

## Ground beneath bibi ...

At the same time, opposition leader Yair Lapid on Wednesday met with two heads of right-wing parties in an attempt to coordinate a bloc that will work together to bring down the Netanyahu's cabinet.

Lapid, Yisrael Beytenu chairman Avigdor Liberman and New Hope leader Gideon Sa'ar agreed on a plan of action to replace the cabinet for the sake of the future of the regime, a statement on behalf of the trio said. They once again called on National Unity party chief Benny Gantz to quit the coalition and join them, as Gantz has threatened to do by June 8 if the premier fails to meet a series of demands. On Thursday, Israeli war cabinet minister Benny Gantz's centrist party proposed a bill to dissolve parliament, showing the growing strains in Netanyahu's cabinet even if the prime minister has enough lawmakers to keep him in office. According to Haaretz, but it was unclear whether he has enough support to bring about snap elections.

On Thursday, residents in Tel Aviv protested, demanding the dissolution of Netanyahu's cabinet and early elections. The protesters chanted slogans against Netanyahu, highlighting the urgent need to exchange captives with the Palestinian resistance in Gaza. Zionist captive families participating in the protests also expressed that without ending the war, no exchanges would occur, with many of them advocating for a cease-fire in exchange for the return of captives. Netanyahu's coalition cabinet is comprised of right-wing parties that hold 64 seats in the Knesset. Considering that the parliament has 120 seats, the Netanyahu's shaky cabinet will only collapse if a few representatives leave the ruling coalition, leading to early elections.

Israel's Maariv newspaper published the results of a survey on May 10, indicating a decline in the popularity and position of the Likud party and the far-right coalition. Based on the survey, if early elections are held in the occupied territories, the right-religious coalition under Netanyahu will only secure 47 seats and will be deprived of achieving a majority. In contrast, the coalition of Netanyahu's opponents will gain 68 seats, paving the way for their victory in the elections and potentially forming a coalition cabinet. Simultaneously with such movements in Israel against Netanyahu, it appears that his star is also on the decline in the international arena. A group of Western countries underscore the idea of a "Two-State" solution, namely the formation of independent Palestinian and Israeli states, as the pathway to a sustainable peace. Recently, Spain, Norway, and Ireland have also recognized an independent Palestinian state. Another European country, Slovenia, has signed and sent a proposal to recognize the Palestinian state for approval by the parliament.

However, the ruling extremist cabinet in Israel opposes the formation of an independent Palestinian state, and, in reality, achieving peace in this region from the perspective of Western nations is tied to the removal of Netanyahu's cabinet. The support of some European countries, including Joseph Borrell, the EU's foreign policy chief, for the international criminal court's ruling on the arrest of Israel's prime minister and defense minister on charges of war crimes must also be evaluated in this context as Europeans also seek liberation from the Netanyahu cabinet's influence.

# Trump's guilty verdict lays US election on bumpy road

The 2024 US presidential election is facing a bumpy road after former President Donald Trump was found guilty of the whole 34 felonies in his hush money trial in New York on Thursday, with the verdict making the businessman-turned-politician the first American head of state in US history to be convicted of a crime.

The ruling was issued after nine and a half hours of deliberations in the Manhattan courtroom where Trump had been on trial for the past six weeks over falsifying business records to hide a \$130,000 payment meant to silence adult movie actress Stormy Daniels and prevent her from publicizing their sexual encounters.

The septuagenarian also faces three more serious criminal indictments over his attempts to overturn his 2020 election loss to Joe Biden and keeping top-secret documents at his home in Florida.

Judge Juan Merchan thanked the jurors for their service in the weeks-long trial, saying, "You gave this matter the attention it deserved, and I want to thank you for that."

Merchan set sentencing for July 11, four days before the Republican National Convention in Milwaukee in the midwestern state of Wisconsin, where the 77-year-old is due to receive the party's formal nomination for the November 5 vote.

Speaking to reporters in the hallway outside the Manhattan courtroom, Trump reacted angrily to the jury's unanimous verdict and railed against the judge.

"This was a disgrace. This was a



US protesters outside the Manhattan Criminal Court House on May 30, 2024 hold up a banner noting that former President Donald Trump has been found guilty of 34 felonies. [amny.com](https://www.amny.com)

rigged trial by a conflicted judge who was corrupt," he said, reiterating the criticism he has leveled at the court since the trial began.

Stressing that the case is "far from over," the presumptive Republican nominee said, "The real verdict is going to be Nov. 5 by the people, and they know

what happened here and everybody knows what happened here. We'll fight to the end."

However, Biden's campaign praised the verdict in a statement and underlined that Trump needs to be defeated in November.

"In New York today, we saw that no one is above the law," said the campaign's communications director, Michael Tyler, but the "verdict does not change the fact that the American people face a simple reality. There is still only one way to keep Donald Trump out of the Oval Office: at the ballot box."

Charles Schumer, the Democratic leader of the US Senate, said the verdict "speaks for itself," stressing, "No one is above the law."

Adam Schiff, a California congressman and one of the impeachment prosecutors of Trump, said that while justice prevailed, the verdict "will only increase Donald Trump's attempts to discredit the justice system and tear down our democracy ... it is up to us to make sure it continues to prevail."

Michael Cohen, one of the witnesses for the prosecution, said Thursday's verdict "is an

important day for accountability and the rule of law," adding, "While it has been a difficult journey for me and my family, the truth always matters."

The presumptive GOP nominee could be sentenced to four years behind bars for each count but is more likely to receive probation.

As per the US Constitution, the conviction does not bar Trump from continuing his campaign or becoming president, and he can still vote for himself in his home state of Florida as long as he stays out of prison in New York state.

## Yemen attacks US aircraft carrier after deadly strikes

### International Desk

Yemen's Houthis said they have launched a missile attack on a United States aircraft carrier in the Red Sea in response to deadly US and British strikes on Yemen.

Yemen's military spokesman Yahya Saree announced the attack on the Eisenhower carrier on Friday, Reuters reported.

Six US and British strikes have killed 16 people and wounded 42, including civilians, Saree said in a televised statement. A US defense official told Reuters they were not aware of any attack on the Eisenhower. "The American-British aggression will not prevent us from continuing our military operations in support of Palestine," Houthi official Mohammed

al-Bukhaiti said on X, warning that the country would "meet escalation with escalation". The US Central Command said on X that attacks against 13 Houthi targets had "successfully destroyed" eight uncrewed aerial vehicles, or drones, in Houthi-controlled areas of Yemen and over the Red Sea. The British Ministry of Defence said Royal Air Force

Typhoon FGR4s conducted attacks on Hodeidah and further south in Ghulayfiqah. It described targets as "buildings identified as housing drone ground control facilities and providing storage for very long-range drones, as well as surface-to-air weapons".

The Houthi movement has emerged as a strong supporter of Palestinians in Israel's ongoing war on Gaza, which has killed more than 36,000 people.

The group has launched repeated drone and missile attacks on Israeli-related

ships in the Red Sea, the Bab al-Mandeb strait, and the Gulf of Aden since November, demanding that Israel end the war.

Iran condemned the US-UK strikes as "violations of Yemen's sovereignty and territorial integrity..., international laws and human rights", Iranian state media reported.

"The aggressor US and British governments are responsible for the consequences of these crimes against the Yemeni people," Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesperson Nasser Kanaani said.



Mohammad Ali Rajabi  
Cartoonist



## Israel troops push into central Rafah

The Israeli army said Friday its troops pushed into central Rafah, escalating its nearly eight-month war with Hamas despite international objections over any offensive in the southern Gaza city. Israel first sent tanks and troops into Rafah from the city's east in early May, ignoring concerns over the safety of displaced Palestinian civilians sheltering in the city on the Egyptian border.

Soldiers were operating "in central Rafah" where they uncovered rocket-launchers and tunnel shafts and dismantled a Hamas weapons storage facility, the army

said in its latest statement. Witnesses reported seeing Israeli air strikes on the Rafah area as well as troop movements in central Rafah. In central Gaza, the army said it was "intensifying operations" and had carried out air strikes that "eliminated several terrorists" operating near Israeli troops. It did not elaborate. On Wednesday, Israel declared its forces had taken control of the 14-km Philadelphia corridor along the Gaza-Egypt border, where it alleges weapons were being smuggled.

Egypt, a longtime mediator in the conflict, has yet

to officially comment on the Israeli takeover, which officials have previously said could violate the two countries' 1979 peace deal. Amid stalled diplomatic efforts towards a cease-fire, Hamas said it had informed mediators it would only agree a "comprehensive" truce agreement including a hostage-prisoner swap if Israel halts its "aggression". Ismail Haniyeh, the head of Hamas's Qatar-based political office, reiterated Friday that the group's core demands - including a permanent cease-fire and full Israeli withdrawal - "are non-negotiable".