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Middle East conflict

2 U.S. planes are down and Iran hits Gulf refineries as the war wraps its 5th week

UPDATED APRIL 3, 2026, 4:12 PM ET

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By NPR Staff

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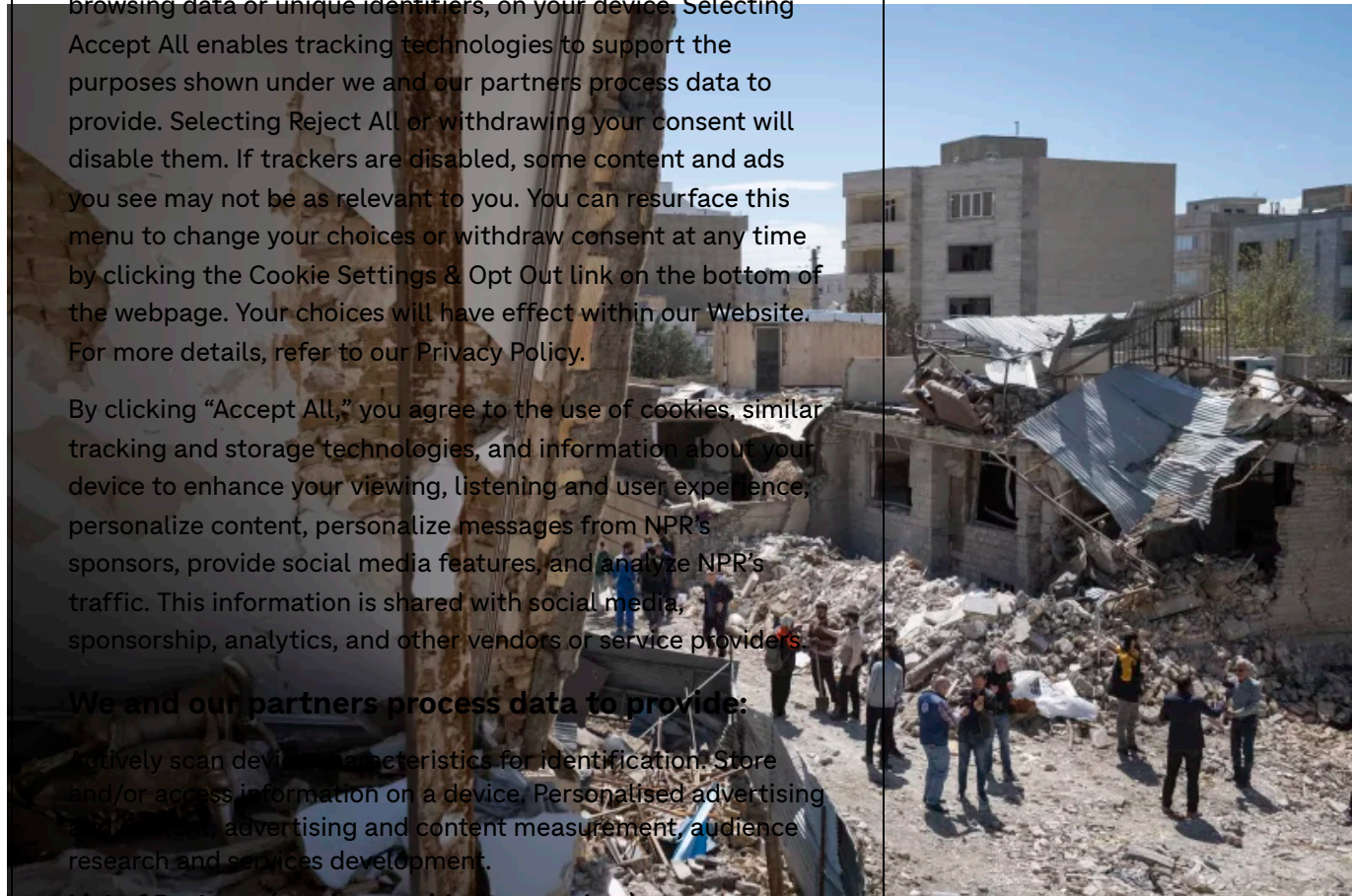
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A view of a residential area affected during the U.S.-Israeli military operations in the city of Karaj, in Alborz province, several miles west of Tehran, Iran, on Friday. The area was struck on March 9.

Morteza Nikoubaaz / AP Photo / Vahid Salehi

One U.S. F-15 fighter jet went down in Iran, and a second U.S. Air Force combat plane crashed near the Strait of Hormuz on Friday, according to a U.S. official, capping off another week of intensified fighting in the U.S.-Israeli war with Iran.



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The official was speaking on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to speak publicly about the incidents.



MIDDLE EAST CONFLICT

A U.S. jet goes down over Iran, a U.S. official confirms

Blasts and sirens rang out across the Middle East from Iranian drones and missiles since overnight. Kuwait's largest oil refinery was hit, setting some of its units on fire.

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Meanwhile, dozens of countries — not including the U.S. or Israel — launched renewed efforts to reopen the Strait of Hormuz, a strategic waterway for the

world's oil supply that has been largely blocked by Iran in retaliation for U.S. and Israeli strikes. President Trump said Friday it would take "a little more time" but it would be easy to open the strait.

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The Brent crude oil price went up by almost 8% on Friday to around \$109 per barrel. The war has also pushed up the cost of gas and fertilizer.

Here's more news from the war on Iran on Friday:

U.S. strikes on Iran | Iran attacks Gulf refineries | Strait of Hormuz talks | Good Friday | UAE attacks

One of Iran's largest bridges destroyed in U.S. strikes



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The death toll from a U.S. attack on one of Iran's largest bridges has risen to 13 people, according to Iranian state media.

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The B1 bridge between Tehran and Karaj was under construction when it was hit. The biggest bridge in Iran came tumbling down, never to be used again — Much more to follow!" President Trump said on social media, sharing a video of a bridge collapsing after being bombed.

Iran's Revolutionary Guard threatened to hit major bridges in the Gulf region in retaliation.

Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi said, "Striking civilian structures, including unfinished bridges, will not compel Iranians to surrender."

Iran launches missile and drone attacks on Israel and Gulf states

Kuwait's Petroleum Corporation said on Friday several units at the country's largest oil refinery, Mina Al-Ahmadi, were on fire following a drone attack.



MIDDLE EAST CONFLICT

Evacuation of U.S. troops from Mideast base sends community groups scrambling to help

Emergency teams were working to contain the fires and no injuries were reported.

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The refinery has been a target of Iranian drones in the past.

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The Kuwait Army also said its air defense systems were responding to hostile missiles and drone threats.

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Authorities in the United Arab Emirates reported a fire in the country's Habshan gas facility caused by falling debris from an intercepted attack.

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Saudi Arabia's Defense Ministry also said it intercepted and destroyed about a dozen drones.

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Israel's Health Ministry said on Friday that it has treated 148 people in the last day, the majority for minor injuries. Some 6,394 people received treatment since

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the war began, according to the ministry's post on social media.

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Nations mult diplomatic pressure on Iran over Hormuz Strait, but reach no agreement

Leaders of 40 countries, who convened virtually on Thursday at the request of the British government, discussed diplomatic pressure and economic measures to compel Iran to reopen the Strait of Hormuz, but did not agree to any specific steps.

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MIDDLE EAST

Over 40 countries meet to discuss ways to reopen the Strait of Hormuz

The meeting, hosted by British Foreign Secretary Yvette Cooper, included representatives from European countries, Canada and the United Arab Emirates. Neither country that launched the war — the U.S. and Israel — were present.

This week Trump said the blocked strait didn't affect the U.S. and told other countries that rely on it for fuel to get it reopened. Cooper said the rest of the world had been left to deal with the consequences of the Iran war.

She said that by blocking the Strait of Hormuz, Iran was "hijacking a global shipping route" and was "holding the global economy hostage."

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"This is hitting the trading routes for Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, the UAE, Saudi, Oman, Iraq, but that means liquid natural gas for Asia, fertilizer for Africa and jet fuel for the world," Cooper added.

She said that traffic through the strait had plunged from 150 vessels a day to 10-20 ships a day.

The meeting discussed diplomatic pressure on Iran as well as sanctions if Iran continues to keep the passage closed. They rejected any attempts by Iran to impose tolls on ships passing through the waterway.



A residential building damaged by recent U.S.-Israeli strikes is seen with a sign on its wall that reads in Farsi, "We stand till the end," in Fardis, west of Tehran, Iran, Friday. For more details, refer to our Privacy Policy.

Vahid Salemi/AP

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Cooper said that military planners from the countries attending the meeting would meet next week to think about defensive capabilities for security of the strait, once the fighting stops.

Officials also said they would work with the International Maritime Organization to try to help about 20,000 sailors and thousands of ships stranded in the Strait of Hormuz.

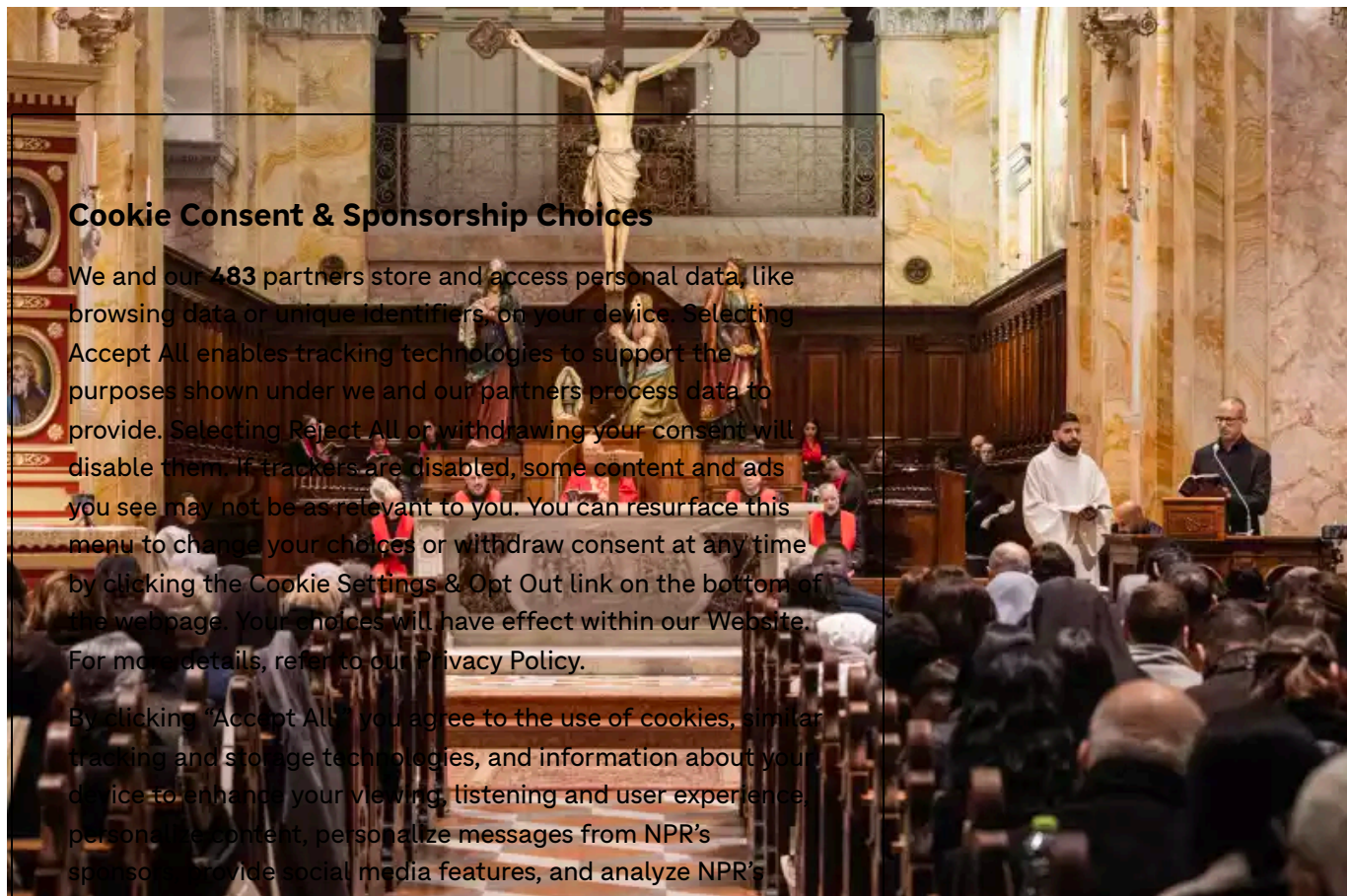
French President Emmanuel Macron said on Thursday the idea of using force to reopen the Strait, as suggested by Trump, is "unrealistic," adding that that would leave cargo ships in the strait vulnerable to Iranian attacks.

Macron and South Korean President Lee Jae Myung said on Friday they would cooperate to reopen the strait, according to The Associated Press.

U.S. allies have repeatedly said they're not going to get involved militarily in the hot phase of the war.

On Friday, Trump said on social media: "With a little more time, we can easily OPEN THE HORMUZ STRAIT, TAKE THE OIL, & MAKE A FORTUNE. IT WOULD BE A "GUSHER" FOR THE WORLD???"

Holy Week in Holy Land at war



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People attend services at St. Saviour Church in the Old City of Jerusalem during Good Friday. Israeli police restricted access to holy sites in the Old City for security reasons linked to the Iran war.

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Christian leaders in Jerusalem say they are holding Holy Week celebrations, including on Easter Sunday, as best they can under wartime restrictions.

Israeli police say they have had to strictly limit gatherings in the Old City for safety from incoming missile fire from Iran.

Catholic leaders held Spon Frship choices inside Jerusalem's St. Savior Church, instead of along the Via Dolorosa street where faithful usually reenact where Jesus

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Auxiliary Bishop William Shomali says Jerusalem is sad without the usual tens of thousands of religious pilgrims

RELIGION

Israeli police stop Latin Patriarch from entering Palm Sunday Mass at Holy Sepulchre

Israel police had stopped senior church officials from entering the Church of the Holy Sepulcher on Palm Sunday, March 29.

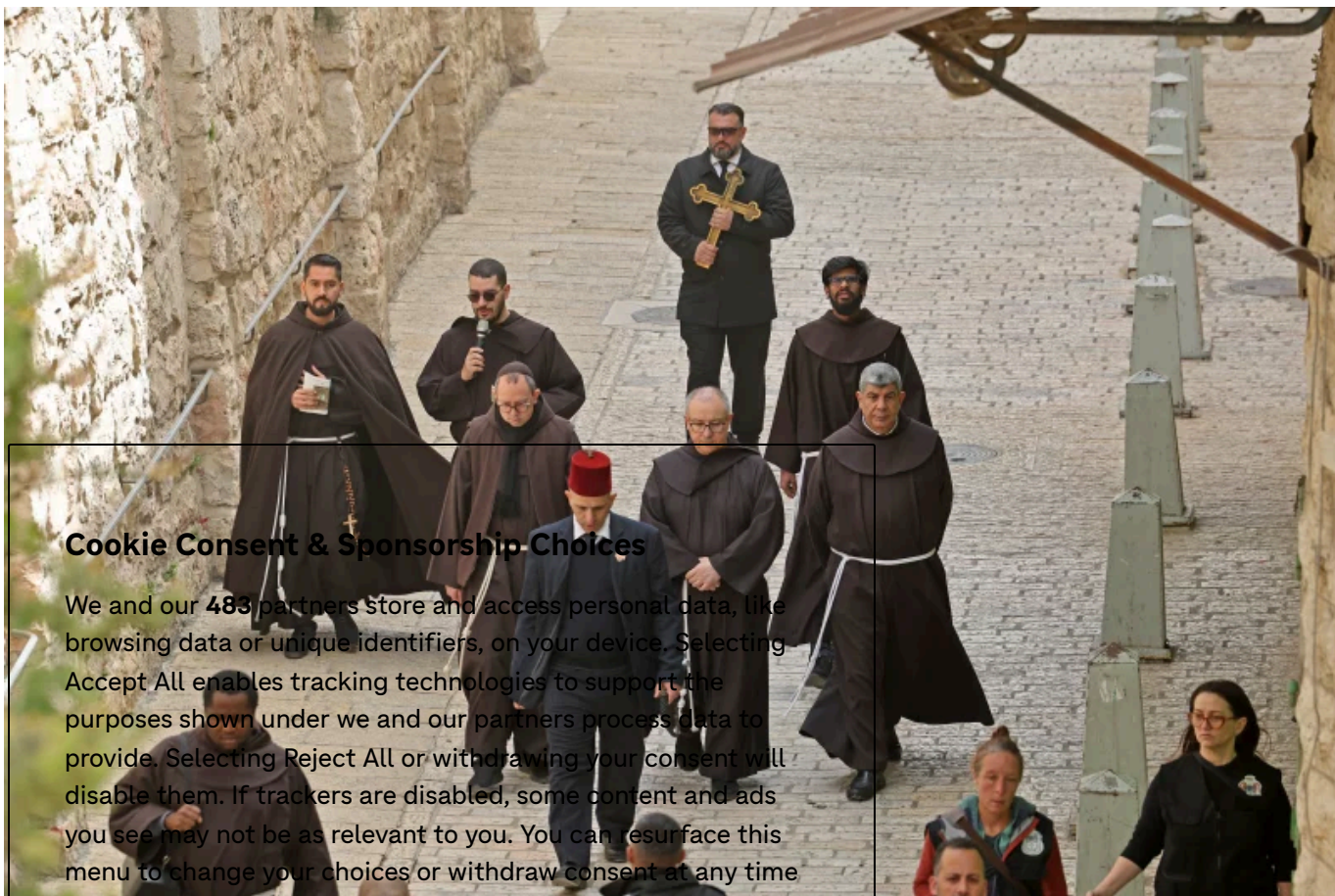
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by clicking the Cookie Settings & Opt Out link on the bottom of the webpage. Your choices will have effect within our website. Catholic devotees walk through Jerusalem's Old City on their way to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre on Good Friday. Police have restricted sites during the Iran war and only a small group is allowed into the church. For more details, refer to our Privacy Policy.

Ahmad Gharabli/AFP via Getty Images

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After broad criticism, a small group of clergy are now allowed to hold Holy Week services inside the church, which dates back to the fourth century.

Good Friday services were canceled in other parts of the Middle East due to the war, including two Catholic churches in Dubai, United Arab Emirates.

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Earlier this week, as Jews around the world celebrated Passover, some Israelis in Tel Aviv held their religious feast commemorating the exodus out of Egypt, called the Seder, in bomb shelters.

Bellingcat says UAE downplayed Iranian attacks in a new report

Investigative outlet Bellingcat published a new report showing several Iranian attacks on the United Arab Emirates that were apparently downplayed or mischaracterized in official statements.

The government did not immediately respond to NPR's request for comment on the report.

Bellingcat, which uses open source data, said a video shared by a migrant worker shows what appears to be an Iranian drone hitting fuel storages in the emirate of Fujairah in early March. Satellite imagery shows three tanks destroyed. Bellingcat notes Fujairah's media office said a fire had resulted from debris following a successful interception – though no interception can be seen.

In other examples, apparent drone strikes on Dubai's airport and a hotel were not acknowledged as such.

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Bellingcat also said satellite imagery shows two fires over a mile apart at Dubai's port last month, including an area used by the U.S. Navy. But authorities acknowledged just one fire at the time.

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Emily Feng contributed to this report from Istanbul, Fatima Al-Kassab from London, Aya Batrawy from Dubai, United Arab Emirates, and Tom Bowman, Tina Kraja and Alex Leff from Washington, D.C.

iran trump strait of hormuz



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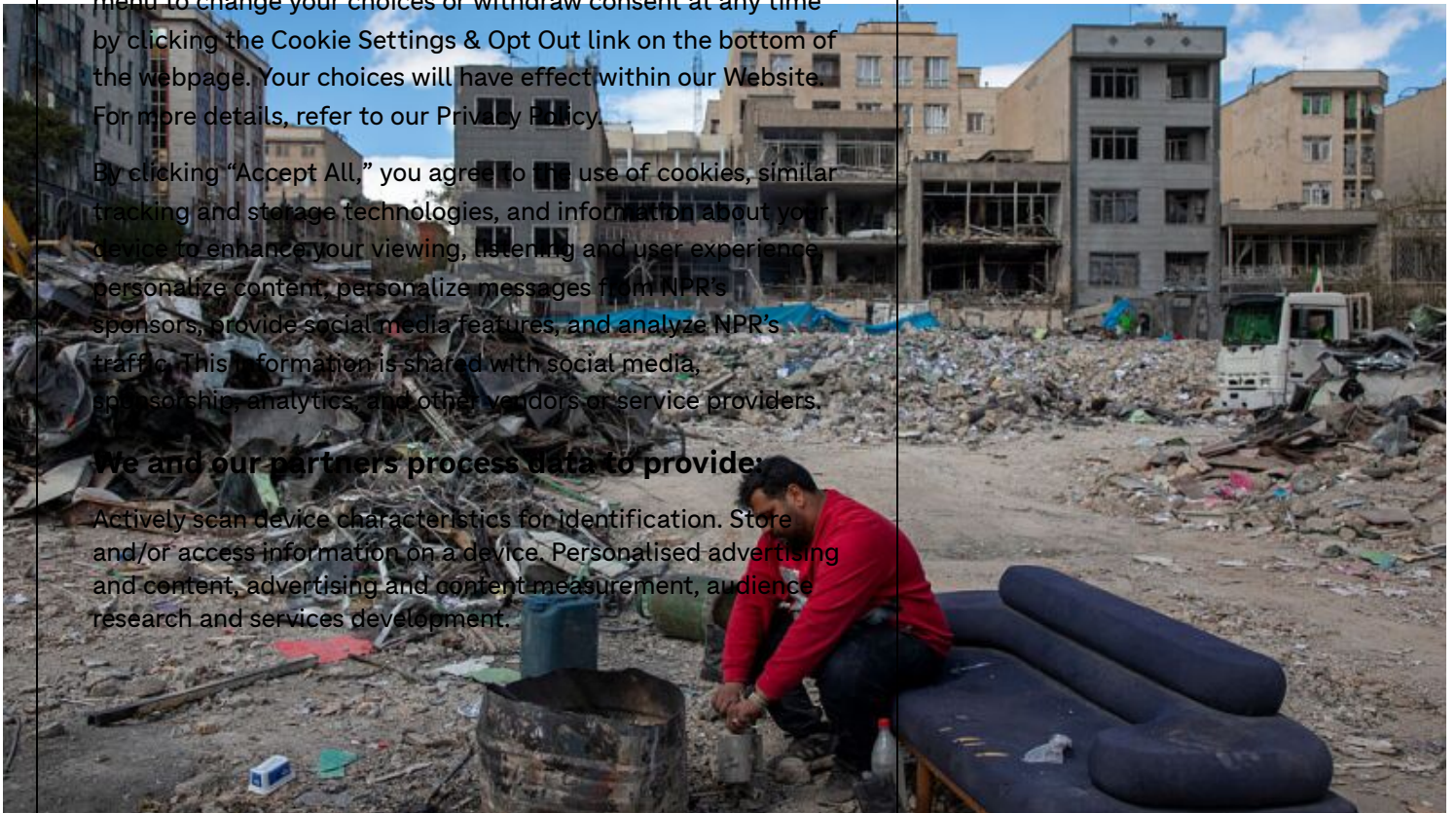
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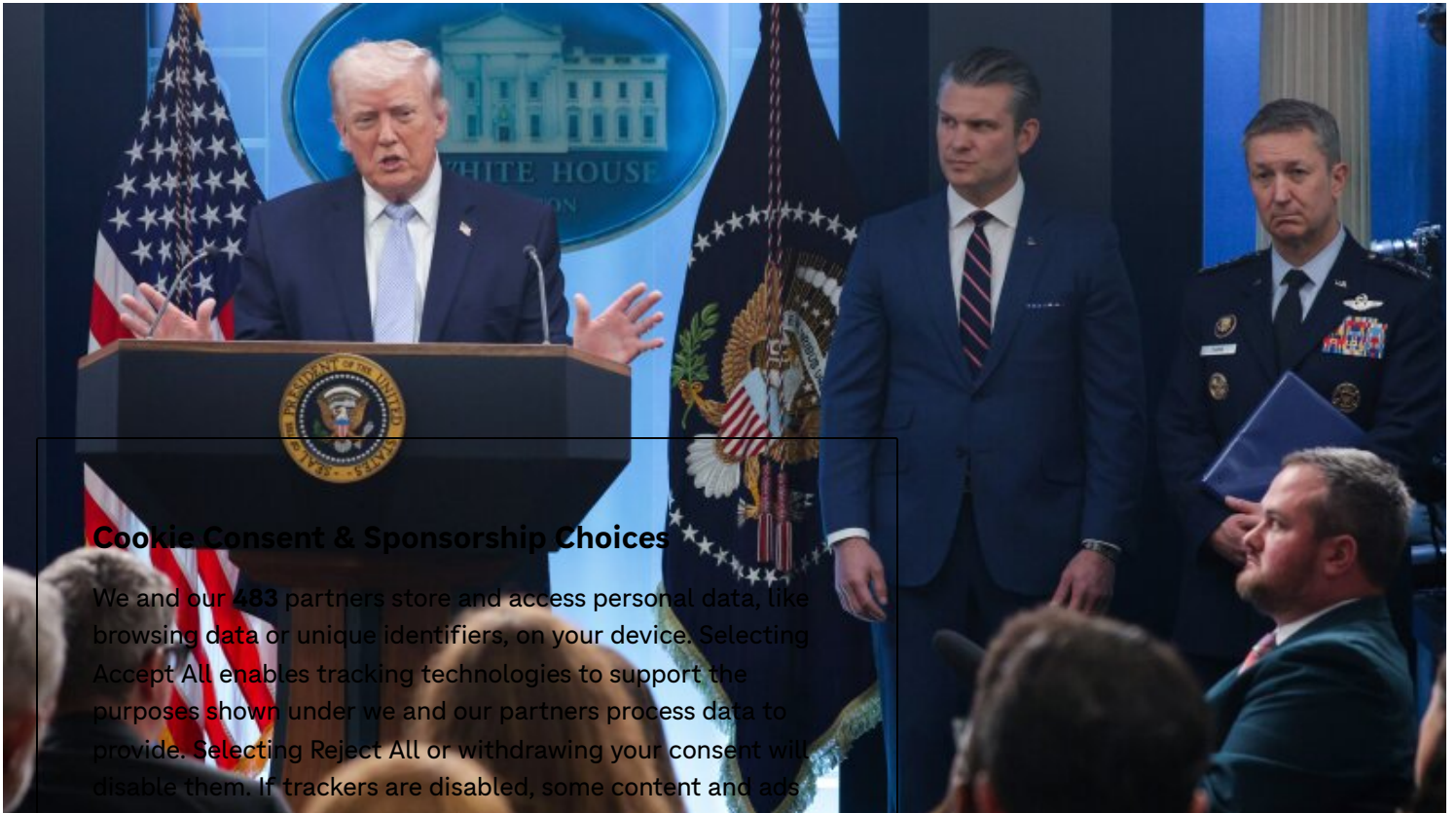
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U.S. and Iran agree to 2-week ceasefire, suspending Trump's threat to annihilate Iran



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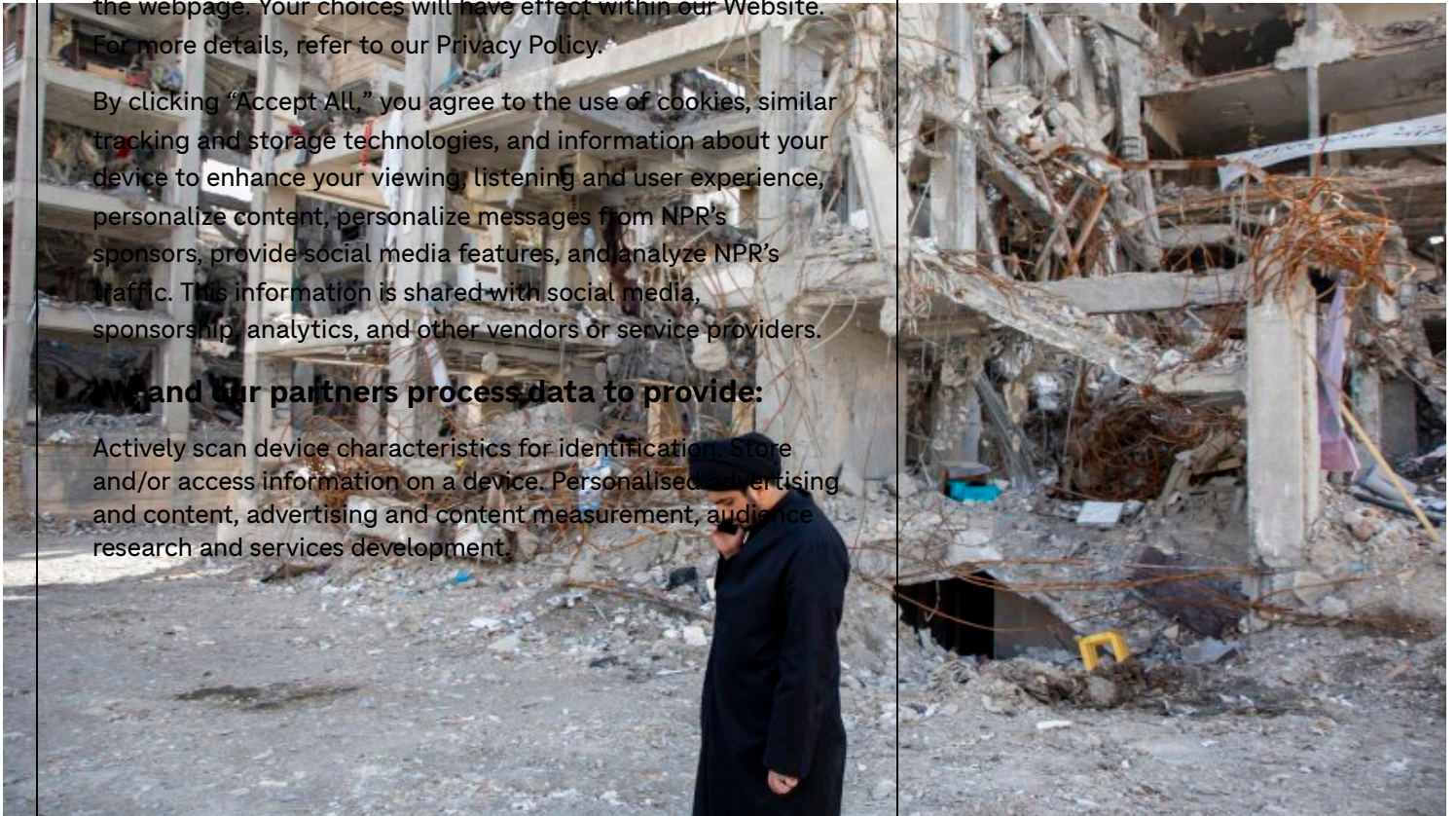
Trump reiterates threats to bomb Iran's power plants and bridges

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MIDDLE EAST CONFLICT

Iran rejects a U.S. ceasefire plan as Trump again threatens to bomb its infrastructure



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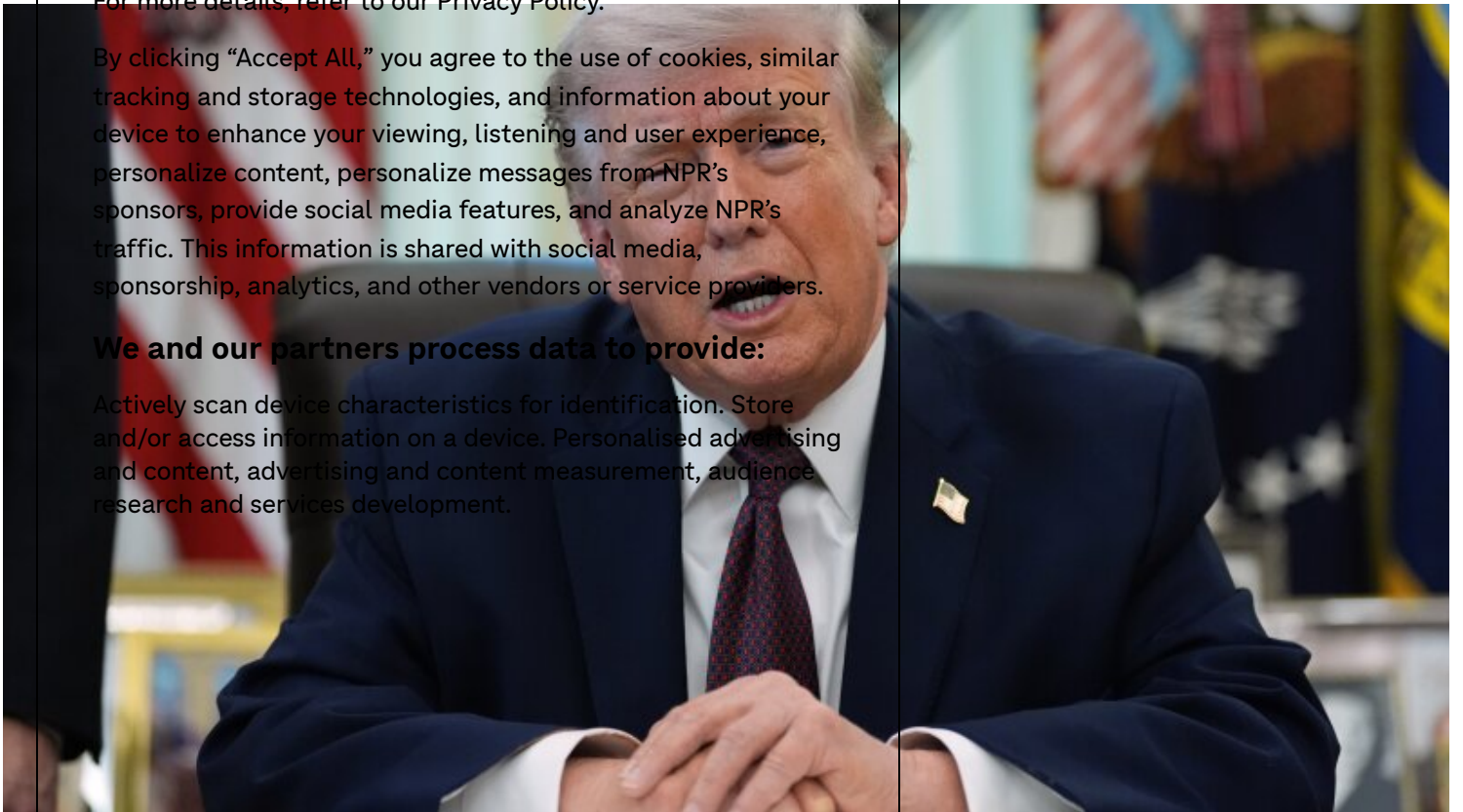
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In Lebanon, more than 50 medics have been killed by Israel. Some say they're targeted

by Israel. Some say they're targeted

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Trump unleashes curse-filled social media rant at Iran after U.S. rescues colonel



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Iran war enters its 6th week as military searches for downed jet crew member

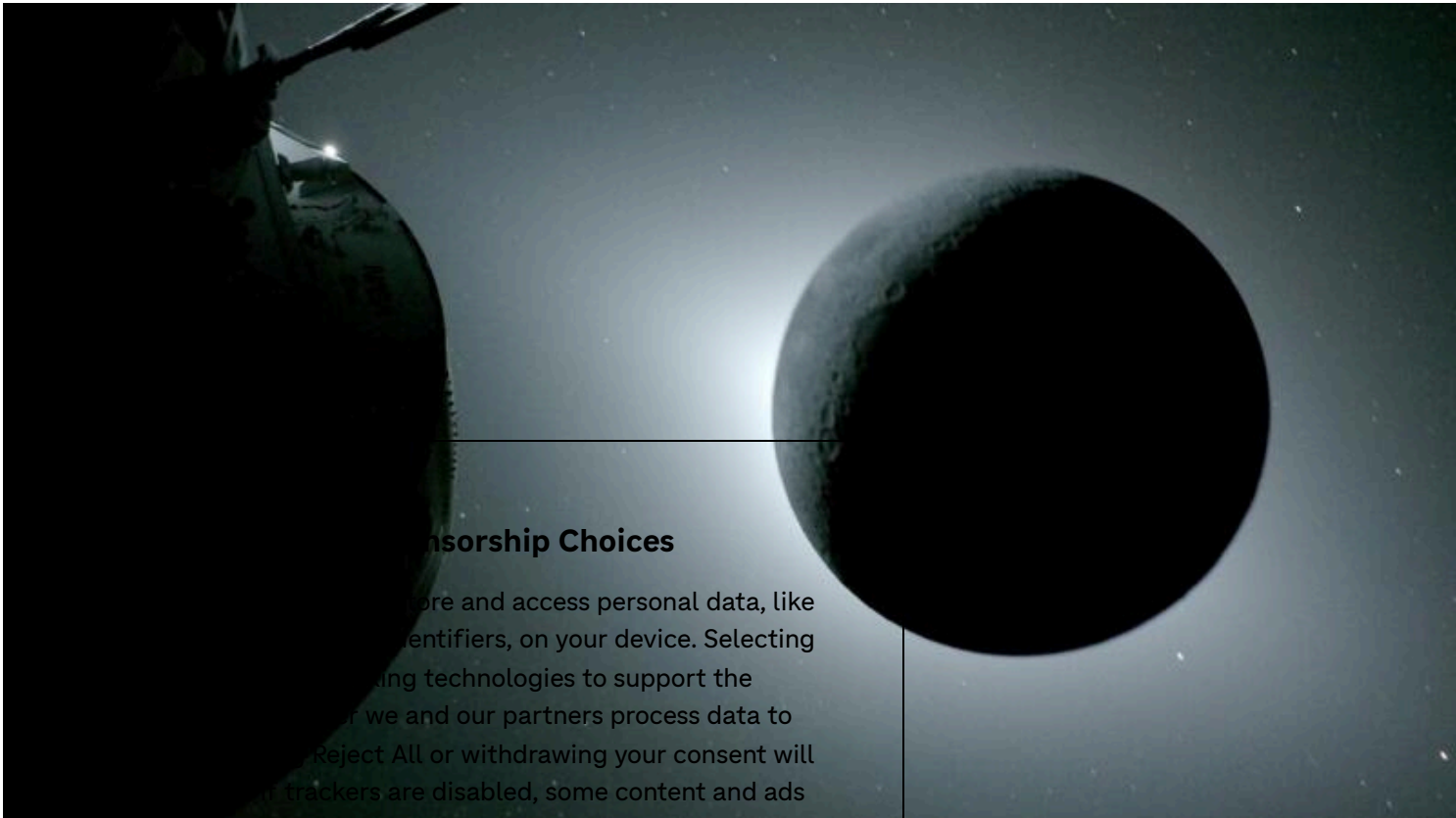
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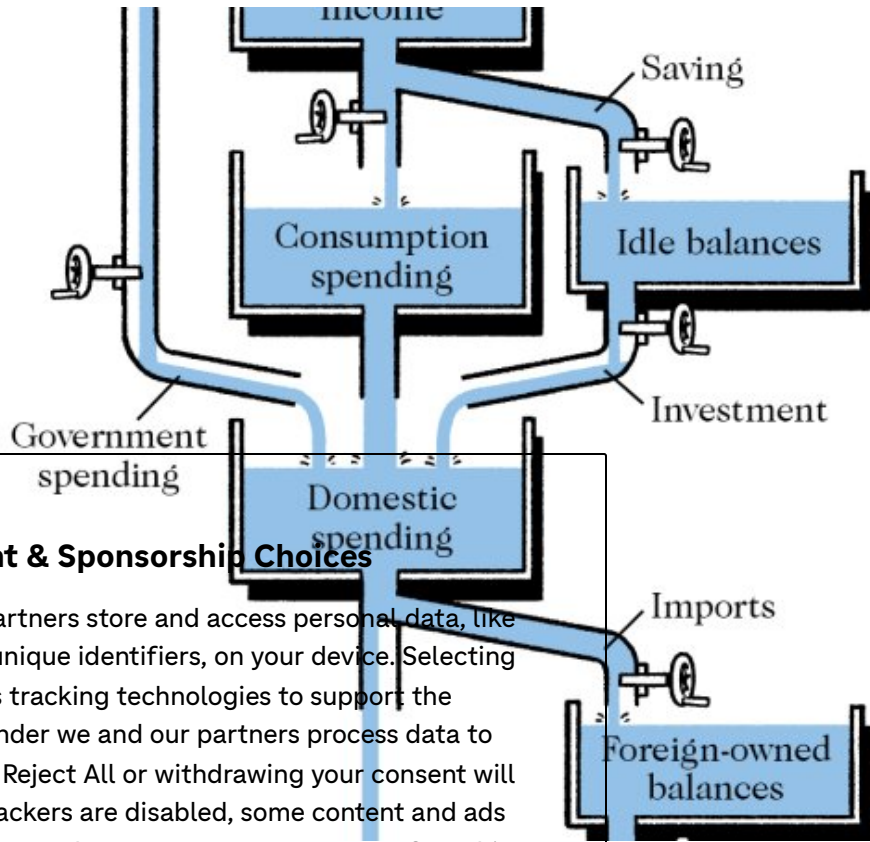
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HEALTH

Telehealth abortion will remain available for now, after a federal judge's ruling



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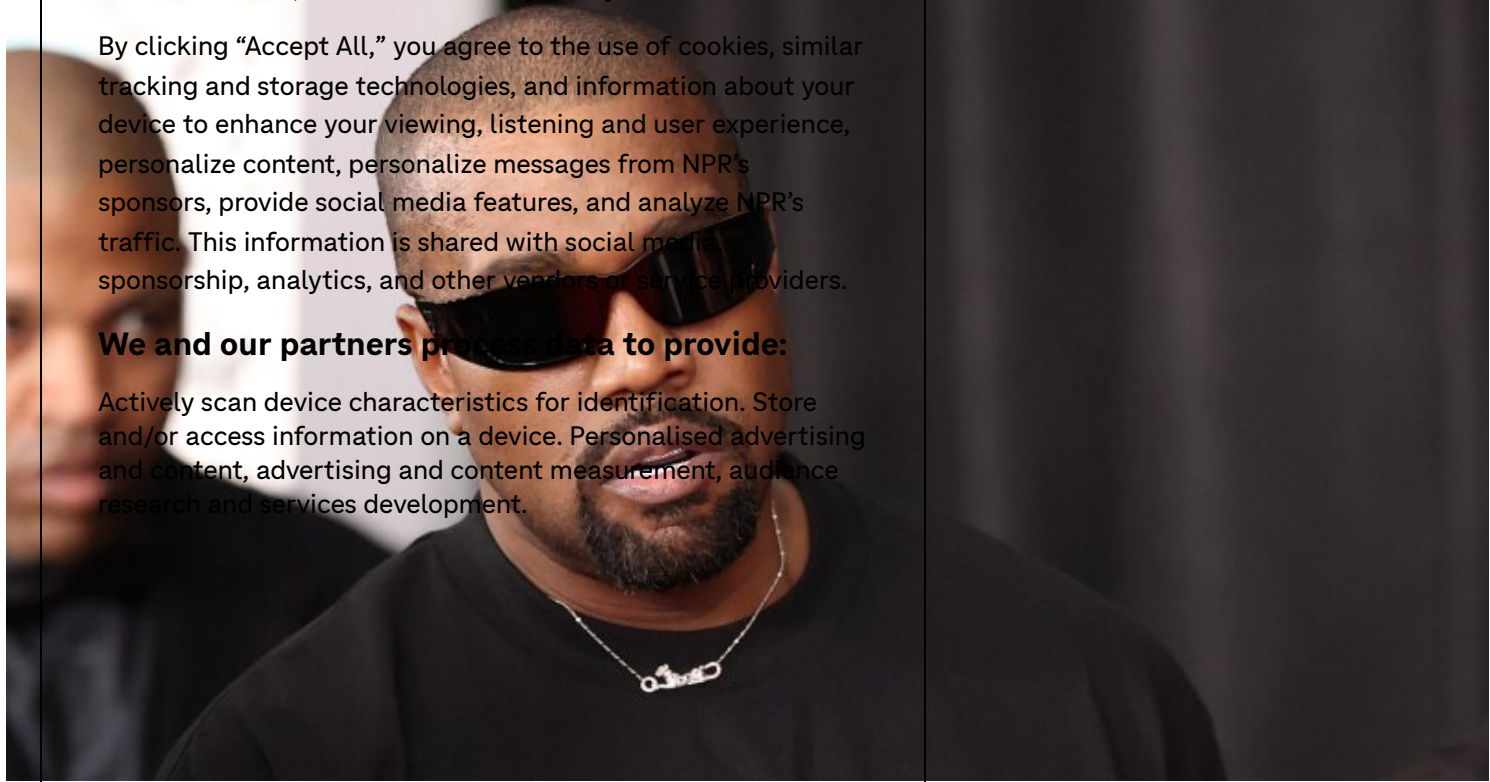
How Bill Phillips used flowing water to model the economy

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MUSIC

U.K. issues Ye travel ban over antisemitism, leading to festival cancellation

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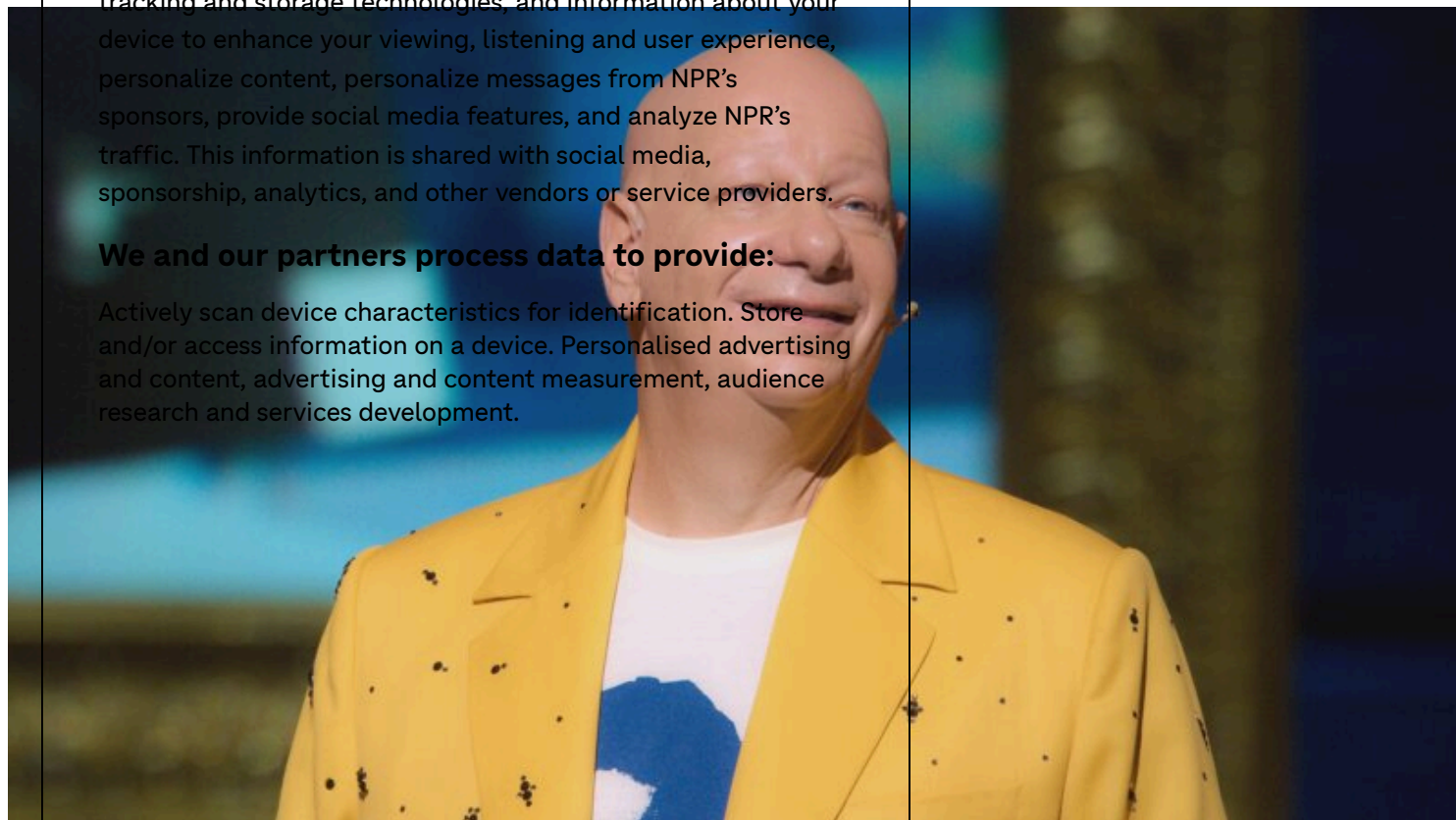
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Congressional Democrats raise alarm over Trump's comments on Iran

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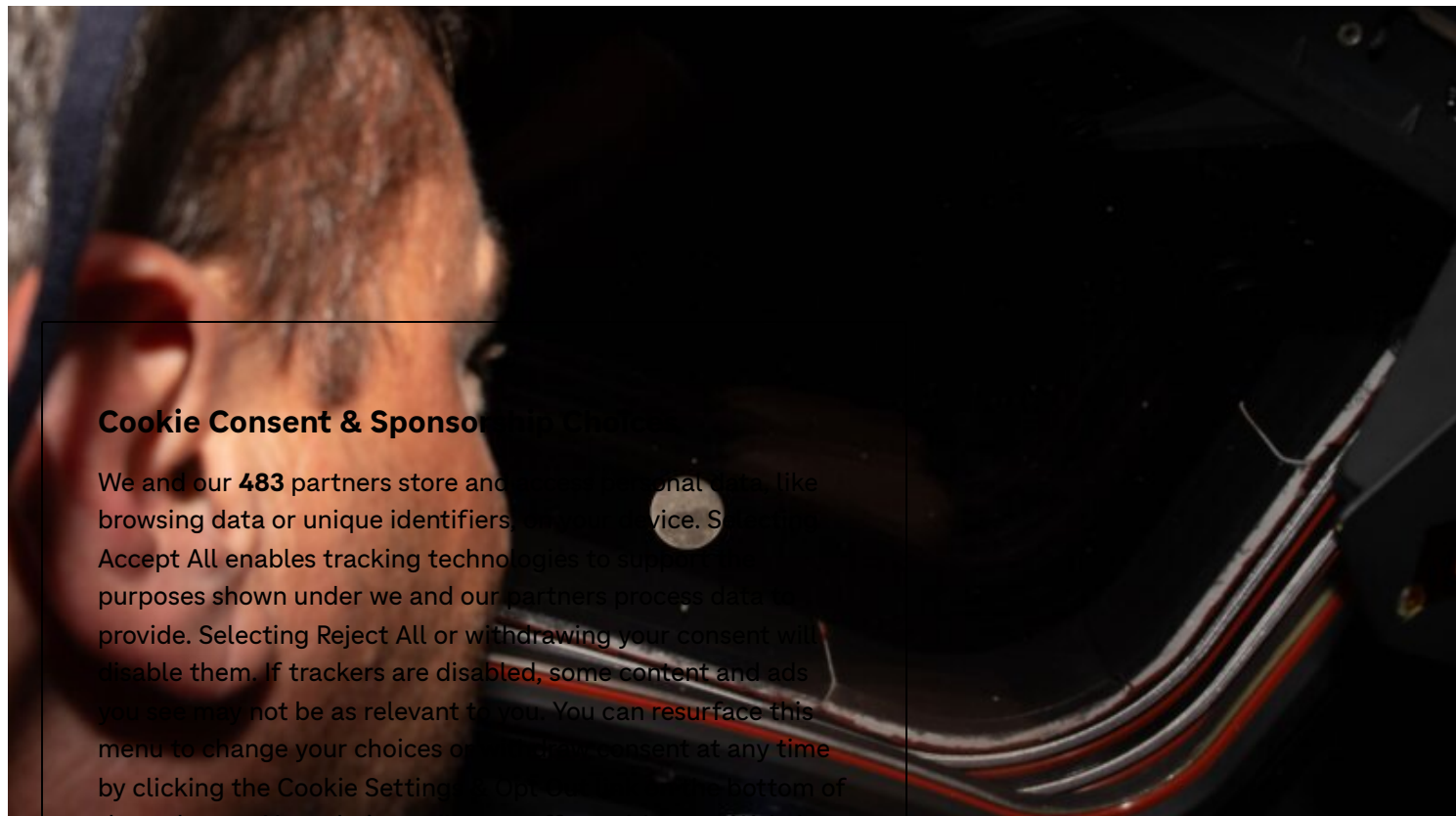
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TELEVISION

Now cancer-free, 'Roastmaster' comic Jeff Ross still finds humor in loss



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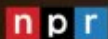
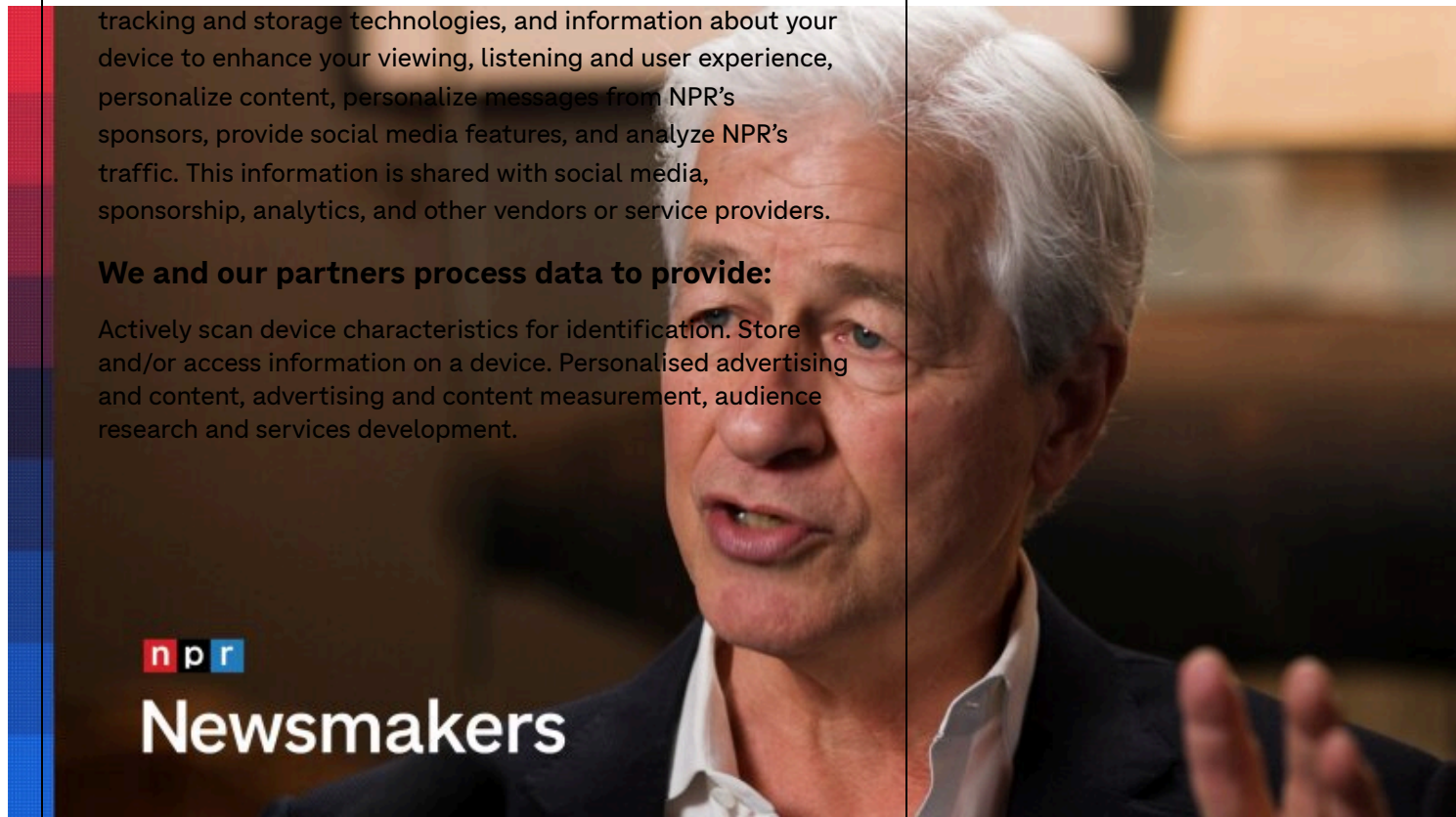
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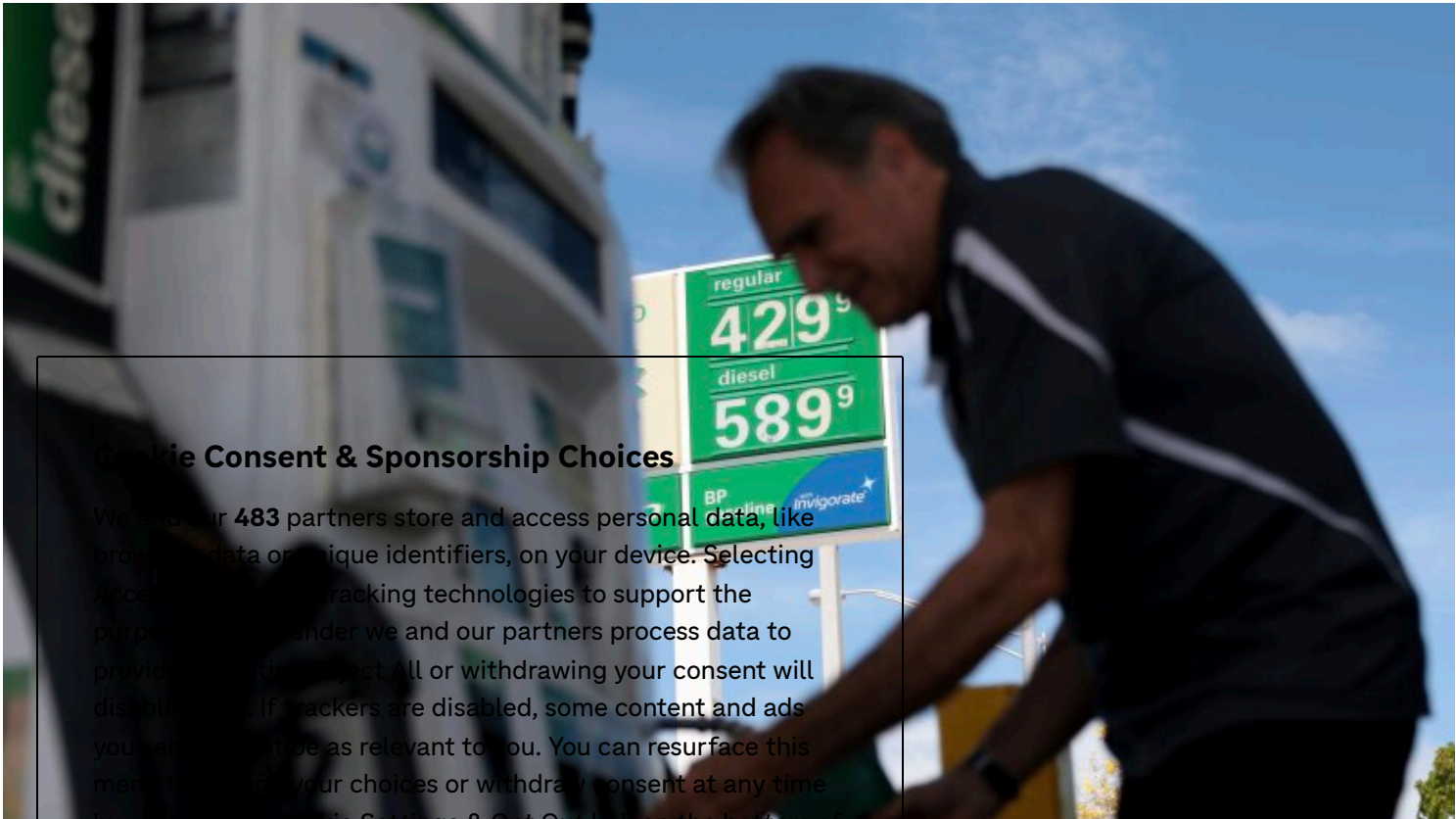
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