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FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 2, 2024

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Israeli security forces stand guard Thursday as a car is checked on the outskirts of the occupied West Bank town of Hebron. HAZEM BADER/GETTY-AFP

Biden sanctions target settlers in West Bank

Executive order rare step against America's closest ally in Mideast

By Colleen Long, Zeke Miller and Aamer Madhani
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Joe Biden on Thursday issued an executive order that targets Israeli settlers in the West Bank who have been accused of attacking Palestinians and Israeli peace activists in the occupied territory, imposing financial sanctions and visa bans in an initial round against four individuals.

Those settlers were involved in

acts of violence, as well as threats and attempts to destroy or seize Palestinian property, according to the order. The penalties aim to block the four from using the U.S. financial system and bar American citizens from dealing with them. U.S. officials said they were evaluating whether to punish others involved in attacks that have intensified during the Israel-Hamas war.

Biden's order is a rare step against America's closest ally in the Mideast who, Biden says, has the right to defend itself. But the Democratic president has pressed Israeli Prime Minis-

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President Joe Biden boards Air Force One at Joint Base Andrews on Thursday. Biden ordered sanctions on Israeli settlers accused of attacks on Palestinians in the West Bank. DOUG MILLS/THE NEW YORK TIMES

Pritzker criticizes City Hall's Gaza stance

Cease-fire resolution disregards atrocities, according to governor

By Olivia Stevens
Chicago Tribune

Gov. J.B. Pritzker on Thursday criticized a Gaza cease-fire resolution passed this week by Mayor Brandon Johnson and Chicago aldermen for failing to hold Hamas responsible for violence

it has committed.

Talking to reporters after an event at the South Shore Cultural Center to announce collaboration on anti-violence initiatives, Pritzker said the resolution — which passed the council 24-23 Wednesday with Johnson casting the tiebreaking vote — should have taken into account atrocities committed by Hamas fighters who killed about 1,200 Israelis and took around 240 hostages during an Oct. 7 attack.

"I was disappointed that no consideration was given to the women who were raped by Hamas fighters who crossed over into Israel, kidnapped people, that the deaths that were caused by those terrorists were not acknowledged," Pritzker said.

Hamas has denied committing sexual violence during the attack, and the United Nations is investigating the allegations.

"And honestly, I don't think the

City Council — if they're going to talk about the challenge of war in the Middle East, you've got to make sure you include all of the perspectives. They did not do that," said Pritzker, who is Jewish.

Some opponents of the vote on the cease-fire resolution have expressed concern the stance both the council and Johnson took on the war in Gaza could

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WAR IN UKRAINE

EU seals \$54B in aid for Ukraine

Bloc overcomes threat of Hungary veto to fund rebuild, boost economy

By Lorne Cook and Samuel Petrequin
Associated Press

BRUSSELS — Leaders of the 27 European Union countries sealed a deal Thursday to provide Ukraine with 50 billion euros, approximately \$54 billion, in support for its war-ravaged economy after Hungary dropped weeks of threats to veto the measure.

European Council President Charles Michel said the agreement "locks in steadfast, long-term, predictable funding for Ukraine" and shows the European Union's determination "to support their future, to support freedom."

The aid package — about two-thirds loans and one-third grants — is not intended to help fight off Russia. Apart from supporting the economy and paying for rebuilding, it's also aimed at setting Ukraine up for future EU membership. The European Union has a separate plan for funding arms and ammunition.

Almost two years after Russia invaded Ukraine, the Ukrainian economy is in shambles. The first months following the 2022 invasion saw the country lose a third of its economic output to wartime destruction and occupation by Russia, which controls Ukraine's heartland of heavy industry.

Inflation soared to 26% because the central bank had to print money to cover budget gaps. The economy rebounded somewhat last year, but Ukraine spends almost all of its tax revenue on the war. That leaves a huge deficit because other bills must also be paid, including pensions and salaries for teachers, doctors, nurses and state employees.

Political infighting in the European Union and the United States has held up funding. A combined total of more than \$100 billion is at stake.

Michel said the EU's move would also send "a signal to the American taxpayers," which could help the Biden administration in its efforts to get a Ukraine support package through Congress.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy welcomed the assistance in a post on X, the platform formerly known as Twitter. He said that continued financial help from the European Union would strengthen Ukraine's long-term economic stability, "which is no less important than military assis-

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INSIDE



PARI DUKOVIC

'Feud' has a vividly piquant energy

Second season of FX's anthology series features Truman Capote skewering New York's elite.
Nina Metz's review in A+E

Fields report: How did QB fare in '23?

Do the Bears build around Justin Fields or draft a QB? The team will first have to evaluate his 2023 season. **Chicago Sports**

'I LOVE THIS COMMUNITY'

A Black-owned running store on the South Side in race to open new shop

By Kate Armanini
Chicago Tribune

To anyone else, it may have looked like an unusual gathering: several dozen people in athletic wear, surrounding a bright blue shipping container in Bronzeville.

To Ian Gonzalez, though, it was a testament to three years of hard work. A community built from the ground up. The crowd had come on a cool Sunday morning to celebrate Gonzalez's business — Last Lap Cornerstore — before its temporary closure in April 2023.

"It was the saddest joy I've ever felt," Gonzalez said. "For the community to come out and say they see me and show the love, that was beautiful."

The 34-year-old decided that Last Lap, a South Side Black-owned running store in Boxville, had outgrown its portable home. Now, Gonzalez hopes to raise \$200,000 to open a brick-and-mortar shop in Hyde Park, bolstering a vibrant running culture there.

"My main focus is to give new runners, especially Black and brown runners, the opportunity to try the sport out, to enjoy the sport, to find themselves in this sport," Gonzalez said.

Since the beginning of the pandemic, there's been a surge of new and expanding diverse running clubs in Chicago. Still,

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Ian Gonzalez talks to runners before they head down South Martin Luther King Drive on Sunday. Several years ago, Gonzalez started the Sunday morning running club. It is open to anyone, but he particularly encourages people of color to join. STACEY WESCOTT/CHICAGO TRIBUNE

