

Netherlands to ban Israeli settler products from Sept 22

AFP | The Hague, Netherlands

The Netherlands government announced yesterday that it would ban imports from Palestinian territories occupied by Israeli settlers from September 22.

The Netherlands will join Ireland, Belgium and Spain among European Union countries that have imposed restrictions on trade with territories occupied by Israeli settlers.

There have been growing calls for the 27-nation bloc to impose EU-wide restrictions over Israel's military action in Gaza and increased vio-

lence in the occupied territories, but some EU members are reluctant.

Israel's occupation of Palestinian territories is considered illegal under international law. And the Dutch foreign ministry said: "With the proposed measures, the Netherlands is reinforcing its commitment to fulfilling its international legal obligation not to contribute to this unlawful situation."

The ban will apply to "the import, purchase, and sale of goods originating from illegal Israeli settlements located in the Palestinian territories", the ministry said.

Trump vows to help Lebanon pursue peace with Israel

● Meeting Aoun at the White House, Trump said Lebanon had been "a very mistreated country" that had been "hit hard" for decades.

● Aoun, the first Lebanese president invited to Washington since 2009, asked Trump for political support.

AFP | Washington, United States

US President Donald Trump vowed yesterday to help Lebanon "a lot" as its president, Joseph Aoun, sought Washington's backing for a fragile effort to disarm Hezbollah and forge a path to peace with Israel.

Meeting Aoun at the White House, Trump said Lebanon had been "a very mistreated country" that had been "hit hard" for decades.

"It's probably a dangerous place in a lot of ways," Trump told reporters. "But they love the country... and we're going to help it. We're going to help it a lot."

Aoun, the first Lebanese president invited to Washington since 2009, asked Trump for political support and continued backing for the Lebanese army, which has begun deploying in southern areas under a US-backed framework agreement with Israel.

"We need to support the LAF," Aoun said, referring to the Lebanese Armed Forces. "Without the LAF, everything will collapse."

The Lebanese president, a former army commander, said the military was "the backbone

of security and stability" and the country's most trusted institution.

His visit came as the Lebanese army moved into an area of the south under a deal with Israel aimed at proving Beirut can extend state authority and disarm Iran-backed Hezbollah.

But in a sign of the fragility of the agreement, the Lebanese army said Israeli troops fired near its soldiers deploying in a so-called "pilot zone" Israel is supposed to withdraw from.

Asked whether Washington would put additional pressure on Israel to withdraw, Trump said: "We'll be looking at that."

Lebanon is under pressure to prove that it can and will disarm Hezbollah, which Israel has set as a precondition for ending its occupation in southern Lebanon.

The "pilot zones" where the Lebanese army is deploying are primarily located just outside territory Israeli forces invaded after Hezbollah opened rocket fire on Israel and drew Lebanon into the Middle East war in March.

The army said Tuesday it had begun deploying to one of three pilot zones, the village of Zawtar al-Gharbiya. Israel's military said it would be "adjusting its force posture" in one pilot area.

Hours later, however, the Lebanese army said Israeli forces "opened fire in the vicinity of these units," adding that the incident would hinder the deployment.

The Israel Defense Forces (IDF) said it had only fired "warning shots into the air" after Lebanese soldiers entered an area that was "not part of the pilot area."

"The Lebanese Armed Forces personnel withdrew from the area, and no injuries were reported," it added.

'If we left right now, it would take Iran 20, 25 years to rebuild'



But, 'we're not finished' at all...we're not leaving right now,' warns Trump

● Kuwait summons Iran ambassador over attack on ship transiting Hormuz strait

AFP | Washington, United States

US President Donald Trump said yesterday the United States was far from finished with Iran and warned the next US military target could be an underground nuclear complex known as Pickaxe Mountain.

Pickaxe Mountain is a deeply buried nuclear site near Natanz where Western intelligence suspects Iran is building an undeclared enrichment facility.

"We'll be hitting that area pretty soon, and very heavily," Trump said, adding that he would not normally announce targets but "there's not a thing they can do about it."

Trump estimated it would take Iran more than 20 years to rebuild from current damage, addressing reporters during a White House meeting with Lebanese President Joseph Aoun.

"If we left right now, it would take Iran 20, 25 years to rebuild. Okay, and we're not finished at all...we're not leaving right now."

Iran stepped up its strikes in the Middle East on Tuesday, two weeks after its war with the United States resumed, with Jordan, Kuwait and Bahrain coming under attack.

The US military said last night it had completed its latest round of strikes against Iran, targeting various sites to counter Tehran's



U.S. President Donald Trump (R) speaks as President of Lebanon Joseph Aoun listens during a bilateral meeting in the Oval Office of the White House

Will 'take care of' Houthis if they blockade Saudi ports

Washington, United States

US President Donald Trump said Tuesday he would "take care of" the Houthi rebels if the Iran-backed militant group fol-

lows through on its threatened blockade of Saudi ports.

"If something like that happens, we take care of it," Trump told reporters during a White House meeting with Lebanese

President Joseph Aoun. "You know, we've done that with the Houthis before, and we haven't heard from them in a while since we did what we did originally."

ability to attack ships transiting the Strait of Hormuz.

"US forces struck Iranian military command centers, maritime capabilities, missile and drone launch sites, and air defense systems to degrade Iran's ability to continue attacking commercial vessels flowing through the Strait of Hormuz," CENTCOM said in a post on X.

Following the deaths of at least

three US soldiers in the past several days, the United States said the attacks were "designed to further degrade Iranian military capabilities used to attack commercial shipping" in the Strait of Hormuz.

US President Donald Trump warned that Iran would pay "many times over" for every American soldier killed, while Iranian President Masoud

Pezeshkian said the conflict had become "a full-scale war".

Nearly 100 US service members have been wounded since war resumed on July 7, the Pentagon said on Monday, most with minor concussion.

Pakistan's Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif called for restraint from all warring sides during a meeting with Iran's interior minister on Tuesday.