

Peace Efforts Falter While U.S. Sends More Military Aid to Ukraine



Ukrainian servicemen taking part in the armed conflict with Russia-backed separatists in Donetsk region of the country attend the handover ceremony of military heavy weapons and equipment in Kiev.

BEIJING (Dispatches) - While China and Brazil have offered to mediate a cease-fire in the Russia-Ukraine military conflict, the flow of Western arms to Ukraine continued on Tuesday.

The United States announced a new \$1.2 billion military aid package for Ukraine that will include air defense systems, ammunition and funds for training, the Pentagon said.

Antonio Guterres, the secretary-general of the United Nations, has expressed skepticism over efforts to halt the conflict, which started in February 2022.

"Peace negotiations are not possible at this time," Guterres told Spain's El Pais newspaper in an interview, adding that the efforts were "doomed to fail".

"I already said that peace negotiations at this time are not going to happen. I hope in the future, yes. There was talk of a Russian offensive in the winter and a Ukrainian one in the spring. It is evident that the parties are fully involved into the war," Guterres said.

China unveiled a 12-point peace road map earlier this year to halt the hostilities. The initiative got a positive response in Moscow, with Russia's

top leadership signaling a willingness to discuss it.

However, the proposal was rejected by Kyiv and its Western allies, who accused Beijing of siding with Russia and therefore having no standing in peace talks.

In late April, Brazilian President Lula da Silva said: "There is no use now in saying who is right, who is wrong. What we have to do now is stop the war."

Meanwhile, in Moscow on Tuesday, Russian President Vladimir Putin said that Western "arrogance" is driving a "real war" against Russia, and the West's "superiority ideology is, by definition, repulsive, deadly, and criminal".

Putin, who made the comments during a Victory Day parade in Moscow's Red Square, said Western leaders "still talk about their exclusivity, put people against each other and divide society, provoke bloody conflicts and coups, sow hatred, Russophobia, aggressive nationalism, destroy those family, traditional values that make humans human".

Victory Day marks the anniversary of Germany's unconditional surrender in World War II on the night of May

8, 1945.

The Ukraine Security Assistance Initiative (USAI) funds from Washington will be used to purchase the weapons, allowing U.S. President Joe Biden's administration to buy arms from industry instead of pulling them from U.S. stocks. Delivery of the weapons and systems depends on their availability and production timeline.

The Pentagon said it will fund air-defense munitions and drones for air defense and provide equipment to help modify Western air-defense launchers, missiles and radars so they can be used with Ukraine's systems. It will also buy artillery rounds, howitzer ammunition, satellite imagery assistance and funding for ongoing maintenance and spare parts for a variety of systems.

U.S. officials said the weapons include HAWK air-defense systems. They spoke on condition of anonymity because that has not yet been formally announced.

So far in fiscal 2023, the U.S. Department of Defense has provided \$5 billion in military aid to Ukraine under the USAI in four separate tranches. In fiscal 2022, the U.S. spent \$6.3 billion worth in USAI funds for Ukraine's defense.

The U.S. has also rushed more than \$35 billion worth of weapons to Ukraine using presidential drawdown authority, which authorizes the president to transfer articles and services from U.S. stocks without congressional approval during an emergency.

Tuesday's military aid announcement came as Congress and the White House debated ways to avoid a default on the nation's \$31.4 trillion debt, with many Republicans demanding sharp cuts in domestic spending in exchange for increasing the debt ceiling.

Members of both parties, however, maintain that they support continued aid for Ukraine including top Republicans House Speaker Kevin McCarthy and Mitch McConnell, the top Republican in the Senate.

Sudan's Death Toll Rises as Warring Sides Continue Talks



A soldier stands as Sudanese women who fled the violence in their country, wait to receive food supplies from a Turkish aid group near the border between Sudan and Chad.

CAIRO (AP) — The death toll from the ongoing clashes in Sudan has risen to 604 people, including civilians, the UN health agency said. The new figures come as representatives of the warring parties are holding talks in Saudi Arabia.

More than 5,100 people were also wounded in connection with the fighting, World Health Organization spokesperson Tarik Jasarevic told reporters. On Monday, the Sudanese Doctors' Syndicate, which tracks only civilian casualties, said that the fatalities had reached 487.

The persisting war between Sudanese military chiefs have severely impacted civilians in the North African state, with the number of people forced to flee their homes doubling in the past week to 700,000, the United Nations said.

Hundreds of people have already been killed in the war amid fresh concerns about the emerging ethnic clashes that have left at least 16 people killed so far in south of the country as well as demonstrations held in support of the

army by a powerful group in eastern Sudan, an area that had not been affected by the war.

Paul Dillon, spokesman for the UN's International Organization for Migration in Geneva, said more than 700,000 people are currently internally displaced by the fighting, which is now in its fourth week.

This is while the figure had stood at 340,000 people last Tuesday.

Many Sudanese cross the border to escape the raging battle between the country's army, led by Abdel Fattah al-Burhan, and his new rival, Mohamed Hamdan Daglo, who is in charge of the Rapid Support Forces (RSF).

The fighting is concentrated in the capital Khartoum, though other areas -- particularly the West Darfur region bordering Chad -- have also witnessed heavy fighting.

The United Nations Refugee Agency announced on Monday that in addition to internally displaced people, another 150,000 people have fled to neighboring countries.

Pakistan Court Indicts Imran Khan After Arrest Sparks Deadly Unrest



Supporters of Pakistan's former Prime Minister Imran Khan throw stones towards police during a protest against Khan's arrest, in Peshawar, Pakistan, May 10, 2023.

ISLAMABAD (Dispatches) - A Pakistani court on Wednesday indicted former prime minister Imran Khan on charges of selling state gifts during his four years in power, a day after his arrest in an unrelated fraud case sparked unrest that killed at least five people.

The action against ex-cricket star Khan, 70, comes at a precarious time for the South Asian country of 220 million people as it grapples with a severe economic crisis and a delay to an International Monetary Fund bailout since November.

At least four people died in clashes in the northwestern city of Peshawar on Wednesday, a hospital official said, as Khan's supporters clashed with police across the country in response to his arrest by the anti-graft agency in a separate case related to land fraud. Another person died on Tuesday.

Khan's indictment followed a decision by the Election Commission of Pakistan in October, which found him guilty of illegally selling state gifts between 2018 and 2022 and barred him from holding public office until the next election due in November. He has denied any wrongdoing.

Mohsin Shah Nawaz Ranjha, a lawmaker from Pakistan's ruling coalition who was a plaintiff in the case against Khan on state gifts, confirmed his indictment and said the former premier had put the "country's peace at stake". Khan's colleagues in his Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party did not immediately respond to a request for comment on his indictment. His legal team has challenged his arrest in the Supreme Court.

The concern of the region and the international community." The nuclear consultative group was announced as part of a "Washington Declaration" made during Yoon's trip to the U.S. Yoon has said the declaration has "upgraded" the alliance with the U.S. and that Japan is not ruled out from joining the NCG.

It also includes a renewed pledge by Seoul not to pursue nuclear bombs of its own despite recent polls suggesting a majority want Seoul to acquire them. Japan and South Korea are set to agree early next month to link their radars via a U.S. system to share real-time information on North Korea's ballistic missiles, a person with knowledge of the matter said on Tuesday.

South Korea's presidential office also said on Monday that the country would form a group with Japan and the United States to share information about North Korea's missiles, news agency Yonhap reported.

North Korea Warns Japan Not to Join Nuclear Group

SEOUL (Reuters) - North Korea's foreign ministry has warned Japan not join the newly announced Nuclear Consultative Group (NCG) between South Korea and the U.S. and said doing so would make the Northeast Asian region unstable.

The group, announced during South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol's state visit to the U.S. last month, will see the U.S. give Seoul more insight and say in its nuclear planning over any conflict with North Korea.

"If Japan persistently resorts to forming the U.S.-led tripartite military alliance...it will plunge Northeast Asia into instability and finally turn it into a sea of flames, where it will perish," Kim Sol Hwa of the foreign ministry's Institute for Japan Studies said in an editorial.

The comment was aimed at Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida, who paid a working visit to South Korea on Sunday, criticizing the first bilateral trip in 12 years as "amplifying

Jury Finds Trump Liable for Sexual Abuse, Awards Accuser \$5mn



Trump found liable for sexual battery, defamation in E. Jean Carroll trial

NEW YORK (AP) — A jury has found Donald Trump liable for sexually abusing advice columnist E. Jean Carroll in 1996, awarding her \$5 million in a judgment that could haunt the former president as he campaigns to regain the White House.

The verdict was split: Jurors rejected Carroll's claim that she was raped, finding Trump responsible for a lesser degree of sexual abuse. The judgment adds to Trump's legal woes and offers vindication to Carroll, whose allegations had been mocked and dismissed by Trump for years.

She nodded as the verdict was announced in a New York City federal courtroom only three hours after deliberations had begun, then hugged supporters and smiled through tears. As the courtroom cleared, Carroll could be heard laughing and crying.

Jurors also found Trump liable for defaming Carroll over her allegations. Trump did not attend the civil trial and was absent when the verdict

was read.

Trump immediately lashed out on his social media site, claiming that he does not know Carroll and referring to the verdict as "a disgrace" and "a continuation of the greatest witch hunt of all time." He promised to appeal.

Trump's lawyer, Joseph Tacopina, shook hands with Carroll and hugged her lawyer, Roberta Kaplan, after the verdict was announced. Outside the courthouse, he told reporters the jury's rejection of the rape claim while finding Trump responsible for sexual abuse was "perplexing" and "strange."

He defended Trump's absence, citing the trial's "circus atmosphere." He said having Trump there "would be more of a circus."

Carroll, in her own statement, said she sued Trump to "clear my name and to get my life back. Today, the world finally knows the truth. This victory is not just for me but for every woman who has suffered because she was not believed."

News in Brief

MOSCOW (Reuters) - The Kremlin said on Wednesday that Poland's decision to rename the Russian city of Kaliningrad in its official documents was a "hostile act", as bilateral ties continue to fray over the conflict in Ukraine. Kaliningrad was known by the German name of Königsberg until after World War II, when it was annexed by the Soviet Union and renamed to honor Soviet politician Mikhail Kalinin. Warsaw said on Tuesday that Kalinin's connection to the 1940 Katyn massacre - when thousands of Polish military officers were executed by Soviet forces - had negative connotations and that the city should now be referred to as Krolewiec, its name when it was ruled by the Kingdom of Poland in the 15th and 16th centuries.

LABUAN BAJO, Indonesia (AP) — Southeast Asian leaders condemned an attack on an aid convoy that the regional group had arranged for displaced people in Myanmar, calling Wednesday for an immediate stop to violence and for the military government to comply with a peace plan. Leaders of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations convened in the picturesque harbor town of Labuan Bajo in southern Indonesia at the start of a two-day summit. Their host, President Joko Widodo, called for unity amid global economic headwinds and major-power rivalry that's lashing the region.

NEW YORK (AP) — U.S. Rep. George Santos, who faced outrage and mockery over a litany of fabrications about his heritage, education and professional pedigree, has been charged with federal criminal offenses, two people familiar with the matter told The Associated Press. The charges against Santos, filed in the Eastern District of New York, remain under seal. The New York Republican has admitted to lying about having Jewish ancestry, a Wall Street background, college degrees and a history as a star volleyball player. Serious questions about his finances also surfaced — including the source of what he claimed was a quickly amassed fortune despite recent financial problems, including evictions and owing thousands of dollars in back rent.

KALEHE, DR of Congo (AP) - The death toll from flooding in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo crept higher as aid workers found more bodies among the muddy devastation and wounded residents succumbed to their injuries in an under-equipped local clinic. The floods, in a remote, mountainous area of South Kivu province, ripped through the riverside villages of Nyamukubi and Bushushu five days ago, razing houses, destroying crops and killing more than 400 people. It was the deadliest natural disaster in recent Congo history. Survivor Paul Serushago was still searching for the bodies of two family members on Tuesday, digging with a spade in the mud and debris that reached halfway up the doorway of their home in Nyamukubi.

ROME (AP) — Greenpeace and an environmental coalition including 12 Italian citizens are suing Italian energy company ENI, accusing it of knowingly contributing to climate change. The complaint names ENI as well as its two biggest shareholders, the Italian Economy Ministry and the Italian state lender and public investment bank, Cassa di Risparmio di Trieste. It's seeking past and future damages as a result of "climate change to which ENI has significantly contributed by its conduct in recent decades, while being aware of it," according to a statement from Greenpeace Italy.

MEXICO CITY (Reuters) - Long lines of migrants have amassed this week in the border city of Tijuana, near the sprawling wall that divides Mexico from the United States, in the final days of a three-year long COVID-19 policy that blocked people crossing from seeking asylum. The policy, known as Title 42, is set to expire at midnight on May 11, prompting a rush of migrants to the border, now huddled under black plastic or makeshift tents waiting to cross into the U.S. Activists say that queues of migrants started arriving this week to the city of Tijuana, which borders San Diego, California, hoping to get ahead of a potential rush in asylum applications after May 11.