

Bolivia coup attempt fails

Armed forces pulled back from presidential palace; general arrested

REUTERS, La Paz

Bolivian armed forces pulled back from the presidential palace in La Paz on Wednesday evening and a general was arrested after President Luis Arce slammed a 'coup' attempt against the government and called for international support.

Earlier in the day, military units led by General Juan Jose Zuniga, recently stripped of his military command, had gathered in the central Plaza Murillo square, home to the presidential palace and Congress. A Reuters witness saw an armored vehicle ram a door of the presidential palace and soldiers rush in.

'Today the country is facing an attempted coup d'etat,' Arce said in comments from the presidential palace, with armed soldiers outside.

A few hours later, a Reuters witness saw soldiers withdraw from the square and police take control of the plaza.



Palestinian families flee the Tuffah neighbourhood in the east of Gaza City following an Israeli military operation yesterday. Heavy fighting, artillery shelling and helicopter fire were also reported around northern Gaza's Shujayia market. PHOTO: AFP

IRAN ELECTION

Two candidates drop out of race

REUTERS, Dubai

Two hardline candidates dropped out of Iran's presidential election yesterday, a day ahead of the landmark vote, and called for unity among forces supporting the country's Islamic revolution, state media reported.

Iranian's tightly controlled election today follows Ebrahim Raisi's death in a helicopter crash last month, with the outcome expected to influence the succession to Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, the top decision-maker in the clerically-ruled state.

Tehran's mayor Alireza Zakani and head of the Martyrs' Foundation Amirhossein Ghazizadeh Hashemi exited the race, state media said. They were expected to win just 1.7 percent and 2 percent of votes respectively according to a 22-23 June poll carried out by the Iran Students Polling Centre.

Their departure leaves four presidential candidates and Zakani urged the two most prominent headline ones to join forces to prevent moderate Masoud Pezeshkian from winning.

US health workers sound alarm on Gaza medical crisis

AFP, Washington

Patients in Gaza's few standing hospitals are dying in droves from infections resulting from a lack of protective gear and soap, even when they survive their horrific blast injuries.

And health workers are facing agonising decisions, like giving up on a seven-year-old boy with extensive burns because bandages are in short supply and he'd have probably died anyway.

These are just some of the horrors witnessed by American doctors and nurses returning from the besieged Palestinian territory, who are now on a mission to spread the word about what they saw and apply pressure on Israel to allow in more life-saving supplies.

'Whether or not a ceasefire happens, we have to get humanitarian aid. And we have to get it in sufficient volumes to meet the demands,' Adam Hamawy, a former US army combat surgeon, tells AFP in an interview after a medical mission to

Gaza's European Hospital last month.

'You could give all you want, you can donate,' says the reconstructive plastic surgeon from New Jersey. 'But if these borders don't open up to allow that aid to get in, then it's just useless.'

Hamawy has volunteered in war-torn and natural disaster-hit countries for the past 30 years, from the siege of Sarajevo to the Haiti earthquake.

'But the level of civilian casualties that I experienced was beyond anything I'd seen before,' says the 54-year-old, who helped save the life of Senator Tammy Duckworth when she lost both of her legs to a rocket-propelled grenade (RPG) attack on the helicopter she was flying in Iraq.

'Most of our patients were children

under the age of 14,' he stressed. 'This has nothing to do with your political views.'

Hamawy and other medics told AFP they are convinced that for now their energy is better spent lobbying the halls of power to stop the offensive and require Israel to comply with international law by letting in more aid.

Israel denies allegations of international law violations during its invasion.

On a hot June afternoon in the capital Washington, Monica Johnston, a 44-year-old ICU nurse from Portland, Oregon said she conveyed specific lists of what was needed in meetings she had held with White House officials and lawmakers on Capitol Hill.



People react to tear gas during a demonstration over police killings of people protesting against Kenya's proposed finance bill 2024-2025, in Nairobi, Kenya yesterday. PHOTO: REUTERS

Sudan faces famine risk in 14 areas

Says monitor

REUTERS, Cairo

There is a realistic chance of famine in 14 areas across Sudan if the conflict that began in April last year between military factions escalates further, a global hunger monitor said yesterday.

The areas include parts of the capital Khartoum, the regions of Darfur and Kordofan and El Gezira state, according to an update from the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC).

As previously reported by Reuters, some 755,000 people in Sudan face 'catastrophe', the most severe level of extreme hunger. In total, 8.5 million people - or 18 percent of the population - face food shortages that could result in acute malnutrition and death, according to the update.

EU leaders sign security deal with Ukraine

REUTERS, Brussels

European Union leaders signed a security agreement with Ukraine yesterday, kicking off a two-day summit at which they will also set a strategic course for the EU for the next five years and appoint the people who will run the EU's key institutions.

Leaders of the 27 EU countries, meeting formally for the first time since European elections on June 6-9, gave a warm welcome to Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, who made a rare personal appearance in Brussels for the signing ceremony.

Draft conclusions of the summit showed the leaders will reiterate their pledge to support Ukraine as long as it takes, stressing that 'Russia must not prevail' and that Ukraine must get back the land annexed by Moscow.

They will also ask EU institutions to work out the details of a G7 deal to provide 50 billion euros in loans for Ukraine.

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