



# Union-Tribune

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SUNDAY

## ISRAELI AIR, GROUND OFFENSIVE PRESSES ON AMID CALLS TO HALT WAR

Washington approves emergency sale of tank ammunition to Israel

BY WAFEA SHURAFU & BASSEM MROUE

### DEIR AL-BALAH, Gaza Strip

Israel's military pushed ahead with its punishing air and ground offensive in Gaza on Saturday, bolstered by a U.S. veto derailing U.N. Security Council efforts to end the war and word that an emergency sale of \$106 million worth of tank ammunition had been approved by Washington.

Unable to leave Gaza, a territory 25 miles long by about 7 miles wide, more than 2 million Palestinians faced more bombardment Saturday, even in areas that Israel had described as safe zones.

The sale of nearly 14,000 rounds of tank ammunition was announced a day after the U.S. vetoed a U.N. Security Council resolution demanding an immediate ceasefire in Gaza, a measure that had wide international support. The U.S. said Secretary of State Antony Blinken determined that "an emergency exists" in the national interest requiring the immediate sale, meaning it bypasses congressional review. Such a determination is rare.

Meanwhile, a day after Israel confirmed it was rounding up Palestinian men for interrogation, some men released Saturday told The Associated Press they had been treated badly, providing the first accounts of the conditions from the detentions.

Osama Oula said Israeli troops  
SEE GAZA • A9



ANA RAMIREZ U-T PHOTOS

Ian Paul, 4, of Colombia uses a tent rod to poke a fire at a makeshift encampment in the Jacumba Hot Springs area. Groups of migrants are crossing through Jacumé, then stopping at the encampments to wait for the Border Patrol to pick them up.

## EFFORTS TO DETER MIGRANTS NOW MORE VISIBLE AT BORDER

Fence, more agents placed, but some say crossings will shift east

BY ALEXANDRA MENDOZA

Months into an ongoing increase in migrant border crossings — which have left hundreds of migrants on any given day unsheltered in San Diego County and strained local humanitarian resources — Mexican authorities have stepped up enforcement in an effort to deter passage into the United States.

Just south of the border wall in San Ysidro, Mexican officials have installed a chain-link fence reinforced with razor wire at the top and bottom that prevents entry to a section of the Tijuana River



Mexican officials recently installed a chain-link fence along the Tijuana River channel to discourage migrant crossings.

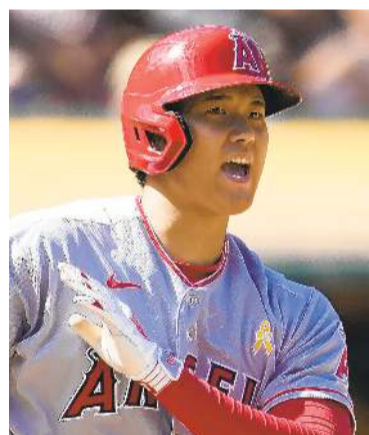
channel, identified as one of the main points for migrants crossing into San Diego.

Behind the barrier, Mexican National Guard and immigration agents keep watch at all times.

Since its installation last month, the number of migrants crossing in that area has decreased. However, it has increased in others spots farther east, such as Jacumé in Tecate, just south of the border from Jacumba Hot Springs, according to Mexican officials. As a result, Mexican federal agents have increased their presence there, as well.

Immigration-rights advocates expressed concern over the new fence, arguing it forces people to seek more dangerous ways to reach the U.S. to seek asylum.

Mexican officials said the new  
SEE MIGRANTS • A8



JEFF CHIU AP FILE

### SPORTS

## OHTANI SIGNS DEAL WITH L.A. DODGERS FOR \$700 MILLION

Shohei Ohtani has agreed to a \$700 million, 10-year deal to play for the Los Angeles Dodgers, he announced Saturday on Instagram. It is by far the richest contract in baseball history, eclipsing former teammate Mike Trout's \$426 million, 12-season deal. D1

## MASSIVE NAVY BRIBERY CASE PROSECUTIONS IN PERIL

Months after 4 officers' felony trial convictions dismissed, more likely

BY ALEX RIGGINS

Four defense attorneys submitted letters Friday to a San Diego federal judge suggesting the government has agreed to deals on lesser charges — and in one case will grant a complete dismissal of charges — with five military officers who previously pleaded guilty to more serious offenses in connection with the U.S. Navy's "Fat Leonard" bribery and corruption scandal.

The deals, if accurate as described in the letters, would seem

to represent further crumbling of the massive, high-profile prosecution, which has been marred in recent years by prosecutorial misconduct and the escape of Leonard Glenn Francis, its key figure and the mastermind behind the worst corruption scheme in the Navy's history.

In September, the U.S. Attorney's Office admitted to "serious issues" with the case and prosecution errors involving evidence. In that same hearing, U.S. District Judge Janis Sammartino called the government's conduct "outrageous." Sammartino previously ruled a prosecutor committed "flagrant misconduct" by withholding in-



Leonard Francis

formation from defense lawyers.

Submitted Friday by attorneys for three other Navy officers who had already been sentenced,

the letters — one of which was particularly scathing in its accusations against the U.S. Attorney's Office — claim prosecutors have made a deal to dismiss all charges against former Navy Cmdr. Stephen Shedd, who previously pleaded guilty to two bribery charges. The defense attorneys wrote that Shedd, one of the key witnesses last year in the case's only trial, perjured himself while on the stand. They also claim the perjury was committed at the behest of prosecutors who are now dismissing

Shedd's charges in order to cover up the extent of their trial misconduct.

U.S. Attorney Tara McGrath, who took over the office in October, said in a statement: "As in every case, the United States will respond in court — with civility."

Shedd's attorney declined to comment or confirm that a dismissal agreement had been reached.

The letters submitted Friday represented a remarkable step by their authors, all longtime defense attorneys who said they'd never before taken such drastic actions. "I have been involved in other cases in which I believed 'cooperators' provided false evidence or testimony, and my client  
SEE SCANDAL • A7

## STATE AUDIT: BIG CHARTER SCHOOL NETWORK LACKED RECORDS TO JUSTIFY MILLIONS SPENT

BY KRISTEN TAKETA

Inspire, a home school charter network that once served tens of thousands of students statewide, for years lacked records to justify its claims for state funding and tens of millions of dollars in transactions among its schools and related organizations, a new state audit found.

The Inspire network, which included two schools authorized out of San Diego County, also overreported student attendance and, as a result, collected about \$609,000 more in public money than it was supposed to, according to the audit, which scrutinized the network's activities from 2017 to 2020.

The audit's findings suggest that Inspire's lapses resulted in part from some of the same financial practices  
SEE INSPIRE • A10



HAYNE PALMOUR IV U-T FILE

The Pacific Coast Academy in Poway is one of two charter schools in the county linked to the Inspire charter school network.

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Cathryn Wake and Christopher Sieber in Ebenezer Scrooge's Big San Diego Christmas Show, 2023.  
Photo by Rich Souble II.

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### U-T INDEX

Books	E3	Econometer	C3	Markets	C4	Television	E14
Crossword	S4	Editorials	B8	Obituaries	B6	Travel	E11
Dear Abby	S2	Lottery	A2	Scores	D9	Weather	A15



