

# West Bank, Gaza rally to slam Israel's deadly raid in Nablus

"We salute all proud Palestinians, who came early on Friday to turn entire Palestinian territories into a den of lions in response to the Nablus massacre," Haniyeh pointed out. Meanwhile, the Council of the Arab League has condemned Israeli crimes against Palestinians and demanded the provision of international protection to the oppressed nation. The council decried the large-scale Israeli crimes — classified as crimes against humanity and war crimes under international humanitarian law — against Palestinian people and called on the international community to implement

resolutions related to the protection of Palestinian civilians, especially the UN Security Council Resolution 904 (1994), UNSC Resolution 605 (1987) and UN General Assembly Resolution 10/20-RES/ES (201) on the protection of the Palestinian civilian population. It urged international institutions to adopt promising measures for the protection of Palestinians and form a practical and effective mechanism to implement the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) resolution. The council also called upon the UN Security Council to shoulder its responsibilities in terms of defending international security and peace, take immediate effective actions to halt all Israe-

li crimes and practices, and put an end to the illegal Israeli occupation of Palestinian territories. Over the past months, Israel has ramped up attacks on Palestinian towns and cities throughout the occupied territories. As a result of these attacks, dozens of Palestinians have lost their lives and many others have been arrested. The United Nations marked 2022 as the deadliest year for Palestinians in the West Bank in 16 years. Israeli forces killed at least 171 Palestinians in the West Bank and occupied East Al-Quds last year, including more than 30 children, while at least 9,000 others were injured.



↑ Palestinians participate in a mass rally in the occupied West Bank on February 24, 2023, in condemnation of the brutal Israeli military raid on the northern West Bank city of Nablus. ● TWITTER

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### Australia reassures Thailand over nuclear subs



● ABC

AFP — Australia's Defence Minister aimed to reassure Thailand on Friday that plans to acquire a new fleet of nuclear submarines would enhance "collective security" in the region after neighbouring countries voiced concerns. Australia has been weighing whether it wants the United States or Britain to supply the new nuclear subs, with Prime Minister Anthony Albanese expected to announce a decision in Washington next month at a meeting with both countries' leaders.

### White supremacists dominate extremism-related US murders

REUTERS — Mass shootings in the United States accounted for most extremism-related fatalities last year in the country with over 80% of those murders committed by white supremacists, data released by the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) showed on Thursday. The advocacy group labeled 25 murders in 2022 as "extremist-related," with 18 of those "committed in whole or part for ideological motives."

### Two Pakistanis leave Gitmo after 20 years without charges



AL JAZEERA — Officials from the United States have returned two Pakistani brothers to their home country after holding them for 20 years without charges at the Guantanamo Bay military prison. Abdul, 55, and Mohammed Rabbani, 53, were the latest inmates to be released from US custody as the US moves towards emptying and shutting down the prison.



↑ Dmitry Medvedev, deputy chairman of Russia's Security Council ● AP

## Moldova warns of Russian 'psy-ops' as tensions rise Russia's Medvedev floats idea of pushing back Poland's borders

### International Desk

Former Russian president Dmitry Medvedev said the only way for Russia to ensure lasting peace with Ukraine is to push back the borders of hostile states, even as far as the frontiers of NATO member Poland, while Moldova's leaders rejected the possibility of being targeted by Russia. Medvedev, now deputy chairman of Russia's Security Council, made the remarks a year after Moscow sent tens of thousands of troops into Ukraine to protect Russian speakers and ensure its own security, Al Jazeera wrote. "Victory will be achieved. We all want it to happen as soon as possible. And that day will come," Medvedev stated in the comments of a message on his Telegram account on Friday. He predicted that tough negotiations with Ukraine and the West would culminate in "some kind of agreement". But he said that deal

would lack "fundamental agreements on real borders" and not amount to an overarching European security pact, making it vital for Russia to extend its borders now. "That is why it is so important to achieve all the goals of the special military operation. To push back the borders that threaten our country as far as possible, even if they are the borders of Poland," said Medvedev. Poland shares long eastern borders with Ukraine and with Russia's ally Belarus, and a frontier of some 200km (125 miles) in its northeastern corner with the Russian exclave of Kaliningrad. Any encroachment on Poland's borders would bring Russia for the first time into direct conflict with NATO. US President Joe Biden pledged in a speech in Warsaw this week to defend "every inch" of NATO territory if it was attacked. In his state-of-the-nation

speech earlier this week, the Russian president announced the suspension of a nuclear arms treaty with the US and blamed the government in Kyiv for taking the Ukrainian people "hostage" and failing to address their needs. "They [Ukrainian government] intend to transform a local conflict into a phase of global confrontation," Putin said on Tuesday. "We will react accordingly because, in this case, we are talking about the existence of our country."

### Moldova dismisses Russian 'psy-ops'

Moldova's leaders have rejected Russian claims that Ukraine is planning to attack the country's breakaway pro-Russian territory and called for calm. Russia's Defence Ministry earlier said that Ukrainian saboteurs, dressed as Russian troops, would attack from Transnistria, according to BBC. "The defence ministry be-

lieves it is an element of a psychological operation rather than a real plan," said Moldova's State Secretary Valeriu Mija. Moldovan President Maia Sandu, on a visit to neighbouring Romania, spoke of unprecedented security challenges ahead. Moldova is not part of NATO but last June it was awarded the EU candidate status on the same day as Ukraine, bringing it one step closer to joining the bloc. Earlier this week the Moldovan leader met US President Joe Biden, who promised to support her country's sovereignty. However, on Moldova's eastern flank lies a narrow strip of land called Transnistria, between the Dniester river and the Ukrainian border. This breakaway region has a contingent of Russian peacekeepers, and Moscow has warned that any threat to its security will be treated as an attack on Russia itself.

## China: US refused to share information on downed balloon

China's foreign ministry said on Friday that the United States had refused to reply to a Chinese request for information on the balloon that it had shot down off the coast of South Carolina earlier this month. The Chinese balloon, which Beijing denies was a government spy vessel, spent a week flying over the United States and Canada before President Joe Biden ordered it to be shot down, according to Reuters.

The episode strained further ties between Washington and Beijing, leading America's top diplomat to postpone a trip to China. "The United States, from the recovery of the (balloon) remains to the analysis of the (balloon) debris, has completely acted on its own and in a surreptitious manner," Chinese Foreign Ministry's Spokesperson Wang Wenbin told a regular briefing. "China early on through protected consular channels clearly de-

manded the United States notify (China) on the progress (of recovery of the balloon), but the United States refused to respond." China said that the alleged spy balloon is a civilian airship used for meteorological purposes and that it was accidentally blown off course into US airspace. The United States has said a Federal Bureau of Investigation Laboratory in Virginia is analysing debris from the balloon for "counterintelligence exploitation."



↑ The Chinese balloon drifts to the ocean after being shot down off the coast in Surfside Beach, South Carolina, US, on February 4, 2023. ● RANDALL HILL/REUTERS