

Israel kicks out diplomats, accuses Australia of fueling antisemitism after MK banned

Sa'ar orders embassy to give visa requests from Down Under a closer look * Hamas handed new Gaza deal proposal with 2-phase hostage release * Comptroller wants to grill Netanyahu over October 7

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Thousands of Palestinians flee Gaza City as fresh offensive looms

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Zelensky says Russia shouldn't be 'rewarded' for invasion, ahead of talks with Trump

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Australian Jewish leader condemns rejection of MK, despite 'offensive' views

By **TOI STAFF**

Today, 6:29 am



People walk past trucks loaded with aid for Gaza waiting on the Egyptian side of the Rafah crossing on August 18, 2025. (Khaled DESOUKI / AFP)

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The Times of Israel is liveblogging Monday's events as they unfold.

11min ago

Thousands of Palestinians flee Gaza City as fresh offensive looms



Palestinians carry humanitarian aid they gathered after an airdrop, as they walk in the al-Mawasi area, in the southern Gaza Strip on August 18, 2025. (AFP)

CAIRO, Egypt — Fearing an imminent ground offensive, thousands of Palestinians have left their homes in eastern areas of Gaza City, now under constant Israeli bombardment, for points to the west and south of the shattered territory.

In Gaza City, many Palestinians have also been calling for protests soon to demand an end to a war that has demolished much of the territory and wrought a humanitarian disaster, and for Hamas to intensify talks to avert the Israeli ground offensive.

Ahmed Mheisen, Palestinian shelter manager in Beit Lahiya, a war-devastated suburb abutting eastern Gaza City, says 995 families had departed the area in recent days for the south.

With the Israeli offensive looming, Mheisen put the number of tents needed for emergency shelter at 1.5 million, saying Israel had allowed only 120,000 tents into the territory during a January-March ceasefire.

“The people of Gaza City are like someone who received a death sentence and is awaiting execution,” Tamer Burai, a Gaza City businessman, says.

“I am moving my parents and my family to the south today or tomorrow. I can’t risk losing any of them should there be a surprising invasion,” he tells Reuters via a chat app.

A protest is scheduled for Thursday in Gaza City by different unions, and people took to social media platforms vowing to participate, which will raise pressure on Hamas to reach a ceasefire deal.

24min ago

Egyptian FM says Cairo ready to join UN-backed international force in Gaza

By AFP

Egypt says it is willing to join a potential international force deployed to war-torn Gaza, but only if backed by a UN Security Council resolution and accompanied by a “political horizon,” as ceasefire-hostage release efforts pressed on in Cairo.

“We are standing ready, of course, to help, to contribute to any international force to be deployed in Gaza in some specific parameters,” Egyptian Foreign Minister Badr Abdelatty tells a joint press conference with Palestinian Authority Prime Minister Mohammad Mustafa at the Rafah border crossing.

“First of all, to have a Security Council resolution, to have a clear-cut mandate, and of course to come within a political horizon,” Abdelatty says.

“Without a political horizon, it will be nonsense to deploy any forces there.”

Abdelatty says a political framework would enable international troops to operate more effectively and support Palestinians “to realize their own independent Palestinian state in their homeland.”

31min ago

Zelensky says Russia shouldn't be 'rewarded' for invasion, ahead of talks with Trump

By [AFP](#)



Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelensky speaks during a joint press conference with the European Commission president in Brussels, Belgium, on August 17, 2025. (Simon Wohlfahrt / AFP)

WASHINGTON — Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky says ahead of talks with Donald Trump today that Russia should not be “rewarded” for its invasion, after the US leader pressed Ukraine to make concessions in exchange for peace.

The talks, in which European leaders will also take part, follow a Friday summit between Trump and Russian President Vladimir Putin in Alaska that failed to produce a ceasefire in the nearly three-and-a-half-year war.

Trump, who dropped his insistence on a ceasefire in favor of a final peace deal after meeting Putin, said Sunday that Zelensky could end the war “almost immediately, if he wants to” but that, for Ukraine, there was “no getting back” Crimea and “NO GOING INTO NATO.”

Kyiv and European leaders have warned against making political and territorial concessions to Russia, whose assault on Ukraine since February 2022 has resulted in tens of thousands of deaths.

“Russia should not be rewarded for its participation in this war.... And it is Moscow that must hear the word: Stop,” Zelensky says in a Facebook post.

Trump and Zelensky are expected to meet one-on-one before being joined by the leaders of Britain, France, Germany, Italy, and Finland, as well as NATO chief Mark Rutte and European Commission chief Ursula von der Leyen, according to the White House.

The European leaders will also hold a preparatory meeting with Zelensky ahead of talks with Trump, the European Union says.

42min ago

Australian Jewish leader condemns rejection of MK, despite ‘offensive’ views

By [ZEV STUB](#)

The head of one of Australia’s leading Jewish organizations has spoken out against the country’s decision to bar far-right Religious Zionism MK Simcha Rothman from visiting the country, even if many do not share Rothman’s far-right views.

“It is one thing to disagree strongly with an elected representative of a democracy and ally, it is quite another to deny them entry on that basis,” Jeremy Leibler, president of the Zionist Federation of Australia, says in a statement to The Times of Israel.

While noting that many of Rothman’s views “are highly offensive and do not reflect the values of the Australian Jewish community or the mainstream Israeli public,” Leibler states that Australia “ought not set such a precedent.”

A spokesman for the Executive Council of Australian Jewry, the official representative of Australian Jewish organizations, declines to comment.

1hr ago

PA prime minister says committee being formed to manage Gaza once again

By [NURIT YOHANAN](#)



Palestinian Authority Prime Minister Mohammad Mustafa (L), accompanied by Egypt's Foreign Minister Badr Abdelatty (C), arrives at an airport in El-Arish, Egypt, on August 18, 2025. (Khaled DESOUKI / AFP)

Visiting the Egyptian side of the Rafah crossing alongside Egyptian Foreign Minister Badr Abdelatty, Palestinian Authority Prime Minister Mohammad Mustafa says the PA is laying the groundwork for it to eventually retake control of the Gaza Strip.

“We will soon announce the establishment of a temporary committee to manage the affairs of the Strip under the auspices of the Palestinian government,” he says.

Mustafa says the body will not be new but rather a reactivation of institutions of the “State of Palestine and its government in Gaza,” which he stresses is “an inseparable part of the State of Palestine.”

The PA was in charge of running Gaza’s affairs until 2007, when it was ousted by Hamas in a bloody coup. Israel has said it will not agree to handing over control to the PA, but has yet to formulate an alternative acceptable to the international community.

Mustafa says Israel’s offensive does not grant legitimacy to any local or international body to impose “arrangements” on the Gaza Strip, hinting at US pressure on Egypt to accept Gazans into Egyptian territory.

2hr ago

Israel boots Australian diplomats, orders close look at visa requests as ties sour

By [NAVA FREIBERG](#)

Foreign Minister Gideon Sa’ar has decided to revoke the residency visas of Australia’s representatives to the Palestinian Authority, the minister [announces](#) in a post on X, hours after Canberra barred an Israeli lawmaker from entering the country.

Sa’ar, who accuses the Australian government of fanning antisemitism, writes that he also instructed Israel’s embassy in Canberra “to carefully examine any official Australian visa application for entry to Israel.” It’s unclear if the policy will affect all Australian requests or only those from Australian officials.

The moves, which were presented to the Australian ambassador a short while ago, follow “Australia’s decisions to recognize a ‘Palestinian state’” in September, and the country’s “unjustified refusal to grant visas to a number of Israeli figures, including former Minister Ayelet Shaked and the Chairman of the Knesset’s Constitution, Law and Justice Committee, MK Simcha Rotman,” according to Sa’ar.

“While antisemitism is raging in Australia, including manifestations of violence against Jews and Jewish institutions, the Australian government is choosing to fuel it by false accusations, as if the visit of Israeli figures will disrupt public order and harm Australia’s Muslim population. It is shameful and unacceptable!” Sa’ar adds.

In a sharply worded Hebrew-language video message released by Sa’ar’s office shortly after the announcement, the minister adds that “Australia is acting against Israel, Australia is persecuting Israel,” and that its move to bar individuals “must be understood in this context.”

“And we will take additional measures,” Sa’ar adds. “To be continued.”

Despite holding offices in Ramallah, both Australian diplomats representing Canberra to the PA live in Israel, according to Channel 12 news.

2hr ago

Around 180 tons of aid dropped into Gaza

By [EMANUEL FABIAN](#)

Aircraft from Jordan, the United Arab Emirates, Germany, Belgium, France, Italy, the Netherlands, Singapore and Indonesia airdropped 180 pallets of humanitarian aid in the Gaza Strip today, the IDF says.

Each pallet contains around one ton of food.

Indonesia, with the largest Muslim population in the world, does not have relations with Israel, but reports in recent weeks have swirled around efforts to broker a normalization deal. Yesterday marked the first time it airdropped aid in Gaza, according to COGAT.

Israel re-adopted a policy of allowing aid airdrops on July 26, amid mounting international criticism over the hunger crisis in Gaza. But airdrops are only able to deliver a small fraction of what can come into Gaza by land. They also pose safety risks for the civilians who can be hit by the packages from above.

2hr ago

Source says new Gaza plan would free 10 hostages in first phase

By [AFP](#)

A source from the Islamic Jihad terror group fighting alongside Hamas in Gaza tells AFP that a proposed ceasefire plan presented to Hamas today involves a “ceasefire agreement lasting 60 days, during which 10 Israeli hostages would be released alive, along with a number of bodies.”

Previous talks had centered around a deal that would see 10 living hostages and the bodies of 18 others released in a first phase.

Terror groups in the Gaza Strip are holding 50 hostages, including the bodies of at least 28 confirmed dead by the IDF. Twenty are believed to be alive and there are grave concerns for the well-being of two others, Israeli officials have said. The number includes the body of an IDF soldier killed in Gaza in 2014.

According to the Islamic Jihad source, “the remaining captives would be released in a second phase, with immediate negotiations to follow for a broader deal” for a permanent end to “the war and aggression” with international guarantees.

The source adds that “all factions are supportive of what was presented” by the Egyptian and Qatari mediators.

Israel’s government is said to now demand that any deal include all hostages released in a single tranche.

2hr ago

One in three Australians think Palestine recognition too soon, won’t matter anyway

More than half of Australians support the recognition of a Palestinian state, but many of them think their government should wait until Hamas is no longer in power or Palestinians first recognize Israel’s right to exist, polling numbers [published by the Sydney Morning Herald](#) show.

According to the survey of 1,800 respondents, 24% of Australians think the government should recognize a Palestinian state regardless, while 32% of Australians want Prime Minister Anthony Albanese to wait until those conditions are met. The remaining 44% polled prefer the government not grant recognition at all.

The poll, conducted from November 11 to 16, also finds that only 25% of Australians think the recognition move will change anything, versus 36% who think it will not and 40% who are unsure. It is unclear where the extra percentage point comes from.

2hr ago

Norwegian wealth fund to divest from 6 companies linked to West Bank, Gaza

By [REUTERS](#)

Norway’s sovereign wealth fund says it is divesting from six companies with connections to the West Bank and Gaza, following an ethics review of its Israeli investments.

The \$2 trillion wealth fund, the world’s largest, does not name the companies it has decided to exclude, but says these would be made public, along with specific reasons for each company, once the divestment is complete.

The announcement follows an urgent review launched this month after reports that the fund had built a stake in an Israeli jet engine group that provides services to Israel’s armed forces, including the maintenance of fighter jets.

The fund’s ethics council watchdog says it will continue to assess Israeli companies every quarter.

Exclusions from the fund are based on recommendations from the fund’s ethics watchdog.

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