



## 'Defend European interests' in US tariff talks: Macron

AFP | Paris

French President Emmanuel Macron yesterday condemned US President Donald Trump's threat to impose 30-percent tariffs on the European Union, calling on the bloc to "resolutely defend European interests".

US President Donald Trump yesterday warned that Mexico and the EU would be slapped with 30-percent tariffs starting on August 1, raising the stakes in already tense negotiations with two of the largest US trading partners.

Expressing France's "very strong disapproval" of the announcement, Macron called on the bloc to "step up the preparation of credible countermeasures by mobilising all instruments at its disposal" if the two sides failed to reach agreement by August 1.

## Israeli strike on south Lebanon leaves one dead

AFP | Beirut

Lebanon's health ministry said an Israeli strike in the south yesterday killed one person whom Israel described as a Hezbollah fighter.

The attack was the latest despite a November ceasefire that sought to end more than a year of conflict between Israel and the Iran-backed group.

The ministry said the Israeli strike hit a house in the village of Wata al-Khiam.

## 30 PKK fighters destroy weapons at ceremony

AFP | Sulaimaniyah, Iraq

Thirty PKK fighters destroyed their weapons at a symbolic ceremony in Iraqi Kurdistan, two months after the Kurdish rebels ended their decades-long armed struggle against the Turkish state.

The ceremony marked a major step in the transition of the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) from armed insurgency to democratic politics as part of a broader effort to end conflicts.

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# Rallies spark UK wave of arrests

Tensions rise as police detain 86 more Palestine Action supporters across five British cities

## Protests to 'defy' government ban on group using anti-terror law

AFP | London

Police in several British cities yesterday arrested scores of people for supporting Palestine Action, following a second consecutive weekend of protests over the government's decision to the group using anti-terror laws.

Campaign group Defend Our Juries, which had announced the rallies "to defy" the ban, said 86 people had been arrested across five different cities.

They included four vicars, a lawyer, a civil servant, a social worker, a mechanical engineer and the daughter of a Polish resistance fighter, as well as veterans of the 1960s civil rights movement, the group added.

### Accusations

"We will not be deterred from opposing genocide, nor from defending those who refuse to be bystanders," the group said in a statement, referring to ac-



Police line up in front of protesters gathered to support the "Palestine Action", in Parliament Square, London. (AFP)

cusations levelled against Israel over its war in Gaza.

The protesters were also taking a stand "against the corruption of democracy and the rule of law", it added.

In London, the Metropolitan Police said its officers had made 41 arrests for "showing support

for a proscribed organisation".

### Assault

Another person was arrested for common assault, the force added.

Footage showed police moving in on a small group of protesters displaying signs support-

ing Palestine Action.

They had gathered at lunchtime at the steps of the Mahatma Gandhi statue in Parliament Square.

### Offence

Greater Manchester Police arrested 16 people, while officers

in the Welsh capital Cardiff detained 13, all for the same offence under the 2000 Terrorism Act, both forces confirmed.

"South Wales Police supports the right for people to make their voices heard through protest providing it is done lawfully," said a police statement.

The other arrests occurred in the Northern Irish city Londonderry - also known as Derry - and Leeds, in northern England, according to Defend Our Juries.

They come a week after 29 similar arrests at protests staged last Saturday, mainly in London.

### Crime

Since the Palestine Action ban kicked in on July 5, police have warned that expressing support for the group was now a crime, after a last-ditch High Court challenge failed to stop its prescription becoming law.

The government announced plans for the ban under the 2000 Terrorism Act days after the group's activists claimed to be behind a break-in at an air force base in southern England.

Two aircraft there were sprayed with red paint, causing an estimated £7 million (\$9.55 million) in damage.

## Push for diplomatic solution

# Iran's cooperation with IAEA to take 'new form'

AFP | Tehran

Iran said yesterday its cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) "will take on a new form", expressing a desire for a diplomatic solution to resolve concerns over its nuclear programme.

Iran's 12-day war with Israel last month, sparked by an Israeli bombing campaign that hit military and nuclear sites as well as residential areas, rattled its already shaky relationship with the UN nuclear watchdog.

The attacks began days before a planned meeting between Tehran and Washington aimed at reviving nuclear negotiations, which have since stalled.

Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi said yesterday that Iran's cooperation with the IAEA "has not stopped, but will take on a new form", after the Islamic republic formally ended cooperation with the UN watchdog in early July.

Iran has blamed the IAEA in part for the June attacks on its nuclear facilities, which Israel says it launched to prevent Iran from developing a nuclear weapon - an ambition Tehran has repeatedly denied.

The US, which had been in talks with Iran since April 12, joined Israel in carrying out its own strikes on June 22, targeting Iranian nuclear facilities at Fordo, Isfahan and Natanz.

Araghchi said requests to monitor nuclear sites "will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis... taking into account safety and security issues", and be managed by Iran's Supreme National Security Council.

In early July, a team of IAEA inspectors left Iran to return to the organisation's headquarters in Vienna after Tehran suspended cooperation.

The talks were aimed at regulating Iran's nuclear activities in exchange for the lifting of economic sanctions.

Before agreeing to any new meeting, "we are examining its timing, its location, its form, its ingredients, the assurances it requires", said Araghchi.

## Heatwave fury



A youth cools off in the Euphrates river amidst power cuts due to an extreme heatwave in Mishkhab district south of Iraq's central city of Najaf. (AFP)