

# U.S., Iran remain deadlocked over blockade; Lebanese aid workers killed in Israeli “double tap”; Over half of South Sudan’s population faces acute hunger

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## Iran and Ceasefire

- **Trump weighs extended Iran blockade, WSJ reports:** President Donald Trump has reportedly [instructed](#) aides to prepare for a prolonged blockade of Iran aimed at cutting off the country’s oil exports and economic lifelines to force nuclear concessions, according to a Tuesday Wall Street Journal report citing U.S. officials. The report says Trump decided in recent meetings to maintain pressure through a maritime blockade rather than resume bombing or disengage, judging those options to be riskier. The strategy has led to reduced shipping through the Strait of Hormuz and rising global energy costs, while also weighing on domestic political support ahead of the midterms. Trump, in a [post](#) on Truth Social Wednesday, said: “Iran can’t get their act together. They don’t know how to sign a nonnuclear deal. They better get smart soon!” Meanwhile, Reuters reports that U.S. intelligence agencies are [examining](#) how Iran would likely respond if President Donald Trump declared a unilateral victory in the war, per two U.S. officials and a source familiar with the matter, with White House advisers expressing concern the conflict could hurt Republicans in the midterms and officials describing domestic pressure on Trump to end the war as “enormous.”
- **Japan-linked supertanker exits Strait of Hormuz:** The Idemitsu Maru crude supertanker has fully [cleared](#) the Strait of Hormuz, becoming the first Japan-linked supertanker to exit the Persian Gulf since the start of the U.S.-Israel war on Iran. Two Japanese tankers, one carrying liquefied natural gas and the other carrying liquefied petroleum, crossed the strait earlier in April. Reports suggest the tanker received Iranian clearance to exit the Strait.
- **Iran tells UN it has right to counter U.S. “state-sponsored piracy”:** Iran’s ambassador to the United Nations, Amir Saeid Iravani, has [accused](#) the United States of “state-sponsored

piracy and terrorism” over the seizure of Iranian commercial vessels and oil cargo, saying the actions violate international law and the UN charter, according to the Islamic Republic News Agency. In a letter to the UN Secretary-General and Security Council president, Iravani said U.S. forces had “interdicted, boarded, and forcibly seized Iran’s commercial vessels on the high seas,” referring to the reported confiscation of the M/T Majestic and M/T Tifani and the “stealing of 3.8 million barrels of Iranian oil.” He described the move as “acts of aggression” and a breach of the UN charter and international maritime law.

- **Gulf Cooperation Council condemns Iran, calls for Hormuz opening:** Following a Gulf Cooperation Council summit in Jeddah, Secretary-General of the GCC Jasem Al-Budaiwi [issued](#) a statement strongly condemning “blatant Iranian attacks” targeting GCC states and Jordan and called on Tehran to take initiative to “rebuild trust,” while voicing “categorical rejection” of what it called Iran’s illegal measures to close the Strait of Hormuz. The statement made no reference to U.S. or Israeli strikes on Iran that started the regional conflict, nor to the ongoing U.S. naval blockade of Iran. It also stressed the need to intensify military integration, including development of a ballistic missile early warning system.

- **Trump attacks German chancellor for calling U.S.-Israeli war on Iran “ill-considered”:** President Donald Trump [lashed out](#) at German Chancellor Friedrich Merz on Tuesday after Merz called the military campaign against Iran “ill-considered” and warned of the difficulty of exiting such conflicts, writing that Merz “thinks it’s OK for Iran to have a Nuclear Weapon” and taunting Germany over its economic struggles. Merz, who said Israel “is doing the dirty work for all of us” when Israeli bombing of Iran began, has since sharpened his criticism, suggesting Washington is being “humiliated” by Tehran’s negotiating tactics—a notable shift for one of Israel’s most consistent European backers and among its largest weapons suppliers.

- **U.S. sanctions 35 individuals and entities over Iran “shadow banking”:** The United States [imposed](#) new sanctions on Tuesday targeting what it described as Iran’s “shadow banking architecture,” blacklisting 35 individuals and entities accused of facilitating sanctions evasion worth tens of billions of dollars, according to the Treasury Department. The Treasury alleged Iranian banks rely on private intermediaries known as “rahbars” to process payments for sanctioned trade through shell companies and foreign bank accounts, often linked to entities including the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps and the National Iranian Oil Company. U.S. Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent said Iran’s system “serves as a critical financial lifeline for its armed forces,” warning that any institutions engaging with these networks face “severe consequences.”

- **Iranian rial drops to record low:** Iran's national rial currency hit a record low on Wednesday of 1.8 million rial to \$1. The new rate marks a 12.5% drop from the January level of 1.6 million to the dollar and is likely to further fuel inflation.
- **World Bank projects 24% energy price surge amid war shock:** Energy prices are projected to [rise](#) 24% in 2026 to their highest level since 2022 amid the Iran war, according to the World Bank's latest Commodity Markets Outlook published on Tuesday. Overall commodity prices are expected to increase by 16%, driven by sharp rises in energy, fertilizer, and metals costs. The report says attacks on energy infrastructure and disruption in the Strait of Hormuz—handling about 35% of global seaborne crude—have triggered what it calls the largest oil supply shock on record, cutting supply by around 10 million barrels per day at its peak. World Bank Chief Economist Indermit Gill said “the war is hitting the global economy in cumulative waves,” from energy to food to inflation, warning that “war is development in reverse” and that poorer countries will be hit hardest.
- **EU says Middle East conflict costing Europe €500 million a day:** Europe is [losing](#) nearly €500 million a day due to rising fossil fuel costs driven by the ongoing Middle East conflict, said European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen, according to Politico. Addressing the European Parliament, von der Leyen said that in just 60 days of conflict, “our bill for fossil fuel imports has increased by over €27 billion, without a single molecule of additional energy,” arguing this underscores the need to accelerate toward renewable and nuclear energy. UN spokesperson Stéphane Dujarric said Tuesday that shipping through the Strait of Hormuz has fallen by 95.3% since the start of the U.S.-Israeli war on Iran, with crude oil prices in Europe increasing by 53%.
- **UN rights chief warns of escalating crackdown in Iran:** UN human rights chief Volker Türk [said](#) on Wednesday that Iran has executed at least 21 people and arrested more than 4,000 since the U.S. and Israel launched the war two months ago. “I am appalled that—on top of the already severe impacts of the conflict—the rights of the Iranian people continue to be stripped from them by the authorities, in harsh and brutal ways,” said Türk. “In times of war, threats to human rights increase exponentially.” At least nine people were executed in connection with the January 2026 protests, ten for alleged membership in opposition groups, and two on espionage charges, according to the UN.

## Lebanon

- **Israeli attacks on Lebanon continue:**

- Israeli strikes across southern Lebanon on Wednesday morning **killed** a Lebanese soldier and his brother after their motorcycle was hit in an airstrike in the town of Khirbet Shamaa in the Bint Jbeil district, according to the National News Agency.
- Israeli warplanes also carried out multiple strikes on Shaqra in the Bint Jbeil district and Braashit. A drone strike **targeted** a motorcycle on the Burj Qlawiyeh road, causing injuries. Another drone attack on a motorcycle on the Mansouri road wounded two Syrian nationals.
- On Tuesday, an Israeli strike on Tayr Debba, a coastal town south of Tyre in southern Lebanon, **killed** a pregnant woman, her young daughter, and another woman, according to L'Orient Today.
- An Israeli strike on a building in Jwaya, in southern Lebanon's Tyre district, **killed** two people, including an Ethiopian migrant worker, and wounded at least 15 others—including children, according to L'Orient Today.
- An Israeli airstrike **killed** three Lebanese Civil Defense first responders while they were carrying out a rescue mission in Majdal Zoun, in southern Lebanon's Tyre District, with Lebanon's health ministry reporting a preliminary toll of five dead total. Two Lebanese soldiers were also wounded while attempting to rescue the paramedics and other civilians injured in the initial attack. At least 100 aid workers in Lebanon have been killed in Israeli attacks since March 2, according to the Health Ministry.
- **Hezbollah MP says resistance will thwart any attempt by Israel to establish a “security belt”:** Hezbollah MP Hassan Fadlallah **said** in Parliament on Wednesday that any attempt by Israel to establish a “security belt” in Lebanon would be defeated “through the sacrifices of the resistance and the steadfastness of the people.” Fadlallah also criticized the approach of the Lebanese government, which he characterized as concessionary, saying that such policies threaten Lebanon's power-sharing system, established in the 1989 Taif Agreement.
- **IPC: 1.24 million in Lebanon face food insecurity:** The food security situation in Lebanon has **sharply worsened** since Israel escalated its assault on March 2, according to the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC), the world's leading authority on food crises. Around 1.24 million people in Lebanon are projected to face high levels of acute food insecurity between April and August 2026, marking a significant increase from the estimated 874,000 people in the previous assessment period. The biggest increases are found in southern Lebanon, particularly in Bent Jbeil, Marjaayoun, El Nabatieh and Sour districts. The decline in food security is primarily driven by renewed conflict, displacement, and ongoing economic challenges.

# Gaza, the West Bank, and Israel

- **Casualty count:** Over the last 24 hours, five Palestinian were killed—four killed in new attacks and one recovered from under the rubble after an earlier attack—and seven were injured across Gaza. The total recorded death toll since October 7, 2023 has risen to 72,599 killed, with 172,411 injured. Since October 11, the first full day of the so-called ceasefire, Israel has killed at least 823 Palestinians in Gaza and wounded 2,308, while 763 bodies have been recovered from under the rubble, according to the Palestinian Ministry of Health.

- **Israel continues to bombard Gaza:** A Palestinian paramedic was [killed](#) and a woman wounded on Wednesday in Israeli attacks in northern Gaza, according to WAFA. The paramedic, Ibrahim Saqr, was killed in an airstrike near al-Tawam roundabout in the northwest of the territory, while the woman was shot and injured in the town of Beit Lahia. On Tuesday, an Israeli airstrike [struck](#) a civilian vehicle near the Haider Abdul Shafi roundabout in western Gaza City on Tuesday, killing at least four people and wounding others.

- **Palestinian Red Crescent evacuates 47 patients and companions through Rafah crossing:** The Palestinian Red Crescent Society [announced](#) Tuesday that its ambulances evacuated 47 travelers—24 patients and 23 companions—through the Rafah border crossing as part of medical evacuations coordinated by the World Health Organization. Only 3,922 of 12,800 planned Rafah crossings were allowed by Israel since the start of the ceasefire, according to latest Palestinian figures, with nearly 20,000 Palestinians in need of medical evacuation.

- **Nun assaulted in Jerusalem as Israeli attacks continue across city:** A nun affiliated with the French School of Biblical and Archaeological Research was assaulted Tuesday in Jerusalem, according to the institute's director Olivier Poquillon, who condemned the "unprovoked" and "sectarian" attack in a [post](#) on X. Israeli police said a 36-year-old man has been arrested on suspicion of carrying out the assault. The incident comes amid continued Israeli army and settler attacks in Jerusalem, with Jerusalem's Governorate reported multiple Israeli raids across neighborhoods on Wednesday, including Silwan, Issawiya, and Anata. Officials also said demolition orders were issued for homes in Ras al-Amud.

- **Israel approves 126 new illegal settlement units in occupied West Bank:** Israel [approved](#) the construction of 126 new settlement units in the northern West Bank, in the recently reestablished settlement of Sa-Nur near Jenin, according to the Times of Israel. The approval was granted by the Defense Ministry's Higher Planning Committee, with the Israeli Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich saying the move sends a message that the settlement is "here to stay," adding, "This is just the beginning." Sa-Nur had been evacuated in 2005 under

Israel's disengagement plan but was re-inhabited last week, with families moving into prefabricated homes. The decision comes amid a wider push by the Israeli government, which quietly approved plans in March for 34 new settlements across the occupied West Bank.

- **Israeli forces detain approximately 140 Palestinians across West Bank in two-day sweep:** Israeli forces [detained](#) and interrogated approximately 140 Palestinians from across the occupied West Bank, including Jerusalem, on Monday and Tuesday, among them a woman, children, and former prisoners, according to the Palestinian Prisoner's Society. Raids lasting several hours were concentrated in al-Ram, Kafr Aqab, al-Dhahiriya, and Qalandiya refugee camp, with most detainees later released. The society listed a number of "crimes and violations" that accompany field interrogations, including beatings, home vandalism, destruction of infrastructure, use of family members as hostages, and vehicle and property confiscation.

- **Palestinian report tallies over 2,300 Israeli violations since Gaza ceasefire began:** A report shared with Palestinian negotiators and obtained by [Drop Site News documents](#) 1,027 live-fire attacks, 1,188 airstrikes and shelling incidents, and 103 military incursions carried out by Israel since the Gaza ceasefire took effect in October. Israel continues to hold approximately 34 square kilometers beyond agreed withdrawal lines, has blocked repairs to electricity, water, and sewage infrastructure, allowed only around 37.4 percent of agreed humanitarian aid to enter—roughly 225 trucks per day against a promised 600—delivered fuel at just 14.7 percent of required levels, and permitted only 3,922 of 12,800 planned Rafah crossing movements.

- **Tony Blair urges UN Security Council support for Trump's Gaza peace plan, UN reps. balk:** Former British Prime Minister Tony Blair [urged](#) the UN Security Council on Tuesday to back President Donald Trump's 20-point Gaza peace plan, calling the framework a "strategically coherent framework" that "succeeded in bringing the war in Gaza to an end." He claimed that over \$7 billion in firm pledges had been secured, and that the effort to disarm Hamas "and every other armed group in Gaza" was ongoing and necessary to allow the government in Gaza to be "the sole legitimate authority with arms." Russian Ambassador Vassily Nebenzia countered that the plan has stalled, while Norway called on Israel to lift restrictions on aid, banking, and movement. Palestinian Foreign Affairs Minister Varsen Aghabekian demanded an immediate response to Israel's ongoing restrictions on aid, which have led to "the spread of rodents and diseases ... and delays in restoration of basic services and recovery."

# U.S. News

*By Julian Andreone, with Ryan Grim. Have a tip on Capitol Hill? Email Andreone at [Julian@dropsitenews.com](mailto:Julian@dropsitenews.com).*

· **Federal appeals court rejects Trump administration's mandatory immigration detention policy:**

A unanimous three-judge panel of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit [ruled](#) Tuesday that the Trump administration's policy of subjecting most people arrested in its immigration crackdown to mandatory detention without bond hearings relies on an incorrect interpretation of a 1996 immigration law, with Judge Joseph F. Bianco—a Trump appointee—writing that the government's reading “would send a seismic shock through our immigration detention system and society.” The ruling conflicts with rulings from two other appeals courts that upheld the policy, making Supreme Court review increasingly likely.

· **Senate rejects Cuba war powers resolution:**

The Senate [voted](#) 51-47 on Tuesday against a resolution that would limit President Trump's ability to use military force against Cuba without congressional authorization. **Sen. Susan Collins (R-Maine)** and **Rand Paul (R-Ky.)** voted for the resolution, while **Sen. John Fetterman (D-Penn.)** was the sole Democratic Senator to vote against it. Both chambers have repeatedly voted against similar measures related to the war in Iran, though House Democrats plan to force another vote on an Iran war powers resolution this week. Cuba remains under a de facto maritime blockade, and Trump has suggested that the U.S. might “take” the island and that it is the “next” target for U.S. military intervention. **Sen. Tim Kaine (D-Va.)**, who brought the resolution forward, [told Drop Site's Julian Andreone](#) before the vote that the administration's strategy is “purely a regime change effort” and that if any country did to the U.S. what we are doing to Cuba, “we would consider it an act of war.”

· **King Charles addresses Congress:**

King Charles III [addressed](#) a joint session of Congress on Tuesday to mark the 250th anniversary of American independence, praising the U.S.-U.K. alliance. He said the alliance could “not rest on past achievements,” and called for “unyielding resolve” in backing Ukraine against Russia. He did not, however, directly acknowledge the victims of Jeffrey Epstein in his speech. The king's brother, Andrew Mountbatten-Windsor, is being investigated for misconduct connected to his activities with Epstein. Charles had been urged to meet with some of Epstein's victims before his speech by **Rep. Ro Khanna (D-Calif.)**; Khanna [called](#) his failure to do so “disappointing” and told Drop Site's Julian Andreone that it was the “the least” Charles could have done.

- **U.S. Forest Service plans record glyphosate spraying in fire-ravaged forests, Mother Jones reports:** A Mother Jones investigation reveals that the U.S. Forest Service and private timber companies are spraying the herbicide glyphosate—most commonly known as Roundup—across California’s fire-ravaged forests at record levels, with 266,000 pounds applied in state forests in 2023 alone, nearly five times the amount used two decades ago. The agency’s primary safety justification relies on a peer-reviewed study that was retracted after the journal it was published in confirmed Monsanto had ghostwritten it. The Forest Service plans to spray up to 10,000 acres in Lassen National Forest this spring, and tens of thousands more acres statewide, even though a 2020 EPA report found glyphosate harms 93 percent of endangered species and their critical habitat. Read the full investigation from Mother Jones [here](#).

- **FCC orders review of all ABC station licenses:** The Federal Communications Commission on Tuesday [ordered](#) an early review of all station licenses owned by ABC—the first such sweeping action ever taken against a major television network—framing it as an investigation into Disney’s diversity and inclusion policies, though the move came one day after President Donald Trump and first lady Melania Trump publicly called for the firing of late-night host **Jimmy Kimmel** over a joke about her. FCC Chairman **Brendan Carr** has repeatedly issued threats to take away broadcasters’ licenses, but this is his first direct step towards potentially doing so. Experts, however, have pointed out how difficult it is to actually remove a license, calling the legal standard for doing so “almost insurmountable.”

- **DOJ indicts former FBI director James Comey:** A federal grand jury in North Carolina [indicted](#) former FBI Director **James Comey** on Tuesday on charges of threatening the president and transmitting a threat across state lines, based on an Instagram post Comey made nearly a year ago showing seashells arranged to read “86 47”—which the Trump administration characterized as a call to assassinate Trump—marking the second indictment against Comey after a previous charge was dismissed in November. Comey, who said he deleted the post after learning it could be interpreted as having a violent connotation and denied any such intent, vowed to fight the case, saying “I’m still innocent, I’m still not afraid.”

- **FBI has not found fragment that struck Secret Service officer at White House Correspondents’ Dinner:** The FBI has yet to [recover](#) the fragment that pierced a Secret Service officer’s bulletproof vest at Saturday’s White House Correspondents’ Dinner, leaving investigators unable to confirm whether suspect Cole Tomas Allen—who has been charged with attempting to assassinate President Donald Trump—fired the shot that struck the officer, or whether the officer was hit by something else during the chaotic tackle that followed Allen’s breach of the final security checkpoint. New details indicate Allen walked down ten

flights of stairs from his hotel room to reach the checkpoint, and sprinted toward it before stumbling and falling just short, and that no Secret Service agents were stationed in the stairwell he used.

- **UK ambassador to Washington said Israel, not Britain, holds special relationship with U.S.:** **Sir Christian Turner**, the United Kingdom’s ambassador to Washington, [told](#) a group of British students in February that he disliked the phrase “special relationship” to describe Anglo-American ties, saying the term more accurately applied to Israel. “I think there is probably one country that has a special relationship with the United States—and that is probably Israel,” Turner said, according to a recording shared with the Financial Times. The remarks came weeks before the U.S.-Israeli strikes on Iran that launched the current Middle East conflict.

- **Trump administration pays nearly \$900 million to cancel two more offshore wind projects:** The Interior Department [announced](#) Monday that Bluepoint Wind and Golden State Wind have agreed to abandon their offshore wind leases in exchange for reimbursements totaling nearly \$900 million, with both companies committing to redirect the funds into fossil fuel projects and pledging not to pursue new offshore wind development in the United States. The deals follow a similar \$1 billion payout to TotalEnergies in March and come after courts blocked the administration’s executive orders halting offshore wind construction. Each of the projects were capable of powering more than one million homes and had been intended to help New Jersey, New York, and California meet clean energy goals.

- **Emails show top House Intelligence Democrat privately whipped votes for FISA surveillance extension he publicly opposed:** Emails obtained by The Lever [show Rep. Jim Himes](#) of Connecticut, the top Democrat on the House Intelligence Committee, urged colleagues to support a five-year reauthorization of Section 702 of the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act on April 17—the same day he publicly posted that such an extension was “not acceptable”—with internal committee staff explicitly stating that “Ranking Member Himes recommends a ‘yes’ vote on the bill.” Reporting from [Politico](#) characterized Himes’ present position as being on a “mission” to save these spy powers. Himes also claimed to the outlet that, in the last 14 months, there has “not been a single example of their attempt to abuse” the 702 database ” and that “there is no program that is more overseen than this one. None.”

- **Le Moyne College president tells Gaza genocide survivor he cannot use the word “genocide”:** Le Moyne College, a Jesuit institution in Syracuse, New York, sent a letter to students this week condemning language used by Palestinian poet **Mosab Abu Toha** during an April 15 guest lecture—specifically his use of the word “genocide” to describe Israel’s actions in Gaza. **President Linda LeMura**, without naming Abu Toha, wrote that the word

caused “real hurt” to Jewish students and implied its use was incompatible with the college’s commitment to inclusion. Abu Toha, who survived Israeli strikes in Gaza, called the letter “deeply shameful,” writing: “How dare you tell a person who survived a genocide that they cannot speak about it?” he said. “I never once used the word ‘Jewish’ during the entire event. I refuse to conflate the faith of Judaism with the actions of the state of Israel.”

- **DNC chair reverses course, will not release 2024 election autopsy finding Gaza policy hurt Harris:** Democratic National Committee Chair **Ken Martin** [confirmed](#) he will not publicly release the party’s 2024 election autopsy report, reversing the transparency platform on which he ran for the chairmanship and arguing the full document would be a “distraction” from the 2026 midterms. The IMEU Policy Project reported that DNC aides acknowledged in a closed-door meeting that the report concluded the Biden-Harris administration’s approach to the genocide in Gaza cost **Kamala Harris** significant support.

- **Arizona lawmakers back use of “Judea and Samaria” in place of West Bank:** The Arizona Legislature has [approved](#) a nonbinding resolution urging state agencies to use the term “Judea and Samaria” instead of “West Bank” in official communications, the Jewish News Syndicate reports. The measure, sponsored by Republican state **Rep. David Livingston**, frames the change as recognizing the “historical, biblical and legal legitimacy” of the term while rejecting “West Bank” as a modern construct—aligning with language long promoted by Israeli officials. The United Nations formally refers to the territory as the “occupied West Bank” or “occupied Palestinian territory.” Hamas condemned the decision, calling it an attempt to promote an “occupation narrative” at the expense of historical and legal realities, adding that changing names “will not alter the fact that the West Bank is Palestinian land.”

- **Trump administration moves to cut disability benefits for poor families living together, ProPublica reports:** The Trump administration is [working](#) on a rule change that would deduct the value of a disabled adult’s bedroom from their Supplemental Security Income allotment—even if the family they live with is poor enough to qualify for food stamps—potentially slashing benefits by up to a third or eliminating them entirely for as many as 400,000 people, according to ProPublica. The effort, initiated by White House and Department of Government Efficiency officials, would undo a Biden-era policy that exempted families already certified as poor through other assistance programs from redundant income checks—a change disability advocates, evangelical groups, and budget experts warn would push disabled adults out of family homes and into far more expensive institutional facilities. Read ProPublica’s full report [here](#).

## Other International News

- **U.S. sanctions are the primary cause of a 148% rise in Cuba's infant mortality rate since 2018:** Cuba's infant mortality rate has risen from 4 per 1,000 live births in 2018 to 9 in 2025, a 148% increase, according to a [new report](#) by the Center for Economic and Policy Research. The report concludes that the primary driver is the dramatic tightening of U.S. sanctions since 2017, compounded by Trump's current fuel blockade, described as "by far the most damaging US unilateral measure imposed to date."

- **Mali's military leader surfaces to meet Russian ambassador after weekend coup attempt:** Malian military leader Assimi Goita [made](#) his first public appearance since Saturday's rebel attacks—which killed Defense Minister Sadio Camara—by meeting Russian Ambassador Igor Gromyko on Tuesday, as Russia's Defense Ministry claimed its Africa Corps forces had repelled an attempt to seize the presidential palace and other key sites, while separately confirming those forces had been driven out of the northern town of Kidal. The coordinated attacks—carried out by the Tuareg separatist Azawad Liberation Front and the al-Qaeda-linked Group for the Support of Islam and Muslims—were the largest in nearly 15 years and marked an unprecedented alliance between the two former rivals against Goita's military government and its Russian backers.

- **EU threatens sanctions against Israel over stolen Ukrainian grain—but not over Gaza:** The European Union [warned](#) Israel it is ready to impose sanctions over its role facilitating trade in Russian-stolen Ukrainian grain, after a Panama-flagged vessel carrying over 25,000 tonnes of wheat and barley docked at Haifa, with Ukraine summoning its Israeli ambassador and President Volodymyr Zelenskyy calling the trade illegitimate. The move drew immediate notice given that an internal European External Action Service review found last year that Israel had breached Article 2 of the EU-Israel Association Agreement through systematic violations of international law in Gaza, with no sanctions following.

- **UN warns 7.8 million people face acute hunger in South Sudan as conflict deepens:** A United Nations report [published](#) Tuesday warns that 7.8 million people—56 percent of South Sudan's population—will suffer high levels of food insecurity in the coming months, with 2.2 million children under five experiencing acute malnutrition, up 100,000 over the past six months, and 700,000 children at grave risk of dying. The Food and Agriculture Organization, World Food Programme, and UNICEF called for immediate international action to prevent an "irreversible humanitarian catastrophe," as nutritional services across the country have been damaged or shuttered by intensifying clashes between the South Sudan People's Defence Forces and opposition groups—fueled by a long-running feud between President Salva Kiir Mayardit and suspended Vice President Riek Machar, who is currently on trial in Juba.

· **Northern Irish police arrest man after New IRA claims Belfast police station car bombing:** Police in Northern Ireland [arrested](#) a 66-year-old man under the UK Terrorism Act on Tuesday after the New IRA claimed responsibility for a Saturday car bomb attack on Dunmurry police station in Belfast—carried out after a delivery driver was hijacked and forced to drive to the station—with the group declaring it had intended to kill officers and warning it planned to target police at their homes. The attack, which injured no one, is part of a mounting series by the New IRA, a dissident republican group that rejects the 1998 Good Friday Agreement.

· **Maldives police raid critical news outlet, ban editors from leaving country after documentary on president’s alleged affair:** Maldivian police [raided](#) the offices of opposition-aligned outlet Adhadhu Online late Monday, seizing laptops and storage devices and imposing travel bans on CEO Hussain Fiyaz Moosa and editor Hassan Mohamed, after the outlet published a documentary featuring an anonymised interview with a woman claiming she had a sexual relationship with President Mohamed Muizzu. The raid, which the Committee to Protect Journalists called an attempt to “criminalise investigative journalism under the guise of religious and national interests,” came weeks after a constitutional referendum delivered a stinging rebuke to Muizzu, with 69 percent of voters rejecting a government proposal critics said would undermine checks and balances.

· **Sudanese army claims it repelled RSF attack in Blue Nile region as humanitarian conditions deteriorate:** Sudan’s army [said](#) Tuesday its 4th Infantry Division, backed by allied groups, repelled a Rapid Support Forces and Sudan People’s Liberation Movement-North attack on the outskirts of the Sali area in the Blue Nile region, claiming to have seized 10 combat vehicles and destroyed more than 15 others. Fighting in the area has escalated since March, when the RSF and its allies captured the strategic border town of Kurmuk, driving thousands of civilians toward the regional capital, Ed Damazin, where they are sheltering in overcrowded facilities.

· **UN sanctions RSF commander’s brother and three Colombian mercenary recruiters over Sudan war:** The United Nations Security Council, at the proposal of the United States, Britain, and France, [imposed](#) sanctions Tuesday on Algoney Hamdan Daglo Musa—younger brother of RSF leader Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo—for leading RSF efforts to procure weapons and military equipment, along with three Colombian nationals accused of playing a central role in recruiting former Colombian military personnel to fight for the RSF. Video and photographic evidence showed the three Colombians providing the RSF with tactical and technical expertise, serving as infantry, artillery, drone pilots, and instructors, with some training children to fight—part of a broader pattern of Colombian mercenary involvement in battles across Sudan including Khartoum, Omdurman, Kordofan, and El Fasher.

· **Beijing touts economic benefits of unification as Taiwan's Lai vows to strengthen defenses:** China's Taiwan Affairs Office [said](#) Wednesday that Taiwan's economy would gain "unprecedented opportunities" through unification with the mainland, citing access to China's market and Taiwan's strengths in semiconductors and technology—an appeal Beijing has intensified since late last year even as it refuses to renounce the use of force. President Lai Ching-te, speaking to senior military officers in Taipei the same day, rejected the overture, saying "unification packaged as peace will inevitably bring endless troubles" and that only by strengthening Taiwan's own defenses can genuine peace be ensured.

· **German prosecutors arrest alleged Russian spy in Berlin:** Federal authorities in Germany detained a Kazakh national on Tuesday on suspicion of working for a Russian intelligence service and conducting surveillance on military sites in Germany since at least May 2025. According to a press release the suspect is accused of passing information on Germany's military aid to Ukraine and on its defense industry—particularly drone and robotics firms—and of photographing public buildings, documenting military convoys on German highways, including one tied to a NATO member, and scouting potential sabotage targets and recruits.

· **Greek police arrest 89-year-old man after shooting spree at Athens social security office and courthouse wounds five:** Greek police [arrested](#) an 89-year-old man in Patra on Tuesday following a shooting spree in Athens in which he wounded one employee at a state pension office in Kerameikos before traveling by taxi to a nearby courthouse in Ambelokipi and injuring four more people, reportedly firing at the floor and throwing envelopes he claimed explained his actions. The suspect, identified by local media as a rubbish collector who had been treated at a mental hospital in 2018, was arrested at a hotel where a second weapon was found. Athens court staff announced a 24-hour strike Wednesday over the incident, citing poor security at court buildings.