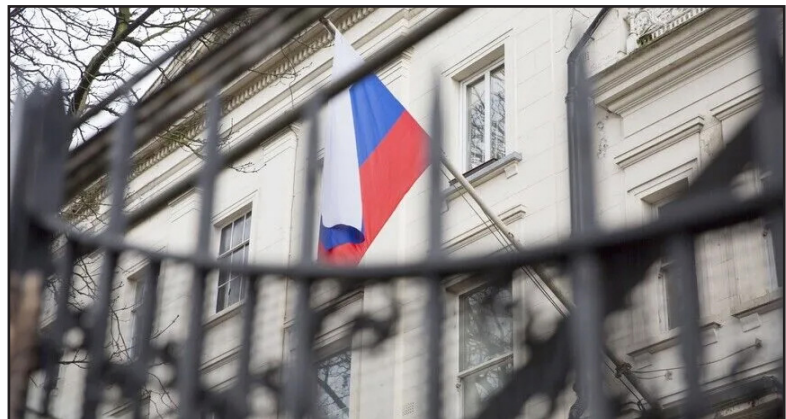


# Russia Warns of Nuclear Response to Any Kaliningrad Blockade



MOSCOW (Dispatches) - Russia has warned that any attempt to blockade the Kaliningrad Region by the UK or NATO will be met with a response using all means, including nuclear weapons.

In a statement on Telegram, the Russian Embassy in London said this while responding to UK media reports that discussed the possibility of a NATO blockade of Kaliningrad or non-recognition of Russian sovereignty over the region.

“Those advocating plans to blockade Kaliningrad or launch a strike against it should have no illusions about the consequences. Any military action by the UK or NATO against Russian territory will be met with a response using all means available to

Russia, including nuclear weapons,” it stressed.

The embassy reiterated that Russia “does not seek confrontation with NATO and Europe and does not intend to attack them,” adding that those who choose to initiate such a conflict “should not be under any illusions” that Russia would respond accordingly.

The Kaliningrad Region is a Russian exclave on the Baltic Sea, situated between Poland and Lithuania and separated from mainland Russia by Lithuanian territory.

Last week, in remarks to Anadolu, the Russian Embassy in Paris also commented on what it described as “provocative statements regarding the possibility of NATO forces strik-

ing the Kaliningrad region or blocking access to it.”

“We wish to emphasize that Russia will use all means at its disposal to defend its territory and that, should any attempt be made to carry out such plans, the retaliation will be inevitable and overwhelming,” the embassy said.

Wednesday, President Vladimir Putin said that Russia will not travel around the world seeking “handouts”.

Speaking at the first session of the newly elected State Duma in Moscow, Putin urged lawmakers to work closely with the government to provide the necessary legislative basis for Russia’s further economic development.

“Russia, unlike some others — we will not point fingers — cannot run around the world humbly begging for handouts with an outstretched hand,” he said, in an apparent reference to Ukraine.

Putin also said Russia’s financial system and economy were performing confidently, urging officials to avoid mistakes in addressing economic challenges.

“Russia’s financial system and economy feel confident. The main thing is not to make any mistakes and to approach the resolution of tasks in these extremely important areas responsibly,” he said.

## Over 400 Arrested Amid High School Blockades in France



Riot police were in force in Paris again on Tuesday as tensions flared.

Paris (Anadolu) - **French Interior Minister Laurent Nunez said more than 400 people were arrested Tuesday during widespread high school blockades.**

“Across the country, there were 440 arrests. We do not yet have

the full figures, but I am told that two-thirds resulted in people being placed in police custody,” Nunez told broadcaster BFMTV late Tuesday.

He said the arrests were mainly linked to property damage and clash-

es with security forces, including violence against public officials.

Describing the incidents as “quite serious,” Nunez said security forces had acted in an “extremely proportionate manner” in response to criticism from several political figures over police actions.

The high school student union USL reportedly said that 400 of France’s roughly 3,700 high schools had been blocked.

The Education Ministry also reported 31 injuries among students and staff, while Nunez said “48 members of the internal security forces were injured” during the day.

High school students have been mobilizing in the Ile-de-France region over the past week, protesting overcrowded classes and schedules as well as teacher shortages.

USL later called for the school blockades to continue on Thursday to demand more resources for stu-

## India’s Ujjain Tense as Mosque Partially Demolished for Hindu Pilgrimage

NEW DELHI (Dispatches) - Tensions are running high in the central Indian city of Ujjain after a prominent mosque was partially demolished to widen a road for a Hindu pilgrimage festival held every 12 years.

It began on Sunday when the 30-year-old joined hundreds of Muslims in central India’s Ujjain city for a night vigil outside a prominent mosque to prevent its partial demolition to widen the road for a Hindu pilgrimage festival held every 12 years.

Ujjain is about 200km (124 miles) from Bhopal, the capital of Madhya Pradesh state, which has been governed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) since 2003, barring a brief 15-month rule by the opposition Congress.

The Hindu nationalist BJP has been accused of a deliberate campaign to target Muslim religious structures – mosques, shrines, graveyards and madrasas (Islamic schools) – by claiming they were either illegally built or stood on former Hindu temples.

Hundreds of Muslim sites have been partially or fully demolished by the authorities in several BJP-governed states in recent years, many of them in the dead of night. In many cases, the demolitions took place even as the matter was still pending in courts.

The Muslim residents of Ujjain, who had similar fears of a nightly demolition, congregated outside the Shahi Mosque in Ujjain’s Chhatra Chowk area on Sunday night to protest against the planned demolition.

The government aims to clear and



Protesters gesture towards police officers during a demonstration near the Shahi Masjid in Ujjain, Madhya Pradesh, India, September 28, 2026.

widen the road for Simhastha Kumbh Mela, a Hindu pilgrimage to be held on the banks of the Kshipra River in 2028.

“It started about two months ago, when the Ujjain Municipal Corporation issued a notice to the Shahi Masjid, saying that the mosque would have to be acquired because the road needed to be widened,” Khan, who runs a digital marketing business, told Al Jazeera on Tuesday over telephone.

He said the municipal authorities gave a September 10 deadline to “remove the structure ourselves”, failing which, the government would take strict action.

Meanwhile, a petition filed by the Muslims before the local High Court urging a halt to the demolition was dismissed, with the court saying the 2028 Hindu pilgrimage needs additional space to manage the traffic.

“Their argument was that a lot of people would be coming from outside and that the public should not face problems. So public interest had to come first,” Khan told Al Jazeera.

As protests continued, the mosque management held several rounds of discussions with the district authorities, forcing them to agree to three feet of space from the street to be removed instead of the more than seven feet of structure originally demanded by the officials.

On Sunday night, as the administration brought bulldozers near the mosque, thousands of people congregated at Chhatra Chowk. Authorities said AI-generated social media posts by some Muslim men caused rumors that the mosque was set to be demolished, triggering the night-long demonstration.

## Shootings, Detention Deaths Put U.S. Immigration Enforcement Under Scrutiny



Federal agents spray demonstrators at close range with irritants after the killing of Renee Good by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement officer Jonathan Ross on Jan. 7, 2026, in Minneapolis.

WASHINGTON (Dispatches) - A series of fatal shootings and deaths in federal custody has put renewed focus on the Trump administration’s expanding immigration operation, including the use of force, detention conditions and the handling of investigations.

The latest case involves Wilber Rafael Garces Perez, a Venezuelan delivery driver who was shot by an Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) officer in Austin, Texas, on Sept. 20.

Federal prosecutors however charged Perez on Sept. 29 with assaulting, resisting, interfering with and impeding a federal officer. A detention hearing has been set for Oct. 2.

Perez disputes elements of the government’s account and remains in detention with a bullet lodged in his back, according to his lawyer.

Immigration agents have fired on people in at least 31 incidents since Trump launched his immigration crackdown last year, according to US gun violence tracker The Trace.

Nine people were killed and 15 injured.

The nonprofit also documented another 49 incidents in which agents held bystanders, protesters or others at gunpoint under what it described as “questionable circumstances.”

Deaths in detention have added to the scrutiny. Between Jan. 23, 2025, and Aug. 23, 2026, federal records indicate 56 people died in ICE custody.

Here is a look at some of the shootings, deaths in custody and efforts to hold those responsible accountable.

An ICE officer fatally shot Johan Sebastian Duran Guerrero, a 25-year-old Colombian national, during a vehicle encounter in Biddeford on July 13, 2026.

Guerrero worked as a food delivery

driver and cleaner and had a 3-year-old daughter. He was not the person agents had initially been seeking, according to local reporting.

Authorities said the officer fired while “fearing for public safety,” but released few details about the encounter. The shooting prompted protests and an investigation by the Maine attorney general’s office.

U.S. Rep. Chellie Pingree, a Maine Democrat, said Guerrero had a pending asylum application and a valid work permit. She demanded answers from the Department of Homeland Security about his death and expressed concern about a lack of video footage.

Lorenzo Salgado Araujo, a 52-year-old Mexican national and father of three U.S. citizens, was driving his construction crew to a job when an ICE officer fatally shot him on July 7, 2026.

He had lived in the U.S. for nearly 35 years, according to an account entered into the Congressional Record.

Alex Pretti, a 37-year-old intensive care nurse at the Minneapolis Veterans Affairs hospital, was fatally shot by federal immigration personnel on Jan. 24, 2026.

Colleagues remembered him for his care for seriously ill veterans. His death brought nurses and other health workers to a vigil near the scene.

Federal officials initially portrayed Pretti as an armed threat. Video showed him recording events with his phone and intervening as officers confronted a woman before he was wrestled to the ground and shot.

Renee Good, a 37-year-old U.S. citizen and mother of three, was fatally shot by an ICE officer on Jan. 7, 2026.

Good was a writer who had studied English at Old Dominion University, which issued a statement mourning her death.

## EU Climate Agency: Nearly 40% of World Population Exposed to Harmful Ozone Pollution

BRUSSELS (Firstpost) - **Nearly 40% of the world’s population has been exposed to harmful levels of ground-level ozone in 2026, according to a new analysis by the Copernicus Atmosphere Monitoring Service (CAMS).**

The analysis, published Wednesday, shows how extreme heat and human-caused air pollution combined to drive ozone pollution across large parts of the world during the first eight months of the year.

According to CAMS, only 5% of the global population was exposed to ozone levels classified as “good” under the analysis, while Asia was the world’s most affected region, followed by Europe and North America.

Some 60% of Asia’s population was exposed to “extremely poor” ozone levels in 2026, rising to 90% when populations exposed to “poor” and “very poor” levels were included.

In Europe, 50% of the population experienced “poor,” “very poor” or “extremely poor” ozone exposure, with repeated heat waves between June and August contributing to elevated ozone concentrations.

In North America, more than two-thirds of the population experienced “poor,” “very poor” or “extremely poor” ozone exposure, with emis-

sions from major wildfires contributing to elevated ozone concentrations.

CAMS said Oceania remained the region with the lowest ozone exposure, with its entire population experiencing “good” or “fair” ozone levels.

In South America, 81% of the population experienced “good” or “fair” ozone exposure, while the figure for Africa was 56%.

The analysis also highlighted the increasing importance of transboundary air pollution, with wildfire smoke, desert dust and other pollutants traveling thousands of kilometers across national borders and oceans.

CAMS said the findings underline the relationship between climate change and air quality.

Ozone itself is a greenhouse gas, while higher temperatures can create conditions that favor ozone formation, creating what scientists describe as an “ozone-climate penalty.”

“Air pollution does not respect national borders,” Laurence Rouil, director of CAMS, said. “Wildfire smoke, ozone and dust can travel thousands of kilometers, affecting communities far from their source.”

Rouil said the findings highlight the need for global action on air quality alongside climate measures.

## News in Brief

STOCKHOLM (Reuters) - The Swedish government should apologize to the indigenous Sami people for past injustices and Sami interests should be given stronger consideration against mining and wind power projects, a government-appointed commission said on Wednesday. An estimated 80,000 to 100,000 Sami live in the northern lands of Sweden, Finland, Norway and Russia, where reindeer herding over vast areas has been the cornerstone of their culture and livelihood. The government-appointed Truth Commission said that the Swedish state had unilaterally taken ownership of large parts of Sami land, especially during the 18th and 19th centuries. “The indigenous Sami people today face major challenges in preserving and developing their culture as a direct consequence of the Swedish state’s past and present policies,” the Truth Commission wrote in the report published on the government webpage.

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LONDON (AP) - About 18,000 homes and businesses across Ireland were without electricity Wednesday following strong winds and heavy rain. Electricity provider ESB Networks said crews were working to restore power after adverse weather caused widespread disruption, particularly in the south and southwest of the country. The company urged customers to continue checking its website for updates on power outages and restoration times. Further heavy showers and thunderstorms were expected in parts of Munster, Ireland’s southern province.

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JOHANNESBURG (Reuters) - South Africa’s foreign affairs ministry called in U.S. Ambassador Leo Brent Bozell III on Tuesday for a third time over what it described as “undiplomatic conduct,” a senior government official told Reuters, but did not elaborate on what the conduct was. “We can confirm that we demarched Ambassador Bozell. The third demarche since he started his duties nine months ago,” a senior official at South Africa’s Department of International Relations and Co-operation (DIRCO) told Reuters late on Tuesday. A demarche is a formal diplomatic protest from one government to another.

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BUCHAREST (AFP) - The Romanian parliament on Wednesday rejected a pro-European liberal as prime minister, prolonging a political crisis seen as fueling an already rising far right. Liberal European Parliament member Siegfried Muresan failed to get lawmakers’ backing with just 182 of the 233 votes needed to approve his government, according to the official count. This brings the prospects of snap elections closer, but pro-EU President Nicusor Dan has warned those would not solve the crisis facing the eastern European country.

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BRATISLAVA (AFP) - A knife-wielding schoolboy killed a teacher and wounded another and a pupil in an attack in northwestern Slovakia on Tuesday, authorities said. The attack occurred at around 0700 GMT in the village of Staskov close to the Czech border. A 13-year-old schoolboy was detained over the attack, police said, adding he was being investigated for “premeditated murder”. “This morning, after the first class, a school pupil launched a knife attack,” Interior Minister Matus Sutaj Estok told reporters.