

افغانستان آزاد – آزاد افغانستان

AA-AA

چو کشور نپاشد تن من مباد بدین بوم و بر زنده یک تن مباد
همه سر به سر تن به کشتن دهیم از آن به که کشور به دشمن دهیم

www.afgazad.com

afgazad@gmail.com

European Languages

زبانهای اروپایی

By Saurav Sarkar

17.09.2023

Global News Dispatches: 5 Stories

Author Bio: Saurav Sarkar is a freelance writer and editor who covers political activism and labor movements. They live in Long Island, New York, and have also lived in New York City, New Delhi, London, and Washington, D.C. Follow them on Twitter [@sauravthewriter](https://twitter.com/sauravthewriter) and at sauravsarkar.com.

Credit Line: from the [Globetrotter News Service](#)

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.

Headlines in This News Package:

- Thousands Reported Dead in Libyan Floods
- U.S. Auto Workers Go on Strike
- Philippines Journalist and Media Outlet Cleared of Tax Evasion Charges
- Mexico Decriminalizes Abortion as Rights Deteriorate in U.S., Poland
- Red Wine Flows Down Streets of Portuguese Town

[NEWS ITEM TEXT]

Thousands Reported Dead in Libyan Floods

[250 words]

“[Democracy Now!](#)” [reported](#) that the mayor of Derna, which sits on the Mediterranean in northeastern Libya, has said the final death toll from storm-related floods in Libya might reach as high as 20,000. Meanwhile, the [Associated Press \(AP\)](#) cited an unnamed World Health Organization official based in Libya who said that the number of deaths was in the range of 7,000.

An unusually strong storm called Daniel led to two dams breaching, washing away whole neighborhoods in Derna. Other towns in eastern Libya were affected by the flooding as well, [reported the AP](#).

“They were screaming, ‘Help, help!’” said Mohammed Derna, a 34-year-old teacher, to the AP. Derna and his family spent the night of September 10 on the roof as they saw others carried away by the water. “It was like a Hollywood horror movie,” he said.

While cyclones do affect the Mediterranean, such strong storms have been [rare in the past](#) compared to tropical areas. No definitive study has been conducted yet establishing a link between Daniel and climate change, but warmer sea temperatures are generally believed by scientists to produce more intense storms.

With two major governments persisting in Libya since the aftermath of the Arab Spring in 2011, two civil wars, and Western strikes on the country, [relief efforts must contend](#) with both decimated infrastructure and a potentially difficult political situation. As of September 14, though, both governments have cooperated in addressing the fallout from Daniel.

The storm also hit Greece, Turkey, and Bulgaria.

U.S. Auto Workers Go on Strike

[231 words]

The United Auto Workers (UAW), the union that represents hundreds of thousands of U.S. auto workers, academic workers, and others, is striking the so-called “Big 3” car companies: General Motors, Ford Motor Company, and Stellantis North America (formerly Chrysler). According to experts, the union is conducting targeted strikes that have the potential to shut down the entire U.S. auto industry, which has about 145,000 workers.

“Two plants per company, you can pretty much idle North America,” [said Jeff Schuster](#), an industry consultant, to CNN, prior to the strike.

The effort reflects the most adversarial approach taken by the union toward auto companies in years. The UAW took a hard line in negotiations with the Big 3 as the union’s auto contracts expired on September 14. The union is seeking a 40 percent pay hike over four years and other dramatic changes to auto workers’ terms and conditions.

American labor advocates have struggled for decades with the problem of moribund big unions, but appear to have found a winning formula with the UAW. The union recently endured a massive corruption scandal that resulted in government intervention into the

union and the prosecutions of previous leadership officers, including former presidents Gary Jones and Dennis Williams. An upshot of the internal turmoil was that members were able to vote directly for more militant union executive officers like current President Shawn Fain.

Philippines Journalist and Media Outlet Cleared of Tax Evasion Charges

[189 words]

Renowned Filipina journalist and Nobel Peace Prize winner Maria Ressa was cleared in mid-September 2023 of the last of the tax evasion charges levied against her by the Filipino government, reported [“Democracy Now!”](#).

“It shows that the court system works. We hope to see the remaining charges dismissed,” [said Ressa](#) to reporters.

She and her website Rappler achieved prominence internationally for their reporting on former Filipino President Rodrigo Duterte and his violent war on drugs. She continues to face [numerous efforts](#) by the government to throw her in prison and shut down the operations of Rappler. These include a “cyber libel” charge for [Rappler reporting](#) on alleged malfeasance by Filipino businessman Wilfredo Keng and the Philippines’s Chief Justice.

[According to Reuters](#), the Philippines is in the bottom third of countries ranked by press freedom as measured by the World Press Freedom Index. The country took an authoritarian turn with Duterte’s election, who presaged his years in office by [telling a group of businessmen](#) that his term would be “a bloody one.” He then followed through on his promise, with [at least 6,000 killed](#) in his drug war alone.

Mexico Decriminalizes Abortion as Rights Deteriorate in U.S., Poland

[251 words]

On September 6, the Mexican Supreme Court ruled that federal laws criminalizing abortion are unconstitutional, [reported The Guardian](#). Congress must now pass laws that remove the procedure from the penal code before the measure takes effect, but those who seek abortions and abortion providers will immediately be protected from prosecution. People seeking abortions will also now be able to get them at federal health facilities throughout the country right away.

“Today is a day of victory and justice for Mexican women!” [said the National Institute for Women](#), a government agency.

Since 1994, the rate of unintended pregnancies in Mexico has dropped 31 percent [according to the policy organization Guttmacher Institute](#). However, the rate of abortions has remained steady, leading to the rate of unintended pregnancies ending in abortion rising significantly.

The move by Mexico's Supreme Court, which is part of a trend in Latin America, comes even as Mexico's neighbor to the north has moved in the opposite direction. In 2022, the U.S. Supreme Court struck down *Roe v. Wade*, which for nearly 50 years had guaranteed the right to abortion to women and others with uteruses in the country. Since then, [22 U.S. states](#) have banned or restricted abortions, and a total of 24 are expected to ban or heavily restrict the procedure in the near future.

The U.S. is not alone in restricting abortion rights. Human Rights Watch, a non-governmental organization, [recently reported](#) that Poland's government is engaged in a "witch hunt [targeting] women [and] doctors."

Red Wine Flows Down Streets of Portuguese Town

[165 words]

Red wine coursed through the town of São Lourenço do Bairro, Portugal, on September 10. Two tanks at a nearby distillery had burst, leading to about 581,000 gallons of the drink flowing through the streets, [reported the U.S.'s National Public Radio \(NPR\)](#).

"True river of wine in Anadia. Calamity!" [read the caption](#) to a video of the incident posted on social media.

According to NPR, "The large amount of wine was being stored at the distillery through the government's 'crisis distillation' program, which aims to use incentive funds to remove a glut of wine from the market pipeline before this year's harvest."

[Portugal drinks more wine per capita](#) than any other country, but this has dropped significantly, contributing to the surplus of wine that the industry must contend with. The problem is not restricted to the Iberian country; with the assistance of funding from the European Union, France is spending 200 million euros (\$213 million) to destroy wine to prop up producers.