

French police, protest violence is problematic: *EU Commissioner*

Violence in France, by some police officers and by demonstrators who turn to looting, "poses a problem," EU justice commissioner Didier Reynders said Wednesday. "It is striking" that a "very high level of violence" was seen in protests in France in recent years over cost of living, pension reform and last week's police killing of a teen driver, Reynders told Belgian public radio RTBF, AFP reported. "That really needs to be looked at because it poses a problem," the commissioner, a former Belgian prime minister, said. Reynders said the issue was with "a certain number of police officers... (and) the behaviour of people who have the right to freely protest -- that's a fundamental right -- but not to loot shops, to destroy stores, not to destroy public equipment". He said that Brussels sees

"probably two or three demonstrations a day, but these demonstrations -- which fortunately aren't all violent -- are handled in a way that perhaps relies more on prevention... rather than direct confrontation". Later Wednesday, Reynders was to present the European Commission's annual report on rule of law in the 27 EU countries. It looks at media freedom, the functioning of courts and the fight against corruption, and offers a series of recommendations. However, law enforcement and fundamental rights do not come under its scope. Two EU countries, Poland and Hungary, are in Brussels' sights for "very big deviations when it comes to rule of law," Reynders said. They have already had EU funds frozen pending reforms to improve the independence of judges and to battle corruption.



● GETTY IMAGES

Resistance groups hail Palestinians' operation against Israel



when it would perpetrate crimes against the Palestinian nation without paying the price are over," he said. The resistance operation featured an "integrated response" on the part of Palestinian fighters from various branches, striking "fear and terror" inside the heart of the Israeli military, Haniyeh noted, Press TV reported. Israel launched the military campaign against



Thousands of people turn out in the occupied northern West Bank city of Jenin on July 5, 2023 for the funeral procession of a dozen Palestinians killed by Israeli military forces during a raid on the Jenin refugee camp two days earlier.

● SHEHAB NEWS AGENCY

Palestinian resistance groups in the Gaza Strip have hailed the Palestinian people's successful operation against Israeli invaders in the city of Jenin that forced the latter to with-

draw from the northern West Bank city. Speaking on Tuesday, Hamas' Political Bureau Chief Ismail Haniyeh congratulated Palestinians on their inflicting a "humiliat-

ing defeat" on Israel during the resistance operation, the Palestinian Information Center news agency reported. "We say this to the Zionist enemy that their days

Jenin in early Monday, mobilizing upwards of 1,000 troops as means of supposedly damaging the resistance "infrastructure" in the city and the refugee camp that it hosts.

At least 12 Palestinians and one Israeli trooper died as a result of the conflict, during which a steadfast Palestinian resistance response prompted the regime to pull out its forces after less than two days. Thousands of people turned out for the funeral procession of the dozen Palestinians, Press TV reported. On Wednesday, the mourners converged outside Jenin's governmental hospital as they grieved for the victims of the latest Israeli onslaught.

They shouted slogans in commemoration of the fallen Palestinians and in support of the resistance fighters, who courageously withstood the Israeli violence and forced the regime's troops to withdraw. In his message, Haniyeh described the Tel Aviv operation as "heroic." He said it indicated that all Palestinians from various plac-

es and societal strata were supportive of the struggle that was going on in Jenin, and considered resistance to be their "strategic option" against the enemy's atrocities and towards forcing the occupiers out of the Palestinian land. "We conveyed a clear message from all parties to the enemy," the Hamas official asserted, saying the message was that "the Zionist enemy should end its invasion against the Jenin camp fast." The Islamic Jihad, Hamas' fellow resistance movement in Gaza, also felicitated Palestinians on the occasion of the "great victory." "Through their unity and the support they provided for the Palestinian fighters, the Palestinian people proved that they can defeat the enemy in whatever confrontation," said the Islamic Jihad's Secretary-General Ziad al-Nakhleh.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Ukraine, Russia trade blames over nuclear plant attack

AP - Ukraine and Russia accused each other Wednesday of planning to attack one of the world's largest nuclear power plants, but neither side provided evidence to support their claims of an imminent threat to the facility in southeastern Ukraine that is taken by Russian troops.

Russia and Ukraine have regularly traded blame over shelling near the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant that caused power outages. Over the last year, the U.N.'s atomic watchdog repeatedly expressed alarm over the possibility of a radiation catastrophe like the one at Chernobyl after a reactor exploded in 1986.

North Korea satellite had 'no military utility': S. Korea

S. Korea



● YNA/AP

REUTERS - South Korea's military said on Wednesday it had retrieved the wreckage of a North Korean spy satellite that plunged into the sea in May after a botched launch and found it had no meaningful military use as a reconnaissance satellite. The South's military said it had on Wednesday ended salvage operations, which began immediately after the debris splashed down off South Korea's west coast on May 31. Aircraft, the navy and deep-sea divers were involved in the effort.

Ten dead, 38 wounded in three US mass shootings



Police officers work at the scene as investigations are ongoing the day after a mass shooting in the Kingsessing section of southwest Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, U.S. on July 4, 2023.

● BASTIAAN SLABBERS/REUTERS

Ten people were killed and 38 wounded in mass shootings in Philadelphia, Baltimore and Fort Worth ahead of the Fourth of July holiday, officials said, prompting a fresh call from President Joe Biden to pass gun control legislation. In Fort Worth, three people were killed and eight wounded in a mass shooting after a local festival to mark the U.S. Independence Day holiday, police said on Tuesday. In a separate mass shooting in Philadelphia on Monday evening, five people were killed and two were wounded, including a 2-year-old boy and 13-year-old boy, both of whom were shot in the legs, when a suspect in body armor and armed with an AR-15 opened fire on strangers, according to local police. The Monday night shootings came a day after two people were shot dead and 28 others injured, about half of them children, in a hail of gunfire at a neighborhood block party in Baltimore. The motives in all three recent shootings remained unclear. The United States is struggling with a large number of mass shootings and incidents of gun violence. There have been over 340 mass shootings in the country so far in 2023, according to data collected by the Gun Violence Archive, which defines a mass shooting as an incident in which at least four people are shot, excluding the shooter. Biden condemned the violence on Tuesday and renewed his calls to tighten America's gun laws. Citing constitutional protections for gun ownership, Republicans in Congress have generally blocked attempts to significantly reform gun safety laws and oppose Biden's push to reinstate a ban on assault weapons.

Two killed as strongest summer storm blasts Netherlands, Germany

A record-breaking summer storm hammered the Netherlands and Germany on Wednesday, killing two people and throwing international air and rail travel into chaos. Storm Poly packed howling winds of up to 146 km/h, toppling trees and forcing the cancellation of 400 flights from Amsterdam's Schiphol airport, one of Europe's busiest hubs, AFP reported. Meteorologists said the storm was the strongest on record to hit the Netherlands in the summer months and issued a rare "code red" warning for millions of people in the low-lying nation to stay indoors. Schiphol Airport said the number of flights would "gradually improve" as winds started to drop but would remain disrupted for the rest of the day. "At the moment, 400 flights have been cancelled," a Schiphol spokesperson told AFP. Eurostar trains from Amsterdam to London and high-speed rail services to the German cities of Cologne and Hamburg were also called off, while many domestic trains were cancelled, Dutch train operator NS said. The Dutch meteorological service KNMI said winds of force 11, the second highest on the scale, were measured along with a gust of 146 km/h measured in the northern port of IJmuiden. It was the "first very severe summer storm ever measured" in the country, Dutch weather service Weerplaza said, adding that the gusts were also the strongest ever recorded in the summer in the Netherlands.



A tree uprooted by Storm Poly landed on a houseboat in Amsterdam, on July 5, 2023.

● phys.org