

# Daily Peace and Crisis Report — Saturday 16 May 2026

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## Summary

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- Gaza remains under sustained Israeli military assault, with the cumulative death toll since 7 October 2023 surpassing 72,740 as ceasefire violations continue; Israel and Lebanon have agreed a 45-day extension to their shaky ceasefire.
- Russia launched its largest drone and missile barrage of the war on Kyiv this week, killing at least 22 civilians over two days; German Chancellor Merz condemned Moscow as "banking on escalation rather than negotiation" despite Putin's claims the war is nearing an end.
- Sudan's civil war intensifies as the UN warns armed drones are now responsible for more than 80 per cent of civilian deaths; at least 880 civilians were killed by drone strikes in the first four months of 2026 alone.
- In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, more than 26.5 million people face acute hunger as M23 rebels and Rwandan-backed forces continue to drive mass displacement in the east.
- Iran–US ceasefire talks remain deadlocked, with Iran's foreign minister expressing "distrust" of Washington at a BRICS meeting

that ended without a joint statement due to divisions over the Middle East conflict.

- Afghanistan's Taliban regime carried out mass corporal punishment against 312 people in three months and detained at least three journalists, drawing renewed international condemnation.
  - The US pledged an additional \$1.8 billion for UN humanitarian operations, while UN peacekeeping faces a deepening cash crunch threatening ongoing operations worldwide.
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## Middle East

### Gaza Strip

The humanitarian situation in Gaza remains catastrophic as Israeli military operations continue despite the ceasefire announced on 10 October 2025. According to the Gaza Ministry of Health, as of 15 May 2026, the total death toll since 7 October 2023 has reached at least **72,744** Palestinians killed and **172,588** wounded. [SANA](#) (Syr); [WAFA](#) (Pal)

Since the ceasefire announcement on 10 October 2025, the Gaza MoH reports **856 additional fatalities** and **2,463 injuries**, with 103 further fatalities retroactively added after identification. [OCHA](#)

On 15 May, Israeli airstrikes on a residential building in Gaza City killed at least seven people, including three women and a child, and wounded at least 50. [Reuters](#); [QNA](#) (Qatar)

The World Health Organization estimates that over **43,000 people** in Gaza have sustained life-changing injuries, with one in every four being a child. Rehabilitation services remain critically overstretched, with no facility fully operational. [UN News](#)

Humanitarian access remains severely constrained: only one in every two aid trucks from Egypt could offload at Israeli-controlled crossings in

the first 11 days of May. Kerem Shalom and Zikim remain the only operational entry points. [OCHA](#)

The UN marked the 78th anniversary of the Nakba on 15 May, with Assistant Secretary-General Khaled Khiari describing the situation in Gaza as "a catastrophe of grave proportions," noting that more than 85 per cent of Gaza's population has been displaced, many repeatedly. [UN News](#); [Democracy Now!](#)

## West Bank

Violence in the occupied West Bank continues to escalate. According to OCHA, between 7 October 2023 and 23 April 2026, at least **1,088 Palestinians** — including at least 238 children — were killed in the West Bank. In 2026 alone, 47 Palestinians have been killed up to 11 May, including 13 by Israeli settlers and 32 by Israeli forces. [OCHA](#)

The Jordan Valley has witnessed a spike in settler violence, with the monthly average of incidents causing casualties or property damage increasing **14-fold since 2020**. Between 5 and 11 May, Israeli authorities demolished 45 Palestinian-owned structures, 90 per cent of which were used for agricultural, livelihood, water or sanitation purposes. [UN News](#)

More than 40,000 Palestine refugees have been forcibly displaced from camps in the northern West Bank since early 2025. [UN News](#)

## Lebanon

Israel and Lebanon agreed on 15 May to a **45-day extension** of their ceasefire following two days of talks in Washington DC, the US State Department confirmed. The original ceasefire, brokered in April 2026, had been due to expire on Sunday. Despite the extension, Israeli airstrikes and demolitions continue daily, causing civilian casualties. [Reuters](#); [Al Jazeera](#); [BBC](#)

UN Humanitarian Coordinator Imran Riza warned that the situation in Lebanon remains "alarming," with civilians — including displaced families, Syrian and Palestinian refugees, and Bangladeshi migrants — continuing to bear the toll of ongoing strikes. [UN News](#)

## Iran–US Conflict

Iran–US ceasefire negotiations remain deadlocked. Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi, speaking at a BRICS foreign ministers' meeting in India, expressed "distrust" of the United States regarding war negotiations. Iran had sent a response to a US ceasefire proposal via mediator Pakistan. [Al Jazeera](#)

US President Trump said on 15 May he would accept a 20-year suspension of Iran's uranium enrichment program "if there's a real commitment." US Vice President Vance had earlier said progress was being made in talks. [AP](#); [Reuters](#)

The BRICS foreign ministers' meeting ended without a joint statement as divisions deepened over the Iran war, with Iran urging member states to condemn "violations of international law" while Gulf states including Saudi Arabia and the UAE resisted. [Al Jazeera](#); [Reuters](#)

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## Ukraine–Russia War

Russia launched its largest drone and missile barrage of the war this week, pummeling Kyiv and other Ukrainian cities over two consecutive days (13–14 May). At least **22 civilians were killed** over Wednesday and Thursday, including at least 16 in Kyiv — among them two children. Kyiv's mayor declared Friday a day of mourning. President Zelenskyy said Russia had launched **1,567 drones** since the start of Wednesday. [The Guardian](#); [New York Times](#)

German Chancellor Friedrich Merz condemned the attacks, saying Russia was "banking on escalation rather than negotiation," directly contradicting Putin's claim made on 11 May that the war was "coming to an end." Merz stated: "Russia, for its part, is continuing the war." [The Guardian](#)

The IAEA warned of "intensified" military activities near several Ukrainian nuclear sites — including Khmel'nitsky, Rivne and South Ukraine plants — with more than 160 UAVs recorded flying in their

vicinity. Director General Grossi urged "all parties to exercise maximum restraint." [The Guardian](#)

A UN humanitarian convoy delivering aid to Kherson was struck twice by drones despite prior coordination with both Ukrainian and Russian forces. [Al Jazeera](#)

OHCHR's April 2026 report recorded at least **238 civilians killed and 1,404 injured** in Ukraine during April alone — the highest monthly toll since July 2025, representing an 18 per cent increase compared with April 2025. The vast majority (96 per cent) of casualties occurred in government-controlled territory. In the first four months of 2026, civilian casualties were 21 per cent higher than the same period in 2025.

[OHCHR Ukraine](#)

As of March 2026, OHCHR had verified a cumulative total of approximately **15,578 civilians killed** since the full-scale invasion began on 24 February 2022. OHCHR notes it has been denied access to Russian-occupied territories (Donetsk, Luhansk, Zaporizhzhia, Kherson, and Crimea), meaning the true toll is likely significantly higher. [OHCHR Ukraine](#)

Ukrainian drone attacks on Russia's Belgorod border region killed one person and injured three on 14 May, according to Russian regional authorities. [The Guardian](#)

Latvia's Prime Minister Evika Siliņa resigned after her government collapsed over the issue of Ukrainian drones straying into Latvian territory from Russia. Ukraine says the drones are driven off course by Russian electronic warfare. [The Guardian](#)

The Kremlin has demanded Ukraine withdraw from all of Donbas as a precondition for resuming negotiations. [ISW](#)

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## Sudan

Sudan's civil war, now in its fourth year, continues to escalate. The UN Human Rights Chief Volker Türk issued a "high alert" on 11 May,

warning that armed drones are now responsible for more than **80 per cent of civilian deaths** in Sudan's war. At least **880 civilians** were killed by drone strikes between January and April 2026 alone, carried out by both the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF). [OHCHR](#); [Reuters](#)

Two weeks of clashes in Sudan's South Kordofan region killed at least 61 people, including nine children, according to the Sudan Doctors Network. Fighting between the SAF-aligned SPLM-N and RSF forces has also displaced more than 28,000 people in Blue Nile State.

[Democracy Now!](#); [Al Jazeera](#)

The total death toll since the war began in April 2023 is estimated at **at least 150,000**, with some estimates significantly higher. The conflict has displaced approximately **13–14 million people** — the world's largest displacement crisis — and pushed much of Sudan into famine conditions. [Democracy Now!](#); [Al Jazeera](#)

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## Democratic Republic of the Congo

More than **26.5 million people** in the Democratic Republic of the Congo face acute hunger, according to a new UN-backed food security analysis published on 12 May. Nearly 3.6 million people are at emergency levels of food insecurity — one step from famine — while a further 22.9 million are in crisis. [UN News](#)

Ongoing conflict in the country's east, driven by M23 rebels and Rwanda-backed forces, has displaced approximately **3.59 million people** in eastern DRC, with South Kivu and North Kivu provinces the hardest hit. Human Rights Watch documented M23 and Rwandan military forces carrying out an abusive month-long occupation of the eastern city of Uvira. [Human Rights Watch](#)

Rebel fighters killed at least **69 people** in Ituri province in northeastern DRC on 10 May. Separately, the US Embassy in Kinshasa issued a

health alert on 15 May regarding an Ebola outbreak in Ituri Province. [AI Jazeera](#)

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## Afghanistan

The Taliban carried out judicial corporal punishment against at least **312 people** — including 39 women and four boys — in just three months (January to March 2026), according to a new UN human rights report. A sweeping new decree, "Decree No. 12 on Criminal Rules of Courts," also expanded the scope of the death penalty to include blasphemy, heresy and "persisting in corruption," and criminalised criticism of Taliban authorities. [UN News](#)

The Taliban detained at least three journalists on unspecified charges in mid-May, according to the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) and media rights groups. [Reuters](#); [Washington Post](#)

The ban on girls attending school beyond grade six entered its fifth consecutive year, leaving **2.2 million girls and women** without access to secondary or higher education. Women were also removed from the civil service payroll entirely in January 2026. The last day of March marked the 205th consecutive day that Afghan women were barred from UN premises nationwide. [UN News](#)

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## Mozambique — Humanitarian Crisis

Mozambique continues to grapple with the aftermath of severe flooding in 2025–2026. The floods damaged or destroyed **201,411 houses** (183,866 flooded, 12,279 destroyed), with Gaza Province remaining the epicentre of the humanitarian crisis. Humanitarian partners continue emergency response operations despite access constraints. [ReliefWeb / IFRC](#)

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# International Cooperation and Peacekeeping

The United States pledged an additional **\$1.8 billion** for UN humanitarian operations on 14 May 2026, the second major contribution since an earlier \$2 billion pledge. The funding will support emergency relief operations reaching millions of people across multiple crises. [UN News](#); [NPR](#)

UN peacekeeping operations face a deepening cash crunch, with the Fifth Committee of the General Assembly warned of a crisis threatening the continuity of operations. The United States separately owes \$2.2 billion to the UN's regular operating budget and \$1.8 billion to the peacekeeping budget. [UN Press](#)

The UN is seeking a new Secretary-General with a "new vision for peacekeeping operations," with simplified mandates tailored to specific cases, as the world faces an unprecedented number of simultaneous conflicts. [El País](#)

The ASEAN Summit concluded with a focus on Myanmar and regional energy security, with Philippine President Marcos describing a "nano-shift" in ASEAN's approach to the Myanmar crisis. Myanmar's military junta has signalled willingness to engage in peace talks, though civil war continues across the country. [BBC](#)

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## Key Statistics

Table 1 — Casualties (Killed / Wounded)

Conflict / Crisis	Key Statistic	Source	Killed	Wounded
			72,744	172,588

Conflict / Crisis	Key Statistic	Source	Killed	Wounded
Gaza Strip	Cumulative since 7 Oct 2023	<a href="#">OCHA</a> / Gaza MoH		
—	Since Oct 2025 ceasefire announcement	<a href="#">OCHA</a> / Gaza MoH	856	2,463
West Bank	Since 7 Oct 2023 (incl. ≥238 children)	<a href="#">UNRWA</a> / <a href="#">OCHA</a>	1,088+	—
Sudan	Estimated deaths since April 2023	<a href="#">Democracy Now!</a> / UN News	150,000+ (est.)	—
Ukraine	Civilians (Govt-controlled territory) — cumulative since 24 Feb 2022	<a href="#">OHCHR Ukraine</a>	~15,578 (as of Mar 2026)	~37,000+ (est.)
—	Civilians (Russian-occupied territory) — cumulative since 24 Feb 2022	<a href="#">OHCHR Ukraine</a>	unverified	unverified
Russia	Civilians killed on Russian territory	<a href="#">Russia Matters</a> / OHCHR	—	—

Conflict / Crisis	Key Statistic	Source	Killed	Wounded
	(Ukrainian strikes)			

**Table 2 — Numbers (Non-casualty figures)**

Conflict / Crisis	Key Statistic	Figure	Source
Gaza Strip	Population displaced (% of total)	85%+ (repeatedly displaced)	<a href="#">UN News</a>
Gaza Strip	People with life-changing injuries (WHO est.)	43,000+	<a href="#">OCHA / WHO</a>
West Bank	Palestine refugees forcibly displaced from northern WB camps since early 2025	40,000+	<a href="#">UN News</a>
Sudan	People displaced (world's largest displacement crisis)	~13–14 million	<a href="#">Al Jazeera / UN</a>
Sudan	Civilians killed by drones, Jan–Apr 2026	880+	<a href="#">OHCHR</a>
DR Congo		26.5 million	<a href="#">UN News</a>

Conflict / Crisis	Key Statistic	Figure	Source
	People facing acute hunger		
DR Congo	Internally displaced persons (eastern DRC)	3.59 million	<a href="#">UN News</a>
Ukraine	Civilians killed/injured in April 2026 alone	238 killed; 1,404 injured	<a href="#">OHCHR Ukraine</a>
Afghanistan	Girls/women barred from secondary or higher education	2.2 million	<a href="#">UN News / UNESCO</a>
Mozambique	Houses damaged or destroyed by 2026 floods	201,411	<a href="#">ReliefWeb / IFRC</a>

*Note on Ukraine data: OHCHR has been denied access to Russian-occupied territories (Donetsk, Luhansk, Zaporizhzhia, Kherson, and Crimea); independent verification of civilian casualties in those areas is not possible. The cumulative figure of ~15,578 killed (as of March 2026) reflects verified casualties predominantly in government-controlled territory (96% per OHCHR). The actual toll is likely significantly higher.*

*Note on Russia civilian casualties: No independently verified cumulative figure for civilians killed on Russian territory by Ukrainian strikes is currently available from OHCHR or Russia Matters. Individual incidents are reported (e.g., Belgorod region: 1 killed, 3 injured on 14 May 2026), but no reliable aggregate figure exists for the reporting period.*

*All figures are as reported by cited sources as of 15–16 May 2026 (AEST). Casualty figures in active conflict zones are subject to revision.*