

02022026 NEWS SPECIAL Don't miss Lev U'Neshama NOTE at end!

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Ahead of Friday nuclear talks with Iran, Witkoff heading to Israel to meet PM, Zamir
Trump envoy reportedly to meet with Iranian FM in Istanbul after country's president orders start of negotiations; Kremlin offers to process or store Tehran's enriched uranium

By [Agencies](#), [Tol Staff](#) and [Lazar Berman](#)

Today, 4:13 pm Updated at 6:39 pm



(L-R) Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in Jerusalem on December 22, 2025 (ABIR SULTAN / POOL / AFP), Steve Witkoff at the White House, January 29, 2026 (AP Photo/Evan Vucci), and IDF Chief of Staff Lt. Gen. Eyal Zamir on December 29, 2025. (Israel Defense Forces)

US envoy Steve Witkoff is expected to arrive in Israel on Tuesday for meetings with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Israel Defense Forces Chief of Staff Lt. Gen. Eyal Zamir, according to two senior Israeli officials. The discussions will likely concern Iran, after Zamir was in Washington DC over the weekend for a series of discussions with American defense officials regarding the

Islamic Republic.

Following his visit to Israel, Witkoff and Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Arraqchi plan to meet on Friday in Istanbul to discuss a possible nuclear deal and other issues, a US official said on Monday.

“The president’s been calling for them to make a deal. The meeting is to hear what they have to say,” the official said.

Turkey, Qatar, and Egypt have been working to arrange the meeting, Axios reported earlier, citing two sources.

Meanwhile, Iranian media said on Monday that Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian ordered the start of nuclear talks with the US after President Donald Trump said he was hopeful for a deal to avert military action against the Islamic Republic.

Following the Iranian authorities’ deadly response to anti-government protests that peaked last month, Trump threatened military action and ordered the dispatch of an aircraft carrier group to the Middle East.

Tehran, in response, has warned that if Trump orders strikes, Iran will target Israel and American military assets in the Middle East.

Netanyahu addressed these threats in a speech to the Knesset Monday, saying Israel was “ready for every scenario.”

“Whoever attacks us will face unbearable consequences,” the premier warned.

While piling pressure on Iran, Trump has maintained that he is hopeful of making a deal. Tehran has also insisted it wants diplomacy, even while vowing an unbridled response to any aggression.

“President Pezeshkian has ordered the opening of talks with the United States,” the news agency Fars reported, citing an unnamed government source.

In this handout picture provided by Iranian presidency, Iran’s President Masoud Pezeshkian addresses cabinet members, as they visit of the tomb of the late Iranian revolutionary leader Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, in Tehran on January 31, 2026 (Handout/Iranian Presidency/AFP)

“Iran and the United States will hold talks on the nuclear file,” Fars said, without specifying a date.



The report was also carried by the government newspaper Iran and the reformist daily Shargh.

Without giving details on the content of any prospective negotiation, Iranian foreign ministry spokesman Esmaeil Baqaei said, "Countries of the region are acting as mediators in the exchange of messages."

"Several points have been addressed and we are examining and finalizing the details of each stage in the diplomatic process, which we hope to conclude in the coming days," he added. "This concerns the method and framework."

Speaking on CNN on Sunday, Araghchi said he believes his country can reach an agreement with the US.

Others in the region are also keen to avoid the tensions with Iran boiling over, and Jordan's top diplomat communicated as much in a phone call with his Iranian counterpart on Monday.

"Jordan will not be a battleground in any regional conflict or a launching pad for any military action against Iran," Ayman Safadi told Araghchi, according to a Jordanian foreign ministry statement.

Safadi added that Amman, a US ally, "will not permit any party to violate its airspace or threaten its security and the safety of its citizens," and stressed Jordan's support for de-escalation and restoring calm.

Meanwhile, the Kremlin said that Russia is still trying to de-escalate tensions around Iran, noting that it had long ago offered its services to process or store Iran's enriched uranium.

Asked if Russia was discussing with Iran and the US the possibility of taking Iranian enriched uranium, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said: "This topic has been on the agenda for a long time."

"Russia has been offering its services for quite a long time as a possible option that would lead to the removal of certain irritants for a number of countries," Peskov said.



Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi, left, and Russian President Vladimir Putin, right, shake hands during their meeting on the sidelines of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation summit in Tianjin, China, September 1, 2023. (Alexander Zemlianichenko, Sputnik, Kremlin Pool Photo via AP)

"Right now, Russia is continuing its efforts, continuing its contacts with all interested parties, and maintains its readiness to de-escalate tensions around Iran to the best of its ability," he said.

Israel targeted Iran's nuclear and ballistic missile programs during last year's war, and has debilitated several of the terror groups funded by Tehran that seek Israel's destruction. Trump has also warned Iran not to expand its ballistic missile stockpile.

Israel said its sweeping assault on Iran's top military leaders, nuclear scientists, uranium enrichment sites, and ballistic missile program was necessary to prevent the Islamic Republic from realizing its avowed plan to destroy the Jewish state.

Iran has consistently denied seeking to acquire nuclear weapons. However, it enriched uranium to levels that have no peaceful application, obstructed international inspectors from checking its nuclear facilities, and expanded its ballistic missile capabilities. Israel said Iran had recently taken steps toward weaponization.

Iran retaliated to Israel's strikes by launching over 500 ballistic missiles and around 1,100 drones at Israel. The attacks killed 32 people and wounded over 3,000 in Israel, according to health officials and hospitals.

<https://www.timesofisrael.com/witkoff-to-arrive-in-israel-for-talks-with-netanyahu-idf-chief-zamir/>

Iranian official to US: 'Move the warships' as regional talks to avert war take shape

A regional diplomat told Reuters Arab states including Qatar will join US-Iran talks Friday in Istanbul; as Iran demands a US pullback, Israel believes Trump is preparing for a strike, underscored by a US-Israel naval show of force in the Red Sea

Itamar Eichner, Yoav Zitun, News Agencies | Updated: 12:41

A senior Iranian official confirmed Monday afternoon to the Reuters news agency that expected talks between U.S. envoy Steve Witkoff and Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi will be held Friday in Istanbul.

Reuters also quoted a regional diplomat who said representatives of several countries in the region, including Qatar, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Oman and Egypt, will attend the meeting in Istanbul, in what now appears to be an effort to convene a kind of regional summit as part of intense efforts to prevent war.



(Photo: US Navy, Reuters, Anna Moneymaker/AFP, KHAMENEI.IR/AFP)



Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi and US envoy Steve Witkoff (Photo: REUTERS/Evelyn Hockstein/Pool)

"The president called on them to make a deal. The meeting is intended to hear what they have to say," a U.S. official said of the expected talks Friday. Witkoff is due to arrive after traveling to Israel on Tuesday, where he is expected to meet Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, and after taking part Wednesday and Thursday in other negotiations between Russia and Ukraine in Abu Dhabi.

Alongside the diplomatic efforts, the military threat continues. Earlier Monday, the Israel Defense Forces and the U.S. military announced a naval exercise conducted Sunday by their navies in the Red Sea. According to U.S. Central Command, CENTCOM, the exercise included the destroyer Delbert Black, which docked at the port of Eilat over the weekend and has since departed, alongside the Israeli vessel INS Eilat. The Black is one of eight destroyers the United States has sent to the region as part of a buildup of forces, in addition to the aircraft carrier Abraham Lincoln. "The combined exercise demonstrates the strong military cooperation between the U.S. Fifth Fleet and the Israeli Navy," CENTCOM said in a statement.

The Istanbul talks will take place against the backdrop of peak tensions between Tehran and Washington. Those tensions began with former President Donald Trump's belligerent statements during protests in Iran against the ayatollahs' regime last month, when he encouraged the demonstrators, promised them that "help is on the way" and threatened to strike if the regime harmed them. The regime massacred thousands of protesters during the brutal crackdown, with estimates putting the death toll in the tens of thousands, and Trump is now under pressure to follow through on his threats.

Trump has since sent what he calls a "big armada" to the Middle East, including the Lincoln and eight destroyers, and is reportedly weighing a range of strike options, from limited targeted attacks to a broad campaign aimed at destabilizing the regime. At the same time, Trump has repeatedly said he wants to reach an agreement with Iran, one that would block any future path to nuclear weapons and ostensibly prevent the killing of protesters, even though the mass killings have already ended after the successful suppression of the unrest.



The US destroyer Delbert Black behind the Israeli vessel INS Eilat during an exercise in the Red Sea (Photo: IDF)



(Photo: IDF)

According to behind-the-scenes reports, the U.S. administration is presenting Iran with additional demands. Beyond a complete halt to uranium enrichment, Washington is also demanding restrictions on Iran's ballistic missile program and an end to funding and support for Iran's proxies across the Middle East.

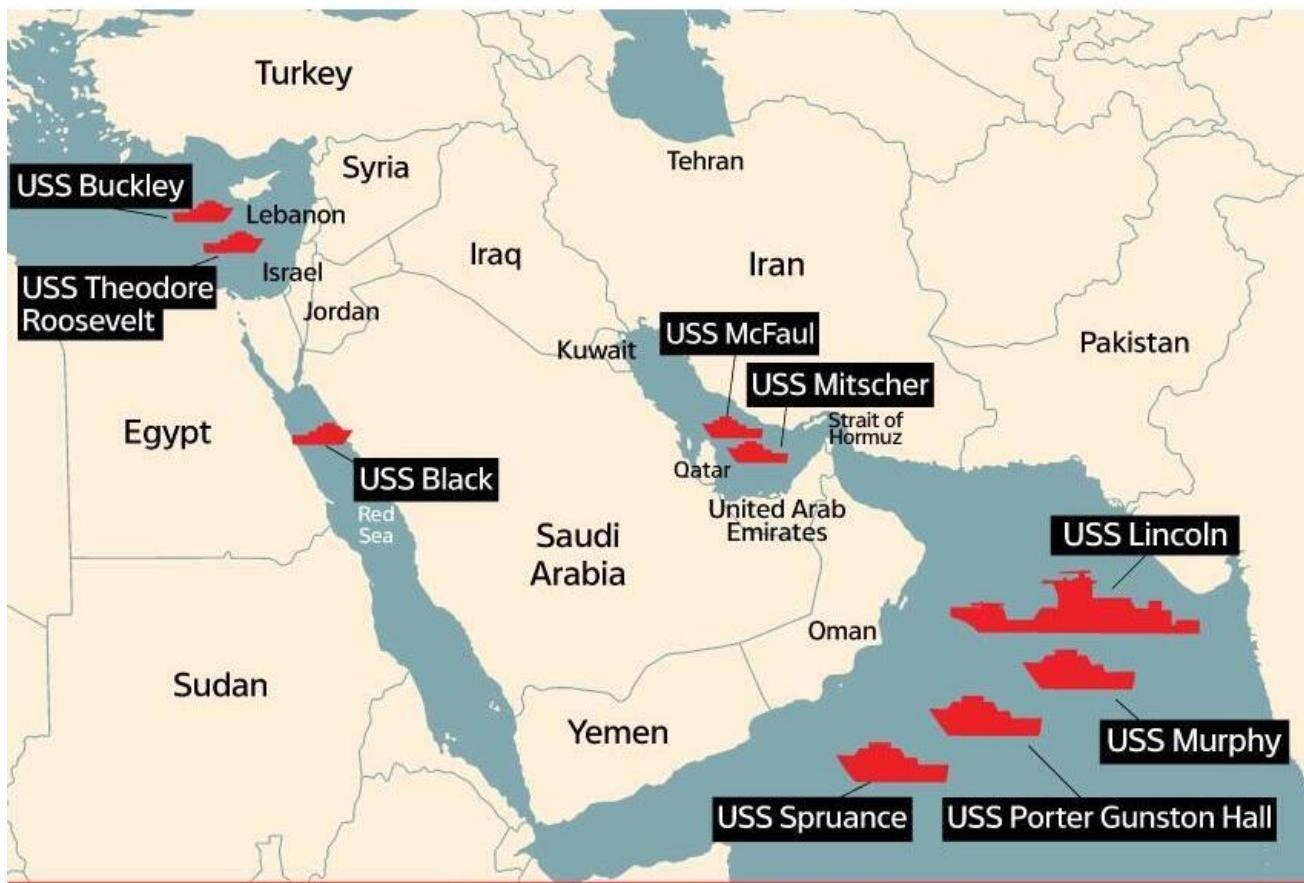
Iran is firmly refusing a complete halt to uranium enrichment and is also refusing to discuss its missile program. That program was badly hit by Israel during Operation Rising Lion in June last year but has since reportedly undergone significant rehabilitation and has again become a major threat to Israel and to U.S. forces.

deployed in the region.

When asked Sunday in an interview with CNN about Iran's ballistic missile program, Araghchi dismissed the idea of discussing it as unrealistic. He urged the United States not to miss what he described as an opportunity to reach a fair and just agreement that would ensure Iran does not obtain nuclear weapons, saying such an outcome could be achieved within a relatively short period of time.

Trump's armada

y net
Global



* The exact locations of the vessels are not known

Trump's armada

It is not yet entirely clear whether Iran will refuse to address the missile issue in Friday's talks. However, a report Monday morning by Iran's Fars news agency emphasized that the talks will focus on the nuclear issue. Reuters quoted two Iranian officials as saying the uranium enrichment issue is not expected to be the main obstacle to an agreement with the United States, but rather the missile issue, though it was not clear from their remarks whether that issue will be included in the talks.

In any case, Iran's willingness to hold negotiations comes despite statements by Araghchi and other senior Iranian officials that talks with the United States cannot take place under an atmosphere of threats. In a Reuters report Monday morning, another Iranian official was quoted as saying Tehran wants the United States to pull its military assets away from Iran, meaning the aircraft carrier and destroyers moved closer, as a condition for talks to begin. "Now the ball is in Trump's court," the Iranian official said, just hours before reports emerged that the negotiating meeting had been set for Friday. So far, there is no sign Trump intends to remove the military threat alongside the talks.

Trump responds to Khamenei on regional war: 'I hope we make a deal, if not, we'll find out'

Trump has declined to say whether he has set a deadline for Iran, but last week he warned that time was running out to reach an agreement and threatened that any future strike would be far harsher than the previous one, referring to the targeted attack on nuclear facilities last June.

Iran's Supreme Leader [Ayatollah Ali Khamenei](#) warned Sunday that a U.S. attack this time would ignite a

regional war, implying among other things that Israel would also be attacked in response. Trump replied later that night, “I hope we make a deal. If we don’t make a deal, we’ll find out.” Trump also said, “We have the biggest and strongest ships there, very close. They’ll be ready within days,” a remark suggesting U.S. forces would be ready for an attack only in several days. Against this backdrop, there are reports that the United States is still transferring additional air defense systems to the region to help protect its forces and Israel’s airspace.

Witkoff is due to arrive in Israel on Tuesday. Along with Netanyahu, he is expected, according to Reuters, to meet with IDF Chief of Staff Lt. Gen. Eyal Zamir. The talks will focus on the expected negotiations with Iran, amid concern in Jerusalem that Trump could abandon demands for limits on the missile program and an end to support for Iran’s proxies, settling instead for a narrower agreement that would impose restrictions only on the nuclear program. Iran’s missile program is increasingly viewed in Israel as an existential threat. The expectation in Jerusalem is that the Americans will insist on reducing the missiles, particularly their range. If Iran commits not to develop long-range missiles, the threat to Israel would diminish. Tehran, as noted, refuses to discuss the issue.



A missile launched by Iran toward Israel during the 12-day war

Witkoff is opposed to a military strike and is seen in Israel as pushing an isolationist line that distances the United States from military conflicts. There is concern he could “fall into the trap” set by the Iranian team, and the big question is how determined Trump is to go all the way. In Israel, it was reported, there is a belief that the die has been cast and that Trump is effectively working to build legitimacy for action. Evidence cited is the large naval force Trump has sent to the region, at a cost of tens of billions of dollars.

Meanwhile, Prime Minister Netanyahu held a routine update meeting Monday with opposition leader Yair Lapid. The meeting was attended by Netanyahu’s military secretary, Maj. Gen. Roman Gofman. Lapid said afterward: “The entire State of Israel is united in the face of Iran. There are no disputes between us about the importance of confronting this threat. It is important that Tehran knows the State of Israel stands united against the regime’s terror.” <https://www.ynetnews.com/article/rkdxbw8wx#autoplay>

Iran leaders fear US strike could destabilize regime, officials say

Sources say senior officials warned Ayatollah Ali Khamenei that fear is no longer containing public anger after last month’s bloodiest crackdown in decades, raising concern a US strike could ignite mass protests
Reuters|11:47

Iran’s leadership is increasingly worried that a U.S. strike could weaken its grip on power by driving an already enraged public back into the streets, following a bloody crackdown on anti-government protests, according to six current and former officials.

In high-level meetings, officials told Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei that public anger over last month’s crackdown — the bloodiest since the 1979 Islamic Revolution — has reached a point where fear is no longer a deterrent, four current officials briefed on the discussions said.



(Photo: Anonymous/Getty Images, AP)

The officials said Khamenei was warned that many Iranians were prepared to confront security forces again and that external pressure, such as a limited U.S. strike, could embolden them and inflict irreparable damage on the political establishment.

One of the officials told Reuters that Iran’s enemies were seeking renewed protests to bring the Islamic Republic to an end and that “unfortunately” there would be more violence if an uprising occurred.

“An attack combined with demonstrations by angry people could lead to a collapse of the ruling system,” the official said. “That is the main concern among the

top officials, and that is what our enemies want.” Like the others, the official spoke on condition of anonymity due to the sensitivity of the matter.

The reported remarks are significant because they suggest private misgivings within the leadership that contrast with Tehran’s defiant public stance toward protesters and the United States.

The sources declined to say how Khamenei responded. The Foreign Ministry did not immediately respond to a Reuters request for comment on the account of the meetings.

Multiple sources told Reuters last week that U.S. President Donald Trump is weighing options against Iran that include targeted strikes on security forces and senior leaders to inspire protests, even as Israeli and Arab officials said air power alone would not topple the clerical leadership.

'People are extremely angry,' says former official

Any such uprising following a U.S. strike would contrast with the public response to Israeli and U.S. bombing attacks on Iran’s nuclear program in June, which were not followed by anti-government demonstrations.

But a former senior moderate official said the situation had changed since the crackdown in early January. IRGC in Tehran

“People are extremely angry,” he said, adding that a U.S. attack could push Iranians back into the streets. “The wall of fear has collapsed. There is no fear left.”

Tensions between Tehran and Washington remain high. The arrival of a U.S. aircraft carrier and supporting warships in the Middle East has expanded Trump’s ability to take military action, after repeatedly threatening intervention over Iran’s crackdown.

'The game is over,' says former prime minister

Several opposition figures who were once part of the establishment have warned the leadership that what they described as “boiling public anger” could lead to the collapse of the Islamic system.

“The river of warm blood spilled in the cold month of January will not stop boiling until it changes the course of history,” former prime minister Mirhossein Mousavi, who has been under house arrest without trial since 2011, said in a statement published by the pro-reform Kalameh website.

“In what language should people say they do not want this system and do not believe your lies? Enough is enough. The game is over,” Mousavi said.

During the early January protests, witnesses and rights groups said security forces crushed demonstrations with lethal force, killing thousands and wounding many others. Tehran blamed the violence on “armed terrorists” linked to Israel and the United States.

Trump ultimately stopped short of intervening militarily but later demanded nuclear concessions from Iran. Both Tehran and Washington have signaled openness to reviving diplomacy over the long-running nuclear dispute.

Simmering anger, 'danger of bloodshed'

Analysts and insiders say that while the streets are quiet for now, deep-seated grievances remain.

Public frustration has been simmering over economic decline, political repression, a widening gap between rich and poor, and entrenched corruption that leaves many Iranians feeling trapped in a system offering neither relief nor a path forward.

“This may not be the end, but it is no longer just the beginning,” said Hossein Rassam, a London-based analyst.

Dead protesters in Tehran

If protests resume amid mounting foreign pressure and security forces respond with force, the six current and former officials said they fear demonstrators would be bolder than in past unrest, driven by experience and a sense they have little left to lose.

One official told Reuters that while public anger is deeper than before, the establishment would use harsher methods if it were under U.S. attack. He warned the result would be a bloodbath.

Ordinary Iranians contacted by Reuters said they expected authorities to crack down hard on any renewed protests.

A Tehran resident whose 15-year-old son was killed during the protests on Jan. 9 said demonstrators had only sought a normal life and were answered “with bullets.”

“If America attacks, I will go back into the streets to take revenge for my son and for the children this regime killed,” he said. <https://www.ynetnews.com/article/hkybwcu11g#autoplay>

UK sanctions Iran interior minister, other officials over protester crackdown

Measures including asset freeze and travel ban placed on minister, senior police chiefs, Revolutionary Guard figures, judges and a security agency for human rights violations

By [Agencies](#) Today, 7:04 pm



Screen capture from video of Iranian Interior Minister Eskandar Momeni in Tehran, October 29, 2025. (YouTube)

The **United Kingdom on Monday sanctioned 10 individuals, including Iran's interior minister and police chiefs, for their roles in "recent brutality against protesters," the British foreign ministry said.**

Those sanctioned include the Law Enforcement Forces of the Islamic Republic of Iran (FARAJA), interior minister Eskandar Momeni, two Islamic Revolutionary Guard (IRGC)

officers, senior police chiefs, an Iranian businessman linked to the IRGC, and two judges accused of directing violent repression, excessive sentencing, or rights-abusing proceedings.

"The Iranian people have shown extreme courage in the face of brutality and repression over recent weeks simply for exercising their right to peaceful protest," said UK Foreign Minister Yvette Cooper.

"The reports and shocking scenes of violence that have been seen around the world are horrific," Cooper said, adding that this package of sanctions seeks to hold Iran's authorities "to account" for the crackdown. The measures involve asset freezes and travel bans, the government said.

Iran's authorities have said the protests, which were sparked by economic strain and exploded in size and intensity over several days in early January, were "riots" inflamed by its arch foes, the United States and Israel.



Bodies lie in body bags on the ground as people stand amid the scene outside Kahrizak Forensic Medical Centre in Tehran, Iran, in this screen capture from a video obtained from social media, January 11, 2026. (Social Media/via REUTERS)

Tehran has acknowledged thousands of deaths during the protests, and on Sunday, the presidency published the names of 2,986 people out of the 3,117 whom authorities said were killed in the unrest.

Authorities insist most were members of the security forces and innocent bystanders, attributing the violence to "terrorist acts."

The US-based Human Rights Activists News Agency said it has confirmed 6,842 deaths, mostly protesters killed by security forces, though rights groups warn that the figure is likely far higher.

The Iranian embassy in London did not immediately respond to a Reuters request for comment.

The UK government said the action follows sanctions imposed by the European Union and the United States to hold the Iranian authorities to account. EU foreign ministers [last week included](#) the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps on the bloc's list of terrorist organizations.



Britain's Foreign Secretary Yvette Cooper speaks to the media at 1 Carlton Gardens in London on January 19, 2026. (Jack Taylor / POOL / AFP)

Amid a US naval buildup following last month's deadly protest crackdown, US envoy Steve Witkoff and Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Arraqchi are planning to meet on Friday in Istanbul to discuss a possible nuclear deal and other issues, a US official said on Monday.

Iran's reaction to rising international pressure escalated on Sunday, when the speaker of its parliament said [Tehran now considered](#) the armies of EU member states "terrorist groups" after the bloc listed the Revolutionary Guards as such. <https://www.timesofisrael.com/uk-sanctions-iran-interior-minister-other-officials-over-protester-crackdown/>

Iran summons EU ambassadors after bloc listed IRGC as terrorist group

Iranian foreign ministry says reciprocal actions being considered; Parliamentary speaker says all EU militaries considered terrorist organizations under Iranian law

By [Jon Gambrell](#) Today, 11:16 am



Women, one flashing a victory hand gesture, cross a street under a huge banner showing hands firmly holding Iranian national flags as a sign of patriotism, in Tehran, January 14, 2026. (AP Photo/Vahid Salemi)

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP) — Iran said Monday it had summoned all of the European Union ambassadors in the Islamic Republic to protest the bloc's listing of the paramilitary Revolutionary Guard as a terror group.

The move comes as Iran faces the threat of US military action in response to the killing of peaceful demonstrators and over possible mass executions. The American military has moved the USS Abraham Lincoln and several guided-missile destroyers into the Mideast. It remains unclear whether US President Donald Trump will decide to use force, though regional countries have engaged in diplomacy in an effort to halt a new Mideast war from breaking out.

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The EU [listed](#) the Guard as a terror group last week over its part in the bloody crackdown on nationwide protests in January that killed thousands and saw tens of thousands detained.

<https://www.timesofisrael.com/iran-summons-eu-ambassadors-after-bloc-listed-irgc-as-terrorist-group/>

'A lifeline': Gazans rejoice as Rafah Crossing opens for limited pedestrian passage

Gazans welcome the opening as a milestone, although only limited crossings allowed for now; some 50 people expected to cross each way on first day

By [Emanuel Fabian](#), [Jacob Magid](#)

and [Agencies](#) Today, 1:54 pm



Ambulances wait in line at the Egyptian side of the Rafah border crossing with the Palestinian Gaza Strip, in northeastern Egypt, on February 2, 2026. (AFP)

The Rafah Border Crossing between Egypt and the Gaza Strip officially resumed operations on Monday for the first time in almost a year, an Israeli security official said, in a move hailed by Palestinians and international organizations as a milestone in the ceasefire.

Rafah, which Palestinians see as their gateway to the world, has been largely shut since it was captured by Israel in May 2024. The crossing was closed last March with the collapse of a ceasefire signed in January 2025.

About 20,000 Palestinians needing medical care are hoping to leave war-devastated Gaza via the crossing, and thousands of other Palestinians outside the territory hope to return home.

The move is currently largely a symbolic development on the ground as few people will be allowed to travel in either direction. Nevertheless, Palestinians seeking to leave and enter Gaza, and European monitoring teams began arriving on Monday morning at the facility.



The crossing is expected to be open for about six hours daily, according to Israel's public broadcaster, Kan.

The crossing was open only for the passage of Gazan Palestinian pedestrians. Foreigners, including aid workers, who seek to enter Gaza can only do so via Israel's crossings with the Strip. Goods and aid will continue to go through the Israeli crossings. Israel is also still refusing to allow the unsupervised entry of foreign journalists into Gaza.

Only Palestinians who left Gaza during the war were to be permitted to return to the Strip, Israeli authorities said. According to data from Israel's Coordinator of Government

Activities in the Territories, some 42,000 Gazans left the Strip during the war, the vast majority of them patients seeking medical treatment abroad or dual citizens.

A US official and an Arab diplomat told The Times of Israel on Monday that the members of the Palestinian technocratic committee were expected to enter in the Strip via the Rafah crossing later this week.

The 12-member National Committee for the Administration of Gaza (NCAG), tasked with managing the daily affairs of postwar Gaza in place of Hamas, has been holding meetings [in Cairo](#) after it was unveiled last month.

All of its members are originally from Gaza, though some have been residing outside of the Strip in recent years.

It was not immediately clear how many Palestinians had crossed in and out of the Strip through Rafah on Monday, though numbers are expected to be limited in the first days of the crossing's opening.

Palestinian youth and their guardians wait in the grounds of the Red Crescent Hospital to be evacuated from the Gaza Strip via the Rafah border crossing with Egypt for treatment abroad, in Khan Yunis, in the southern Gaza Strip on February 2, 2026. (Photo by Bashar Taleb / AFP)

An Egyptian official said ahead of time that 50 Palestinians were expected to cross in each direction on Monday, although Kan said as many as 150 people would be leaving for Egypt from Gaza, including 50 patients.

A source at the border told AFP that a few dozen people had arrived on the Egyptian side on Monday, awaiting entry into Gaza.

"The Rafah crossing is a lifeline," said Mohammed Nassir, a Palestinian who had his leg amputated after being injured early in the war.

"I need to undergo surgery that is unavailable in Gaza but can be performed abroad."

Rajaa Abu Mustafa stood Monday outside a Gaza hospital where her 17-year-old son Mohamed was awaiting evacuation. She said he was blinded by a shot to the eye last year as he joined Palestinians seeking food from aid trucks east of the city of Khan Younis.



A young Palestinian with eye damage and his mother, Rajaa Abu Mustafa, arrive in the grounds of the Red Crescent Hospital to be evacuated from the Gaza Strip via the Rafah border crossing with Egypt for treatment abroad, in Khan Yunis, in the southern Gaza Strip, on February 2, 2026. (Photo by Bashar Taleb / AFP)

"We have been waiting for the crossing to open," she said. "Now it's opened and the health ministry called and told us that we will travel to Egypt for (his) treatment."

About 150 hospitals across Egypt are ready to receive Palestinian patients evacuated from Gaza through Rafah, authorities said. Also, the Egyptian Red Crescent said it has readied "safe spaces" on the Egyptian side of the crossing to support those evacuated from the Gaza Strip.

Egypt's state-linked Cairo News reported that the Egyptian side of the crossing would remain open "round the clock."

On Monday evening, the first medical evacuees were reported to have arrived in Egypt after leaving Gaza through Rafah.

"They have begun arriving in Egyptian ambulances, accompanied by several escorts," an Egyptian official at the border told AFP, speaking on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to brief the media.

"Three ambulances have arrived so far carrying a number of the sick and injured, who were immediately screened upon arrival to determine to which hospital they will be transferred."

The EU's foreign policy chief on Monday welcomed the reopening of the crossing as a "lifeline" for sick and wounded Palestinians in the territory and a step forward in the peace plan.

"The opening of the Rafah crossing marks a concrete and positive step in the peace plan," EU top diplomat Kaja Kallas posted online.



"The EU's civilian mission is on the ground to monitor crossing operations and support Palestinian border guards," she wrote.

European Union monitors and Palestinian security officers are seen at the Rafah Crossing between Gaza and Egypt, February 1, 2026. (COGAT)

All Gazan Palestinians seeking to enter or leave the Strip will be required to receive Egyptian approval, and Egypt was to send the names to Israel's Shin Bet domestic security service for clearance.

Israel will supervise the exit of Gazans to Egypt remotely. From a control room, Israeli officers, using facial recognition software, will verify that those leaving the Strip are on the list of approved names and open a gate at the crossing to allow them through.

A team of Palestinian Authority representatives and monitors from the European Union stationed at Rafah Crossing will be tasked with conducting security screenings for those leaving the Strip.

On Sunday, a day of systems checks and tests was conducted at the crossing.

The entry into Gaza from Egypt will, however, include an Israeli security screening. Those Palestinians will arrive at an IDF checkpoint after passing through the Rafah Crossing. Only afterward will they be permitted to continue toward the Hamas-controlled areas of Gaza.

The IDF published footage on Sunday of the military checkpoint, dubbed "Regavim," for Palestinians entering the Gaza Strip from Egypt, which is located just outside the Rafah Crossing.

"The facility is part of the effort to enhance security oversight in the area," the military said, adding that security officers at the terminal will "verify the identities of those entering against lists approved by the Israeli defense establishment and conduct thorough inspections of their luggage."

An IDF checkpoint for Palestinians entering the Gaza Strip from Egypt is seen in southern Gaza's Rafah, just outside the Rafah Crossing, in a video issued by the military on February 1, 2026. (Israel Defense Forces)

The crossing was briefly opened for the evacuation of medical patients during a ceasefire in early 2025. Israel had resisted reopening the Rafah crossing since the October ceasefire, but the recovery of the remains of the last hostage in Gaza last week cleared the way to move forward.

There are no plans to allow the crossing to be used for aid and goods, which go through other crossings where they are screened by Israel for contraband, especially weapons.

In the years before the war, Hamas used the Rafah Crossing to bring in numerous weapons and other supplies into the Strip for its military wing, without any Israeli oversight, according to the IDF and security officials.

The Israeli defense establishment is backing an idea for a tri-border crossing between Israel, Egypt, and Gaza, where the current Kerem Shalom Crossing is located. <https://www.timesofisrael.com/rafah-crossing-opens-for-limited-pedestrian-passage-of-gazans-for-1st-time-in-a-year/>

IDF officials warn ICJ genocide case poses greater risk than ICC

Military officials say the ICJ genocide case worries them more than the ICC, as Israel prepares a major response ahead of a March deadline.)

By **YONAH JEREMY BOB** FEBRUARY 2, 2026 21:13



Judges are seen at the International Court of Justice before the issue of a verdict in the case of Indian national Kulbhushan Jadhav who was sentenced to death by Pakistan in 2017, in The Hague, Netherlands July 17, 2019(photo credit: REUTERS/PIROSCHKA VAN DE WOUW

There are top IDF officials who are more concerned about the threat to Israel from the International Court of Justice than they are from the International Criminal Court, according to military sources.

It is unknown how universal this view is among top Israeli officials, but it is not an isolated view and

could be said to be based on the huge amounts of time and energy that Israel is pouring into responding to a March 12 ICJ deadline for the Jewish state to respond to genocide charges.

One reason that IDF sources believe the ICJ could be worse than the ICC is because of the charge of genocide itself versus individual war crimes.

For the ICC, war crimes can be limited to an individual or to a limited series of events, but the ICJ can only issue a verdict of genocide if it decides that there is a systematic nationwide effort to perpetrate mass killing.

While genocide is much harder to prove than an individual war crime or a small series of such crimes, if proven, IDF sources warn that the consequences for Israel's reputation of an ICJ genocide verdict, and the resultant diplomatic and economic fallout, could be much more severe and last for decades.



banning them from visiting.

Although Defense Minister Israel Katz has not been publicly banned, he has angered foreign countries with some of his statements, including officials in the Trump administration, and has generally had a less influential global profile than his predecessors.

IDF officials sometimes see a provocative statement from some Israeli political officials, and would then fatalistically go on with their work, trying to improve Israel's reputation by improving the Palestinians' situation, knowing that the country would inevitably be hit with more anger in response to the statement.

Confronting false narratives

For much of the war, the military has also said that, beyond a few extreme incidents, it didn't receive much consistent help from the Foreign Ministry and the Prime Minister's Office in truly combating the anti-Israel war crimes narrative.

Further, IDF sources said that anytime Israel temporarily did a good job confronting false narratives or exaggerations against it, there was no follow-through, especially regarding starvation allegations.

The army hopes that the large comprehensive response being sent to the ICJ will make some impact regarding how Israel and its military are perceived globally.

On the flipside, IDF sources said that a number of humanitarian aid workers on the ground have admitted that many of the accusations of war crimes or starvation propagated by their bosses back at headquarters have been disproven.

These aid workers have indicated to the military that a lot of the messaging about war crimes at the top is impacted by broader political concerns, mainly to pressure Israel to end the war no matter the cost, including ignoring Hamas's ongoing strength and how many Israeli hostages would be returned.

One of the largest examples from the war, where Israel was accused of massive war crimes, which never transpired, was the evacuation of Rafah in May 2025, the IDF said.

After being told that it would take several months to properly evacuate the Gazan civilian population from Rafah to avoid massive deaths all at once, the IDF managed to evacuate nearly the entire civilian population in around a week, it stated.

At some point, some American officials told the military that each tent for a Rafah evacuee should be pre-labeled for specific family members.

In response, the IDF said that this is not how such a situation would work in [Gaza](#), and while many tents were provided for evacuees, they were not specifically labeled, and many of them simply brought their own tents with them. <https://www.jpost.com/israel-news/defense-news/article-885369>

Confronting the ICJ challenge

In confronting the ICJ challenge, some non-legal military officials have warned that their job has not been made easier by the lack of organized, coherent, and systematic global messaging coming from the government.

Rather, IDF sources cautioned that the messages coming from senior Israeli officials are often chaotic, and those from some officials undermine significant hard work by the military to build trust and credibility worldwide.

While army sources would not name specific officials, National Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir and Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich have been lightning rods throughout their terms, with many democratic countries

Syrian government forces enter SDF held Hasakah after ceasefire deal

Syrian Interior Ministry forces entered Hasakah on Monday under a deal with the US-backed SDF, marking a key test of coordination after weeks of clashes.

By [SETH J. FRANTZMAN](#) FEBRUARY 2, 2026 18:02 Updated: FEBRUARY 2, 2026 20:08



Syrian Interior Ministry security forces vehicles prepare to enter the city of Hasakah in northeastern Syria, following an agreement between Damascus and the Syrian Democratic Forces reached on January 30, in Al-hasakah, Syria, February 2, 2026. (photo credit: REUTERS/Khalil Ashawi TPX IMAGES OF THE DAY)

Forces from the Syrian Interior Ministry entered Hasakah in eastern Syria on Monday. The city has been controlled by the US-backed Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF).

“Syrian Interior Ministry security forces at the traffic center in Hasakah city,” North Press Agency, a Syrian news agency that is considered close to the US-backed Syrian Democratic Forces in eastern Syria, reported Monday. “On Monday, government security forces entered the city of Hasakah in northeastern Syria, in accordance with the agreement concluded between the Syrian government and the [SDF on January 30].”

This is an important milestone to determine whether the SDF and the Syrian Transitional Government can iron out their differences. There were clashes throughout January.

Hasakah city

Hasakah has about 400,000 residents, and it is also the capital of the Hasakah governorate in eastern Syria. That area is believed to have 1.5 to two million people, including many of the Kurds who live in Syria.

The Democratic Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria (DAANES) is the civilian arm of the SDF, which has administered eastern Syria, has been governing Hasakah and eastern Syria.

This is the first major test of having the security forces of [Damascus](#) overlap with SDF forces. The US helped train and support the SDF since 2015. It is a largely Kurdish-led force.

Hasakah is a mixed city with Kurds, Arabs, and members of Christian minority groups in Syria, such as Assyrians. As such, it is a symbol of how things might move forward.

Hasakah was once the site of battles between the Syrian regime and ISIS and then between the SDF and ISIS in 2015.

In 2016, the SDF wrested control of some parts of the city from a remaining pocket of Syrian regime control. This was an important symbol of the SDF advance against ISIS and also proof of its capabilities.

The move by the Syrian Interior Ministry into Hasakah is expected to be part of a wider deployment. It is not clear how this will work in Kurdish-majority cities such as Kobane, Qamishli, or Derik.

“A convoy of the Syrian Interior Ministry’s Internal Security Forces will enter the city of Hasakah at 2 p.m.,” a security source told North Press Agency. About 100 Interior Ministry forces had arrived, a source said.

Forces will be stationed in the town of Al-Hawl

“The forces that will enter Hasakah will be stationed in the town of Al-Hawl in the southeastern Hasakah countryside before entering the city,” the report said.

AL-HAWL, sometimes spelled Al-Hol, is also the site of a large detention camp in which members of ISIS families have been staying. The US is busy trying to move many [ISIS](#) detainees from Syria to Iraq.

“Shortly before the convoy of government security forces entered, warplanes from the international coalition flew over the city of Hasakah,” North Press Agency reported. Many children turned out to celebrate the arrival of the Damascus government forces, the report said, adding that this took place despite a curfew that reportedly had been in place.

The shift in control of Hasakah also comes amid new appointments in the city.

“The Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) candidate for governor of Hasaka says an agreement has been reached with the Syrian interim government to nominate him for the post, marking a coordination between the two sides over a senior administrative position after weeks of intense clashes,” Rudaw Media Network, a news channel in the autonomous Kurdistan Region of northern Iraq, reported.

“Nour al-Din Ahmed told Rudaw on Sunday that ‘an agreement has been reached between the two sides on my name to assume the position of governor of Hasaka,’” the report said. “He added that he is expected to travel to Damascus within the next two days, where he will meet with Syria’s interim President Ahmed al-Sharaa and other

senior government officials to finalize the process.”

Meanwhile, a delegation from the Kurdish National Council is also heading to Damascus. The KNC is a Kurdish group that has often been sidelined in SDF-controlled areas, because the SDF is linked to the left-leaning PYD political party, while KNC is seen as being closer to the KDP Kurdish leadership in the Kurdistan Region.

“Syria’s Internal Security Forces moved towards the city of Hasakah on Monday as part of the implementation of an agreement reached between the Syrian government and the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), the Interior ministry said,” Syrian Arab News Agency (SANA), Syria’s official news agency, reported.

“The Syrian government announced on January 30 that it had reached a comprehensive agreement with the SDF providing for a ceasefire and a phased process to integrate military and administrative structures into the State’s institutions,” the report said. “Ahead of the convoy’s entry into the city, the commander of Internal Security Forces in Hasakah province, Brig.-Gen. Marwan al-Ali, gave instructions to security units to carry out their duties in accordance with approved plans, adhere to laws and regulations, and ensure discipline while maintaining public order and protecting citizens and public and private property.” <https://www.jpost.com/middle-east/article-885357>

UAE denies reports it would assume civilian administration of Gaza

The UAE issued a blunt denial of reports it would take over Gaza’s civilian administration following a Channel 12 report.

By [JERUSALEM POST STAFF](#) FEBRUARY 2, 2026 16:22 Updated: FEBRUARY 2, 2026 19:12



A UAE AID tent stands in front of a collapsed building at Saftawi street in Jabalia in the northern Gaza Strip on February 5, 2025 (photo credit: OMAR AL-QATTAA/AFP via Getty Images)

The United Arab Emirates on Monday issued a blunt denial of reports that it planned to assume control of the civilian administration of the Gaza Strip, saying governance and administration remained the responsibility of the Palestinian people.

State Minister for International Cooperation Reem Al Hashimy “categorically” denied what the UAE Foreign Ministry called a “false and unfounded claim” that the

Emirates would take over Gaza’s civilian administration.

The denial followed a report aired the previous evening by Channel 12, which said that Abu Dhabi had been holding intensive talks with Israel and the United States in recent weeks on a government-to-government framework that would place the UAE in charge of [Gaza’s “civilian envelope.”](#)

According to the N12 report, the plan discussed included a multibillion-dollar investment package, management of Gaza’s markets and trade, the purchase of goods entering Gaza from Israel, and the use of Israeli contractors. It also described upgrading distribution centers into logistics hubs, with a security component that included armed Emirati forces securing the hubs alongside private American security companies operating in Gaza.

N12 said draft documents had been exchanged and that Israel supported the move in principle while stressing that the details would still require Israeli approval. Israeli officials quoted in the report described the UAE as seeking to enter “with full force” and become Gaza’s “civilian patron” while arguing that the civilian track would sit alongside Israel’s stated war aims regarding Hamas and demilitarization.

UAE framed its role differently

In its statement, the UAE framed its role differently. Al Hashimy said the UAE remained focused on expanding humanitarian support and advancing a durable peace, and she pointed to Abu Dhabi’s participation in the [“Board of Peace”](#) and membership on the Gaza Executive Board.



A recent Congressional Research Service brief also noted Al Hashimy's appointment to the Gaza Executive Board and said the UAE had remained noncommittal about direct participation in an international stabilization force without a clear framework. <https://www.jpost.com/middle-east/article-885351>

EU gas reserves plunge to lowest level since 2022 – FT

A cold snap and lower Russian supplies have pushed storage to 43% of capacity across the bloc, the newspaper has reported

2 Feb, 2026 13:57



FILE PHOTO. © Getty Images / Anton Zubchevskyi

EU gas storage has fallen to its lowest level for this time of year since the 2022 energy crisis, as below-normal reserves and cold weather accelerate withdrawals, the Financial Times has reported.

The bloc has seen a sharp rise in energy prices since cutting back on Russian oil and gas imports after the escalation of the Ukraine conflict four years ago. Moving away from relatively cheap Russian pipeline gas has forced the bloc to rely more heavily on energy supplies from the US.

New legislation passed last week requires EU member states to stop all Russian energy deliveries by the end of 2027, increasing the bloc's exposure to supply risks.

European gas prices hit their biggest monthly gain in over two years as supply concerns mount, with the Dutch TTF benchmark – a key European gas price index – rising to €42.60 (\$46) per megawatt-hour last week, a ten-month high, the FT said on Sunday.

Severe winter storms in the US have disrupted domestic gas markets, pushing up European prices as the region increasingly relies on American LNG shipments after a sharp drop in Russian pipeline supplies.

The EU is short by roughly 130 full-sized cargoes compared with last year, with storage at 490 terawatt-hours as of January 29, according to Gas Infrastructure Europe (GIE). Gas reserves in the region are now at 43% of capacity – the lowest seasonal level since 2022.

Last week, Russian energy giant Gazprom said Europe had withdrawn more than 81% of the gas stored in underground facilities in preparation for the current heating season, citing data from GIE.

Storage levels in the Netherlands alone fell to 27.8%, the lowest recorded for that date, the company said.

"Gas reserves in France and Germany are also at their lowest levels for January 28," Gazprom added.

Before the Ukraine conflict, the EU imported 45% of its gas from Russia – the bloc's largest foreign supplier since the end of the Cold War. Western sanctions and sabotage of key infrastructure have slashed Russian gas deliveries, although purchases of Russian LNG by EU countries remain significant.

To bridge the gap, the EU has increasingly turned to more expensive American LNG. US President Donald Trump has used energy as leverage in trade talks, with the bloc agreeing last July to buy \$750 billion of US energy by 2028 to avoid higher tariffs – a move critics call coercive. <https://www.rt.com/business/631862-eu-gas-reserves-plunge/>

'It's crazy!' Trump tells Bongino Republicans will never win another election if one thing is not done

By Joe Kovacs February 2, 2026



Dan Bongino interviews President Donald Trump on Monday, Feb. 2, 2026

STUART, Florida – President Donald Trump said on Monday that Republicans would never win another election if illegal aliens brought in during the Biden administration are not removed from the United States.

Trump appeared on "The Dan Bongino Show" as the former FBI deputy director made his first broadcast on Rumble since leaving the Federal Bureau of Investigation last month.

"These people were brought to this country to vote, and they vote illegally," Trump told Bongino.

Trump explained how foreign countries "sent every single person in a mental institution over our border with Texas with their open border policies."

"So we have millions of people, most of them are bad to be honest with you, because they're not gonna send their good people. ... They only send their bad people, and the best of their people are people that don't work, those are the best ones."

"They've sent all of their people, millions and millions of people. We have to get 'em out. And, by the way, if Republicans don't get 'em out, you will never win another election as a Republican. These people are all put in so they vote. And they make all this cr*p with the voting, you can vote, you can do whatever you want. It's crazy."

Trump added, "It's amazing the Republicans are not tougher on this. The Republicans should say we want to take over the voting in many, at least 15 places. The Republicans ought to nationalize the voting. ... We have states that are so crooked."

WATCH:

[I'm Back \(Ep. 2443\) - 02/02/2026](#)

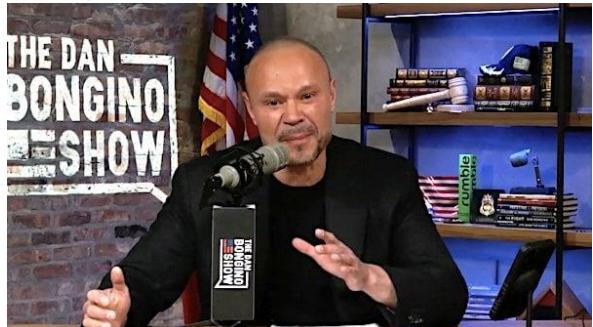
Trump hammered the media for not reporting on the reason crime has plunged to record lows since his inauguration a year ago.

"Everyone knows what the reason is," Trump said. "We do a great job, we don't get credit. ... The news is so corrupt and so fake, it's unbelievable."

"Two percent of the people create 90% of the crime," he added. "So when you start moving these guys out, you have a huge impact on crime."

Bongino told Trump he was doing the right thing when it comes to asserting American dominance in the Western Hemisphere, citing recent events in Venezuela and with the Panama Canal.

"You're absolutely spot on," Bongino said. "This not the 1960s anymore. We have to control this hemisphere."



Bongino said people should give FBI Director Kash Patel time to rebuild the bureau.

"Let him go to the mat," Bongino said. "It took decades to destroy the place. It's not going to be rebuilt overnight."

Trump told Bongino: "You did great in the FBI and I'm very torn [having you where you're now]. "Very few people can do what you do ... Thank you for your service."

Despite reaching more than 226,000 viewers on Rumble, Monday's initial livestream actually crashed during its first few minutes, and Bongino said it was because his program was "under attack."

"All right, folks. Sorry about that, but a lot of people interested in keeping me off the air as you can probably imagine. So if you can hear us, just let us know," Bongino said. "But Rumble is under attack and the show of course is under attack. This is what these scumbags do. They can't have a voice like me speaking out. I anticipated some of this so I appreciate you all hanging with us."

"It's a live show obviously and we had a good kind of impression this was going to happen," he added. "They just don't want me to talk. They're so terrified of this show coming back that they were going to do anything to try to stop us."

He gave what he called a "double-barreled" flipping of the bird to his enemies.



"I'm not gonna let a bunch of sh**heads and doomers and everyone else sit here and collapse this movement like cannibals and eat it from the inside," Bongino said. "No chance. Zero."

<https://www wnd com/2026/02/its-crazy-trump-tells-bongino-republicans-will-never/>

OP ED

US Spent \$10B and 42 American Lives Trying to Help Somalia

Sun, 1 Feb 2026 9:24 AM PST by Daniel Greenfield



In 2024, the Biden administration bragged that the “U.S. government is the single largest donor of humanitarian assistance to Somalia.”

A year earlier, the Biden administration had spent \$1.1 billion on Somalia. And the same was true of the year before. U.S. spending on Somalia had shot up from \$103 million under a Republican House to \$300 million under Pelosi’s Democrats. By 2017, foreign aid to Somalia had passed the half a billion dollar mark, by 2018, it was over \$800 million and by 2020, after Rep. Ilhan Omar joined Congress, our spending on Somalia had passed over \$1 billion.

Over the last decade, \$9.3 billion was spent on Somalia. Over \$10 billion since 9/11. While the spending has dropped in the second Trump administration, another \$150 million was allocated for 2025. Not only have we provided humanitarian aid for Somalia’s perennial famines, which like most UN declared famines remain dubious, but “Somalia (is) among the most significant recipients of security aid in sub-Saharan Africa” even though other countries are more troubled.

The skyrocketing spending on Somalia was intimately tied to the growing political power of Somalis who had migrated to America. The origins of America’s disastrous involvement in Somalia which would cost 42 American lives and countless billions of dollars began in Maine.

Sen. George Mitchell of Maine championed intervention to aid Somalis after the United Nations faked a famine, claiming that millions of Somalis were “on the brink of starving to death.” “The worst humanitarian disaster in the world today,” the former director of OFDA, the predecessor to USAID, claimed. There was no actual famine, millions were not starving and any food shortages were limited to a handful of rural areas, not the city of Mogadishu where our soldiers were sent.

The collapse of the regime of Mohammed Siad Barre, a murderous dictator, led to a civil war. Somali elites tied to Barre’s regime, including Rep. Omar’s father who was one of Barre’s colonels, fled to America, heading to Minnesota and Maine, among other places, built up political influence and urged politicians to intervene to ‘stabilize’ Somalia or millions would die.

Sen. Mitchell, who was of partial Lebanese Arab ancestry, championed the Somali intervention [which cost the lives](#) of “thirty American soldiers, four marines, and eight Air Force personnel”, resisted efforts to pull out the troops and continued to defend the mission afterward. He also [defended](#) the growing Somali population in Maine from efforts to restrict immigration.

The aid operation quickly turned into a campaign by Somali Darod exiles, the clan that Rep. Omar and much of the old Somali ruling class belonged to, against Mohamed Farrah Aidid, often described as a “warlord”, but who was no more of a warlord than any of the others, but who had been eliminating members of the Darod ruling class. And they wanted him gone.

A reluctant President George H.W. Bush finally gave in to political pressure and agreed to dispatch 26,000 American troops to save Somalis from ‘famine’. The intervention was originally supposed to cost \$200 million, but soon ballooned to \$885 million or over \$2 billion today. Bush paid for it by cutting the construction of C-130 cargo planes and defense research grants.

The UN operation tethered American forces to UN Pakistani Muslim ‘peacekeepers’ whose government was backing Aidid’s rival warlord and chose to pick a fight with Aidid over a radio station, resulting in a firefight between the Pakistanis and a Somali faction. American intervention on behalf of the Pakistanis led to the Battle of Mogadishu, during which 18 American military personnel were killed, some of whose bodies were dragged through the streets, and 84 were wounded, for the worst single battle since Vietnam.

A number of Al Qaeda terrorists were on the ground in Somalia and the battles convinced Osama bin Laden that the United States of America was weak and vulnerable to a more serious blow, eventually leading to a series of attacks that climaxed in the hijackings of September 11.

The 4.5 million Somalis starving to death proved to be just as fictional as the UN's subsequent fake famines in Gaza, [Afghanistan, Syria and Yemen](#). By 1996, the Somali population had increased by around 500,000 since the beginning of the civil war, and was up by nearly 20% by the end of the decade. These numbers were not consistent with famine, but a temporary population drop due to Somalis from certain clans fleeing to other countries to escape the fighting. The claims that 300,000 had died in Somalia from famine had little basis in reality and even humanitarian aid workers admitted that a malaria outbreak was behind most of the dying.

Dozens of American soldiers died for a lie pushed by Somali clan members in the U.S.

And despite that, even well after the Somali Civil War, American personnel, both military and 'civilian' contractors, continued to try and help Somalis with deadly results.

In 2017, Chief Petty Officer Kyle Milliken was killed in a firefight in Somalia while two other Americans were wounded. In 2020, three Americans were killed and two wounded in an attack on a base in Kenya used for peacekeeping operations in Somalia. And there is no end in sight.

The United States is being asked to help fund the ongoing African Union peacekeeping mission in Somalia. The UN, well aware that Trump has a limited appetite for more foreign spending, has proposed a smaller \$102.8 million budget, but costs on the ground have a way of increasing.

Our reason for being in Somalia is to help the Somali regime fight Al-Shabaab, the local version of Al Qaeda, but the fight between the regime and Al Qaeda is, like everything else in Somalia and much of the Muslim world, a war between clans and sub-clans, both of which support different factions of Islamic terrorists. Al-Shabaab is backed by Iran while the Somali regime is backed by Turkey and Qatar. It's not a fight against terrorism, but a fight between terrorists.

Christians live in terror in Somalia, worshipping in underground churches and knowing that they may be killed at any moment. "Outwardly, all Somali Muslims must support attacks on Somali Christians because otherwise they may not be seen as Muslim," a Somali Christian [said](#).

American troops are however not there to protect them, but to protect the regime of Prime Minister Hamza Abdi Barre who had declared that "Hamas is not a terrorist outfit but rather a movement for the liberation of its territory and people" and that "the blood spilled in Gaza heralds the forthcoming liberation of the Al-Aqsa Mosque."

America's involvement in Somalia has been a disaster in which we lost blood and treasure, and paved the way for the September 11 attacks, to help end a famine that never existed. Since then we've been dragged in to stabilize Somalia so that we aren't threatened by Somali pirates, Somali terrorists and the Somali 'refugees' who flooded Minnesota, Maine and other states, and defrauded Americans on a scale that their counterparts in Somalia could never have done.

Somalia has been branded very corrupt because officials were caught embezzling \$21 million. Somalis in Minnesota embezzled \$250 million through welfare meal frauds alone, and [billions more through everything](#) from housing the homeless to autism, and there is no end in sight.

No wonder that Somalia's Foreign Minister, its UN ambassador and the deputy speaker of its parliament have all allegedly run health care companies in Ohio and Minnesota.

America lavished billions on Somalia and then Somalis stole billions from Americans.

After 40 American lives lost and over \$10 billion wasted, it's time to get Somalia out of America, and to get America out of Somalia.

[Daniel Greenfield](#) is a Shillman Journalism Fellow at the David Horowitz Freedom Center. This article previously appeared at the Center's [Front Page Magazine](#).

<https://bkdkvk-zgpvh.campaign-view.com/ua/viewinbrowser>



STEP BY STEP

STEP BY STEP: Good news is that many friends and supporters of Lev U'Neshama (Heart and Soul) donated towards the Education Fund project to provide basic school supplies for actually 350 children within our Lev U'Neshama families.

We are grateful that the school supply part of our effort has been successful.

According to the Israel Population and Statistics office, Tzfat's population is about 40,000, and one third live at the poverty level. We do what we can so at least the children within our struggling LUN families can get

the things they need.

Every week we are providing new sport shoes and eye exams/eyeglasses to the children on our request list. However, previous donations are rapidly dwindling. I am reaching out now before the fund has been emptied and we will have to say "no" to additional requests.

We work with two local shoe merchants who give Lev U'Neshama a discount but they advised us the cost of the shoes has increased. Also, we work with an accredited optician in town who also gives us a discount but his cost is stable.

Lev U'Neshama is an Israeli registered non-profit charity organization, volunteer run, no business expenses whatsoever and every \$ goes into our programs.

Shoes: \$45 per pair regular and \$60 for First Steps, baby shoes.

Eye Exam/Eyeglasses: \$60 per child.

Your support is urgently requested.

Or use the Zelle US to US bank transfer system (contact me at mortsмо@aol.com for bank information.

US Donors may also send checks made payable to

Simcha Smolensky, my son, who is also a volunteer. Send to:

Rabbi Simcha Smolensky, 6739 N Mozart St Chicago IL 60645

Your support will be appreciated.

Yaffa Smolensky