s health system. More than 20,000 patients and wounded are waiting to travel abroad for treatment, according to Gaza’s Health Ministry. The Ministry warned that the partial operation of the Rafah crossing “does not match the scale of the humanitarian catastrophe.” Between February 2 and 16, 2026, only 925 people passed through Gaza’s Rafah crossing—just 31 percent of the roughly 3,000 Israel had previously said it would allow—according to the Government Media Office.
- **Doctors Without Borders suspends “non-critical” activities at Gaza’s Nasser Hospital:** On Wednesday, Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) said it was halting all non-essential activities at Nasser Hospital in Khan Younis, claiming in a statement that masked, armed men had entered the compound. The organization said it could not confirm the identity or affiliation of the gunmen. MSF claimed the militants were intimidating patients, arresting them, and accused them of moving weapons. Hospital staff and witnesses have said Nasser has faced repeated incursions by masked gunmen and Israeli-backed militias in recent months, even with Gaza’s civil police stationed nearby. The hospital administration in a statement rejected MSF’s allegations as “false, unsubstantiated, and misleading,” warning they could put a protected medical site at further risk. Furthermore, Gaza’s Interior Ministry announced new police deployments to prevent the entry of any armed elements in the hospital.

- **Hamas tells Drop Site it rejects Trump and Netanyahu’s renewed demands for full disarmament in Gaza:** As President Donald Trump and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu re-escalate demands for Hamas and all Palestinian resistance factions to immediately disarm as a precondition for reconstruction and Israeli withdrawal—threatening to resume full-scale war—Hamas says no formal proposals have been presented and it rejects demands for unilateral disarmament. Senior leader Basem Naim told Drop Site, “Palestinian resistance and its weapons are a legitimate right, and disarmament is rejected,” saying the movement would only discuss disarmament within a comprehensive framework that includes a binding long-term ceasefire and a political process toward a Palestinian state. In the near term, Hamas has signaled its openness to specific arrangements—such as internationally verified warehousing or decommissioning of certain “offensive” weapons—if a recognized Palestinian security force is established in Gaza. **Read the full report from Jeremy Scahill and Jawa Ahmad here.**
- **Board of Peace has more than \$5 billion committed:** Trump announced on Sunday that member states of his “Board of Peace” have pledged more than \$5 billion for Gaza’s reconstruction and committed thousands of troops to an international stabilization force. In the same post, Trump demanded that Hamas fully and immediately demilitarize. Writing on Truth Social, Trump described the Board of Peace as potentially “the most consequential International Body in History” and said he will formally outline its next steps when the board holds its inaugural meeting in Washington, D.C. on Thursday at the newly renamed Donald J. Trump U.S. Institute of Peace.
- **Israel moves to register West Bank land as “state property”:** The Israeli cabinet approved a plan to begin formally registering West Bank land as “state property” for the first time since 1967. The move, pushed by Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich and others, exploits the fact that most Palestinian land was left unregistered after Israel froze the process in 1967, despite international law barring an occupying power from confiscating territory. Palestinian Authority officials and Hamas condemned the maneuver as illegal and void, and experts say it is tantamount to “de facto annexation.”
- **PA security forces kill two children in the West Bank:** Palestinian Authority security forces shot and killed two Palestinian children—siblings aged 16 and three—in the West Bank town of Tamoun on Sunday, according to Al Jazeera Arabic. The contingent was pursuing their father, Samer Samara, who is wanted by Israel. A spokesperson for the Palestinian Authority said that they had a judicial arrest warrant for Samara and announced that the killings would be investigated. Hamas condemned the killings, and said they reflect “repressive policies” pursued at a time of escalating Israeli attacks across the West Bank.
- **Israeli settler to face reckless homicide charges for killing Palestinian activist in West Bank:** Israeli prosecutors said on Monday they plan to indict settler Yinon Levy on reckless homicide charges for the July 28 killing of Palestinian teacher and activist Awdah Hathaleen in the village of Umm al-Khair, according to Times of Israel. Hathaleen, who appeared in the Oscar-winning documentary “No Other Land,” was filming when Levy fired at him from a distance. If convicted, Levy faces a maximum of 12 years in prison. Read Drop Site’s coverage of Awdah Hathaleen’s killing **here.**

- **Prominent Palestinian leader continues to face abuse in Israeli prison:** Longtime Palestinian political prisoner Marwan Barghouti was visited on Tuesday at Megiddo Prison by his lawyer Ben Marmarelli, who said that while Barghouti is in relatively good mental condition and physically stable, he still suffers from hearing damage and his broken ribs, both of which are traceable to a September 15 assault. According to Barghouti's lawyer, the harsh living conditions for Barghouti and his two cellmates include: severe food shortages, beatings, denial of access to the prison yard or showering, and isolation.

Iran

- **Iran stages naval drills in the Strait of Hormuz:** Iran closed the Strait of Hormuz for several hours on Monday while it conducted live naval exercises in the area. The drills were aimed at assessing the readiness of the IRGC's navy in light of "potential security and military threats" to the country, according to the Iranian news agency IRNA. The drills come amid a major military buildup by the United States in the region and speculation that Iran may announce a closure of the economically vital waterway if attacked. The U.S. military has dispatched F-35 jets, tanker aircraft, and naval assets in recent weeks. At least 163 heavy cargo flights have also landed at bases in Jordan, Saudi Arabia, and Kuwait as part of the campaign.
- **Iran and U.S. announce end of second rounds of nuclear talks in Geneva:** Iranian and U.S. officials have announced the end of a second round of negotiations in Geneva. Speaking to reporters aboard Air Force One en route to Washington, Trump said, "I will participate in those talks, indirectly," adding, "I don't think they want to face the consequences of not making a deal." Iranian Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei meanwhile indicated that Iran is ready for war if talks fail, stating that "even the strongest army in the world can sometimes receive a blow that leaves it unable to rise." On Monday, prior to the talks, Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi also held separate talks with Omani mediator Badr bin Hamad Al-Busaidi in Geneva, and said that Iran had "real ideas" for a deal focused on enrichment limits in exchange for sanctions relief, while staying that Iran was unwilling to submit to threats.
- **Netanyahu lays out his conditions for an Iran deal:** Netanyahu said at a Sunday press conference that he has presented Trump with five demands for any agreement with Iran. These include zero uranium enrichment, removal of all nuclear infrastructure from the country, strict missile range limits, a "full dismantling" of Iran's regional allies, and continuous unannounced inspections to ensure compliance. These demands far exceed those of the 2015 nuclear deal, which limited, but did not abolish, Iran's enrichment program. Tehran has previously rejected deals with zero enrichment as a component.
- **Iranian diplomat says "the ball is in America's court":** In an interview with the BBC on Sunday, Iran's deputy foreign minister for political affairs, Majid Takht-Ravanchi, said that "the ball is in America's court to prove that they want to do a deal," when discussing Tuesday's talks between the two countries. Takht-Ravanchi said negotiations will focus solely on the nuclear issue, and warned they will collapse if Washington attempts to

negotiate missiles or Iran's regional alliances. Takht-Ravanchi also maintained that zero uranium enrichment continues to be a red line for the Iranian cohort.

U.S. News

- **Jesse Jackson dies at 84:** Rev. Jesse Jackson died “peacefully” on Tuesday, according to his family, at the age of 84. A top aide to Martin Luther King, Jr., Jackson organized a Rainbow Coalition to try to stem the slide of the Democratic Party into neoliberalism. A roving, freelance diplomat, he was often at the center of global peace efforts, nearly capturing the 1988 Democratic nomination and bringing a generation of progressives, including Bernie Sanders, into national Democratic politics. Trump posted a statement praising Jackson and saying he had provided Jackson with office space. Jackson “had much to do with the election, with no acknowledgement or credit, of Barack Hussein Obama, a man who Jesse could not stand,” Trump wrote.
- **Mamdani secures \$1.5B in NY state funding:** On Monday, New York Gov. Kathy Hochul and NYC Mayor Zohran Mamdani announced that the city will receive \$1.5 billion in state investment in a major show of political support by Hochul. On Tuesday, Mamdani will present his administration's first preliminary budget in City Hall.
- **Brooklyn Navy Yard forces Israeli military drone firm to vacate:** The Brooklyn Navy Yard Development Corporation declined to renew the lease of Easy Aerial at the city-owned Brooklyn Navy Yard, effectively forcing the Israeli military drone manufacturer to leave the complex, the New York Post reports. Rep. Elise Stefanik immediately condemned the decision as “deeply disturbing” and blamed Mamdani. Supporters of the move pointed to Easy Aerial's production of surveillance drone systems used by United States agencies and the Israeli military in Gaza, arguing that such technology has played a central role in killing civilians during Israel's genocidal campaign in the Gaza Strip.
- **U.S. ambassador scorns the UN in Munich:** At the Munich Security Conference on Sunday, United States Ambassador Mike Waltz called the United Nations a “failed 80-year relic” and said Washington is “returning the world from the brink” by reforming multilateralism through direct deals, even presenting a “Make the UN Great Again” cap to European Union foreign affairs chief Kaja Kallas. Kallas pushed back, stressing that America's strength lies in its allies. “When America goes to war, a lot of us go with you, and we lose our people on the way,” she said. “In terms of economic might, China is a very, very powerful country. In terms of military might as well. So what is the difference between you and the other superpowers?” Kallas also criticized the proposed Board of Peace for its expansive sense of its own remit, and for locating decision-making power in a single person—Trump himself.
- **Rubio says Cuba must “open” its economy if it wants sanctions relief:** Secretary of State Marco told reporters in Munich over the weekend that Cuba must grant greater economic freedom if it wants relief from U.S. sanctions and the oil blockade, arguing the country's dire situation could push it toward reforms. Cuban officials rejected what they called Rubio's “maximum pressure” approach, with Foreign Minister Bruno Rodríguez Parrilla

accusing him of pursuing a personal agenda and Deputy Foreign Minister Carlos Fernández de Cossío asserting the country's sovereignty, saying Havana is “not ready to discuss [its] constitutional system.”

- **Trump continues to claim Rubio is in contact with Cuba, despite denials from Havana:** Trump told a gaggle of reporters Monday on Air Force One that Rubio is in contact with his Cuban counterparts, despite repeated denials from Havana that any such engagement is taking place. Drop Site's report on Rubio's attempt to exclude Trump from Cuba talks is available [here](#).
- **Leaked audio shows New Jersey Democrat shifts stance on aid to Israel:** In leaked audio, New Jersey Democrat Sue Altman, now running to represent the state's 12th Congressional District, said she is rethinking her support for U.S. weapons transfers to Israel, striking a markedly different tone from her 2024 campaign, during which she was backed by the AIPAC-aligned group Democratic Majority for Israel and pledged to ensure Israel had the resources to defend itself. In the audio, Altman said, “a lot has happened since then,” and that what has happened in Gaza, “has been a horrific tragedy... I don't want our taxpayer money being used to kill innocent children and women.” Altman faces physician Adam Hamawy, who opposes all military aid to Israel after serving medical missions in Gaza.
- **Federal judge orders release of ICE detainee who suffered medical neglect:** On Friday, U.S. District Judge Tana Lin ordered the release of Greggy Sorio from Immigration and Customs Enforcement custody at the Northwest ICE Processing Center, noting a “pattern of failures” in his medical care that more likely than not led to extreme pain and permanent disability, according to an NBC News report on the case. Sorio had two partial foot amputations, suffered from ulcerative colitis, blood loss, severe weight loss, and a kidney injury while in ICE detention in Tacoma, WA. Lin wrote in her decision that Sorio suffered “unreasonable treatment” and that the conditions of his detention violated his constitutional rights.
- **Minnesota officials say the FBI is blocking evidence related to the killing of Alex Pretti:** Minnesota authorities allege that the Federal Bureau of Investigation is refusing to share evidence in its probe into the killing of Alex Pretti by CBP agents, according to The Guardian. Minnesota's Bureau of Criminal Apprehension (BCA) announced Monday that the FBI told it that it would not share evidence related to the Pretti case. The FBI also declined to share evidence in the cases of Renee Good and Julio Sosa-Celis.

International News

- **More than 60 killed across Sudan:** More than 60 people were killed in a wave of drone strikes across Sudan's Kordofan and Sennar states over a 48-hour period, according to Radio Dabanga. In West Kordofan, at least 28 civilians—including nine women and 12 children—died when a reported strike by the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) hit a displacement shelter in El Sunut, while 28 were killed in North Kordofan when an SAF drone struck El Safiyya market, according to the Emergency Lawyers group. In Sennar, the Sudan Doctors Network

reported three killed in hospital shelling, which it blamed on the RSF. Additional SAF strikes were reported on Nyala in South Darfur, a key RSF hub for launching operations.

- **Sudan army says it destroyed second RSF air defense system in West Kordofan:** Sudan's army reported Sunday that it carried out a "specialized operation" in Abu Zabad, West Kordofan, destroying a Chinese-made FB-10 short-range air defense system used by the Rapid Support Forces, according to Sudan Tribune. The military claimed the attack caused "heavy losses" for the RSF.
- **Israeli drone strikes kill civilians in southern and eastern Lebanon:** Early Monday, an Israeli drone strike killed a school bus driver in the border village of Hanine in Lebanon, with local reports saying he was preparing to transport children when his vehicle was hit and engulfed in flames. The strike followed another Israeli drone attack on Sunday on a vehicle near the Lebanon–Syria border in eastern Lebanon that killed four people. The Israeli military claimed the latter attack targeted figures linked to Palestinian Islamic Jihad, though it failed to provide any evidence to that effect.
- **Fuel shortages trigger mounting waste crisis in Cuba as U.S. pressure tightens:** Trash piled up across Cuba on Monday, particularly in Havana, after fuel shortages left fewer than half of the capital's garbage trucks operational, according to a joint report from Al Jazeera and Reuters. Only 44 of Havana's 106 rubbish trucks have been able to keep operating due to fuel shortages, causing a buildup of waste that has raised public health concerns. Trump has responded to the situation by calling Cuba a "failed nation," while Mexico and Spain pledged to send aid.
- **Argentina's Senate passes Milei-backed labor overhaul:** Argentina's Senate approved President Javier Milei's sweeping "Labor Modernization" bill in a 42–30 vote last Thursday, advancing reforms that would extend workdays through the use of "hour banks," slash severance packages, restrict strikes in essential sectors, allow for employers to provide wages in foreign currency or in kind, and weaken union contracts. The vote came amid clashes outside Congress in Buenos Aires, as major unions weigh a national strike and the legislation moved to the Chamber of Deputies for final approval.
- **Carney pushes EU–Indo-Pacific trade bloc to counter Trump tariffs:** Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney is leading early talks between the European Union and a 12-nation Indo-Pacific bloc to form a major trade alliance aimed at countering what he called the Trump administration's "coercive" tariffs, according to Politico. Speaking at Davos earlier this year, Carney urged "middle powers" to unite against economic intimidation through the creation of a "super supply chain."
- **Kallas says Russia wants more than Ukraine:** At the Munich Security Conference, the EU's Kaja Kallas argued that Russia's ambitions extend beyond Ukraine, saying that "Donbas is not Vladimir Putin's endgame" and urging Europe to prepare for further Kremlin aggression. Kallas argued Russia's economy is "in shreds" after years of war with limited territorial gains and massive casualties, but cautioned the greatest risk now is Moscow securing at the negotiating table what it failed to achieve on the battlefield, going on to insist that any peace deal must include concrete concessions like the return of abducted Ukrainian children and reparations for Ukraine.

- **Russia claims mass drone interceptions and new territorial gains in eastern Ukraine:** On Monday, Russia's defense ministry said its forces downed 345 Ukrainian drones over the last 24 hours and seized control of the eastern settlements of Pokrovka and Minkivka, according to Reuters.
- **U.S. announces more missile deployments to Philippines in snub to China:** In a joint statement Monday, the U.S. and Philippine governments announced plans for expanded defense cooperation this year including joint military exercises, U.S. support to modernize the Philippine military, and intentions "to increase deployments of U.S. cutting-edge missile and unmanned systems to the Philippines." The statement comes amid escalating naval confrontations between Chinese and Philippine naval vessels in disputed territorial waters in the South China Sea and a broader U.S. military buildup in the region.
- **U.S. deploys troops to Nigeria:** About 100 U.S. military personnel arrived in Nigeria on Sunday as part of Washington's scaling up of operations targeting Islamist insurgents in the country, according to Reuters, with Nigerian officials saying the troops will train and advise local forces but not engage in combat. The deployment follows prior U.S. strikes against Islamic State-linked militants and comes as Trump has criticized Nigeria over its internal security and for "religious discrimination" against Christians, both of which Abuja contests.
- **Nigerian forces repel coordinated militant attacks:** On Monday, Nigerian troops said they pushed back simultaneous assaults by Islamist fighters on military bases in Pulka near the Cameroon border and Mandaragirau in southern Borno State, in some of the fiercest clashes reported in the northeast this year, according to Reuters. The army said militants from Boko Haram and Islamic State West Africa Province briefly breached one base before being driven back, with unspecified numbers of soldiers and civilian auxiliaries killed or wounded.
- **Ghanaian traders killed in Islamist attack in northern Burkina Faso:** Seven Ghanaian tomato traders were killed on Saturday, when Islamist militants stormed the town of Titao in Burkina Faso, according to Reuters, citing Ghana's interior minister. The attackers separated men from women before opening fire. "They went on a shooting spree, killing almost all the males there, burning them together with the truck," a witness told Reuters, adding that the bodies of the victims were burnt beyond recognition. Survivors were evacuated under military escort, as authorities struggle to secure the area.
- **Myanmar expels East Timor's top diplomat after war crimes case opens:** Myanmar's military government ordered East Timor's senior diplomat to leave the country after courts in East Timor accepted a criminal complaint against Myanmar's armed forces, sharply escalating tensions within the Association of Southeast Asian Nations. The case, backed by the Chin Human Rights Organization, targets senior junta figures, including Min Aung Hlaing, for alleged war crimes and crimes against humanity. East Timorese President José Ramos-Horta has been a longtime critic of Myanmar's military rule.

More from Drop Site

- **Emails show Epstein brokered logistics, security, and energy deals across Africa alongside Ehud Barak:** Newly released Justice Department emails reveal Jeffrey Epstein spent years brokering infrastructure and logistics deals in Nigeria for Emirati conglomerate DP World while simultaneously helping former Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak expand Israeli surveillance, cybersecurity, and energy interests across West Africa. The correspondence details how security partnerships marketed as counterterrorism—including biometric systems first tested on Palestinians—were used to open doors to oil, mining, and port investments. Epstein described a dinner in Nigeria this way: “The dinner is one other excellent way...to meet with good Friends of Israel and make new friends for Israel as well.”