

All eyes on the Strait of Hormuz; Israel kills over 60 in Lebanon; Abortion by mail temporarily halted by federal court

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Iran and Ceasefire

- **Iran is reviewing U.S. counterproposal:** Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesperson Esmail Baghaei said on Monday officials are reviewing a U.S. counterproposal to end the war. "The U.S. message was received through Pakistan, and I will not discuss the details of the issues raised at this time because these issues are still under review," Baghaei said in a briefing broadcast on state television on Monday. He did not outline the terms of the counterproposal. "The issues raised about enrichment or nuclear materials are purely speculative and, at this stage, we are not talking about anything other than stopping the war completely, and the direction we will take in the future will be determined in the future." He added, "At this stage, our priority is to end the war. The other side must commit to a reasonable approach and abandon its excessive demands regarding Iran."

- Iran [sent](#) a 14-point proposal outlining its key conditions for ending the war through Pakistani mediators on Thursday.

- Trump told Israel's Kan TV network on Sunday that Iran's proposal is "not acceptable to me. I've studied it, I've studied everything—it's not acceptable." He added, "the Iranians want to make a deal, but I'm not satisfied with what they've offered."

- The Iranian proposal reportedly included demands for guarantees against future military aggression, the withdrawal of U.S. forces from areas surrounding Iran, lifting the U.S. naval blockade, unfreezing Iranian assets, compensation payments for the damages of the war, sanctions relief, and a total end to the war across all fronts, including Lebanon. It also outlines a new mechanism for the Strait of Hormuz.

- **U.S. announces operation in Strait of Hormuz to guide tankers out:** President Donald Trump [announced](#) Sunday that the U.S. would launch a maritime operation beginning Monday morning to guide foreign vessels out of the Strait of Hormuz, describing the effort, which he called “Project Freedom,” as a humanitarian mission and warning that any Iranian interference would be met “forcefully.” The operation will involve guided-missile destroyers and 15,000 service members, according to U.S. Central Command.

- A senior Iranian official [told](#) Drop Site’s Jeremy Scahill that Iran’s leadership rejects any attempt to alter “current conditions” in the Strait and would intercept any ships trying to cross the Strait. Trump’s action “is primarily intended to provoke Iran into taking an initial step toward confrontation, thereby creating a pretext for escalation and enabling him to justify further military action in response to an Iranian initiative,” the Iranian official said. “The U.S. military vessels are far from the corridor area. If commercial vessels attempt to move, they would be engaged well before reaching any American ships,” the official added.

- **Iran reports striking U.S. navy vessel:** Iran’s Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) claimed that it struck a U.S. navy vessel on Monday after it ignored warnings to halt, Iranian state media reported. U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM) denied the claims and said no American navy vessels were attacked in the Strait of Hormuz. “U.S. forces are supporting Project Freedom and enforcing the naval blockade on Iranian ports,” CENTCOM [said](#) on X. In a subsequent [post](#), CENTCOM said “2 U.S.-flagged merchant vessels have successfully transited through the Strait of Hormuz and are safely headed on their journey.” The IRGC denied the claims, saying no commercial vessels or tankers have traversed the strait today. “Claims by US officials are baseless and complete lies,” the IRGC said in a statement.

- **UAE says Iran attacked tanker:** The United Arab Emirates said on Monday that Iran launched two suicide drones at a tanker affiliated with its Abu Dhabi National Oil Company in the Strait of Hormuz, with no casualties reported. “Targeting commercial shipping and using the Strait of Hormuz as a tool of economic coercion or blackmail represents acts of piracy by Iran’s Revolutionary Guard Corps,” the Foreign Ministry said in a [statement](#).

- **Bulk carrier attacked by small craft near Iranian coast:** The UK Maritime Trade Operations agency [issued](#) two alerts Saturday reporting that a northbound bulk carrier was attacked by multiple small craft 11 nautical miles west of Sirik on Iran’s southern coast, with all crew reported safe. Iran’s Fars News Agency disputed reports that Iranian forces seized or attacked the bulk carrier, saying that the vessel was stopped by the Iranian navy for a document inspection as part of routine monitoring procedures.

· **Iranian tankers evade U.S. naval blockade:** A liquefied gas tanker named XAVIA has transited the Strait of Hormuz after departing Iran, Haaretz [reported](#) on Monday. Citing shipping analytics group TankerTrackers, the report said the vessel left Iranian waters without incident while operating in an area where U.S. naval forces are present. The ship was previously seen loading in Assaluyeh and, in recent days, appeared near the Omani port of Sohar. Another vessel, a National Iranian Tanker Company supertanker, the HUGE, [carrying](#) approximately 1.9 million barrels of crude oil valued at nearly \$220 million, also evaded the U.S. Navy blockade and reached the Far East after going dark on tracking signals March 20 and reappearing in Indonesia's Lombok Strait en route to the Riau Archipelago near Singapore, according to TankerTrackers.com.

· **Crew members from captured Iranian vessel returned to Iran:** Fifteen crew members from the Iranian container vessel MV Touska that was captured by the U.S. have arrived in Iran, according to the Fars News Agency. Earlier, Pakistan's Foreign Ministry said the U.S. had sent all 22 crew members held on board the vessel to Pakistan and would hand them over to Iranian authorities. Pakistan's foreign ministry called the move a "confidence-building measure."

· **Navy awards \$100 million AI contract for mine detection in Strait of Hormuz:** The U.S. Navy [awarded](#) a contract worth up to \$100 million to San Francisco-based Domino Data Lab to deploy artificial intelligence on unmanned underwater vehicles hunting Iranian mines in the Strait of Hormuz, Bloomberg reports.

· **China orders firms not to comply with U.S. sanctions:** China's Ministry of Commerce [activated](#) its 2021 Blocking Rules for the first time Monday, ordering Chinese firms and individuals not to comply with U.S. sanctions targeting five independent Chinese oil refineries accused of buying Iranian crude, putting multinationals operating in both markets in direct legal conflict. Beijing called the U.S. measures, imposed under two executive orders, "unjustified" and "improper."

· **Trump bypasses Congress for third time to fast-track \$8 billion in arms sales to Israel and Gulf states:** Secretary of State Marco Rubio [invoked](#) emergency authority Friday to approve more than \$8 billion in weapons sales to Israel, Qatar, the UAE, and Kuwait, including air-defense systems, Patriot missiles, and laser-guided rockets. The State Department reportedly determined that "an emergency exists that requires the immediate sale" of the arms in each case. This is the third such congressional bypass since the start of the Iran war.

· **Kuwait posts zero crude exports in April for first time since 1991:** Kuwait Petroleum Corporation [exported](#) no crude oil in April 2026—the first total halt since the Gulf War—after

the U.S. naval blockade of the Strait of Hormuz forced the state oil company to extend a force majeure on April 17, erasing roughly 90% of the country's export earnings and cutting production from a pre-crisis 2.7 million barrels per day to approximately 1.2 million, according to Tanker Trackers and CNBC. The crisis is particularly acute for Kuwait, which unlike some neighbors has no bypass pipeline and depends on Hormuz for exports, with petroleum revenues funding roughly 90% of the government budget.

- **OPEC+ approves third straight output increase:** Seven OPEC+ members **agreed** Sunday to raise June production quotas by 188,000 barrels per day in the group's third consecutive monthly increase, though Al Jazeera described the move as "modest and largely symbolic" given that the Strait of Hormuz closure has throttled exports from Saudi Arabia, Iraq, and Kuwait, making meaningful supply gains difficult in practice. Brent crude last traded around \$108 per barrel, up nearly 80% since the start of 2026, as overall OPEC+ output dropped 7.7 million barrels per day in March compared to February. The increase is the group's first decision since the UAE formally quit after more than six decades of membership on May 1.

- **Five executed in Iran:** Iran executed three men—Mehdi Rassouli, Mohammad Reza Miri, and Ebrahim Dolatabad—on Sunday after being convicted on charges related to protest violence in the eastern city of Mashhad in January, according to the Mizan news agency. Two others—Yaghoub Karimpour and Nasser Bakarzadeh—were **executed** on Sunday after being convicted of intelligence cooperation with Israel's Mossad, with Karimpour accused of passing sensitive information to a Mossad officer and Bakarzadeh of collecting intelligence on government and religious figures and key sites, including near the Natanz nuclear facility in Isfahan province, Iranian media reported.

Lebanon

- **Casualty count:** The death toll from Israel's assault on Lebanon has risen to at least 2,696—with 8,264 wounded—since March 2, according to Lebanon's Health Ministry. Israel has killed nearly 500 people in Lebanon since the so-called ceasefire on April 16.

- **Israeli attacks on Lebanon:**

- **Monday attacks:** Six people were killed in Israeli attacks on Monday: Two in an Israeli airstrike targeting the town of Shhour in the Tyre district in southern Lebanon on Monday, according to Lebanon's National News Agency. The Lebanese Ministry of Health also announced on Monday that four people were killed in two Israeli strikes on the town of Yahmar Al-Shaqif in the country's south.

- **Israeli forces continue killings across southern Lebanon on Sunday:** At least 20 people were killed in Israeli attacks across Lebanon on Sunday, according to the Health Ministry. An Israeli drone strike on a mosque in Sammaaiyeh **killed** three people overnight. A separate strike on the al-Oustoura restaurant and a neighboring pharmacy in Arab Salim, in the Nabatieh district, killed two people and triggered explosions and fire from gas cylinders on the premises, L'Orient Today reported. In the Bint Jbeil district, a drone strike on a moped in Haris killed one person, while a strike on Srifat wounded four rescue workers from the Islamic Health Committee.
- **Israel kills 41, injures 89 in 24 hours:** Lebanon's Health Ministry said at least 41 people were killed and 89 wounded on Saturday. Israeli forces carried out widespread airstrikes and artillery shelling across southern Lebanon near the Israeli border at the start of the weekend. At least three people were **killed** in a dawn strike on al-Louaizeh in the Jezzine district, with two additional casualties reported in Choukin near Nabatieh, according to Lebanon's National News Agency.
- **Infrastructure damage:** Israeli forces **blocked** Red Cross teams from retrieving bodies and evacuating the wounded in Majdal Selm, a town in the Nabatieh district, Al Mayadeen reported. The military also ordered forced evacuations of nine villages in the same district, killing at least eight people there in fresh strikes on Saturday, according to L'Orient Today. Israeli forces demolished a monastery and school run by the Sisters of the Holy Savior in Yaroun, a border village. Press TV Journalist Hadi Hoteit said Israeli forces destroyed a 100-year-old community center in his village of Dweir in southern Lebanon: "We can barely process the amount of terror against our people... The collective memory of a century was erased."
- **Hezbollah claims 11 operations against Israeli forces:** Hezbollah **announced** 11 military operations against Israeli forces in southern Lebanon on Sunday, concentrated around Al-Bayyada, Naqoura, Al-Qantara, and Houla, employing drone swarms, loitering gliders, rocket barrages, and artillery against troop gatherings, military vehicles, a command headquarters, and a newly established Israeli position in Blat. The group described the operations as "the minimum duty" to deter Israeli ceasefire violations and attacks on civilian villages, claiming confirmed hits on an Israeli command vehicle and personnel.
- **Netanyahu convenes emergency meeting over Hezbollah attacks:** Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu convened an emergency security meeting to assess the growing threat of Hezbollah attack drones, according to Israel's Channel 14, with discussions focusing on fiber-optic guided systems that make them resistant to electronic warfare.

Gaza, the West Bank, and Israel

- **Casualty count:** Over the last 24 hours, two Palestinians were killed and nine injured across Gaza. The total recorded death toll since October 7, 2023 has risen to 72,612 killed, with 172,457 injured. Since October 11, the first full day of the so-called ceasefire, Israel has killed at least 832 Palestinians in Gaza and wounded 2,354, while 767 bodies have been recovered from under the rubble, according to the Palestinian Ministry of Health.

- One Palestinian was **killed** and several injured on Monday following an Israeli strike in the southeast of Gaza City, according to Wafa. Another Palestinian was killed and several others wounded in a drone strike north of Al-Bureij refugee camp. In a separate earlier incident, 42-year-old Mousa Al-Abyad was shot and killed by Israeli forces in the Al-Atatra area in the northern Gaza Strip.

- Three Palestinians, including a child, were **killed** by Israeli forces in Gaza on Sunday, according to sources cited by Ultra Palestine. In the south, 15-year-old Riyad Abu Namer was killed by shrapnel from an Israeli drone strike in the Qizan Abu Rashwan area south of Khan Younis. Ahmad al-Harash was shot and killed by Israeli forces in Jabalia refugee camp in northern Gaza. A third Palestinian was killed east of Khan Younis.

- Muhammad Sbitan was **killed** by an Israeli drone strike, east of Deir al-Balah in central Gaza on Saturday, according to Palestine Online.

- Separately, Israeli forces carried out attacks across multiple areas of the strip on Saturday. Military vehicles targeted eastern Khan Younis, artillery struck western Rafah, and gunboats opened fire off the Khan Younis coast.

- **Over 1,600 Israeli settler and army attacks in April:** A total of 1,637 attacks were **carried out** by Israeli forces and settlers against Palestinians in the occupied West Bank in April, according to Mu'ayyad Shaaban, head of the Wall and Settlement Resistance Commission. Shaaban said Israeli forces were responsible for 1,097 of the attacks, while settlers carried out 540. The assaults included physical violence, uprooting and damaging thousands of olive trees, burning farmland, seizing property, and demolishing homes. The report noted the destruction, damage, or poisoning of 4,414 olive trees across several areas. The Israeli government announced the establishment of 34 new illegal settlements in April alone. A budget of about \$270 million to build roads connecting illegal settlements in the occupied West Bank was also approved on Monday, reported Haaretz.

- **Adalah: Flotilla activists beaten, held in stress positions and blindfolded in Israeli custody:** Human rights organization Adalah says lawyers **visited** flotilla activists Thiago de

Avila and Saif Abukeshek at Shikma Prison in Ashkelon on Friday. Both were detained when Israeli naval forces seized their vessels in international waters near Crete on April 30. De Avila told lawyers he was dragged face-down across the floor and beaten so severely he lost consciousness twice. He was kept blindfolded and in isolation, he said, and was interrogated by the Shabak intelligence agency and told he would face further interrogation on suspicions of “affiliation with a terrorist organization.” Abukeshek reported being kept hand-tied, blindfolded, and forced to lie face-down on the floor. Both men have declared a hunger strike. An Israeli court **extended** their detention until May 5, with no formal charges filed.

· **Israeli forces kill expectant father in Nablus at moment his wife delivers their first child:** Israeli forces shot and **killed** Naif Samaro, 26, during a raid in central Nablus on Sunday while he was shopping for baby clothes, the Palestinian Ministry of Health confirmed, with a Red Crescent source telling Haaretz he was pronounced dead at Rafidia Hospital at the same moment his wife was there giving birth to their first child. The Israeli military said troops used live fire to “remove a threat” after individuals threw stones; the Red Crescent treated 45 people for injuries sustained during the raid, most for tear gas inhalation. Palestinian media separately reported a 70-year-old man was shot in a commercial center in the city.

· **Palestinians commemorate Press day, highlight Israel’s targeting of journalists:** Palestinians in Gaza **gathered** Sunday to mark World Press Freedom Day 2026 as Israel’s assault on journalists, especially those reporting on its actions, continues. Drop Site News spoke with Tahseen al-Astal, deputy head of the Journalists Syndicate in Gaza, who shared the following updated figures:

- 262 journalists killed in Gaza
- 15 journalists killed in Lebanon
- 150 media institutions destroyed in Gaza
- 700 journalists’ homes demolished
- 900 journalists displaced, many now living in tents

“We are talking about terrifying and shocking numbers,” al-Astal told Drop Site, adding that the scale reflects a deliberate, systematic policy of targeting journalists. He called for urgent international action under humanitarian conventions.

· **IDF West Bank commander admits two-tiered use of force:** The head of IDF Central Command told a closed briefing that Israeli forces have been “killing [Palestinians] at a scale not seen since 1967,” Haaretz **reports**. Maj. Gen. Avi Bluth expressed pride in the fact that he

relaxed the rules of engagement for firing at Palestinians in the occupied West Bank, with an emphasis on those trying to cross the barrier into Israel. Bluth said the current rules of engagement permit soldiers to shoot a suspect in or below the knee while carrying out an arrest. “There are a lot of ‘limping monuments’ in Palestinian villages, of those who tried to, so there is a price being paid,” Bluth said. He added, “In 2025, we killed 42 stone-throwers on the roads.” At least 1,169 Palestinians have been killed, including 242 children, and 11,885 injured, in Israeli attacks in the occupied West Bank since October 2023.

- **Ben-Gvir’s noose cake:** Israel’s National Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir celebrated his 50th birthday on Saturday with a cake which was decorated with a golden noose alongside the phrase, “Sometimes dreams come true,” in reference to the newly-passed death penalty for Palestinian detainees. The law was heavily championed by Ben-Gvir.

U.S. News

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

- **Cuban man dies in ICE detention:** Denny Adan Gonzalez, a 33-year-old Cuban national, died at the Stewart Detention Center in Georgia on April 28, the agency [announced](#) on Friday. Gonzalez received CPR and other “life-saving” efforts after he was found unresponsive in his cell on April 28. ICE claimed the cause of death is a suspected suicide. Gonzalez is the 18th person to die in ICE detention so far in 2026.

- **DCCC expands “red to blue” list to 20 candidates:** The Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee [added](#) eight candidates to its “Red to Blue” program, which identifies top contenders in districts the party believes it can flip from Republican control. In California’s 22nd District, the committee is backing assemblywoman and physician **Jasmeet Bains** over **Randy Villegas**, who holds endorsements from the Congressional Progressive Caucus and the Congressional Hispanic Caucus’s campaign arm, in a race to unseat Republican Rep. **David Valadao**. In Pennsylvania’s Seventh District, the committee is elevating **Bob Brooks**, president of a firefighters union, who holds the rare combined backing of the moderate **Blue Dog PAC**, Senator **Bernie Sanders**, and Pennsylvania Governor **Josh Shapiro**, over Marine veteran and Justice Department official **Ryan Crosswell**.

- **Fifth Circuit halts telemedicine prescribing and mail delivery of abortion pill mifepristone:** A federal appeals court panel on Friday temporarily [blocked](#) abortion providers from prescribing mifepristone via telemedicine and delivering it by mail, suspending an FDA rule that had removed the in-person visit requirement. The order follows from a case brought by the state of Louisiana against the FDA; the state alleges that the

agency's rules about the provision of mail-order abortion medication allows residents of the state to circumvent the state's near-total abortion ban. The Fifth Circuit ruled in Louisiana's favor, saying that the state had shown it was "irreparably harmed" in the matter. Medication abortion currently accounts for nearly two-thirds of all abortions in the United States.

- **New School Hillel sends money to support IDF units:** The Student Senate at The New School in New York City [voted](#) on Friday to suspend funding to Hillel after the group was found to have taken money from mandatory student fees and used it to send students to "logistically support" units in the IDF, including the notorious Golani Brigade, which has been accused of murdering paramedics in Gaza. On Saturday, the school rejected the vote, with a spokesperson for the university saying that the student senate did not have "the authority to determine the recognition, funding eligibility, or official status of registered student organizations." "The administration is taking immediate steps to address the USS's action and ensure it acts within its actual purview, now and going forward," the statement added.

- **Trump says U.S. will cut troop presence in Germany "way down":** After the Pentagon announced on Friday that the United States would reduce its military presence in Germany by 5,000 troops, President Donald Trump [said](#) Saturday a much larger reduction is planned. "We're going to cut way down. And we're cutting a lot further than 5,000," he told reporters. The withdrawal of the 5,000 troops—roughly one-seventh of the approximately 36,000 American service members stationed in Germany—is scheduled over the next six to 12 months. U.S. military branches were not informed of the decision in advance and learned of it "in real time," according to a defense official who spoke on condition of anonymity with CNBC. The drawdown occasioned immediate congressional resistance, with Republican Senate Armed Services Committee chair **Roger Wicker** of Mississippi and House counterpart **Mike Rogers** of Alabama saying Saturday they were "very concerned" about the decision.

- **Tucker Carlson tells NYT that Netanyahu holds "total control" over Trump:** Conservative commentator Tucker Carlson [said](#) in an interview with The New York Times that Trump is a "hostage" to Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, citing Israel's alleged derailment of U.S.-Iran ceasefire negotiations that Trump had sought and its continued attacks on southern Lebanon in violation of ceasefire terms. Carlson said Trump's public silence in response amounted to "slavery" and "total control of one man by another." In the same interview, Carlson conditionally [praised](#) Maine Democratic Senate candidate Graham Platner for his foreign policy positions, but noted disagreement with Platner on his domestic agenda, saying that there is "no justification for immigration of any kind."

- **Jake Sullivan and Ben Rhodes revive National Security Action ahead of 2028, tapping Palestinian-American Maher Bitar to lead:** Senior Democrats are [reviving](#) the foreign

policy group co-founded by former Biden national security adviser Jake Sullivan and former Obama aide Ben Rhodes ahead of the 2028 race. National Security Action will be led by Maher Bitar, a Palestinian-American who served on Biden's National Security Council before joining Senator Adam Schiff's office in 2023, Axios reports. The revival comes as the party's foreign policy direction is described as "wide open," with Sullivan, a key architect of U.S. backing for Israel's war on Gaza, and Rhodes, who has described that war as a genocide, both remaining involved.

- **Michigan professor praises pro-Palestinian students in graduation speech, university apologizes:** Derek Peterson, a University of Michigan historian and MacArthur Genius Grant recipient, [thanked](#) "pro-Palestinian student activists" during a graduation speech on Saturday, for "opening our hearts to the injustices and inhumanity of Israel's war in Gaza." The university's president, Domenico Grasso, immediately [issued](#) an apology for Peterson's remarks, calling them "hurtful," "insensitive," and "inappropriate," and said that they "do not represent" Michigan's "institutional position."

- **Two U.S. service members missing in Morocco:** U.S. Africa Command [said](#) Sunday that two American service members went missing Saturday near the Cap Draa Training Area outside Tan Tan in southwestern Morocco during the annual African Lion multinational military exercise, with U.S., Moroccan, and partner nation forces conducting a search and rescue operation using ground, air, and maritime assets.

Other International News

- **Trump imposes sweeping Cuba sanctions:** President Donald Trump [signed](#) an executive order on Friday imposing broad new sanctions on Cuba, targeting its energy, defense, metals, mining, financial services, and security sectors, with secondary sanctions authorized against any foreign person facilitating transactions with those designated. The Trump administration accused Havana of aligning with Iran and Hezbollah and providing "a permissive environment for hostile foreign intelligence, military, and terrorist operations less than 100 miles from the American homeland." Cuban President Miguel Díaz-Canel denounced the measures as reinforcing a "brutal, genocidal" blockade, which has suffocated the island and contributed to major nationwide blackouts.

- **Iraq ships oil through Syria for first time since 2011:** A convoy of 70 Iraqi crude oil tankers [crossed](#) into Syria via the al-Yarubiyah border crossing Friday, bound for the Baniyas refinery on Syria's Mediterranean coast, marking the first use of the route since the Syrian civil war shut it down in 2011, according to Syria's SANA news agency. The Strait of Hormuz closure has collapsed Iraqi oil production from more than 4 million barrels per day to roughly 1.1 million, cutting revenues by 70% and forcing Baghdad to seek alternatives.

- **Sinaloa governor temporarily resigns after U.S. drug trafficking indictment:** Sinaloa Governor Rubén Rocha Moya [announced](#) he is taking “temporary leave” to fight a U.S. indictment charging him and nine other officials with directly aiding the Sinaloa cartel in exchange for bribes and political support. The mayor of the state capital, Culiacán, also charged, also announced a leave of absence.
- **Russian drone strike on Kherson bus kills two, wounds seven:** Russia [killed](#) two people and wounded seven more early Saturday in a drone strike on a bus in Kherson, regional authorities said, with most casualties among public utilities workers. Ukraine’s air force reported downing 142 of 163 long-range drones launched by Russia overnight Saturday, with a separate strike on the Odesa region damaging a warehouse and neighboring buildings at a port.
- **Ukraine strikes Russian oil port and shadow fleet tankers:** Ukraine [launched](#) dozens of drones at Primorsk on Sunday, hitting one of Russia’s largest Baltic Sea oil export hubs. A fire was reported, according to the region’s governor, but there was no oil spill. President Volodymyr Zelenskyy separately announced strikes on two shadow fleet tankers near the Black Sea port of Novorossiysk, saying, “these tankers had been actively used to transport oil—not anymore.”
- **Jean-Luc Mélenchon announces fourth French presidential bid:** Jean-Luc Mélenchon, 74, leader of the left-wing La France Insoumise, [announced](#) Sunday he will run for president in 2027, telling TF1, “Yes, I am a candidate.” Mélenchon, who narrowly missed the 2022 runoff by 1.2 points, is running on a platform of replacing the Fifth Republic with a “Sixth Republic,” withdrawing France from NATO, and imposing an arms embargo on Israel, saying Sunday that “Israel’s economy cannot survive without Europe.” Current President Emmanuel Macron is term-limited and far-right Marine Le Pen faces a five-year ban from public office over EU funds embezzlement, currently under appeal.
- **U.S. and Philippines display anti-ship missile system near Taiwan:** U.S. and Philippine forces [showcased](#) the NMESIS coastal anti-ship missile system in Batanes province—roughly 100 miles south of Taiwan along the strategically vital Luzon Strait—during annual exercises involving more than 17,000 troops. China has intensified naval activity around Taiwan and erected a barrier at the mouth of Scarborough Shoal. Beijing routinely condemns U.S. weapons deployments to the Philippines as escalatory, calling them part of a U.S.-led “encirclement” of China.
- **Austria expels three Russian diplomats over alleged espionage:** The Austrian foreign ministry declared three Russian Embassy staff personae non gratae after authorities alleged they were running a satellite-intercept operation from rooftop antennas on the Russian

Embassy and a nearby diplomatic compound. The setup allegedly captured internet traffic from international organizations headquartered in Vienna—including the IAEA, OPEC, and the OSCE.