

# VOA NEWS

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This is VOA News. I'm Alexis Strobe.

Israel's use of deadly force against Palestinians is scrutinized. AP correspondent Karen Chammas reports.

Israel's use of deadly force is being scrutinized after a 12-year-old boy who lit a firework was killed by Israeli police in East Jerusalem.

A clip of Rami Halhouli's final moments last week has been circulating on social media for days.

Rami's father, Ali Halhouli, cries as he talks to AP reporters about the moment he discovered his young son was killed. "I looked out of this window and heard him say mom, when I rushed out of here, I saw him lying on his face."

B'Tselem activist Sarit Michaeli told the AP about 60 Palestinian children have been killed without justification by Israeli forces since October the 7.

"These are, for example, cases of stone-throwing of their protests, of setting fire to tents, or in some cases, even just bystanders."

Israeli police say the officer who fired the shot acted appropriately. The Israeli government says the shooting is under investigation.

I'm Karen Chammas.

U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken says that a major Israeli ground assault on the southern Gaza town of Rafah would be a, quote, "mistake" and unnecessary to defeating Hamas. His comments underscore the further souring of relations between the United States and Israel.

Blinken is on his sixth urgent Mideast mission since the war began. He spoke Thursday after huddling with top Arab [di...] diplomats in Cairo for discussions over efforts for a cease-fire and over ideas for Gaza's post conflict future.

He said, quote, "[in] an immediate, sustained cease-fire" with the [re...] release of Israeli hostages held by Hamas was urgently needed and that gaps were narrowing in indirect negotiations that US, Egypt and Qatar have [been] spent weeks mediating.

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The Justice Department on Thursday announced a sweeping antitrust lawsuit against Apple, accusing the tech giant of engineering an illegal monopoly. VOA's Rick Pantaleo reports.

The lawsuit against Apple alleges that the tech company has monopoly power in the smartphone market. This is U.S. Attorney General Merrick Garland.

"Apple has maintained monopoly power in the smartphone market, not simply by staying ahead of the competition on the merits, but by violating federal and antitrust law. Consumers should not have to pay higher prices because companies break the law."

Apple disagreed in a statement, saying this lawsuit threatens who we are and the principles that set Apple products apart in fiercely competitive markets.

If successful, it would hinder the ability to create the kind of technology people expect from Apple, where hardware, software and services intersect.

Rick Pantaleo, VOA News.

Lawmakers have introduced a \$1.2 trillion spending package that sets the stage for avoiding a partial government shutdown for several key federal agencies this weekend.

Democrats were able to swat back scores of policy mandates and some of the steeper budget cuts that House Republicans were seeking to impose on nondefense programs.

Among the policy wins that House Speaker Mike Johnson is highlighting for Republicans is a nearly 24 percent increase in detention beds for migrants awaiting their immigration proceedings or removal from the country.

Australia and the United Kingdom signed a new defense and security cooperation agreement Thursday. From Sydney, Phil Mercer reports.

The new accord signed Thursday builds on the 2021 AUKUS alliance, which is designed to allow Australia to build a new multibillion-dollar fleet of nuclear-powered submarines with help from the United States and Britain.

Britain's defence minister, Grant Shapps, is in Australia for the annual Australia-U.K. Ministerial meetings, which were first held in 2006. Shapps told a news conference in Canberra that the treaty would enhance global efforts to maintain peace.

"... because we stand united in our view of the world and what needs to be done and we are proactive nations that are prepared to stand up and make sure that we do maintain the world order."

Phil Mercer, VOA News, Sydney.

An Oklahoma district attorney says he doesn't plan to file any charges in the case of Nex Benedict, the nonbinary 16-year-old Owasso teenager whose death following a fight in a high school bathroom was ruled a suicide.

Tulsa County District Attorney Steve Kunzweiler said in a statement Thursday that the fight between Nex and three girls was an, quote, "instance of mutual combat."

Kunzweiler also said Owasso police uncovered a, quote, "suicide note" written by Benedict, although he declined to say what the note said. The state medical examiner determined last week that Benedict's death was a suicide caused by a drug overdose.

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