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Note to Editors: This is a selection of news wire reports that have been edited to be relevant for audiences for the next two weeks. You are welcome to select and publish individual items or the whole stack.

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- **Progressive Luisa González and Millionaire Daniel Noboa Head to Runoff Elections in Ecuador**
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[NEWS ITEM TEXT]

2023 Is Already the Deadliest Year on Record for Palestinians in Occupied West Bank, Says UN Envoy

[234 words]

Israeli occupation forces have killed over 200 Palestinians in the occupied West Bank this year, surpassing the total number of deaths last year ([167](#)), said the UN's Middle East envoy Tor Wennesland in a special briefing to the UN Security Council on August 21. This year's death toll is already the highest since 2005.

The UN envoy blamed “unilateral acts” by Israel, including increased settlement expansion, demolition of Palestinian homes and other structures, and settler violence, as the main reasons for the number of deaths in the occupied Palestinian territories.

Israeli state violence against Palestinians has increased tremendously in the last few years. Israeli security forces have carried out near-daily raids in Palestinian localities, with increased [demolition](#) of Palestinian homes and other structures including schools. On August 22, Israeli occupation forces [killed](#) another Palestinian teenager, Othman Atef Abu Kharj, during a raid in al-Zababdeh town near Jenin in the occupied West Bank. Israel has also repeatedly allowed extremist illegal settlers to go on [rampages](#) inside Palestinian localities under tight security cover.

Wennesland noted the dire financial condition of most of the Palestinian institutions such as the Palestinian Authority, which has a projected deficit of over \$370 million this year. The condition of UN agencies such as the UN Relief and Work Agency and the World Food Program is similar, threatening the food security of hundreds of thousands of Palestinian refugees in the occupied territories.

Progressive Luisa González and Millionaire Daniel Noboa Head to Runoff Elections in Ecuador

[255 words]

On August 20, over [13 million Ecuadorians](#) took part in the early general elections to elect the country’s next president, vice president, and 137 members of the National Assembly amid a wave of violence and record rates of homicide.

After 60 percent of the votes had been counted, at around 9 p.m. on August 20, president of the National Electoral Council Diana Atamaint gave a [public address](#) and confirmed that Ecuadorians would return to the polls for a runoff election on October 15, since no candidate hit the threshold to win outright.

Luisa González of the left-wing Citizen Revolution Movement party [won](#) this first round of elections with 33 percent of the vote, while Daniel Noboa of the right-wing National Democratic Action alliance trailed behind her with 24 percent. Both candidates will now head to the second round in October.

The key concerns among voters as they headed to the polls on August 20 were sharp increases in crime, which the government of incumbent conservative President Guillermo Lasso blames on drug-trafficking gangs, and the struggling economy, which has caused a rise in unemployment and migration.

González, a protégé of former leftist President Rafael Correa, has promised to address the security crisis by strengthening the institutions and entities in charge of managing security, which she alleges Lasso and ex-President Lenin Moreno dismantled. She also promised to address the root causes of violence, such as poverty and inequality. She has vowed to increase public spending and revive Correa's large-scale social welfare programs and public infrastructure projects.

Pakistani Rights Activist Ali Wazir and Lawyer Imaan Mazari-Hazir Jailed on Terror Charges

[245 words]

Former member of Pakistan's parliament and Pashtun Tahafuz Movement (PTM) leader Ali Wazir and human rights lawyer Imaan Zainab Mazari-Hazir were remanded to three days in detention by the country's Anti-Terrorism Court on August 21.

Wazir and Mazari-Hazir were arrested on August 20 for participating in a rally organized by the PTM on August 18 demanding immediate action against extrajudicial killings and the enforced disappearances of thousands of innocent people in the military's so-called anti-terror operations in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) province.

At the PTM rally, Mazari-Hazir [demanded](#) an end to war in the country, the release of all the people arrested by the army from the KP province, and the court martial of all army officials creating troubles in the country.

Wazir has been arrested several times in the past for speaking against the army's atrocities. He was [briefly arrested](#) in June 2023, after being [released on bail](#) in February following nearly 26 months behind bars on charges of sedition and criticism of the army.

Several members of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), the main opposition, were also arrested over various charges recently. Former Prime Minister Imran Khan is already in jail. On August 19, Pakistan arrested Shah Mahmood Qureshi, vice chairperson of PTI, over [alleged involvement](#) in missing state documents.

PTI has alleged that the arrest of its leaders and activists is part of a crackdown on the opposition party before national elections. Omar Ayub Khan, secretary general of PTI, called Pakistan's government "[fascist.](#)"

Maui Wildfire Devastation Exposes the Legacy of Colonialism

[303 words]

On August 8, one of the deadliest wildfires in the 21st century broke out on the island of Maui, Hawai‘i. Aerial photos show the effects of the devastation, with the historic city of Lahaina going from a thriving, lush greenscape to a burnt husk of destroyed buildings and wildlife. The fires [still rage](#) as of August 22 and have taken 115 lives, with [around 1,000 unaccounted for](#), as of that date.

[According](#) to Kaniela Ing, former Hawaiian legislator and the director of the Green New Deal Network, the wildfires are “a tragic symbol of the climate emergency and colonial greed.” Lahaina, which experienced much of the worst devastation, was once the seat of the independent Hawaiian government kingdom years before it was toppled and annexed by the United States in the 1890s. Some of the most precious historic sites of an independent Hawai‘i were [destroyed in the fires](#).

Ing claims that “the gross mismanagement of land by greedy developers and land speculators destroyed our natural landscape and buffers and enabled the rapid spread of the fire.”

The Maui Emergency Management Agency estimates that it will cost over [\\$5.5 billion to rebuild](#) from the damage. With numerous residential buildings destroyed, there are now [thousands of displaced people](#) in Maui.

Even before the fires, Native Hawaiians were struggling to stay in their homes, with a booming tourism industry driving up prices. The cost of living in Hawai‘i is [almost twice the U.S. average](#) (though it is key to note that Hawaiian independence activists protest the island chain’s default inclusion as a part of the United States). The median price of a single-family home in Maui is [\\$1.2 million](#), and the median condo price is \$850,000. The racial groups with the [highest poverty rates](#) are Native Hawaiians and other Pacific Islanders.