

Chicago Tribune



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BREAKING NEWS AT CHICAGOTRIBUNE.COM

NORTHWESTERN LAW STUDENT SUES STATE DEPARTMENT, SEEKS FAMILY'S SAFE RETURN FROM GAZA



'My pleas are falling on deaf ears'

By Zareen Syed | Chicago Tribune

In a past life, Yasmeen Elagha's visits to Khan Yunis, the largest city in southern Gaza, were marked by platters of *knafeh gazawiya*, a nutty dessert made with semolina soaked in a sweet syrup, and late nights with her enormous extended family across homes east of the Mediterranean Sea. She doesn't know if that'll ever happen again.

"All of my relatives are displaced, crammed into hospitals, on the streets," said Elagha, a 27-year-old Palestinian American law student at Northwestern University. "It's my home, it's my culture, it's everything that is love to me. It's so horrifying what's happening."

While President Joe Biden's administration evacuated thousands of Israeli Americans on charter flights and ships almost as soon as the crisis in Gaza intensified on Oct. 7, Elagha watched cellphone footage of destroyed buildings in her grandparents' neighborhood in Khan Yunis, where her family members remain trapped, including

two cousins who are American citizens. In a lawsuit filed in December, Elagha, of Oakbrook Terrace, is accusing the U.S. State Department of denying her Palestinian American family equal protection under the Constitution and urging the government to

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Above: Yasmeen Elagha, a law student at Northwestern University, sits in her family's home in Oakbrook Terrace on Wednesday. She is working to have 10 members of her family evacuated from Khan Yunis, a city in the southern Gaza Strip. **JOHN J. KIM/CHICAGO TRIBUNE**

INSIDE

Defense chief lays out 'vision' for Gaza

Israel's defense minister describes how forces would shift into an apparently scaled-down "new combat approach" in northern Gaza. **Nation & World**

Illinois finds 46,400 people

Population loss shown in 2020 census could be offset by update

By Robert Channick
Chicago Tribune

Illinois may not be losing population after all.

An undercount in the 2020 census missed 46,400 Illinois residents living in group homes, an adjustment to the population base that will be incorporated in future surveys, the state announced Wednesday.

While the total won't be added retroactively to previously reported census data, the bolstered base may more than offset the nearly 33,000 people Illinois lost in the 2023 annual census update published last month.

"I'm pleased that the Census Bureau has recognized the undercounting that I and many members of Illinois' congressional delegation have worked to remedy since the 2020 census results were first released," Gov. J.B. Pritzker said in a news release. "This correction will bring in millions in additional federal funding for crucial programs and help to ensure future counts reflect the true number of Illinois residents."

State legislators have been calling for a recount of the 2020 census since its initial release, which showed a population of 12,812,508, a decrease of 18,000 people over a decade — the first such decline since Illinois joined the union. A 2022 follow-up survey found the state's population figures had likely been undercounted.

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Files shed light on Epstein's abuse

Trump and Clinton listed among names in unsealed records

By Larry Neumeister
Associated Press

NEW YORK — A new batch of unsealed documents pertaining to Jeffrey Epstein's sexual abuse of teenage girls was released Thursday, adding several hundred pages to the fountain of information detailing how the financier leveraged connections to the rich, powerful and famous to recruit his victims and cover up his crimes.

The 19 documents, or about 300 pages, were half as many as the more than 40 documents released late Wednesday. The documents so far — with more to come — were sprinkled with names of celebrities and politicians who socialized with Epstein or worked with him in the years before he was publicly accused nearly two decades ago of paying underage girls for sex.

More documents are expected to be released Friday and Monday. Most of those names were familiar to anyone who has followed the scandal closely, including the criminal trial of Ghislaine Maxwell, who was Epstein's former girlfriend, household manager and chief recruiter of young, vulnerable females.

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CPD push to fire officer revived after acquittal

Snelling appeals police board's ruling in case tied to 2020 unrest

By Sam Charles
Chicago Tribune

Attorneys for Chicago's police superintendent have taken legal action to ask a Cook County judge to reverse a recent Chicago Police Board ruling that cleared a controversial police officer of wrongdoing — the first time in the consent-decree era that the city and its police boss have made such a request.

County court records show the complaint for administrative review was submitted on behalf of Chicago police Superintendent Larry Snelling in late November amid an ongoing fight over the way serious police misconduct cases are ultimately adjudicated.

The board voted in October to find Officer James Hunt not guilty of all the administrative charges brought against him in late 2022, charges that stemmed from a chaotic arrest scene in the River North neighborhood during the civil unrest and looting in

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JOHN J. KIM/CHICAGO TRIBUNE

City's risk level at 'medium' as COVID-19 hospitalizations rise

People in the lobby of Northwestern Memorial Hospital's Feinberg Pavilion wear face masks Thursday. Chicago's COVID-19 risk level has risen from "low" to "medium" for the first time since last January. The heightened warning, spurred by a jump in hospitalizations, shows the virus's spread "is creeping up," said Dr. Alex Sloboda, medical director of immunization and emergency preparedness programs at the Chicago Department of Public Health. **Chicagoland, Page 3**

Foreign nations paid Trump

Donald Trump's businesses received at least \$7.8 million from 20 foreign governments during his presidency, according to papers released by House Dems. **Nation & World**

Quarterback confidential

The NFL world teems with curiosity about how the Bears will navigate the 2024 offseason with so many high-profile and high-stakes decisions ahead. **Chicago Sports**

