

9/27/24 Friday

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Thousands of Iraqis Protest Nasrallah Assassination Near US Embassy in Baghdad

Thousands of Iraqis protested against the Israeli bombing that killed the secretary general of the Lebanese movement Hezbollah, Hassan Nasrallah, by marching towards the US embassy in Baghdad, videos posted to social media showed and local news outlets confirmed.

The protesters, seen holding signs with Nasrallah's picture and the Hezbollah flag, were seemingly stopped by police and security forces at the 14th of July Bridge, which crosses the Tigris River and into the so-called "Green Zone" where the US and several other embassies are located.

Earlier, Iraqi Prime Minister Mohammed Shia al-Sudani condemned the Israeli airstrike that killed Nasrallah, calling it "a crime that shows the Zionist entity has crossed all red lines."

Al-Sudani declared three days of mourning across Iraq for Nasrallah and his companions.

There appeared to be pushing and shoving between protesters and security forces. However, no arrests or serious clashes were reported.

An Israeli airstrike killed Nasrallah in a densely populated neighborhood of southern Beirut on Friday evening. According to the Lebanese Ministry of Health, at least eleven people were killed and 108 wounded in the wave of Israeli bombings in the area on Friday night.

According to Israeli media, the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) used around 85 "bunker-buster" bombs in the attack, which burrow deep into the ground before detonating and can weigh up to 4,000 pounds (1,800kg). Their use and other heavy-duty bombs are banned in populated areas by the Geneva Conventions due to the potential for mass casualties. Several residential buildings were flattened in the attack.

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At Least 44 Dead as Hurricane Helene Weakens

At least 44 people have been reported dead across several states of the US after Hurricane Helene made landfall late Thursday night and continued its path of destruction even as it weakened into a post-tropical cyclone.

Helene topped out at 140 mph (225 kph) sustained winds with occasional stronger gusts. The dead were spread out across Florida, Georgia, North and South Carolina, and Virginia. The remnants of Helene currently sit over Tennessee, where the National Hurricane Center warns flooding is still possible in the Tennessee Valley and Southern Appalachian Mountain regions. Rescue workers are still working around the clock in the worst-hit states, and they fear the death toll will continue to rise as they search through more houses.

Many areas were completely flooded and remain accessible only by boat. Authorities urged residents not to brave the water in an attempt to escape and recommended they wait for rescue

instead. They noted that the water could be dangerous due to electrical lines, sewage, and sharp objects floating under the surface.

In Erwin, Tennessee, the Unicoi County Hospital was almost completely submerged, with rescuers taking still intubated patients out on rafts.

At least three million people remain without power across Florida, Georgia, Tennessee, and the Carolinas, with further power outages reported in Ohio and Indiana due to high winds caused by the outskirts of the storm.

Tornadoes were also reported during the storm, including in North Carolina where one twister severely injured four people.

In Atlanta 11.2 in (28.4 cm) of rain fell across two days, the largest amount since the city started keeping records. The previous record of 9.59 in (24.3 cm) was set in 1886.

Helene made landfall in the Big Bend region of Florida's northwest coast, a sparsely populated area consisting of vacation spots and fishing towns.

The storm also affected parts of Mexico's Yucatan Peninsula and took out power for 200,000 homes and businesses in Cuba.

In response to the storm, US President Joe Biden approved emergency assistance to Alabama, Florida, Georgia, North Carolina, and South Carolina, according to a "fact sheet" released by the White House. It noted that Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris, "are praying for those who lost loved ones and everyone impacted by this storm."

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How the US Always Wanted to Destroy Hamas, Hezbollah

On Thursday, White House officials announced that in coordination with France, they had presented a 21-day ceasefire plan for Israel and Hezbollah and claimed Israel had accepted the deal and was involved in its creation. On Friday, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu denied agreeing to a ceasefire.

"We continue to hit Hezbollah with all our might. We will not stop until we achieve all of our goals," the Israeli prime minister said.

While the US is play-acting the role of unbiased mediator in both the Israel-Gaza and Israel-Lebanon wars, words cannot hide billions in aid and military actions in support of Israel. The world knows the US is complicit. But it is also a longstanding policy of the US government that both Hamas in Gaza and Hezbollah in Lebanon should—as officially designated terrorist organizations—be destroyed.

"Americans want to get rid of Hezbollah and Hamas even before [recent actions by] Israel.

They're more eager to continue this war against Hezbollah," explained veteran war correspondent Elijah Magnier on [Radio Sputnik's Fault Lines](#), noting that US President Joe Biden once called the invasion of Rafah a "red line" that could not be crossed by Israel.

In May, Israel crossed Biden's red line and invaded Rafah, reducing it to rubble by July. The US did not cut off aid or arms sales to Israel and, on Thursday, Israel announced it secured an additional \$8.7 billion in aid from the US.

"And then who put pressure on Egypt to allow the presence of Israeli troops [at the Philadelphi Corridor] that violated the 1978 peace accord, the Camp David Accord, and the 2005 additional agreement?" asked Magnier. "It is the United States of America, not Israel... This is why we see the involvement of the Americans [down] to the bones."

On Tuesday, Biden gave a speech at the UN, in which he described Hamas as "terrorists" and again accused them of "despicable acts of sexual violence" despite extensive reporting disproving the claim of sexual violence being used as a weapon of war on October 7.

"Together, we must deny oxygen to terrorists – to [Iran's] terrorist proxies," Biden added later, again confirming the US' unequivocal stance on the side of Israel.

"Listen to what Biden is saying," instructed Magnier. "He said he is doing his best to stop the war in Lebanon. When Netanyahu said 'no, thank you,' do we think that Netanyahu had the courage to stand against the country that is supporting him?"

Despite the similarities in their beginnings: the mass bombing of civilian targets and irrational claims of militant strongholds in the unlikely places, Israel will not find the war in Lebanon as manageable as Gaza.

"Hezbollah cannot hit [Israel] exactly with the same intensity because it doesn't have an air force. The Israelis have an air force and they have hundreds of jets" that can hit Lebanon in shifts, 24 hours a day, explained Magnier.

However, Hezbollah does have extensive drone capabilities that can damage Israel's infrastructure. Over the summer, Hezbollah released several batches of drone footage of critical Israeli military infrastructure, the Israeli port city Haifa and occupied Golan Heights.

"[Israel] considered the Palestinians as animals, they destroyed their capability, they destroyed the infrastructure, they cut water, electricity, food supply and medicine and they destroyed their university, their schools, everything. They can't do that with Lebanon because Lebanon, the resistance there, has the capability to damage the Israeli infrastructure," Magnier continued.

"There is not a balance, but there is more capability from Lebanon to inflict serious damage on Israel and turn Israel, in terms of infrastructure, to the Stone Age because if they destroy the electricity, the water and close all the harbors and the airports and bomb and destroy the gas and oil platform, what's going to happen to Israel?"

On Friday, the US credit rating agency Moody's Investor Service downgraded Israel's credit for the second time this year. The drop lowered Israel's credit rating two notches, from A2 to Baa1.

"In our view, the significant escalation in geopolitical risk also points to diminished quality of Israel's institutions and governance which have not fully mitigated actions detrimental to the sovereign's credit metrics," the agency warned.

A lower credit rating from Moody's will increase the price of loans, decrease investments, lower profits, and increase inflation for Israel. The problem will get exponentially worse if Hezbollah closes Israel's remaining seaports and damages its infrastructure.

But the real challenge will come when Israel launches its ground war against Lebanon. The problem is twofold, according to Magnier. One, since Israel cannot carpet-bomb Lebanon as extensively as it did to Gaza, it will not be able to significantly diminish Hezbollah's capabilities before invading as it did to Hamas before launching its ground campaign in Gaza. Two, Hezbollah's ground and artillery forces are far more powerful than Hamas."

"Remember, in [the 2006 Lebanese-Israeli War] Hezbollah was 100 times weaker than it is today and Israel failed to achieve its objectives," recalled Magnier. "Israeli tanks were caught in

Radi Hezir and they were screaming for help and the Israelis were saying to the tank commander, according to his testimony, 'wait until we reach a ceasefire, we can't help you now. Hold on and find the shelter for you to hide.'"

Meaning, Netanyahu's only choice is to draw the US into the war.

In 2006, then US President George W. Bush called Israel's war in Lebanon one of three "fronts of the global war on terror" and said responsibility for the war and its resulting suffering "lies with Hezbollah."

In a news conference announcing a ceasefire in that conflict, Bush claimed Hezbollah would no longer be able to act as "a state within a state" and would be replaced in the south by the official Lebanese government's forces. More than 18 years later, Hezbollah remains the dominant military force in Lebanon and is stronger than it has ever been.

"The United States never stopped supporting Israel and Israeli wars. If the Americans wanted to stop this war, they would cut the ammunition and money," explained Magnier. "Now, there is no doubt that the Americans are full partners with Israel in every single bomb that falls on civilians, Palestinians or Lebanese and in every war they carry out."

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Diplomats Say Bye-Bye to Bibi

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu gave a speech to a nearly empty United Nations General Assembly on Friday after dozens of diplomats were seen leaving the hall in protest as Netanyahu took the stage.

The increasingly isolated prime minister continued with his speech and called the UN a "swamp of antisemitic bile."

It is not immediately clear which delegates from which countries remained to listen to Netanyahu's speech, but he spoke to a largely empty assembly hall. Meanwhile, his supporters in the visitors' gallery cheered his arrival.

"Ladies and Gentlemen Order! Order please," UN General Assembly President Philémon Yang pleaded while slamming his gavel several times.

As Netanyahu gave his speech, Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) continued air assaults on Lebanon, hitting residential apartment buildings in Beirut it claims were strongholds for fighters belonging to the Lebanese Shia movement Hezbollah.

Countries around the globe have called for a ceasefire in Lebanon and Gaza and Israel has been accused of genocide by South Africa and nearly a dozen other countries in front of the International Court of Justice.

Hezbollah and Israel have been trading daily strikes since October 8 when Hezbollah started striking Israel in solidarity with Palestinians in Gaza. More than 41,000 Palestinians in Gaza have been killed by Israel since October 7 according to the Palestinian Ministry of Health.

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US Ports Workers Prepare for Strike That Could Cause Billions of Dollars in Losses

WASHINGTON, September 30 (Sputnik) – Dock workers are set to walk off their jobs at US ports early Tuesday in a labor strike that could cost the economy \$5 billion a day and cause widespread shortages and price increases.

The International Longshoremen's Association (ILA) said in a statement on Sunday that its 85,000 members would start a strike at 12:01 am on Tuesday, October 1, 2024 and halt work at all Atlantic and Gulf Coast ports from Maine to Texas.

“United States Maritime Alliance (USMX) refuses to address a half-century of wage subjugation where Ocean Carriers profits skyrocketed from millions to mega-billion dollars, while ILA longshore wages remained flat,” it said.

The current Master Contract between the ILA and the US Maritime Alliance (USMX) expires at midnight, it added.

JPMorgan has said the strike could cost the economy as much as \$5 billion per day, or about 6% of gross domestic product.

Despite the potential high costs of a strike, US President Joe Biden said on Sunday that he would not intervene in the labor dispute.

US companies are now scrambling to use the last hours before the strike to almost \$14 billion worth of cargo from 14 American ports where they arrived last week, including New York/New Jersey, Baltimore, Norfolk, Savannah, Miami, New Orleans and Houston, CNBC reported.

Giants such as Walmart, IKEA, Samsung, LG, Amazon, and Hyundai are among top US companies exposed to the impending port strike, according to the Import Genius data.

“Every importer, exporter, and even domestic shippers should be watching developments very closely this week because the impacts of a port strike on the U.S. East Coast and Gulf Coast ports could potentially impact all modes if there is a strike, and if it lasts longer than a few days,” global chief commercial officer of Seko Logistics. Brian Bourke, told CNBC.

The strike could cost ultimately the US economy tens of billions of dollars depending on its length, according to the report.

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US to Work With Partners to Diplomatically Resolve Israeli-Lebanese Conflict - Blinken

WASHINGTON, September 30 (Sputnik) – The United States will keep working with partners to reach a diplomatic resolution to the Israeli-Lebanese conflict amid the ongoing escalation, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken said on Monday.

"The United States will continue to work with our partners in the region and around the world to advance a diplomatic resolution that provides real security to Israel, to Lebanon, and allows citizens on both sides of the border to return to their homes," Blinken said in his remarks at the top of the Global Coalition to Defeat ISIS (a terrorist group, banned in Russia) ministerial meeting.

Over the weekend, the Lebanese Shiite movement Hezbollah confirmed that its chief, Hassan Nasrallah, was killed in an Israeli airstrike on the Lebanese capital of Beirut on Friday.

The situation on the Israeli-Lebanese border aggravated after the start of Israel's military operation in the Gaza Strip in October 2023. Israel began carrying out massive strikes on southern and eastern Lebanon last Monday. Hezbollah retaliated by firing dozens of rockets toward northern Israel.

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US Will Continue to Work With Partners to Advance Diplomatic Resolution to Israel-Lebanon Conflict - Blinken

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US Developing Joint Defense Plan with Israel Against Possible Iran Retaliation - Reports

WASHINGTON, September 30 (Sputnik) – The Biden administration is developing a defense plan with Israel to ward off a possible retaliatory attack from Iran for Israel's assassination of Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah, CNN reported on Monday, citing a US official.

The official said on Sunday night that a joint defense is being prepared, declining to elaborate further.

The Pentagon also said in a statement on Sunday night that "should Iran, its partners, or its proxies use this moment to target American personnel or interests in the region, the United States will take every necessary measure to defend our people."

Israel dropped 85 'bunker-buster' bombs weighing 2,000 pounds each on a residential neighborhood in Beirut's southern suburbs on Friday, flattening at least six apartment buildings with civilians in order to assassinate Nasrallah, who was holding a meeting underground. While casualties are still being compiled, Lebanon's public health ministry reported at least 11 people killed and 108 wounded in the attack.

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Biden Orders Up to \$567Mln in Military Assistance to Taiwan - White House

MOSCOW, September 30 (Sputnik) - US President Joe Biden ordered to provide up to \$567 million in military assistance to Taiwan, according to a memo circulated by the White House on Monday.

"I hereby delegate to the Secretary of State the authority under section 506(a)(3) of the FAA to direct the drawdown of up to \$567 million in defense articles and services of the Department of Defense, and military education and training, to provide assistance to Taiwan," the document says.

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Biden Approves Another Package of Up to \$567Mln in Military Assistance to Taiwan - White House

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Guinea-Bissau's Ties With Russia to Continue Amid Western Sanctions - Foreign Minister

UNITED NATIONS, September 29 (Sputnik) - Guinea-Bissau's relations with Russia will continue normally amid Western sanctions, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Guinea-Bissau Carlos Pinto Pereira told Sputnik.

"Our cooperation with Russia will continue normally. It is not going to suffer with these sanctions," Pereira said on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly in New York.

The Western countries have imposed a comprehensive sanctions regime on Russia, targeting the country's economy, energy, and banking services, among other areas, after Moscow launched a special military operation in Ukraine in February 2022. Russia has repeatedly said that the Western sanctions had failed.

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Urgent to Create Conditions For Russia-Ukraine Dialogue - Guinea-Bissau Foreign Minister

UNITED NATIONS, September 29 (Sputnik) - Guinea-Bissau believes it is urgent to create conditions for a dialogue between Russia and Ukraine to end the ongoing conflict, has discussed a peace proposal with China and Brazil, Guinea-Bissau Minister of Foreign Affairs Carlos Pinto Pereira told Sputnik.

"They [Russia, Ukraine] both have the responsibility to talk. Because today the problem is in

Ukraine and Russia, but tomorrow it can be all of us," Pereira said on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly in New York.

Guinea-Bissau believes the conflict can be resolved only through dialogue and political means, the minister said.

"We cannot waste time. It's urgent to create conditions for this dialogue between Russia and Ukraine," he said.

Pereira said that on the sidelines of the UNGA he had discussed peace initiatives with colleagues from China and Brazil, adding that there is also an African proposal for dialogue, which he hoped might yield some results in the future.

Earlier this week, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi said that China, Brazil and other countries of the Global South intended to create an open "Friends of Peace" platform to resolve the Ukrainian crisis.

Russian President Vladimir Putin said in June that Russia would cease fire and start talks with Ukraine as soon as Kiev withdrew troops from Russia-controlled regions and abandoned plans to join NATO. Ukrainian leader Volodymyr Zelenskyy rejected the proposal.

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Guinea-Bissau Hopes For Bigger Commercial Relations With Russia - Foreign Minister

UNITED NATIONS, September 29 (Sputnik) - Guinea-Bissau hopes to have better commercial ties with Russia, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Guinea-Bissau Carlos Pinto Pereira told Sputnik.

"We are expecting for some investments in processing some natural resources of Guinea-Bissau, but they didn't start yet," Pereira said on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly in New York.

Pereira said that right now commercial relations are primarily in the fishing sector.

"So in the future, I hope that we shall have a bigger commercial relation with Russia," he said.

In May, during a visit by Guinea-Bissau President Umaro Sissoco Embalo to Moscow for a military parade, Russian President Vladimir Putin said that the two countries' bilateral relations are based on the tradition of equality. Putin also said the two countries' approaches to addressing global issues and strengthening multipolarity are similar. However, the Russian president suggested that steps should be considered to develop bilateral cooperation even further.

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Guinea-Bissau Ties With Russia 'Very Good' - Foreign Minister

UNITED NATIONS, September 29 (Sputnik) - Guinea-Bissau's relations with Russia are "very good," but the country aims to strengthen bilateral cooperation as much as possible, its foreign affairs minister, Carlos Pinto Pereira, told Sputnik on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly in New York.

"I can say our relationship with Russia is very good," Pereira said. "As you know, it's a relationship that started before our independence since the [19]60s. Russia was always a big friend of Guinea-Bissau. We are now reestablishing this old cooperation and trying to make it stronger as much as it is possible."

Pereira added that Guinea-Bissau expects an influx of private investment in the near future, including from Russian companies.

"We have many companies coming from Russia to fish in our waters," Pereira said, referring to the country's exclusive economic zone.

Guinea-Bissau also maintains military cooperation with Russia, the diplomat said.

"As you know, our main equipment comes from Russia," Pereira said, adding that the two countries have already discussed prospects for Russia to service and maintain Guinea-Bissau's military equipment.

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Guinea-Bissau Backs Trade in National Currencies, Supports BRICS - Foreign Minister

UNITED NATIONS, September 29 (Sputnik) - Guinea-Bissau is open to exploring bilateral trade in national currencies and supports BRICS, Guinea-Bissau Minister of Foreign Affairs Carlos Pinto Pereira told Sputnik.

"We think that the initiative from BRICS, we support it because we intend to join it," Pereira said on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly in New York.

When asked whether Guinea-Bissau would be interested in engaging in bilateral trade using national currencies, Pereira said: "Absolutely."

The minister added that despite years of efforts to restructure the international financial system without success, Guinea-Bissau planned to explore new approaches and saw BRICS as an alternative solution.

"BRICS for us is an alternative solution," Pereira said. "We hope that with BRICS we can face our economical issues and challenges in a better way, without the pressure and the conditions or the conditionality of actual financial system... we hope it will be an opportunity to have better access to financing, to our economies."

On Thursday, Russian President Vladimir Putin said that Russia's trade partners are interested in switching to national currencies to pay for Russian exports.

The president added that Russia and other BRICS countries were working to create their own payment system for independent servicing of trade.

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US Secret Service Pushed to Limits Amid Increased Workload, UNGA High-Level Week -Official

WASHINGTON, September 29 (Sputnik) - The US Secret Service is being pushed to its limits as it provides heightened security to an increasing number of protectees and was tasked with ensuring the safety of more than 140 world leaders during the United Nations General Assembly High-Level Week, a senior US official briefed on the planning told Sputnik.

Earlier on Saturday, Trump claimed during a campaign rally in Wisconsin that he had to downsize the venue for his event because the Biden administration couldn't provide enough US Secret Service agents necessary for a bigger venue as they were "guarding the Iranian president who's looking to kill Trump."

"The agency was never configured to provide such an elevated level of protection for an increasing number of protectees," the official said on Saturday in response to Trump's comment. "Our personnel and equipment are being pushed to their limits to sustain the current operational tempo. This proposed Wisconsin event also took place during the United Nations General Assembly, where the Secret Service is responsible for the safety and security of over 140 world leaders amid a challenged global threat level."

The official, who spoke on the condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to speak to media, added that the US Secret Service needed a paradigm shift that would also position the agency to enhance its operational readiness to reduce reliance on external partners when providing heightened protection.

This past week, Congress passed legislation to strengthen Secret Service protection for US presidential candidates, which would provide Trump and Democratic nominee Kamala Harris the same level of protection provided to President Joe Biden. The bill heads to Biden's desk to be signed into law.

US Secret Service spokesperson Anthony Guglielmi said in a statement to Sputnik that Trump was receiving heightened levels of US Secret Service protection and their top priority was mitigating risks to ensure his continued safety at all times.

US intelligence officials recently notified Trump that threats from Iran against his life had heightened in the past few months, and US law enforcement officials across all agencies were working to ensure the former US president was protected.

"Big threats on my life by Iran," Trump said in a statement on Tuesday. "The entire US Military is watching and waiting. Moves were already made by Iran that didn't work out, but they will try again. Not a good situation for anyone. I am surrounded by more men, guns, and weapons than I have ever seen before."

There have been two assassination attempts on Trump since July but there has been no evidence disclosed publicly linking these events to Iran.

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Guinea-Bissau to Attend BRICS Summit in Kazan - Foreign Minister

UNITED NATIONS, September 29 (Sputnik) - Guinea-Bissau confirms getting an invitation to attend the BRICS summit in Kazan and will be present there, the country's foreign minister, Carlos Pinto Pereira, told Sputnik on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly in New York.

When asked whether Guinea-Bissau had received an invitation to the upcoming BRICS Summit in Kazan, Pereira said "yes."

Pereira added that the country would be represented at the event, though it was not yet decided at what level.

"I don't know, I cannot say it at the moment at what level, but we shall be present," he said.

The summit of the association will be held in Kazan from October 22-24.

BRICS is an intergovernmental organization comprising Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa, Iran, Egypt, Ethiopia, and the United Arab Emirates. Russia took the rotating presidency of the BRICS group in 2024. Russia is chairing BRICS under the motto "Strengthening Multilateralism for Just Global Development and Security."

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Guinea-Bissau has received invitation and will attend BRICS summit in Kazan - foreign minister to sputnik

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Guinea-Bissau Leader May Conduct State Visit to Russia This Year - Foreign Minister

(Adds more quotes in paras 4, 5)

UNITED NATIONS, September 29 (Sputnik) - A state visit by Guinea-Bissau President Umaro Sissoco Embalo to Russia can take place this year, Guinea Bissau's Minister of Foreign Affairs Carlos Pinto Pereira told Sputnik.

"We are invited for a state visit. The date is not fixed but we are trying to fix it," Pereira said on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly in New York.

When asked if the visit could happen this year, the diplomat said "yes."

According to Pereira, the visit in May was significant for his country and is expected to help strengthen economic ties between Guinea-Bissau and Russia.

"It was a very, very important visit. The results for us were positive on the political level especially, but also we hope that on an economic level we shall have this impact in the near future," the minister said.

Russian President Vladimir Putin invited Guinea-Bissau President Umaro Sissoco Embalo to pay a state visit to Russia during his trip to Moscow for a military parade in May. Embalo attended the May 9 Victory Day parade as a guest of honor.

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Guinea-Bissau president's visit to Russia could happen this year - foreign minister to sputnik

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Iran Urges UNSC to Convene Emergency Meeting to Address Situation in Lebanon - Statement

UNITED NATIONS, September 28 (Sputnik) - Tehran calls on the UN Security Council to convene an emergency meeting on the situation in Lebanon as a result from the recent Israeli actions, the Iranian Mission to the UN said in a statement.

"Iran calls on the Security Council to convene an emergency meeting to address Israel's terrorist aggression and the continuous atrocities perpetrated by the warmongering Israeli regime in Lebanon and across the region," the statement says.

Tehran also believes that the Israeli attacks in Beirut are a flagrant act of terrorist aggression, posing threat to peace, it added.

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Iran mission to UN says Israel attacks in Beirut are flagrant act of terrorist aggression, pose grave threat to regional, international peace

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Biden Says US Will Respond to Recent Houthi Attack on Naval Ships in Red Sea

WASHINGTON, September 29 (Sputnik) - US President Joe Biden told reporters that the United States would respond to the Houthi attack targeting US Navy warships in the Red Sea that occurred this past week, according to the White House press pool.

"We're responding," Biden said on Saturday when asked if he would respond to missile attacks on US warships in the Red Sea.

US media reported that three US Navy warships had shot down nearly two dozen incoming missiles and drones launched by the Houthis while transiting the Red Sea. No Navy vessels were hit and no US service members were injured during the attack.

Earlier on Saturday, the White House said Biden convened a call with his national security team to receive an update on the situation in the Middle East, review the status of US military force posture in the region, and direct continued diplomatic efforts to coordinate with allies and partners to deescalate the ongoing conflicts.

The State Department also announced that non-essential US personnel in the American Embassy in Beirut had been ordered to leave Lebanon given the spike in violence in the region.

Biden convened his national security team following confirmation that Israeli strikes on Friday had killed Hezbollah Secretary General Hassan Nasrallah. The US president called it a "measure of justice," claiming the movement's leader was responsible for killing hundreds of Americans.

Biden's goal is de-escalation in the Gaza Strip and Lebanon through diplomacy, the White House said.

Iranian Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei also reportedly called an emergency meeting of Iran's Supreme National Security Council in light of the latest escalation of fighting in the region.

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Belarus Expects BRICS to Consider Membership Application Soon - Foreign Minister

UNITED NATIONS, September 28 (Sputnik) - Belarus expects the BRICS organization to consider its application for membership in the near future, Belarusian Foreign Affairs Minister Maxim Ryzhenkov told Sputnik.

"It is no secret that Belarus submitted its application, and we expect its consideration in the very near future," Ryzhenkov said in an interview.

BRICS is one of the most dynamically developing organizations of the global majority and is attractive to many countries, Ryzhenkov said. The group is rapidly "gaining weight" politically and economically, he added.

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BRICS among most dynamically developing global organizations, rapidly 'gaining weight' politically, economically - Belarus foreign minister to sputnik

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Belarus expects its BRICS application will be considered in 'very near future' - foreign minister to sputnik

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First BRICS 'Wave of Expansion' Will Take Place at Kazan Summit - Ryzhenkov

UNITED NATIONS, September 28 (Sputnik) - Some ten countries could be part of the first expansion of the BRICS organization during the group's upcoming summit in Kazan, Belarusian Foreign Affairs Minister Maxim Ryzhenkov told Sputnik.

"At the moment, the Russian presidency is formulating a list of countries who will be in the first wave of expansion," Ryzhenkov said in an interview, when asked about consideration of membership at the Kazan summit in October. "According to insider data, it is expected so far that there will be about ten of them."

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Belarus foreign minister tells sputnik first BRICS 'wave of expansion' will take place at Kazan Summit, might impact about 10 states

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Belarus to Give 'Immediate Response' if Ukraine Deliberately Used Drones on Territory - FM

UNITED NATIONS, September 28 (Sputnik) - Minsk will adequately respond to Kiev if it assesses that the use of drones on Belarusian territory was deliberate, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Belarus Maxim Ryzhenkov told Sputnik.

"Therefore, we, of course, are looking at this, we are contacting all authorities. But only if it is clear that there are some deliberate actions in terms of the targeted use of drones on Belarusian territory, the response, as the head of our state said, will be immediate," Ryzhenkov told Sputnik.

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Minsk to give 'immediate response' if Ukraine deliberately used drones on Belarusian territory – foreign minister to sputnik

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Belarus Does Not Need Election Observers 'Broken In' by The West - Foreign Minister

UNITED NATIONS, September 28 (Sputnik) - Minsk does not need pre-trained Western election observers who will intentionally look for mistakes, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Belarus Maxim Ryzhenkov told Sputnik.

"That is, they concentrated their attention only on us. And you know, when observers arrive, trained by the relevant countries, who select people, these are primarily representatives of Western countries, they are already configured accordingly, they have already undergone the appropriate 'breaking-in' in their countries - how, what to look at," Ryzhenkov said.

As a rule, he added, these are largely representatives of the ministries of foreign affairs, and some state organizations of these countries that send them.

"When the organization itself has been given some narratives that need to be seen or somehow reflected in Belarus, why do we need such observation?" Ryzhenkov said.

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Belarus Will Use Wide Range of Tools to Monitor Presidential Elections - Foreign Minister

UNITED NATIONS, September 28 (Sputnik) - Belarus will use a wide range of tools for international observation of the presidential elections in the country, including through the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) and Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), Belarusian Foreign Minister Maxim Ryzhenkov said in an interview with Sputnik.

"We plan to use a broad range of instruments for international observation through all specialized organizations that are constructively and objectively set to study the issues that observers encounter in the countries where they conduct observations," Ryzhenkov said on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly High-level Week ending in New York.

The minister said Minsk expects the arrival, in particular, of observation missions from the CIS, SCO, and other organizations and centers addressing the issue, as well as central election commissions of countries from all over the world.

The presidential elections in Belarus will take place no later than July 20, 2025.

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Interference in Belarus Intended to Create 'Cordon Sanitaire' Against Russia - Ryzhenkov

UNITED NATIONS, September 28 (Sputnik) - Western interference in Belarus' internal affairs ahead of the country's 2025 presidential election is intended to create a cordon sanitaire against Russia, Belarusian Foreign Affairs Minister Maxim Ryzhenkov told Sputnik.

"In fact, we understand that certain people are behind the interests of the West, whom they have raised, taught and desire to bring to power in Belarus, the same way they brought them to power in many post-Soviet countries," Ryzhenkov said in an interview. "That's what they want here... to simply give tasks to these people so that they implement that foreign policy, domestic policy, and socio-economic policy in a way that benefits the West today, and above all, to create a further cordon sanitaire against the Russian Federation."

Belarus has already recorded Western interference in its internal affairs ahead of its 2025 presidential election, Ryzhenkov also said.

Some Western analysts and politicians are already alleging that Belarus' elections will go poorly, he also said.

However, it is nonsense to claim that Belarusian citizens do not have access to media and cannot express their opinions, Ryzhenkov said.

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Claims Belarusian elections are undemocratic are nonsense, citizens can express different views, are not imprisoned for dissenting - foreign minister

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Western interference in Belarusian elections is aimed at creating a 'cordon sanitaire' against Russia - foreign minister to sputnik

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Western Interference in Internal Affairs of Belarus Continues - Foreign Minister

UNITED NATIONS, September 28 (Sputnik) - The Western interference in the internal affairs of Belarus continues, Belarusian Foreign Affairs Minister Maxim Ryzhenkov told Sputnik.

"It is not just recorded, it continues," Ryzhenkov said when asked whether Belarus has noticed Western interference ahead of its 2025 presidential election.

He pointed out that the impermissibility of interference in the internal affairs of other countries is directly laid out in the fundamental documents of the United Nations.

The situation is an example of how the United Nations' embedded mechanisms do not work, Ryzhenkov said.

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principle of non-interference embedded in UN documents is disregarded in case of Belarus - top diplomat to sputnik

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Western interference in Belarus internal affairs ahead of presidential election has been recorded and continues -foreign minister Ryzhenkov to Sputnik

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Current Global Security Model Is 'Coming Apart at The Seams' - Belarusian Foreign Minister

UNITED NATIONS, September 28 (Sputnik) - The current model of ensuring stability and security in the world is unreliable, the Global South countries do not receive support from the United Nations and in this regard are creating their own mechanisms - like the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) and BRICS, Belarusian Foreign Minister Maxim Ryzhenkov said in an interview with Sputnik.

The minister said the current model of ensuring stability and security in the world is "coming apart at the seams", adding that the UN is also unable to cope with "the influx of problems that are today simply destroying the international consensus on issues of further global development."

"Certain regions, or certain groups of countries, such as the Global South, or some countries united by their common interests, can no longer receive any adequate response or support from UN organizations and are beginning to independently create certain mechanisms that will help them resolve these issues, which, strictly speaking, are within the UN's area of responsibility, including: security issues, terrorist activities, addressing illegal migration, human rights, and so on," Ryzhenkov told Sputnik during the UN General Assembly session.

He cited BRICS and the SCO as examples - these, he noted, are "echoes" of the fact that the UN is failing to fulfill its main responsibility - to be a "consolidating link" that allows the interests of all countries to be taken into account based on the principle of consensus and the principles that are laid down in all the fundamental documents of the Organization.

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Нынешняя модель мировой безопасности "трещит по швам" - глава МИД Белоруссии

ООН, 28 сен - РИА Новости. Действующая модель обеспечения стабильности и безопасности в мире "трещит по швам", страны Глобального Юга не получают поддержку

от ООН и в этой связи создают собственные механизмы - по типу ШОС и БРИКС, сообщил в интервью РИА Новости глава МИД Белоруссии Максим Рыженков.

По словам министра, нынешняя модель обеспечения стабильности и безопасности в мире "трещит по швам". Также ООН не в состоянии справиться с "тем наплывом проблем, которые сегодня просто-таки разваливают международный консенсус по вопросам развития дальнейшего мира", добавил Рыженков.

"Отдельные регионы, либо отдельные группы стран, как, например, Глобальный Юг, либо какие-то страны, объединенные своими общими интересами, не могут уже получить какого-то адекватного ответа и поддержки в организациях системы ООН и начинают заниматься самостоятельно созданием неких механизмов, которые будут помогать им решать эти вопросы, которые, собственно говоря, лежат в зоне ответственности ООН, в том числе: вопросы безопасности, вопросы террористической деятельности, вопросы борьбы с нелегальной миграцией, права человека и так далее", - сказал министр агентству в ходе Генассамблеи ООН.

В качестве примеров Рыженков привел БРИКС и ШОС - это, отметил он, "отголоски" того, что ООН не справляется со своей главной обязанностью - быть "консолидирующим звеном", позволяющим решать интересы всех стран на принципе консенсуса и принципах, которые заложены во всех основополагающих документах Организации.

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Global South Does Not Receive Support From UN, Creates Its Own Mechanisms Like SCO, BRICS - Belarusian Foreign Minister to Sputnik

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Turkish Cypriot Leader Says Will Raise Issue of Cyprus Militarization With Guterres

UNITED NATIONS, September 28 (Sputnik) - Turkish Cypriot leader Ersin Tatar told Sputnik on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly in New York he will discuss with UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres the increasing use of Cyprus military bases by the United Kingdom and the United States, particularly during the Gaza conflict.

"What is happening now in the south is concerning me," Tatar stated, adding that Turkey is also concerned by the militarization of Cyprus. "Of course, I will talk to Guterres [about it]."

Tatar said they always talk about demilitarization of the island, however, the complete opposite is now happening in the southern part of the island.

"They are saying that this island should be demilitarized, what about the south, it is being plus-militarized," he said. "The South is becoming more and more involved in all these international affairs, which have nothing to do with Cyprus. And some of these Hamas and the other organizations are saying South Cyprus can become a target because Cyprus is being very much used for these operations, and we are uncomfortable for this thing."

The United States has deployed dozens of military personnel to Cyprus amid concerns about

the need to potentially respond to escalating hostilities in the Middle East, CNN reported on Wednesday.

"They say they sent evacuation people, but God knows exactly why they are there. All Cypriots are concerned," Tatar said.

Tatar is scheduled to have a meeting with Guterres tomorrow.

Tatar shared that he will also stress to Guterres that Cyprus President Nikos Christodoulides should regard Northern Cyprus as counterpart to a deal with the matters related to natural resources, irregular migration, and electricity.

After the Republic of Cyprus was established in 1960, the UK retained two Sovereign Base Areas in Akrotiri and Dhekelia, leaving them beyond the reach of the republic. Amid Israel's war on Gaza, Cyprus has been facing backlash over the use of military bases by UK and US forces to strike the Houthis.

Cyprus has denied any involvement in the conflict and said that the UK is not formally required to inform it about the use of the military installations. Nicosia instead highlights its role in international efforts to create a sea route for humanitarian aid to Gaza. Cyprus has been de facto divided into Greek and Turkish territories since 1974. The Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus was declared in 1983 with Ankara's backing. It is recognized only by Turkey.

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Biden Directs Force Posture Adjustments in Mideast Amid Latest Developments - White House

WASHINGTON, September 28 (Sputnik) - US President Joe Biden directed the Defense Department to assess and make any needed adjustments to the US force posture in the Middle East following an escalation of fighting in the region, the White House announcement.

"President Biden has been briefed several times today by his national security team on the latest developments in the Middle East," the White House said in a statement on Friday. "He has directed the Pentagon to assess and adjust as necessary US force posture in the region to enhance deterrence, ensure force protection, and support the full range of US objectives."

Biden has also directed his team to ensure that US embassies in the region take all protective measures as appropriate.

Earlier on Friday, Israel said that it had carried out an airstrike on the main headquarters of the Lebanese movement Hezbollah in Beirut, destroying several residential buildings in the attack. The Al Arabiya broadcaster reported that Israel tried to eliminate Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah, but failed.

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biden directed his team to ensure US embassies in mideast take all protective measures as appropriate - white house

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biden directs pentagon to assess, adjust force posture in middle east to enhance deterrence amid latest developments - white house

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Belarus Will Sign Security Guarantees With Russia in December - Foreign Minister

UNITED NATIONS, September 28 (Sputnik) - Belarus will sign a deal on security guarantees with Russia in December, Belarusian Foreign Affairs Minister Maxim Ryzhenkov told Sputnik. "This agreement is in the final stages of approval... in a few months, by the 25th anniversary of the signing of the Treaty on the Creation of the Union State, it will be in December, this agreement will already be signed legally," Ryzhenkov said in an interview, when asked about the status of the agreement. Belarus and Russia have fully worked out the text of the agreement, Ryzhenkov said. The agreement provides guarantees on nuclear weapons in the event of aggression or threats of aggression on the territory of either union state, Ryzhenkov said.

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Lockheed Wins \$3.2Bln Contract to Provide Missiles to Finland, Poland, Japan - Pentagon

WASHINGTON, September 28 (Sputnik) - Lockheed Martin has been awarded a \$3.2 billion contract to produce joint air-to-surface standoff missiles and long-range anti-ship missiles for four allied countries, the US Defense Department announced. "Lockheed Martin Missiles and Fire Control, Orlando, Florida, was awarded a \$3,230,277,154 firm-fixed-price, undefinitized contract action for a joint air-to-surface standoff missile and long-range anti-ship missile large lot procurement," the Defense Department said in a press release on Friday. The missiles will be acquired by Japan, Finland, Poland and the Netherlands, the release added.

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China Displacing US in Influence Across Entire Middle East Region - US Congressman

WASHINGTON, September 28 (Sputnik)- China is displacing the United States in influence across the Middle East and Washington must come up with a solution to the Palestinian problem acceptable to the Arab world or it will lose out to Beijing entirely in the region,

Congressman Adam Smith, the ranking member on the House Armed Services Committee (HASC) said at a meeting at the Center for a New American Security (CNAS).

"China is growing in the Middle East and we are shrinking," Smith told the meeting on Friday. "It is a problem. We are not winning that competition."

The United States had to learn to coexist with China both in the Middle East and in the wider world, Smith said.

"I always ask what your strategy is for coexisting with China because if you don't have one, we are in big trouble," he said.

China had learned from its own mistakes of the past in dealing with Middle Eastern nations and was now enjoying success by being more transactional in its dealings with different countries in the region, Smith said.

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Lockheed wins \$3.2Bln for joint air-to-surface standoff missiles, long-range anti-ship missiles for Poland, Finland, Netherlands - Pentagon

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US at Tipping Point as China Dominates Rare Earths Production - Congressman

WASHINGTON, September 28 (Sputnik) - China dominates the production of rare earths - rare metal and minerals that are essential to the manufacture of most high technology devices - and has even prohibited their export of them, US House Armed Services Committee Vice Chairman Rob Wittman said.

"We have allowed China to dominate in that space [production and control of] critical minerals," Wittman told a meeting at the Center for a New American Security on Friday. "We really are at a tipping point in that."

On July 10, China announced that they would ban the export of rare earth elements, Wittman said.

"That should concern us," Wittman also said.

Chinese semiconductors and circuit boards have been found in Russian missiles shot down in Ukraine, Wittman added.

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UK Test Flies European Common Radar Upgrade on Royal Air Force Typhoon Fighter - BAE

WASHINGTON, September 28 (Sputnik) - A prototype of the new European Common Radar System Mark 2 (ECRS Mk2) has been flown and operated on a United Kingdom (UK) Royal Air Force (RAF) Typhoon combat fighter for the first time, BAE Systems said in a press release on

Friday.

"This significant achievement saw the prototype of the ECRS Mk 2 operated on a UK Typhoon test and evaluation aircraft at BAE Systems in Lancashire, supported by the radar's developer, Leonardo UK," the release said.

The flight is the latest step in the ongoing development program for the UK Typhoon fleet and strengthens the aircraft's control of the airspace, BAE Systems said.

"The ECRS Mk2 can perform traditional radar functions such as search and targeting, as well as providing advanced electronic warfare capabilities making it an even more potent capability in NATO's frontline fleet," the release said.

The radar's new capabilities will enable Typhoons to locate and deny use of an adversary's radar with a powerful electronic jamming attack, whilst staying beyond the reach of threats, BAE Systems explained.

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SPUTNIK TOP STORIES OF THE DAY

UNITED NATIONS, September 28 (Sputnik) -

TRUMP-ZELENSKYY MEETING

* The conflict in Ukraine must end at some point, former US President Donald Trump said on Friday.

* Trump said that he could meet again with Zelenskyy to discuss bringing an end to the conflict with Russia.

MIDDLE EAST DEVELOPMENTS

* Two people were killed and 76 others were injured as a result of an Israeli airstrike on the southern suburb of Beirut, the Lebanese Ministry of Health's Emergency Response Center said.

* Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov expressed Russia's solidarity with the people of Lebanon and expressed condolences over the loss of life due to the current sharp escalation of the conflict between Lebanon and Israel.

* The United Nations is deeply worried about the civilian impact of Israeli massive strikes on Beirut's densely populated suburbs on Friday, UN Special Coordinator for Lebanon Jeanine Hennis said.

* China calls for an immediate ceasefire in the Middle East, the withdrawal of Israeli troops from Gaza and the sovereignty of Lebanon, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi said on Friday.

* Jordanian Foreign Minister Ayman Safadi said that all Arab countries are ready to guarantee the security of Israel if the latter ends the occupation of Palestinian lands and allows for the creation of the State of Palestine.

* Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan Al Saud said on Friday that the risk the situation in the Middle East may spin out of control is "real."

* Israeli Ambassador to the United Nations Danny Danon said that Israel will continue to "act decisively."

COUNTER TERROR COALITION IN IRAQ

* The United States and Iraq have agreed on a two-phase transition plan to end military operations as part of the CJTF-OIR to defeat the Islamic State terrorist group (banned in Russia), the a senior US official said on Friday.

* The first phase of a transition plan agreed upon between the United States and Iraq will see the end of the CJTF-OIR military operations and the withdrawal of the coalition's military personnel from certain locations in the country, the official said.

* The US-led coalition will continue to conduct operations against the Islamic State on the territory of Syria from Iraq through at least September 2026, the official said.

CONFLICT IN UKRAINE

* The Russian military has eliminated more than 17,750 Ukrainian soldiers and 131 tanks during operations in the border areas of the Kursk region, the Russian Defense Ministry said on Friday.

* Russia's army group South has eliminated up to 5,140 Ukrainian soldiers over the past week, the Russian Defense Ministry said.

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Opportunity for Gaza Ceasefire with Hostage Release, Diplomatic Talks in Lebanon -US Envoy

UNITED NATIONS, September 27 (Sputnik) — There is still an opportunity for a ceasefire with hostage release in Gaza and a diplomatic resolution in Lebanon amid the conflict between Israel and Hezbollah, US Ambassador to the UN Linda Thomas-Greenfield said on Friday.

"There is still an opportunity to have a ceasefire with hostage release in Gaza, and a diplomatic resolution of the conflict between Israel and Hezbollah," Thomas-Greenfield said during a UN Security Council meeting.

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Biden OKs Sale of Extended Range Anti-Radiation Missiles to Australia - Defense Agency

WASHINGTON, September 27 (Sputnik) - The Biden administration has given the go-ahead for the sale of \$405 million worth of Advanced Anti-Radiation Guided Missiles-Extended Range (AARGM-ER) to Australia, the Defense Security Cooperation Agency (DSCA) announced in a press release on Friday.

"The State Department has made a determination approving a possible Foreign Military Sale to the Government of Australia of Advanced Anti-Radiation Guided Missiles-Extended Range and related equipment for an estimated cost of \$405 million," the release said.

The DSCA delivered the required certification notifying Congress of this possible sale also on Friday, the release noted.

This proposed sale will support US foreign policy and national security objectives as Australia is one of Washington's most important allies in the Western Pacific, the release said.

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Israeli Military Calls for Evacuation of Neighborhoods in Beirut's Southern Suburbs

WASHINGTON, September 27 (Sputnik) -The Israeli military on Friday called for the immediate evacuation of neighborhoods around three specific buildings in the densely populated southern suburbs of Beirut, just hours after carrying out an airstrike on what it said was Hezbollah's headquarters.

"You are located near Hezbollah interests and for your safety and the safety of your loved ones, you are obliged to evacuate the buildings immediately and move away from them at a distance of no less than 500 meters," Israel Defense Forces spokesman Avichay Adraee said via X.

The evacuation extends to the Munir Shadi building and surrounding buildings in the al-Laylaki neighborhood, as well as the Sheet building and Al-Salam Complex in Al-Hadath district, Adraee said.

The post included a video message and maps of the affected areas.

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us ambassador to un says there is still an opportunity to have ceasefire with hostage release in gaza, diplomatic resolution in Lebanon

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Blinken Says Expects Communication Between Biden, Xi in Future

WASHINGTON, September 27 (Sputnik) - US Secretary of State Antony Blinken said on Friday that he expects US President Joe Biden and Chinese President Xi Jinping to communicate in the coming weeks and months.

"When [Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi] and I met just a couple of hours ago, we discussed a number of things... but we also agreed on the importance of the leaders communicating, and so I fully anticipate that we'll see that in the weeks and months ahead," Blinken said during a press conference in New York, when asked about a potential meeting between Biden and Xi. However, Blinken said there is nothing scheduled to share at this time.

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US Politician Charged for Threatening to Kill Rival With Ukraine, Russia Hit Squads - DOJ

WASHINGTON, September 27 (Sputnik) - Former US congressional candidate William Braddock has been charged for allegedly threatening to kill his political opponent in a Republican primary with a hit squad made up of Ukrainians and Russians, the US Department of Justice said on Friday.

"An indictment was unsealed yesterday charging a Florida man with threatening to kill his primary opponent in the 2021 election for the 13th Congressional District of Florida and a private citizen and acquaintance of his opponent," the Justice Department said in a press release.

Braddock's political opponent at the time of this incident was Republican Congresswoman Ana Paulina Luna, but she's not named in the court documents.

The Justice Department said that on June 8, 2021, Braddock made several threats to injure and kill his political opponent.

According to court documents, Braddock said he would "call up my Russian-Ukrainian hit squad" and make his political opponent "disappear."

After making the threats, Braddock fled the United States and was later found in the Philippines. Braddock was recently deported back to the United States and made his first court appearance in Los Angeles on Thursday.

Braddock faces up to five years in prison if he's convicted, the release noted.

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Blinken says fully anticipates to see communication between Biden and Xi in weeks and months ahead

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Israeli military calls for immediate evacuation of neighborhoods in Beirut's southern suburbs

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Blinken Says Expressed Concern to Chinese Counterpart About China's Support for Russia

NEW YORK, September 27 (Sputnik) - US Secretary of State Antony Blinken said on Friday that he expressed concerns to his Chinese counterpart about Beijing's support for Moscow amid the conflict in Ukraine.

"I concluded a candid and substantive meeting with China's Foreign Minister, Wang Yi. We discussed steps to implement the commitments that our leaders made at Woodside last year... I also underscored our strong concern with China's support for Russia's defense industrial base,

which fuels Russia's war machine and perpetuates a war that China purports to want to see ended," Blinken said during a press conference.

Blinken said that he and Wang also discussed efforts to disrupt the flow of synthetic drugs and precursor chemicals into the United States, improve communications between the two militaries and discussed the risks of artificial intelligence.

Moreover, Blinken said that he emphasized the importance of maintaining peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait and raised concerns about China's activities in the South China Sea.

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Blinken Says Choices Made by Mideast Parties in Coming Days Will Determine Region's Path

WASHINGTON, September 27 (Sputnik) - The choices made by parties in the Middle East in the coming days amid heightened tensions between Israel and the Lebanese movement Hezbollah will determine the path for the region, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken said on Friday.

"Israel has the right to defend itself against terrorism, the way it does so matters," Blinken said during a press conference. "The choices that all parties make in the coming days will determine which path this region is on with profound consequences for its people now and possibly for years to come."

Blinken added that one path is toward a diplomatic solution and the other path is a conflict, whose profound consequences may be felt around the world.

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Saudi Foreign Minister Says Mideast Peace Impossible Without Addressing Palestinian Issue

UNITED NATIONS, September 27 (Sputnik) – Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan Al Saud said on Friday that regional peace in the Middle East is impossible without addressing the Palestine issue.

"Without addressing the issue of Palestine, it will not be possible to reach the regional peace and stability," Al Saud told reporters at the United Nations.

The formation of the Palestinian state within the framework of international law will open up the horizon for regional integration, cooperation and normalization, he added.

"It offers a huge potential for all of us in the region, but again, without addressing the issue of the Palestinians, this is not going to happen," Al Saud said.

The Biden administration has tried to negotiate a deal to normalize relations between Saudi Arabia and Israel, but the effort has been put on hold since the outbreak of the conflict in Gaza.

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Trump Suggests Investigation Into Pelosi Selling Visa Stocks Ahead of Government Lawsuit

WASHINGTON, September 27 (Sputnik) - Former US President Donald Trump suggested on Friday that an attorney general (AG) should launch an investigation into Paul Pelosi's sale of Visa stock shares ahead of a government lawsuit against the payment card service.

"Visa crashed because the government went after them, the government filed a big suit against Visa. Nancy and her husband sold their stock the day before it was announced," Trump said during remarks in Michigan. "So why don't we get some AG somewhere, like in a Republican territory, and why don't we get them to do a little investigation?"

On Tuesday, the US Justice Department announced a civil antitrust lawsuit against Visa, alleging monopolization and other unlawful conduct in violation of the Sherman Act. Visa's stock price dropped in the wake of the announcement.

Paul Pelosi sold 2,000 shares of Visa stock on July 1 for at least \$500,000, according to financial disclosures. However, former US House Speaker Nancy Pelosi has previously denied owning any stocks or getting involved in transactions.

Earlier this year, a bipartisan group of US House lawmakers introduced legislation to ban members of Congress, their spouses and dependents from trading stocks.

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Palestine's PM Says An Int'l Plan With Measures To Change Reality On The Ground Is Needed

UNITED NATIONS, September 27 (Sputnik) — An international plan with necessary measures is needed to change the situation on the ground, Palestinian Prime Minister Mohammed Mustafa said on Friday.

"We need an international plan with the necessary measures to change the reality on the ground," Mustafa said during the UN Security Council.

Mustafa added that the plan consists of four points, recognizing the state of Palestine and supporting its UN membership, implementing the International Court of Justice (ICJ) advisory opinion and the UN General Assembly resolution to end the Israeli presence in the occupied territories within 12 months, joining a global alliance to achieve Palestinian independence and the two-state solution, and supporting Palestine's national plan to build its economy and institutions.

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Oil Prices Up on Day But Tumble on Week, Extending September Volatility and Weakness

NEW YORK, September 27 (Sputnik) - Oil markets finished Friday's trading higher but still posted a large loss on the week that upended two prior weeks of gains amid worries about slackening demand in China.

Possible disruption in crude supply from wars in the Middle East had boosted crude prices

intermittently during the week. But worries about China's decreasing demand won out eventually, reinforcing the volatile-but-weaker pattern in oil seen month after month since the end of June.

UK North Sea Brent finished Friday's session in New York trading at \$71.98 per barrel, up 38 cents, or 0.5%. For the week, the global benchmark for crude finished down 3.4%. With just Monday's trading left for the close of September, Brent was headed for an 8.7% loss on the month, extending the 2.5% slump from August and 6.5% drop from July.

West Texas Intermediate (WTI) settled at \$68.18, up 51 cents, or 0.8%, on the day. For the week, the US crude benchmark finished down 5.2%. For September, WTI was down 7.3% for the month, after the 5.6% slide in August and 4.5% in July.

Top oil importer China has doled out one stimulus package after another since the 2020 outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic, but none have brought lasting impact. Analysts are urging Beijing to focus on quality measures that could effectively restart China's economy and more fiscal measures are expected to be announced before the Chinese holidays starting on Oct. 1.

"Despite aggressive Chinese stimulus, concerns of oversupply from OPEC's plan to bring production back have pushed prices lower," analysts at Aegis Hedging said in a note to its clients in oil markets distributed on Friday.

OPEC, or the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries, will go ahead with plans to increase production by 180,000 bpd each month starting from December, two OPEC+ sources said.

A Financial Times report on Wednesday said the planned increase is due to the decision by OPEC head Saudi Arabia to abandon a \$100 oil price target and gain market share. The Saudis have repeatedly denied targeting a certain oil price.

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Arab Countries Ready to Guarantee Israel's Security - Jordanian Foreign Minister

UNITED NATIONS, September 27 (Sputnik) – Jordanian Foreign Minister Ayman Safadi said on Friday that all Arab countries are ready to guarantee the security of Israel if the latter ends the occupation of Palestinian lands and allows for the creation of the State of Palestine.

"We are here, members of the Muslim/Arab Committee, mandated by 57 Arabian/Muslim countries, and I can tell you here unequivocally, all of us are willing right now to guarantee the security of Israel in the context of Israel ending the occupation and allowing for the emergence of the Palestinian independent state," Safadi told reporters on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly.

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Saudi Foreign Minister Says Risk of Situation in Middle East Going Out of Control 'Real'

UNITED NATIONS, September 27 (Sputnik) - Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan Al Saud said on Friday that the risk the situation in the Middle East may spin out of control is "real."

"The risk of the situation spinning out of control is real. That is why we continue to push for a ceasefire," Al Saud told reporters.

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Biden Says US Needs to Get More Information About Israeli Strikes in Beirut

WASHINGTON, September 27 (Sputnik) – US President Joe Biden told reporters on Friday that his administration needs to get more information about the latest Israeli strikes in Beirut, Lebanon.

"The United States had no knowledge of or participation in the IDF action," the White House press pool quoted Biden as saying. "Need to get more information."

Earlier in the day, the Israel Defense Forces carried out what they called a "pinpoint" airstrike on the main headquarters of Hezbollah in Beirut, located under residential buildings in the center of the Dahiyeh neighborhood. Six buildings were turned into rubble as a result, according to Lebanese media.

The airstrike is believed to have targeted Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah.

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US-Led Coalition to Keep Conducting Anti-IS Operations in Syria Through September 2026

WASHINGTON, September 27 (Sputnik) - The US-led coalition will continue to conduct operations against the Islamic State terror group (IS, outlawed in Russia) on the territory of Syria from Iraq through at least September 2026, a senior US official said on Friday.

"The United States and the government of Iraq have reached an understanding to allow the coalition to continue to support counter-ISIS [IS] operations in Syria from Iraq throughout the second phase of the transition until at least September 2026 subject," the official told reporters.

While the Combined Joint Task Force - Operation Inherent Resolve's (CJTF-OIR) military mission in Iraq will end by September 2025, the coalition's mission in Syria will continue, the official said.

The official emphasized that the United States is not withdrawing its military personnel from Iraq.

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Global Coalition to Defeat IS to Continue Working Despite Iraq Transition - US Official

WASHINGTON, September 27 (Sputnik) - The Global Coalition to Defeat the Islamic State terror group (IS, outlawed in Russia) will continue its work despite the transition of the Combined Joint Task Force - Operation Inherent Resolve (CJTF-OIR) military mission in Iraq, a senior US official said on Friday.

"This transition is not the end of the Global Coalition to defeat ISIS. The coalition will continue to support long-term efforts against ISIS [IS] in the region and around the globe," the official said during a press briefing.

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First Phase of US-Iraqi Transition Plan to End Military Operations in Iraq - Official

WASHINGTON, September 27 (Sputnik) - The first phase of a transition plan agreed upon between the United States and Iraq will see the end of the Combined Joint Task Force - Operation Inherent Resolve (CJTF-OIR) military operations and the withdrawal of the coalition's military personnel from certain locations in the country, a senior US official said on Friday.

"In the first phase, we'll be concluding the global coalition's military mission in Iraq, the Combined Joint Task Force. Inherent Resolve, and ending the presence of coalition forces in certain locations in Iraq as mutually determined," the official said.

The transition period will begin this September and will conclude at the end of the same month in 2025, the official said.

The United States is not yet in a position to speculate on how many US troops would remain in Iraq, as this will be determined during the two countries' bilateral dialogue, the officials added.

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iraq transition is not end of global coalition to defeat IS terror group, coalition's work will continue in region and around globe - senior official

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US, Iraq Agreed on Two-Phase Transition Plan to End Operations in Iraq – Senior Official

WASHINGTON, September 27 (Sputnik) – The United States and Iraq have agreed on a two-phase transition plan to end military operations as part of the Combined Joint Task Force – Operation Inherent Resolve (CJTF-OIR) to defeat the Islamic State terrorist group (banned in Russia), a senior Biden administration official said on Friday.

"Today, we plan to announce that the United States and Iraq have decided on a two-phase transition plan for CJTF-OIR operations in Iraq," the official said during a press briefing.

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first phase of plan will see conclusion of coalition's military mission in Iraq, end presence of forces in certain locations - senior official

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biden says us needs to get more information about israeli strikes in beirut

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jordan's foreign minister says all of us are ready to guarantee Israel's security

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saudi foreign minister says risk of situation in middle east going out of control is real, we continue to push for ceasefire

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Israel Will Continue to 'Act Decisively' After Striking Beirut - Envoy to EU

UNITED NATIONS, September 27 (Sputnik) - Israeli Ambassador to the United Nations Danny Danon said on Friday that Israel will continue to "act decisively."

"Israel will continue to act decisively," Dannon told reporters.

Earlier on Friday, Israel carried out an airstrike on the main Hezbollah headquarters in Beirut in the center of the Dahiyeh neighborhood. Six residential buildings were destroyed in the attack, according to Lebanese media. The airstrike is believed to have targeted Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah.

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Israel's ambassador to un after strikes in beirut says israel will continue to act decisively

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Ukraine Will Use Artillery Shells Signed by US Democrats on Women, Children - Kennedy

WASHINGTON, September 27 (Sputnik) - Ukraine's Volodymyr Zelenskyy convinced Democrats in the United States to sign artillery shells that will be used on women and children, independent 2024 US presidential candidate Robert F. Kennedy Jr. said on Friday.

Earlier this week, Zelenskyy visited an arms factory in Pennsylvania alongside Democrats, where Pennsylvania Governor Josh Shapiro took a video of himself signing artillery shells during the event.

"The Democrats had done their own press conference, and you know what [Zelenskyy] got them to do? He got them to sign artillery shells. These are artillery shells that are going to be dropped on women and children," Kennedy said during a Trump campaign event in Michigan.

The US Democratic Party is no longer the party of peace, but rather, the party of war, Kennedy said.

However, Kennedy praised former US President Donald Trump's meeting with Zelenskyy earlier on Friday, where Trump said that the conflict in Ukraine must end at some point.

Kennedy ended his presidential bid in battleground states to aid Trump, although he will remain on the ballot in most states. Kennedy has repeatedly cited Trump's position on resolving the Ukraine conflict as a factor in his support.

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Trump After Meeting With Zelenskyy Says Harris Will Never Be Able to End Ukraine Conflict

WASHINGTON, September 27 (Sputnik) - Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump said on Friday after his political rival Kamala Harris met with Ukraine's Volodymyr Zelenskyy that she would never be able to end the conflict in Ukraine and it will only get worse if she gets elected in November.

"Comrade Harris will never be able to end the war, and hasn't. Nothing will change except the death and destruction will only get worse!" Trump said via a post on Truth Social.

Earlier on Friday, Trump said after meeting with Zelenskyy that he intends to visit Ukraine and that he believes a just peace deal can be negotiated at the right time.

Trump pointed out that his meeting with Zelenskyy was "great" and reiterated his claim that the Russia-Ukraine conflict will end quickly if he is reelected in November.

On Thursday, Trump published a letter that he allegedly received from Zelenskyy seeking a meeting in New York to discuss ways of settling the conflict in Ukraine.

Relations between Trump and Zelenskyy have worsened amid statements made by the latter during his visit to the United States, which has been going on for almost a week. Over the weekend, Zelenskyy visited a munitions factory in the town of Scranton with Pennsylvania's Democratic Governor Josh Shapiro and Democratic Senator Bob Casey. The meeting caused an avalanche of accusations of election interference.

In an interview with The New Yorker, Zelenskyy also criticized Trump's running mate J.D. Vance for allegedly being "too radical" and Trump himself as allegedly being unable to stop the war in

Ukraine despite his claims to the contrary.

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UN Says Worried About Civilian Impact of Strikes on Densely Populated Suburbs of Beirut

WASHINGTON, September 27 (Sputnik) – The United Nations is deeply worried about the civilian impact of Israeli massive strikes on Beirut's densely populated suburbs on Friday, UN Special Coordinator for Lebanon Jeanine Hennis said.

"Deeply alarmed and profoundly worried about the potential civilian impact of tonight's massive strikes on Beirut's densely populated southern suburbs. The city is still shaking with fear and panic widespread," Hennis said on X.

She called on all parties to urgently reach a ceasefire.

Earlier in the day, the Israel Defense Forces carried out what they called a "pinpoint" airstrike on the main headquarters of Hezbollah in Beirut, located under residential buildings in the center of the Dahiyeh neighborhood. Six buildings were turned into rubble as a result, according to Lebanese media.

The airstrike is believed to have targeted Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah.

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At Least 26 People Die In US Due to Hurricane Helene

WASHINGTON, September 27 (Sputnik) – Hurricane Helene has killed at least 26 people in the US, ABC News said on Friday.

Eleven people, including a first responder who helped others, were killed in the state of Georgia, and another seven deaths were reported in Florida, the report said.

Six people have died in South Carolina and one in North Carolina, according to the report.

A White House official said that US President Joe Biden was briefed on the latest impacts of Hurricane Helene.

Hurricane Helene weakened to a tropical storm after it made landfall in the United States late on Thursday.

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Trump Team Says Harris Visit to Border 'Political,' Can't Hide Failure to End Crisis

WASHINGTON, September 27 (Sputnik) - Vice President Kamala Harris' visit to the US southern border later on Friday is a political move that cannot hide her failures to end the border crisis, a Trump campaign spokesperson said.

"The American people will not be deceived by Kamala's political games - they are smart

enough to realize Kamala Harris has been in charge of the border for four years and she has failed," the spokespersons said in a press release.

President Joe Biden had appointed Harris to lead efforts to address the record levels of migration seen on the US southern border under the current administration.

"Kamala's last-minute trip to the border and empty calls for more security 39 days before the election will not rewrite the past 44 months of chaos, crime, and bloodshed caused by her open border policy," the Trump campaign added.

The Trump campaign noted that Harris has previously fought against more funding for US Border Patrol, called to abolish Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), and voted against construction of additional border wall under the Trump administration.

Illegal migration crossings on the US southern border has gone through three consecutive record-breaking years since President Joe Biden became president in January 2021, totaling some 8 million illegal encounters during that period, according to CBP data.

However, US media reported that the Biden administration is expected to soon cement a policy it implemented to restrict asylum for illegal migrants, which has helped deter the influx of migrants arriving on the US southern border in recent months.

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un 'alarmed' by potential civilian impact of tonight's strikes on Beirut's densely populated suburbs, urges ceasefire - Coordinator for Lebanon

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More Than 3,600 Flights Canceled, Delayed in US as Hurricane Helene Advances

WASHINGTON, September 27 (Sputnik) - More than 3,600 flights have been canceled or delayed in the United States as Hurricane Helene hit several US states, the portal FlightAware.com reported on Friday.

"Total cancellations within, into or out of the United States today: 917," the portal said.

Almost 2,750 flights have been delayed, it added.

The airport in Charlotte, North Carolina, has experienced the most significant changes in its schedule as almost 400 flights have been cancelled and about 600 others delayed, the portal said.

The Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport in Georgia experienced some 170 cancellations and more than 430 delays, the portal said.

More than 200 flights had to be rescheduled in Tampa, Florida, the portal added.

As of Friday noon, more than 4 million customers have no electricity in South Carolina and North Carolina, Georgia and Florida, according to Poweroutage.us.

Hurricane Helene weakened to a tropical storm after it made landfall in the United States late on Thursday. The storm caused at least six casualties, according to media reports.

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US Still Assessing Situation After Beirut Strikes, Getting Details From Israel - Pentagon

WASHINGTON, September 27 (Sputnik) - The United States is still assessing the situation after massive strikes on Beirut and will continue calls with Israel to gather more details, Pentagon spokesperson Sabrina Singh said on Friday.

"We are still assessing the situation. We are going to continue to have our calls with the Israelis to get more details," Singh said during a press briefing.

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Biden Was Briefed on Israeli Strikes in Beirut Friday - White House Press Pool

WASHINGTON, September 27 (Sputnik) - US President Joe Biden was briefed about the Israeli strikes that took place in Beirut earlier in the day, the White House press pool reported on Friday.

A White House official told reporters that Biden was briefed on the strikes in Beirut by his national security team.

The Pentagon said the United States had no advanced warning about the strikes.

Earlier in the day, Israel Defense Forces (IDF) spokesman Daniel Hagari said that IDF had carried out a pinpoint airstrike on the main headquarters of Hezbollah in Beirut, which is located under residential buildings in the center of the Dahiyeh neighborhood. Al Arabiya broadcaster reported that the Israeli army tried to eliminate Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah, but the attempt failed.

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Pentagon Says No US Force Posture Changes Following IDF Strike on Beirut

WASHINGTON, September 27 (Sputnik) - There are currently no planned changes in the posture of US armed forces in the Middle East following the latest escalation caused by an Israeli Defense Force (IDF) airstrike on the main headquarters of Lebanese Shia movement Hezbollah, Pentagon spokesperson Sabrina Singh said on Friday.

"No force posture changes to announce at this time," Singh said during a press briefing when asked whether the latest escalation would make the US move more air, ground and naval assets to the region.

Earlier in the day, Israel Defense Forces (IDF) spokesman Daniel Hagari said that IDF had carried out a pinpoint airstrike on the main headquarters of Hezbollah in Beirut, which is located under residential buildings in the center of the Dahiyeh neighborhood. Al Arabiya broadcaster reported that the Israeli army tried to eliminate Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah, but an

attempt failed.

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biden was briefed on strikes in Beirut - white house press pool

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US Does Not Believe IDF Ground Incursion Into Lebanon 'Right Path' Forward - Pentagon

WASHINGTON, September 27 (Sputnik) - The United States does not believe an Israeli Defense Force (IDF) ground incursion into Lebanon to confront Lebanese Shia movement Hezbollah is the right path forward, Pentagon spokesperson Sabrina Singh said on Friday.

"We're still assessing, and that remains to be seen. We certainly don't think a ground incursion is... the right path forward," Singh said during a press briefing.

The situation on the Israeli-Lebanese border worsened after the start of Israel's military operation in the Gaza Strip in October 2023. The Israel Defense Forces and Hezbollah fighters exchange fire almost daily in areas along the border.

The Pentagon on Wednesday said the US does not consider a potential Israeli ground incursion into Lebanon imminent. The US military also denied providing any support to Israeli operations with respect to Lebanon.

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New York Mayor Eric Adams Pleads Not Guilty to Corruption Charges - Lawyer

WASHINGTON, September 27 (Sputnik) - New York Mayor Eric Adams pleaded not guilty on Friday to corruption charges related to allegedly accepting bribes from a Turkish businessman, his attorney Alex Spiro told reporters outside the courtroom.

"The Mayor entered a plea of not guilty. He's innocent," Spiro said.

Adams on Thursday became the first serving mayor of New York City to face criminal charges with a five-count indictment, including for allegedly taking bribes worth some \$100,000 in luxury travel and other benefits from Turkey and millions of dollars in unlawful campaign money, which he denied.

The US Justice Department said Adams' decade-long pattern of abuse allegedly began when he was elected president of the Brooklyn borough in New York in 2014 and accelerated as he embarked on his mayoral campaign in 2021.

Benefits received by the mayor included routinely upgraded business-class travel to France, China, Sri Lanka, India, Hungary, and Turkey, stays in opulent hotels, meals at high-end restaurants and luxurious entertainment — all often paid by a certain Turkish businessman, with tacit knowledge sometimes of the government in Ankara, for favors that Adams would repay

with the influence he held through New York's top office, Williams said.

The 64-year-old Adams faces a maximum sentence of 45 years in prison if convicted on all five counts.

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us still assessing situation in wake of massive strikes on Beirut, will have calls with Israelis to get more details - pentagon

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Pentagon Says No US Ships Damaged, Personnel Injured in Latest Houthi Attacks

WASHINGTON, September 27 (Sputnik) - The Defense Department confirms that no US ships have been hit or damaged and no US personnel injured in the latest Houthi attacks, Pentagon deputy spokesperson Sabrina Singh said on Friday.

"I can confirm that no US ships were damaged or hit. There were no injuries to US personnel," Singh said during a press briefing.

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Pentagon Amid Beirut Bombings Says US Will Continue to Call for Diplomatic Solution

WASHINGTON, September 27 (Sputnik) - In response to bombings in Beirut, the US will persist in urging a diplomatic resolution to the ongoing Middle East conflict, Pentagon spokesperson Sabrina Singh said on Friday.

"We're going to continue to urge for a diplomatic solution," Singh said during a press briefing.

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pentagon says no force posture changes to announce amid Beirut strikes

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US Not Involved in IDF Strike on Beirut, Had No Advance Warning - Pentagon

WASHINGTON, September 27 (Sputnik) - The United States was not involved, nor did it receive advance warning on the Israeli Defense Force (IDF) airstrike on the main headquarters of Lebanese Shia movement Hezbollah, Pentagon spokesperson Sabrina Singh said on Friday.

"Secretary [Lloyd] Austin spoke by phone earlier today to his Israeli counterpart Minister [Yoav] Gallant," Singh said during a press briefing. "The United States was not involved in this operation, and we had no advanced warning."

Earlier in the day, Israel Defense Forces (IDF) spokesman Daniel Hagari said that IDF had carried out a pinpoint airstrike on the main headquarters of Hezbollah in Beirut, which is located under residential buildings in the center of the Dahiyeh neighborhood. Al Arabiya broadcaster reported that the Israeli army tried to eliminate Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah, but an attempt failed.

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US Sanctions Seven Iranian Nationals Over Alleged US Election Interference - Treasury

(Adds detail to lede, changes para 2, adds para 3 onward)

WASHINGTON, September 27 (Sputnik) - The US Treasury imposed sanctions on seven Iranian nationals on Friday over allegedly interfering in the 2020 and 2024 US elections, according to a release.

"Today, the Department of the Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) designated seven individuals as part of a coordinated US government response to Iran's operations that sought to influence or interfere in the 2024 and 2020 presidential elections," the release stated.

The treasury alleged that Iranian state-sponsored actors undertook a variety of malicious cyber activities, such as hack-and-leak operations and spear-phishing, in an attempt to undermine confidence in the US election processes and institutions and to interfere with political campaigns.

Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) member Masoud Jalili was sanctioned for alleged interference in the 2024 election. The treasury alleged that since May, he and other IRGC members compromised several accounts of officials and advisors to one of the presidential campaigns and leaked stolen data to members of the media and other people to influence the election. Jalili also allegedly used spear-phishing in an attempt to compromise a former US official's personal accounts in 2022.

The Department of Justice also unsealed an indictment charging Jalili and two IRGC co-conspirators. The Department of State is offering up to \$10 million for information on Jalili and his two associates.

Six employees of Iranian cybersecurity company Emennet Pasargad were also sanctioned for alleged attempts to interfere in the 2020 presidential election. They allegedly obtained or attempted to obtain voter information from US state election websites, sent threatening emails to intimidate voters, and crafted and disseminated disinformation about the election and election security. They include Ali Mahdavian; Fatemeh Sadeghi; Elaheh Yazdi; Sayyed Mehdi Rahimi Hajjiabadi; Mohammad Hosein Abdollahi; and Rahmatollah Askarizadeh.

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pentagon amid beirut bombings says us will continue to call for diplomatic solution in mideast

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us was not involved in Beirut bombings, had no advanced warning - Pentagon

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Without US, EU Assistance Ukraine Would Have to Surrender - Borrell

WASHINGTON, September 27 (Sputnik) - Ukraine would need to surrender to Russia without the help of the European Union and the United States, EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Josep Borrell said on Friday.

"We play a crucial role in Ukraine, yes. Without you and without us, Ukraine would have to surrender," Borrell said in remarks at the Council on Foreign Relations.

However, the United States and the European Union cannot determine when there will be a final resolution of the conflict in Ukraine, Borrell said.

Earlier on Friday, former US president and 2024 Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump said ahead of a meeting with Ukraine's Volodymyr Zelenskyy that the conflict has to end at some point.

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UN Trying to Gather More Information About Israel's Attack in Beirut - Spokesperson

WASHINGTON, September 27 (Sputnik) - The United Nations is trying to gather more information about Israel's attack in Beirut, Lebanon, UN spokesperson Stephane Dujarric said on Friday.

"We are trying to gather more information as we speak, as soon as we have a reaction for you we will share it," Dujarric said during a press briefing.

Earlier on Friday, Israel struck the central headquarters of the Lebanese movement Hezbollah in Beirut. A series of massive explosions leveled multiple buildings in the Lebanese capital, sending clouds of smoke into the sky.

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US Charges Three Iranians in Alleged Hack of Trump Campaign - Unsealed Indictment

WASHINGTON, September 27 (Sputnik) - The US Justice Department has charged three Iranians for their alleged involvement in a hack and leak attack against the former president's

campaign, an indictment unsealed on Friday showed.

"[Masoud Jalili Seyyed Ali Aghamiri and Yasar Balaghi] prepared for and engaged in a wide-ranging hacking campaign," said US authorities in the indictment.

The court documents allege that the trio acted on behalf of the Iranian government and offered news organizations data files stolen from the email accounts of Trump advisers.

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un trying to gather more information about israel's attack in beirut - spokesperson

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UN Watches Developments Unfolding in Lebanon 'With Great Alarm' - Spokesperson

UNITED NATIONS, September 27 (Sputnik) - The United Nations is watching the developments in Beirut, Lebanon, with great alarm, UN spokesperson Stephane Dujarric said on Friday.

"We [the UN] are watching the developments unfolding in Beirut with great alarm," Dujarric said during a press briefing.

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UN watching developments unfolding in beirut with great alarm - Dujarric

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US Sanctions Seven Iranian Nationals Over Alleged US Election Interference – Treasury

WASHINGTON, September 27 (Sputnik) – The US Treasury imposed sanctions on seven Iranian nationals on Friday over allegedly interfering in the US elections, according to a registry notice.

Six nationals are linked to Emennet Pasargard, an Iranian company allegedly hired by the Iranian government to interfere in the US elections, and one national is linked to the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps.

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us charges three Iranians in alleged hack of trump campaign - unsealed indictment

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Federal Reserve's Key Inflation Gauge Just 2 Points Off 2% Target in August

WASHINGTON, September 27 (Sputnik) - The Federal Reserve's preferred inflation gauge was just two points away in August from the US central bank's 2% per year target, according to data on Friday that appeared to herald victory for restrictive US monetary policy and interest rates.

The Personal Consumption Expenditures (PCE) Price Index grew by 2.2% per year last month, the slowest it has since February 2021, the US Commerce Department said. The growth was even lower than the 2.3% forecast by economists on Wall Street, after the 2.5% expansion in July.

"All quiet on the inflation front," Chris Larkin, managing director of trading and investing at E-Trade, Morgan Stanley's online trading unit, said in remarks carried by CNBC. "Add today's PCE Price Index to the list of economic data landing in a sweet spot. Inflation continues to keep its head down, and while economic growth may be slowing, there's no indication it's falling off a cliff."

The US economy grew 3% per year in the second quarter of 2024, unchanged from the previous quarter and a notch above Wall Street's 2.9% projection, Commerce Department data showed.

The Fed cut US interest rates last week for the first time in four years, dropping 50 basis points to bring the peak rate to 5%. Prior to that, rates topped off at a two-decade high of 5.5% due to inflation on a tear from the trillions of dollars of relief spending and breakdown of supply chains caused by the coronavirus pandemic measures.

The Fed has signaled that it is open to cutting another 50 to 100 basis points from rates before the year-end if inflation continues to decline and the job market remains in peril.

The Federal Reserve's Summary of Economic Projections showed last week that the forecast for unemployment among Americans had been raised to 4.4% this year, from a previous 4%. The United States added just 142,000 non-farm payrolls in August, some 23,000 jobs below Wall Street estimates. In comparison, non-farm payrolls grew by 315,000 in April.

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Trump After Meeting With Zelenskyy Says He Will Visit Ukraine

NEW YORK, September 27 (Sputnik) - Former US President Donald Trump on Friday after meeting with Volodymyr Zelensky said he will visit Ukraine.

"I will," Trump said when invited by Zelenskyy to visit Ukraine. "It's a beautiful country, beautiful weather, beautiful everything."

Trump also mentioned that he believes a fair peace deal can be negotiated at the right time. The Republican presidential candidate added that he has his own ideas for a peace plan but it is too early to predict what a peace plan could look like.

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Trump Says 'Very Well' Could Meet With Zelenskyy Again

WASHINGTON, September 27 (Sputnik) - Former US President Donald Trump said on Friday that he could meet again with Ukraine's Volodymyr Zelenskyy to discuss bringing an end to the conflict with Russia.

"Could very well happen," Trump told Fox News after a meeting with Zelenskyy, when asked whether he will meet with him again in the future.

The Ukraine conflict is a "complicated puzzle," Trump said. However, Trump said that he will solve the conflict and let people get on with their lives.

Ahead of his meeting with Zelenskyy, Trump said that the Ukraine conflict "has to end" at some point.

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Mexican Foreign Minister Barcena Says Mulls Running to Be Next UN Secretary-General

UNITED NATIONS, September 27 (Sputnik) - Mexican Foreign Affairs Minister Alicia Barcena on Friday confirmed that she is considering running to be the next secretary-general of the United Nations.

"There are so many things that need to be done," Barcena during a press conference at the United Nations. "Of course, if I feel that I can [run], I probably do, but I don't think I am ready to answer your question with just 'yes' or 'no.'"

Barcena said it is now time for South America and the Caribbean to put forward their candidates, but also noted that it is expected that a woman would assume the position of UN secretary-general for the first time.

"There are other women that are very capable. I think it's a matter of who could be the best person to really ... address the crucial problems of the United Nations today," Barcena said.

It is important that the candidate has the ability to address the critical issues facing the United Nations, including a reform of the UN Security Council and securing sufficient funding and ensuring efficiency in the work of the world body, Barcena added.

The election for a new UN secretary-general will be held in 2026.

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trump says another meeting with zelenskyy could very well happen

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Trump Says Ukraine Conflict 'Has to End' at Some Point

WASHINGTON, September 27 (Sputnik) - The conflict in Ukraine must end at some point, former US President Donald Trump said on Friday.

"It has to end at some point," Trump said ahead of a meeting with Ukraine's Volodymyr Zelenskyy.

Trump reiterated that, if elected president in November, he will work with Russia and Ukraine to resolve the conflict before he formally takes office in January.

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Zelenskyy Arrives for Talks With Trump, After Meeting Biden and Harris

NEW YORK, September 27 (Sputnik) - Volodymyr Zelenskyy has arrived at Trump Tower in midtown New York City for talks with former US President and current Republican presidential nominee Donald Trump.

Zelenskyy met with US President Joe Biden and Vice-President Kamala Harris at the White House on Thursday to discuss his so-called "victory plan," which he hopes will "force Russia to peace."

Trump agreed to a last-minute meeting with the Ukrainian leader after representatives from his presidential campaign had earlier said a meeting between the two was extremely unlikely.

Zelenskyy's stance on "forcing Russia to peace" is a fatal mistake and will inevitably have consequences for Kiev, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said earlier this week.

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trump while meeting zelenskyy says ukraine conflict has to end at some point

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