

# Russia's Wagner announces total capture of Bakhmut



● TELEGRAM/CONCORDGROUP/OFFICIAL

## International Desk

Russian mercenary chief Yevgeny Prigozhin said on Saturday his Wagner fighters had completed the capture of Bakhmut, but Ukraine rejected the claim and said fighting was still going on. Prigozhin made the claim in a video in which he appeared in combat fatigues in front of a line of fighters holding Russian flags and Wagner banners, Reuters reported. "Today, at 12 noon, Bakhmut was completely

taken," Prigozhin said. "We completely took the whole city, from house to house." The Wagner boss also said it will hand control of Bakhmut to Russia's army by May 25 and withdraw its fighters, AFP reported. "By May 25 we will completely examine (Bakhmut), create the necessary lines of defence and hand it to the military," Prigozhin said. "We ourselves will go into field camps."

Ukraine: Fighting goes on. However, Ukrainian military spokesperson Serhiy

Cherevatyi told Reuters: "This is not true. Our units are fighting in Bakhmut." Bakhmut has been the focus of the longest battle of war in Ukraine, which is nearly at the end of its 15th month. Prigozhin taunted Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy and U.S. President Joe Biden, who were taking part in a Group of Seven summit in Japan on Saturday where the Ukraine war was front of mind for world leaders. Addressing Zelenskyy, Prigozhin said: "Today when

you see Biden, kiss him on the top of his head, say hi to him from me." Zelenskyy arrived Saturday in Japan for talks with the G7 leaders. Zelenskyy's in-person visit to the G7 summit came just hours after the United States agreed to allow training on potent American-made fighter jets, laying the groundwork for their eventual transfer to Ukraine. According to a U.S. official, President Joe Biden will also announce a \$375 million military aid package

for Ukraine while in Hiroshima. The official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said the package will include artillery, ammunition and HIMARS rocket launchers. Russia's deputy defense minister, Alexander Grushko, accused Western countries of "continuing along the path of escalation," following the announcements that raised the possibility of sending F-16s to Kyiv. The G7 vowed to intensify the pressure in its joint statement Saturday.

## Air strikes hit Khartoum's outskirts as Sudan's war enters sixth week



Smoke rises above buildings after aerial bombardment, during clashes between the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces and the army in Khartoum North, Sudan, on May 1, 2023.

● MOHAMED NURELDIN  
ABDALLAH/REUTERS

Air strikes hit outer areas of the Sudanese capital Khartoum overnight and on Saturday morning, as fighting that has trapped civilians in a humanitarian crisis and displaced more than a million entered its sixth week. The fighting between Sudan's army and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces has led to a collapse in law and order with looting that both sides blame the other for. Stocks of food, cash, and essentials are rapidly dwindling, Reuters reported.

Air strikes were reported by eyewitnesses in southern Omdurman and northern Bahri, the two cities that lie across the Nile from Khartoum, forming Sudan's "triple capital." Some of the strikes took place near the state broadcaster in Omdurman, the eyewitnesses said. Eyewitnesses in Khartoum said that the situation was relatively calm, although sporadic gunshots could be heard. The conflict, which began on April 15, has displaced almost 1.1 million people internally and into neighbouring countries. Some 705 people have been killed and at least 5,287 injured, according to the World Health Organization.

Talks sponsored by the United States and Saudi Arabia in Jeddah have not been fruitful, and the two sides have accused each other of violating multiple ceasefire agreements. The RSF is embedded in residential districts, drawing almost continual air strikes by the regular armed forces. In recent days ground fighting has flared once again in the Darfur region, in the cities of Nyala and Zalenjei. Both sides blamed each other in statements late on Friday for sparking the fighting in Nyala, one of the country's largest cities, which had for weeks been relatively calm due to a locally-brokered truce. A local activist told Reuters there were sporadic gun clashes near the city's main market close to army headquarters on Saturday morning. Almost 30 people have died in the two previous days of fighting, according to activists. The war broke out in Khartoum after disputes over plans for the RSF to be integrated into the army and over the future chain of command under an internationally backed deal to shift Sudan towards democracy following decades of conflict-ridden autocracy. The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) announced late on Friday more than \$100 million to Sudan and countries receiving fleeing Sudanese, including much-needed food and medical aid. "It's hard to convey the extent of the suffering occurring right now in Sudan," said agency head Samantha Power.

## Palestinian Islamic ...



Abu Sharif said the PIJ had been developing its military might on a daily basis since it came to existence in 1981, which had become a source of grave concern for Israeli leaders. "As the Zionists acknowledged, the Islamic Jihad came out of the recent war successfully. This was a clear indication of the movement's growing power," he pointed out. Abu Sharif hailed a coordinated response by the Palestinian resistance faction to the Israeli raids, saying, "Although we suffered losses, the war brought unity to the Palestinian resistance groups which was very important." The Palestinian envoy said the recent Israeli aggression on Gaza and the Islamic Jihad was aimed at "restoring the exhausted power of Israel's army, forging an alliance among political parties, and fostering unity among Israelis." He noted that Israeli society "was falling apart" and that Israeli authorities had admitted that they were facing a "grave crisis". "Zionist society is divided and a gap is widening between ultra-orthodox and secular Jews," Abu Sharif said, adding that the issue had grown into "a big challenge" for Israeli leaders.

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## NEWS IN BRIEF

### China's 'strong dissatisfaction' with G7



AFP - China on Saturday expressed "strong dissatisfaction" with a statement issued by G7 leaders that took aim at Beijing on issues including the South China Sea, human rights and alleged interference in their democracies. China's Foreign Ministry hit back on Saturday evening, saying the G7's "approach has no international credibility whatsoever". "The G7 insisted on manipulating China-related issues, smearing and attacking China," a spokesman for the foreign ministry said in a statement.

### Turks abroad begin voting in presidential runoff



● AFP

REUTERS - Turkish citizens based abroad began voting on Saturday in Turkey's presidential runoff election between the incumbent Recep Tayyip Erdogan and his challenger Kemal Kilicdaroglu. Some 3.4 million Turks are eligible to vote abroad, out of a total electorate of more than 64 million, and will cast their ballots from May 20-24.

### No progress on US debt ceiling



REUTERS - A second meeting on Friday between White House and Republican congressional negotiators on raising the federal government's \$31.4 trillion debt ceiling broke up with no progress cited by either side and no additional meeting set. That came at the end of a day of acrimonious talks that were broken off for several hours, with less than two weeks to go before June 1, when the Treasury Department warned that the federal government could be unable to pay all its debts. That would trigger a calamitous default.