



Drop Site

This is Drop Site Daily, our new, free daily news recap. We send it Monday through Friday.



Palestinians try to retrieve their belongings at the site of Thursday's Israeli strike on tents in Gaza City, on January 9, 2026 (Photo by Majdi Fathi/NurPhoto via Getty Images).

The Gaza Genocide, The West Bank, and Israel

- **Casualty counts in the last 24 hours:** Over the past 24 hours, the bodies of 14 Palestinians arrived at hospitals in Gaza, while 17 Palestinians were injured, according to the Gaza Ministry of Health. The total recorded death toll since October 7, 2023 is now 71,409 killed, with 171,304 injured.
- **Total casualty counts since ceasefire:** Since October 11, the first full day of the ceasefire, Israel has killed at least 439 Palestinians in Gaza and wounded 1,223, while 688 bodies have been recovered from under the rubble, according to the Ministry of Health.
- **Israel kills at least 14 in a wave of attacks across Gaza on Thursday:** Israeli forces carried out a series of attacks across the Gaza Strip on Thursday, killing at least 14 Palestinians—including five children. The deadliest strikes hit tents and shelters for displaced families in Al-Mawasi, Khan Younis, the Jabaliya refugee camp, and Gaza City's Al-Tuffah neighborhood, while schools, residential homes, and a child in eastern Zeitoun were also targeted. Additional Israeli airstrikes, artillery fire, and gunfire were reported near Abu Hussein School, Khalifa bin Zayed School, Hamad Hospital, Al-Mashtal Hotel, and eastern Khan Younis. Civil defense crews in the Strip responded to fires, recovered bodies, and treated wounded civilians, including children, with bombardment continuing across northern and southern Gaza into Friday. Here are some additional details on one of the more horrifying attacks, the one in Al-Mawasi:
 - Four Palestinians, including children, were killed and others were wounded when an Israeli suicide drone struck tents sheltering displaced families in Al-Mawasi, Khan Younis, according to Felesteen Online. Separate strikes hit tents belonging to the Al-Farra and Al-Abadla families, with civil defense crews recovering four bodies and treating three wounded, including one in critical condition. Footage from the scene shows a father killed and his son wounded, surrounded by the wreckage of their tents.
- **Destruction of medical technology is putting patients' lives at risk, Gaza doctors say:** Doctors at Al-Shifa Hospital in Gaza warned on Thursday that the destruction of X-ray and imaging equipment is putting patients' lives at risk, with clinicians forced to make critical decisions without basic diagnostic tools, according to Felesteen Online. Emergency physician Abdel Rahim Al-Adawi said doctors are "working blind" after Israeli forces destroyed labs and imaging units, leaving staff unable to determine causes of respiratory distress, fractures, or internal bleeding, while hospital officials said hundreds of patients each day are denied access to a proper diagnosis. Radiology chief Mohammed Mattar described the situation as a "complete diagnostic collapse" and urged urgent international intervention, warning that delays in restoring imaging capacity will cost lives.
- **UN aid efforts reach more than 16,000 households in Gaza:** The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs said it reached more than 16,000 households in Gaza this week, providing access to shelter and winter supplies. This number hardly meets the need, with aid agencies estimating that around 1.3 million people still urgently need shelter, and with only about 50,000 tents having entered the enclave since the ceasefire. "As emergency structures, tents offer limited protection from heavy rain, flooding, or cold, and

rapidly deteriorate under prolonged use,” the UN warned. Authorities have called for a rapid shift toward transitional housing, supplies for which remain blocked.

- **Education in Gaza is not a “critical activity,” Israel says:** Israeli authorities told the UN that “education is not a ‘critical activity’” for Palestinians, according to UN Secretary General’s spokesperson, as Israel continues to block the entry of basic school supplies needed for more than 625,000 school-age children in Gaza who remain out of the education system for a third year. With only about 230,000 students reached through 420 temporary learning spaces, the Guardian reported that items like paper and pencils are effectively barred under Israel’s import rules, despite U.S. requests to ease the restrictions.
- **Spanish PM to seek approval to send a peacekeeping force to Palestine:** Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez said Thursday that he will seek parliamentary approval to deploy Spanish peacekeeping troops to Palestine once conditions advance toward “pacification” and recognition of a two-state solution. Spain “cannot forget Palestine or Gaza,” he said, and he called the situation there “intolerable.” Government sources told RTVE1 that Spain is open to joining a future peace mission—building on existing deployments in Lebanon and EU missions in the West Bank.
- **In two weeks alone, Israeli authorities demolished 50 Palestinian structures in Area C and East Jerusalem:** Over the past two weeks, Israeli authorities demolished 50 Palestinian-owned structures in Area C and East Jerusalem, displacing more than 50 Palestinians and disturbing the livelihoods of around 14,000 people, according to the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. The Office said the demolitions coincided with severe winter weather that damaged or destroyed dozens of tents and makeshift shelters in Bedouin and herding communities across the West Bank, worsening the displacement from the storms.

Venezuela

- **Under U.S. pressure, Venezuela releases detainees to “seek and consolidate” peace:** Jorge Rodríguez, president of Venezuela’s National Assembly, said on Thursday that the government would release an unspecified number of Venezuelan and foreign detainees, calling the move a gesture “to seek and consolidate peace.” The announcement comes amid U.S. pressure for the release of political prisoners. Rights group Foro Penal says 806 political prisoners remain held, and the confirmed releases include five Spanish citizens, according to Spain’s government. In a response on Truth Social, President Donald Trump said Venezuela’s release of large numbers of political prisoners was a “very important and smart gesture.”
- **Trump expects the U.S. to run Venezuela for years:** President Donald Trump said on Wednesday evening that the United States expects to run Venezuela and extract oil from its reserves for years, according to his interview with the New York Times. Trump claimed the interim Venezuelan government is cooperative, and he added that Washington will lower oil prices. Trump said U.S. oversight would last “much longer” and declined to commit to

elections or a withdrawal timeline, while signaling a continued U.S. campaign of coercion against the country by keeping alive the threat of further military action.

- **Trump scheduled to meet with oil executives re: Venezuela on Friday:** U.S. President Donald Trump is scheduled to meet Friday with top U.S. oil executives at the White House, including leaders from ConocoPhillips, Exxon Mobil, and Chevron. They plan to discuss potential investment in Venezuela's oil sector following recent U.S. actions in the country, according to Reuters. In a post on Truth Social, Trump said that Venezuelan cooperation on rebuilding the country's oil and gas infrastructure led him to cancel a previously expected second wave of U.S. attacks.
- **Update on tankers evading the U.S. blockade:** At least nine of the 16 U.S.-sanctioned oil tankers that were reported attempting to breach the U.S. naval blockade around Venezuela have now sailed far out from Venezuela's coast in efforts to evade interception, the New York Times reported on Thursday. U.S. European Command confirmed that the U.S. Coast Guard seized the Russian-flagged tanker *Marinera* (formerly *Bella 1*) in the North Atlantic for violating U.S. sanctions, following an earlier attempt by the Coast Guard to board it in Caribbean waters. Authorities also took control of another sanctioned vessel, *M/T Sophia*, in the Caribbean Sea. According to tracking data cited by maritime analysts, the remaining sanctioned tankers are split into two groups: one hundreds of miles into the Atlantic Ocean and another heading northeast through the Caribbean Sea.

U.S. News

- **Border Patrol shoots two in Portland:** Federal Border Patrol agents shot and wounded a married couple in Portland, Oregon on Thursday, prompting protests. This incident comes a day after ICE killed Renee Nicole Good in Minneapolis. Oregon Attorney General Dan Rayfield said his office is examining whether agents acted outside their lawful authority, while Portland Mayor Keith Wilson called the shooting "deeply troubling" and urged ICE to halt operations in the city. The Department of Homeland Security claimed without evidence that its agent fired in self-defense during a vehicle stop involving a "Venezuelan national."
- **Senate advances war powers resolution:** The U.S. Senate advanced a war powers resolution on Thursday aimed at restricting President Donald Trump's ability to take further military action against Venezuela without congressional approval, moving it toward a full floor vote by a 52–47 margin. The procedural motion passed with all Senate Democrats and with support from five Republican senators — namely, Rand Paul of Kentucky, Lisa Murkowski of Alaska, Todd Young of Indiana, Susan Collins of Maine, and Josh Hawley of Missouri.
- **Trump threatens land strikes on Mexico:** President Donald Trump told an interviewer on Thursday that the United States will now carry out land strikes against drug cartels, making the remarks while discussing Mexico but without explicitly stating that such strikes would take place on Mexican territory. Mexican President Claudia Sheinbaum has already explicitly rejected the prospect of U.S. military activity within her country, despite similar threats and statements from Trump in the past.

- Federal judge says government is not compelled to rescue Palestinian Americans, despite claims of equal protection violations:** A federal judge dismissed a lawsuit on Thursday seeking to compel the U.S. government to carry out emergency rescues of Palestinian Americans and their families in Gaza, ruling the court lacked authority to order evacuations. Virginia Kendall, chief judge of the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Illinois, said foreign policy and evacuation decisions rest with the Executive Branch, rejecting claims by nine U.S. citizens or lawful permanent residents that the government violated their equal protection rights by failing to evacuate them.
- U.S. floating cash payments to Greenlanders to promote secessionist campaign:** U.S. officials discussed offering lump-sum payments of roughly \$10,000 to \$100,000 per person to Greenlanders as part of efforts to encourage Greenland to secede from Denmark and potentially join the United States, according to Reuters, as the White House weighs options including purchase, a Compact of Free Association, or military force. Donald Trump said the island is vital for U.S. national security, but the idea has drawn sharp rejection from Danish Premier Jens-Frederik Nielsen and European governments, which said decisions over Greenland rest solely with Greenland and Denmark, amid polling showing Greenlanders favor independence but oppose becoming part of the United States.
- Trump: My executive power is limited only by “my morality”:** President Donald Trump said on Wednesday that his power as commander in chief is limited only by “my own morality,” brushing aside a commitment to international law in his wide-ranging interview with The New York Times. Asked whether there were any limits on his global powers, Trump replied: “Yeah, there is one thing. My own morality. My own mind. It’s the only thing that can stop me...I don’t need international law.”
- Protests continue in Minnesota:** Protests continued on Thursday in Minneapolis a day after an Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) officer shot and killed Renee Good. Demonstrators gathered outside a federal facility tied to the Trump administration’s immigration crackdown, The Associated Press reported. The ICE agent who fatally shot the 37-year-old woman in Minneapolis on Wednesday has been identified as Jonathan Ross by The Minnesota Star Tribune. DHS Secretary Kristi Noem has not publicly announced the identification of the officer, but Noem referenced the 2025 incident in Bloomington, Minnesota, in which the ICE agent was dragged by a fleeing vehicle.
- House subpoenas journalist Seth Harp:** The House Oversight Committee voted on Wednesday to subpoena journalist Seth Harp over his reporting on the U.S. military operation in Venezuela, prompting alarm from press freedom advocates who said the move disregards First Amendment protections for the press. Congresswoman Anna Paulina Luna accused Harp of “doxxing” and leaking classified information after he posted publicly available details about a Delta Force commander involved in the Venezuela operation. Harp and press freedom groups said publishing such material is constitutionally protected and central to holding the U.S. government accountable.
- Trump says he will rein in institutional investors buying homes:** President Donald Trump said on Wednesday that he would take “immediate steps to ban large institutional investors from buying more single-family homes,” a move that lowered shares of major property owning companies sharply and drew skepticism from housing advocates. Many of the firms

most affected—including Blackstone—have been major political backers of Trump. **Read more from The Lever here.**

International News

- **Protests continue in Iran, where nationwide internet access is cut:** A nationwide internet blackout was reported across Iran on Thursday as mass anti-government demonstrations escalated. Over two dozen people have been killed in the protests and over 1,200 arrested. In Isfahan, the Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting building in Isfahan was set ablaze, according to the BBC. President Donald Trump warned for a third time that the United States would “hit Iran hard” if authorities begin killing protesters. Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei accused protesters of vandalism and acting to please Trump, claiming some rioters were destroying Iranian property in hopes of gaining U.S. backing amid unrest. “If he can, he should manage his own country,” Khamenei said, dismissing Trump’s remarks as encouragement for “individuals who are harmful to the country.”
- **Lebanese army claims it has taken over security in the south:** The Lebanese army claimed on Thursday it has completed the first phase of a plan to disarm Hezbollah, asserting operational control south of the Litani River except for areas still under Israeli occupation. Israel has bombed Lebanon on a near daily basis since a so-called ceasefire deal went into effect in November 2024. On Thursday, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said the efforts to disarm Hezbollah were “an encouraging beginning” but “far from sufficient.”
- **Israel signals an interest in a wider campaign in Lebanon:** Israeli officials are signaling a possible wider military operation, according to Israeli media, with Channel 12 quoting military sources saying Lebanese army statements “do not match reality,” Israel Hayom citing a political source rejecting claims Hezbollah has been disarmed, and Kan reporting that Benjamin Netanyahu told ministers the United States had given Israel a “green light” to escalate if Hezbollah refuses to hand over its weapons.
- **Fighting in Aleppo intensifies:** Fighting in Aleppo between the Syrian military and SDF continues to intensify as SDF fighters refuse to withdraw from the Kurdish-majority Ashrafiyah and Sheikh Maqsoud neighborhoods, vowing to resist government forces that have encircled the areas in the city. The Syrian military has issued a new ultimatum demanding the SDF lay down their arms and warned of imminent attacks, particularly in Sheikh Maqsoud. Since fighting in Aleppo began on Tuesday, at least 22 people have been killed, and more than 140,000 residents have fled their homes, underscoring fears of a wider escalation in the city.
- **Yemen’s Southern Transitional Council announces dissolution in contested statement:** The secretary general of Yemen’s Southern Transitional Council (STC), Abdulrahman Jalal al-Subaihi, said in a televised statement from Riyadh on Friday that the group would disband effective immediately. The announcement came a day after the group’s leader, Aidarous al-Zubaidi, fled to the United Arab Emirates. However, a spokesperson for the STC, Anwar al-Tamimi, who is in Abu Dhabi, dismissed the announcement as “ridiculous,” indicating a

split within the group. The STC, which is backed by the UAE, was established in 2017 as an umbrella organization for separatist groups in southern Yemen. The STC last month moved into the governorates of Hadramout and al- Mahra and pushed out the Saudi-aligned National Shield Forces. The National Shield Forces have since regained control of Hadramout and the presidential palace in Aden.

- **Greek farmers protest EU-Mercosur deal:** Greek farmers escalated their nationwide protests on Thursday with a 48-hour blockade of major highways, junctions, and toll stations, shutting down parts of the Athens-Thessaloniki route as they demanded stronger state support for farmers and expressed their rejection of the EU-Mercosur trade deal, The Associated Press reported. Protesters said soaring production costs and fears of cheaper South American imports threaten their livelihoods, while the government warned it would not tolerate prolonged blockades. Responding to their complaints, the Greek government announced limited concessions on electricity prices and fuel taxes.
- **Russian tanker is disabled by a drone attack:** A Russia-bound oil tanker was diverted in the Black Sea on Thursday after a drone attack targeted its engine room, according to Reuters. The tanker, the Palau-flagged Elbus, was carrying 25 crew members and reported no injuries or pollution, issuing a request for Turkish coast guard assistance after the attack, while traveling en route to Novorossiysk, Russia and later anchoring off Inebolu, Turkey. The responsible party for the attack remains unclear, though Moscow has blamed similar strikes on Ukraine, which has denied its involvement in similar incidents.
- **India removes restrictions on Chinese firms:** India's finance ministry announced that it would scrap five-year-old restrictions on Chinese firms bidding for government contracts on Thursday, imposed after the 2020 border clash, Reuters reported. The decision—pending approval by Narendra Modi's office—would lift registration and security-clearance requirements that effectively barred Chinese companies from a \$700–\$750 billion procurement market and had delayed projects across multiple ministries.

Africa

Drop Site Africa correspondent Godfrey Olukya highlights some of the continent's biggest news stories of the week.

- **Death toll from Demo attack in Nigeria rises to 55:** Authorities said on Thursday that the death toll from an armed attack on the Kasuwan Daji market in Demo village, Niger State, had risen to 55, after gunmen stormed the market on Saturday, killing at least 50 people on the spot and looting food supplies. President Bola Tinubu condemned the attack and ordered security forces to pursue the assailants and rescue those abducted, saying, "They are testing the resolve of our nation and must face the full consequences of their criminal actions."
- **DRC says more than 1,200 child fighters were released:** Authorities in the Democratic Republic of the Congo said on Monday that more than 1,200 child fighters were released by armed groups in Ituri during 2025, with 1,233 children—including 455 girls—reintegrated with their families, according to the Disarmament, Demobilization, Community Recovery

and Stabilization Program in Bunia. Spokesperson Philip Leku said the children were returned to school or enrolled in vocational training, adding, “We took the released children back to school... [and] enrolled [others] in vocational training to acquire skills,” as officials praised cooperation with humanitarian partners, including UNICEF.

- **South Africans protest in solidarity with UK pro-Palestine hunger strikers:** Thousands of South Africans staged nationwide protests on Tuesday demanding the United Kingdom release pro-Palestinian hunger strikers held in UK jails, with demonstrations outside British diplomatic sites in Johannesburg, Cape Town, and Durban, according to organizers. “They have been held without bail, and they are now really on death’s door,” said Madison Bannon of the Palestine Solidarity Alliance, as civil society groups said the detainees—held for more than a year over alleged actions targeting Elbit Systems facilities—have gone without food for over 60 days.
- **22 migrants killed in transportation disaster in Ethiopia’s Afar region:** At least 22 migrants were killed and 65 seriously injured on Tuesday when a lorry carrying about 85 Ethiopian migrants overturned near Semera in the Afar region of Ethiopia, according to regional officials. Authorities said the migrants were traveling along the eastern migration route toward the Middle East, with investigations ongoing and the wounded taken to nearby health facilities for treatment.
- **New president elected in CAR:** Faustin-Archange Touadéra was declared on Tuesday to be the winner of a third term as president of the Central African Republic, securing 76.15 percent of the vote in last month’s election, according to provisional results released by the National Electoral Authority, after campaigning on claims of improved security backed by foreign forces, including Russian mercenaries and Rwandan troops, Al Jazeera reported. While the African Union and the MINUSCA said the vote was peaceful and free, the main opposition coalition boycotted the polls and rejected the outcome as unfair.
- **Somalian authorities deny U.S. allegations that led to aid suspension:** Somalia’s government denied U.S. allegations on Thursday that authorities in Mogadishu demolished a World Food Programme warehouse and seized U.S.-funded food aid, after Washington suspended all assistance to Somalia’s federal government over what it called diversion of humanitarian aid. The WFP confirmed its port warehouse was demolished by local authorities but said it has since retrieved 75 metric tons of specialized food intended for malnourished women and children, while the Trump administration said it is continuing its investigation and pressing Somali authorities for a full accounting.
- **RSF claims it shot down a Turkish-made drone in Darfur:** The Rapid Support Forces said on Thursday that its air-defense units “shot down” a Turkish-made Bayraktar Akıncı drone over Nyala, South Darfur, claiming it was intercepted as it attempted to strike targets. Video from the scene, however, shows the high-altitude aircraft largely intact, raising questions about whether it was physically hit, disabled electronically, or malfunctioned. The RSF has developed extensive aerial and counter-air capabilities during the war—now challenging or exceeding those of the Sudanese Armed Forces—with investigations by the Wall Street Journal and United Nations reporting highlighting these advances. Much of this edge has been linked to its foreign suppliers, particularly the United Arab Emirates, which

denies backing the RSF, though Nathaniel Raymond of the Yale Humanitarian Research Lab said the group's air advantage is now "a defining feature of the conflict."

- **20 civilians killed by Sudanese army drone strike in Kordofan:** More than 20 civilians were killed on Tuesday when a Sudanese Armed Forces drone strike reportedly hit a crowded market in Bayam Kasha, South Kordofan, according to Darfur 24. Local witnesses said the afternoon strike hit commercial vehicles and people gathered at the market, killing traders, displaced civilians, several women, and a pregnant woman, and said there was no military presence at the site at the time; the SAF has not publicly commented.
- **Massad Boulos: Sudan war "unlikely to damage" relationships between Middle Eastern countries:** Massad Boulos, a senior adviser to President Donald Trump, said on Thursday that the war in Sudan is unlikely to damage relations among U.S. Middle East partners, despite Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates backing rival sides. Boulos told IMI News that the conflict is politically containable for Washington and its Gulf allies.