



Today's date is 2024-09-24

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News

'WE JUST HAD TO FLEE': FEAR AND TENSION IN LEBANON UNDER DEADLY ISRAELI BOMBARDMENT


[1] `<article><DIV id="readability-page-1"><article><figure><div data-component="image-block"><p>EPA</p></div></figure><div data-component="text-block"><p>Across southern Lebanon, families scrambled together belongings and headed north in cars and trucks and on motorcycles as the Israeli military struck targets it said were linked to the Lebanese Shia armed group Hezbollah.</p><p>Some residents reported receiving warnings in the form of text messages and voice recordings from the Israeli military to leave areas near the Iran-backed group's positions.</p><p>Zahra Sawli, a student in the southern town of Nabatieh told the BBC's Newshour programme the bombardment was intense.</p><p>"I woke up at 6am to the sound of bombing. By`

noon it started to get really intense and I saw a lot of strikes in my area."</p><p>"I heard a lot of glass shattering."</p><p>Unlike many, she and those she was with did not leave the house - they didn't dare, she said.</p><p>"Where are we supposed to go? A lot of people are still stuck on the streets. A lot of my friends are still stuck in traffic because a lot of people are trying to flee," she said.</p></div><div data-component="text-block">Live updates: Israel strikes dozens more sites in southern LebanonBowen: Israel believes it has weakened Hezbollah but escalation still carries risksCold military logic takes over in Israel-Hezbollah conflict</div><div data-component="text-block"><p>By the middle of the day roads north towards Beirut were clogged with traffic, with vehicles heading towards the capital on both sides of a six-lane coastal highway.</p><p>Other images showed people walking along the beach in the southern city of Tyre as smoke rose from air strikes in the countryside inland.</p><p>The BBC spoke to one family of five who had arrived in Beirut on a single motorbike. </p><p>From a village in the south, they were heading to Tripoli in the north. They were exhausted.</p><p>"What do you want us to say? We just had to flee," the father said.</p></div><div data-component="image-block"><p><img sizes="(min-width: 1280px) 50vw, (min-width: 1008px) 66vw, 96vw" srcset="https://ichef.bbci.co.uk/news/240/cpsprodpb/0945/live/8231d4f0-79da-11ef-aa47-5d501e31b93c.jpg.webp 240w, https://ichef.bbci.co.uk/news/320/cpsprodpb/0945/live/8231d4f0-79da-11ef-aa47-5d501e31b93c.jpg.webp 320w, https://ichef.bbci.co.uk/news/480/cpsprodpb/0945/live/8231d4f0-79da-11ef-aa47-5d501e31b93c.jpg.webp 480w, https://ichef.bbci.co.uk/news/640/cpsprodpb/0945/live/8231d4f0-79da-11ef-aa47-5d501e31b93c.

jpg.webp 640w, <https://ichef.bbci.co.uk/news/800/cpsprodpb/0945/live/8231d4f0-79da-11ef-aa47-5d501e31b93c.jpg>.webp 800w, <https://ichef.bbci.co.uk/news/1024/cpsprodpb/0945/live/8231d4f0-79da-11ef-aa47-5d501e31b93c.jpg>.webp 1024w, <https://ichef.bbci.co.uk/news/1536/cpsprodpb/0945/live/8231d4f0-79da-11ef-aa47-5d501e31b93c.jpg>.webp 1536w" src="https://ichef.bbci.co.uk/news/480/cpsprodpb/0945/live/8231d4f0-79da-11ef-aa47-5d501e31b93c.jpg.webp" alt="Hassan Harfoush family of five arrived in Beirut on a bike"/>Hassan Harfoush</p></div></figure><div data-component="text-block"><p>By Monday evening the Lebanese health ministry reported that 492 people had been killed and more than 1,600 injured in the bombardment. It said at least 35 children were among those killed. The Israel Defense Forces (IDF) said it had carried out 1,100 strikes over the previous 24 hours.</p><p>That included an air strike in southern Beirut that the IDF said had targeted a senior Hezbollah commander.</p><p>In Beirut too there was widespread anxiety. As people from the south arrived in the capital in cars with suitcases strapped to the top, some of the city's residents were themselves leaving. </p><p>Israel has warned people to evacuate areas where it says Hezbollah is storing weapons - but it also sent recorded warnings to people in Beirut districts not considered Hezbollah strongholds including Hamra, an area home to government ministries, banks and universities.</p><p>Parents rushed to pick up their children from school after receiving more warnings to leave the area.</p><p>One father, Issa, took his son out of school, telling Reuters news agency: "[We're here] because of the phone calls.</p><p>"They're calling everyone and threatening people by phone. So we're here to take my boy from school. The situation is not reassuring," he said.</p></div><figure><div data-component="image-block"><p><img sizes="(min-width: 1280px) 50vw, (min-width: 1008px) 66vw, 96vw" src-set="https://ichef.bbci.co.uk/news/240/cpsprodpb/e9d0/live/75ec7280-79e0-11ef-917a-83304be33794.png

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day, workers said.



Meanwhile Lebanon's hospitals were also ordered to cancel all elective surgeries on Monday as physicians braced for a wave of casualties and injuries. Despite the tense and uncertain atmosphere in Beirut, some people were defiant. "If a total war happens, we should stand as Lebanese people together regardless of our political affiliations because at the end of the day, our country is getting bombed," one man told the BBC. Others were simply resigned to the violence. "If they want war, what can we do? It was imposed on us. We cannot do anything," shop owner Mohammed Sibai told Reuters. Mohammed, a 57-year-old in the southern Beirut suburb of Dahieh - Hezbollah's main power base in the capital - told the BBC he had "survived all the wars since 1975" so "it's normal for me." "I will not leave, I will be in my house," he said.

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WAR WITH RUSSIA CLOSER TO END THAN WE THINK - ZELENSKY

[2] <article><DIV id="readability-page-1"><div data-component="text-block"><p>Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky has said the war with Russia could end sooner than some people think.</p><p>"I think that we are closer to peace than we think," he told US broadcaster ABC News.</p><p>He added that Ukraine could push Russian President Vladimir Putin to end the conflict, but only if Kyiv was coming from a "strong position" - once again calling on his Western allies to strengthen the Ukrainian army.</p><p>The Ukrainian president is in the US this week to speak at the United Nations General Assembly and to present what he has called a "victory plan" to his Western allies, including US President Joe Biden.</p></div><div data-component="text-block"><p>In a statement ahead of the visit,

Zelensky said the plan included further weapons donations, diplomatic efforts to force Russia to agree to peace, and holding Moscow accountable for its full-scale invasion in 2022.

In his interview with ABC News, Zelensky said his victory plan was not about negotiating with Russia, but rather it was "a bridge to a diplomatic way out, to stop the war".

On Tuesday, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said Russia was being cautious about media reports of a Ukrainian plan and added that the conflict would only end when Russia's aims were achieved.

Zelensky has for some time been asking Western countries to allow Ukraine to ease restrictions on the use of long-range missiles which could be used to strike deep into Russia. He is expected to do so again this week as he visits the US.

On Sunday, Biden said he had not yet decided whether to give Ukraine the green light. Zelensky said the US would need to lead the decision: "Everybody's looking up to [Biden], and we need this to defend ourselves," he told ABC.

Zelensky will speak at the UN General Assembly on Wednesday and is also due to meet US presidential candidates Donald Trump and Kamala Harris.

The president of the Czech Republic, Petr Pavel, told the New York Times that Ukraine would have to be "realistic" about its prospects of recovering the areas in the east of the country which Russia has managed to gain over the last 31 months of war.

He added that the most likely outcome of the war was that a part of Ukrainian territory would remain under Russian occupation for a number of years.

A defeat of either Ukraine or Russia "will simply not happen", Pavel told the Times, adding that the end of the conflict would be "somewhere in between".

Zelensky's US trip comes as Ukraine continues to come under sustained attack by Russia.

An incursion by Ukrainian troops into Russia's Kursk region in August failed to ease the pressure put by Moscow on eastern Ukraine.

Several regions continue to see daily casualties and widespread damage to Ukraine's energy infrastructure. There are concerns Russia could seize more key towns in the

east of the country.

In a daytime attack on Tuesday, Russia hit a high-rise apartment block in Ukraine's northeastern city of Kharkiv.

At least three people died and 15 were injured in the attack, which local authorities said was carried out with glide bombs.

- [Three killed in Russian strike on Kharkiv apartments](https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cx245n0gex5o)

On Monday night, an attack on the eastern Ukrainian town of Poltava damaged infrastructure, while in the southern city of Zaporizhzhia one person died and six others were wounded following "massive air strikes".

Russian troops have made serious advances in the east and are closing in on Vuhledar - a city on the southern part of the Donbas front line that the Russians have been trying to seize since the beginning of their full-scale invasion.

Ukrainian military expert and retired colonel Kostyantyn Mashovets warned his fellow Ukrainians they had to be "psychologically prepared" for the loss of Selydove, Toretsk and Vuhledar in the eastern region of Donbas.

"I would love to be wrong," he wrote on Facebook.

"But from the information I have... this is a very likely scenario of events in the near future."

THREE KILLED IN RUSSIAN STRIKE ON KHARKIV APARTMENT

[3]

Russia has struck an apartment block in the north-east Ukrainian city of Kharkiv, killing at least three people and injuring 31 more, say local officials.

The wave of strikes, which officials said had hit four districts, was conducted with the use of guided glide bombs on Tuesday.

"The targets for Russian bombs are a residential building, a bakery, a stadium... that is, the ordinary life of ordinary people," said Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelensky.

The attack comes as fighting intensifies in the country's east with Russian troops encir-

clinging and closing in on the largely destroyed town of Vuhledar.

Shortly after Tuesday's blitz in Kharkiv, Zelensky issued a statement sharing pictures of the destroyed residential tower - which showed a gaping hole in the middle of the building.

He called on allies to "stop the terror".

He is in New York to address the UN General Assembly's annual congress, having arrived on Monday reiterating Ukraine's need for timely US military assistance.

"There is much discussion now at the UN General Assembly about collective efforts for security and the future. But we just need to stop the terror. To have security. To have a future," Zelensky said.

- War with Russia closer to end than we think - Zelensky

Meanwhile in Kharkiv, officials said the block that was hit had previously been struck at the start of the war.

"It was almost repaired, all the windows were put in, insulated, and prepared for the heating season. The enemy hit it a second time with a KAB [glide bomb]," said Kharkiv's mayor Ihor Terekov on Telegram.

Russia has increasingly been using glide bombs in recent months - Soviet-era bombs fitted out with wings and satellite navigation aids. They are cheap, destructive, and are said to have been key to Russia's effort to capture further ground in Ukraine.

They were used in May in attacks in Kharkiv, while military analysts also note that they appear to have been used for the first time in Zaporizhzhia city on Sunday night.

Ukrainian officials said Russia conducted seven airstrikes with KAB glide bombs, injuring at least 21 civilians in the attacks on 13 residential buildings and two educational facilities.

Zaporizhzhia officials

also said Russia had conducted another strike on the south-eastern city on Monday night, which killed one person and injured at least four others including two children.

Russian forces have made serious advances in Ukraine's east and are closing in on Vuhledar - a coal-mining town on the southern part of the Donbas front line. The Russians have been trying to seize the town since the beginning of their full-scale invasion.

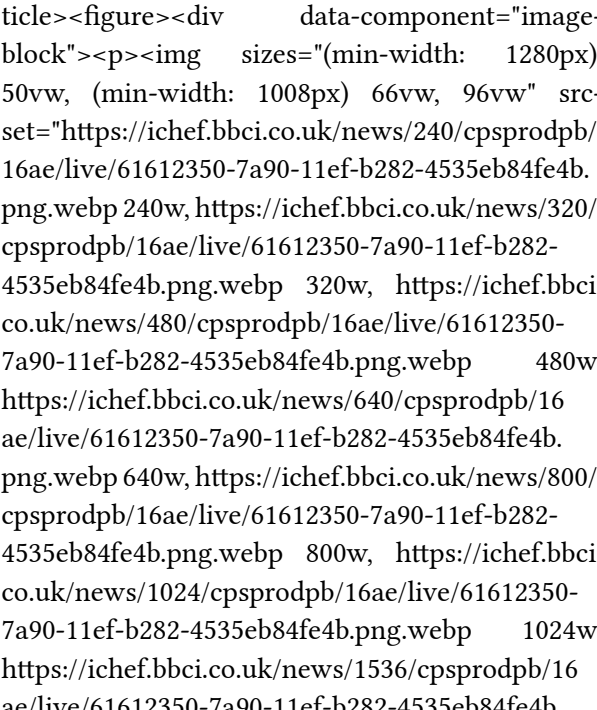
On Monday, Russian military bloggers were reporting that Moscow's troops had entered the outskirts of the town in the Donetsk region. Ukraine's military has mentioned only a number of attempts to capture its positions in Vuhledar.

Meanwhile, Russian forces have also recently advanced near Hlyboke, Kupyansk, and Pokrovsk, according to the US-based think tank the Institute for the Study of War.

The war tracking group said Ukrainian forces had recently advanced in Kursk region.

GERMAN GRANDMOTHER AND BABY MISSING IN TUSCANY FLOODS

[4]



png.webp 1536w" src="https://ichef.bbci.co.uk/news/480/cpsprodpb/16ae/live/61612350-7a90-11ef-b282-4535eb84fe4b.png.webp" alt="Vigili del Fuoco A firefighter wading into a house amid floodwater"/>>Vigili del Fuoco</p></div></figure><div data-component="text-block"><p>A German grandmother and her five-month-old grandson are missing after a flash flood swept through the house they were staying in near Pisa, in Tuscany.</p><p>The German family of holidaymakers reportedly called emergency services on Monday evening as soon as the nearby River Sterza broke its banks and water started coming into the house from under the door.</p><p>Local media said that the language barrier and the rescuers' difficulties in locating the family meant it took some time for firefighters to arrive.</p><p>In the meantime, the family tried to climb to the higher floors of the house.</p></div><div data-component="text-block"><p>However, as they were doing so the baby fell into the water, Francesco Auriemma, the mayor of the town of Montecatini Val di Cecina, told Italian media.</p><p>His grandmother was swept away as she tried to rescue him. Other members of the family – the baby's grandfather and his parents – managed to save themselves and were later rescued on the rooftop.</p><p>More than 100 firefighters are now searching for the woman and the baby, but are having to contend with the aftermath of the flood. </p><p>Some roads have collapsed and entire areas are covered in mud.</p><p>Firefighter Nicola Cianelli told Italian outlet Corriere della Sera that the river swelled up "incredibly quickly" and that the the wave that swept through the German family's home was 2.5m (8ft) high and "extremely violent".</p><p>The surrounding area has been battered by heavy rains since Monday, with more bad weather expected until at least the end of Wednesday.</p><p>Local farmers reported destroyed crops and devastated vineyards.</p><p>Eugenio Giani, the regional president, said the area had seen more rainfall in the space of six hours than normally falls over the course of one rainy month. It was

the most intense bad weather since records began, he added.</p><p>Last week, the region of Emilia Romagna to the east of Tuscany suffered serious floods. More than 1,000 people had to be evacuated from their homes and two people went missing in Bagnacavallo, near Ravenna.</p></div></article>

'STOP RIPPING US OFF': NOVO NORDISK CEO DEFENDS WEIGHT LOSS DRUG PRICING DURING SENATE GRILLING

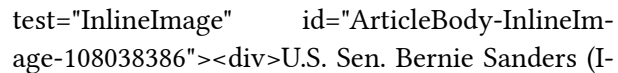
[5] <article><div id="RegularArticle-Article-Body-5" data-module="ArticleBody" data-test="articleBody-2" data-analytics="RegularArticle-articleBody-5-2"><div><p>Novo Nordisk's top executive faced a Senate grilling on Tuesday over the high prices of the company's weight loss drug Wegovy anddiabetes treatment Ozempic, as demand for both injections soars in the U.S. </p><p>Novo Nordisk CEO Lars Fruergaard Jørgensen did not explicitly promise lawmakers at a Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committeehearing in Washington, D.C., that he would slash prices for the two drugs.</p><p>But Jørgensen said he wants to work with them on policy solutions that will

address the "structural issues" that drive up prescription drug costs. He also committed to sitting down with pharmacy benefit managers – middlemen who negotiate drug rebates with manufacturers on behalf of insurers – to "collaborate on anything that helps patients get access and affordability."

That pledge came after Sen. Bernie Sanders, the Vermont independent who chairs the Senate panel, said he received commitments in writing from all of the major PBMs that they would not limit coverage of Wegovy and Ozempic if Novo Nordisk reduced their list prices. The hearing comes roughly five months after Sanders opened an investigation into the Danish drugmaker's pricing practices.

"All we are saying, Mr. Jørgensen, is treat the American people the same way that you treat people all over the world," Sanders said during the hearing Tuesday. "Stop ripping us off."

He noted that Novo Nordisk has raked in nearly \$50 billion in sales from Wegovy and Ozempic, with most of that revenue coming from the U.S. Sanders contends that Novo Nordisk charges Americans substantially higher prices for its blockbuster drugs than it does for patients in other countries. Before insurance, Ozempic costs nearly [\\$969 per month](https://www.novocare.com/diabetes/products/ozempic/explaining-list-price.html) and Wegovy costs almost [\\$1,350 per month](https://www.novocare.com/obesity/products/wegovy/let-us-help/explaining-list-price.html) in the U.S.



U.S. Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-VT) speaks during Novo Nordisk CEO Lars Jørgensen's hearing before a Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee on U.S. prices for the weight loss drugs Ozempic and Wegovy, on Capitol Hill in Washington, U.S., September 24, 2024.

Piroschka Van De Wouw | Reuters

Meanwhile, both treatments can cost as little as under \$100 for a month's supply in some European countries, according to a release

from the [committee](https://www.help.senate.gov/chair/newsroom/press/media-advisory-sanders-to-lead-help-committee-hearing-on-outrageous-ozempic-and-wegovy-prices-with-novo-nordisk-ceo). Ozempic costs just \$59 in Germany, while Wegovy costs \$92 in the U.K.

Sanders also said last week that the CEOs of major generic pharmaceutical companies have told him that they could sell a version of Ozempic for [less than \\$100 a month](https://www.sanders.senate.gov/press-releases/news-sanders-announces-generic-pharma-companies-willing-to-sell-ozempic-for-less-than-100/) at a profit. There are currently no generic alternatives to Ozempic available in the U.S.

Major PBMs, including United-Health Group's Optum Rx and CVS Caremark, and some health plans said \$100 monthly list prices for Wegovy and Ozempic would help make those drugs more widely available to patients, according to a [release](https://www.sanders.senate.gov/wp-content/uploads/9.23.2024-Novo-Nordisk-Untenable-Strategy-final.pdf) from Sanders.

That could undercut Jørgensen's claim in his written testimony that PBMs are to blame for the high list prices of Novo Nordisk's drugs and "exercise near-total control over the ability of hundreds of millions of Americans to get the medicines they need at affordable prices." The company has argued that it needs to be able to pay rebates to those middlemen to get their drugs on formularies, or lists of medications covered by insurance.

Jørgensen noted that the written promises that Sanders received from PBMs are "new information to me," but said he understands "that perhaps the PBMs have changed their minds."

Novo Nordisk has argued

that it has spent billions to research, develop and expand manufacturing for the treatments and is funneling more money into researching their potential to treat other obesity-related health conditions. That investment has extended and improved the lives of millions of Americans, which helps reduce the health-care costs associated with obesity and diabetes, according to written testimony from Jørgensen.

Novo Nordisk CEO Lars Jørgensen testifies before a Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee hearing on U.S. prices for the weight loss drugs Ozempic and Wegovy, on Capitol Hill in Washington, U.S., September 24, 2024.

Piroschka Van De Wouw | Reuters

During the hearing, Jørgensen said the company has fought to secure public and private insurance coverage for the medications. He also in part blamed the "complex U.S. healthcare system" for making it difficult for patients to access affordable prescription drugs, noting that "no single company alone can solve such vast and complicated policy challenges."

Jørgensen promised that Novo Nordisk will "remain engaged and work with this committee on policy solutions to address the structural issues that drive up costs."

But Jørgensen contended that lowering prices could have consequences, saying it could lead to less insurance coverage. In his written testimony, Jørgensen said Novo Nordisk's insulin product Levemir was previously available to 90% of U.S. patients through formularies. But insurers began to drop coverage of the insulin after Novo Nordisk cut its list price, leading to only 36% of patients having access. That eventually drove the company to discontinue the insulin, Jørgensen said in his written testimony.

Sanders and other lawmakers, [health experts](https://www.hsph.harvard.edu/news/hsph-in-the-news/weight-loss-drug-costs-could-go-out-of-control-says-expert/) and insurers have warned that the insatiable de-

mand for Novo Nordisk's drugs and similar weight loss and diabetes treatments from rival Eli Lilly could [potentially bankrupt the U.S. health-care system](https://www.sanders.senate.gov/in-the-news/sanders-diabetes-and-weight-loss-drugs-could-bankrupt-u-s-health-care-system/#:~:text=If%20half%20of%20all%20Medicare,drugs%20in%202022%2C%20%24175%20billion.) unless prices drop.

Both drugmakers make GLP-1s, which mimic hormones produced in the gut to tamp down a person's appetite and regulate their blood sugar. Eli Lilly's weight loss injection Zepbound and diabetes drug Mounjaro similarly cost around \$1,000 per month before insurance and other rebates.

In a release, the Senate Health Committee said it would cost the U.S. \$411 billion per year if half of all Americans took weight loss drugs from Novo Nordisk and Eli Lilly. That's \$5 billion more than what Americans spent on all prescription drugs in 2022.

Medicare spent [\\$4.6 billion on Ozempic](https://www.kff.org/policy-watch/medicare-spending-on-ozempic-and-other-glp-1-s-is-skyrocketing/) in 2022 alone, according to health policy research organization KFF.

Other insurers and employers have implemented strict requirements to control weight loss drug costs, or have dropped coverage of those treatments altogether. Many health plans cover GLP-1s for diabetes, but not for weight loss. The federal Medicare program doesn't pay for weight loss treatments unless they are approved and prescribed for another health condition.

The hearing comes as the Biden administration and lawmakers on both sides of the aisle try to rein in health-care costs in the U.S., in part by pressuring the pharmaceutical industry and drug supply chain middlemen. On average, Americans pay two to three times more than patients in other developed nations for prescription drugs, according to a

gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2023/12/14/fact-sheet-biden-harris-administration-announces-dozens-of-pharma-companies-raised-prices-faster-than-inflation-triggering-medicare-rebates/" target="_blank">fact sheet from the White House.</p><p>Notably, Ozempic will likely be subject to the next round of price negotiations between manufacturers and Medicare — a key provision of President Joe Biden's Inflation Reduction Act that aims to lower costs for seniors. Wall Street analysts say Ozempic will likely be eligible for negotiations by the time the next round of drugs is selected in 2025, for price changes that will go into effect in 2027.</p><p>Lawmakers asked Novo Nordisk to commit to not suing the federal government if Ozempic and Wegovy are selected for the next round of negotiations.</p><p>Jørgensen did not explicitly make that commitment, noting that the company believes the talks are "not a fair negotiation, but actually price-setting" that will have negative consequences for drug innovation.</p></div></article>

OPEC IS HIGHLY BULLISH ON LONG-TERM OIL DEMAND GROWTH. NOT EVERYONE AGREES

[6] <article><div id="RegularArticle-Article-Body-5" data-module="ArticleBody" data-test="articleBody-2" data-analytics="RegularArticle-articleBody-5-2"><div id="ArticleBody-InlineImage-106118561" data-test="InlineImage"><div>The sun sets beyond crude oil storage tanks at the Juaymah tank farm at Saudi Aramco's Ras Tanura oil refinery and oil terminal in Ras Tanura, Saudi Arabia, on Monday, Oct. 1, 2018.</div><div>Bloomberg | Bloomberg | Getty Images</div></div><div><p>Global benchmark <a href="https://www.cnbc.com/quotes/

@LCO.1/" target="_blank">Brent crude falling below \$70 a barrel in early September — its lowest in 33 months — is terrific news for consumers, who will consequently see lower prices at the pump.</p><p>It's also the stuff of nightmares for OPEC+, for whom oil revenues are critical.</p><p>The oil producer alliance led by Saudi Arabia earlier this month decided to delay oil production hikes for two additional months in an effort to shore up prices, but so far to no avail. Low global demand forecasts, coupled with new oil supply coming from non-OPEC countries, spell a long period of subdued crude prices.</p><p>It's led some in the market to ask the question: Have we officially reached "peak oil"? Has demand growth hit its apex, and is it just downhill from here?</p><p>By the forecasts of OPEC itself, that's a hard no.</p><p>The oil producer group's 2024 World Oil Outlook report, released Tuesday, predicts strong energy demand growth of 24% globally between now and 2050. It also forecasts "robust medium-term growth" in oil demand reaching 112.3 million barrels per day in 2029, an increase of 10.1 million barrels per day compared to 2023.</p><p>A fair number of energy analysts appear to disagree with that calculation — not least those at the International Energy Agency. The Paris-based agency sees demand actually leveling off by the end of the decade to around 106 million barrels per day, according to its annual mid-term outlook published in June. The IEA still sees global oil demand rising; it just forecasts a smaller rise, and expects it to peak by the end of the decade.</p></div><div><p>The battle of the forecasts between OPEC and the IEA has gained publicity

in recent years, with the latter organization pushing hard for a net-zero future. S&P Global Commodity Insights, meanwhile, sees the medium-term future as somewhere in between, with demand reaching a peak of 109 million barrels per day in 2034 and gradually declining to fall below 100 million barrels per day in 2050. OPEC, by contrast, sees demand hitting a whopping 120 million barrels per day by 2050. All parties agree that demand will fall in the developing world, while rising in emerging markets led by India.

The medium-term outlook

As for the near-to-medium term outlook, analysts are bearish on oil demand and prices. This is despite the early September announcement by OPEC+ that the group would be extending its crude production cuts into December in an attempt to limit market supply. "That two month extra time hasn't convinced anybody who's skeptical about the market that that's going to do much to shore up prices," Dave Ernsberger, head of market reporting at S&P Global Commodity Insights, told CNBC. "So that's the in-the-moment issue. But the much bigger issue is, existentially speaking, are we moving past the moment of peak oil demand?" Ernsberger pointed to the growth of alternative energy forms, including the increasing use of biofuels in the maritime industry. "What we're moving into is an era of post-demand growth. It's not a post-oil moment, but it's a post-growth moment. And how does OPEC+, how does the market readjust to a world of low or no growth in demand overall?"

Price increase prospects are also dimmed by China, the world's largest oil importer, which has put itself on a dedicated path to electrification. "The biggest threats to higher prices for OPEC+ are external," Li-Chen Sim, a non-resident scholar at the Washington-based Middle East Institute, told CNBC. "Those are chiefly 'lackluster demand, especially from China, oil supply from non-OPEC+ sources, and internal; some members are producing more than assigned quotas.' Estimates

by international and Chinese sources show a slowing demand for oil and refined products in China, Sim said. That is in part due to slowing Chinese economic growth of around 3% to 5% annually in recent years — still better than many other countries, she noted. "But there's also a structural element to the reduction in oil consumption, driven by a conscious effort to reduce its high dependence on oil (and gas) imports, and expressed in policies such as electric vehicle uptake and encouraging expansion of renewable and nuclear power," Sim added. In the near term, OPEC+ is still expected to bring some production back in December, several countries in the alliance are producing beyond their quotas, and more supply is coming onto the market from non-OPEC+ producers like the U.S., Guyana, Brazil, and Canada. "It's difficult to see prices moving much higher from here as long as that threat is out there in the market to bring those supplies back," Ernsberger said. In the much longer term, the eventual decline of the oil era — if it happens — will be brought on due to changing demand rather than dwindling supply, many analysts argue. It was the late Saudi Sheikh Ahmed Zaki Yamani who <https://www.oxfordreference.com/display/10.1093/acref/9780191826719.001.0001/q-oro-ed4-00017466> target="_blank">said in 2000: "The Stone Age came to an end not for a lack of stones and the Oil Age will end, but not for a lack of oil."

U.S. STEEL CEO DEFENDS PLANNED SALE TO JAPAN'S NIPPON, BELIEVES DEAL WILL CLOSE ON ITS MERITS

[7] <https://www.cnbc.com/quotes/X/> target="_blank">U.S. Steel CEO David Burritt on Tuesday defended the company's planned sale to Japan's

href="https://www.cnbc.com/quotes/" type="security" brand="cnbc" section="[object Object]" contentclassification="" target="_blank">Nippon Steel, expressing confidence that the deal will be completed despite President Joe Biden's vocal opposition.</p><p>"We strongly believe the deal closes on its merits," Burritt said in an interview on CNBC's "Money Movers." "It strengthens national security, it strengthens economic security and it strengthens job security."</p><p>Biden has publicly vowed that U.S. Steel will remain American-owned. Two people familiar with the matter told NBC News earlier this month that the president is preparing to formally block the \$14.9 billion sale. Vice President Kamala Harris and former President Donald Trump also both oppose the deal.</p><p>"We have to remember that Nippon North America has been doing business here for 50 years and while it may sound sexy for it to be a company that stays the same, we won't be able to succeed without Nippon,"Burritt said.</p><p>He said the transaction would save jobs, and pointed to Nippon's commitment to invest \$2.7 billion in U.S. Steel's struggling mills as an example. When asked why U.S. Steel cannot make these investments, Burritt said the company has an obligation to shareholders.</p><p>"It's about resource allocation," Burritt said. "They're about three times our size. They also have the best R&D and technology in the industry as it relates to integrated mills."</p><p>"Our priorities would be different," Burritt said. "Our priorities would not invest in these because we have to decide where we can get the best returns, because at the end of the day we have a fiduciary obligation to our stockholders."</p><p>The sale is currently under review by the Committee

on Foreign Investment in the United States, a body that reviews the national security implications of transactions by foreign entities. Burritt said he expects a decision to come after the U.S. presidential election in November.</p><p>CFIUS told Nippon that the sale could "lead to a reduction in domestic steel production capacity," according to a letter obtained by Reuters earlier this month. The committee said supply chains could be disrupted in sectors critical to national security such as transportation, infrastructure, construction and agriculture.</p><p>Burritt dismissed potential national security concerns Tuesday, "With this agreement that could be signed, they will adhere to the trade laws in the United States," he said.</p><p>"It's going to be run by U.S. citizens and there will be a board of directors that ... is largely U.S. citizens as well," Burritt said.</p></div></article>

JUSTICE DEPARTMENT ACCUSES VISA OF DEBIT NETWORK MONOPOLY THAT IMPACTS PRICE OF 'NEARLY EVERYTHING'

[8] <article><div id="RegularArticle-ArticleBody-5" data-module="ArticleBody" data-test="articleBody-2" data-analytics="RegularArticle-articleBody-5-2"><div data-test="InlineImage" id="ArticleBody-InlineImage-108038472">Justin Sullivan | etty Images</div><div><p>The U.S. Justice Department on Tuesday sued Visa, the world's biggest payments network, saying it propped up an illegal monopoly over debit payments by imposing "exclusionary" agreements on partners and smothering upstart firms.</p><p>Visa's moves over the years have resulted in American consumers and merchants paying billions of dollars in

additional fees, according to the DOJ, which filed a civil antitrust suit in New York for "monopolization" and other unlawful conduct.

"We allege that Visa has unlawfully amassed the power to extract fees that far exceed what it could charge in a competitive market," Attorney General Merrick Garland said in a DOJ release.

"Merchants and banks pass along those costs to consumers, either by raising prices or reducing quality or service," Garland said. "As a result, Visa's unlawful conduct affects not just the price of one thing – but the price of nearly everything."

Visa and its smaller rival MasterCard have surged in the past two decades, reaching a combined market cap of roughly \$1 trillion, as consumers tapped credit and debit cards for store purchases and e-commerce instead of paper money. They are essentially toll collectors, shuffling payments between the merchants' banks and cardholders.

More than 60% of debit transactions in the U.S. run over Visa rails, helping it charge more than \$7 billion annually in processing fees, according to the DOJ complaint.

But the payment networks' dominance has increasingly attracted attention from regulators and retailers.

In 2020, the DOJ filed an antitrust suit to block Visa from acquiring fintech company Plaid; the companies initially said they would fight the action, but soon abandoned the \$5.3 billion takeover.

In March, Visa and Mastercard agreed to limit their fees and let merchants charge customers for using credit cards, a deal retailers said

was worth \$30 billion in savings over a half decade. A federal judge later rejected the settlement, saying the networks could afford to pay for a "substantially greater" deal.

Visa wields its dominance, enormous scale, and centrality to the debit ecosystem to impose a web of exclusionary agreements on merchants and banks," the DOJ said in its release. "These agreements penalize Visa's customers who route transactions to a different debit network or alternative payment system."

Furthermore, when faced with threats, Visa "engaged in a deliberate and reinforcing course of conduct to cut off competition and prevent rivals from gaining the scale, share, and data necessary to compete," the DOJ said.

The move comes in the waning months of President Joe Biden's administration, in which regulators including the Federal Trade Commission and the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau have sued middlemen for drug prices and pushed back against so-called junk fees.

In February, credit card lender Capital One announced its acquisition of Discover Financial, a \$35.3 billion deal pre-

icated in part on Capital One's ability to bolster Discover's also-ran payments network, a distant No. 4 behind Visa, MasterCard and American Express.</p><p>Capital One said that once the deal is closed, it will switch all its debit card volume and a growing share of credit card volume to Discover over time, making it a more viable competitor to Visa and Mastercard.
</p><p>This story is developing. Please check back for updates.</p></div></div></article>

MALDIVES LEADER SAYS ISRAEL MUST BE HELD TO ACCOUNT FOR 'GENOCIDE' IN GAZA

[9] <article><DIV id="readability-page-1"><DIV><p>Mohamed Muizzu also tells the UNGA that Israel is targeting journalists to cover up its 'crimes' in Gaza and Lebanon.</p></DIV><div aria-live="polite" aria-atomic="true"><p>Maldives President Mohamed Muizzu has told the United Nations that Israel must be held accountable for the crimes it is committing in Gaza, including "genocide", as well as its attacks on journalists and other violations of international law.</p><p>"The ongoing massacre, the genocide by Israel in Gaza is a travesty of justice and the international system," the leader of the Indian Ocean archipelago told the UN General Assembly in New York on Tuesday.</p><p>He said Israel's killing of civilians and its "repeated destruction" of homes, hospitals, and schools in Gaza was now being extended to Lebanon.</p><p>On Tuesday, Israel and Hezbollah again traded cross-border fire, a day after the Israeli military launched a wave of air attacks into Lebanon that have killed at least 569

people so far.</p>

<p>Israel's new offensive against Hezbollah has stoked fears that nearly a year of conflict between Israel and Hamas in Gaza will explode into a larger regional conflagration.</p>

<p>The Israeli military is shifting its focus from Gaza to the northern frontier, where Hezbollah has been firing rockets into Israel in support of Hamas, which is also backed by Iran.</p>

<p>Israel has made a war priority of securing its northern border and allowing for the return of displaced residents. This has set the stage for a long conflict, while Hezbollah has said it will not back down until a ceasefire is reached in Gaza.</p>

<p>Muizzu also said Israel was attempting to cover up its crimes by targeting Palestinian and Lebanese journalists, including by closing Al Jazeera bureaus in Israel and the occupied West Bank.</p>

<p>"How can we interpret this as anything other than brutal attempts to prevent the world from knowing the crimes taking place?" he asked.</p>

<p>"Israel must be held accountable for these acts of terrorism, for these violations of international law and UN resolutions."</p>

<p>In June, Muizzu said his government will ban Israelis from the Maldives, known for idyllic beaches and luxury resorts, as public anger in the predominantly Muslim nation was rising over Israel's war in Gaza, which has killed more than 41,000 Palestinians, displaced nearly all of the population, and left much of the enclave in ruins.</p>

<p>On Tuesday, he called for the world to accept a sovereign and independent Palestinian state on the pre-1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital.</p>

<p>"Now, we must ensure that Palestine becomes a full member of the UN," he added.</p>

<p>In May, the UNGA <a href="https://

www.aljazeera.com/news/2024/5/10/un-backs-palestines-bid-for-membership-how-did-your-country-vote backed a Palestinian bid to become a full UN member by recognising it as qualified to join and recommending the UN Security Council “reconsider the matter favourably”. The [United States had vetoed](https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2024/4/18/palestinian-bid-for-un-membership-set-for-security-council-vote) a Palestinian bid to become a full UN member at the Security Council in April.

Muizzu makes climate crisis plea

Muizzu also asked world leaders on Tuesday for additional support in combatting the climate crisis, which is threatening the existence of the world’s lowest-lying country.

“Climate change is the most serious threat to our world, the defining challenge of our generation. It’s washing away decades of progress in mere minutes,” he said.

“It’s diverting already depleted resources for long-term development to emergency relief and reconstruction, preventing countries from adapting to the climate impact.”

He called on rich countries and the worst emitters of carbon to not only meet existing financial pledges made to developing countries to help them adapt to climate change, but also to extend that funding when the 2024 UN Climate Change Conference, more commonly known as COP29, takes place in November.

“As we work towards COP 29, we must ensure the new goal on climate finance matches the level of climate action required.”

PALESTINIAN CHILD MOURNS FATHER KILLED BY ISRAELI STRIKE

[10] [NewsFeed](https://www.aljazeera.com/program/newsfeed/)

“Oh God, I have no one but him.” A young Palestinian boy mourned his father who was killed by an Israeli air attack while in a car in Gaza.

Published On 24 Sep 2024

QATARI LEADER CONDEMNS ‘BLATANT AGGRESSION’ AGAINST PALESTINIANS

[11] [NewsFeed](https://www.aljazeera.com/program/newsfeed/)

Qatar’s Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani has called Israel’s war on Gaza ‘the most barbaric, heinous and extensive aggression’ and accused Israel of committing genocide during his address at the UN’s General Assembly.

Published On 24 Sep 2024

THREE KILLED IN UKRAINE’S KHARKIV AS RUSSIA BOMBS AN APARTMENT BLOCK

[12] [Attack launched as world leaders, including Ukraine’s President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, gather in New York for the UN General Assembly.](https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2024/9/)

Russia has hit the Ukrainian city of Kharkiv with guided bombs, killing at least three people and wounding dozens, according to Ukraine’s President Volodymyr Zelenskyy.

“The targets of the Russian bombs were an apartment building, a bakery, a stadium. In other words, the everyday life of ordinary people,” said

24/zelenskyy-seeks-us-investments-in-ukraines-battered-energy-sector" target="_blank">Zelenskyy on Tuesday, posting a statement on X about the attack, which also left dozens injured.</p>

<p>He posted a picture showing the facade of a nine-storey apartment block partially ripped off, the windows blown out and debris strewn across the street.</p>

<p>Kharkiv regional governor Oleh Syniehubov reported that 31 were injured.</p>

<p>“People are still trapped under the rubble. One of the multistorey buildings suffered a direct hit. The rescue operation continues,” he wrote on Telegram.</p>

<p>The northeastern city of Kharkiv lies about 30km (18 miles) from the Russian border and has been pounded by Russian aerial attacks throughout the two-and-a-half-year war.</p>

<p>Kharkiv mayor Ihor Terekhov said on Telegram that the nine-storey block had already been attacked by Russia at the start of the war.</p>

<p>“It was almost repaired, windows were installed, it was insulated, and prepared for the heating season. The enemy hit it a second time,” he said, adding that the section of the building that suffered most damage was housing 82 people.</p>

<p>In total, Russia launched eight guided bombs, six of which hit Kharkiv, according to regional prosecutors on Telegram.</p>

<p>Ukrainian air defences struggle to intercept the highly destructive bombs.</p>

<p>The afternoon assault was launched as world leaders, including the Ukrainian president, gathered in New York for the United Nations General Assembly, discussing the wars in Gaza, Sudan and Ukraine.</p>

<p>“There is much discussion now at the UN Gen-

eral Assembly about collective efforts for security and the future,” said Zelenskyy. “But we just need to stop the terror. To have security. To have a future.”</p>

<p>Kyiv, which is pressing allies to allow deep strikes into Russia, says the most effective means of reducing the attacks is to target not the bombs themselves but planes and airfields hosting them.</p>

<p>“We are counting on the courage to allow us to attack military targets in enemy territory with Western weapons,” said Ukrainian Prime Minister Denys Shmyhal, commenting on Tuesday’s attacks.</p>

<p>Also on Tuesday, Ukrainian soldiers drove Russian forces out of a processing plant in the town of Vovchansk in the Kharkiv border region, which had been occupied for four months, according to a statement from Ukrainian military intelligence.</p>

<p>The plant, a partly steel structure with some 30 buildings, had been a Russian stronghold in the country’s northeast since Russia launched a new push in the area in May.</p>

<p>Ukraine’s incursion last month into Russia’s Kursk region, where Ukrainian forces are holding ground, was launched in part to ease pressure in the northeast by forcing Russia to divert its forces.</p>

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AS LEBANON REELS FROM ISRAELI ATTACKS, THE FUTURE IS MURKY FOR A WOUNDED HEZBOLLAH

[13] <article><div data-testid="companionColumn-0" name="articleBody"><p>Swaths of southern Lebanon are smoldering ruins. Highways are clogged with thousands fleeing the possibility of an even bigger war between Israel and Hezbollah.

As towns and villages held funerals on Tuesday, Lebanon was just beginning to grapple with the fallout from its deadliest day in decades.

A vast wave of Israeli airstrikes on Monday targeting parts of the country where Hezbollah holds sway [killed hundreds of people](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/09/23/world/middleeast/israel-hezbollah-lebanon-strikes.html) and plunged Lebanon into a deep state of uncertainty over what Israel would do next, how deeply the militia had been damaged and what sort of response its remaining forces could muster.

Israel said it had hit more than 1,000 sites, mostly in southern and eastern Lebanon, aimed at the fighters and military infrastructure of Hezbollah, the Lebanese political party and militia it has been fighting along the Israel-Lebanon border for 11 months. At least 558 people were killed in the strikes, including 94 women and 50 children, Lebanon's health minister told reporters on Tuesday.

That toll marked a terrible milestone for Lebanon: Monday was the country's deadliest day since its 15-year civil war, which ended in 1990.

"The victims of a strike by the Israeli enemy on the village of Arnoun. Targeted in their homes!" read text over a photo shared on social media of three women killed in one of the strikes.

The death toll given by the health ministry did not differentiate between fighters and civilians, and the strikes overwhelmingly hit parts of the country where Hezbollah dominates, suggesting that Israel had struck another fierce blow to the group. That capped a week in which Israel also [blew up electronic devices](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2024/09/18/world/israel-hezbollah-gaza-hamas) distributed by Hezbollah, killing dozens of people and injuring thousands more, and assassinated a group of its [military leaders in an airstrike](https://www.nytimes.com/2024/09/21/world/middleeast/israel-lebanon-hezbollah-beirut.html) near Beirut.

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News Analysis

Some experts said that Israel's onslaught had left Hezbollah in disarray. Others noted its large weapons stockpiles and history of adapting to battle Israel's much more high-tech military.

media

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WHAT IS HEZBOLLAH, THE MILITANT GROUP BASED IN LEBANON?

[14] <article><section name="articleBody"><div data-testid="companionColumn-0"><p>Hezbollah militants in Lebanon have been exchanging fire with the Israeli military for nearly a year, but now the long-simmering conflict is approaching a boiling point.</p><p>Israel bombed more than 1,000 sites in southern and eastern Lebanon on Monday. Lebanon's health minister said the strikes killed 558 people, with another 1,800 injured, making it the country's deadliest day since a civil war that ended in 1990. The airstrikes continued on Tuesday.</p><p>Lebanon was already reeling from a string of Israeli attacks last week. But Hezbollah has not backed down. The armed group has launched more than 100 missiles, rockets and drones into Israel since Sunday,

most of which were intercepted. There were no deaths or serious injuries reported in Israel.

World leaders, meeting at the United Nations General Assembly in New York this week, fear the conflict could quickly escalate even further and draw in bigger, more powerful players, like Hezbollah's patron, Iran.

Here's what to know.

Hezbollah is a Shiite Muslim militant group formed in the 1980s during the chaos of Lebanon's long civil war. It was created, with Iranian guidance, to fight the Israeli occupation of southern Lebanon, which ended in 2000. The name Hezbollah (pronounced hez-bollah) is Arabic for "Party of God."

Hezbollah has grown into a powerful political and fighting force in Lebanon, and has expanded its operations into Syria, Iraq, Yemen and elsewhere in the Middle East. It has an extensive infrastructure in Lebanon to support its mission, including offices dedicated to social services, communications and internal security.

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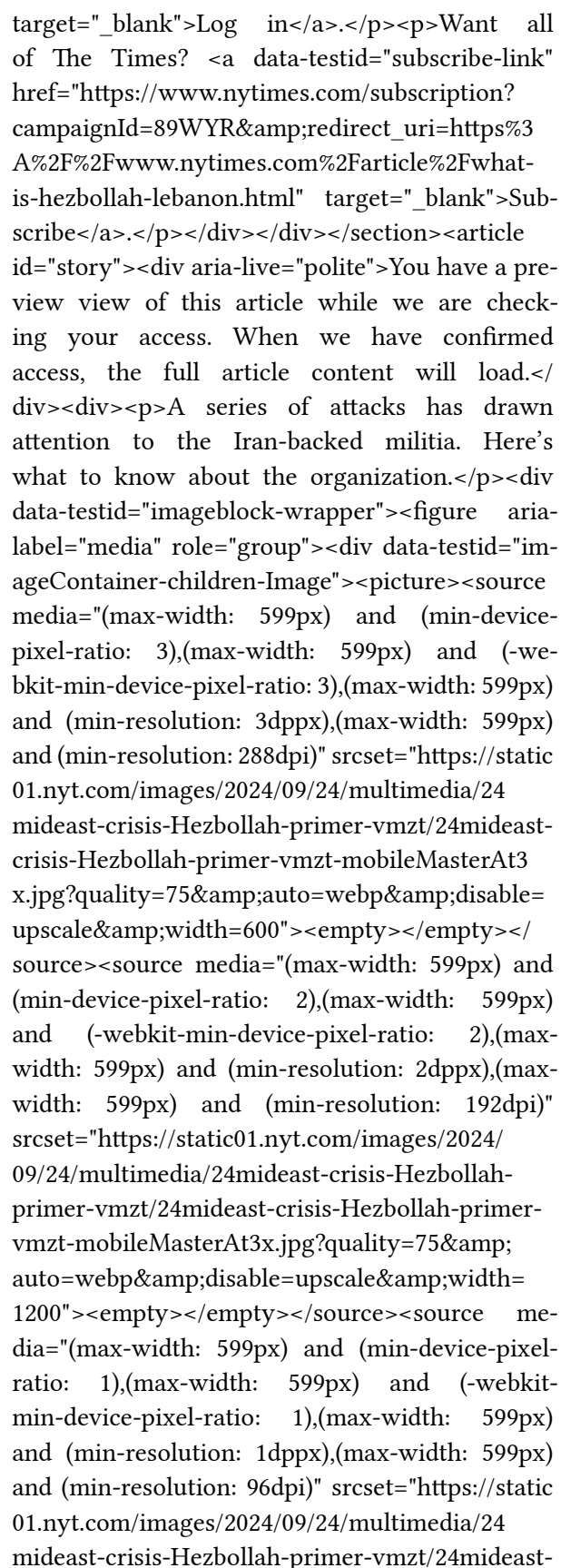
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A series of attacks has drawn attention to the Iran-backed militia. Here's what to know about the organization.



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crisis-Hezbollah-primer-vmzt-mobileMasterAt3x.jpg?quality=75&auto=webp&disable=upscale&width=1800"></picture></div><figcaption data-testid="photoviewer-children-ImageCaption">Hezbollah supporters paying tribute to the victims of an Israeli airstrike, in Dahiyeh, near Beirut, on Saturday.Diego Ibarra Sanchez for The New York Times</figcaption></figure></div><div><time datetime="2024-09-24T09:55:21-04:00">Sept. 24, 2024</time></div></div></article></article>

BIDEN WARNS THE WORLD IS AT AN 'INFLECTION POINT'

[15] <article><section name="articleBody"><div data-testid="companionColumn-0"><p>President Biden used his final speech to the United Nations to celebrate his defense of Ukraine against Russia's

invasion and his work to restore America's global alliances, but he also warned that the advances of his administration could easily fall apart if America returns to isolationism.</p><p>In an address of a little more than 20 minutes to the U.N's General Assembly, Mr. Biden ticked through the high points of his nearly four years in office, citing a list of challenges he faced and the responses he organized. But he stopped short of assessing how he did in what he has described as the central challenge of his time: ensuring that democracy wins out over autocracy.</p><p>Not surprisingly, Mr. Biden focused heavily on America and the West's response to the Ukraine invasion, declaring that the United States and its allies, chiefly NATO, had "ensured the survival of Ukraine as a free nation." But he also acknowledged that Ukraine's power to hold off Russia could be fleeting.</p><p>"We cannot grow weary, we cannot look away," he declared, in what may be his last opportunity to rally global support behind a conflict that has played a central role in his presidency.</p></div><div data-testid="companionColumn-1"><p>On Thursday, Mr. Biden will meet with President Volodymyr Zelensky, the Ukrainian president, and will come under new pressure to let Ukraine use American long-range missiles to strike deep into Russian territory — a step he has resisted, fearing it would put the United States into direct conflict with one of its two major nuclear-armed adversaries.</p><p>While Mr. Zelensky will soon speak to the General Assembly, Russia's president, Vladimir V. Putin, will not; Russia is being represented by its longtime foreign minister, Sergey V. Lavrov. Nor is China's president, Xi Jinping, coming to the annual event, meaning that the two other major powers confronting the United States during Mr. Biden's presidency will be barely heard.</p></div><div id="optimistic-truncator-a11y" tabindex="-1"><hr><empty></div><p>Thank you for your patience while we verify access. If you are in Reader mode please exit and <a href="https://myaccount.nytimes.com/auth/login?response_type=cookie&client_id=vi&redirect_uri=https%3A%3A"

2F%2Fwww.nytimes.com%2F2024%2F09%2F24%2Fus%2Fpolitics%2Fbiden-unga-speech.html&asset=opttrunc" target="_blank">log into your Times account, or subscribe for all of The Times.</p><hr><empty></empty></hr></div><div data-testid="optimistic-truncator-message"><p>Thank you for your patience while we verify access.</p><p>Already a subscriber? <a data-testid="log-in-link" href="https://myaccount.nytimes.com/auth/login?response_type=cookie&client_id=vi&redirect_uri=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.nytimes.com%2F2024%2F09%2F24%2Fus%2Fpolitics%2Fbiden-unga-speech.html&asset=opttrunc" target="_blank">Log in.</p><p>Want all of The Times? <a data-testid="subscribe-link" href="https://www.nytimes.com/subscription?campaignId=89WYR&redirect_uri=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.nytimes.com%2F2024%2F09%2F24%2Fus%2Fpolitics%2Fbiden-unga-speech.html" target="_blank">Subscribe.</p></div></div></section><article id="story"><div aria-live="polite">You have a preview view of this article while we are checking your access. When we have confirmed access, the full article content will load.</div><div><p>The president celebrated his defense of Ukraine and restoration of global alliances but warned that a world filled with crises looms outside.</p><div data-testid="imageblock-wrapper"><figure aria-label="media" role="group"><div data-testid="imageContainer-children-Image"><picture><source media="(max-width: 599px) and (min-device-pixel-ratio: 3), (max-width: 599px) and (-webkit-min-device-pixel-ratio: 3), (max-width: 599px) and (min-resolution: 3dppx), (max-width: 599px) and (min-resolution: 288dpi)" srcset="https://static01.nyt.com/images/2024/09/24/multimedia/24dc-prexy-wlpq/24dc-prexy-wlpq-mobileMasterAt3x.jpg?quality=75&auto=webp&disable=upscale&";

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WHY THE INTERNET'S SO HOOKED ON TIKTOK'S KING OF SANDWICHES

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content creator Owen Han, known as the
"Sandwich King," makes a meatball
sandwich in his studio, kitchen in Venice, Cali-
fornia, on Aug. 28, 2024. Han used to make
the meatball sandwich with his Nonna or grand-
mother, in Italy. Han is known for sharing creative
sandwich recipes with his TikTok, YouTube and
Instagram followers. He started making videos
in his apartment while attending USC. He has
over 4 million followers. Han is the author of

<div>
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the book, “Stacked - the art of the perfect sandwich.” (Genaro Molina/Los Angeles Times/TNS) target="_blank"><figcaption>Food content creator Owen Han, known as the "Sandwich King," makes a meatball sandwich in his studio, kitchen in Venice, California, on Aug. 28, 2024. Han used to make the meatball sandwich with his Nonna or grandmother, in Italy. Han is known for sharing creative sandwich recipes with his TikTok, YouTube and Instagram followers. He started making videos in his apartment while attending USC. He has over 4 million followers. Han is the author of the book, "Stacked - the art of the perfect sandwich." (Genaro Molina/Los Angeles Times/TNS)</figcaption></figure></div>

<p>LOS ANGELES — Owen Han didn’t know how much the internet loves sandwiches when he posted a TikTok video of grilled chicken, bacon, smashed avocado and chipotle mayo between two slices of sourdough bread one day in the summer of 2021. But he soon found out.</p>

<p>“It was my first video to break a million views,” says Han in his Venice studio apartment, where a large kitchen takes up most of the small, tidy space, outfitted with a six-burner range with built-in griddle, more knives and pans than some restaurants and a deli-style meat slicer.</p>

<p>“The way in which it happened was kind of just by chance,” he says. “I was planning on filming a cioppino, which is a fish stew. It takes a lot of time, has a lot of ingredients, and I was feeling a little bit lazy, so I was like, ‘You know what? Let me just film making my lunch.’”</p>

<p>Three years later, Han has a following of 4.3

million on TikTok, 2.2 million on Instagram and nearly 800,000 dedicated YouTube fans. His first cookbook, “Stacked: The Art of Making the Perfect Sandwich,” will be released by Harvest on Oct. 15, when he kicks off a coast-to-coast tour. And he has just returned from cooking at a pop-up in Ibiza and a cheesemaking tour in Oregon with Tillamook, one of the many brands wooing him for content.</p>

<p>Even by TikTok standards, which have created a new equation for fame, Han’s rise was meteoric. Based on the success of that chicken-bacon-avo sando, “I just figured, let me try another one, which happened to be the steak sandwich, which is on the [cookbook] cover, and that broke 10 million views. I was like, wow, this is crazy. People like sandwiches, and I also like sharing my passion for sandwiches.”</p>

<p>He followed that up with a breakfast sandwich. “And then from there, people were already dubbing me ‘the sandwich guy.’ It kind of has a good ring to it,” says Han, being modest.</p>

<p>He was already the Sandwich King.</p>

<p>‘It’s a comfort thing’</p>

<p>And that was just the start. His tomahawk steak sammie has reached almost 13 million TikTok views. Chicken tikka wrap: 16.6 million. Open-face ham and cheese: 24 million. Beef shawarma wrapped in laffa: 52.3 million (that’s more than the entire population of South Korea).</p>

<p>Tall and dark-haired, Han barely speaks in a majority of his videos. They almost always start the same: He squishes the sandwich, cuts into it with a smooth slice or thwacking chop, takes a big crunchy bite and beams a big smile. And though quick edits and ASMR are nothing new to social media, the way he slaps deli meats and splatters sauces on bread obviously resonates with his audience.</p>

<p>Why do people love sandwiches so much? “I think what it comes down to is it’s a comfort

thing, it's such a comforting food," says Han. "I mean, tons of memories come to mind," including his Italian grandmother's pan e Nutella and the sandwich of the day at his high school cafeteria in Sarasota, Florida. "I loved the cafeteria staff. I remember super vividly Friday was tuna melts. Thursday was burger. No matter what was being served, I'm always getting the sandwich."

Born in Milan and raised in Florida, Han spent summers with his grandmother in a tiny village in the mountains of Tuscany, with no Wi-Fi until recently. "So there wasn't really much to do besides spend your time outside running around or watch Nonna cook," he says. "And I was much more a fan of staying in the kitchen with her."

Pasta was the first thing he learned to make, and Nonna – along with Han's Shanghainese father – instilled in him a passion for food, especially her cucina povera: sugo di pomodoro, stracotto (pot roast), carbonara, turkey braised with vegetables and wine, pizza from her outdoor oven.

She enrolled him in a cooking class at a local restaurant, but he's otherwise a self-taught chef who studied economics and nutrition at USC. After college he landed a job as a "nutrition ambassador" at a hospital in Los Angeles. "That's a fancy way of saying I was delivering food to patients and taking their orders," he says.

That's when his life took a turn. In April 2021 his father – a former concert pianist who helped spark Han's passion for cooking – died due to COVID-19. Han writes in his book that after his father's death, returning to his job "where I was constantly surrounded by families undergoing similar hardships and pain was extremely difficult. At that point in time, a typical workday consisted of me crying in the bathroom for hours while neglecting my work."

His roommate at the time, H. Woo Lee, was posting food videos to TikTok and, because Han loved to cook, encouraged him to do the same. "I really owe it to him for encouraging me to start," Han says.

"I had an Instagram at the time, but I was too embarrassed to post food content," Han says. "Be-

cause there were 800 people I know that followed me, I was like, 'I'm not gonna embarrass myself there.' So I went on this new platform, TikTok."

Among the first videos to go viral was shrimp toast, based on a recipe from his Chinese grandmother's cookbook, passed down to him by his father. He takes the stained, barely bound-together copy of "Recipes: Chinese Cooking" from the bookcase in his kitchen (where there's also a trophy inscribed with "Sandwich King Owen Han," a gift from Bon Appétit personality Brad Leone) and shows where she wrote "celery leave (sic) chopped" on the page. "She had some edits in here," he says.

By the time his first chicken sandwich hit a million views and the first brands reached out to him, he had quit his hospital job, turned down an offer to work in operations at Roscoe's Chicken & Waffles in Hollywood and decided to focus full-time on sandwich content.

Is lasagna a sandwich?

On a recent August day, he's standing at the stove stirring the tomato sauce for polpetta, a recipe from Nonna. But "Nonna never made meatball subs," Han says. "I doubt she knew what a meatball sub was." Until he shot a video of making one with her in Italy this summer.

"She was really weirded out by eating [meatballs] in a sandwich. But she was like, 'This is actually very good.'"

Nonna's meatballs are especially tender, bound by milk-soaked bread (rather than traditional breadcrumbs or panko) and beaten egg. One key to a good meatball sub is not to oversauce, Han says. "Nobody likes soggy bread."

Han has cooked and made videos with Nonna, Giada De Laurentiis, Martha Stewart, Alex Guarnaschelli and Padma Lakshmi. When he explained to Stewart his broad definition of a sandwich – any stackable ingredients with a flour/bread component – "She was quick. She said, 'Does that mean lasagna is a sandwich?'"

But you can't eat lasagna with your hands, I respond.

<p>“I have,” Han says.</p>
<p>The “Stacked” cookbook includes recipes for tacos, burgers, burritos and wraps, a quesadilla, chicken and waffles, as well as more traditional sandwich styles, both classic and inventive. (But no lasagna.)</p>
<p>Mining his Italian and Chinese heritage and inspiration from social media, “I have yet to run out of ideas,” says Han, who estimates he has made nearly 1,000 sandwiches since becoming a self-described sandwich influencer and keeps a continual list of ideas on his phone.</p>
<p>“It’s definitely a fear of mine, but if I’m ever at a dead end or lacking inspiration, I will just pull that up. ... There are times where I will literally wake up from a dream or a nap, and will come up with an idea and I’ll just add it to that tab.”</p>
<p>When asked about critics of TikTok cooking content who point out that 30-second videos are more entertainment than instructional, he says, “I fully agree. There is some instructional element to the short videos, because if you slow it down or watch it enough times, [you] get the gist of it.”</p>
<p>But, he says, he was inspired to write a cookbook partly because he receives comments and DMs with requests for recipes. “I wanted to share my story and recipes with people.”</p>
<p>His cookbook proposal stood out because Han is “authentic, charming, genuinely loves to cook and comes by this naturally,” says Harvest executive editor Sarah Pelz. With his fan base, “He has a direct connection with them. We’ve seen this with authors who have big social media platforms. I think readers feel they know this person. So there’s a very personal connection” that publishers can’t create for authors.</p>
<p>That’s what catapulted “Baking Yesteryear” by B. Dylan Hollis, who makes retro recipes such as Kool-Aid pies and chocolate syrup cakes, to the No. 1 spot on the New York Times bestseller list. Other cookbooks from TikTok creators have climbed the bestseller list, including “An Unapologetic Cookbook” by Joshua Weissman and “The Korean Vegan” by Joanne Lee Molinaro.</p>
<p>The next frontier for Han is YouTube, he says,

where he has been experimenting with a couple of cooking series. One is “Ciao Chow” – “like Italian ‘ciao’ and Chinese ‘chow’” – with Han’s mashups such as dan dan Bolognese. The other is “My Nonna Knows,” in which Han consults with his grandmother via FaceTime and she rates his renditions of classic Italian dishes.</p>
<p>“I definitely want to continue pushing out long-form content on my YouTube,” he says. Once the book tour is done, he plans to make YouTube his main focus and come up with another series.</p>
<p>“Right now I don’t even speak in my [social media] videos, so one, it’s a great way to let the audience kind of see a different side of me, and then also to experiment. And show that I can cook more than just sandwiches.”</p>

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GRETCHEN’S TABLE: BANG BANG CHICKEN
SKEWERS ARE A SPICY-SWEET AIR FRYER REVELATION

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<p>I’m pretty old-school when it comes frying or roasting chicken, usually cooking breasts and thighs in the trusty cast-iron skillet I inherited years ago from my mother.</p>
<p>My kids? Now that they’re on their own, they prefer to do all their frying in an air fryer,

a time-saving, user-friendly appliance that makes cooking faster, easier and, in most cases, a little healthier, too.

The egg-shaped cookers produce crispy fried foods with a fraction of the oil used in traditional cooking. All you need is a tiny spritz of oil in the fryer basket or on the food being cooked and you're good to go.

So when one of my twin daughters came to visit, I felt obligated to pull my air fryer off the shelf in my pantry, dust it off and actually put it to use for the first time in, well, forever.

It helps that I had the perfect recipe already in hand: a banh mi-like sandwich featuring tender chunks of chicken thigh doused in a spicy-sweet bang bang sauce.

Every family makes their own version of the creamy, mayonnaise-based dip that's often associated with the shrimp dish of the same name.

Per my daughter Catherine, ours includes a teaspoon of smoked paprika and a squeeze of fresh lime juice along with the requisite Sriracha and spicy-sweet tang of another favorite Asian condiment: Thai sweet chili sauce.

A perfect balance of heat, salt, sweet and acid, bang bang sauce is often used as a dressing or dipping sauce for egg rolls or french fries. Here, it's a tasty marinade for chicken thigh kebabs cooked to crispy perfection in the air fryer, and then stuffed into a soft roll and topped with pickled carrots and radish.

Garnish with chopped scallion or chives and, if you really want to spice it up, a dusting of red pepper flakes.

Additionally, you also could serve the chicken with the veggies on top or with white or brown rice as a rice bowl.

Bang Bang Chicken Skewers

PG Tested

For sauce

1/2 cup mayonnaise

1 tablespoon Sriracha sauce

2 tablespoons Thai sweet chili sauce

1 clove garlic, minced

1 teaspoon smoked paprika

2 teaspoons rice vinegar

Juice 1/2 lime

Pinch of salt

For quick-pickled veggies

1 cup julienned or shredded carrot

1 cup julienned or shredded daikon radish

1/3 cup rice vinegar

1/3 cup water

1 tablespoon sugar

1 teaspoon salt

For skewers

1 1/2 pounds boneless, skinless chicken thigh

Wooden or metal skewers, for cooking

1 baguette, cut into 6-inch lengths, and sliced open (you should get 4 pieces)

Chopped chives or green onion, for garnish

Japanese or Korean chili flakes, for garnish (optional)

Prepare sauce: Place mayonnaise, Sriracha, chili sauce, garlic, paprik, rice vinegar and lime juice in a large bowl. (You will be adding chicken.) Stir well to combine, then season to taste with salt. If it's not spicy enough, add more Sriracha. Reserve about 1/4 cup in another small bowl (for drizzling) and set aside.

Place shredded carrots and radish in a small bowl. In small saucepan, combine water, vinegar, sugar and a pinch of salt and bring to boil on medium heat until the sugar dissolves. Stir occasionally. Remove from the heat and cool it down.

Pour over carrot mixture. Let cool to room temperature; cover and refrigerate until ready to use.

Cut chicken thigh into large cubes. Add to large bowl with bang bang sauce, and stir to combine, making sure all the cubes are well coated in sauce.

If using bamboo skewers, make sure they have soaked in water for 30 minutes to prevent

them from burning. (If you score them with a sharp knife, bamboo skewers will easily break into smaller pieces that fit into the air fryer pan; I trimmed the fuzzy edges with a pair of kitchen shears.)

Preheat air fryer to 400 degrees.

Thread chicken cubes onto skewers, 6 or 7 pieces on each. Place in the air fryer and cook for 8 minutes. Using tongs or your fingers (the meat will be hot!), rotate the skewers and air fry again for another 8 minutes, until both sides are golden brown and internal temperature of chicken is 165 degrees on an instant-read thermometer.

Remove from air fryer to platter. Place one chicken skewer in each of the baguette pieces, and slide out the skewer. Top with pickled vegetables and a drizzle of reserved bang bang sauce.

Garnish with chopped chives or scallions, and chili flakes, if using, and serve.

Serves 4.

– Gretchen McKay, Post-Gazette

LOCA VORE: CURATE WITH A CHEF; SPOOK
WITH A COOKIE; CELEBRATE WITH APPLES

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<p>BY KELLIE LAMBERT
REPUBLICAN-AMERICAN</p>

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<p>SPECIAL DINNEREnjoy a curated five-course menu and wine pairings with a notable chef this weekend.An Epicurean chef dinner with visiting chef Mark Rosenstein on Friday at the Madison Beach Hotel.The...</p>

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