

European leaders back Denmark after Trump claims on Greenland

Washington's military intervention in Venezuela has reignited fears



Denmark's Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen, Greenland's Head of Government Jens-Frederik Nielsen and (small pictures in the middle, clockwise, from top L) Germany's Chancellor Friedrich Merz, Italy's Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni, Spain's Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez, Poland's Prime Minister Donald Tusk, France's President Emmanuel Macron and Britain's Prime Minister Keir Starmer.

- **NATO has made clear that the Arctic region is a priority**
- **Trump quipped on Sunday that "we'll worry about Greenland in about two months"**

AFP | Berlin, Germany

A group of European leaders yesterday underlined their support for Denmark after US President Donald Trump again voiced designs on its autonomous Arctic territory of Greenland.

The leaders of France, Britain, Germany, Italy, Poland and

Spain as well as Denmark said that sovereignty, territorial integrity and the inviolability of borders were "universal principles, and we will not stop defending them".

Washington's military intervention in Venezuela has reignited fears about Trump's designs on Greenland, which has untapped rare earth deposits and could be a vital player as polar ice melts, opening up new shipping routes.

Greenland is on the shortest route for missiles between Russia and the United States, and Washington already has a military base there.

With the situation in Venezuela more pressing, Trump quipped on Sunday that "we'll worry about Greenland in about two months".

The European leaders' joint statement said: "Arctic security remains a key priority for Europe and it is critical for international and transatlantic security."

"NATO has made clear that the Arctic region is a priority and European allies are stepping up."

"We and many other allies have increased our presence, activities and investments, to keep the Arctic safe and to deter adversaries."

They stressed that Denmark -- including Greenland -- was part of NATO.

"Security in the Arctic must therefore be achieved collectively, in conjunction with NATO allies including the United States, by upholding the principles of the UN Charter, including sovereignty, territorial integrity and the inviolability of borders,"

the leaders said.

"These are universal principles, and we will not stop defending them."

The statement was signed by British Prime Minister Keir Starmer, Danish Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen, French President Emmanuel Macron, German Chancellor Friedrich Merz, Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni, Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk and Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez.

They added that the US was "an essential partner in this endeavour".

"Greenland belongs to its people. It is for Denmark and Greenland, and them only, to decide on matters concerning Denmark and Greenland," they said.

US Capitol riot anniversary exposes a country still divided

AFP | Washington, United States

Washington on Tuesday marks five years since a mob overran the US Capitol, with rioters pardoned by Donald Trump retracing their steps as Democrats revive hearings to hold the president accountable.

The anniversary of a day that reshaped American politics is expected to reflect a country still unable to agree on who was responsible, or what justice should look like.

"Five years ago today, a violent mob brutally attacked the US Capitol on January 6. Their mission was to overturn a free and fair election. We will never allow extremists to whitewash their treachery," top House Democrat Hakeem Jeffries posted on X.

On January 6 2021, thousands of Trump supporters gathered in Washington after the president urged them to protest Congress's certification of his election defeat to Joe

Biden.

Several thousand breached the Capitol grounds, overwhelming police lines and wounding more than 140 officers, smashing windows and doors, ransacking offices and forcing lawmakers into hiding as the electoral count was halted for hours.

Inside the Capitol on Tuesday, House Democrats are convening an unofficial hearing featuring police, former lawmakers and civilians who experienced the violence firsthand.

Many involved in the original

investigation say the aim is not to relitigate the past but to prevent it from being erased -- particularly after Trump returned to office and pardoned nearly all defendants charged in connection with the attack.

Normalizing political violence

A new Democratic report documents dozens of pardoned rioters later charged with new crimes, and they warn that the clemency risks normalizing political violence.

Outside the building Trump supporters, including figures linked to the far-right Proud Boys, are staging a midday march retracing the route taken by rioters in 2021.

The march is being promoted by the group's former leader Enrique Tarrio, who was serving a 22-year sentence for seditious conspiracy before Trump pardoned him.

Organizers say the march will honor those who died, including Trump rioter Ashli Babbitt, and protest what they describe as excessive force by police and politically motivated prosecutions, insisting the event will be

peaceful.

The competing events mirror a broader political dispute, with Democrats saying Trump incited the attack to overturn the election. Republicans reject that view, instead citing security failures and criticizing the Justice Department.

Republican leaders have dismissed Tuesday's hearing as partisan and have shown little appetite for formal commemoration.

House Speaker Mike Johnson, an unswerving Trump ally, has yet to install a plaque honoring Capitol Police officers who defended the building that day, despite a federal law requiring it.

And Republican investigator Barry Loudermilk has argued that January 6 has been used to advance a political narrative against Trump and his allies.

The anniversary also arrives against the backdrop of unresolved legal and historical questions.

Former special counsel Jack Smith has said the attack would not have occurred without Trump, but abandoned the federal case after Trump's reelection, in line with Justice Department policy barring prosecution of a sitting president.

Trump was impeached by the House over the riot in 2021 and acquitted by the Senate.



Taiwan launches search for fighter jet pilot



Representative picture
AFP | Taipei, Taiwan

Taiwan's Air Force said Tuesday it has launched a search for a pilot believed to have ejected from a F-16 fighter jet over the sea during a routine training mission.

The single-seat aircraft took off at 6:17 pm local time (1017 GMT) from Hualien Air Base in eastern Taiwan, the Air Force said in a statement.

"At 7:29 pm, the pilot was suspected to have ejected about 10 nautical miles east of Fengbin Township in Hualien County," the statement said.

"The Air Force immediately established an emergency response centre and launched a search operation."

Premier Cho Jung-tai has called for Taiwan's coastguard and nearby fishing vessels to assist in the search and rescue efforts, Cabinet spokeswoman Michelle Lee said in a state-

ment.

Taiwan has ordered 66 US F-16V -- a fourth-generation multi-role fighter -- that is a significantly upgraded version of Taiwan's ageing F-16 A/B jets.

Taiwan completed upgrades of 141 older F-16s to the V standard in late 2023.

The aircraft were due to be delivered in 2026 but Taiwan's Defence Minister Wellington Koo said recently that would be "challenging".

Taiwan's military is under pressure from China, which claims the democratic island is part of its territory and has threatened to use force to annex it.

China has in recent years ramped up incursions by fighter jets and warships around the island -- actions that military experts dub as grey-zone tactics that serve to exhaust the island's armed forces.

Israeli FM in Somaliland weeks after official recognition

AFP | Mogadishu, Somalia

Israel's foreign minister arrived in Somaliland yesterday in the first high-profile visit by an Israeli official since the country recognised the breakaway region in the Horn of Africa, the Somaliland presidency said.

Israel announced last month it was officially recognising Somaliland, a first for the self-proclaimed republic that in 1991 declared it had unilaterally separated from Somalia.

"A delegation led by the Israeli Foreign Minister Gideon Saar landed at the Hargeisa town, he was received at the airport by senior government officials. He had meetings with the Somaliland top officials," the presidency said in a statement.

Israel's recognition of the breakaway region drew widespread criticism from Africa and Muslim-majority countries, which described the move as an attack on Somali sovereignty.

The European Union has also insisted that Somalia's sovereignty should be respected.

Somali President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud condemned the decision as a "threat" to the stability in the Horn of Africa.

In an interview with Al Jazeera, he said Somaliland had accepted three conditions from Israel: the resettlement of Palestinians, the establishment of a military base on the Gulf of Aden, and joining the Abraham Accords to normalise ties with Israel.

But Somaliland's foreign



Somalia's President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud

ministry denied the first two conditions.

The breakaway region has been diplomatically isolated since its unilateral declaration of independence, even if it has generally experienced greater stability than Somalia, where Al-Shabaab Islamic militants periodically mount attacks in the capital Mogadishu.

Regional analysts believe that a rapprochement with Somaliland would provide Israel with better access to the Red Sea, enabling it to hit Houthi rebels in Yemen.

Its location alongside one of the world's busiest shipping lanes has made it a key partner for foreign countries.



Somaliland, which has for decades sought international recognition, enjoys a strategic position on the Gulf of Aden and has its own currency, passport and army.