

EU agrees long-stalled sanctions on Israeli settlers

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● The occupied West Bank has been gripped by almost daily violence since the start of the Gaza war

AFP | Brussels, Belgium

European Union foreign ministers yesterday agreed new sanctions on Israeli settlers over violence against Palestinians, as a change of government in Hungary ended months of blockage.

"It's done. The European Union is sanctioning today the main Israeli organisations guilty of supporting the extremist and



An armed Israeli woman in military uniform stands with children as they enjoy the Palestinian water spring of Ein al-Auja as they celebrate the Israeli Independence Day at the Israeli-occupied West Bank village of Ras Ein al-Auja, whose Bedouin community was displaced by Israeli settlers earlier this year

violent colonisation of the West Bank, as well as their leaders,"

French Foreign Minister Jean-

Noel Barrot wrote on social media.

"These most serious and intolerable acts must cease without delay."

The move in response to rising

violence and settlement expansion in the Israeli-occupied West Bank had been stalled by former Hungarian prime minister Viktor Orban.

But the ouster of the nationalist leader and Israel ally, by rival Peter Magyar, now appears to have paved the way for the veto to be lifted.

EU officials said seven settlers or settler organisations would be blacklisted. The bloc also agreed to sanction representatives from Palestinian militant group Hamas.

The occupied West Bank has been gripped by almost daily violence since the start of the Gaza war in October 2023, involving Israeli troops and settlers.

There has been a surge in deadly attacks by Israeli settlers in the occupied West Bank since the start of the Iran war on February 28, Palestinian officials and the United Nations have said.

While the EU is moving ahead with the sanctions on Israeli settlers, there remains no consensus among member states to take further steps

against Israel such as curbing trade ties.

A number of countries are pushing to ban products from Israeli settlements in the West Bank.

"The work on trade measures for products coming from the illegal settlements moves forward," an EU diplomat said.

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EU rejects Putin pitch for Schroeder as Ukraine mediator



Gerhard Schroeder
AFP | Brussels, Belgium

EU foreign policy chief Kaja Kallas yesterday pushed back on Russian President Vladimir Putin's proposal for ex-German leader Gerhard Schroeder to act as mediator on the war in Ukraine.

"If we give the right to Russia to appoint a negotiator on our behalf, you know, that would not be very wise," Kallas told reporters at foreign ministers' talks in Brussels.

"Gerhard Schroeder has been a high-level lobbyist for Russian state-owned companies. So it's clear why Putin wants him to be the person so that actually, you know, he would be sitting on both sides of the table," she said.

Asked Saturday whom he would like to help restart talks with Europe, Putin said he would "personally" prefer Schroeder, who led Germany from 1998 to 2005.

The former chancellor has remained close to the Kremlin leader, standing apart from most Western leaders since Russia's invasion of Ukraine -- which he never publicly condemned.

Donald Trump declares Iran ceasefire on 'life support'

AFP | Washington, United States

US President Donald Trump said yesterday that the Iran ceasefire is on "life support" and that he is considering restarting naval escorts through the Hormuz Strait waterway as he seeks "complete victory" in the war.

Amid growing pressure at home over the war's impact on the US economy, Trump warned that Iran's rejection over the weekend of Washington's demands meant the already tenuous ceasefire is now "unbelievably weak."

"I would say it's one of the weakest right now, it's on life support," he told reporters in the White House. "I would say the ceasefire is on massive life support."

Separately, Trump told Fox News that he was considering

renewing a US attempt to escort oil and other commercial shipping through Hormuz, but that he had not yet taken a final decision.

The initiative, dubbed Operation Freedom, was first launched on May 6 but abandoned less than two days later.

The United States sent Iran a set of conditions for easing the conflict, mostly related to preventing the country from being able to expand its nuclear program.

At the weekend, Iran sent counter-proposals which

Trump told reporters on Monday were "garbage."

The impasse does not mean the United States will back off, Trump said.

"We're going to have a complete victory," he said. Iran thinks "I'll get tired of this. I'll get bored, or I'll have some pressure. But there's no pressure."

Asked if he was still willing to negotiate with Iran, Trump said the leadership there was divided into "moderates" and "lunatics."

"The lunatics want to fight til the end. You know, it'll be a very quick fight."



White House press gala shooting suspect pleads not guilty

AFP | Washington, United States

A California man charged with attempting to assassinate US President Donald Trump at a White House press gala last month pleaded not guilty on Monday.

Cole Allen, 31, entered the not guilty plea during an appearance before Judge Trevor McFadden in a federal

district court in the nation's capital.

Allen appeared in court wearing an orange jumpsuit and wearing handcuffs.

McFadden scheduled a status conference on the case to be held on June 29.

Allen faces four charges in connection with the April 25 attack at the White House Correspondents' Association

(WHCA) dinner at a downtown Washington hotel and potentially faces life in prison if convicted.

He is charged with attempting to assassinate the president, transportation of a firearm and ammunition across state lines with intent to commit a felony, using a firearm during a crime of violence and assaulting a federal officer.

Venezuela has 'never considered' becoming 51st US state

AFP | The Hague, Netherlands

Venezuela has "never" contemplated becoming the 51st US state, as suggested by US President Donald Trump following the capture of deposed leader Nicolas Maduro, the country's acting president said on Monday.

"That would never have

been considered, because if there is one thing we Venezuelan men and women have, it is that we love our independence process, we love our heroes and heroines of independence," Delcy Rodriguez told reporters as she left a hearing at the International Court of Justice in The Hague.

70 Labour MPs Demand Starmer's Resignation

AFP

Calls for UK Prime Minister Keir Starmer to resign have intensified, with a total of 70 Labour MPs now publicly urging him to step down or set a clear timetable for his departure, according to BBC monitoring of post-local election statements.

The growing pressure follows last week's local election results, which several Labour figures have described as a setback for the party. The tally of dissenting MPs has steadily increased over recent days, reflecting widening internal divisions within the governing party.

However, not all within Labour are calling for a change in leadership. Several MPs have spoken out in defence of Starmer, urging unity and stability. Chris Ward said this is "not the time to divide the party," warning against what he described as a damaging leadership contest. Similarly,

Mike Tapp argued that "the country needs stability, not another revolving door of leaders," stressing the importance of focus amid global uncertainty.

Angela Eagle also cautioned against internal disruption, saying the timing is particularly sensitive ahead of the King's Speech, which outlines the government's legislative agenda.

Meanwhile, Labour Party chair Anna Turley reaffirmed her support for the Prime Minister, saying she is "proud" of Starmer's leadership and urging the party to "step up" rather than step away from responsibility.

Despite these appeals for unity, resignations within the wider government team have added to the pressure. Melanie Ward has resigned from her role as parliamentary private secretary to Deputy Prime Minister David Lammy, stating that the election results sent a "clear message".