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Edition 030



MaghrebiWeek

A snap shot PDF magazine of the news from North Africa and the MENA region



**Revealed:
Gaddafi IRA cash
for UK victims**

**New book fingers
Mossad over
Moroccan hit job**

**Can Steve Witkoff
avert Morocco
Algeria war?**



France and Algeria agree to 'normalisation' of relations

Algeria's domestic scene has been dominated by the fight against terrorism in the Sahel, but the country has now turned its attention to the West. France and Algeria have agreed to 'normalise' their relations, a move that could lead to a more stable and secure region.

Israel poised to finish off Hezbollah

Israel hopes to see Hezbollah out of Lebanon politics, a leading Israeli journalist has warned. A policy which could see further destruction of the war-torn nation.

MaghrebiWeek

Editor: Ariana Hashtrudi

Contributors: Leon Kouider, Farheen Khamar, Julian Amani

Publisher: Martin Jay

US working on peace deal between Morocco and Algeria

David Chan

The United States' presidential advisor, Steve Witkoff, announced on October 20th that the Trump administration is working on a peace deal between Morocco and Algeria, according to a report by the Moroccan government-friendly North Africa Post, plus agencies.

Speaking on CBS's "60 Minutes Overtime" program, Witkoff, who is the US envoy for the Middle East, said that his "team is working on a peace agreement between Morocco and Algeria at the moment." He added: "There will be a peace agreement, in my opinion, within 60 days."

Rising tensions between Morocco and Algeria over the sovereignty of Western Sahara have prompted Algeria to increase its defence budget to \$25 billion, just under 20% of its expenses, for 2026. This is up from 2023, when Algeria allocated a defence budget of \$18 billion.

The regional tensions have also led Morocco to seek military co-operation with the US, including participation in a joint military exercise as part of the annual "African Lion" training programme. "African Lion" focuses on skills related to naval tactics, air defence, maritime rescue operations, and live ammunition firing.

"The weapons deals between Morocco and the US have raised regional concerns"

The US approved the \$524.2 million sale of 18 HIMARS and other equipment to Morocco on April 11th, 2023. The State Department also authorised the sale of Javelin anti-tank missiles on March 19th, 2024, in response to Algeria's record military spending and signing of arms deals with Russia and China.

Morocco had also raised its defence budget in response to tensions with Algeria; the figure for the 2025 fiscal year was \$13 billion. This represents an increase from \$12 billion in 2024.

On June 20th, Morocco reportedly sought to reach a deal with US defence contractor Lockheed Martin to acquire state-of-the-art F-35 fighter jets, making it the first Arab and African country to acquire the jets, as US policy has historically restricted the sale of fifth-generation jets in the Middle East to Israel.

The weapons deals between Morocco and the US have raised regional concerns about a potential escalation of tensions in the Maghreb, as Rabat backs Moroccan sovereignty over the Western Sahara, while Algeria supports Sahrawi independence. The US also pledged on June 3rd to provide Morocco with technical assistance, training programmes and logistical support.



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Morocco: Book reveals Israeli role in death of opposition leader

David Chan

A new book has accused Israel of being involved in the 1965 kidnapping of Mehdi Ben Barka, according to a report by the Middle East Eye via agencies on October 22nd.

“The Ben Barka Affair: The End of Secrets,” is scheduled for publication in France later this month. It is based on unreleased documents and reports from confidential archives, which the authors claim demonstrate links between Israel’s intelligence agency, Mossad, and the Moroccan security apparatus.

Ben Barka was the exiled opposition leader of the left-wing National Union of Popular Forces (UNFP) in Morocco, who opposed King Hassan II, the country’s monarch from 1961

until his death in 1999. The book also alleges that King Hassan II helped facilitate the departure of Moroccan Jews to Israel. Ben Barka’s body was never found, although many have blamed the Moroccan state for his disappearance and presumed death after he was kidnapped at a brasserie on Paris’s left bank on October 29th, 1965.

The operation was allegedly overseen by Ahmed Dlimi, deputy director of Moroccan security, and Rafi Eitan, a prominent Israeli intelligence figure. Israeli spies were said to patrol the area around Ben Barka’s detention site, and also provided advice on how to bury his body in a forest.

Morocco sentenced Ben Barka to death in absentia over an alleged plot to overthrow the king, and for calling on Moroccan soldiers

to refuse to fight against Algeria in the 1963 Sand War, after Moroccan soldiers seized two Algerian border outposts in the disputed Saoura region.

According to Morocco’s Minister of Foreign Affairs, Nasser Bourita, all of Morocco’s monarchs, including King Hassan II, have supported a two-state solution between Israel and Palestine.

Since the 1980s, Israel and Morocco have maintained secret relations, including a notable meeting in 1986 when King Hassan II secretly met with then-Israeli Prime Minister Shimon Peres in Rabat.

In 2020, Morocco formally re-established ties with Israel under the US-led Abraham Accords, which seek to normalise

relations between Israel and Arab countries. The book is set to be released amid deepening military ties between Morocco and Israel, including the Kingdom hosting Israeli drone tests on October 13th.

The Kingdom’s Finance Minister, Nadia Fettah Alaoui, endorsed the strengthening of economic ties to Israel at a conference in Washington, DC, on October 17th. Israel’s largest defence contractor, Elbit Systems, is reportedly Morocco’s main weapons supplier, which provides 85 per cent of the drones used in Israel’s genocidal war on Gaza.



Tunisians jailed for protesting state-owned chemical plant

Slim Sellami

Citizens in Gabès, a city in southern Tunisia, have been protesting to demand the shutdown of a state-owned chemical plant. On the night of October 18th, more than 70 Tunisians were arrested during demonstrations, according to Jeune Afrique via AFP.

Khayreddine Debaya, a coordinator with the Stop Pollution association, confirmed the arrests and added that many more demonstrators were detained between October 18th and 19th, including several taken from their homes by Tunisian authorities.

A Tunisian lawyer, Mehdi Talmoudi, clarified that the crackdown targeted the night protesters, not the ones who were present during the peaceful daytime demonstrations.

During the night protests, Tunisians reportedly set fire to car wheels and clashed with Tunisian police forces to express their frustration over the state’s disregard for the crumbling plant.

It’s worth noting that while Gabès residents were mobilising to assert the right to breathe purer air in their city, police forces tried to disperse them by using tear gas that suffocated them, according to France 24 via AFP.

The Groupe Chimique Tunisien (CGT) has been heavily criticised by the local population of Gabès for decades due to CGT’s pollution spills of highly toxic and radioactive chemicals that have harmed the region’s ecosystems and the residents’ health.

Since September 9th, more than 200 Tunisians have been poisoned by gas leaks coming from the phosphate plant, with the

most recent occurrence harming 69 pupils in their classrooms.

The poisoning of the schoolchildren caused an uproar that led even more Tunisians to take to the streets to express their disapproval of the government’s plans to resume the plant’s activities and to condemn how the plant’s mismanagement and lack of maintenance has degraded the ageing CGT facility.

While the Tunisian authorities promised in 2017 that the chemical plant would be dismantled to build a modern facility that adheres to international standards, President Kais Saied decided otherwise.

Phosphate is the North African country’s largest natural resource and its economy heavily relies on it. Critics argue Saied prioritised economic development over public safety by planning to quintuple

the plant’s chemical production by 2030 – a move he hopes will boost the state’s revenues by betting on the recent international increase in fertiliser prices.

While previously aware of the risks of the plant’s activities, the President stated on October 17th during a meeting with two parliament officials that they were constantly assessing the situation and working towards swift solutions to resolve the environmental damages and pollution, according to Mo-saique FM.

Nonetheless, Saied has reportedly employed his familiar tactic of casting doubt on people’s true intentions to justify dismissals. He urged the residents of Gabès and local police forces to unite against those allegedly attempting to exploit the environmental situation for personal gain, and to remain vigilant against so-called state conspirators who were reportedly funded by foreign sources to voice their opinions.



2020 report reveals scheme to compensate Gaddafi-IRA victims

Ally Freischmidt

After five years the report on the victims of Gaddafi funded IRA attacks was partially released on October 20th, revealing suggestions for a scheme to compensate victims, according to MSN news.

Sir William Shawcross was commissioned by the government in 2019 to compile this report, which the UK government then refused to publish on national security grounds.

“Gaddafi’s regime supplied the IRA with plastic semtex”

The subject of the report is compensation for UK victims of Irish Republican Army attacks that were sponsored by the former Libyan dictator Muammar Gadd-

afi. Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, Gaddafi’s regime supplied the IRA with the plastic explosive Semtex which was used in bombs that killed hundreds of people.



A difficulty that the report faced, according to the executive summary released on October 20th, was that it is “not possible to identify the number of people affected” by Libyan supplied weaponry, as there were other sources of funding and arms.

Shawcross suggested widening the class of victims who would receive compensation: “If HM Government provides funding (or advance funding), payment to a narrow group of beneficiaries [it] could contribute to tensions

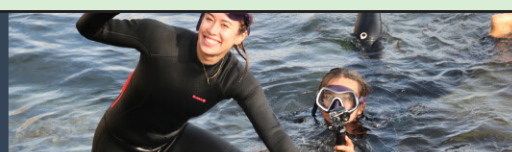
over Northern Ireland legacy issues, and could be perceived not to be ‘rigorously impartial’ to both communities in Northern Ireland, an idea that is central to the Good Friday Agreement.”

“compensation has been paid by Libya to other victims of its attacks”

The UK government’s decision to withhold the report’s findings was

met with surprise, as compensation has been paid by Libya to other victims of its attacks, including American, German and French victims. A Key reason why the UK has not pressed Libya for compensation. There are £12 billion worth of Libya assets formerly owned by Gaddafi frozen in the UK, and Shawcross’ report suggests using the tax on these assets to compensate victims.

Continue reading on the [Libya Gazette](#).



NEWS IN BRIEF

UN mission in Libya unveils measures for selecting participants

The UN mission in Libya has unveiled its measures for choosing participants in its structured dialogue in November, the Moroccan government-friendly North Africa Post reported on October 21st.

The mission has claimed that the selection process would maintain inclusivity, in which women, civil society, youth, alongside cultural and institutional groups will form part of the selected participants.

The subjects of governance, economy, security, human rights and foreign relations will be the area of focus for the dialogue, which intends to enhance governmental structures.

Tunisia shipwreck kills 40 African migrants off coast

Forty migrants from sub-Saharan Africa were found dead off Tunisia's coast on October 22 following a shipwreck, The New Arab and agencies reported.

Authorities stated that out of 70 people on board, 30 were rescued, whilst 40 bodies, including infants, were recovered. Tunisia, serves as a key transit point for migrants due to its proximity of 145 km from Italy's Lampedusa. Around 4,000 migrants have reached Italy from its shores this year.

The tragedy comes amid increased border restrictions, and Tunisia's \$290 million EU deal to curb irregular migration, criticised by activists as a "silent genocide," reflecting the growing dangers and desperation along the central Mediterranean route.

Poland officially declares support for Moroccan autonomy plan

Poland has formally expressed its support for the Moroccan autonomy plan for Western Sahara, describing the plan as a "serious, realistic, and pragmatic basis for a lasting solution", according to Moroccan-friendly Atalayar on October 22nd.

The endorsement was made official following a telephone call between Polish and Moroccan Foreign Affairs Ministers, Radosław Sikorski and Nasser Bourita. Poland has joined the 23 EU countries and 120 nations that support the autonomy-under-sovereignty solution.

Morocco's autonomy plan (first presented to the United Nations in 2007) proposes that Western Sahara be granted broad self-governance while remaining under Moroccan sovereignty.

Libya and Tunisia agree to bolster bilateral economic ties

Libya and Tunisia have agreed to consolidate their economic ties by developing a joint roadmap for future trade cooperation, according to the Libya Review on October 22nd.

The agreement established plans to focus on broadening trade, foreign direct investment, and the

diversification of exports between the two countries, who already enjoy quite extensive bilateral trade relations.

Both countries also discussed the prospect of expanding trade relations with African markets via the African Continental Free Trade Area framework, which they see as a crucial mechanism that can be leveraged to enhance regional economic stability and sustainable development.

Algeria seeks Russian backing ahead of UN vote

Algeria's Foreign Affairs minister Ahmed Attaf had a phone exchange with his Russian counterpart Serguei Lavrov, focusing on the Western Sahara, according to state-aligned AL24 News on October 22nd.

Russia is currently president of the UN's Security Council until the end of October, and a

decisive vote on the renewal of MINURSO (UN Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara) is due on October 31st.

This follows up a meeting between both parties in September, with Algeria seeking Russia's veto to block the Moroccan plan.

Egyptian President in Brussels to attend first Egypt-EU summit

Abdel Fattah El-Sisi, the president of Egypt, has visited Brussels in Belgium to attend an Egypt-EU summit, which is the first of its kind, as reported by Asharq Al-Awsat on October 22nd.

The event indicates that relations are improving between the country and the union following Europe's months-long delivery of financial aid to the North African country.

Purportedly, the summit's agenda includes regional political issues, which most likely refers to the Israel-Hamas ceasefire.

Egypt endorses Tony Blair as post-war Gaza leader

David Chan

The Egyptian President, Abdel-Fattah el-Sisi, has signalled support for former UK Prime Minister Tony Blair to lead the post-war Gaza Strip, Middle East Eye plus agencies reported on October 21st.



This support came after Blair attended the Gaza summit in Sharm el-Sheikh, which occurred days after the Gaza ceasefire between Israel and Hamas came into effect on October 10th.

Blair reportedly has a long-standing political relationship with the Egyptian

government, as both prioritise countering political Islam.

A source from the Tony Blair Institute (TBI) said that Blair had previously "advised on how to handle the Muslim Brotherhood, opposition forces, and the media impact in order to stabilise Sisi's government."

An Egyptian presidential advisor said that "Blair's re-emergence in the Gaza file is no coincidence, for he is acting like a modern-day British high commissioner." However, not everyone in Egypt is optimistic about Blair's involvement, with Kamal Abu Eita, the former minister of labour and a senior official of the leftist al-Karama (Dignity) Party, saying that many Egyptians "do not trust Blair at the personal level, a man who is strongly connected with colonial heritage."

The sidelining of the Palestinian Authority in the US peace plan has also caused controversy in Egypt, as the US-led plan envi-

sions a committee overseen by US President Donald Trump and Blair. Concerns have been raised over the legitimacy and fairness of this administration overseeing the Palestinian enclave.

Blair is a controversial figure in the Middle East due to his role in the 2003 invasion of Iraq, which critics believe violated international law. Many have also called for Blair's prosecution for alleged war crimes and crimes against humanity that took place in Iraq. It was reported on October 1st that Blair was under consideration for a lead role in a post-war Gaza Strip, according to information leaked by Haaretz.

The plan would see Gaza being governed by a board of billionaires and businesspeople, while highly vetted "neutral" Palestinian administrators would hold lower positions of authority. On January 1st, 2024, it was reported that Blair denied allegations that he supported an Israeli initiative that would depopulate Gaza.



Israeli soldiers operating in Lebanon's south, on November 20th 2024.

South Lebanese women claim war never ended

Despite the signing of a truce between Israel and the Lebanese armed group, Hezbollah, many women living in the southern villages of Lebanon say that the conflict remains unresolved, Arab News via AFP and Reuters reported on 22nd October.

The ceasefire was brokered between the two sides in a deal mediated by the US on 26th November 2024 and was intended to allow citizens on both sides of the conflict to return to peace and live on their land without fear of conflict.

However, thousands of people in South Lebanon remain

displaced in the aftermath of the conflict, unable or unwilling to return to their homes as a result of continued Israeli military incursions. Residents say that the Israeli military have continued to occupy hillside positions near the homes.

US advisor: Only Israel-held Gaza should be rebuilt

Jared Kushner, the son-in-law of US President, Donald Trump, has proposed to only rebuild the parts of Gaza that are under Israeli occupation as reported by Middle East Eye and agencies on October 22nd.

In an official statement from Kushner on October 21st: "There are considerations happening

now in the area that the IDF controls, as long as that can be secured, to start the construction as a new Gaza in order to give the Palestinians living in Gaza a place to go, a place to get jobs, a place to live."

Kushner went on to say that areas under Hamas control would not receive reconstruction funds, possibly in an attempt to contribute to the increasing pressure Hamas is receiving to relinquish power through things such as reduced aid.

Israeli forces razed civil infrastructure in south Lebanon

A resident of south Lebanon, who was displaced during Israel's

war with Hezbollah, revealed that Israeli troops intentionally wrecked civil infrastructure, according to Arab News via AFP and Reuters on October 22nd.

When recalling what Israeli troops did to the farm she was forced to flee, 50-year-old Zeinab Mehdi said that "whatever house was still standing or land was still in good shape, they razed."

She continued in saying that "they pulled water pumps out from the ground and destroyed them. All the irrigation I had in the ground is broken. I have nothing."

Afghan women's refugee team to play football match in Morocco

A football tournament involving the Afghanistan women's refugee team is set to take place in Morocco from October 26th, Reuters has reported.

Originally scheduled to run in Dubai from October 23-29, the four-team friendly competition was organised by FIFA and features the national women's teams of the UAE, Chad and Libya.

The creation of a refugee football team for Afghan women came after the Taliban took over the country in 2021 and established a complete ban on women's sports — prompting most athletes to flee the country and seek asylum in Australia.

Social media platforms restrict Iraqi activism accounts

Social media platforms, including Facebook, X and TikTok, have reportedly restricted or banned Iraqi accounts critical of the government following national pressure, the New Arab plus agencies reported on October 22nd.

Iraqi activists and rights organisations have said several journalists and influencers who had previously criticised the government can no longer access the platforms.

Israel tests Trump's limits with annexation vote

Enda Maguire

The Trump administration has warned Israel that any attempt to annex parts of the occupied West Bank would jeopardize U.S. support, as Washington attempts to stabilise a fragile ceasefire in Gaza.

The New York Times reported on October 23rd, following an interview with Donald Trump, that annexation "won't happen" because he had pledged to Arab states that the U.S. would oppose such a move.

"Israel would lose all of its support from the United States if that happened," he said.

The remarks come against the backdrop of votes in Israel's Knesset in favour of annexing parts of the West Bank, a territory viewed internationally as the core of a future Palestinian state, however such votes have been dismissed as symbolic. Although the measures have no legal force, they triggered a sharp reaction from Washington and deepened tensions during a sensitive diplomatic period.

U.S. Vice President JD Vance, visiting Israel as the votes were held, expressed frustration over the move. "If it was a political stunt, it was a very stupid political stunt, and I personally take some insult to it," he told reporters in Jeru

-salem. "The West Bank is not going to be annexed by Israel."

The Trump administration has attempted to downplay the latest votes in Israel's Knesset as symbolic "political stunt", however in reality the annexation of the West Bank is already well underway following decades of illegal settlement construction, which has only accelerated since the start of Israel's genocide in Gaza in October 2023.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu moved quickly to calm tensions, calling the votes "a deliberate political provocation by the opposition" aimed at sowing discord during the vice president's visit.

He said the bills were unlikely to advance without backing from his Likud party.

UK planning officers to oversee progress of Gaza ceasefire

A group of planning officers from the UK have been dispatched to Israel to work with a US-led unit responsible for overseeing the progress of the Gaza ceasefire, the BBC via Reuters reported on October 21st.

Known as the civil military coordination centre, the taskforce is reportedly likely to include soldiers from Qatar, Turkey, Egypt as well as the UAE, according to American officials.

The US Central Command (Centcom) would be leading the taskforce, which will also be responsible for organising humanitarian support.



World Food Programme: not enough food is entering Gaza

The UN World Food Programme (WFP) stated on October 21st that, since the Israel-Hamas ceasefire, food supplies reaching Gaza are still far below the daily target of 2,000 tons, according to Reuters.



According to the WFP, only roughly 750 metric tons of food have been reaching Gaza, and entrance is only possible through two Israeli-controlled crossings — none of which are on the north of the enclave, a vulnerable and famine-hit area.

WFP spokesperson Abeer Etefa said in a press briefing that “to be able to get this scale up, we have to be able to use every border crossing point”.

US envoys discuss regional updates with Israel

US envoys Steve Witkoff and Jared Kushner, met with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to discuss regional developments on October 20th,

according to a report by the Middle East Eye plus agencies.

The news came amid reports that Witkoff planned to leave his role in the administration of US President Donald Trump, which Witkoff denied.

Both Witkoff and Kushner have played a key role in mediating a ceasefire between Israel and Hamas, which was accepted following negotiations.

Israeli settlers storm Al-Aqsa mosque under police protection

Reports by the Islamic Endowments Department suggest that at least 93 Israeli settlers stormed Al-Aqsa mosque under

police protection, as reported by the Middle East Eye via Al Jazeera on October 16th.

The incursion began in the morning as settlers entered the mosque, which is located in occupied Jerusalem, to perform Talmudic rituals and prayers, while Israeli authorities blocked Muslim worshippers from entering the compound.

Al-Aqsa mosque, which is widely recognised as an exclusively Islamic site, has come under increased attack by Israeli settlers, with the Israeli monitor, the Ir Amim Association, expressing concerns that the Israeli government was exploiting Jewish holidays to increase Jewish presence at the compound.





Voters in Cameroon stand outside an Election Cameroon (ELECAM) office on October 8th this year.

First domestic flight lands in Sudan's capital since war began

The first domestic passenger flight landed in Khartoum International Airport in Sudan's capital since the country's civil war broke out in 2023 according to the Associated Press on October 22nd.

In the backdrop of a horrific civil war that has killed over 40,000, Sudan's media and culture ministry confirmed that the Badr Airlines flight safely landed in Khartoum's airport after departing from Port Sudan.

This marks the first commercial flight to successfully touch down in Sudan; the only other flights that have been received

by the airport were two arrivals containing military chief and de facto leader of Sudan, Abdel Fattah al-Burhan.

Nigeria: fuel tanker explosion kills at least 42

An oil tanker explosion which took place after the vehicle skidded away from the road, before crashing, has killed at least 42 people in the central Niger state of Nigeria, the BBC reported on October 22nd, citing an aid worker.

A further 52 people who sustained injuries are at present getting treated in a hospital, according to the head of the Niger state emergency service, Abdullahi Baba Ara.

Many people were burned to the point that they were no long recognizable, due to the blaze from the explosion. In Nigeria, tanker explosions have been ongoing.

Mauritanian government to compensate victims of ethnic violence

The Mauritanian government has announced plans to provide financial compensation to Afro-Mauritanians who were victims of ethnic violence between 1989 and 1991, according to the Moroccan government-friendly North Africa Post on October 21.

The plan follows reports of executions and torture targeting Black Mauritanians excluded from the Arabic-speaking

majority. The government pledged over 27 billion ouguiyas (€59 million) in reparations which is below the 35 billion requested by activists.

Whilst seen as a step toward acknowledging past injustices, rights groups criticised the proposal for lacking truth and accountability. Activist Maimouna Alpha Sy stated, "Money cannot replace what was lost."

Cameroon: One dead amid contentious election

One person has died after reportedly being shot by a police officer in the Cameroonian city of Garoua during a demonstration as the country awaits its presidential election results, according to Africanews via agencies on October 22nd.

The victim was identified as a young teacher named Zouhairatou Hassana, who neighbours claim was shot dead by a police officer on October 21st.

The demonstrations follow a contentious election held on October 12th, with the candidates being the current President, Paul Biya, and opposition leader Issa Tchiroma. Both candidates declared victory on October 20th, despite the results not being released until later.

Sudan: El-Fasher siege worsens amid drone strikes

David Chan

Residents in the Sudanese city of El-Fasher face deteriorating conditions as drone strikes intensify attacks, according to a report by Asharq Al-Awsat via Reuters on October 20th.

Many of the city's residents have been forced to seek refuge in underground bunkers due to increased attacks by drones and shells that target displaced person shelters, clinics and mosques.

The attacks are blamed on the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF), who have been at war with the Sudanese military

since April 2023. El Fasher is one of the last areas in the western region of Darfur that is under the control of the Sudanese Army. It has been under an RSF-imposed siege since May 2024.

Over 13 million people have been displaced by the conflict, while at least 24,000 people are estimated to have been killed. Another 26 million out of the country's 50 million inhabitants are facing hunger.

The UN has condemned the "repeated and deliberate" attacks on Sudanese civilians, including a series of drone strikes carried out between October 10th and 11th, which killed 110 people. A shelter

for displaced persons and the city's last major hospital were among the targets of the strikes.

Speaking about the impact of the attacks, local journalist Mohyaldeen Abdallah said: "We can only bury people at night, or very early in the morning. It's become normal for us."

Khadiga Musa, head of the North Darfur health ministry, explained the apparently indiscriminate nature of the attacks, saying that: "They [the RSF] don't distinguish between civilians and soldiers, if you're human they fire at you."

Researchers at the Yale School of Public Health's Humanitarian Research Lab (HRL) have described the situation in El-Fasher as a "literal kill box."

UN: Over 1000 people flee Sudanese city in two days

A report from the UN's International Organisation for Migration (IOM) found that 1,070 people have fled the Sudanese city of El-Fasher in two days between October 19th and 20th, as reported by the Middle East Monitor via Anadolu on October 21st.

El-Fasher is the state capital of Sudan's North Darfur region, and has been under siege by the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) since May 2024.





South African pupils suspended after violent school assault

South African authorities have suspended eight pupils due to a case of alleged bullying as seen through a circulated video showing a 16-year-old boy being violently attacked at Milnerton High School in Cape Town on October 22nd as reported by BBC News Africa.

The boy, who recently completed chemotherapy for cancer, was assaulted by several pupils using a hockey stick, hose pipe, and belt. National outrage led to a protest, which prompted police to disperse crowds with tear gas.

Human rights groups condemned the attack, calling it assault, not mere bullying, and urged for urgent action to protect children in schools.

Madagascar's youth outraged over PM appointment

The Gen Z movement in Madagascar which had contributed towards the ouster of President Andry Rajoelina, have voiced their opposition to the prime minister that has been selected by the new president of the African country, the BBC reported on October 21st.

Col Michael Randrianirina was sworn in as the president of the country on October 17th. Randrianirina named Herintsalama Rajaonarivelo, who is a businessman, as the new prime minister.

The movement, Gen Z Mada, said that the move "runs contrary to the desired structural change" the group is eyeing and has urged to be told how the new prime minister was chosen.

Trump-Putin summit in Hungary faces likely delay

A planned summit between Russian President Vladimir Putin and U.S. President Donald Trump has been delayed according to Arab News via Reuters on October 21st, following Russia's refusal of a ceasefire in Ukraine.

Following a two-hour call on October 16, both sides had revealed plans to meet in Budapest to discuss ways to resolve Russia's conflict with Ukraine, however no schedule has been confirmed.

Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov stated it was "premature" to discuss preparations, while Trump, facing a U.S. government shutdown, expressed frustration

at stalled peace efforts and ongoing tensions with Moscow and Kyiv.

Japan elects first female prime minister

Sanae Takaichi, a self-described admirer of Margaret Thatcher, has become Japan's first female prime minister after securing a strong parliamentary majority, the BBC reports on October 21st.

Known for her conservative stance and ties to the late Shinzo Abe, she faces public scepticism over whether her leadership will truly advance women's rights.

Taking office amid economic pressures and strained regional relations, Takaichi must also work to restore confidence in the scandal-hit Liberal Democratic Party.

Paris's Louvre museum reopens after jewellery heist

The Louvre reopened for visitors on October 22 after \$102 million in historical jewellery was stolen in a heist, damaging the museum's security reputation, The National plus agencies reported.

The museum opened at its usual hour, 9 am, to allow visitors to access the galleries – apart from the Apollo Gallery, where the heist took place.

The investigation is being conducted by around 100 professionals, who are seeking information on the organised crime group, thought to be made up of four members, that broke into the museum.

Cuban man deported from US to Eswatini jail goes on hunger strike

A Cuban man who the U.S. deported under the Trump administration's third-country programme is on a hunger strike, according to Africanews via AP on October 22nd.

Held in a maximum-security prison in Eswatini, the man has been there for the past three months without being charged or given access to legal counsel.

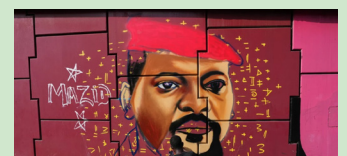
Roberto Mosquera del Peral was one of five men sent down to the small country in South Africa earlier in July, as part of the U.S. deportation programme to Africa.

Graffiti is gradually being accepted in West Africa

The artist from Guinea, Omar Diaw, who also goes by his artist name "Chimere", started spray painting on a blank wall one day in the streets of Guinea.

According to AP, on October 24th, Diaw's painting was exhibited in Senegal, where modern urban street art emerged within West Africa.

When Diaw moved to Guinea in 2018, from Senegal, he was surprised to see the streets bare and said art was non-existent. "It was thought that graffiti was vandalism," said Diaw. To win over the public's approval of Diaw's graffiti, he began painting for awareness campaigns.





Dalu Ajene

Africa's economic landscape is undergoing a significant transformation, driven by shifting demographic needs, demand for commodities such as rare minerals, technological and digital transformation, trade and regional integration and strategic partnerships.

As the continent navigates the complexities of global economic trends, it is poised to capitalise on emerging opportunities and cement its position as a key player in the global economy.

Africa's economic growth is projected to reach 4.4% by 2026, driven by a combination of factors such as fiscal consolidation, rising domestic demand, and growth in resilient sectors including financial services, digital, telecom and tourism. Its long-term projection can be sustained at over 3% if Africa continues on its path to embed integrated development strategies, including value-added industrialisation and AfCFTA.

Africa can lead the green revolution the world expects due to its vast renewable energy potential, including solar and wind resources, which is expected to drive growth in the energy sector. The continent's arable land and favourable climate make it an attractive destination for agricultural investment, with potential for significant growth in output and exports. The fintech ecosystem is in its infancy, valued at over \$3 billion, with startups attracting significant funding and driving innovation in financial services – a new springboard for exponential growth.

Significantly, private sector investment in Africa is increasing, with multinational corporations and global financial institutions recognising the continent's growth potential. Foreign Direct Investment [FDI] inflows to Africa reached \$47 billion in 2023, up 10% from 2022, with investments in infrastructure, energy, and technology driving growth.

The Africa Summit thought leadership event in Lagos, organised by Standard Chartered Bank, in collaboration with government, private sector and business organisations, sought to discuss these important factors underpinning Africa's attraction with an

Driving Nigeria's economic future through innovation

Nigeria's economic growth must be built on innovation, infrastructure, private sector partnerships, and collaboration across Africa.

emphasis on industry participants committed to unlocking growth while navigating the ever-evolving challenges evident in doing business in Africa and Nigeria.

The summit unpacked four things that stand conspicuous for me. First, Nigeria's government can only benefit from adopting a 'whole of Africa' approach that brings together governments, private sector and development finance institutions to deal with the well-documented infrastructure deficit evident in Nigeria and a lot of African nations. The country's grand ambitions in infrastructure are already a one-way ticket to success. Nigeria's National Integrated Infrastructure Master Plan, a public-private sector driven multi-trillion-dollar development plan, is a good place to start. It seeks to enhance the market's infrastructure over the next two decades – including significant projects such as the \$11 billion Lagos-Calabar coastal road that traverses and connects eight coastal states, the Lagos transit metro consisting of the 68km Green Line train that will service key urban nodes in Lagos, and the 92,000km fibre optic backbone project across Nigeria to expand coverage and boost digital inclusion.

“With the right policies and partnerships in place, Africa and by extension Nigeria, can unlock its full potential and drive sustainable economic growth and development.”

Second, Nigeria's diversification of its industries and exports away from the oil and gas sector will drive the country towards growth. In H1 2025, non-oil GDP growth outpaced oil GDP growth by a factor of 1.71x. In the same period, the non-oil tax collections surged by 44.2%, demonstrating a resurgence of growth in critical non-oil sectors. This has also contributed meaningfully to export-led growth, which is already bearing fruits. According to the Nigeria Export Promotion Council (NEPC), Nigeria's non-oil exports hit \$1.791 billion in Q1 2025, a 24.75% increase from Q1 2024. Led by products such as agricultural

products, this growth reflects progress in Nigeria's diversification strategy. Export volume also saw a 243% jump, reaching over 2.4 million metric tonnes.

Third, the biggest opportunity yet for Nigeria, is in the African Continental Free Trade Area [AfCFTA] which aims to expand market access, liberalise trade in goods and services, reduce tariffs and non-tariff barriers and promote intra-African trade. Today, Nigeria's future is more connected than ever. Nigeria's inclusion in this free trade area helps to facilitate trade in sectors ranging from fishery and textiles to automobiles and electricals. Following this agreement, Nigerian exports to African markets outside of West Africa are expected to increase significantly, and reach markets such as Botswana, Egypt and Kenya. The agreement has the potential to boost intra-African trade by 52%, increase Africa's GDP by 3%, and create 68 million jobs by 2030.

Lastly, Nigeria should enhance trade inclusivity of SMEs into the growth equation. SMEs are the backbone of the Nigerian Economy and crucial to the market's strategy to enhance productivity and promote trade inclusivity. While the government's plan is to increase SME contribution to the market's GDP from 49 per cent in 2022 to 70 per cent by 2025, a lot more needs to be done in affordable credit and mainstreaming their visibility in the global marketplace through greater adoption of cross-border e-commerce platforms.

Standard Chartered Nigeria sees great promise in Africa and Nigeria's growth prospect. With our extensive network and expertise and over 145 years of doing business in Africa, we are committed to provide tailored solutions to businesses and individuals who are taking part in the transformation we foresee. With the right policies and partnerships in place, Africa and by extension Nigeria, can unlock its full potential and drive sustainable economic growth and development.

The views expressed in this article belong to the author and do not necessarily reflect the editorial policy of Maghrebi.org. Dalu Ajene is the Chief Executive Officer of Standard Chartered Bank Nigeria. He has over twenty-two years of financial services experience working for both international banks and Africa banks.

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Martin Jay

How's the so-called ceasefire holding up in Gaza? You might be forgiven for thinking that it is anything but a ceasefire but more of an illusion created by the U.S. and a deal which can be broken at any moment by Israel if and when it sees capital to be gained there. Indeed, if there is one thing Bibi Netanyahu is renowned for, it is breaking ceasefires and so it should come as little surprise that he recently did that, supposedly to attack Hamas fighters which Israel claimed were posing a threat.

Let's be clear. The ceasefire is really all about boosting Trump's credibility as a statesman and giving Netanyahu breathing space to re-equip his army, ahead of an inevitable war with Iran. It is anything but a peace deal with the Palestinians but more of a bluff which was really about giving Netanyahu a shot in the arm amongst voters as he gets the credit for bringing back the hostages. But what is the real story? What is behind all this and reports of ISIS fighters being shipped in to take on Hamas?



What we are witnessing is an illusion on a grand scale. Israel has not really stopped its military campaign against the Palestinians there and is still killing Gazans on a daily basis. It is also not feeding them as legacy media likes to assert but in reality the starvation policy is still in place. The West likes to create the narrative that the Gazans are getting fed now with aid shipments whereas in reality these trucks are not getting through. Tom Fletcher, a man comfortable in his role as someone who lies to the press in his previous role of British ambassador to Lebanon is the UN's relief chief who claims that his operation is feeding one million Gazans a day? But can we

Gaza's so-called ceasefire masks ongoing suffering

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believe the softly spoken former diplomat? The smooth media operator who is comfortable doing 'pieces to camera' like broadcast journalists stirred up controversy recently when he made a series of films of him standing in front of UN aid trucks driving past, supposedly heading for Gaza. Sara Wilkinson, a UK-based activist who is often in Gaza, claimed that the trucks were actually only moving in and out of a UN compound and that the whole stunt was dishonest.

“What we are witnessing is an illusion on a grand scale. Israel has not really stopped its military campaign against the Palestinians there and is still killing Gazans on a daily basis.”

My own personal experience with Fletcher is that he smeared my name in Lebanon in 2015 as a pathetic act of petulance following an interview I wrote up about him which, in places, revealed him to be at best a lame diplomat winging it, at worse misinformed and woefully ignorant of regional politics. His response was to defame me in front of a group of visiting MEPs which backfired as the hapless buffoon didn't realize that I had worked in Brussels previously for a decade and most of the MEPs knew me (or knew of me) and respected my work. One of them even invited me for a working breakfast the next day and was shocked at how immature and vindictive he was.

Fletcher is just all spin. He is hollow and has no substance and only made the news in Lebanon almost on a daily basis for being photographed with super models with bee sting lips and fake boobs while his podgy Irish wife stood behind him with eyes rolling. He is so vain that he gave a photoshoot to a local Time Out magazine posing as James Bond in front of a British supercar and has a fabulous contempt for free speech. But of course he is a good communicator. He is the man to go to if

you have a grand illusion to pull off for Israel as he will happily make that magician's trick happen by misinforming the press and the greater public about what is the real story.

Gazans are not only still starving but according to a number of top analysts like Lawrence Wilkerson are still being killed at gunpoint (airstrikes) by Israel at feeding centres. So what exactly is the role of this UN body which Fletcher heads up?

The aid trucks are a huge deception conjured up to draw us away from not only a more nefarious, bloody plan which is about to kick off in Gaza but a bigger existential threat to the West and in particular America, which is coming Trump's way. Like a moth being drawn to a flame, Netanyahu is preparing for war with Iran and this time it will be nuclear.

Some pundits wrongly pour over the subject of the power struggle between Israel and the U.S., with many pointing to the power of AIPAC within the deep state.

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21st April 2023

US approves \$825 million missile deal to strategic ally Morocco

Algeria has presented the decision from France to make a diplomat arrested over the kidnapping of an instructor in April 2023, according to the New Arab on April 19th.

The indictment follows a period of normalisation between the two countries after months of diplomatic conflict.

However, the indictment of these men - including one Algerian consular official - has put relations at risk again.

Rebel group attacks civilian hit camp in Sudan

Displaced people were forced to seek refuge in the town of Tondia after the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) rebel group attacked two civilian hit camps in Sudan, as reported by Al Jazeera on April 19th.

The RSF attacked two camps, the Zennar and Abu Sheraa camps as well as the nearby city of d. Fakh, all of which are in the North Darfur region.

The attack has left more than 100 people dead, including men, women and children.

Continued on page 3

Tunisia crackdowns on political opposition using arrests

50 individuals are detained on political grounds, with 22 being held arbitrarily and 14 facing the death penalty.

The Ennahda Movement, an opposition group in Tunisia, recently disclosed the names of 50 individuals it claims are "enemies of the state".

The trial session was held for more than 40 individuals, including six who've been in prison for more than two years.

The defendants have all gone on hunger strike and Ennahda has offered their "absolute solidarity" with the prisoners on hunger strike and with all political detainees.

A number of the most high profile opposition figures have joined the hunger strike in protest against the government.

This includes opposition leader Ali Benabdellah, who is the leader of the Free Constitution Party and Rachid Ghannouchi, the leader of the Ennahda Party.

The Tunisian government has not responded to the allegations although it has recently described the country as a "democracy", despite attempting to a landslide victory in October 2022, winning 90% of the vote and arresting leading opposition figures.

Since the 2011 revolution, Tunisia has suffered from a series of political crises, including the arrest of opposition figures and the country's status as a political prison, leading to the arrest of hard-line civil liberties.

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“Trump will no longer have any cards to play if a war starts with Iran. He will be forced to join Israel with a Samsonesque suicide doctrine. The problem with a war with Iran is that it is unwinnable for Israel..”

It is a common idea that Israel completely controls Trump – a notion I sign up to. But we miss the point.

Yes, it's true that Trump's son-in-law Jared Kushner will make billions in real estate deals in Gaza. The point though is that Trump will no longer have any cards to play if a war starts with Iran. He will be forced to join Israel with its Samsonesque suicide doctrine. The problem with a war with Iran is that it is unwinnable for Israel and more to the point, a disaster for Western hegemony.

War with Iran, even if it were only with Iran, doesn't favour Israel even backed by the U.S. But war with Iran goes beyond the country's borders as since the Donald was reported to have directed U.S. attacks against Iran's nuclear bunkers and since it was reported that they had severely damaged them, Saudi Arabia has signed a nuclear pact with Pakistan and both Russia and China are stepping up their military procurement for Iran.

“The ceasefire is really all about boosting Trump's credibility as a statesman and giving Netanyahu breathing space to re-equip his army, ahead of an inevitable war with Iran.”
It is anything but a peace deal with the Palestinians..”

Iran is no longer alone and the first U.S. bunker buster bombs have, if anything, conglomerated these regional powers' support for Iran. Put bluntly, China simply cannot afford to have its economy threatened by Iran's cheap oil being halted and Russia needs

Iranian drones. To allow Israel, backed by the U.S., to go ahead with a nuclear strike on Iran poses such an existential threat to both Russia and China that is inconceivable that there will be no counter strike on Israel which has never been seen before, which might well mean the end of Israel as we know it.

There are no good outcomes to Bibi's plan to begin a war with Iran and Trump fears more than ever being dragged into it.

Yet for the moment, the Gaza ceasefire can be seen for what it is. An illusion, rather like those marching bands and performing artists which come onto a soccer pitch during the half time break which you don't pay too much attention to and Tom Fletcher is the effeminate wanker leading them spinning his gilt baton and his sparkling teeth.



The views expressed in this article belong to the author and do not necessarily reflect the editorial policy of Maghrebi.org.

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