



Global Watch Daily – July 20, 2026

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A concise summary of significant developments in Israel and the world through a grounded Christian worldview.

Israel & Jerusalem

Recent developments in Israel reveal that Hamas has appointed Khalil al-Hayya as its new political chief, succeeding Yahya Sinwar, who was killed by Israeli forces in October 2024. Israeli Defense Minister Yoav Katz has barred a member of the Democratic Party from serving in the Israel Defense Forces due to public calls to refuse reserve duty, emphasizing his commitment to eradicating such phenomena. Meanwhile, Iran has been conducting bombings on Gulf states while deliberately avoiding US naval assets and Israeli targets, raising questions about Tehran's strategic calculations ([JNS](#); [JNS](#); [Al Jazeera](#)).

In addition, a notable social media phenomenon has emerged with an Israel Defense Forces soldier influencing public opinion about Israel on TikTok, as featured in the "Straight Up" news show hosted by former Government Press Office director Danny Seaman. This program offers candid analysis of Israeli and Middle Eastern affairs. Meanwhile, Hamas's leadership dynamics continue to evolve, with Khalil al-Hayya confirmed as the new leader following a run-off against Khaled Meshaal ([JNS](#); [Al Jazeera](#)).

Wars & Security (Israel and Region)

Recent intelligence indicates that Iran has instructed the Houthi rebels in Yemen to close the Bab al Mandeb Strait, a critical maritime chokepoint at the southern end of the Red Sea, should the United States strike Iran's power grid. This directive underscores Tehran's strategy to escalate pressure in the region amid ongoing tensions. Concurrently, Venezuela is grappling with the aftermath of two devastating earthquakes that struck north-central regions on June 24, resulting in over 4,800 deaths, nearly 17,000 injuries, and displacing approximately 18,000 people. The scale of the disaster has overwhelmed emergency services and impeded political transition efforts. Additionally, Russia has officially unveiled its new low-cost cruise missile, the 'Banderol,' which has seen increased deployment in the Ukraine conflict ([Long War Journal](#); [Long War Journal](#); [Long War Journal](#)).



Further developments include Iraq's imposition of sanctions on individuals and entities linked to Lebanese Hezbollah, aligning with US designations issued earlier this year. Iraqi Prime Minister Ali al Zaidi is currently in the United States seeking support for expanded economic cooperation. Meanwhile, the United States has reinstated a naval blockade against Iranian ports and conducted a week-long series of strikes on Iranian military targets in response to Tehran's repeated violations, signaling a potential escalation in hostilities. Reports also confirm Iran's instructions to the Houthis to close the Bab al Mandeb Strait if the US attacks Iran's power infrastructure ([Long War Journal](#); [FDD](#); [FDD](#)).

Additional coverage highlights Ireland's lower house passing legislation criminalizing imports from Israeli settlements in the West Bank, including eastern Jerusalem, a move criticized as counterproductive. Former US President Donald Trump has threatened further escalation in the Iran conflict, risking repetition of past errors. Iraqi Prime Minister Zaidi's meetings in Washington with President Trump and other officials focused on security cooperation, investment, and efforts to bring Iranian-backed militia weapons under state control ([FDD](#); [FDD](#); [Long War Journal](#)).

Reports also reveal that Syrian authorities intercepted a shipment of advanced weapons concealed in an Iraqi oil tanker destined for Hezbollah in Lebanon. The cargo included sophisticated equipment such as first-person-view drones, fiber-optic spools, drone warheads, and anti-tank missiles. Meanwhile, analysts discuss the unraveling of the US-Iran memorandum of understanding, marking the end of the ceasefire and raising concerns about renewed proxy conflicts in the Gulf region ([Long War Journal](#); [Long War Journal](#)).

Global Macro & Geopolitics

Strategic competition between China and the United States is intensifying in Southeast Asia, particularly in the export of nuclear reactors, which has become a critical arena for influence. The Hormuz Strait crisis has escalated just as fuel markets tighten globally, pushing gasoline prices above \$4 per gallon amid the US summer driving season. In the United Kingdom, Prime Minister Andy Burnham faces significant economic challenges, including sluggish growth and persistent inflation, as he begins his tenure ([The Diplomat](#); [Bloomberg](#); [Bloomberg](#)).

In India, student protests are testing Prime Minister Narendra Modi's administration as the new parliamentary session begins. The protesters, led by the CJP, demand the resignation of the education minister. Despite ongoing US-Iran hostilities, oil prices have remained



relatively stable over the past five months, defying expectations of sharp increases ([Bloomberg](#); [Reuters](#)).

Pestilence & Global Health

New research indicates that tiny plastic particles in drinking water may be strengthening harmful bacteria by enhancing the resilience of their biofilms within water systems. These fortified biofilms are more resistant to treatment, posing increased health risks. In cancer research, a naturally occurring bacterium from amphibian intestines has demonstrated the ability to completely eliminate colorectal tumors in mice with a single dose, both by directly attacking cancer cells and activating the immune system. This discovery suggests promising avenues for novel cancer therapies. Additionally, scientists have identified a previously unrecognized immune backup system that can amplify the effectiveness of mRNA cancer vaccines by recruiting unexpected immune cells, potentially leading to more tailored and potent treatments ([ScienceDaily](#); [ScienceDaily](#); [ScienceDaily](#)).

Natural Disasters & Signs in the Heavens

Recent seismic activity includes a magnitude 1.9 earthquake located 14 kilometers south-southwest of Jal, New Mexico, at a depth of 6.98 kilometers, and a magnitude 5.6 event 208 kilometers southwest of Port McNeill, Canada, at a depth of 10 kilometers. Both events registered moderate shaking intensities ([USGS](#); [USGS](#)).

Additional reports note a magnitude 5.5 earthquake near Sicaya, Peru, with shaking intensities reaching level VII, and a magnitude 4.8 earthquake in Venezuela at a depth of 66 kilometers, potentially affecting approximately 1.3 million people within a 100-kilometer radius. These events highlight ongoing seismic risks in the Americas ([USGS](#); [GDACS](#)).

Middle Eastern Artifacts

Archaeological excavations at the entrance to the City of David Visitor Center in Jerusalem have uncovered a significant collection of ceramics from the Early Islamic, Medieval, and Late Ottoman periods. The assemblage includes bowls, basins, storage jars, jugs, and cooking vessels, all recovered from well-stratified contexts. Another study analyzes pottery from the Late Roman and Byzantine periods found at the same site, providing valuable insights into the city's occupation and development during those eras ([Israel Antiquities Authority](#); [Israel Antiquities Authority](#)).



Additional reports include a weekend roundup highlighting the discovery of 18 ancient tombs, a granite sarcophagus, and numerous rare burial objects at Marina El Alamein in Egypt, shedding light on the city's role as a cultural crossroads in antiquity. Further excavations at the City of David summit have revealed remains spanning from the Late Roman through the Medieval to the late Ottoman periods, enriching the historical understanding of Jerusalem's continuous habitation ([BiblePlaces](#); [Israel Antiquities Authority](#)).