

# Khamenei is buried; Hormuz grinds to a halt; What we know about the Platner replacement process

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## Iran and Ceasefire

- **Netanyahu says Iran war “not over”:** Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu [said](#) Thursday the U.S.-Israeli war on Iran “is not over” and vowed to keep preventing Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon “with or without an agreement.”
  - Netanyahu pledged Israeli forces will continue to occupy parts of Lebanon “as long as the need requires.”
  - Defense Minister Israel Katz said that Israel is prepared to strike Iran again “with even greater force” if required, including resuming operations to “regain air superiority” and striking Iran “a third time if necessary.”
  - Mohammad Baqer Zalgahdr, secretary of Iran’s Supreme National Security Council, [said](#) Friday that attacks on infrastructure would be met with retaliation, warning that “the rogue Zionist regime... will not be spared from the response of our fighters,” Iran’s Tasnim News Agency reported.
  - Qatari mediators have been meeting separately with U.S. and Iranian officials in an effort to deescalate the situation and resume negotiations, according to reports by Reuters and the New York Times.
- **Gulf Cooperation Council condemns attacks on tankers in Strait of Hormuz, holds Iran responsible:** The Gulf Cooperation Council [condemned](#) attacks on the Saudi tanker Wadiyan and Qatari LNG carrier Al Rekayyat “in the strongest terms” in a Thursday statement, holding Tehran fully responsible and declaring that aggression against one Gulf state threatens all six member states.
  - The statement condemned Iranian strikes targeting U.S. bases in Bahrain and Kuwait as violations of international law, but did not mention the U.S. strikes on Iran that preceded them.

- The bloc also called on the UN Security Council to guarantee freedom of navigation in the strait without “transit or service fees.” Iran has maintained its demand passing ships pay “service fees,” covering what it says are necessary maritime navigation and environmental protection fees.

- **Shipping grinds to a halt in the Strait of Hormuz:**

- Traceable vessel transits through the U.S.-coordinated Omani lane effectively [ground to a halt](#) on Thursday, according to the maritime tracking firm Lloyd’s List, with no tracked vessels with capacity exceeding 10,000 metric tons having transited the corridor since July 7. Two untracked crossings were recorded by the firm.

- On Thursday, U.S. Central Command claimed in a [post](#) on X that since early May, U.S. forces have helped facilitate the transit of more than 800 commercial vessels through the Strait of Hormuz carrying 380 million barrels of crude oil.

- The United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations agency [issued](#) a warning Friday morning that the security threat in the Strait of Hormuz remains at its highest level (“SEVERE”) after this week’s hostilities, advising ship owners and sailors to use “established reporting and coordination procedures” and that routes beside the approved southern route “are not protected.”

- **Assassinated Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei buried in Mashhad:**

- The Iranian Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, killed in a U.S.-Israeli strike on February 28, was buried in his hometown of Mashhad in northeastern Iran on Thursday, concluding a week of mourning with ceremonies in Iran’s holy cities, its capital, and the Shia holy cities of Iraq.

- Between 41 and 43 million people participated in the six-day funeral ceremonies for Khamenei, Iranian media reported on Friday.

- At the ceremonies, IRGC commander Brigadier-General Ahmad Vahidi pledged vengeance against the U.S. and Israel for the killing of Supreme Leader, calling for a “fitting response to the criminals, especially the child-killing American army,” according to a statement carried by Iran’s Sepah news agency.

- **Seafarers sue Thai shipping firm over Strait of Hormuz attack:** Three former crew members of the Thai cargo ship Mayuree Naree, which was struck in a March attack in the Strait of Hormuz, [filed](#) a lawsuit Friday against the vessel’s operator alleging labor rights violations and unfair dismissal.

- The ship was hit by a projectile north of Oman on March 11, killing three of its crew; the remaining 20 members were rescued and returned to Thailand a week later.
- The lawsuit alleges the defendants endangered the crew's lives by sailing through the Strait despite known risks.
- **Israel feeds Trump report that Iran plans to assassinate him, sources say:** Israel [shared](#) intelligence with the United States that claimed Iran had recently devised a new plan to assassinate President Donald Trump, according to a Thursday report from the Wall Street Journal.
  - One source told CNN that the warning came this week, the latest in a series of possible plans to assassinate Trump that an intelligence official characterized as “a steady drumbeat.”
  - Asked to comment, the White House pointed to Trump's Wednesday remarks that Iran wants “to take out the U.S. leader—me” adding that he is “on every single one of their lists.”

## Lebanon

- **Israel continues to attack Lebanon, despite “ceasefire” and U.S.-backed framework:**
  - Israel [hit](#) a car with a “double-tap” strike in the southern Lebanon town of Kfar Reman in the Nabatieh district on Friday, Lebanon's state-run National News Agency (NNA) reported. There was no immediate reports of casualties.
  - Also in Nabatieh, an Israeli drone [struck](#) a pick-up truck on the outskirts of Shukin and Kfar Dajjal while the vehicle was unloading waste, wounding two people, NNA reported.
  - Separately, an Israeli drone [dropped](#) a stun grenade near the town of Al-Mansouri in the southern Tyre district, according to the NNA.
  - Additionally, Israeli tanks and other military vehicles reportedly advanced towards the Birket al-Hammam in Khiam, and soldiers set fire to several homes in Qantara, in the Marjayoun district.
- **Amnesty calls for war crimes probe into Israeli strikes that killed 24 Lebanese civilians:** Amnesty International [called](#) for war crimes investigations into three Israeli air attacks on homes in Lebanon's Tyre, Sidon and Nabatieh districts on March 6, 12 and 13 that killed 24 civilians, including 12 children, six women and six men, with at least 18 others wounded.

- “Within the space of just a week—the Israeli military obliterated entire families, including a dozen children, in Lebanon, demonstrating a callous disregard for civilian lives. How many more families will have to pull the body parts of their children from the rubble before this devastating cycle of war crimes ends?” a spokesperson for the group asked.

- Amnesty also warned of the potential effects of the current “framework” agreement signed by Lebanon and Israel on its pursuit of justice; Article 13 of the framework agreement requires both sides to “cease all hostile or negative actions in international political or legal forums.” The broadly worded provision could prevent victims of Israeli war crimes committed since October 8, 2023, from seeking justice through international or national courts.

- At least 4,320 people have been killed, and 12,203 wounded, in Israeli attacks on Lebanon since March 2, according to Lebanon’s Health Ministry.

- **Journalist Courtney Bonneau steps back from reporting in Lebanon, citing devastating toll of war:** Courtney Bonneau, who has reported extensively from Lebanon throughout Israeli attacks for the past three years, announced she is stepping away from the field for several days, saying years of documenting war and the loss of loved ones, colleagues, and friends have left her “heart in pieces.”

- In a [statement](#) on X, Bonneau reflected on the cumulative weight of witnessing death and destruction, describing how scenes of violence have permanently reshaped her inner life. She also recounted surviving multiple life-threatening incidents, including being chased by an Israeli Merkava tank, coming under Israeli sniper fire eight times, and being intimidated by quadcopter drones while reporting. “Not because the work has become less necessary, but because mourning, too, demands its own uncompromising attention,” she wrote.

- Her reporting—along with that of many courageous Lebanese journalists—has been an important source for Drop Site News’ coverage of developments in Lebanon.

## Palestine

- **Two hospital workers wounded after Israeli drone attack at Kamal Adwan Hospital:** Two staff members were wounded after an Israeli quadcopter drone dropped an explosive device at Kamal Adwan Hospital in Beit Lahia, northern Gaza on Friday, Gaza’s Health Ministry reported. The facility is located within the “green zone.”

- **Israel appears to target Hamas political spokesperson amid continued attacks:** One Palestinian was [killed](#) and others wounded after an Israeli strike hit a civilian vehicle west of Gaza City, in a strike that appears to have targeted Hamas's political spokesperson in Gaza, Hazem Qassem, killing his personal aide. According to Israel's Channel 14, Qassem [survived](#) the attack.

- In a separate strike in Khan Younis, Israel killed two people.
- Israeli gunfire wounded several people in the Al-Salatin area of Beit Lahia.
- Israeli forces also opened fire on Khan Younis, continuing their near-daily attacks east of the "Yellow Line."

- **Israel bans Al-Aqsa preacher from mosque:** Israeli forces on Friday detained Grand Mufti of Jerusalem and the Palestinian Territories Mohammad Hussein, the preacher of Jerusalem's Al-Aqsa Mosque, before handing him a one-week order [banning](#) him from entering the third holiest site in Islam, according to WAFA.

- Israeli restrictions and settler incursions at Al-Aqsa are intensifying. More than 25,600 settlers entered the compound during the first half of 2026. Israeli authorities also fully closed the mosque between February 28, the first day of U.S.-Israeli attacks on Iran, and April 9.

- **Israeli attacks in the occupied West Bank continue:**

- Israeli settlers [wounded](#) seven Palestinians, including two children in the Masafer Yatta area of the South Hebron Hills. The settlers reportedly pepper sprayed and beat a Palestinian. Israeli soldiers who arrived at the scene protected the settlers and also joined the assault, according to the reports.
- Israeli settlers [demolished](#) the Yanun Mixed Basic School in southern Nablus on Thursday, around eight months after residents of Khirbet Yanun were forcibly displaced, WAFA reported. The school served 15 Palestinian students from first to sixth grade.
- Three Palestinians were [shot](#) by Israeli forces and dozens suffered tear gas inhalation during a raid on the village of Al-Mughayyir, northeast of Ramallah, according to WAFA. Israeli soldiers also stormed a home and severely beat its residents, leaving several with bruises and other injuries. After residents gathered to support the family, Israeli forces opened fire with live ammunition and tear gas.

- **Smotrich claims Witkoff privately called Gaza's population "Nazis":** Israeli Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich [said](#) on Thursday that Trump's Middle East envoy Steve Witkoff privately told him "I will not let two million Nazis live next to your children along the border fence," referring to Gaza's besieged population, half of them children, according to Israel National News. "There is only one thing that hurts the enemy: land," Smotrich reported Witkoff telling him.

- Smotrich said the exchange took place on January 30, 2025, when Witkoff met him and then-Strategic Affairs Minister Ron Dermer in Jerusalem a day after touring Gaza's Netzarim Corridor and viewing October 7 attack footage.

- The alleged remark also came days before Trump publicly unveiled his plan to take over Gaza and transfer its population.

- Witkoff has not commented on the story and the language mirrors Smotrich's own; he frequently describes Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza as "Nazis."

- **France calls for Israel to release imprisoned Palestinian physician:** On Thursday, France [joined](#) international calls for Israel to release Dr. Hussam Abu Safiya, the director of Kamal Adwan Hospital, who has been held without charge since December 2024.

- A statement from the country's foreign ministry noted "extremely worrying information about his state of health."

- The French appeal follows warnings from Physicians for Human Rights Israel that Abu Safiya's life is in immediate danger: his lawyer, who visited him last week at the underground Rakefet facility, said he arrived shackled and so badly injured he was barely recognizable, and reported being beaten daily.

- The French foreign ministry also called for the second phase of the Gaza ceasefire to commence and urged the Israeli army to withdraw from the Strip.

## 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).*

- **Maine Democratic Party establishment plans Platner replacement process:** The process to replace **Graham Platner** as Maine's Democratic Senate nominee is underway. A 100-person state committee voted to approve a process by which 600 delegates, 500 county committee elected delegates, and the 100 state committee members themselves will select the

new nominee from a slate of candidates vying to replace Platner at a convention later this summer.

- **Troy Jackson, Shenna Bellows, Nirav Shah, Dan Kleban, Jordan Wood, and Vallie Geiger** are running for the spot. All the candidates lost their respective Democratic gubernatorial and congressional primaries in June, aside from Geiger, who serves as a state representative for the Rockland area.
- [Drop Site obtained private Maine Democratic Party information](#) showing that the 500 delegates will be proportionally appointed based on 2024 election Democratic vote totals in their respective counties. How those 500 delegates will be elected is still under debate.
- Sources close to the Maine Democratic Party (MDP) have shared two potential processes for delegate elections. The first requires delegate candidates to file with the state and obtain at least 250 voter signatures prior to the County Committee meeting where the qualifying delegates will be voted on by registered Maine Democrats. Another source says the MDP will hold caucuses at each county committee meeting to select the delegates. The MDP has not officially announced a process to select candidates.
- The Maine AFL-CIO [endorsed](#) Jackson on Friday. They represent more than 200 local labor unions that include over 42,000 working people and retirees across the state.
- **AIPAC targets Cori Bush's comeback bid against Rep. Wesley Bell:** AIPAC's super PAC, United Democracy Project, has [spent](#) \$865,000 on TV ads supporting **Rep. Wesley Bell** in Missouri's 1st Congressional District primary rematch against former **Rep. Cori Bush**, making it the race's biggest ad spender so far, Axios reported on Friday, with Bush's campaign spending just \$30,000 and no outside groups yet backing her ahead of the Aug. 4 primary.
  - AIPAC spent more than \$9 million to oust Bush in 2024, when Bell defeated her by roughly 5 percentage points.
  - "People are really upset that so much money came into our district and was used to influence who became the representative this Congress," Bush told Axios in an interview. "A lot of people have said to me, 'Cori, I just didn't know,' or 'I didn't understand what was happening at the time, and now I know.' And they're upset."
- **ICE agents in Houston killed man who was not their target, DHS says:** Federal immigration agents who [killed](#) Mexican immigrant **Lorenzo Salgado Araujo** during a

Tuesday traffic stop in Houston had actually been searching for two Guatemalan immigrants, one of whom they believed was in a white van Araujo was driving to work, a Department of Homeland Security spokeswoman said on Thursday.

- An agent shot Araujo, who had lived in the U.S. for 35 years, in the abdomen after DHS alleged he tried to use his vehicle as a weapon, though no video or other evidence has emerged to support that claim, and the agents were not wearing body cameras.
- Araujo's son said the family believes his father fled because he was being chased by unmarked cars and has demanded an independent inquiry.
- Mexico says 14 of its citizens have died in ICE detention and three more during arrest operations, including Araujo. Mexican President Claudia Sheinbaum said her government will file criminal complaints with U.S. prosecutors over the deaths, arguing those responsible should face homicide or human rights investigations. Foreign Minister Roberto Velasco said Mexico is also planning civil lawsuits against the private companies that operate U.S. immigration detention centers.
- **Marine veteran Victor Marx wins Colorado GOP governor primary:** Marine Corps veteran and Christian minister **Victor Marx** [won](#) the Republican primary for Colorado governor Thursday, edging out state Sen. **Barbara Kirkmeyer**, who had establishment backing, in results certified after the tight June 30 race.
  - Marx, who describes himself as a “high-risk humanitarian” after his Christian missions in “ISIS territory,” will face Democratic state Attorney General **Phil Weiser** in November. Colorado has not elected a Republican governor in more than two decades.
- **New Mexico AG accuses DOJ of obstructing Epstein investigation:** **Raúl Torrez** [accused](#) the Justice Department of obstructing the state's criminal investigation into **Jeffrey Epstein's** activities at his Zorro Ranch property by withholding unredacted records despite six requests since February, according to a letter reported by the New York Times.
  - Torrez said the withheld records, which contain names of survivors, witnesses and co-conspirators, are needed for the state's investigation, warning “every day that the U.S.D.O.J. withholds these records, the foundation upon which a New Mexico prosecution could be built erodes.”
- **Trump ousts remaining Election Assistance Commission members:** The White House [fired](#) all three sitting members of the bipartisan U.S. Election Assistance Commission on Thursday, four months ahead of the midterm elections, NBC News reported.



- A White House official confirmed all three commissioners are gone and said “they will be replaced,” though presidential appointments require Senate confirmation.
- The EAC, which certifies election equipment and has distributed more than \$1 billion in election security grants since 2018, was already down to three members after a Republican commissioner resigned earlier this year.
- One fired commissioner called the dismissals “purely political” and warned they would “throw the country into chaos,” and Arizona’s Secretary of State said the move was “irresponsible and dangerous” and undermined “the integrity of nonpartisan election administration.”

## Other International News

- **Germany to buy U.S. Tomahawk missiles:** Germany will purchase U.S.-made Tomahawk cruise missiles and Typhon ground-based launchers, German Chancellor Friedrich Merz [said](#) on Thursday.
  - The agreement, reached following the NATO summit in Ankara, comes after uncertainty over U.S. deployments following President Donald Trump’s decision to reduce the American military presence in Germany.
  - Berlin said the acquisition will fill a critical strategic gap while Europe develops its own long-range missile systems, though the number of missiles and launchers to be purchased remains classified.
- **Anti-immigrant protests escalate in South Africa:** Anti-immigration [protesters](#) in Johannesburg went house-to-house on Thursday searching for suspected undocumented migrants and handing them over to police, Reuters reported.
  - The campaign, led by the anti-immigrant group March and March, has vowed to hold weekly protests demanding mass deportations and stricter border controls.
  - South African President Cyril Ramaphosa condemned vigilante immigration enforcement, although police have increased arrests of undocumented migrants amid the unrest.
  - The violence has prompted a large-scale exodus from the country, with tens of thousands of immigrants from Malawi and Zimbabwe reportedly leaving the country in recent weeks.
- **June was the deadliest month for Ukrainian civilians, the UN says:** The United Nations [told](#) the Security Council that Russian strikes killed at least 265 civilians and injured 1,816 in

Ukraine in June, the highest combined monthly civilian casualty toll since the early months of Russia's 2022 invasion.

- A senior UN official told the council that the trend of elevated civilian deaths appears to be continuing into July following multiple large-scale Russian air attacks on Kyiv and other cities, which have seen depletions of missile interceptor supplies in recent months.
- The UN has verified at least 16,402 civilian deaths and 48,428 injuries in Ukraine since the start of the war, while warning the true toll is likely higher.
- **Canadian PM visits Saudi Arabia, seeks to reset relationship:** Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney [visited](#) Saudi Arabia on the first trip by a Canadian leader to the country in 25 years.
  - Carney and Saudi leader Mohammed bin Salman signed agreements to expand cooperation in sectors including energy, critical minerals, and artificial intelligence, with plans to finalize a business facilitation deal next year.
  - Carney added that Canada would not “lecture countries from afar” on human rights. The approach marks a sharp shift from the government under Justin Trudeau, which led to a diplomatic rupture with Riyadh in 2018 over the kingdom’s human rights record.
- **Andy Burnham apologizes for Labour’s Gaza stance:** British MP Andy Burnham [apologized](#) for the party’s initial response to Israel’s military action in Gaza, telling the Guardian on Thursday that “the response has too often not been good enough” and pledging to increase pressure on the Israeli government through further sanctions and a potential ban on trade with illegal settlements.
  - Burnham said there was “increasing evidence” of war crimes in Gaza but stopped short of calling it a genocide, saying accountability “must be for the international courts to determine.”
- **Tanzania arrests 130 in crackdown on dissent:** Tanzanian police [arrested](#) 130 people on Thursday for “inciting criminal acts” as part of efforts to contain dissent in the country, with the police noting that they are working to track down other people to arrest.
  - The arrests follow a June 26 ban on political rallies, which was announced ahead of a July 7 protest commemorating the violence that accompanied last year’s elections.

“Heavy security deployments” were necessary to prevent the protest, according to Reuters.

- At least 518 people were killed in last year’s violence, a government commission found, driven by the exclusion of leading opposition candidates.

- **Sudan army accepts most of U.S. truce proposal, objects to limited RSF withdrawal:** Sudan’s army-led government [accepted](#) most of a U.S. proposal for a 90-day humanitarian truce and civilian-led transition to elections, but objected to a provision calling for only limited RSF withdrawals, according to a Reuters report on Thursday.

- U.S. Senior Adviser Massad Boulos said last week he was “extremely pleased” that army chief General Abdel Fattah al-Burhan “has apparently accepted — rather than rejected” the proposal, after initially telling the UN Security Council that the Sudanese Army had rejected it.

- A senior RSF official told Reuters that the force welcomed the Boulos plan and had submitted a written response, but gave no further details.

- The proposal, which also calls for a unified national army and a political process excluding the Muslim Brotherhood and militia elements accused of atrocities, prioritizes RSF withdrawal from North Darfur and North Kordofan.

- **North Korea approves measures to expand nuclear forces:** The North Korean government [issued a directive](#) to strengthen the country’s nuclear arsenal “quantitatively and qualitatively,” state media KCNA reported.

- At a meeting of the Workers’ Party’s Central Military Commission, Kim Jong Un also called for modernizing combat systems, military bases, naval facilities, shipyards, and intelligence capabilities, arguing that “true peace” could only be secured through overwhelming military power