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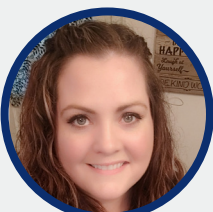
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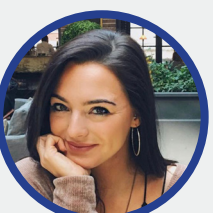
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Washington Insider

ABOUT US



We believe in providing our audience with independent journalism throughout expert writers, analysts and journalists. Our culture is distinguished by unwavering grit, honesty, and a focus on innovation.

Transatlantic Today delighted to present the Washington Insider Magazine, a product that we present to our readers in Washington DC and beyond. Our magazine publishes unique and independent coverage on transatlantic relations with a Washington perspective. Transatlantic Today covers policymaking, politics and business related to the transatlantic relationship.

Our magazine strives to be become a key news analysis source for news on politics and policymakers in the US with particular focus on DC. Our coverage is designed with nonpartisan journalism and real-time tools create, inform and engage a those seeking timely and concise news.

Our work is designed by relentless grit, integrity and a prioritization of urgent and newsworthy topics.

In both of our website and and this magazine we cover topics about Diplomacy, Security, Defence, Counter Terrorism, foreign policy and international affairs. Indeed our reporting, OPeds, interviews with various stakeholders provide unique insights and analysis as well as the tools to arm you with the intel you need to make informed decisions.

Here I wish to commend.

Hannah Ochocki
Editorial Team

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TEXAS SCHOOL SHOOTING



INFLATION REACHED A NEW
HIGH OF 7.5% IN NATIONS
USING EURO

House Jan. 6 Committee Sets A Date For Prime-Time Hearing

By Athena Nagel



Next week, the House panel probing the Capitol insurgency will make its discoveries public in a prime-time hearing, the first step in what members believe will be a high-profile airing of the reasons and repercussions of the internal assault on the US administration.

According to ABC NEWS, legislators intend to hold a series of hearings in June that will detail how ex – president Donald Trump and his supporters worked diligently to invalidate his loss in the 2020 presidential election, spreading misinformation about massive voter fraud – which have been widely discredited by courts as well as his own administration – that bolstered a violent violent attack on the seat of democracy.

The 6 hearings, which will commence on June 9 and extend through late June, would be the first time the panel releases “pre-

viously unseen material” concerning what it has learned during a ten-month inquiry into practically every facet of the insurgency.

The committee was founded in the wake of the domestic terrorist assault on the Capitol, which has been dubbed “one of the darkest days of democracy.” Its mission is to study the facts, conditions, and causes surrounding the attack.

Unlike any other contemporary legislative panel, the committee’s investigation has been both eagerly awaited by Democrats and repeatedly rebuked by Trump and his supporters, along with some Congressional republicans, who claim it is partisan.

The panel questioned around 1,000 individuals, and only portions of their testimony have been released to the public, largely

through legal filings. The hearings are scheduled to feature a number of witnesses, but the identities have not yet been made public by the committee.



The investigation has looked into every aspect of the uprising, including Trump’s and his allies’ attempts to cast uncertainty on the election and prevent President Joe Biden’s win from being certified; the funding and planning of protests in Washington prior to the assault; security lapses by federal authorities and Capitol Police; and the rioters’ actions.

The hearings are anticipated to be lengthy, but they will not be the panel’s final word; it wants to deliver future assessments on its discoveries, including legislative reform suggestions, ahead of the November elections.

Republican Steps Down From Wisconsin Elections Commission

By Henry Nicholas

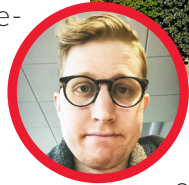
The Wisconsin Elections Commission temporarily halted appointing a new chairman on Tuesday after a Republican official who could have contested for the position stepped down, claiming that the state GOP does not want him to lead the commission since he believes Joe Biden won the election fairly.

According to ABC NEWS, Dean Knudson informed the commission in his parting speech that Republican members have labeled him a "RINO," or Republican In Name Only, a derogatory phrase Republicans use to refer to party members who they believe aren't conservative enough.

Despite the fact that repeated recounts and court judgements have revealed no massive fraud and that Biden beat Trump by approximately 21,000 votes in Wisconsin, Knudson thinks the GOP has "falsely peddled" conspiracy theories claiming Biden somehow took the state from Trump.

Three Republicans and three Democrats make up the commission. Every 2 years, the chairmanship is rotated between the parties. This year is the turn of the Republicans to lead the country.

Only Knudson and Republican commissioner Bob Spindell are qualified for the position, according to state law. Spindell has been outspoken in his support for the position.



Despite Trump's loss in Wisconsin, Spindell was one of ten Republicans who voted for him in the Electoral College. Last week, he as well as the other fake GOP members were sued.

The next chair will take office in November and in the run-up to the 2024 presidential race in Wisconsin, which is a battleground state. The chair is required by state law to authorize the vote canvass after elections and to certify the results. The chair also determines the commission's agenda and has some say in how questions are phrased, a significant power on a panel that is evenly split between Democrats and Republicans.

Knudson urged that the commission wait until Assembly Speaker Robin Vos chooses his successor

before voting. Despite Spindell's pleas, the panel voted 5-1 to delay the competition until its June 10 session. The sole commissioner who ruled against the proposal was Spindell.

Amidst the commission's observations that the 2020 election was free of voting fraud, Republicans have chastised it for a number of choices made in the run-up to the election, along with not sending special voting officers into care facilities to assist inhabitants with absentee votes while the COVID-19 pandemic was erupting and continuing to expand the usage of ballot drop boxes.

The four Republican contenders for governor all demand the commission to be abolished. Tim Michels, the last skeptic, first stated that he wanted to maintain the

commission but reform its operations, but on Wednesday he switched his position and stated that the institution should be abolished. The 3 Republican contenders for secretary of state want the office to take up election control from the commission.

Spindell has stated he favors keeping the commission in operation, but in a speech Tuesday evening, he said that he would support a Republican secretary of state taking over election control.

He claims that no one knows what the commission does, and that many Wisconsin people are still unsure whether the board's choices in the run-up to the 2020 election were constitutional.

Trans Sports Ban Veto Set To Be Overridden By Indiana Legislators

By Kathy Malouf



The Republican-controlled Indiana Legislature is expected to override the governor's veto of a legislation prohibiting transgender students from participating in girls' sports on Tuesday, bringing Indiana into line with over a dozen other states that have passed similar legislation in the last 2 years.

The Indiana legislation passed by huge numbers in both the Senate and the House before being vetoed by Republican Governor Eric Holcomb in March, claiming that it did not offer a uniform policy for "fairness in K-12 sports."

Critics of Indiana's prohibition have claimed that it is a discriminatory approach to a non-existent problem. They claim there is little chance that enough members will change their votes to prevent the veto overturn, which only requires simple majority votes in the Senate and House.

According to ABC NEWS, the bill's Republican supporters argue that it is necessary to defend the integrity of female athletics and opportunities for females to obtain college athletic scholarships. How-

ever, no cases of trans athletes outperforming other girls have been documented in the state.

Before the Legislature's anticipated Tuesday afternoon voting, activists staged a Statehouse protest against the prohibition. The American Civil Liberties Union of Indiana has announced that it will file a lawsuit against "hateful legislation" in the hopes of preventing it from going into effect on July 1 as planned.

Holcomb's veto comes a day after Republican Utah Governor Spencer Cox vetoed an identical ban, claiming that such measures target vulnerable youngsters already at danger of suicide. Days later, Utah's Republican legislators overrode the veto, part of a surge of similar bills that political watchers describe as a typical "wedge issue" to mobilize conservative voters.

Holcomb cited the Indiana High School Athletic Association in his veto letter, which has a guideline supporting transgender kids who wish to play sports that reflect

their gender identification and has stated that no transgender girls have filed a request to participate on a female squad. Kids who identify as transgender males or fe-

males would be allowed to play on boys sports teams under the rule.

In his veto letter, Holcomb stated that the legislation assumed there

is an existing issue in Indiana K-12 sports that demands additional state government interference, but he found no evidence supporting that allegation.

House Panel Rejects Justice Department's Request

By Eric Gahagan

For the time being, a request by the Department Of Justice for access to the panel's interviews has been denied by the House committee probing the January 6 insurrection in the United States Capitol.

The request was issued as part of the Justice Department's active criminal investigation into the assault, according to Rep. Bennie Thompson, D-Miss., the panel's chairman. However, he said it was "premature" for the panel to reveal its findings at this time because the investigation is still on.

The Justice Department's petition comes as investigators have issued subpoenas and sought interviews with those who were engaged in the planning of events leading up to last year's Capitol attack. According to ABC NEWS, the request to the House committee demonstrates the extent of the Justice probe into one of the biggest assaults on democracy in American history, which has conducted over 1,000 interviews so far.

Since a House committee laid out a rationale for what its members consider could be a credible



criminal proceeding against former President Donald Trump on January 6, the Department Of Justice and Attorney General Merrick Garland have been under mounting pressure to prosecute him.

The Justice Department investigation — the largest criminal investigation in US history — has focused largely on prosecuting those who attacked the Capitol in an effort to prevent the certification of Joe Biden's presidential victory by pushing past and beating down overwhelmed police officials until they were battered and bruised. Over 800 individuals have been apprehended in the 16 months since the uprising began, with around 280 of them pleading guilty to various federal offenses.

Garland has provided no hint that the prosecution is thinking about bringing a lawsuit against Trump. He has promised, however, to hold all offenders of the January 6th attack, at any degree, accountable, including those who were there on that day or were somehow criminally liable for the attack on the democracy.

Thompson said that the committee had provided some evidence to the local, state, and federal agencies.

As part of its probe into Russian meddling in the 2016 presidential election, the Senate intelligence committee turned down a similar request.



Republicans Split Over Pennsylvania's Governor Race

By The Editor

As Pennsylvania Republican politicians prepare to nominate a governor candidate on Tuesday, several party insiders are worried about the likelihood of a primary win by a candidate who they believe is too far to the right to succeed statewide this fall.

Doug Mastriano, a former United States Army colonel and state senator since 2019, had dominated polls despite spending a fraction of the funds spent by some of the remaining 8 Republican primary contenders.

Mastriano recently received Donald Trump's endorsement after assisting the former president in overturning his defeat in the presidential battle in 2020 and spreading Trump's falsehoods that rampant election fraud cost him victory. Many party insiders advised Trump against endorsing Mastriano, thinking that he would struggle to win over the moderate supporters needed to win in Pennsylvania's politically split state.

Meanwhile, Democrats are rallying behind Josh Shapiro, the state's 2-term attorney general. According to ABC NEWS, he is unopposed in the primary after winning the support of the state party and its major supporters, such as the AFL-CIO, and raising over \$20 million since early 2021.

Shapiro solidified his image by leading a historic grand jury probe into child sex abuse coverups within Pennsylvania's Roman Catholic



dioceses and successfully defending Pennsylvania's 2020 election outcome against Trump and his supporters in court.

They're competing for the chance to replace Democratic Governor Tom Wolf, who is serving his second term after taking office in 2015. The winner will almost certainly share authority with a Republican-controlled Legislature, which has had an entrenched GOP majority for 30 years.

Mastriano has assured voters that he is not an extreme right candidate, and that his policies, which include lowering school property taxes, prohibiting abortion, extending gun rights, and removing mail-in voting, have widespread support.

Rather, he claims that Democrats, namely President Joe Biden, are far-left revolutionaries determined to defeat him, and that the Republican "swamp" is working

against him. Meanwhile, Shapiro's campaign is airing a TV ad depicting Mastriano as a right-wing extremist and claiming that if Mastriano succeeds, "it's a win for what Donald Trump stands for."

Mastriano represents a largely Republican state Senate seat in Franklin County, which borders Maryland on the south.

Despite the fact that two candidates — Melissa Hart and Jake Corman — have stopped their campaigns and backed former U.S. Rep. Lou Barletta in a final effort to defeat Mastriano, Republican electors will see 9 candidates on the ballot for governor.

Former and current Republican legislators, including congress members, have given Barletta their support.

Besides from Hart, Corman, Barletta, and Mastriano, the Re-

publican candidates for governor include: Charlie Gerow, a marketing specialist and longtime conservative activist; Joe Gale, a Montgomery County commissioner; Bill

McSwain, a lawyer who served as the Trump-appointed U.S. attorney in Philadelphia; Nche Zama, a veteran heart surgeon who has directed units at different hospitals

in Pennsylvania; and Dave White, who runs a successful plumbing and HVAC company and is a former Delaware County councilman.

Lawyer Accused In Russia Investigation Stands Trial

By The Editor



A federal prosecution for a counsel for Hillary Clinton's presidential election campaign is set to begin on Monday. He is accused of lying to the FBI during an investigation into possible links between Russia and Donald Trump in 2016.

According to ABC NEWS, the lawsuit against Michael Sussmann, a cybersecurity lawyer who represented the Clinton campaign in 2016, is the first court case emerging from special counsel

John Durham's active investigation, and it will assess the power of evidence he and his team have collected while scrutinizing the initial days of the Russia-Trump investigation for potential wrongdoing.

Acquittal would almost obviously motivate Trump voters who have long looked to Durham to reveal what they perceive as biased persecution of the former president.

Sussmann is charged with deceiving the FBI's then-general attorney throughout a meeting in September 2016 in which he provided research indicating what he claimed was a worrisome backchannel of communication between Trump Organization computer servers and Alfa Bank in Russia.

Prosecution said Sussmann lied by claiming he wasn't at the meeting on behalf of any one client when, in fact, he was representing

two: the Clinton campaign as well as a technology executive who assisted in the data collection.

Durham's team contends that if the FBI had been given the truth, it would have influenced the bureau's evaluation of the Alfa Bank asserts when deciding whether to investigate. The FBI investigated the matter but discovered nothing untoward in the end.

Sussmann's attorneys dispute he lied, but argue that the alleged deception is irrelevant in any case because there's no proof that what the FBI did or didn't know regarding his political ties influenced its decision-making.

On Monday, jurors will be chosen in federal court in Washington. In a nod to the trial's highly charged character, prospective jurors are

being questioned if they voted in 2016 and if they or anybody close to them was involved in the investigation into possible links between Russia and the Trump campaign.

Durham was appointed by then-Attorney General William Barr in 2019 to investigate any wrongdoing while the US government investigated alleged collusion between Russia and the 2016 Trump campaign to manipulate the election result. A prior special counsel inquiry, led by Robert Mueller, found no evidence of an illegal conspiracy between Russia and the Trump campaign, while it did determine that Russia attempted to help Trump win the election.

Durham's investigation has led to 3 criminal prosecutions, but only one has gone to trial: the one

against Sussmann.

Kevin Clinesmith, a former FBI lawyer, pled guilty in 2020 to tampering with an email connected to secret FBI monitoring of Carter Page, an ex-Trump campaign aide. The FBI used an anti-Trump document dubbed as the "Steele dossier" to petition for warrants to listen in on Page. The dossier included unsubstantiated assertions and speculations.

Durham accused a Russia expert who was a contributor for the dossier of lying to the Authorities of his own information sources, one of whom was a longstanding Hillary Clinton backer, last year. Igor Danchenko has entered a no contest plea. The matter is still pending, with a trial date set for October.

North Carolina Oath Keeper Has Pleaded Guilty To Seditious Conspiracy

By Eric Gahagan

On Wednesday, a man from North Carolina pled guilty to plotting with other supporters of the extreme right Oath Keepers militant group to disrupt the peaceful transition of power following President Joe Biden's election victory in 2020.

According to ABC NEWS, William Todd Wilson, 44, of Newton Grove, North Carolina, is the 3rd member of the Oath Keepers to plead guilty to a seditious conspiracy charge coming from the invasion on the United States



Capitol on Jan. 6, 2021.

Last Friday, Brian Ulrich, 44, of Guyton, Georgia, pled guilty to the same offense. The first Oath Keepers supporter to admit guilt to seditious conspiracy was Joshua James, 34, of Arab, Alabama.

Stewart Rhodes, 55, of Granbury, Texas, and 8 other Oath Keepers members have pleaded not guilty to counts of seditious conspiracy and other crimes. In July, a prosecution for a few of them is set to begin.

Wilson, unlike Ulrich and James, was not charged in the seditious conspiracy allegation when it was first indicted in January 2022.

The charge is seldom used. Prior to January, the last time US prosecutors launched a seditious conspiracy case was in 2010 in Michigan, when members of the Hutaree militia allegedly plotted to inspire a revolt against the government.

According to a court document, Wilson has been a member of the Oath Keeper since 2016 and was

the Sampson County head of the group's North Carolina branch. He is described as a police and military veteran in the lawsuit, but no specifics about his service are provided.

Wilson traveled to the Washington region on Jan. 5 with ammo, a handgun, a rifle, and other battle gear. Prosecutors claimed he left the firearms in a Virginia hotel room but was equipped with a pocketknife and disguised himself with a beanie cap and neck gaiter when he and other Oath Keepers stormed the Capitol on Jan. 6.

In "stack" formations, Oath Keepers militants outfitted in paramilitary garb attacked the Capitol. According to prosecution, others collected weapons on the suburbs of Washington, D.C., and were ready to transport them into the metropolis on January 6 if Rhodes or his accomplices de-

cided the need arose. The group's "quick reaction force" teams didn't bring firearms into Washington in the end.

Wilson joined a crowd of individuals attempting to open the Rotunda Doors from within the Capitol before leaving, according to prosecution.

According to a court document, Wilson accompanied Rhodes and others in a hotel's private room later that afternoon, when Rhodes repeatedly pushed someone to encourage Trump to call on organizations like the Oath Keepers to aggressively fight the political transition over a speaker phone. The person on the other end of the line declined to let Rhodes talk with Trump directly.

Wilson dumped his smartphone into the Atlantic Ocean several days after returning home, authorities say, to keep its records

out of the hands of police.

Wilson also admitted to impeding an official procedure by refusing to declare Biden's win over former President Donald Trump before the joint session of Congress.

Four additional Oath Keepers members have agreed to plead guilty for obstruction of Congress and a misdemeanor charge of conspiracy. The maximum sentence for a seditious conspiracy sentence is 20 years, compared to 5 years for a lesser conspiracy crime.

Over 780 persons have been charged with federal charges in connection with the disturbance on Jan. 6. Over 270 of them have entered pleas, the majority of them to misdemeanors. Over 160 of them have already been sentenced.



While Honoring NHL Champion Lightning, Biden Stays Away From Politics

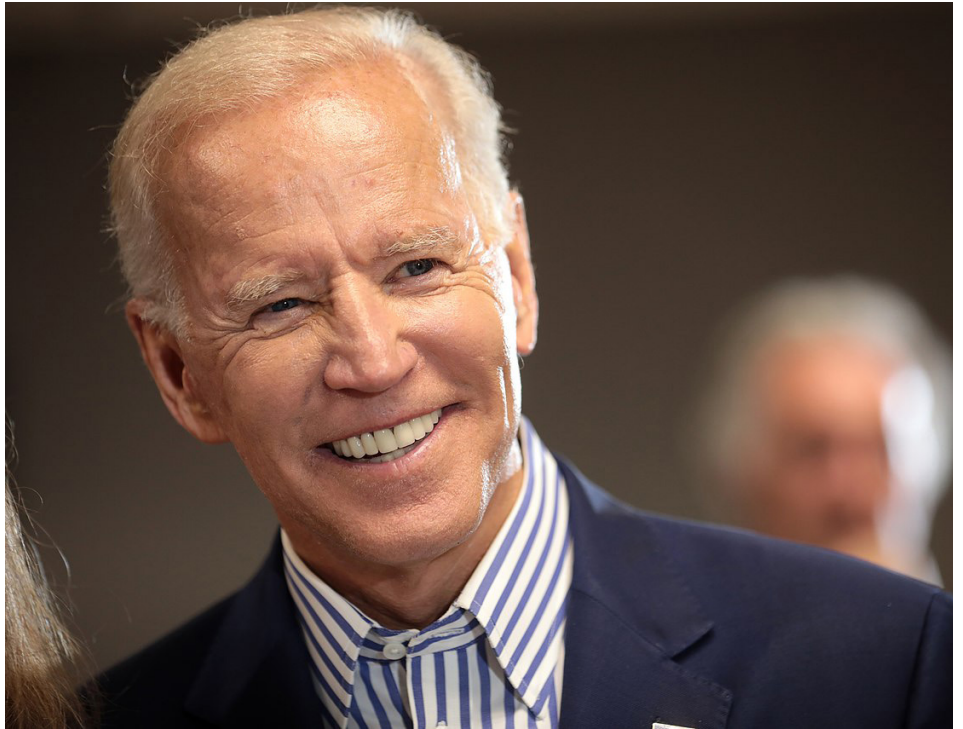


BY AMBER ERWIN

Joe Biden joked that after 14 seasons in the NHL, Steven Stamkos was getting old, applauded the Tampa Bay Lightning's vaccination efforts, and largely dodged politics while congratulating the club for lifting the Stanley Cup in each of the last 2 seasons.

In a rare pause from his administration's answer to Russia's military campaign in Ukraine, president mentioned first lady Jill Biden's participation at a vaccination event at the Lightning's home field last year and praised the team on having won 2 pandemic championships: one in a vacant building in a quarantined bubble and the other in front of a big crowd in Tampa.

While discussing the Lightning's back-to-back championship wins, Biden said nothing about the players apart from Stamkos, who relied highly on Russian forward Nikita Kucherov, goalkeeper Andrei Vasilevskiy, and defender Mikhail Sergachev. Last year's playoff MVP was Vasilevskiy, and Kucherov was the leading scorer in both rounds.



All 3 players were in attendance, and Sergachev posted images of them on social media from around the White House. According to ABC NEWS, there were no notable oversights, and a few athletes from the Lightning's 2020 championship squad who had gone or retired even made an appearance.

The squad traveled to the country's capital for the third time in 8 months, having already visited the Washington Capitals twice this season. The Lightning traveled home late Sunday night following a game against the Florida Panthers, and will face the Columbus Blue Jackets this Tuesday in one of their final regular matches before the playoffs start next week.

Despite lifting the Stanley Cup 3

times (in 2004, 2020, and 2021), it was the Lightning's first trip to the White House with a serving president. The NHL lockout in 2004-05 stopped the squad from visiting, and the pandemic postponed the chance until 9 months after the 2nd of these back-to-back titles.

Biden scored some brownie points by praising the Tampa Bay region for the Rays' World Series appearance in 2020 and the Buccaneers' Super Bowl victory a year later.

The Lightning are back among the NHL's elite teams, and they're aiming to become the first club since the early 1980s' New York Islanders dynasty to win the Cup 3 years in a row.

Ukraine To Receive Longer-Range Rocket Systems From Biden Administration

By The Editor



In a New York Times opinion article published Tuesday, President Joe Biden stated that he will supply more armaments and sophisticated rocket systems to the Ukrainians, allowing them to more precisely hit vital targets on the battleground in Ukraine.

The declaration was made as part of an article outlining the Biden administration's objectives in Ukraine.

The most sophisticated rocket systems, according to the White House National Security Council, are longer-range Multiple Launch Rocket Systems, or MLRS. Officials say they're competent at striking Russia, but they're not meant to fire rockets into Russia or be utilized outside of Ukraine.

Ukraine has committed not to

utilize them to fire rockets into Russia, according to a high ranking administration official.

The \$700 million package, according to the high ranking official, would comprise more weapons and systems than the US has already delivered Ukraine, along with more Javelin missiles.

The decision to deliver the long-range missile systems to Ukraine had been disputed in the Biden administration, with officials debating whether Moscow would regard the US approving Ukraine's request for them as intimidatory due to their range. Biden has reached a decision, officials indicated early Tuesday, and an announcement might come as soon as the next day.

Ukraine has been pressuring the Biden office for the US-made

weapons and equipment for weeks, but defense officials have warned that it is a difficult system that will take weeks to train.

According to a defense official, the Defense Department believes that basic operational training for Ukrainian forces can be reduced to a week or 2, with extended training programmes for system maintenance. According to the official, all training will take place outside of Ukraine.

Biden is still considering sending the MLRS to Ukraine, according to White House press secretary Karine Jean-Pierre. She claimed that Biden has stated that the US will not transfer rocket systems to Ukraine for use outside of the conflict.

Biden Meets Parents Of American Who Was Abducted In Syria

By The Editor

Austin Tice's family had been waiting for a decade for their son, a Marine Corps veteran and American reporter who was kidnapped in Syria. President Biden wasted no time after making a public appeal for help over the weekend.

After the meeting, White House press secretary Jen Psaki said in a statement that the president emphasized his intention to continue working through all possible means to facilitate Austin's long-awaited reunion with his family.

Biden's national security staff will keep in touch with the Tice family, as well as the relatives of other hostages, according to Psaki.

The president's attention has been drawn to Tice's situation after the president of the White House Correspondents' Association paid tribute to him at the group's annual dinner on Saturday, urging his mother to stand and be recognised.

Later that evening, in his remarks, Biden expressed interest in meeting with Tice's parents.

That high-profile scene at the White House Correspondents' Association dinner comes days after Trevor Reed, an American veteran Marine who had been detained in Russia for 2 years, was released as part of a global prisoner exchange — a deal that came together weeks after Reed's family had their own White House discussion with their president.

The couple had previously met

with State Secretary Antony Blinken and National Security Adviser Jake Sullivan, but Psaki described the meeting with Biden as a significant step forward.

The meeting, according to State Department spokesman Ned Price, demonstrates the administration's dedication to bringing Tice home, saying he has been apart from his parents for far too long and "we're doing everything we can" to ensure that happens.

Tice's incarceration, on the other hand, presents distinct complications. Reed's release came after months of difficult discussions between Moscow and the United States. However, since the start of Syria's civil conflict in 2012, the US has had no official diplomatic connections with the nation, some-

thing Tice's mother has expressed dissatisfaction with in previous interviews.

Despite this issue, Price believes the US will be able to secure Tice's release.

According to ABC NEWS, Tice vanished in 2012 while reporting about the Free Syrian Army, a group of Syrian military personnel who had joined the resistance to Syrian President Bashar al-Assad. A month later, a video surfaced showing him blindfolded, removing himself from a car, and being carried up a hill by armed men while saying, "Oh, Jesus." He hasn't been seen or heard from since then.

For intelligence leading to Tice's secure location, rescue, and return, the FBI is offering a reward of up to \$1 million.



First Lady To Meet Ukrainian Refugees In Slovakia, Romania

By The Editor



The White House announced Sunday that Jill Biden would spend Mother's Day engaging with Ukrainian mothers and kids who escaped for their lives when Russian President Vladimir Putin declared war on Ukraine.

According to ABC NEWS, the meeting on May 8 will take effect in Slovakia, 1 of 2 eastern European nations the first lady intends to travel during a 5-day tour that begins on Thursday. She will also make a stop in Romania.

Biden's visit will be his latest display of support for Ukraine.

Ukraine, which has spent the last 2 months battling against Russia's armed invasion, shares borders with Slovakia and Romania. Slovakia and Romania are also members of NATO.

According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, about 5.5 million Ukrainians, mainly children and women, have escaped since Russia attacked its tiny neighbor on February 24. Many have migrated to neighboring nations or to other parts of Europe.

Jill Biden will speak with US service personnel, US embassy staff, educators, and humanitarian relief workers during her trip, according to the White House.

She is set to visit with US service men at Mihail Kogalniceanu Air Base, a US military facility near the Black Sea, after landing in Romania on Friday.

On Saturday, she will travel to Bucharest, Romania's capital, to meet with U.S. Embassy officials, government officials, educators, and humanitarian relief workers

who are assisting in the education of displaced Ukrainian children. The first lady will fly to Bratislava, Slovakia, to meet with officials at the US Embassy.

Jill Biden will go to Slovakia's Vysne Nemecke and Kosice on May 8 to meet with humanitarian assistance workers, refugees, and local Slovaks who are assisting Ukrainian families seeking asylum in Slovakia.

On May 9, she will meet with officials of the Slovakian government before heading back to the United States.

Following her travel to Tokyo previous year for the kickoff of the postponed 2020 Olympic Games, it will be the first lady's 2nd international excursion. The visit will also be her most recent show of support for Ukraine.

Biden attended a White House function wearing a face mask decorated with a sunflower, Ukraine's national flower, 4 days after Russia invaded Ukraine on February 24.

She also asked Oksana Markarova, Ukraine's envoy States, to sit beside her at President Joe Biden's State of the Union speech in March, and had a sunflower sewed into the sleeves of the blue outfit she wore for the event.

During a visit to Poland in March, President Biden met with Ukrainian refugees.

Ketanji Brown Jackson Marks Confirmation To Supreme Court

By *Conor La Rourke*

On Friday, President Joe Biden welcomed Judge Ketanji Brown Jackson at the White House to commemorate her Senate confirmation as the first Black woman to serve on the Supreme Court.

At the ceremony on the South Lawn, Biden appeared with Vice President Kamala Harris — the 1st Black woman to occupy that elective position — and Jackson to applause and cheers.

“We’re going to look back and see this as a moment of real change in American history,” Biden said, adding that he has long considered the necessity of choosing a Black woman to the Supreme Court.

Jackson expressed her sincere gratitude to all who stood with her during the confirmation process.

She noted it took more than 230

years “and 115 prior appointments” for a Black woman to be appointed to the Supreme Court of the United States, her eyes watering up at times and her voice heavy with emotion. “But we’ve made it, we’ve made it, we’ve made it. All of us.”

The notion that America might establish a more ideal union has propelled the country forward for years, according to Harris, and it is this belief that the Senate confirmed yesterday with its decision to confirm Jackson.

Jackson was approved by the Senate on Thursday with a 53-47 majority. All 50 Democratic party members joined Republican Senators Mitt Romney of Utah, Lisa Murkowski of Alaska, and Susan Collins of Maine.

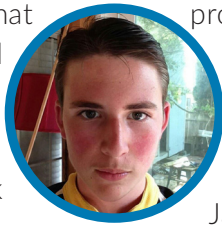
Collins has tested Covid positive, Murkowski is in Alaska for a conference, and a representative for

Romney has stated that he would not be joining the event on Friday. The Utah Republican and former Republican presidential candidate in 2012 was the sole Republican to applaud Jackson’s approval following the vote.

At the White House on Thursday, Biden and Jackson saw the result unravel.

According to NBC NEWS, Jackson will not be appointed to the Supreme Court until the conclusion of the current term, which is projected to occur in June or July, when Justice Stephen Breyer is scheduled to depart and Biden fulfills a key campaign pledge to name the first Black woman to the court.

Because she is replacing a liberal justice, the Supreme Court will retain a 6-3 conservative balance after Jackson takes her seat on the bench.



US Plans Further Sanctions Against Russia Following Bucha Killings

By Randy Whitehead

Following accusations of a mass killing of people by Russian soldiers in the Ukrainian village of Bucha, President Joe Biden said on Monday that he is pursuing more sanctions against Russia and once again branded President Vladimir Putin a war criminal.

"You may remember that I was criticized for calling Putin a war criminal," Biden remarked to reporters in a short statement. "Well, the truth of the matter, you saw what happened in Bucha. This warrants him — he is a war criminal."

Biden stated that the US will continue to collect evidence to back

up war crimes accusations against Putin. He also stated that the US is working on new sanctions and will keep supplying Ukraine with weapons.

According to NBC NEWS, Biden's remark came in reaction to claims over the weekend of crimes in the town of Bucha, near Kyiv, where gruesome photographs supposedly display killed people around the city, including those who looked to have been executed at close proximity with their hands behind their backs.

According to Ukrainian sources, over 400 individuals were killed be-

fore Russian soldiers left the city. The Associated Press described sights of dead sprawled around a place that neighbors claimed the Russian military used as a base, including victims dressed in civilian attire who looked to have been executed at close range, at least 2 of whom had their wrists tied behind their backs.

In reaction to the executions and an inquiry by the International Criminal Court, the European Commission, the European Union's executive body, announced it is exploring new sanctions against Russia. Emmanuel Macron, the French president, stated on Monday that there were "clear indications" that Moscow was to blame for the killing of civilians in Bucha, and that this constituted "strong evidence of war crimes."

Following the revelations from Bucha, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy called on the global community to take tougher action, stating that further sanctions would be insufficient.

The assertions have been dismissed by Russia's defense ministry, which has called them a "provocation," despite video and images showing ruined city roads strewn with dead.



White House Plans To Push For Covid Funding As Congress Reconvenes

By Athena Nagel



After a \$10 billion bipartisan compromise faltered in the Senate before legislators went for break, the Biden office is ready to revive its drive for Covid-19 financing when Congress returns this week, according to a White House official.



Uninsured Americans are suddenly being forced to pay the cost for testing, treatments, and immunizations, and states are receiving less monoclonal antibodies to keep patients out of the hospitals, according to the official.

When Congress reconvenes, the White House plans to advocate for greater help to Ukraine. According to the person, the administration would focus on negotiating with Congress to acquire monies to keep relief going to the Ukrainian citi-

zens while also continuing to safeguard Americans from Covid-19.

Senators Chuck Schumer of New York and Mitt Romney of Utah revealed earlier this month that they had reached an agreement to allocate \$10 billion in Covid emergency funds.

\$5 billion would be set up for treatments, with the remainder going for vaccines, including booster doses, and testing capacity, according to the deal. With one exception: money for worldwide operations to battle the pandemic, it makes up the majority of the White House's proposal. Previous attempts by Congress to integrate the bill failed due to disputes about how the bill should be structured and funded.

Importantly, this legislation has dollar-for-dollar offsets and would

not cost the American citizens a single extra dollar, according to Romney. The measure would be paid by reusing unspent funds from prior Covid relief programs, he added.

Covid money was originally requested by the White House as part of a \$1.5 trillion federal budget plan enacted last month. However, it was removed in order for the cumulative package, which involved emergency funding for Ukraine, to receive enough Republican support to pass. According to NBC News statistics, the United States was recording 46,088 daily Covid cases as of Sunday, up 46.9% in the previous two weeks. The coronavirus strain BA.2 of the omicron variant remains the most common in the country.

Biden To Host US-ASEAN Summit In Washington

by Christina Levandowski

The White House announced Saturday that President Joe Biden will welcome leaders of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations for a conference in Washington next month.

According to ABC NEWS, the May 12-13 event is intended to underscore the United States' determination to become a regional partner.

The summit was originally scheduled for March 28-29, however the regional bloc of nations known as ASEAN requested a rescheduling owing to time constraints among several of its member nations.

The summit will mark the 45th anniversary of the United States' relationship with the ASEAN member countries. Following Biden's attendance at an October 2021 event, when he committed \$102 million in new programmes to assist these nations with COVID-19, economic growth, climate change, gender equality, and health security, the summit will take place.

Singapore, Malaysia, Brunei, Indonesia, Myanmar, Cambodia, Laos, the Philippines, Vietnam, and Thailand are the ten members of ASEAN.

Its leaders have been at conflict over Myanmar, which was ravaged by violent turmoil since the army deposed Aung San Suu Kyi's democratic administration in February last year.

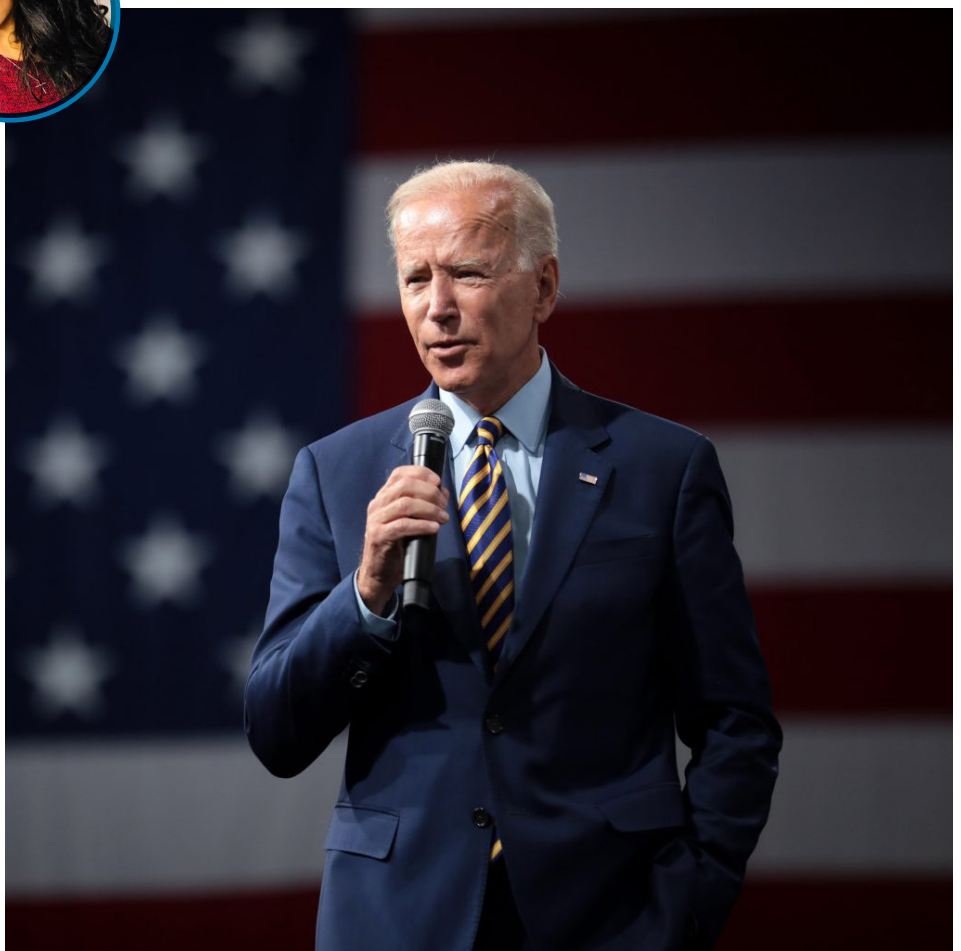
ASEAN is working to put into action a 5-point strategy for Myanmar that was agreed upon last year and emphasizes diplomacy, humanitarian aid, and also an end to conflict. However, Myanmar's governing military regime has postponed the plan's execution, despite the fact that the nation has devolved into a civil conflict, according to some UN officials.

As a result of Myanmar's lack of compliance, ASEAN barred its leader, Senior General. Min Aung Hlaing, from joining its annual summit conference last year, an extraordinary measure for

an organization whose representatives have usually shunned public criticism and functioned by agreement.

It has adopted a similar stance for future sessions, stating that Myanmar will only be allowed to send non-political officials.

Last month, Biden met with Singapore's Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong for meetings in which he attempted to reassure Singapore as well as other Pacific nations that the government remained committed to the area, even as it works with Europe and other partners to halt Russia's attack in Ukraine.



Warnings For Tropical Storm Issued For Florida

By The Editor

As the storm that ravaged Mexico continues east, tropical storm warnings were issued for the Bahamas, Cuba, and Florida on Thursday.

The storm that was originally known as Agatha in the Pacific Ocean will now be identified as Alex in the Atlantic Ocean basin, according to the National Hurricane Center in Miami.

The tropical storm warning was in effect in Florida from Longboat Key on the Gulf Coast to the southern Florida peninsula, encompassing Lake Okeechobee, which is typically prone to flooding. According to ABC NEWS, the hurricane watch encompassed the low-lying Florida Keys.

According to the US National Weather Service, the Cuban government has announced a tropical storm alert for the regions of Mayabeque, Matanzas, La Habana, Pinar del Rio, Artemisa, and the Isle of Youth.

The northwestern Bahamas were also covered in the watch zone.

On Tuesday, the Atlantic storm season formally began. This is an extremely early beginning to the hurricane season for Florida, but it is not unheard of.

The National Hurricane Center anticipates that this storm may bring up to 10 inches of rain to



parts of South Florida, but it will not bring high winds or a large storm surge. Flooding is still a possibility, as are severe winds.

As of Thursday afternoon, the system's highest sustained winds were around 35 mph, with stronger gusts, according to the Hurricane Center. It's predicted to strengthen into a tropical storm by Friday, bringing stronger winds but not hurricane-force winds.

The Hurricane Center indicated in an online article that "heavy rains will begin to affect South Florida and the Keys Friday and continue through Saturday." Storm surge and floods are also expected, with the severity of both de-

pending on the timing of the tides.

Hurricane Agatha, a Pacific hurricane, triggered mudslides and flooding in Mexico, killing at least 11 individuals and leaving 20 others missing, according to officials. It prompted rivers to overflow their banks, sweeping people from their homes and burying others under rocks and mud.

This hurricane is currently en route to Florida.

Agatha made history by being the most powerful hurricane to hit the eastern Pacific since 1949. Tropical systems, according to climate scientists, will become even more intense and destructive as a result of global warming.

DOJ To Investigate Police Reaction To School Shooting In Uvalde

By Conor La Rouche

The Department Of Justice has declared that it will investigate law enforcement's reaction to the shooting incident at Robb Elementary School in Uvalde, Texas, which killed 19 students and 2 teachers.

The US Justice department will launch a Critical Incident Assessment of the law enforcement agencies response to the shooting incident in Uvalde, Texas, on May 24, at the behest of Uvalde Mayor Don McLaughlin, according to DOJ spokesperson Anthony Coley.

Someone should be chosen in the coming days.

Personnel with law enforcement skills and on-the-ground expertise with mass killing events from outside the Justice Department have usually made up the committee that conducts inquiries into such situations.

Following shooting incidents in San Bernardino, California, in December 2015, and the Pulse nightclub in Orlando, Florida, in June 2016, the agency performed after-action evaluations.

The manner Texas government and law officials reacted to the massacre has drawn a lot of criticism.

The shooting, which was America's bloodiest school shooting incident since the Sandy Hook massacre in 2012, was followed by different government explanations



of what happened. The delay in responding to the mass murderer has exacerbated parents' outrage, with some claiming that a quicker intervention could have protected children's lives.

According to CNN, the approach by enforcement agencies in Uvalde went against widely taught active shooter procedure, which was devised following the Columbine school massacre in 1999 and calls for stopping the shooter as soon as possible while avoiding treating the injured. While the shooter was inside neighboring classrooms, a squad of 19 law enforcement officials waited for room keys and combat gear outside the classrooms for around 50 minutes.

Governor Greg Abbott of Texas stated Friday that he wants a complete explanation of what unfolded during the shooting incident,

claiming that he was first "misled" about some facts he was provided by law enforcement officers overseeing the investigation.

According to Conley, the DOJ spokesperson, the goal of the Justice Department investigation is to offer an impartial account of law enforcement reactions on that day, as well as to classify actionable insights to help first emergency personnel prepare for and react to active shooter situations.

President Joe Biden and first lady Jill Biden visited a memorial to the 21 dead outside Robb Elementary School in Uvalde on the same day the DOJ made its announcement. During their trip to Texas, the President and First Lady visited with family members of the child victims as well as first responders.



Biden Pays Visit To Texas School Massacre Victims' Memorial

By The Editor



President Joe Biden with First Lady Jill Biden visited a memorial for nineteen students and 2 teachers killed in a horrific shooting incident at a Texas elementary school, offering sympathy to a community torn apart by anger and grief.

According to NBC NEWS, Biden's visit to Uvalde on Sunday was his 2nd in as many weeks to console a population in grief following a tragic loss due to a shooting. On May 17, he went to Buffalo, New York, to speak with deceased' families and criticize white supremacy in the aftermath of a shooter who used the racist "replacement theory" to murder ten Black individuals in a supermarket.

At Robb Elementary School, Biden stood at a memorial site of 21 white crosses, one for each of the victims, and the First Lady

placed white flowers on a mound in front of the school sign. As the pair walked down the row, they saw individual altars made in remembrance of each kid, and the first lady caressed the pictures of the kids.

The massacres in New York and Texas, as well as their aftermath, highlighted the country's deep conflicts and reluctance to reach a consensus on how to minimize gun violence.

Biden attended Mass at Sacred Heart Catholic Church, where many of the victims' families pray.

When Biden was leaving the church for private discussions with members of the family at a community hall, a gathering of around 100 people screamed "do something." He replied, "We will."

Before heading to Washington, the president spoke with first responders at the airport. He wasn't supposed to make any formal statements.

Biden paid a visit as the police reaction to the shooting drew significant criticism.

Officials disclosed on Friday that teachers and children begged 911 operators for assistance many times as a police commander directed over a dozen policemen to wait in a hallway. Officials claimed the commander thought the suspect was confined inside an adjacent classroom and that the shooting was over.

The revelation prompted even more anguish and raised further questions as to whether lives were lost as a result of officers' failure to act quickly enough to stop the shooter, who was eventually killed by Border Patrol tactical agents.

On Sunday, the Department Of Justice indicated that it would conduct an investigation into law enforcement's response and disclose its findings to the public.

The shooter lawfully bought 2 guns not long before the school shooting incident, according to authorities. He'd only recently turned 18, allowing him to purchase firearms under federal law.

Sacramento Woman Gets 15 Months In Prison For Punching Flight Attendant

by Zach Schrader



A California woman was sentenced 15 months in federal penitentiary for punching a Southwest Airlines flight attendant in the face on a flight, damaging her teeth.

According to ABC NEWS, Vyviana Quinonez was also ordered by a federal court in San Diego on Tuesday to pay a \$7,500 fine and almost \$26,000 in damages for the violence on a Southwest flight between San Diego and Sacramento on May 23, 2021.

While on monitored parole, the 29-year-old Sacramento woman is barred from flying for 3 years and is required to attend anger management programmes or counseling.

Quinonez admitted to punching a flight attendant in the head and face with a clenched fist and grabbing her hair when she pleaded guilty to one charge of misbehaving with flight attendants and crew members last year. She and her lawyer could not be contacted

for comment on Tuesday.

Quinonez was requested to put on her facemask appropriately, fold her tray table, and fasten her seatbelt during the flight's landing approach.

Quinonez instead started recording the attendant on her smartphone, shoved her, stood up, hit her in the face, and pulled her hair before any other travelers intervened, according to investigators.

Another passenger's cellphone captured the assault.

The attendant sustained 3 chipped teeth, 2 of which required crowns, as well as cuts and bruises below her left eye that required stitches, according to the plea bargain.

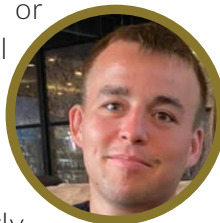
Attacks on flight crew members, who perform critical tasks to guarantee passenger safety, will not be tolerated, said U.S. Attorney Randy Grossman after the sentencing.

The punishment, according to FBI Special Agent in Charge Stacey Moy, should send a clear message to airline travelers that anyone who attacks or disrupts flight staff will be vigorously pursued by the FBI.

The event was part of an uptick in disorderly behavior among air travelers as a result of the coronavirus outbreak, prompting the head of the flight attendants' union to request extra federal air marshals aboard planes.

The Federal Aviation Administration received more than 5,000 reports of disruptive passengers from airlines in 2021.

The majority of the incidents were passengers who refused to comply with the federal rule that travelers wear face masks while on flights, but over 300 included intoxicated people, according to the FAA.



Twitter Shareholders File A Lawsuit Against Musk

By The Editor

Elon Musk is being sued by Twitter shareholders for indulging in “unlawful conduct” in order to cast suspicion on his bid to acquire the social media platform.

According to ABC NEWS, the lawsuit filed late Wednesday in the United States District Court for the Northern District of California asserts that the billionaire Tesla CEO attempted to drive down Twitter’s share price in order to back out of the deal or negotiate a significantly lower buying price.

Twitter, headquartered in San Francisco, is also mentioned as a defendant in the suit, which demands class action status along with monetary compensation.

Musk’s spokesperson did not respond to requests seeking comment on Thursday. Twitter did not respond to requests for comment.

Musk made a \$44 billion offer to purchase Twitter last month, but the acquisition was halted after the company failed to disclose information on how many profiles on the website are bots or spam.

Musk, on the other hand, waived due diligence for his “take it or leave it” bid to buy Twitter, according to the lawsuit. That means he gave up his right to inspect the company’s confidential financial records.

Furthermore, the issue of fake accounts and bots on Twitter is not a new one. Last year, the business agreed to pay \$809.5 million to settle charges that it overstated its rate of growth and monthly



user numbers. For years, Twitter has revealed its bot figures to the Securities & Exchange Board, while simultaneously warning that the estimate could be too low.

Musk has been selling Tesla shares to help fund the acquisition, and the electric carmaker’s stock has dropped about a third of its value since the deal was struck on April 25.

The Twitter shareholders’ suit alleges Musk has been disparaging Twitter in response to the stock’s decline, breaching both the non-disclosure and non-disparagement clauses of his agreement with the company.

According to the lawsuit, Musk hoped to drive down Twitter’s stock value and then use it as a pretext to try to re-negotiate the buyout.

Twitter’s shares closed at \$39.54 on Thursday, down 27% from Musk’s \$54.20 initial offer.

Musk said in early April that he had purchased a 9% stake in Twitter before declaring his offer to buy the company. However, according to the lawsuit, Musk failed to declare his investment within the deadline set by the Securities & Exchange Board.

Musk’s ultimate declaration of the stock to the SEC was “false and misleading,” according to the lawsuit, since he used a form intended for “passive investors,” which Musk was not at the time because he had been granted a seat on Twitter’s board and was keen on buying the company.

According to the lawsuit, Musk profited over \$156 million by failing to declare his increased stake in time, because Twitter’s stock price may have been higher if investors had realized Musk was expanding his ownership.

Lawsuit Seeks To Have FAA's License For Georgia Spaceport Revoked

by Eric Gahagan

Critics of a planned commercial rocket spaceport on the Georgia coast are requesting the court to invalidate the project's government license, claiming that the Federal Aviation Administration miscalculated the hazards of firing rockets over residences and a famous tourist attraction.

According to ABC NEWS, attorneys with the Southern Environmental Law Center have filed a lawsuit in U.S. District Court seeking to have the FAA revoke the launch facility operator license that was issued to the proposed Spaceport Camden in December. Camden County authorities have spent over \$10 million in the last decade trying to create a spaceport for sending satellites into orbit.

Rockets would be launched above Little Cumberland Island, which has around 40 private dwellings, and Cumberland Island, a federally preserved wilderness that attracts roughly 60,000 tourists every year. The National Park Service and local residents are concerned that catastrophic misfires could cause wildfires near residents and homes.

The FAA permitted county authorities to downplay potential safety hazards by basing their permit application on a fictional rocket "which does not exist" and is smaller than existing commercial rockets, according to the suit



filed on account of environmental organizations and homeowners. It claims the FAA failed to follow its own standards, which state that such "unproven" rockets must be held to higher standards.

According to the lawsuit filed, a key FAA executive reportedly told Spaceport Camden critics in March 2019 that he doubted the project's success.

According to the documents, a delegation of homeowners from Little Cumberland Island flew to Washington to speak with FAA officials, namely Wayne Monteith, the department's associate administrator for commercial space travel at the time.

According to FAA spokesperson Steve Kulm, the office does not discuss pending lawsuits. Monteith is no longer an employee at the FAA and is not included in the complaint as a defendant. Monteith's wife said that he was traveling Thursday when contacted by phone. He did not respond to a request for comment right away.

Commissioners in Camden County, a 55,000-person community on the Georgia-Florida border, have long claimed that a launch site would bring economic expansion not only through rocket launches, but also through tourism and allied industries.

Opponents argue that the spaceport's proposed location on

an industrial site once used to manufacture weapons and pesticides poses significant safety and environmental risks that exceed any financial gains.

According to the FAA's final environmental assessment on Spaceport Camden, county authorities submitted a sufficient and effective strategy for handling fires and other issues that could occur during rocket launches.

However, when the FAA gave the county a spaceport license in

December, it stated that a separate and more thorough study would be needed before any rockets could be launched.

After collecting more than 3,500 petitions signed by registered voters stating that they sought the spaceport on the ballot, opposition forced a referendum on the idea in March.

The spaceport suffered a major setback as a result of this. The final total revealed that 72 percent of voters agreed with the resolution to cancel the project, over-

turning the commission's previous decision to purchase property for the spaceport.

Officials from the county have given no signal that they want to close the spaceport. They voted just days after the referendum to proceed with the purchase of property for the development. Meanwhile, commissioners are pursuing a legal lawsuit in Georgia to have the referendum deemed invalid.

Twitter Fined \$150 Million For Violating User Data Privacy

By The Editor

To resolve federal regulators' charges that Twitter failed to secure the privacy of users' data during a 6-year period, the social media company will pay a \$150 million fine and implement new safeguards.

On Wednesday, the Federal Trade Commission and the Department of Justice reached a settlement with Twitter. Twitter allegedly breached a 2011 FTC ruling by misleading users about the security and privacy of their nonpublic contact details, according to the authorities.

Twitter informed customers that it was gathering their email addresses and phone numbers for account safety purposes from May 2013 to September 2019. However, the government claims that it failed to mention that it would also utilize the data to enable corporations to send targeted web



adverts to platform users.

In a federal lawsuit brought Wednesday, the regulators also said that Twitter falsely asserted to comply with US privacy accords with Switzerland and the European Union, which restrict corporations from processing user data for reasons other than those permitted by users.

The San Francisco-based corporation boasts a global user base of more than 229 million people.

According to ABC NEWS, the \$150 million fine and required new compliance safeguards under the deal must be authorized by a federal court in California.

According to the FTC's 2011 decision, Twitter's data protec-

tion had major flaws that enabled hackers to take unlawful administrative command of Twitter, particularly access to nonpublic user data.

In November, Twitter announced the establishment of a new data governance council within the corporation.

The settlement was announced on the same day as Twitter's an-

nual stockholders meeting. For weeks, the controversy surrounding Tesla owner Elon Musk's proposed \$44 billion acquisition of Twitter has engulfed the company. Musk, who is one of Twitter's top stockholders, amended his proposed acquisition financing strategy on Wednesday, giving investors hope that the acquisition may still go through.

Because of its open nature,

simple interface, and in-the-moment immediacy, Twitter has unprecedented influence on society, news, and politics. Several experts are concerned that Musk may loosen content-moderation regulations, which guard against violent threats, hate speech, and white supremacy. After the attack on the US Capitol in January 2021, the website notably banned former President Donald Trump.

19 Children, 2 Adults Killed In Texas School Shooting

By The Editor

A gunman opened fire at a Texas elementary school on Tuesday, killing 19 students in the country's bloodiest school shooting since the 2012 incident at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, Connecticut.

According to Texas Department of Public Safety Lt. Chris Olivarrez, the 18-year-old shooter killed 19 students and 2 teachers while wearing body armor and firing hundreds of bullets. According to a top Department of Homeland Security officer, the shooter was gunned down by a US Border Patrol agent who was one of many responding to the site.

The assailant also shot his grandmother, according to Texas Department of Public Safety Sergeant Erick Estrada, before heading to Robb Elementary School in Uvalde, Texas, where he was equipped with a gun, overpowering a school administrator. The grandmother had been transported to a hospital and was in serious condition, according to Estrada.

The woman had died, according to Texas Governor Greg Abbott.

According to USA TODAY, federal law enforcement authorities estimate the death toll to grow.

Two responding cops were hit by gunfire, but were not critically hurt, according to Abbott.

Authorities have not disclosed the reason for the massacre, but have stated that the perpetrator is a local resident. Salvador Ramos was the gunman, according to Abbott.

At a press conference, Uvalde Consolidated Independent School District Chief of Police Pete Arredondo stated the shooter appeared to be acting alone.

Uvalde, located 85 miles west of San Antonio, has a population of roughly 16,000 inhabitants. Four years ago, a gunman opened fire at Santa Fe High School in the Houston region, killing ten people.

President Joe Biden lamented "another massacre" that had

placed parents in excruciating sorrow during a press conference on Tuesday night: "To lose a child is like having a piece of your soul ripped away," he remarked.

Biden also urged for a renewed effort for gun-control legislation, criticizing the lack of action in the wake of multiple shootings.

The officer who shot the gunman was allocated to a local squad inside Customs and Border Protection's special operations division, BORTAC or Border Control Tactical Unit, according to a US homeland security official who commented on the condition of anonymity to discuss an ongoing investigation. The officer was hit in the leg while confronting the shooter, and his wounds were treated at a local hospital, according to a DHS official.

The number of those injured in the attack, in addition to those killed, was not immediately known. Several people were hurt, according to Arredondo.

Several law enforcement agencies were on the scene Tuesday afternoon, such as the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives.

Outside the school, broadcast footage showed officers in body armor, FBI agents in jackets, ambulances, and yellow tape encircling the grounds.

The administration had previ-

ously stated that all schools in the district had been closed due to gunfire in the neighborhood.

Robb Elementary School has just around 600 kids enrolled.

According to David Riedman, principal researcher at the Naval Postgraduate School's Center for Homeland Defense and Security's K-12 School Shooting Database, there were 249 school shootings last year, more than any other year

since at least 1970, and 137 so far this year.

Vice President Kamala Harris stated on Tuesday that American leaders must take measures to prevent another school tragedy like the one in Uvalde.

San Antonio Mayor Ron Nirenberg requested that people join the city in raising flags at half-staff to honor those who have died.



3 Air Force Cadets Denied Commission Over Vaccine Refusal



BY CONOR LA ROUCHE

The US Air Force Academy announced Saturday that 3 cadets who declined the COVID-19 vaccine would not be commissioned as military officials but will get bachelor's degrees instead.

Dean Miller, a spokesperson at the Academy, stated that a 4th cadet who also had rejected the vaccine until recently opted to get it and will graduate as well as become an Air Force officer.

The Air Force is the only defense institution where cadets are not getting commissioned owing to vaccine rejection as of Saturday. According to ABC NEWS, nearly 1,000 Military cadets at the United States Military Academy in West Point, New York, graduated and were commissioned as officers early during the day.

Vaccine rejections are not preventing any Marine Corps or Navy seniors from commissioning, according to the Naval Academy in Annapolis, Maryland, on Saturday. The Air Force event is on Wednesday in Colorado, and the graduation ceremony is later this week. The US Air Force Academy Board completed its routine assessment



as to if this year's class had fulfilled all requirements for graduation on Friday, prior to the ceremony.

Last year, Secretary Of Defense Lloyd Austin, who will address the Air Force graduation ceremony, made COVID-19 vaccines mandatory for all service personnel, even those in the military schools, citing the vaccine's importance in sustaining military preparedness and force health.

Military authorities have stated that troops have been obliged to receive as many as 17 vaccinations in order to maintain their health, especially those deployed overseas, for years. If students are not already vaccinated, they will receive a series of doses upon their

first day at the military schools, including mumps, rubella, and measles. They also get flu vaccines every year in the fall.

Congress members, the military, and the general public have disputed whether the military services' exemption assessments were fair. Several cases have been brought against the order, with the major focus on the fact that only a small number of service personnel have been allowed religious exemptions from the vaccinations.

Until the COVID-19 vaccine, few military personnel sought religious exemptions from vaccinations.

An Air Force Academy spokesperson, Lt. Col. Brian Maguire, said

sometime ago that all 4 cadets had been warned of the possible implications and had spoken with the academy's superintendent. He also mentioned that they had time until graduation to reconsider their stance, which one of them did.

For decades, military institutions have compelled students to return tuition fees if they quit in their junior or senior year under certain situations. Students with behavioral troubles or other challenges

are frequently involved in these cases. The fees can go as high as \$200,000 or more, and the service secretary makes the final decision on repayment.

The Marine Corps, Air Force, Army, and Navy have all discharged up to 4,000 active service personnel for refusing to take the vaccine. Those who refuse the vaccine outright without obtaining an exemption are nevertheless released. However, subsequent dismissal of service members seeking

religious exemptions have been halted by the courts.

20,000 service personnel have requested religious exemptions, according to the military. Thousands of people have been rejected.

Approximately 98% of active service Army, Marine Corps, and Air Force personnel, as well as 99% of active duty Navy personnel, have received their first dose.

Special Operators' Wish Lists For Firepower Include New Rounds And Small Arms

By The Editor

The next machine gun, according to special operators, should have the accuracy, power and range of a .50 caliber in the stature of a platoon-level M240 machine gun.

To put it mildly, the .338 Norma Magnum Lightweight Medium Machine Gun is a significant breakthrough in small weapons for special ops, according to one expert.

The initiative began in 2017, and 2 corporations, General Dynamics and Sig Sauer, have principally competed for the contract throughout the years since.

During his address Tuesday at the National Defense Industrial Association's SOF Industry Conference, a lieutenant colonel in charge of Special Operations Forces' lethality programme for Special Operations Command provided information of this and other small arms initiatives.



Pursuant to the tactical nature of their work with SOCOM, officers at the rank of O5 or below are not identifiable by name due to media guidelines.

The 7.62mm NATO cartridge is used in the contemporary M240 machine gun. It's a bullet that's

been in operation for over 50 years and has witnessed many improvements, but most specialists feel that it's hit its range and lethality limits.

According to Marine Corps Times, the Marine Corps and the Army have acquired a multi-bar-

rel sniper rifle that can fire .300 Winchester Magnum, .338 Norma Magnum, and 7.62mm rounds.

The administration is still sorting through the selection, according to the official, but the machine gun should be delivered by fiscal 2024.

The Sig Sauer Lightweight Machine Gun, or SLMG, was a 20-pound machine gun with a folding stock that could be loaded from either side. This feature enables the firearm to be utilized efficiently whether dismounted, in an aircraft, or in a combat vehicle.

The Sig Sauer variant has a movable gas block that may be adjusted to match the pressure needs of various suppressors.

Sig Sauer defense product manager Cory McQuilkin informed Army Times in 2019 that the suppressor add-on had not impacted the gun's firing rate, which had

been a concern with these kinds of systems in the past.

The sidearm upgrade contract for the Modular Handgun System programme was awarded to Sig Sauer in 2017. It was also awarded the carbine and squad machine gun armament upgrade contract for the Next Generation Squad Weapon programme earlier this year.

General Dynamics claims that this weapon combination can pierce Level III body armor and take out soft-skinned automobiles at ranges of up to 1,000 meters.

The Mid-Range Gas Gun, chambered in 6.5 Creedmoor, is another developing small arms replacement.

According to the presentation given by the official, that gun will arrive a little sooner, with deliveries slated to begin this year.

The gas gun's next stage will be

to develop an assault model, which will be beneficial for airborne missions and close-quarters warfare in congested places.

The primary add-ons for both firearms will be accouterments, according to the official. That implies optics, weapon attachments, and, most significantly, new types of ammunition.

Forces want training bullets, armor-piercing rounds, and a tracer, according to him.

For years, the agencies have been looking for a one-way tracer. Because the light emitted when a gunman fires a tracer can be seen from all sides, this is the case. This is advantageous for a shooter who is marching in rounds on a target while others fire in formation. The enemy, on the other hand, can see where they're firing from and hit them effectively.

Military Student Sues The Army Over Its HIV Policy

By Carissa R.

In a complaint filed on Thursday, a military college student claimed that armed forces officials ruled him unsuitable for service after he tested HIV positive.

According to ABC NEWS, the 20-year-old student from Revere, Massachusetts, alleged in his case against federal and state military authorities that he tested HIV positive in October 2020 in his sophomore year at Norwich University in Northfield, Vermont.



Despite being asymptomatic, healthy, and on a treatment plan that makes his viral load untraceable, the student was presumed unsuitable for service and dropped from the Vermont Army National Guard and the Reserve Officers' Training Corps, according to the suit filed in Burlington, Vermont.

According to his complaint, he was told he wouldn't be able to earn a scholarship via the ROTC or be eligible for other military advantages like dental and medical care or a state tuition waiver.

Lawyers for Civil Rights, a Boston-based organization that filed the lawsuit on behalf of the student, obtained redacted versions of the student's discharge records, which reveal he was sacked from the guard in January because of being "not medically qualified."

Vermont National Guard and United States Defense Department, who are both implicated in the lawsuit, have declined to comment due to the ongoing litigation.

HIV is one of a long list of health disorders that immediately disqualifies an individual from joining, getting assigned as a commissioned officer, or enlisting as an ROTC scholarship cadet, according to Defense Department guidelines.

The student's attorneys contend that the military's HIV rules date back to the 1980s, when limited information was available about the disease, which may lead to AIDS if left untreated.

Last month, a federal court in Virginia ruled that HIV-positive military personnel cannot be prohibited or dismissed from be-

coming officers solely because they have the infection.

The student's lawsuit is irrelevant, according to Sophia Hall, deputy legal director at Lawyers for Civil Rights, because the Virginia verdict only extended to people already serving in the military.

In a statement released by his attorneys, the student stated that he wishes to regain his military status so that he can walk in the shoes of his uncles and grandfathers who served in the military. In addition, the lawsuit requests the court to declare the rules and military guidelines that led to his discharge from the ROTC and the National Guard invalid.

Judge Halts Biden From Phasing Out Title 42 Expulsion Policy

By Kathy Malouf

For the next 2 weeks, a federal court in Louisiana granted a restraining order that prevents the Biden office from phasing down pandemic-justified border regulations.

According to ABC NEWS, the order from ex-president Donald Trump's appointee Judge Robert Summerhays prohibits the Department of Homeland Security from enhancing standard immigration handling beyond what it was before the government revealed the health code regulations under Title



42 of federal statute would end on May 23.

All through the pandemic, migrants have just been released on parole into the United States under Title 8 of the United States Code, which details the accelerated deportation process. As the more restricted Title 42 restrictions expired, the Biden administration planned to boost expedited removal proceedings.

Despite the fact that the number of people processed under Title 8 increased last month, the judge's ruling limits it to the rate before the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's April 1 Title 42 termination order.

However, the ruling leaves the option open that DHS might be further prohibited from exceeding the regular processing pace that existed prior to the decision to abolish Title 42.

To guarantee compliance, DHS will be compelled to publish immigration processing figures on a regular basis.

Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas delivered a statement Tuesday detailing a number of preparations the department has already begun to take in anticipation of a potential spike in migration if the Title 42 health restriction is lifted.

The restraining order, according to Kerri Talbot, deputy director of the pro-immigrant advocacy organization Immigration Hub, should not preclude the government from making preparations.

The measures highlighted in the recent Mayorkas memo include bringing more resources to the border, such as health care supplies and staff, accelerating case processing at US Customs and Border Protection holding centres, collaborating with local non-profits to help migrants transfer from federal custody to local communities, and ramping up measures to counter human trafficking organisations.

Son Of Acclaimed American Artist Charged In Jan. 6 Capitol Riot By The Editor

Vincent Gillespie fought for years in court to reclaim hundreds of artworks by his father, famed postwar American painter Gregory Gillespie.

Prosecutors allege Gillespie took part in a totally different sort of struggle on January 6, 2021, when he joined rioters in an attempt to gain control of the Capitol Building from the federal government during one of the riot's most violent clashes.

According to NBC NEWS, Gillespie was part of a crowd trying to push their way through a passage at the Lower West Terrace of the Capitol – an attack which almost succeeded, according to authorities.

The AP video of a flushed Gillespie milling around outside the Capitol on the day, defiantly speaking regarding his involvement in the attack – and his grievance that more like-minded individual people didn't join the battle – reveal both the detail of tenacity of several of the rioters, as well as the ambiguity others felt about what they would do when inside.

Gillespie engaged in a violent battle with law enforcement personnel attempting to keep protesters from entering the building when a joint assembly of Congress was certifying Electoral College votes, according to FBI investigators.

Outside the Capitol, the Athol, Massachusetts, resident was seen

putting water in his eyes, allegedly to mitigate the effect of chemical spray used to attempt to control the throng.

At the time, Gillespie told the Associated Press that he was with those trying to attack the building. According to Gillespie, he and many others attempted to break through an opening.

What was less evident to Gillespie that day, though, was what he and the others accompanying him might do if they had been successful in seizing possession of the Capitol.

When the AP journalist asked for his name, Gillespie was eager to respond, but he was hesitant to tell where he was from.

Gillespie was eventually charged with 7 criminal charges in the Capitol, namely disorderly conduct, assaulting officers, and civil disorder. He has submitted a not guilty plea.

He's one of more than 775 individuals detained in virtually all 50 states and the District of Columbia in association with the pro-Trump mob's attempt to prevent Joe Biden's 2020 election win from being announced on Jan. 6. Rioters broke windows, shattered doors, and thrashed and bruised police officers who were poorly

unprepared for the mob.

Gregory Gillespie, whose geometric abstractions, fantasy landscapes, and self-portraits are in the collections of the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston, the Whitney Museum of American Art, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, and other institutions, is Vincent's father.

Gillespie's artworks are also at the core of a long-running and ultimately failed court struggle with his stepmother and her attorneys for custody of the works. Vincent Gillespie identified his father

as a notable artist who left over 400 expensive paintings when he passed away in a court petition dated 2020.

Investigators noted Gillespie's involvement in the incidents of Jan. 6, 2021, appears fully documented, particularly in videos and images that assisted tipsters identify him.

According to the Department of justice, many photographs of Gillespie partaking in the violence were obtained on open-source video and surveillance cameras.



US Marines Killed In Helicopter Crash In Norway Identified

By Henry Nicholas

The 4 US Marines who died in an aircraft accident in Norway last week while participating in a joint military exercise with NATO partners were identified on Sunday.

The Marine Corps named the victims as Capt. Ross A. Reynolds of Leominster, Massachusetts, Capt. Matthew J. Tomkiewicz of Fort Wayne, Indiana, Cpl. Jacob M. Moore of Catlettsburg, Kentucky, and Gunnery Sgt. James W. Speedy of Cambridge, Ohio, in a statement.

The Marine Corps stated their remains were on their way to the United States.

NATO members and other US military partners have offered assistance, according to the corps. The Royal Norwegian Navy, Royal Norwegian Air Force, and armed units from the Netherlands, Italy, and the United Kingdom were among them, according to the report.

The Marines' MV-22 Osprey helicopter crashed amid harsh weather on Friday, according to military sources. The reason for the incident has yet to be determined, and the accident is still being investigated.

According to NBC NEWS, the Marines from the 2nd Marine Aircraft Wing of the II Marine Expeditionary Force were taking part in a huge NATO exercise dubbed Cold Response.



Although the training is meant to improve resilience in the event of assault against NATO partners from the "High North," there is no evidence that it is a direct reaction to Russia's assault on Ukraine, according to the alliance.

NATO hailed the cold-weather drill as "long-planned" in a declaration last week.

The MV-22 Osprey, which can lift off and land like just a helicopter yet fly like a plane owing to its "tilt rotor" motors, has had a tumultuous past over its 2 decades of service.

Before assuming operations in 2007, the helicopter was engaged

in accidents that killed over 30 people. The Marine Corps has been a staunch supporter of the vehicle.

Boeing and Bell, the plane's designers, claim that improved, redundant systems can easily monitor the aircraft's engine and computers have enabled it to become a dependable workhorse.

According to the Joint Rescue Coordination Center North Norway, the weather conditions were so poor at the time of Friday's collision that it was assessed that a responding helicopter would not be able to land at the crash scene.

Sieverodonetsk Mayor Claims Russian Forces Had Taken Half Of City

By The Editor



The mayor of Severodonetsk, in eastern Ukraine, told The Associated Press early Tuesday that Russian troops had occupied half of the city, which is crucial to Moscow's aspirations to quickly conclude the conquest of the industrial Donbas area.

"The city is being ruthlessly destroyed block by block," Oleksandr Striuk stated. He claimed that violent street combat and artillery fire continue to endanger the lives of approximately 13,000 residents who remain in the damaged city, which originally housed more than 100,000 people.

The mayor claims that over 1,500 inhabitants have died of various reasons since Russia's assault on Ukraine in late February, but that it is impossible to monitor civilian deaths amid the round-the-clock bombardment. According to ABC

NEWS, evacuation operations from Severodonetsk have now been suspended due to bombardment.

The city's electricity supply has been turned off, and residents are in desperate need of food, medicine, and water, according to the mayor.

Sieverodonetsk is crucial to Russia's attempts to retake the Donbass region before more Western armaments arrive to strengthen Ukraine's defense. Separatists supported by Moscow already controlled territory in the area and have been battling the Ukrainian military for the past 8 years.

The battle for Severodonetsk has been regarded by military observers as a race against the clock for the Kremlin. The city, which is 90 miles (145 kilometers) south of the Russian frontier, is located in the

Luhansk region's final enclave of Ukrainian government influence.

Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy stated in his nightly video address that the scenario in the Donbas remained "extremely difficult" since Russia has deployed its army's maximum military capabilities there.

A Russian missile attack on the city of Sloviansk, west of Severodonetsk, killed at least 3 people and injured 6 others overnight, according to Donetsk regional governor Pavlo Kyrylenko's Facebook post on Tuesday morning. Many buildings were damaged, including a school. The roadway between 2 apartment buildings extensively pockmarked by shrapnel was highlighted by a crater.

One building's stairs and floor were covered in blood.

Olena Voytenko, 59, a resident, claimed she knew one of the victims, a man whose residence was set on fire in the incident. He was allegedly burned alive, according to her.

Mikheylo Samoluk, another local, reported the strike happened at 1:30 a.m.

Shelling in adjacent Luhansk claimed the lives of 2 individuals and injured 4 others, according to Luhansk governor Serhiy Haidai, who spoke to Telegram on Tuesday. Haidai did not say when or where the attack took place.

Pegasus Spyware Attack Targeted Spanish Prime Minister's Phone

By Zach Schrader

Authorities stated Monday that the mobile phones of the Spanish prime minister and minister of defense were infected with Pegasus spyware, which is exclusively available to government institutions.

According to Cabinet Minister Félix Bolaos, Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez's cell phone was hacked twice during May 2021, and Defense Minister Margarita Robles' cell phone was hacked in the following month.

Bolaos stated during a hurriedly scheduled media conference in Madrid that the breaches, which resulted in a considerable quantity of data being seized, were not approved by a Spanish court, which is a legal necessity of national covert operations.

Throughout those months, the Socialist administration was under scrutiny for its handling of a significant foreign policy conflict with Morocco, as well as a severe domestic conflict over the liberation of imprisoned separatists from Spain's fractious Catalonia region.

Bolaos was adamant about not speculating on who or what could have motivated the Pegasus breach. The breach was investigated by the National Court, and a parliamentary commission on intelligence matters was created to investigate it.



Over 8,000 migrants from Morocco pushed their way into Spain's North African territory of Ceuta in May 2021 by scaling or swimming past a border fence. Spain sent armored vehicles and personnel to the area to prevent further migrants from entering the country.

That issue erupted when Madrid and Rabat clashed over Spain's decision to offer COVID-19 treatment to a major Sahrawi leader battling for the liberation of Western Sahara, which Morocco acquired in the 1970s after it was briefly under Spanish authority.

Moroccan officials denied encouraging massive migration into Ceuta, which occurred as Spain struggled to deal with thousands of African migrants.

Before Monday's disclosure, the government had already been pressed to explain why, between 2017 and 2020, the smartphones

of dozens of persons linked to the separatist rebellion in northeastern Catalonia were infiltrated with Pegasus.

The Catalan conflict has troubled Spanish governments for generations, with separatists wanting to split away from Spain and activists conducting occasionally violent street rallies.

At least 65 individuals are named in the spyware discoveries, which were made by Citizen Lab, a cybersecurity firm connected with the University of Toronto. They include political officials, attorneys, and activists with ties to Catalonia.

They were attacked by software developed by 2 Israeli companies, NSO Group and Candiru, the Pegasus creator. The software infiltrates phones and other devices invisibly in order to collect data and maybe spy on their users.

The regional Catalan administration has accused Spain's National Intelligence Center, or CNI, of spying on separatists, putting relations with national authorities on pause until complete answers are given and those involved are punished.

In 2017, the conservative Popular Party, or PP, was in power when Catalan separatists proclaimed independence in an unlawful referendum, but no action was done to put the declaration into effect. The PP remained in office until mid-2018, when Sánchez won a

legislative vote to depose them.

The spying scandal is causing havoc in Spanish democracy. The ERC, Catalonia's largest political party and a key supporter of the present administration, has demanded that Robles, the defense minister, quit. According to ABC NEWS, the espionage issue has exposed them to pressure from more extreme separatists who want to end backing for Sánchez's left-to-center alliance in the national parliament.

With promises of complete

openness, declarations of intentions for an internal inquiry by the nation's intelligence agency, as well as a separate probe by Spain's ombudsman, the national government has tried to address their worries.

A special parliamentary panel on national secrets has also been formed, and the director of CNI is set to be questioned by House members later this week, despite the fact that conversations about state security matters are not supposed to be made public.

UN Assisting With The Evacuation Of Civilians From Mariupol

By The Editor

On Friday, the United Nations persevered in its efforts to conciliate a civilian rescue operation from the increasingly horrifying wrecks of Mariupol, while Ukraine accused Moscow of demonstrating its disrespect for the world organization by bombing Kyiv while the UN Secretary-General was visiting the Ukrainian capital.

The condition within the steel mill which has become the southern port city's final refuge, according to Mariupol Mayor Vadym Boichenko, is catastrophic, and inhabitants are pleading to be spared.

Meanwhile, Ukrainian soldiers fought back Russian advances in the east and south, where Russia is attempting to seize the nation's industrial Donbas area. In several cities, sirens, explosions, and heavy artillery could be heard.

And, according to a senior US defense official, the Russian attack is moving far more slowly than expected, owing in part to the intensity of Ukrainian opposition.

Moscow's military fired missiles at a residential building in Kyiv on Thursday, disrupting weeks of relative peace in the capital after Russia's withdrawal from the region earlier this month.

Radio Liberty/Radio Free Europe is a US-funded station. One of its reporters, Vira Hyrych, was slain in the bombing, according to the report. Authorities reported ten individuals were injured, with one of them losing a limb.

The missile attack occurred less than an hour after Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy spoke with United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres at a press conference.

The bombing, according to Kyiv Mayor Vitali Klitschko, was Putin's way of showing Guterres "his middle finger."

Russia's military announced it had destroyed manufacturing structures at the Artem defense facility in an apparent connection to the Kyiv attack.

According to ABC NEWS, the missile hit occurred just as life in Kyiv appeared to be returning to normal, with cafés as well as other businesses reopening and increasing numbers of people heading out to celebrate the arrival of spring.

It's been impossible for journalists to get a complete view of the eastern conflict since airstrikes and artillery fire have made moving around highly dangerous. Both Ukraine and the separatists fighting in the east, who are backed by the Kremlin, have imposed harsh

reporting limitations.

However, it appears that Russia's military and rebel fighters have only achieved minimal advances so far.

Russian soldiers' march north out of Mariupol, in order to attack Ukrainian troops from the south, has been "slow and uneven, and certainly not decisive," according to US officials.

Around 100,000 individuals were reported to be stuck in the devastated city of Mariupol, with no water, food, or medication. At the Azovstal steel mill, approximately 2,000 Ukrainian combatants and 1,000 citizens were trapped.

The steel complex, which dates from the Soviet era, has a massive subterranean network of bunkers that can resist attacks. However, after the Russians unleashed "bunker busters" as well as other explosives, the situation worsened.

Farhan Haq, a spokesperson for

the United Nations, said the agency was in talks with officials in Russia and Ukraine to ensure safe passage.

However, Russian Foreign Affairs minister Sergey Lavrov told Saudi-owned Al-Arabiya TV that the actual issue is that Ukrainian ultra-nationalists are ignoring humanitarian passages. Right-wing Ukrainians, Moscow claims, are obstructing evacuation operations and using people as human shields.

Russian missiles also targeted 2 towns in central Ukraine's Dnipropetrovsk region on Friday, according to the regional governor. There was no information about destruction or casualties right away.

Firing could be heard in the Donbas from Kramatorsk to Sloviansk, a distance of 18 kilometers (11 miles). Smoke billowed from the Sloviansk region and adjacent cities. At least one individual was reported to have been injured as a result of the bombardment.

Zelenskyy accused Moscow of attempting to annihilate the Donbas and everyone who resided there in his nightly video message.

According to the governor of Russia's Kursk region, a border station was firebombed by Ukrainian forces, and Russian border forces retaliated. According to him, there have been no Russian deaths.

Hundreds of residents were rescued from the region of Ruska Lozava, near Kharkiv, after Ukrainian troops reconquered the city from Russian invaders, according to the regional governor. Those who escaped to Kharkiv told of horrendous conditions under Russian authority, including the lack of food and water, as well as the lack of electricity.

Troops raised the yellow and blue Ukrainian flag above the federal building in the village's center, according to a video broadcast by Ukraine's Azov battalion, while battle persisted on the outskirts.



Inflation Reached A New High Of 7.5% In Nations Using Euro

By Zach Schrader

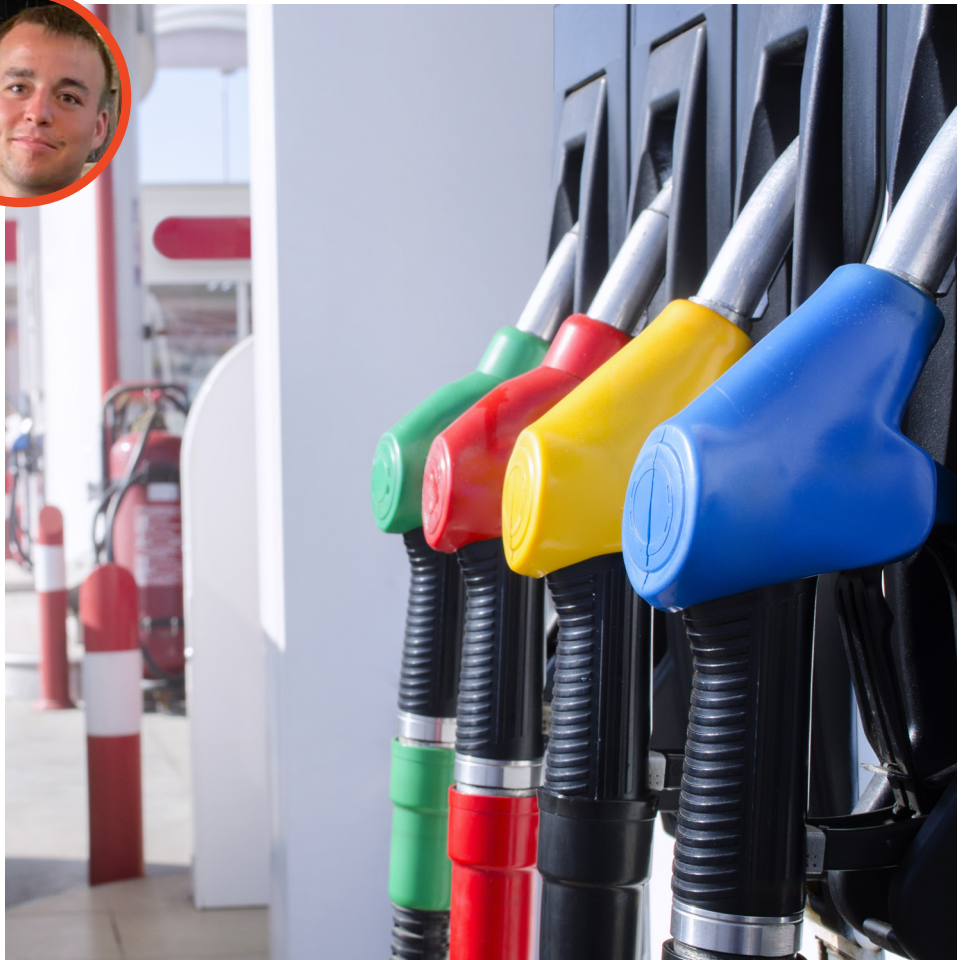
Inflation in the eurozone's 19 member nations hit a new high as increasing fuel costs, bolstered by the conflict in Ukraine, place fresh strains on household budgets and constrain the recuperation from the recent COVID-19 outbreaks.

The European Union's statistics office Eurostat announced Friday that annual inflation touched 7.5 percent in April, the most since figures began in 1997 and the sixth consecutive record, surpassing the previous high of 7.4 percent set in March.

Energy costs have risen by a shocking 38 percent, demonstrating how the conflict and the resulting worldwide energy shortage is impacting the 343 million people living in the eurozone.

Concerns that the battle may disrupt Russia's gas and oil supply, the world's top oil supplier, have pushed natural gas and oil prices higher. This is on top of rising global demand as the world recovers from the pandemic, as well as OPEC and its allies, notably Russia, taking a careful approach to expanding output.

As governments implement monetary assistance for hard-hit people, high inflation is rippling through economics and politics. Germany is eliminating a levy on electricity bills for promoting renewable energy, saving a household of four roughly 300 euros (\$317) each year. According to



ABC NEWS, Germany's IG Metall industrial union is seeking an 8.2 percent yearly hike for the nation's steelworkers as part of wage negotiations.

Fear of even higher power, heating, and motor fuel prices is one reason preventing European nations from agreeing to cease Russian energy imports as part of the sanctions imposed in response to Moscow's invasion of Ukraine.

Inflation is also increasing stress on the European Central Bank to consider increasing interest rates from their current record lows in the months ahead. Higher rates

to combat inflation might stymie a recovery already stymied by the energy crisis, the war, and the recent COVID-19 outbreaks.

In the first 3 months of this year, growth in the 19 EU member nations that use the euro decelerated to 0.2 percent, as voluntary and government regulations during the spread of the extremely contagious omicron variant of the coronavirus, combined with higher inflation, held back demand as individuals used fewer in-person services. The result for the first quarter fell from 0.3 percent in the last 3 months of 2021.

Macron And Le Pen Face Off Again, With France's Future Course At Stake

By The Editor

During Sunday's presidential second round of voting, French voters will pick between two completely different futures for their nation, as centrist President Emmanuel Macron bids to defeat his right-wing opponent, Marine Le Pen.

ALSO READ: Le Pen And Macron Exchange Barbs As Campaigning Ends

Macron, 44, is campaigning on a vision of a creative, globalized France at the helm of a powerful European Union. Le Pen, 53, has proposed a fiscally nationalist, inward-looking programme that would constitute a significant departure from France's post-World War II trajectory.

After coming first and second in the 1st round of voting 2 weeks ago, Le Pen and Macron proceeded to Sunday's decisive race, setting up a rerun of the 2017 campaign. Macron defeated Le Pen by roughly two-to-one in that election.

This time, analysts predict a much closer contest.

Before Russia attacked Ukraine in February, the competition was intended to be an efficient referendum on the development of France's political extremists, causing a change in national discourse.

Macron's diplomatic efforts diverted him off the presidential campaign, whereas Le Pen was pushed to retract her prior backing for Russian President Vladimir Putin. Le Pen has long been an



ardent supporter of Russian President Vladimir Putin, even meeting him amid her 2017 race, and her party had previously sought funding from a Russian-Czech bank.

She has recently criticized Moscow's invasion move and justified the loan, claiming that her party was obliged to look for funds outside of France since no French financial institution would grant permission.

Despite her earlier admiration for Putin, Marine Le Pen has positioned herself to prevail by focusing on economic concerns rather than the conventional far-right

agenda of immigration, identity, and security which drove her 2017 presidential campaign. She has not, however, discarded many of her most divisive policies, such as prohibiting Muslim women from donning head coverings in public.

Experts assert she has done a great job empathizing with French citizens having trouble making ends meet, particularly further than her roots in the erstwhile industrial strongholds where people are out of work due to technological headway and globalization. She also did better in the presidential debate on Wednesday than she previously did in 2017, after her

bad performance sealed her destiny.

Critics, on the other hand, claim that Le Pen's platform has failed to fully illustrate how Paris would pay for several of the remedies presented. They also wonder if they all follow French and EU regulations.

While Le Pen has backed down from several of her more problematic plans, such as exiting the EU and dumping the euro, analysts believe that several of her initiatives might still put France at odds with the EU.

Macron, on the other hand, is not exactly the most popular newcomer on the scene. The former economics minister and investment banker has to defend a chaotic political career while also persuading voters that his plan, which includes massive industrial spend-

ing and combating climate change, isn't just more of the same.

Macron's ambitious goal to strengthen the European Union's competence and geopolitical heft earned him praise both home and abroad in his first term.

His domestic initiatives, on the other hand, are more polarizing, and he continues to remain a controversial figure who is viewed as arrogant, snobbish, and very out of touch by many. Macron's management of the yellow vest protest, which has been one of France's longest-running demonstrations in decades, has been severely condemned, and his performance on the Covid-19 outbreak is ambiguous.

During the epidemic, the French administration invested billions to keep enterprises viable, which increased the national deficit.

During the crisis, Macron's defining policy of having individuals to provide certificates of vaccination in order to go on with their daily lives significantly raised vaccination numbers, but it also enraged a loud minority who opposed his leadership.

While Macron received 27.8% of the ballot during the 1st round to win the presidency, the results revealed widespread voter dissatisfaction with the existing quo. During the first round, contenders on the far left and right received a record 57 percent of the vote, while 26.3 percent of registered voters remained home, culminating in the lowest voter turnout in 20 years.

The candidates wrapped up their campaigning on Friday. The media is restricted from covering until the voting ends at 8 p.m. local time.

Le Pen And Macron Exchange Barbs As Campaigning Ends

By The Editor

The 2 presidential contenders in France have unleashed harsh comments on one another in a last-ditch effort to sway millions of hesitant voters ahead of Sunday's voting.

ALSO READ: Markets May Be More Shaken By French Election Than By Trump Or Brexit

Emmanuel Macron, a centrist, is attempting to be the first incumbent president in 20 years to win a 2nd term.

He claimed that Marine Le Pen's extreme right was fueled by re-

sentment and posed a threat to society's disintegration and hatred.

She said that his employment of old extremist slurs was indicative of his vulnerability.

In the 2nd stage run-off, public surveys favor the incumbent president, but Le Pen's right-wing party has never been so close to victory, and that is why the risks are much higher.

The rising inflation has been the top concern throughout this election, from grocery buying to electricity bills to the expense of

fueling up a car. It was detected early on by Le Pen's campaign, who pledged an administration of national unification to combat high living costs, as well as a prohibition on wearing a headscarf in public and also an immigration referendum.

Her pitch to citizens has been simple: it's either France or Macron.

Macron likewise kept his remarks short, arguing that Le Pen's vision of a Europe of countries would lead to the EU's demise.

In a television pitch to voters, he referenced the UK's choice of leaving the EU and Trump's administration.

Le Pen accused him of disrespecting both her as well as those who backed her, claiming that France had been through 5 years of turmoil and that civic peace and respect could be restored.

For both politicians, the largest challenge is the significant number of people who are planning to cast blank votes or not vote at all. According to statistics, voter turnout might be at its lowest level since 1969.

The discontent with Macron's style of centrism and national politics was shown in the first ballot, when well above half of the voters voted for the extreme left or extreme right.

More than one-fifth of voters supported far-left politician Jean-Luc Mélenchon, who emerged in 3rd spot, just ahead of Marine Le Pen.

Millions in France still remember the yellow-vest demonstrations, also known as gilets jaunes, which arose 18 months after Emmanuel Macron took office in criticism of rising gas prices. Le Pen has taken advantage of accusations claiming he is a leader for the wealthy.

According to latest surveys, the incumbent president will receive approximately 53 percent and 57 percent of the vote, therefore it's unclear what all those 7.7 million Mélenchon supporters would support. According to a Friday Ipsos survey, 48% of those who supported him during the first round



favored neither contender in the last round.

While one out of every 3 far-left supporters will support Macron, a significant proportion of them despise him so much that they would instead support the extreme right.

Following the conclusion of political campaigning on Friday, the two sides are now compelled by law to cease election campaigns until the finish of polling on Sunday evening.

As the sun set in Paris, one of Mr Macron's rising stars helped his party activists in passing out flyers in a last-ditch effort to win votes.

Minister of Agriculture Julien Denormandie stated that the administration was well aware of the need to bring a disgruntled public closer to national politics.

The election has been odd from the beginning, with the Covid out-

break and afterwards the Russian attack in Ukraine casting a cloud over it. As a result, Macron barely interacted with voters 8 days prior to the 1st polling.

Despite the fact that 12 contenders competed in the first campaign, only 3 were successful. The two major parties that ruled France until Emmanuel Macron's dramatic ascent to power in 2017 received just over 2 million ballots between them.

The campaign finally erupted late Wednesday, when the 2 remaining contenders sparred on live television for over 3 hours, with the moderators hardly intervening.

It went on until the dying hours of Friday, with Jordan Bardella, the leader of Le Pen's National Rally party, pledging to save public funds and return it back to the French citizens.

Anthony Albanese Sworn In As Australia's New PM

By The Editor

Early Monday, Australia's new prime minister got sworn in and traveled to Tokyo for a meeting with President Joe Biden, as the counting process continued to decide if he will command a significant majority in a Parliament which is demanding greater action against climate change.

During Saturday's election, Prime Minister Anthony Albanese's center-left Labor Party defeated Scott Morrison's conservative coalition. According to ABC NEWS, the coalition had already been in power for 9 years under 3 prime ministers.

"I want to lead a government that has the same sense of optimism and hope that I think defines the Australian people," Albanese stated in Sydney before traveling to Canberra for his inauguration.

Albanese, who calls himself Australia's 1st non-Anglo Celtic prime minister, and Malaysian-born Penny Wong, Australia's 1st foreign minister, had been sworn in by Governor-General David Hurley before flying to Tokyo on Tuesday for a security summit with Biden, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, and Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida.

According to the White House, Biden called Albanese to congratulate him on his electoral win and underlined the president's desire to strengthen the countries' cooperation.



Albanese regarded their chat as fruitful and positive.

Hurley, who claims to represent Australia's head of state, British monarch Queen Elizabeth II, was able to elect Morrison's successor without proof that Albanese could govern the majority in parliament's lower chamber, where governments are formed, due to Morrison's decision to step down as prime minister during initial vote counting.

While Albanese is in Japan, Deputy Prime Minister Richard Marles has been sworn into office. Jim Chalmers and Katy Gallagher were also sworn in as ministers of economics.

Labor appeared to have secured 75 seats, one less of the 151-seat House of Representatives majority required to establish an administration. According to the Australian Electoral Commission, the conservative alliance was on course to win 58 seats, unaligned Politicians six, and 12 seats were all too close to call.

Albanese claimed that if Labor fails to form a majority government, he has the backing of 5 independent members.

A motion of no confidence in Labor in the House might end in the conservative Liberal Party putting together a minority government, which is improbable. If neither par-

ty is able to administer, another election will be convened, something which has never transpired in Australia's 121-year history.

In Saturday's election, Australia's 2 major political parties, the Liberal Party and the Labor Party, lost support to independents and minor parties, furthering a trend of discontent with the political system.

Terri Butler, who may have become the new administration's environment minister, was replaced by Max Chandler-Mather of the environment-focused Greens, who now have at least 3 seats in the house, up from 2 in the previous parliament.

Previous New South Wales state premier Kristina Keneally's quest to go from the Senate to the House of Representatives in what has been thought to be a secure Labor seat in Sydney was beaten by Dai Le, a Vietnamese-born independent who became the 1st refugee ever elected to parliament.

From 2010 until its electoral defeat in 2013, Greens head Adam Bandt backed a Labor minority administration and was willing to work with Albanese again.

Throughout those 3 years, Albanese served as the government's principal negotiator with external allies in the House, and he was acclaimed for his collaborative ap-

proach.

Teal independents, greener equivalents of the Liberal Party's blue tint, helped the previous conservative government lose 6 typically secure seats.

The teals seek a more aggressive goal than Labor's pledge to cut carbon emissions by 43% under 2005 levels by the conclusion of the decade. The previous administration had maintained the same promise established at the 2015 Paris Climate Agreement: 26 percent to 28 percent below 2005 emissions by 2030.

The Green Party's 2030 aim is 75%.

Quad Members And 5 Nations From South China Sea To Conduct World's Largest Naval Drills

By Danielle Campbell

The Rim of the Pacific drills, which will take place in 2022, will include major US allies from all around the world, including Australia, Japan, and India, which have decided to join Washington in the Quad group, as well as 5 countries bordering the South China Sea, one of the globe's most volatile regions for military conflicts.

According to CNN, army forces from 26 nations will participate in the exercises, which will take place between San Diego and Honolulu from June 29 to August 4. The exercises will involve 170 aircraft, 4 submarines, and 38 surface vessels, according to a statement released by the US Navy's 3rd Fleet on Tuesday. Around 25,000 people will be



involved, including ground forces from 9 different nations.

China has already been ramping up its troops and broadening its reach in the Indo-Pacific, including militarizing islands in the South China Sea, which it alleges as its sovereign jurisdiction almost entirely.

RIMPAC 2022 will bring together three countries with opposing claims to China's territory: Brunei, Malaysia, and the Philippines. Indonesia, which neighbors the South China Sea and has recently experienced maritime problems with China, will also participate, as will Singapore, which lies at the 1.3 million-square-mile sea's southwestern border.

However, as tension with China grows in the region, the Quad nations — Australia, Japan, India, and the United States — have been

boosting military ties.

Since 2020, the 4 nations have carried out 2 naval exercises. However, since last year, their leaders have met 4 times, including in in-person meetings at the White House in September and in Tokyo on May 24.

The exercises will involve amphibious operations, missile, gunnery, air defense, and anti-submarine operations, along with mine clearing operations, counter-piracy operations, explosive ordnance disposal, salvage, and dive operations, according to the US Navy.

China's foreign affairs minister, Wang Yi, has referred to the organization as an Asian "NATO," criticizing it of "stoking geopolitical rivalry" and "trumpeting the Cold War mentality."

The United Kingdom, Canada, Colombia, France, Chile, Denmark, Ecuador, Germany, Mexico, Israel, New Zealand, South Korea, Peru, Tonga, Sri Lanka, the Netherlands, and Thailand are also participating in RIMPAC 2022.

Carl Schuster, a former operations director at the Joint Intelligence Unit of the US Pacific Command, said the RIMPAC roster demonstrates Washington's political influence around the world.

He also remarked on the presence of Tonga, a Pacific island nation, in the drills, which comes at a time when China is attempting to expand its dominance in the South Pacific's minor nations.

The 28th session of RIMPAC, which started in 1971, will be held in the near future.

Sweden, Finland Apply To NATO

By The Editor

After Sweden and Finland filed membership requests, NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg announced on Wednesday that the military alliance is prepared to grab a historic opportunity and act rapidly to admit the two nations.

The ambassadors of Sweden and Finland submitted official applications to NATO, which started the security clock ticking. According to ABC NEWS, Russia, whose assault on Ukraine prompted them to join the military alliance, has cautioned that it will not embrace such a move and may respond.

"This is a good day at a critical time for our security," Stoltenberg

said, standing alongside the 2 envoys, with Swedish, Finnish, and NATO flags behind them.

Russian President Vladimir Putin has demanded that NATO quit expanding toward Russian territory, as well as several NATO allies, led by the United Kingdom and the United States, have indicated that they are prepared to provide security assistance to Sweden and Finland if he tries to provoke or destabilize them during the transition period.

The nations will only profit from NATO's Article 5 security guarantee, which states that any assault on one member will be deemed an assault on all members, until the member-

ship confirmation process is completed, which is expected to take a few months.

For the time being, the 30 member nations must weigh in on the application. Although Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan has raised skepticism about Sweden and Finland joining, the process is estimated to take around 2 weeks.

If his concerns are resolved and accession talks progress as planned, the two countries may join in a matter of months. Normally, the procedure takes 8 to 12 months, but NATO wants to act quickly considering the threat that Russia poses to the Nordic nations.

NATO allies, according to Stoltenberg, are committed to work through all difficulties and find quick conclusions.

Because the Nordic countries applied together, they won't have to waste time ratifying each other's membership applications.

Since Russia's invasion of Ukraine on February 24, public opinion in Sweden and Finland has swung dramatically in favor of membership.

Sweden and Finland have a close relationship with NATO. They have working democracies and well-funded military forces, and they participate in alliance military and aviation operations. Any challenges they

meet will be purely technological or political in nature.

The NATO membership procedure is not standardized, thus the steps can differ. However, their membership petitions will first be considered at a meeting of the North Atlantic Council (NAC) of the 30 member nations, most likely at the ambassadorial level.

The NAC will determine whether to pursue membership and what measures are required to do so. This is largely determined by how well candidate nations adhere to NATO's political, military, and legal requirements, as well as if they assist in North Atlantic security. For Sweden and Finland, this should not be a

significant issue.

Moving forward, the 2 will be asked to commit to upholding Article 5 and meeting spending obligations related to the NATO in-house budget, which is around \$2.5 billion dollars and is split proportionally among what would be 32 member nations during accession negotiations that could be concluded in only one day when the terms of those negotiations are set.

Sweden and Finland would be informed of their involvement in NATO defense planning, as well as any other legal or security requirements they may have, such as personnel vetting and managing classified information.



North Korea Reports 1st COVID Infection

By Christina Levandowski

North Korea is ramping up its anti-epidemic efforts, according to state run media, after confirming its first coronavirus case despite claiming to be virus-free since the outbreak began.

The Korean Central News Agency stated that tests of specimens gathered on Sunday from an unidentified number of persons with fevers in Pyongyang revealed that they had been infected with the omicron strain of the virus, calling it a most severe emergency situation of the state. In response, North Korean leader Kim Jong Un has ordered that all towns and counties in the nation be shut down, according to the report.

Internationally, North Korea's claim that it had no viral instances has been viewed with disbelief, and specialists say its admission today suggests the situation is serious.

North Korea, along with South Korea, China, and Russia, has turned down several vaccine proposals from the Covax global vaccine-sharing programme, leaving its 26 million individuals primarily defenseless against the virus, according to NBC NEWS.

Kim said specific work teams should be segregated and sanitation efforts should be stepped up to stop the infection from spreading during a Politburo session of the governing Workers' Party on Thursday, adding that North Korea would easily handle the current unexpected circumstance. Anti-epidemic efforts, he said, should not interfere with economic activity or national defense, and officials should try to minimize inconveniences.

According to Dr. Jung Jae-hun, a researcher in the Medical college at Gachon

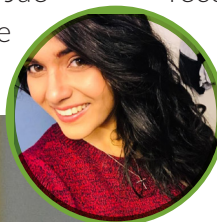
University in South Korea, North Korea is on the edge of a full-blown outbreak due to the omicron variant's strong transmissibility.

Though other forms of the virus have been discovered to have a lower mortality rate than omicron, Jung believes this is due to immunizations and protection developed from previous infections, and also the accessibility of quality medical care.

According to Dominique Fraser, a Sydney-based research scientist at the Asia Society Policy Institute, North Korea has taken the coronavirus "very seriously" since the outbreak began, closing its borders and halting practically all commerce with China, its most significant trading partner, until recently. The measures added to an economy severely hobbled by generations of inefficiency and sanctions imposed by the US over North Korea's nuclear and missile programmes.

An outbreak, according to Fraser, may shatter North Korean aspirations for broader trade resumption, aggravating shortages of food that Kim cautioned about last year.

Fraser predicted that North Korea would tighten Covid regulations even more in a "China-plus" strategy, alluding to a policy much tougher than the current lockdown in Shanghai.



N. Korea Reports 6 Deaths As Covid-19 Spreads 'Explosively'

By The Editor

Six people have died and hundreds and thousands became ill in North Korea on Friday, a day after the country confirmed a Covid-19 epidemic in a mostly unvaccinated populace for the very first time since the epidemic began.

The exact scope of the Covid outbreak is unknown, as North Korea, which lacks Covid-19 diagnostic tools and other medical instruments, claims it hasn't determined why the fever occurred. However, because the national healthcare infrastructure is still shattered and most of its 26 million citizens are unvaccinated and impoverished, some experts believe the outbreak might have serious effects.

More than 350,000 individuals have been treated for a flu that has "explosively" spread across the country since late April, according to the North's official Korean Central News Agency, with 162,200 of them recovering. On Thursday alone, 18,000 individuals were detected with fever symptoms, according to the report.

Because the origin of the fever could not be determined, it was unclear how many of the cases were Covid-19.

According to KCNA, one of the six victims who died was affected with the omicron strain. Currently, 187,800 individuals in North Korea are being segregated for treatment, according to the UN.

After maintaining a largely disputed assertion for more than 2 years



that it had totally managed to fend off the virus which has spread to almost every part of the world, North Korea instituted a statewide lockdown on Thursday to prevent its first confirmed Covid-19 outbreak.

Tests of viral samples obtained Sunday from an unidentified number of individuals with flu symptoms in Pyongyang indicated they were infested with the omicron strain, according to state media. The number of cases was not specified in the reports.

Kim was updated on the virus on his visit to the state emergency epidemic prevention headquarters on Thursday, according to KCNA, and he criticized authorities for failing to avoid a weak spot in the epidemic prevention system.

He stated the fever's spread has been concentrated in Pyongyang and surrounding areas, emphasizing the significance of isolating all work, manufacturing, and residential properties from one another while giving inhabitants every convenience to prevent the "malicious virus" from spreading.

North Korea has severely limited cross-border transportation and trade for the past 2 years, defining its anti-coronavirus program as a subject of "national existence," and is thought to have commanded forces to shoot on sight any intruders who enter its borders.

The border restrictions exacerbated an economy already devastated by generations of mismanagement and severe US-led sanctions over North Korea's nuclear and missile programmes, forcing Kim to possibly his most difficult period since taking office in 2011.

North Korea temporarily restored railroad freight business between Sinuiju and China's Dandong in January, but China halted the trade last month as it dealt with the spread of Covid-19 in its border territories.

North Korea fired 3 short-range missiles towards the sea hours after Kim publicly confirmed the viral breakout, Japan and South Korea reported, potentially as a show of power after Kim officially confirmed the virus outbreak.

Iran Vows Vengeance As It Mourns The Death Of A Guard Colonel

BY THE EDITOR

Thousands of Iranians came onto the roads of Tehran early Tuesday to offer their tribute to a leading Revolutionary Guard member killed earlier this week by 2 shooters on a motorcycle, throwing punches in the air and yelling “Death to Israel.”

Col. Hassan Sayyad Khodaei’s assassination on Sunday resembled earlier fatal shooting incidents in Iran alleged on Israel, including as those attacking the nation’s nuclear scientists.

No one has claimed accountability for the incident so far. Iranian authorities have blamed Khodaei’s death on “global arrogance,” which is a euphemism for Israel and the United States.

Mourners screamed anti-Israel and anti-US slogans as the burial convoy wiggled through the biggest Tehran cemetery. A huge banner with tattered British, Israeli, and American flags praised Khodaei as a martyr with Gen. Qassem Soleimani, the senior Iranian officer killed in a US drone attack in Iraq in 2020.

The banner, which was superimposed with the emblems of the Central Intelligence Agency and Mossad, said, “Iran is a victim of terrorism.”

The burial was attended by General Esmail Ghaani, head of Iran’s expeditionary Quds Force, and Guard commander General Hossein Salami.



On Monday night, Ghaani paid Khodaei a visit and expressed his condolences. The Iranian nuclear negotiator paid a visit to the murder scene, emphasising the government’s outrage. Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi has promised retaliation. According to ABC NEWS, a street in Tehran has been already renamed after the colonel.

The 50-year-old Khodaei is a mysterious character, with Iran’s only biographical information being that he was a high ranking member of the Quds Force, which controls activities in the Middle East through Iran’s backed militias. He has been dubbed “defender of the shrine” by the Guard, a nod to Iranians who back militias battling the hardline Islamic State in Iraq and Syria.

The style of the assassination recalled Israel’s earlier targeted assaults in Iran. Mohsen Fakhrizadeh, a senior Iranian nuclear scientist, was killed in a car crash outside of Tehran in November 2020.

Women wearing black chadors wept and wailed over Khodaei’s casket, an elegant box decorated with flowers and wrapped with the Iranian flag and Shiite mourning symbols.

According to official media, the attackers who fled are still being pursued by Iranian security personnel. No arrests have been made in connection with the homicide.

A sandstorm covered Iran, forcing the closure of government offices and schools in the capital.

Israel Searching For Assailants Who Killed Three People

By The Editor



On Friday, Israeli military personnel took part in a broad manhunt for 2 Palestinians suspected of killing 3 Israelis in a stabbing spree in Tel Aviv.

The stabbing, which occurred on Israel's Independence Day, was the latest in a string of violent attacks carried out deep within the nation in recent weeks. According to ABC NEWS, violence at a significant religious place in Jerusalem holy to Muslims and Jews had already intensified Palestinian-Israeli tensions.

Authorities said they were looking for 2 suspects, aged 19 and 20, from Jenin, in the controlled West Bank, which has resurfaced as a terrorist stronghold in the new wave of attacks, which has been the bloodiest Israel has witnessed in years. Several assailants have originated from Jenin or the surrounding area, and Israeli soldiers have carried out arrest operations

that have sparked gunfights.

A horrific scene was described by medics in Elad, an ultra-Orthodox town near Tel Aviv. Four people were injured, one severely, in addition to the 3 killed.

Oren Ben Yiftah, Boaz Gol, and Yonatan Havakuk, 3 men in their 30s and 40s with 16 children, were among those slain, according to Israeli media. On Friday, there will be funerals.

Ben Yiftah, a 35-year-old father of six, was from Lod. Yair Revivo, the mayor of the city, described it as a "great tragedy."

On Thursday, Israel celebrated its Independence Day, a joyous national holiday celebrated with barbecues and air shows.

The West Bank blockade, implemented before the holiday to deter Palestinians from infiltrating Israel, has been prolonged until Sunday, according to Defense

Minister Benny Gantz.

State Secretary Antony Blinken condemned the "horrific attack" on "innocent women and men" in Washington.

The incident was also criticised by Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas, whose administration governs autonomous regions in the Israeli-controlled West Bank and comply with Israel on security.

The Gaza Strip's controlling Palestinian extremist group, Hamas, hailed the strike and connected it to bloodshed at the Jerusalem sacred site.

The Al-Aqsa Mosque complex is Islam's third holiest place, and it is located on a hilltop that is also the holiest location for Jews, known as the Temple Mount. It is at the conflict's emotional center, and Israeli forces and Palestinians have battled there several times in recent weeks.

Jews are permitted to visit but not pray at the shrine under informal agreements described as the status quo. They have been visiting in ever-increasing figures with armed escorts in recent years, and many have quietly prayed, angering Palestinians along with Jordan, the site's custodian. The Palestinians have generally suspected that Israel intends to take control or split the site.

Israel insists on preserving the status quo, accusing Hamas of provoking the current bloodshed.

In five assaults since March, at least 18 Israelis have been slain, including a stabbing spree in southern Israel, 2 shootings in the Tel Aviv region, and a shooting this weekend in a West Bank community.

Around 30 Palestinians have been killed in violence, the majority of them were involved in

assaults or clashes with Israeli police in the West Bank. However, an unarmed lady and 2 onlookers were also killed, and human rights groups claim Israel frequently uses brutal force.

A year ago, Hamas and Israel waged an 11-day war, driven in part by rioting in Jerusalem.

In the 1967 Mideast battle, Israel took east Jerusalem, the West Bank, and Gaza, including Al-Aqsa and other key holy sites precious to Muslims, Christians, and Jews. The Palestinians want their future state to include all three areas. Over a decade ago, real peace discussions broke out.

Israel Observes Nationwide Pause To Commemorate War Dead

By Kathy Malouf

On Memorial Day, Israel's citizens and soldiers killed in terrorist assaults and conflicts were remembered by sirens blaring around the country.

Prayers and poetry readings were organized at cemeteries to commemorate the approximately 24,000 individuals who died in Israel's conflicts, before the celebrations began at dusk with military flyovers and celebrations to mark the nation's 74th Independence Day. People stayed still and lowered their heads during the 2 minutes of sirens.

Bennett called for Israelis to avoid from attacking one another last week as Israel commemorated the 6 million Jews slain during the Holocaust, despite the weak government he heads being divided. He talked in the light of recent Palestinian unrest, as well as from personal experience.

His family has received 2 distinct death threats in the last few days, each containing live ammo and asking that he quit.



Bennett stated that it is Israel's "duty" to the deceased to unite the country.

Bereaved relatives visit the cemetery and join memorial ceremonies on Memorial Day, while radio and television stations broadcast solemn music, documentaries, and memorial ceremonies for fallen troops.

The blaring of a siren blast throughout the nation brought everyone to a standstill in the yearly rite. Pedestrians halted in the street, while automobiles came to a halt on the highway, their heads down.

Since its founding in 1948, Israel has endured six battles with surrounding Arab nations, faced 2 Palestinian uprisings, and been the target of a slew of fatal extremist assaults. Memorial Day recognises more than 3,000 civilians killed in extremist assaults, in addition to military slain in conflicts.

According to ABC NEWS, the yearly ceremony coincided with the 11th anniversary of Israel's 11-day conflict with Gaza's militant leaders, as well as a recent series of Palestinian bombings, Israeli incursions in the West Bank, and skirmishes between Israeli

forces and Palestinians at a key Jerusalem holy site. The Al-Aqsa Mosque, Islam's third holiest site, is located atop the hilltop compound. It is also the holiest place for Jews, who refer to it as the Temple Mount since it is the site

of ancient biblical Temples that were destroyed.

The Palestinian terrorist organisation Hamas took credit on Monday for a gunshot that killed an Israeli security officer last week

at the entrance to a Jewish community in the West Bank. It was the first incident since 2018 that Hamas claimed responsibility for an attack against Israelis in the controlled West Bank.

Israel Holding Over 600 Palestinians Without Charge

By Christina Levandowski

According to an Israeli rights organization, Israel is keeping 600 Palestinian inmates without accusation or trial, the largest number since 2016.

Israel claims to utilize "administrative detention" to detain dangerous radicals and prevent attacks without disclosing critical intelligence. Palestinians and human rights organizations claim that the system has been extensively misused and that it lacks fair trials, with some prisoners being kept for months or even years without reviewing the case against them.

According to HaMoked, an Israeli rights organization that collects data from prison administrators on a regular basis, there were 604 inmates under administrative detention as of May. Administrative detention is hardly used against Jews, thus nearly everyone is a Palestinian.

According to HaMoked, 2,441 Palestinians are spending time in military prisons after being sentenced in military courts. A total of 1,478 people are being held for interrogation, have been convicted and are facing trial, or are being tried presently.



In recent weeks, Israel has been struck by a series of assaults that have resulted in the deaths of 15 people. It has conducted arrest operations across the disputed West Bank in the interests of stopping more. According to ABC NEWS, these operations have sparked violent demonstrations and gunbattles.

According to the Associated Press, at least 29 Palestinians have been killed. The majority of those killed were as a result of attacks or confrontations with Israeli army, but 2 bystanders and an unarmed woman were also killed.

The last time Israel incarcerated this many administrative prisoners, in October 2016, it was in the aftermath of a wave of attacks by Palestinians, including car-ramming assaults, stabbings, and shootings.

All administrative detention rulings in Israel, according to Israel, are subject to court review. Detainees have the option of appealing to a military appeals court or the Israeli Supreme Court, but human rights groups claim that the courts disproportionately favor the security establishment.

The director of HaMoked, Jessica Montell, believes that violence does not legitimize keeping hundreds of individuals without charge for months or years.

There might be deadly extremists among those detained, as well as incidents of mistaken identity. For nearly a year, a kid with a rare neuromuscular disease has been confined in administrative detention.

In protest, a number of Palestinians in administrative detention have gone on protracted hunger strikes, with many incurring life-lasting health problems as a result. Since the beginning of this year, administrative detainees and their attorneys have boycotted Israeli military court sessions in protest. According to B'Tselem, another famous Israeli rights organization, the courts are holding sessions without them.

Since Israel's 1967 Mideast conflict, when it conquered the region, the West Bank has been under Israeli military authority. It is important to the Palestinians that it be a major feature of their future state.

The almost 3 million Palestinian people of the region are subject to Israeli military justice, but the over 500,000 Jewish settlers who live alongside them are Israeli citizens and are entitled to civilian courts.

Tehran Summons Swedish Envoy Over Ex-Official's Trial

By Henry Nicholas

Iran's foreign ministry summoned Sweden's envoy to voice its displeasure over the "illegal" detention and prosecution of an ex official convicted of human rights violations in 1988.

According to state-run IRNA, Sweden's foreign ministry informed Stockholm's newly-appointed ambassador, Mattias Lentz, that Swedish prosecution had lodged unsubstantiated and manufactured charges against the officer, Hamid Nouri, and Iran.



The Mojahedin-e-Khalq (MEK), an opposition group that Iran deems a terrorist group owing to a series of bombings and shootings in the 1980s and strikes on Iranian land during the Iraq-Iran War with assistance from then Iraqi president Saddam Hussein, impacted Nouri's sentencing, according to the outlet.



The Iranian foreign ministry also demanded that the "political show" before Sweden's judiciary be put to an end, and that Nouri be released immediately.

According to Al Jazeera, the action comes just days after Swedish authorities requested that Nouri be sentenced to life in jail, the maximum penalty, at his 89th court session.

After Swedish officials used the concept of "universal jurisdiction," Nouri was detained in 2019 upon arriving at Stockholm airport, and his prosecution started in August 2021.

The 61-year-old was a deputy lawyer at Gohardasht Prison outside Tehran in 1988, when political detainees, most of them MEK militants, are believed to have

been convicted and executed, according to prosecutors. They said he was “actively engaged” in the alleged human rights violations.

Iranian authorities and Nouri have categorically denied the allegations, calling them absolutely false.

Nouri has been locked in solitary confinement for over 2 years, ac-

cording to his family, who released a statement on Sunday. They also stated that they had been ignorant of his location for some time after his detention, and that despite numerous attempts, they were prevented from visiting him since his incarceration.

Following recent events, Sweden’s and Iran’s foreign ministries have cautioned their citizens to

avoid making needless visits to the other nation.

The Iranian foreign ministry has summoned a Swedish ambassador for the second time this month. The charge d’affaires of the Swedish embassy was called last month after copies of the Quran were torched by Swedish far right organisations during Ramadan, the Muslim holy month.

Palestinian Attacker Kill Israeli Guard In West Bank By The Editor

According to the Israeli armed forces, Palestinian attackers fatally shot a security personnel at the entryway of a Jewish community in the controlled West Bank late Friday. The new incident might exacerbate Palestinian-Israeli tensions, which have been rising in recent months.

The terrorists came at the Ariel community entrance early Saturday and killed the guard in his station before fleeing the area, according to the Israeli military. The suspects were pursued by the soldiers in the West Bank.

A 27-year-old Palestinian man was shot and killed by Israeli soldiers during skirmishes in the district of Qalqilya early Saturday, according to the Palestinian Ministry Of health.

In the last 2 months, 15 Israelis have been killed in a series of Palestinian assaults in Israel and the West Bank. According to ABC NEWS, Israeli security personnel



have murdered at least 27 Palestinians in recent weeks.

The Palestinian organisation Hamas, which rules Gaza, applauded the strike but did not claim credit.

Tensions at a prominent Jerusalem holy site have risen this month, with Palestinian worshippers fighting with Israeli forces on a regular basis. During the Muslim holy month of Ramadan, a growing number of Palestinians vis-

it the site to worship at Al-Aqsa Mosque, Islam's holiest site.

Earlier on Friday, Palestinians threw stones at the site, which has experienced a surge of violence in recent weeks, and Israeli police shot rubber-coated bullets.

According to the police, Palestinians within the Al-Aqsa Mosque complex began throwing stones and pyrotechnics at a heavily guarded gate leading to the Western Wall, the holiest location for Jews to pray, about daybreak. The cops stormed the facility, using rubber-coated bullets.

After some other Palestinians in the complex intervened and persuaded the stone throwers and police to back off, the violence

stopped about an hour later.

More than 40 individuals were injured, according to the Palestinian Red Crescent, with 22 requiring medical attention at local hospitals. During the confrontations, Israeli soldiers barred first responders from accessing the facility, and one of its medics was assaulted by police, according to the report. The reports that Israeli police barred medical professionals from visiting the region were dismissed by Israeli police as a "distorted" account of events. 3 individuals were also arrested, according to the report.

The Al-Aqsa Mosque complex is situated on a hilltop that is considered the holiest place for Jews, who refer to it as the Tem-

ple Mount since it was formerly home to Jewish temples. It's been a hotspot in the Palestinian-Israeli dispute for a long time.

Several times in recent weeks, Israeli forces and Palestinians have battled there. Security personnel were compelled to intervene to stop stone-throwing, according to Israeli officials, who accuse Hamas of instigating violence.

According to the Palestinians, the installation of Israeli forces at the site, as well as frequent visits by a growing number of devout Jews and nationalists, is a breach of the site's decades-old informal agreements. The visits were suspended last week for the final ten days of Ramadan, the Muslim holy month that ends this weekend.

Turkey's Military Operation Triggers Controversy And Division In Iraq

By Henry Nicholas

On April 18, Turkey's recent military campaign in northern Iraq's Kurdish area started, with Ankara beginning a land and air onslaught against the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) in parts of Duhok province.

In recent years, raids against the PKK, an armed militia fighting for independence in Turkey's southeast and deemed a terrorist outfit by Ankara, have become more common. They are, however, becoming increasingly divisive across Iraq, and not only under the Kurdistan Regional Government's



jurisdiction (KRG).

Only days before ordering the operation, nicknamed Claw-Lock, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan met with KRG Prime Minister Masrour Barzani, an evident hint that the KRG was supporting the operation to some level. Erdogan also stated that the Iraqi regime was supportive of the operation.

The Iraqi national government, on the other hand, not only denied Erdogan's assertion, but also severely denounced Ankara's actions. Baghdad has also summoned Turkey's ambassador to express its displeasure.

Turkey claims that actions against the PKK in northern Iraq are vital to prevent the group from attacking Turkey again.

Despite Ankara's assertion that it has backing from both Baghdad and Erbil, there seems to be a split

inside Iraq.

According to observers, the KRG has yet to publish a formal comment on the activity, and internal divisions within the regional administration may have attributed to the radio silence.

According to Al Jazeera, the Turkish military operation comes while Iraqi politics remains unpredictable, with a new government still to be established and continuing discussions between political groups, despite elections being conducted in October 2021.

To make matters even more volatile, local Iraqi news outlets have reported that the Hashd al-Shaabi (PMF) armed group, a predominantly Shia pro-Iranian force that has major military influence in Iraq thanks to its role in the campaign against ISIL (ISIS), now also has a substantial political bloc.

According to Harry Istepanian,

a Washington-based researcher, Turkey has viewed the PMF as totally governed by Iran since its inception in 2014, and so lacking credibility in Sunni regions. A strike on the PMF would be seen as a provocative move, sending a message to Iraq's political factions while also exposing the possibility of future escalation.

The strikes on the PMF have elicited no formal response from Turkey.

How the PMF responds, if at all, will certainly impact some of Turkey's military ambitions in Iraq in the future.

For the time being, Iraq's perplexed attitude to Turkey's operation mirrors the country's own perplexity, since it lacks a government and a clear sense of purpose. When it is settled, a more firm stance on Turkey may be conceivable.

Palestinian Killed In Israeli Operation On Jenin Camp

By Zach Schrader

During an operation on the Jenin region in the northern controlled West Bank, Israeli troops shot and killed a Palestinian teen.

Ahmad Fathi Masad, a former inmate from Burqin, west of Jenin, was recognised as the 18-year-old.

On Wednesday morning, sometime after dawn, his death at the Jenin refugee settlement was reported, and an hour later, a funeral service was arranged for him.

He was shot in the head, according to the Palestinian ministry of health. Three more Palestinian teenagers were wounded by live Israeli gunfire and are in steady condition.

The Israeli army stated it was "conducting counterterrorism activity" in Jenin, but didn't say how many people were killed.

"The blood of the martyr Ahmad and all the martyrs will not go in vain," the Palestinian Islamic Jihad

(PIJ) group, which is operating in the Jenin camp, stated in a release.

On Wednesday, Israeli police raided other districts of Jenin and the occupied West Bank, arresting at least 15 Palestinians.

Masad's death came only one day after Ahmad Ibrahim Owaidat, a 20-year-old Palestinian, was slain during an operation on the Aqabet Jaber refugee settlement near Jericho,



in the eastern West Bank.

Following 4 attacks in Israel that killed 14 individuals, including 3 police officials, Israel has increased raids and arrests throughout the West Bank.

Since the beginning of 2022, Israelis have killed nearly 47 Palestinians.

According to Al Jazeera, Israeli armed forces operations, targeted assassinations, and arrests have increased in Jenin in an effort to quash escalating Palestinian armed insurrection there.

There are widespread concerns of a large-scale Israeli assault of the camp, which is home to the armed wings of the PIJ and Fatah groups.

In the West Bank, Israeli military personnel have killed 11 Palestinians in the last 2 weeks, including 6 from Jenin.



When the Jewish holiday of Passover and the Muslim holy month of Ramadan fell on the same week last week, settler intrusions under police cover resulted in daily clashes with Palestinians at the Al-Aqsa Mosque site, with several Palestinians imprisoned and wounded.

Weeks of demonstrations in occupied East Jerusalem and attacks on Al-Aqsa by Israeli troops during Ramadan last year erupted into a wider revolt throughout Israel and the controlled Palestinian lands, culminating in an 11-day attack on the Gaza Strip.

Israel Closes Border For Gaza Workers Following Rocket Attacks

By Conor La Rouché

After a number of rockets were launched from the region governed by the extremist Hamas group in recent days, Israel announced on Saturday that it will block the border gate to thousands of Gaza employees.

The Palestinians condemned the measure as “collective punishment” against the impoverished region’s 2 million inhabitants, who have been subjected to an Egyptian-Is-

raeli embargo since Hamas took authority from opposing Palestinian forces over 15 years ago.

According to ABC NEWS, the rocket attacks occurred during near-daily skirmishes at a key Jerusalem holy place over the previous week, with Palestinians throwing fireworks and stones with Israeli forces entering the area and shooting rubber-coated bullets and flash grenades.

The bloodshed in Jerusalem, as well as a series of fatal strikes

within Israel and incursions across the annexed West Bank, has sparked worries of another conflict involving Hamas and Israel, akin to the one that erupted last year amid similar circumstances.

Late Friday, Palestinian terrorists launched 2 rockets, one of which landed in an open field within Israel and another in Gaza, according to Israel. According to Palestinian media, the rocket that missed its target injured two Gaza civilians.



Early Saturday, another missile was launched from Gaza, although the army did not disclose where it hit. There have been no casualties or damage reported.

The Israeli armed forces agency in charge of civilian operations in Gaza has announced that the border used by employees would not reopen on Sunday, the first day of the workweek.

Israel has handed hundreds of work licences to Palestinians in Gaza in past months, that has been under a crushing Egyptian and Israeli siege since Hamas assumed control from opposing Palestinian forces over 15 years ago.

The measure was framed by Israel as a gesture of goodwill to maintain peace, but the licenses – which can be canceled at any moment – provide them a powerful kind of control over Palestinians. Israel issues work permits to around 12,000 Palestinians within Gaza and around 100,000 Palestinians in the controlled West

Bank, primarily for construction and other low-wage jobs.

The Gaza workers' union called the shutdown "collective punishment" that will wreak havoc on the already struggling economy, which has a 50 percent unemployment rate. It said that the closure's timing, just before the Eid al-Fitr festival, which marks the conclusion of Ramadan, will exacerbate the misery for households struggling financially.

The licenses themselves, according to Sami Amassi, were designed to "exploit" the laborers for political goals rather than better their lives.

The measure, according to Hamas spokesman Hazem Qassem, "aims at tightening the siege and is a form of aggression that we cannot accept."

During the 1967 war, Israel seized east Jerusalem, the Gaza Strip, and the West Bank, along with important religious sites sa-

cred to Muslims, Christians, and Jews. The Palestinians want their future state to include all three areas.

Israel seized east Jerusalem in a move that was not recognised by the international community, and it has developed Jewish colonies throughout the occupied West Bank, housing roughly 500,000 Jews alongside almost 3 million Palestinians. In more than a decade, there have been no real peace negotiations.

The Al-Aqsa Mosque, Islam's 3rd holiest site, has been the focus of the unrest in Jerusalem. Because it was the site of 2 Jewish temples in antiquity, Jews regard the hilltop on which it is situated as their holiest place, referring to it as the Temple Mount.

The location is at the centre of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, and confrontations there have frequently sparked bloodshed elsewhere.





Washington Insider

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