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Democracy Dies in Darkness

THURSDAY, APRIL 11, 2024 • \$3

## Israel seeks hostages' return amid murky fates

Officials have little clarity on how many of roughly 100 captives are still alive

BY SHIRA RUBIN

TEL AVIV — As Israel and Hamas try to hammer out the thorny details of a U.S.-backed cease-fire proposal, Israeli officials are seeking the release of the remaining hostages held in Gaza. But they don't actually know how many of them are alive.

So far, Hamas has failed to provide Israeli negotiators with a list of the remaining hostages, raising fears that the group has lost track of them amid the war — or worse, that it might not want to reveal how many have been killed.

Israel says that 133 hostages are still in captivity, ranging from toddlers to the elderly, and that 36 of those hostages are confirmed dead.

But the fates of about 100 hostages — including Israelis and foreign nationals, peace activists and soldiers, mothers and grandfathers — are still unclear, six months after the start of the war. The uncertainty is not only complicating negotiations but also leaving the hostages' families in anguish.

The pain of each passing day "is almost exponential," said Jon Polin, the father of 23-year-old Hersh Goldberg-Polin, a dual Israeli-American citizen who was

SEE HOSTAGES ON A13



LORENZO TIGNOLI FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

## On edge in the West Bank

U.N. agency's existential crisis leaves Palestinians fearful of a future without its services

BY CLAIRE PARKER  
IN BALATA CAMP, WEST BANK

Even before war erupted between Israel and Hamas, the U.N. agency for Palestinian refugees was broke.

Its top official for the West Bank was driving a 15-year-old car with broken headlights. Summer camps the agency used to run had been canceled. Some of its trademark blue-and-white schools, which educate about 46,000 students across East Jerusalem and the West Bank, hadn't been painted in a decade.

Now, the U.N. Relief and Works Agency is on life support, after major donors suspended funding in January in the wake of allegations that a dozen of the agency's 13,000 employees

in Gaza took part in Hamas's attacks on Oct. 7.

The impact of what U.N. officials widely describe as an existential crisis for the agency will be felt most acutely in Gaza, where it is the backbone of international efforts to stave off a man-made famine. But the turmoil is also disrupting life and sparking fear among Palestinians in Jerusalem and the West Bank, where the agency provides health, education and sanitation services for the descendants of refugees.

UNRWA is now under a multipronged attack: Israeli officials are seeking to evict it from its East Jerusalem headquarters, have

SEE WEST BANK ON A12

Nana Jibril, head of the physiotherapy department at a U.N. health center in the Balata camp, treats a patient in March.

### ELECTION 2024

## A defiant, divisive symbol of Trump

BY MARIANNE LEVINE,  
JOSH DAWSEY  
AND ISAAC ARNSDORF

CONWAY, S.C. — After Quinzell Williams stepped out of an Uber near a campaign rally featuring Donald Trump, a passing couple did a double take.

"Aren't you embarrassed to be wearing that?" they asked, Williams recalled.

He was wearing a T-shirt with Donald Trump's mug shot from Fulton County, Ga., plastered across the front.

"No, no, no, no," he replied that day in February. "Wearing it with pride."

The mug shot, which the jail released last August after prosecutors charged Trump with illegally conspiring to overturn his 2020 election defeat in Georgia, has become an iconic image for the former president's supporters. They don T-shirts displaying Trump's scowl. They've purchased mugs and can coolers from the Trump campaign promoting the photo. Some of the merchandise is rendered in the same colorized style

as Barack Obama's iconic "HOPE" emblem from 2008.

To many of them, the mug shot has become a symbol of defiance — the same backlash to the prosecutions that Trump portrays as politicized, helping him consolidate support in the Republican primary. In addition to the Georgia case, Trump has been charged in New York with falsifying records to allegedly cover up a hush

SEE TRUMP ON A6

The Fact Checker: The lasting power of Trump's falsehoods. A2



MEGAN JELINGER FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

After Donald Trump's mug shot was released, Jon Bortorff began printing T-shirts at his "left-leaning" Richmond, Ind., shop.

## Report details school's failures in Va. shooting

Grand jury: 'Shocking' administrative lapses led to wounding of teacher

BY JUSTIN JOUVENAL

A 6-year-old boy who shot and wounded a teacher at Virginia's Richneck Elementary School last year should have been unenrolled after choking a different teacher, but basic lapses by administrators allowed him back, according to a special grand jury report released Wednesday.

The breakdown was one in a long line of failures by school administrators to act on warnings about the boy before he sneaked a gun into the Newport News school and opened fire on Abigail Zwerner, a first-grade

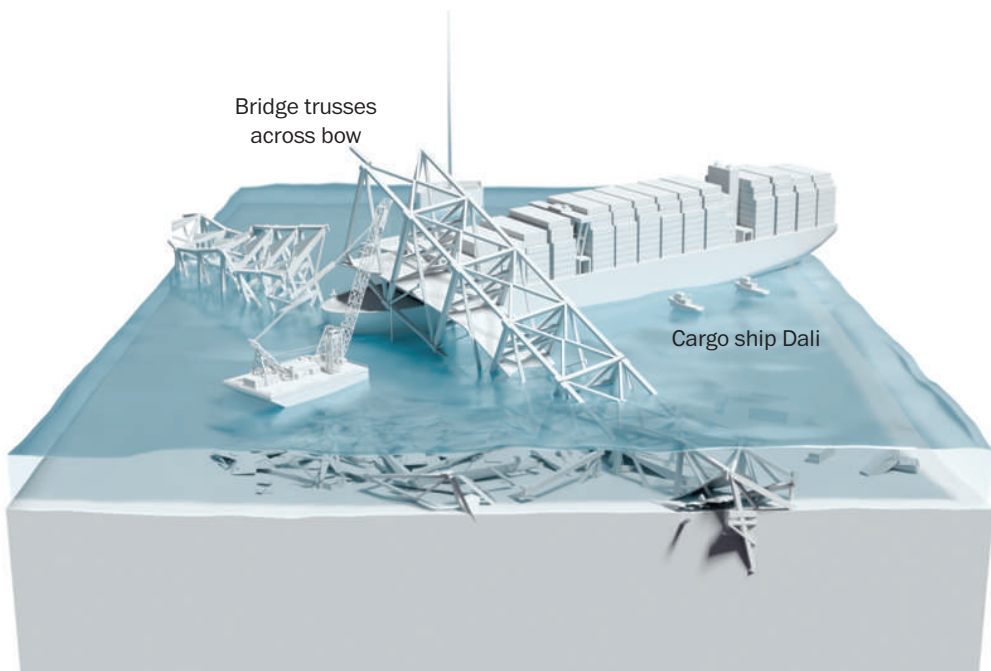
teacher, the special grand jury wrote.

The panel's report suggested that the shooting could have been prevented, but that it also could have been much worse — as the young shooter had a gun full of bullets with 15 students cowering around him.

"The firearm had jammed due to his lack of strength on the first shot inhibiting him from shooting Ms. Zwerner or anyone else again," the special grand jury wrote. "The firearm had a full magazine with seven additional bullets ready to fire."

The 24-page special grand jury report is the most detailed public accounting to date of the shooting, which generated national attention, stirred outrage by parents and led to the ouster of the school district's superintendent. The panel found a school so

SEE RICHNECK ON A8



### The Key Bridge cleanup, illustrated

See our visually driven breakdown of the plan to clear the Patapsco River shipping channel, float the cargo ship Dali and remove the March 26 disaster's jumble of debris. **Story, B2**

## Inflation likely to delay rate cut

PRICES UP 3.5%  
FROM A YEAR AGO

Data dashes expectations for Fed to rein in interest

BY RACHEL SIEGEL

Inflation ticked up again in March compared with the year before — in yet another sign that the economy doesn't need high interest rates to come down any time soon.

Fresh data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics on Wednesday showed prices rose 3.5 percent from March 2023 to March 2024. That's up slightly from the 3.2 percent annual figure notched in February. Prices also rose 0.4 percent between February and March.

The result: The Federal Reserve is very unlikely to cut interest rates in the next few months. Officials have been looking for a bit more assurance that inflation is steadily falling before deciding it's time to trim borrowing costs. But since the start of the year, the data has brought unwanted surprises, with economists and the markets now expecting no cuts until later in 2024.

The Fed "is nowhere near where they're going to need to be," said Douglas Holtz-Eakin, president of the American Action Forum and former director of the Congressional Budget Office. "March would not give anyone any confidence."

All of the major stock indexes closed in the red, with the Dow

SEE INFLATION ON A20

## Iran nears nuclear weapons capability

Tehran blows past limits of defunct accord to gather the ingredients

BY JOBY WARRICK

VIENNA — For the past 15 years, the most important clues about Iran's nuclear program have lain deep underground, in a factory built inside a mountain on the edge of Iran's Great Salt Desert. The facility, known as Fordow, is the heavily protected inner sanctum of Iran's nuclear complex and a frequent destination for international inspectors whose visits are meant to ensure against any secret effort by Iran to make nuclear bombs.

The inspectors' latest trek, in February, yielded the usual matrices of readings and measurements, couched in the clinical language of a U.N. nuclear watchdog report. But within the document's dry prose were indications of alarming change.

In factory chambers that had ceased making enriched uranium under a 2015 nuclear accord, the inspectors now witnessed frenzied activity: newly installed equipment, producing enriched

SEE IRAN ON A14

### IN THE NEWS

**'Forever chemicals'** The EPA has finalized a standard for drinking water to reduce exposure to PFAS, which have been linked to cancer and other illnesses. A3

**Trump on abortion** The former president wavered for months before landing on his message about states' rights, insiders said. A4

**THE NATION** **Cornel West** chose activist Melina Abdullah as his running mate. A8  
**Indoor farms** are re-making the produce market, but at a cost to the planet in the use of fossil fuels. A16

**THE WORLD** **Ukraine's** foreign minister stepped up demands for Patriot air defenses. A10  
**The European** Parliament voted in favor of a migration deal after years of deadlock. A13

**THE ECONOMY** **Link Lauren** gained popularity interviewing long-shot presidential candidates. Now, he's part of RFK Jr.'s presidential campaign. A18  
**College** financial aid offices are wrestling with errors, including faulty tax data, on the new FAFSA form. A19

**THE REGION** **The NTSB** is taking a "preliminary" look at the Dali's electrical issues that preceded the Key Bridge collapse. B1  
**In an ad**, a Democrat running in Maryland's 6th District primary alleges that an opponent has ties to "extreme Republicans." B1

**STYLE** **Nick Adams**, the "Alpha Male" who serves as a surrogate for Trump, is teaching America's young men the art of being hard to deal with. C1

**LOCAL LIVING** **Beginner-friendly tips** to set up your vegetable garden for success.

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The Washington Post  
Year 147, No. 53818

