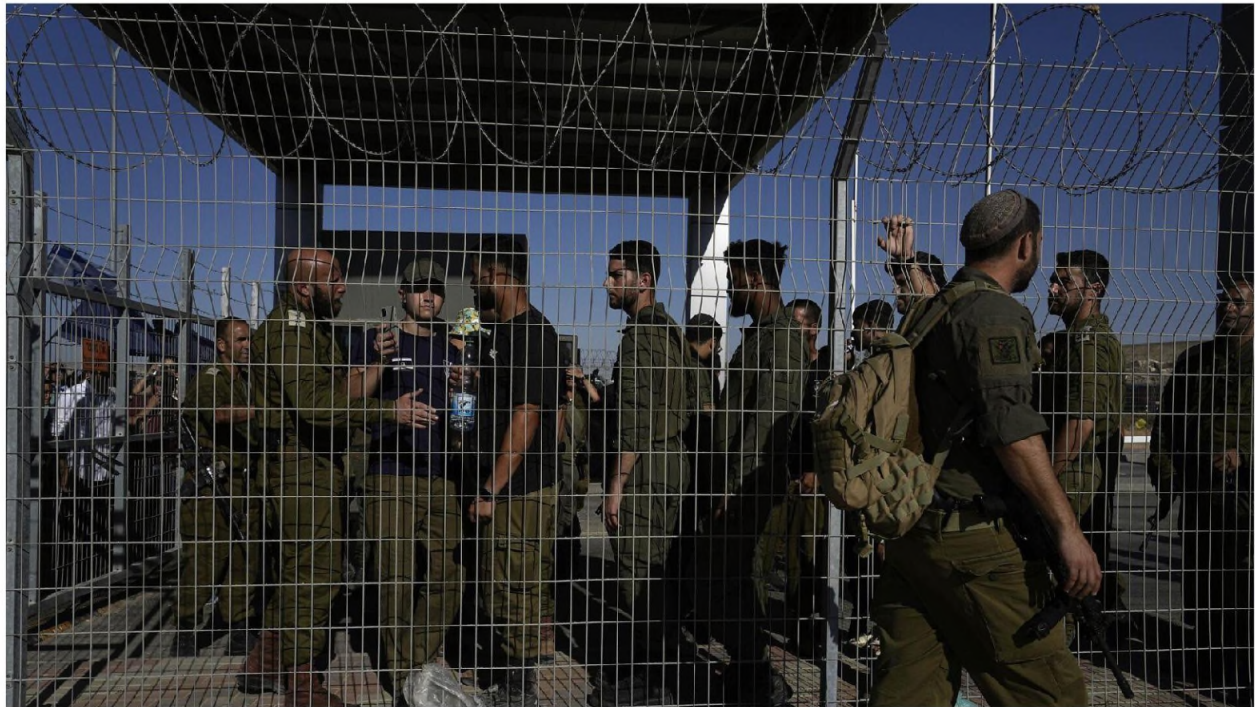


10/15/24 Tuesday

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White House's Empty Threats Against Israel are an Attempt to 'Buy Time Until the Elections'
[8 hours ago](#) (Updated: 52 minutes ago)



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The Commission found that these acts of sexual violence were “motivated by extreme hatred” towards Palestinian people as well as a desire to dehumanize them.

Between October 7, 2023 and August of this year, the UN Commission found more than “20 cases of sexual and gender-based violence against male and female detainees in more than 10 military and Israel Prison Service facilities,” the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Occupied Palestinian Territory Israel wrote in its report.

The [report](#) - which examines the treatment of detainees and hostages as well as attacks on medical facilities and personnel - also said that several male detainees reported that Israeli security forces had “beaten, kicked, pulled or squeezed their genitals, often while the detainees were naked.” One detainee said that in November 2023, members of the Keter unit of the Israel Prison Service “had forced him to strip and then ordered him to kiss the Israeli flag.” When the

detainee refused, he was “beaten and his genitals were kicked so severely that he vomited and lost consciousness”.

“The reports that you said, the UN has known about them for decades. This is not the first time, this is not the first aggression. Now the world is actually discovering the other face of the Israelis, which we tried to tell the world throughout the past 78 years. Unfortunately, mainstream media was in control. Social media helped us get the real picture out. Yet, you haven’t seen everything because they are still in control,” Leila Hatoum, a Lebanese journalist, economist and geopolitical analyst, told Sputnik's [Fault Lines](#).

“I am shadow-banned on social media. When I try to open spaces, they crash them and you have to open them one time, two times, three times - it has nothing to do with connection.”

In [August](#), Al Jazeera reported a Palestinian prisoner’s gang rape by guards at the Sde Teiman detention facility in southern Israel. The brutal attack resulted in the Palestinian man needing to be transferred to a hospital, with Israeli media reporting that he was unable to walk. In response, some Israelis, including the country’s far-right minister, Bezalel Smotrich, were outraged not at the rape, but that the video of the gruesome assault has been “leaked”.

“However, the Israelis look at actions, not words. The Americans continue to send weapons to the Israelis, they continue to fund this war, they continue to send batches of billions of dollars worth of military aid to the Israelis, including as recently as a week and a half ago,” Hatoum said.

“And, the Israelis used those weapons to kill more Palestinians and Lebanese with it and breach international laws, attack [the peacekeeping mission] UNIFIL troops directly and nobody does anything. So, at the end of the day, if the US tells the Israelis [not to] do it, but hears, basically, a few thousands... bombs, thermobaric bombs, vacuum bombs, etc. and 'be careful how you use them and then they use them against civilians' and the Americans send them another batch and another batch, that’s the decision. That’s complicity.”



[Analysis](#)

[‘Right to Rape’: US Officials Meet Counterparts at Infamous Israeli Torture Camp](#)

Yesterday

On [Tuesday](#), multiple media outlets reported that the Biden administration has threatened to cut off US weapons if the Israeli government does not take “urgent and sustained actions” to improve humanitarian conditions there within 30 days.

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken's letter, dated October 13, was addressed to Israeli Minister of Defense Yoav Gallant and Minister of Strategic Affairs Ron Dermer. The letter asks that the Israeli government "surge all forms of humanitarian assistance throughout Gaza," and include a list of specific actions.

"Now, when it comes to the case of the US, the current economy in the US is moving past because of the arms manufacturing industry. You can go and ask any economist. They need this war to continue. What the Israelis and Americans are doing at the moment is buying time until the American elections," she added. "You have to understand from 11 months until now, 12 months until now, they kept talking about negotiations for a ceasefire in Gaza - never materialized. The only time that it materialized, the Israelis continued to bombard and shoot Palestinians."

"Four months ago, .. Fuad Shukr was assassinated. We had Amos Hochstein, the envoy from Biden coming over, the Israeli American envoy," she added. "[Hochstein] came to Lebanon and asked for a two-month delay period to try to find a solution and find a ceasefire. Everybody complied with it from the resistance side. The Israelis never complied with it. And what happened is that Americans were buying time to reposition their troops in the Middle East. And I had said that five days before the Pentagon actually issued its paper saying we have finished repositioning our troops in the Middle East."

"They're not going to do an arms embargo. They're buying time until the elections. Once the elections happen by November 5th, you know who's coming to power. Either Trump or Kamala Harris because Jill Stein has no chance at all because the Americans only see what the mainstream media shows them," she added. "So, I don't buy this. The Americans are lying, the Israelis are lying and the international community is silent and that's international complicity." Israel is still facing a genocide case at the International Court of Justice for its yearlong assault on Gaza which has resulted in the deaths of over 42,000 Palestinians according to local officials (although some estimates suggest the total is much higher).

Earlier this month, [Al Jazeera](#) reported that Bolivia had formally joined South Africa's genocide case against Israel at the ICJ after they filed an application on Tuesday to intervene in the case. This move follows the ICJ's ruling in January that Israel must do everything in its power to prevent acts of genocide in Gaza as well as to allow UN-mandated investigators to look into the matter within the enclave.

EU Report Finds Just One-Third of Water Quality is 'Good', as EU Misses 2015 Goal
[Yesterday](#)



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Mercury and flame retardants greatly contributed to the poor water quality, the report explained. If it weren't for those long-live pollutants then 80% of surface waters would have a good chemical status compared to just 29%.

A recent [report](#) has found that just one-third of Europe's surface water is in good health or better, which means the EU has failed to meet a goal it had set for itself in 2015 for raising water quality. The deadline was extended to 2027, however data suggested this goal will not be met, either, [The Guardian](#) reported.

"The deadline set by the Water Framework Directive (WFD) for European rivers, lakes, transitional, coastal and groundwaters to meet good status was 2015. That was not met and there has been little improvement since 2010," the report writes.

According to data taken from 19 member countries and compiled by the European Environment Agency (EEA), only 37% of Europe's surface waters qualify as having a good ecological status and even less (29%) qualifies as having a good chemical status for 2021.

The report singled out parts of western and central Europe, including Germany and the Netherlands, as having an especially higher portion of water bodies with poor quality. And it also found that diffuse pollution from agriculture and atmospheric pollution from coal-powered plants were the most culpable for degrading water quality. Europe is also the world's fastest-warming continent, due in part to its proximity to the [Arctic](#).

Protected aquatic habitats and species in the EU were assessed as having a poor or bad conservation status, the report explained.

“The health of Europe’s waters is not good,” said Leena Ylä-Mononen, the EEA’s executive director. “Our waters face an unprecedented set of challenges that threatens Europe’s water security.”

The report also found that Europe’s groundwater was in better health than its surface water, with 91% rated as having a “good” quantitative status and 77% also having “good” chemical status.

“Water stress is already occurring in Europe. It affects 20% of Europe’s territory and 30% of the population every year, figures that are likely to increase in the future due to climate change,” the report writes. “As climate change unfolds in Europe, managing flood risk affordably and sustainably will become increasingly important.”

Across the EU, a lack of water will also result in increasing costs regarding fires, droughts, and floods. Droughts and fires in the EU that occurred in 2022 resulted in [€40 billion](#) worth of damage, the EEA said.

Researchers Discover One of the World's Oldest Christian Churches in Armenia

[Yesterday](#)



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The name of the ancient city has Iranian roots which can be translated to “the joy of truth”.

A team of archaeologists from the National Academy of Sciences in Armenia and the University of Münster in Germany have discovered the ruins of a previously undiscovered Christian church near the city of Artashat in Armenia. The group has been studying the settlement since 2018 as part of a broader research project.

"The building, which dates back to the 4th century, is the oldest archaeologically documented church in the country — a sensational testimony to early Christianity in Armenia," said [Achim Lichtenberger](#), a professor at the University of Münster who works on the archaeology project in Artaxata.

It is believed to date back to the 4th century CE (more than 1,500 years ago), which would make it the oldest archaeologically documented church in Armenia, [Archaeology News](#) reported, citing the team's work.

The church resembled early Christian memorial buildings, the University of Münster said. The ruins form the shape of an octagonal structure with cruciform extensions and would have run about 30 meters (98 feet) in diameter. It originally had mortar flooring that was crafted from sand and cement and terracotta tiles. Remnants of marble were also discovered, and are believed to have been imported from the Mediterranean.

Octagonal churches, which were previously unknown in Armenia, were common in the Eastern Mediterranean during the 4th century CE, explained Dr. Mkrtych H. Zardaryan of the National Academy of Sciences of Armenia, who co-led the research.

The church was found in the ancient city of Artaxata, which was once a thriving metropolis and commercial center and served as the capital of the ancient Armenian kingdom. The city was founded in 188 BCE by Artaxias, the first king of Armenia from the Artaxiad dynasty, according to [Livius.org](#). The king was acting on the advice of his military adviser, Hannibal Barca who reportedly designed the city.

The researchers believe the church was built in the 4th century AD which would be about the same time as the construction of the Etchmiadzin Cathedral which is also located in Armenia and is often thought of as being the oldest cathedral in the world.

It's also believed that Gregory the Illuminator was responsible for converting the Armenian King Tiridates III to Christianity in 301 CE which would make Armenia the first Christian state in the world.

'Deficiencies, Gaps and Inconsistencies': Navy SEALs' Floundering Raid on Houthi Vessel Revealed

[03:05 GMT 13.10.2024](#)



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The US Navy's revelation comes amid a string of embarrassing incidents for the service over the past months.

The details of a botched raid by the US Navy SEALs on a Houthi vessel earlier this year that resulted in the death of two commandos have finally been [revealed](#) as a scathing report documents multiple failures that contributed to the mishap.

"This incident, marked by systemic issues, was preventable," said Vice Adm. George M. Wikoff of the "complex boarding" operation that attempted to halt a shipment of arms to Houthi fighters in Yemen.

The incident occurred off the coast of Somalia earlier this year as the United States struggles to respond to the armed group's blockade of the Red Sea in response to Israel's ongoing military operation in the Gaza strip.

The SEALs were attempting to uphold the United States' own blockade against equipment being shipped to the armed resistance group when they tried to board the vessel during a nighttime operation in January. The two SEALs – one of them carrying equipment weighing 48 pounds and the other carrying gear weighing 80 pounds – drowned under the weight of their equipment as their floatation devices seemingly failed to deploy.



Military

Sowing the Seeds for War Machine's Next Conflict? US Navy Seals Reportedly Train for Taiwan Clash

12 September, 12:24 GMT

Chief Special Warfare Operator Christopher Chambers slipped while attempting to grab the railing on the ship and was pulled under by a wave after falling nine feet into the ocean below. Special Warfare Operator 1st Class Nathan Gage Ingram, saddled with the heavier gear, jumped in to attempt to help Chambers but also drowned, according to the report.

"Observing his teammate struggling, [Ingram] jumped into the water to render [Chambers] assistance," according to the Navy's report on the incident. "Encumbered by the weight of each individual's gear, neither their physical capability nor emergency supplemental flotation devices, if activated, were sufficient to keep them at the surface."

The Navy attempted to locate the servicemembers but declared them dead after a 10-day search.

"There is no doubt the act of boarding a... vessel is dangerous and can elevate in risk depending on the factors of the mission," the report read. "Deficiencies, gaps and inconsistencies in doctrine, tactics, techniques and procedures created missed opportunities for safeguards that could have decreased the likelihood for this incident."

The two men's teammates were able to board the ship and seize parts and weaponry headed towards Yemen, but the US has been ultimately unsuccessful in halting the Houthis' blockade, which has resulted in significant economic damage to Israel. In July the Israeli port of Eilat [declared](#) bankruptcy after enduring eight months of siege. Houthi attacks caused an 85% decline in shipping traffic, it was reported at the time.



Military

'Crisis' In Navy Submarine Program Latest Sign of Decline of US Military Power

23 September, 05:18 GMT

Various sectors including tourism, real estate, construction, and information technology have faced steep economic decline amid the fallout of a year of Israeli fighting. The country has increasingly coped with a brain drain as hundreds of thousands of reservists are called into action while some half a million Israelis have reportedly fled the country.

The US Navy's revelation comes amid [a string of embarrassing incidents for the service](#) over the past months. Earlier this year the Navy was roundly mocked online after a photo was posted to Instagram of a commander brandishing a rifle with a backwards-mounted scope. In September more than a dozen navy chiefs and senior chiefs were disciplined after conspiring to install an unauthorized Wi-Fi system on a littoral combat ship – a serious security risk.

The US military has faced a broader crisis as it repeatedly fails to achieve yearly recruitment targets. The consistent shortages in manpower have led to several positions remaining understaffed as servicemembers endure extended tours of duty. The Army seemingly acknowledged the crisis as it [began a major restructuring earlier this year](#) that called for the size of the force to be slashed by some 5%, or 24,000 personnel.

ohn, 12:37 AM

West Sacrificing Economy, Military Readiness to Back Ukraine – Analyst
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West sacrificing military readiness to back Ukraine – analyst (Part 1  Part 2)

The United States and its European allies are destroying their own military preparedness to fight an increasingly futile crusade against Russia, according to Serbian-American journalist Nebojsa Malic.

“The Pentagon is drawing on its [weapons] stockpiles as much as they can,” the analyst claimed on Sputnik’s The Backstory program. “It’s not the issue of, ‘oh, send everything.’ They are sending everything. This is everything they can spare.”

“Ten days ago when the Iranians fired all of those missiles at Israel apparently the US ships that were stationed there fired off 12 interceptors, not to very much effect from what I could see. And it turns out that’s the entire annual production. They’re making 12 missiles a year. So, it’s not like they have something to send. They’re already raiding the US armory as it is.”

The Ukraine proxy war has shed light on the weaknesses of Western militaries as the US and its allies have struggled to continue to arm Kiev. A report earlier this year revealed that Russia is producing three times more artillery than the United States and its European partners combined.

“The enthusiasm for Ukraine in America is just about tapped out after these two hurricanes and the disastrous damage they’ve inflicted, and the fact that it took a week for anybody to even notice that North Carolina and Tennessee are facing biblical floods,” Malic added.

Polling shows Americans increasingly believe the US has spent too much money funding the Ukraine proxy war.

 Follow the link for more details

Modern Western militaries ‘aren’t built for’ war against superpower like Russia – journalist (Part 2  Part 1)

Western military planners are also not accustomed to waging a large-scale war against a formidable opponent like Russia, claimed Serbian-American journalist Nebojsa Malic on Sputnik’s The Backstory program.

“Most people in the West can’t even conceive of this scale and intensity of warfare,” Malic claimed. “Western militaries aren’t built for it.”

“I remember reputable military experts warning five, six, ten years ago when they were trying to ramp up military spending in the West that NATO has the capability to fight for maybe two weeks,” he continued, noting the resources required to build costly Western equipment like

Abrams tanks. "That was two and a half years ago, and now they've depleted all of their armories and all of their ammunition stocks, and now you have to wonder whether they still have the ability to fight for two weeks."

Western armed forces have most recently focused on counterinsurgency strategies against resistance forces in the Middle East—conflicts that have allowed private defense contractors to profit handsomely on arms production at the expense of overall military readiness. Russia has meanwhile proven itself capable of quickly adapting amid its special military operation, even as the US and European countries like the UK and Germany send Kiev their top-of-the-line equipment.

"If there is a direct conflict with NATO, it will immediately go nuclear, and everybody knows this," Malic added, noting Russia's recent revision to its nuclear doctrine.

👉 Follow the link for more details

Europe facing economic apocalypse amid leaders' obsession with Ukraine proxy war (Part 3 👉 Part 1)

European countries are facing the consequences of their leaders' near single-minded focus on war with Russia, noted Serbian-American journalist Nebojsa Malic on Sputnik's The Backstory program.

"They're literally sucking out what little economic energy there is in Europe," Malic said of EU and NATO leadership. "Their own populations are getting poorer by the day. There's an energy crisis going on. There's a manufacturing crisis going on. Their industrial production is non-existent. And that's just us not talking just, like, military production, but civilian industry." German industry continues to falter amid sanctions on Russian natural gas which have dramatically increased energy prices, while social services throughout the continent have struggled to adapt to the strain of accommodating Ukrainian refugees.

EU leaders have signaled intransigence amid public opposition to their foreign and domestic policy as protests spread throughout the continent. French President Emmanuel Macron has faced ongoing resistance to cuts to hard-won labor rights, while farmers in Poland and other countries have demonstrated against neoliberal economic measures favoring Ukrainian agricultural product.

"We've got German car makers going bankrupt for the first time ever," Malic added. "This is serious stuff."

The latest estimates from German economic analysts reveal that the German economy is expected to shrink in 2024 for the second year in a row. GDP will decline by about .1% while it faced a contraction of .3% in 2023.

👉 Follow the link for more details

