

WANT YOUR
KIDS TO GO
TO COLLEGE?
GET SAVING

Joanne Hunt
Business



It's one thing to love your country, another to live in it... Australia offers a distant exoticism blended with comforting familiarity

Laura Kennedy
Life



THREATS TO
SIMON HARRIS
ARE A RED
ALERT FOR
IRISH SOCIETY

Kathy Sheridan
Opinion & Analysis

Qatar condemns Israeli strike on Hamas in Doha

White House says bombing 'does not advance Israel's or America's goals'

Relatives of hostages held by Hamas in Gaza express concern for their fate

MARK WEISS
in Jerusalem

Israel launched an air strike against the leaders of Hamas in Qatar yesterday, in a move the White House said did not advance Israeli or American goals in trying to bring an end to the Middle East conflict.

Qatar, which has been mediating between Hamas and Israel, condemned the attack as "cowardly" and a flagrant violation of international law, claiming it was informed by the United States of the attack as the explosions occurred.

White House spokesperson Karoline Leavitt said "eliminating Hamas, which has enriched itself on the suffering of Gaza residents, is a worthy goal". But she added that bombing inside Qatar, a close ally of the US, "does not advance Israel's or America's goals".

Ms Leavitt said the US mili-

ting the "savage" Hamas leaders in Doha could pave the way to the "immediate" end of the war. "This action can open the door to the end of the war in Gaza," he said. "Israel has accepted the proposal put forward by President Trump to end the war, beginning with the immediate release of all our hostages. If President Trump's proposal is accepted, the war can end immediately," he said.

Earlier yesterday, Mr Netanyahu was at the Tel Aviv district court attending a session in his corruption trial when he was handed a note informing him of a window of opportunity to target the senior Hamas leadership, who were gathering together in the Qatari capital, Doha.

Mr Netanyahu left the courtroom immediately and travelled to the headquarters of Israel security agency Shin Bet.

Ten Israeli aircraft were already in the air, flying to Doha, some 1,800km away. They included fighter jets, refuelling aircraft, intelligence-gathering planes and drones.

The Hamas leaders were discussing how the organisation should respond to the latest US principles presented to the sides to end the 23-month Gaza war. However, Israeli officials claimed a ceasefire was not close and Hamas had no intention of releasing the 48 hostages, including the 20 still believed to be alive.

Meanwhile, the Israeli attacks on Gaza City continued. Relatives of the hostages held by Hamas in Gaza expressed concern for the fate of the 20 captives still believed to be alive. Einav Zangauker, whose son Matan is held by Hamas, said Mr Netanyahu may have killed her son by striking Hamas officials in Qatar.

"I am trembling with fear," she said. "It could be that at this very moment the prime minister has actually assassinated my Matan, sealed his fate. Why does he insist on blowing every chance at a deal? This is my child's life!"

Israel orders evacuation of Gaza City ahead of operation: page 6



Martin gets his man
FF selects Gavin as presidential candidate

Jim Gavin, with Fianna Fáil leader and Taoiseach Micheál Martin, at Leinster House yesterday after he was selected as the party's candidate for the October 24th presidential election.

Reports and analysis:
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Photograph:
Dara Mac Dónaill

'ICE' holds Irish grandmother in US isolation cell

KEITH DUGGAN
Washington Correspondent

An Irish grandmother and green card holder who is married to a US Navy veteran is awaiting a deportation hearing after being arrested and detained by US immigration officers following a flight from Dublin to Chicago in late July.

Donna Hughes-Brown (58) was travelling to the home she shares with Jim Brown in Missouri when she was met on the ramp after disembarking a

flight from Dublin to O'Hare airport, where the couple were to catch a connecting flight to St Louis.

They had spent 10 days in Ireland, visiting family and attending a funeral.

She was held on a misdemeanour relating to a cheque for \$25 she signed 10 years ago, for which she made restitution and received probation.

Speaking from his home in Troy, Missouri, Mr Brown said his wife cleared the US Customs and Border Protection's

pre-clearance checks at Dublin Airport and "should not have ever seen customs in Chicago".

He claimed that she was "fraudulently arrested".

"They scan your passport and that cheque violation was apparently flagged," he said.

The couple were met by a police officer on the ramp in Chicago when they arrived on the flight from Dublin.

"He told us she had paperwork to do and she'd be back on the plane from Chicago to St Louis in two hours," said Mr

Brown. "Well, I got a call the next morning from customs to say she was being detained."

Ms Hughes-Brown was born in England to Irish parents. After spending her childhood in Ireland, she emigrated to the United States with family, where she has lived for 47 years.

She married Jim Brown eight years ago. She has five children and five grandchildren. She has been detained in the Kentucky facility operated by US Immigration and Customs

Enforcement since early August in conditions her husband described as "deplorable".

Mr Brown was able to speak and text his wife during her incarceration until three days ago, when she was moved to an isolation cell, and her husband has been unable to reach her since then.

He said he believed she was isolated because she was on a low-sodium diet after they tried to feed her "hot dogs and chili mac".

"She probably told them af-

ter the fifth time they tried to serve her: 'I'm not eating that.' So, they locked her up. I haven't heard from her in three days now. It's stupid," he said.

Mr Brown has spoken with the Irish consulate on behalf of his wife.

"They say they can't do anything legally," he said.

A deportation hearing is scheduled for September 17th.

I haven't heard from her in three days now': page 3

Two-thirds of public hospitals at unsafe bed occupancy level

SHAUNA BOWERS
Health Correspondent

More than two-thirds of public hospitals were operating at unsafe levels of bed occupancy in the first six months of this year, new figures show.

A number of studies have shown that having too many patients in hospital beds can result in overrun staff, increased levels of hospital-acquired infections, delays in care or cancelled procedures, and worse patient outcomes.

Consequently, a bed occupancy of 85 per cent is generally considered to be the limit.

Data from the Health Service Executive shows the level of bed occupancy was 95.9 per cent nationally in the first six months of this year, rising from 94.2 per cent during the same period in 2024 and 93.3 per cent in 2023.

There were nine hospitals that exceeded their bed capacity during this period, with St Luke's General Hospital in Kilkenny having the highest rate at 116.4 per cent, followed by University Hospital Limerick at 114 per cent and St Vincent's, Dublin at 111.4 per cent.

Data still being validated
A total of 31 hospitals had occupancy rates higher than the recommended 85 per cent. However, the figures do not include Galway University Hospitals, as the HSE said its data is "still being validated".

A number of hospitals have maintained low occupancy rates, including the Royal Victoria Eye and Ear hospital (38.2 per cent), and the National Orthopaedic Hospital Cappagh (46.9 per cent) in Dublin. South Infirmary Victoria Hospital in Cork had an occupancy rate of

58.3 per cent, while Mallow General Hospital's rate was 62.3 per cent.

HSE Mid West, which includes Limerick, was the health region with the highest occupancy rate, at 105.4 per cent.

The figures were released in response to a parliamentary question from Sinn Féin's health spokesman David Cullinane, who said levels were "going in the wrong direction".

"The bed occupancy levels are way beyond international best practice. We have no room for any surge capacity, which is why, when you have a surge, we have problems in emergency departments and overcrowding."

A spokeswoman for the HSE said it and the Department of Health are working to reduce pressure in hospitals by implementing Sláintecare, the programme which seeks to reform the State's health service.

Weather

Mostly cloudy with outbreaks of rain and drizzle. Rain will clear through afternoon, followed by sunny spells and showers

THE IRISH TIMES
24-28 Tara Street, Dublin 2.
D02 CX89
Telephone: (01) 9203900
Online: irishtimes.com
The recommended retail price of THE IRISH TIMES in the Republic of Ireland is €2.60
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Home News

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Courts: A garda superintendent is accused of assaulting the manager of a Dublin gay bar while off duty. Page 4

Sports Wednesday



Soccer: Ireland were outclassed and out-fought in Armenia, losing 2-1 to leave their World Cup qualification hopes hanging by a thread. Page 18

Business + Commercial Property

Housing: Global Student Accommodation Group has deferred over €500 million of planned investment in the State amid ongoing uncertainty. Page 12

Aviation: Ryanair has applied for a judicial review to challenge a limit on night flights at Dublin Airport. Page 13

World News

France: President Emmanuel Macron has appointed Sébastien Lecornu as prime minister after François Bayrou's minority government collapsed. Page 6

Nepal: Prime minister KP Sharma Oli has been forced to resign a day after 19 people died during protests. Page 6

CHRISTY

11 NIGHTS AT VICAR ST

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2026
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March 2nd, 19th

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