

Gold mine attack in South Sudan kills at least 73 people

AFP | Juba, South Sudan

An attack on a gold mine in South Sudan, one of the world's poorest and most volatile countries, killed at least 73 people and wounded 25, the vice president said.

The assault at the weekend targeted the mining area of Khor Kaltan, around 70 kilometres (45 miles) by road southwest of the capital Juba.

"At least 73 local miners have been tragically killed and 25 others seriously injured," Vice President James Wani Igga said in a statement. "We must provide urgent medical care and evacuation for the 25 injured."

"We must establish formal inquiry to determine the identity and motive of these 'unidentified assailants,'" Igga added.

A security source requesting anonymity confirmed the toll to AFP, while a diplomatic source put the figure at between 75 and 86 deaths.



Since gaining independence from Sudan in 2011, the world's youngest country has suffered a series of deadly conflicts

linked to First Vice President Riek Machar, mostly in the central-eastern Jonglei State.

The security source told AFP that "it's believed the attack was carried out" by Machar's opposition forces but conceded that

reports were "mixed". A spokesman for Machar, who has been confined to house arrest for a year, denied that his forces were behind the attack and pointed the finger at the South Sudanese army.

WIDE ANGLE

Where is 'United Nations' in today's conflicts?



JOEL INDRUPATI

"It's high time to end this war." The UN Secretary-General António Guterres said this on 19 March 2026, during a European Council meeting in Brussels.

He said the conflict started by the United States and Israel was risking getting "completely out of control," while "causing immense suffering to civilians." He also warned Iran: "Stop attacking your neighbours; they were never parties to the conflict. The Security Council has condemned these attacks."

But is anyone listening? Is the UN really trying to make the warring nations stop? Was it not established "to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war," as its charter says?

And what are the 193 member states of the UN, who have accepted the obligations of its Charter, doing about it?

Before examining its constraints, maybe, we should first look at the history of its formation.

Following the First World War, the UN's precursor, the League of Nations, was formed as the first intergovernmental organization aimed at maintaining world peace. Though born out of the 1919 Treaty of Versailles, which ended the war between the Allied Powers and Germany, the League failed to prevent another global conflict soon after.

The Second World War (1939-1945) then engulfed around 30 countries and devastated many more. Estimates suggest 40-60 million deaths, with millions more wounded or permanently disabled. The economic cost was staggering; the financial burden of the First World War alone included nearly \$4 trillion spent by the United States (adjusted to today's value), amounting to about 40% of its GDP at the time.

Out of this devastation, the United Nations was founded in 1945, primarily to prevent another world war. Its core mandate has been to maintain international peace and security through diplomacy, cooperation, and collective action.

While its six principal organs work collectively toward peace, security, and development, its specialized agencies operate independently to address global challenges such as health and finance.

Despite its role as a vital forum for diplomacy, peacekeeping, and humanitarian aid, the UN faces serious limitations today.

At the forefront is the Security Council's veto power. Its five permanent members—the US, Russia, the UK, France, and China—can block any substantive resolution. What was once designed as a safeguard of balance has increasingly become an instrument of paralysis, preventing decisive action when it is needed most.

Equally troubling is the organization's financial fragility. The UN depends on contributions from member states, yet it faces a funding crisis of nearly \$1.6 billion in unpaid due, now. When major contributors delay or withhold payments, the institution's ability to act decisively is weakened, turning moral authority into little more than symbolic rhetoric.

More fundamentally, the UN suffers from a credibility gap. It can pass resolutions, issue warnings, and convene debates—but it cannot compel powerful nations to comply. In a world where geopolitical interests override collective responsibility, enforcement becomes selective, and justice appears inconsistent.

The tragedy is not merely institutional—it is moral. The lessons of two world wars were meant to anchor humanity to diplomacy over destruction. Yet today, those lessons seem dimmed by political expediency and national self-interest.

The very nations that empowered the UN are undermining it when its decisions conflict with their ambitions.

This raises an uncomfortable question: is the UN failing, or are its members failing it? Without genuine commitment from its members—not just in words, but in action—the UN becomes a stage for speeches and not a force for peace.

Unless there is urgent reform—structural, financial, and political—the United Nations risks drifting into irrelevance. Not because its ideals are flawed, but because they are no longer upheld with conviction.

"It's time for diplomacy to prevail over war," the UN chief had declared. Yet in today's world, that call is very feeble and is almost lost in the loud and increasing sounds of war.

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US military building 'massive complex' beneath White House

Information about the plan had come out recently "because of a stupid lawsuit"

AFP | Washington, United States

President Donald Trump said Sunday the US military was planning to construct a large complex beneath the new ballroom he is building at the White House.

"The military is building a massive complex under the ballroom, and that's under construction, and we're doing very well, so we're ahead of schedule," Trump told reporters aboard Air Force One.

"It's part of it, the ballroom essentially becomes a shed for what's being built under," Trump said, without elaborating on the unprecedented arrangement.

He said information about the plan had come out recently "because of a stupid lawsuit."

Last October, the former real estate developer had an entire wing of the White House bulldozed, in order to build a vast ballroom to host receptions and state dinners.

Trump speaks frequently and in great detail about the construction work, which has thus



US President Donald Trump delivers remarks to farmers from the Truman balcony of the White House in Washington, DC,

far been undertaken without the usual byzantine vetting procedures for changes to Washington's built landscape.

"We are using onyx and stones that are incredible," he recently told a press conference dedicated in part to the war in the

Middle East.

The ballroom project - one of the most ambitious undertakings at the White House in over a century - has continued to grow in scope, with its privately-funded budget doubling from \$200 to \$400 million.

ager to leave his mark on the US capital, Trump has also renamed an iconic performance venue as the "Trump-Kennedy Center," and plans to build a grand arch in Washington inspired by the Arc de Triomphe in Paris.

Israel approves 2026 budget with increased defence spending

Jerusalem, Undefined

Israel's parliament approved the country's 2026 state budget early Monday, including a record allocation for defence spending, as the opposition denounced the plan as "the greatest theft" in the country's history.

The budget passed its final reading in the Knesset by 62

votes to 55, according to The Times of Israel

The 850.6-billion-shekel (\$271 billion) budget includes 143 billion shekels (\$45.8 billion) for the Defense Ministry, the largest defense allocation in Israel's history, according to Hebrew media.

The vote came ahead of a legal deadline on Tuesday, after

which failure to pass the budget would have automatically triggered early elections.

Opposition leader Yair Lapid expressed his displeasure over the budget.

"The greatest theft in the history of the state has been completed," he wrote on the US social media company X's platform.

"They took the money from reservists and gave it to draft dodgers. They robbed working people and gave it to the corrupt," he added.

The budget was approved amid the ongoing US-Israeli war on Iran, which has heightened tensions across the region and fueled a surge in Israeli military spending.

(The views and opinions expressed in this article are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of the Daily Tribune)