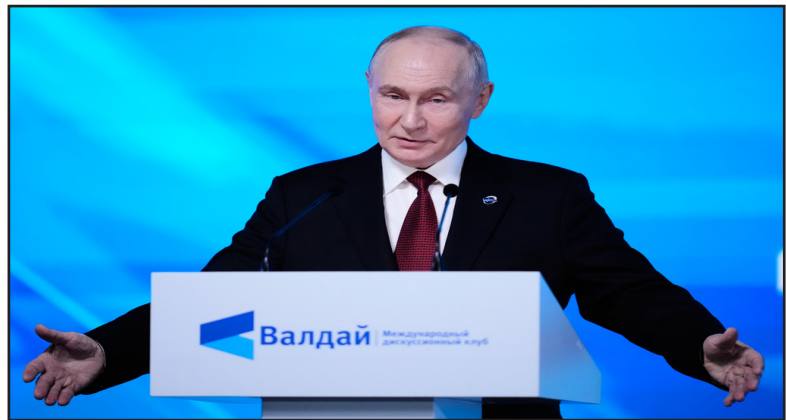


Putin Warns Against Seeking Russia's 'Strategic Defeat', Eyes Multipolar World Order



Russian President Vladimir Putin gestures speaking at the session of the Valdai Discussion Club in Moscow on Oct 1, 2026.

MOSCOW (Dispatches) - Russian President Vladimir Putin has said that bloc confrontation and the West's pursuit of unilateral security advantages lie at the heart of the current global security crisis.

Speaking at the plenary session of the Valdai Discussion Club on Thursday, he warned that rhetoric seeking a "strategic defeat" of Russia carries severe risks of pushing the conflict into its most brutal phase.

Putin said the West had for years nurtured aggressive nationalism and Russophobia in Ukraine, seeking to turn the country into a geopolitical instrument against Russia. Moscow's actions were a response to tangible threats to its own security, he said.

The path out of conflict lies not in defeating one side, but in mutual compromise and a restored stable balance of forces, he said, adding that Europe must abandon bloc thinking

and return to the principle of equal and indivisible security.

On world order, Putin stated the old unipolar system is collapsing and the world is becoming multipolar. Western nations must adapt to this reality and cooperate while respecting the core interests of most countries, he said.

He added that international relations require adherence not merely to written law, but also the spirit of law, established customs and moral restraints. Systematic breach of obligations and the transformation of diplomatic dialogue into propaganda erode the foundations of coexistence between states, he said.

He also accused Western nations of erecting a new "iron curtain" in global relations, stressing that such isolationist policies are doomed to failure.

Contrary to Western accusations, Russia has no intention of creating divides in the international commu-

nity, said Putin.

He pointed out that Western countries have imposed thousands of sanctions on Russia, barred diplomatic engagements with Russian representatives, and sought to isolate Russia from international organizations.

Noting the historical lessons of the Cold War, Putin stated that the Soviet Union's attempt to build an iron curtain ended in total failure. He added that any modern attempt to impose such ideological and geopolitical barriers is unrealistic and will inevitably collapse amid current global dynamics.

Founded in 2004, the Valdai Discussion Club held annual forum this year in Moscow under the theme: "Responsibility for the Future: Limits of the Possible, or Limitless Possibilities?" It gathered around 120 delegates from 40 countries and regions.

Separately, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said on Thursday that Russia will undoubtedly ensure the security of the Kaliningrad region.

"Kaliningrad is an integral part of Russia. It is our highly important westernmost region. Essentially, the point is that Russia will undoubtedly ensure the security of this region under its national legislation," Peskov told reporters.

On Monday, the Russian Embassy in Belgium said Russia had warned the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the Belgian Foreign Ministry that the alliance's hostile actions near the Kaliningrad region were increasing the risk of a direct armed clash, entitling Russia to deploy any weapons at its disposal for defensive purposes.

Spain Faces More Fury Over Housing After Parliament Rejects Decree



Protesters gather outside the Spanish parliament during a vote on housing decrees in Madrid, Spain, October 2, 2026.

MADRID (Reuters) - Protesters said they would return to the streets across Spain and press on with their encampment in Madrid after a government bid to answer their complaints about a mounting housing crisis was rejected by parliament on Friday.

Crowds gathered outside the assembly chanting "your profits, our misery" as lawmakers voted down the minority government's decree that had been drawn up to address mass anger over the eviction of an 87-year-old woman.

The legislation had sought to ban evictions of vulnerable tenants until 2030, impose a two-year rent freeze extension for existing leases and introduce tighter rules for short-term rentals.

It failed after lawmakers from Catalan separatist party Junts - a sometime ally of the left-wing government - joined the opposition in voting it down, arguing that the proposals would exacerbate matters by reducing housing supply.

The Tenants' Union which had driven the protests said it would press on with plans

for more mass rallies for Saturday, piling pressure on the coalition. The decree failed with 178 votes against and 172 in favor.

The eviction of pensioner Mari Carmen Abascal last week triggered protests across Spain. Young people pitched tents in Madrid's central square and other cities for almost a week, bringing back memories of anti-austerity sit-ins sparked by the global financial crisis in 2008-12.

"The encampment will continue and will continue expanding to other neighborhoods. We're aiming for a general strike," Tenants' Union spokesperson Alicia del Rio said.

Abascal's eviction unleashed anger over the cost of housing, with many young people living with parents past 30 years of age.

Rents have doubled over the last decade with average prices reaching €1,176 (\$1,323) a month, equivalent to 98.7% of the average salary for a young person, according to the Youth Council of Spain.

"People have said 'enough is enough'; this cannot go on. The housing problem must be resolved; structural measures must be taken, and this cannot continue," Abascal's lawyer, Beatriz Duro, said in an interview with Reuters on Thursday.

Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez's coalition government has 147 seats in the 350-seat chamber and relies on smaller parties, including Junts, to pass legislation.

Ethiopian Forces Near Tigray Capital, Fears Grow of Wider Conflict

NAIROBI (Reuters) - Militiamen allied with Ethiopia's federal government said they were bearing down on the capital of the northern rebel stronghold of Tigray on Friday, as fears grew that fighting could spill into a wider war after Ethiopia and Eritrea cut diplomatic ties.

The pro-government Tigray Peace Forces militia said on Facebook it had captured the town of Milazat, about 20 km (12 miles) southeast of Mekelle, the main city in Tigray region.

Video posted on social media and purportedly from Milazat showed TPF fighters in a blue truck chanting: "Mekelle! Mekelle!" Reuters could not immediately verify the video.

The Ethiopian military and allied fighters have made quick advances into Tigray since combat erupted last week with a rebel alliance led by the region's ruling party, the Tigray People's Liberation Front, in the worst escalation of violence since a 2020-2022 civil war.

Spokespeople for Ethiopia's military, its government and the TPLF did not immediately respond to requests for comment on the reported advance.

Analysts fear the current conflict could spread beyond Ethiopia's borders in an increasingly fragile region where other powers are competing for influence. Tigray has Ethiopia's longtime foe Eritrea to its north, and Sudan — caught up in a more than three-year-old civil war — to its

west.

Ethiopia's government has accused Eritrea, Sudan and Egypt of supporting the opposition alliance — an allegation they have all denied.

On Thursday, Ethiopia said it was closing its embassy in Eritrea "in response to Eritrea's direct and indirect acts of hostility and belligerence" and ordered 10 Eritrean diplomats to leave Ethiopia within 48 hours.

Eritrea responded by severing all diplomatic ties with Ethiopia. The two countries fought a border war from 1998-2000 and only restored diplomatic relations in 2018.

Inside Mekelle, banks and shops were closed on Friday in anticipation of possible fighting, two residents, who asked not to be named, told Reuters.

EU, Ukraine Agree to Advance \$50bn in Support for Ukraine in 2027



Brussels (Dispatches) - The European Commission and Ukraine on Thursday agreed to move swiftly on allocating €45 billion (\$50 billion) under the Ukraine Support Loan for 2027, according to a joint statement.

The two sides said the allocation would be subject to established conditions and that work would also begin to identify additional budgetary and defense needs for Ukraine.

"All sides agreed that other partners should also fulfil their financial commitments and step up their efforts in light of the significant challenges Ukraine is facing," the statement said.

The European Commission and Ukraine also agreed to hold monthly meetings to coordinate their joint efforts, it added.

On Thursday, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky announced the first combat use of a domestically developed FP-7 tactical ballistic missile.

"Ukrainian tactical ballistic

missile. FP-7. First combat use. Thank you for the result," Zelensky wrote on X, attaching the statement with a video.

Zelensky added that the missile would now move into the production stage.

Developed by Ukrainian company Fire Point, the FP-7 is designed to carry a payload of up to 200 kilograms and strike targets at ranges of up to 250 km.

The ground-launched missile is being developed as a ballistic interceptor for the Frejya program.

In a post on Telegram, Kyiv Mayor Vitali Klitschko said Russia-launched drones struck the Southern Bridge during an attack on the Ukrainian capital on Thursday.

Klitschko said that two drones hit the area near the bridge's support section.

The Kyiv City State Administration said traffic over the bridge had been temporarily suspended. A preliminary inspection found no critical damage to the structure.

EasyJet Cabin Crew Strike Disrupts Hundreds of Flights in Portugal



EasyJet cabin crew based in Portugal walked out on Friday over poor working conditions, a move set to ground hundreds of flights.

LISBON (Euronews) - A strike by easyJet cabin crew in Portugal began Friday and is set to continue until Tuesday, with 443 flights from the airline's bases in the capital Lisbon, Porto, and Faro already canceled, according to the National Union of Civil Aviation Flight Personnel.

Union leader Ana Dias said the canceled flights represent around 80% of scheduled services during the five-day strike, while warning that other flights could also face disruptions.

"Crews arrived in Porto from France, and will probably operate flights to replace the strikers, once again in an illegal manner," Dias said Thursday, according to the union.

An easyJet official told the Lusa news agency that the airline expects to operate around 55% of its scheduled flights during the strike.

The company said minimum ser-

vices account for around 22% of its Portugal-based operations, while additional flights to and from Portugal will be operated by aircraft and crews from other European bases.

EasyJet said the operation is being conducted "in full compliance with applicable legislation and regulations."

The union disputes the use of crews from other bases to replace striking workers, calling the practice illegal and saying it may take the matter to court.

The strike follows disputes over flight schedule stability, pay progression based on length of service, and terms proposed during negotiations for a company agreement.

Another easyJet cabin crew strike is scheduled for Dec. 19-23, potentially affecting travel during the busy Christmas period.

News in Brief

New York (AFP) - A UN special rapporteur has urged Malaysia to halt the ongoing repatriation of Myanmar nationals, warning that returning them amid continuing conflict could violate the principle of non-refoulement. "I am gravely concerned the Government of Malaysia has begun to return 5,000 Myanmar nationals, including women and children, under a so-called 'voluntary repatriation program' agreed with the military authorities in Myanmar," Kelley Currie, UN special rapporteur on human rights in Myanmar, said in a statement. Malaysia began repatriating the first group of 1,476 people on Sept. 29, according to the statement. Currie said the risk of refoulement under current circumstances was "substantial," stressing that conditions for a "safe, dignified, sustainable, and genuinely voluntary" return were not in place.

BRUSSELS (AFP) - Student protests continued Friday in Belgium's Liege region, with hundreds of young people gathering at schools and several locations across the province as police made multiple arrests. In Herstal, a municipality in Liege province, police made 18 administrative arrests after officers intervened against what Mayor Frederic Daerden described as "threatening and violent individuals," according to broadcaster RTBF. In Liege, several groups of students gathered in the city center, with police saying between 500 and 600 demonstrators passed by several schools during the morning. Authorities reported several incidents during the demonstrations, including attempts to enter schools, overturned street furniture and objects thrown at school buildings. Several businesses were also damaged, while several scooters were set on fire, according to police.

BUENOS AIRES (AP) - Argentina rejected British criticism Thursday of its decision to seek international arbitration about oil exploration around the Falkland Islands, which Buenos Aires calls Islas Malvinas. It said an independent international tribunal is the appropriate mechanism to resolve the dispute peacefully. "Nothing has to be feared from submitting a dispute to an impartial international tribunal," Foreign Minister Pablo Quirno said in a statement on U.S. social media platform X. Quirno said Buenos Aires rejected Britain's characterization of the arbitration as an attempt to "undermine" the rights of Falkland Islanders. Argentina said resorting to arbitration under the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) is a legal procedure accepted by both countries and argued that international legal mechanisms provide the appropriate framework for resolving disputes.

BANGKOK (Reuters) - Taiwan on Friday received the first two of 65 F-16V fighter jets ordered from the U.S., the island's air force said, following years of delays. The two F-16V Block 70 jets landed at Chihhang Air Base in Taitung. There are 63 more to be delivered. Taiwan largely purchases arms from the U.S., its largest unofficial ally, to boost its defenses. China sends fighter jets and ships toward the island almost daily. Taiwan's defense minister said on Tuesday that the island remains in continuous discussions with the U.S. about their weapons sales.

PARIS (AFP) - A record 52 percent of Europe was exposed to intense heat stress during the exceptionally hot summer that seared the continent this year, the EU's climate monitor said Friday. Fuelled by climate change, the world's fastest-warming continent endured a relentless series of heatwaves that began unusually early in the spring, shattering temperature records and causing tens of thousands of excess deaths. "One of the things that stands out for 2026 is that the heat was not only remarkable for its intensity, but also for its geographical extent," said Samantha Burgess, climate lead at the European Centre for Medium-Range Weather Forecasts (ECMWF), which operates Copernicus.