

**News in brief**

◆ **A record 383 aid workers** were killed in 2024, the United Nations said yesterday, branding the figures and lack of accountability a "shameful indictment" of international apathy -- and warning this year's toll was equally disturbing. The 2024 figure was up 31 percent on the year before, the UN said on World Humanitarian Day, "driven by the relentless conflicts in Gaza, where 181 humanitarian workers were killed, and in Sudan, where 60 lost their lives". It said state actors were the most common perpetrators of the killings in 2024. The UN said most of those killed were local staff attacked in the line of duty or in their homes. Besides those killed, 308 aid workers were wounded, 125 kidnapped and 45 detained last year.



**Record number of aid workers killed in 2024, UN says**

◆ **A MP from Finland's** Social Democratic Party, Eemeli Peltonen, died in Finland's parliament building yesterday at the age of 30, the assembly's communications office said. "The person who passed away in the Parliament Building on the morning of August 19 is Eemeli Peltonen, a member of parliament in his first term," the statement said, expressing condolences to his relatives. Peltonen died around 11 am local time (8 am GMT), Finnish police said. The police said it "was investigating the causes of death, but do not suspect crime at this stage". Chair of the social democratic parliamentary group, Tytti Tuppurainen, said the "passing of Eemeli Peltonen deeply shocks me and all of us" in a statement.

**Finnish MP, 30, dies inside parliament building**

**SPOTLIGHT**

**300-year-old violin to star at UK music festival**



Berlin-based South Korean violinist Inmo Yang plays the "Carrodus violin" in Berlin, Germany

**London, United Kingdom**

One of the most valuable violins in the world, crafted three centuries ago and once owned by composer Niccolò Paganini, is to be played at a top UK classical music festival.

The violin, known as the Carrodus, is one of only around 150 made by Giuseppe Guarneri del Gesù known to have survived down the centuries, and was acquired by a philanthropic group for \$20 million in June.

It was crafted in 1743 in Cremona, northern Italy, and will be played for the first time as part of the BBC Proms by South Korean violinist Inmo Yang.

The violin once owned by Italian virtuoso Paganini will be seen on August 28 at London's Royal Albert Hall.

"I can't believe how lucky I am to have this instrument. This is easily one of the greatest instruments ever made," Yang, who is also making his debut at the Proms, told AFP.

"I feel a duty to take good care of the instrument and make a beautiful sound, so that people know that it's worth playing these instruments rather than having them in a vault in a museum."

The Stretton Society, a network of philanthropists, patrons and sponsors that has loaned the violin to Yang, seeks to acquire rare and valuable

instruments to lend to the world's leading musicians.

Guarneri was one of the most important violin makers of all time, alongside Italian luthier Antonio Stradivari, said the society's co-founder Stephan Jansen.

Whereas Stradivari made instruments for the Church and the nobility, Guarneri's violins were made for musicians, and they became renowned for their deep and sonorous tones, Jansen said.

"Inmo is one of the finest musicians of his generation," Jansen told AFP.

"When he came to my house and I showed him the fiddle, it was clear from the very first second that this is a match," he said. "Because in the end, it's also about chemistry, you know?"

Yang will perform Pablo de Sarasate's "Carmen Fantasy", which he described as "a virtuoso piece for the violin".

The broad palette of the violin adds the "strong, at times flirty character of the Carmen character," said Yang.

The instrument's sound is also "quite unpredictable," he said, and "this kind of capricious nature really gives more liveliness to the piece".

"Thinking that Paganini used this instrument is kind of spiritual, and I think people also want to hear Paganini's music played on his own violin," Yang added.



Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky (R) gather with British Prime Minister Keir Starmer, US President Donald Trump, Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni, German Chancellor Friedrich Merz, and European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen in the East Room of the White House in Washington, DC.

**Russia says peace deal must ensure its 'security'**

AFP | Paris, France

Russia said yesterday that any deal on Ukraine should ensure its own security and that of Russians in Ukraine, as Kyiv's allies met to discuss possible peace talks, after suggestions that Volodymyr Zelensky could sit down with Vladimir Putin.

Hopes of a breakthrough rose when the Ukrainian president and European leaders met in Washington on Monday with US President Donald Trump, who said he had also spoken by phone with his Russian counterpart.

But Russia warned that any solution of the war in Ukraine must respect "Russia's security interests", with its Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov adding that any meeting between the leaders "must be prepared very thoroughly".

Face-to-face talks between Zelensky and Putin would be their first since Russia's brutal invasion three-and-a-half years ago.

The Ukraine war, which has killed tens of thousands of people, has ground to a virtual stalemate despite a few recent Russian advances, defying Trump's push to end it.

Lavrov told state TV channel Rossiya 24 that any deal to end the conflict must ensure the rights of "Russian-speaking people who live in Ukraine."

His comments came as France and Britain were co-hosting a virtual meeting of about 30 of Kyiv's allies known as the "coalition of the willing" to "keep them up to date on what was decided", President Emmanuel Macron told French news channel LCI.



TDI | agencies

During critical discussions over the Russia-Ukraine war, which has lasted over three years, a US reporter once again commented on Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky's attire during his meeting with President Donald Trump.

"You look fabulous in that suit," said Brian Glenn, a conservative reporter, complimenting Zelensky, whom he had previously criticised for his clothing choices during a February visit to the Oval Office. "I said the same thing," Trump interjected into the conversation between Zelensky and Glenn.

"That's the one who attacked you last time," Trump reminded his Ukrainian

counterpart, as laughter rippled through the room.

He added that work on setting the peace talks will start after that, hinting at Geneva as a possible location.

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"I remember that," Zelensky replied to President Trump.

"You're wearing the same suit," Zelensky continued, prompting laughter from US officials and journalists in the room. During their last meeting in February in the Oval Office, Glenn had asked Zelensky, "Why don't you wear a suit? You're in the highest office in this country, and you refuse to wear one. Do you even own a suit? Many Americans feel you're not respecting the dignity of this office."

In response to Glenn's question, Zelensky explained that he had decided to wear his military garb until peace is achieved in Ukraine.

forced to concede parts of the embattled Donbas region still under its control.

On the streets of Kyiv, there was scepticism about whether the latest talks can

**Trump paused meeting with Europeans to call Putin: source**  
Washington, United States

US President Donald Trump interrupted a meeting with European leaders at the White House Monday to call Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin on efforts to reach a Ukraine deal, a source close to the talks said.

The call came as Trump hosted Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky and the leaders of Britain, France, Germany, Italy, Finland, the European Commission and NATO, the source told AFP on condition of anonymity.

end the grinding conflict. "The main problem is Putin himself doesn't want it," Anton, 32, who works in a warehouse, told AFP.

"They can meet as many times as they want but Putin doesn't need it and Donald Trump doesn't really know what to do."

But in Moscow, some people were more hopeful. "I hope we can agree on mutually beneficial terms," said Vyacheslav, 23, who works for the government.

He added that it would have been better if the meeting between the presidents happened "at the very beginning."

