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EXCLUSIVE INVESTIGATIONS

Trump has used government powers to target more than 100 perceived enemies

APRIL 29, 2025 · 5:00 AM ET

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8-Minute Listen

PLAYLIST

TRANSCRIPT



When Donald Trump campaigned for president, he promised his followers payback.

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"I am your retribution," he said in 2023.

By clicking "Accept All," you agree to the use of cookies, similar tracking and storage technologies, and information about your device to enhance your viewing, listening and user experience, Through ICE arrests, criminal investigations, firings and executive orders, President Trump has launched a sweeping campaign of retribution. The administration has targeted over 100 perceived enemies, including former Rep. Liz Cheney, Sen. Andrew Sabara and content advertising research and services provider. This information is shared with social media, sponsorship, analytics, and other vendors or service providers.

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INVESTIGATIONS



Targets of Trump's threats brace for the new administration

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It was not just campaign rhetoric.

In the first 100 days of his second term, President Trump has moved aggressively to fulfill his promise of retribution against an extraordinary range of individuals and organizations, targeting political opponents, news organizations, former government officials, universities, international student protesters and law firms.

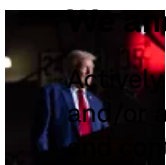
An NPR review has found that the administration is using a vast array of government powers to launch criminal investigations, sweep people into ICE detention, ban companies from receiving federal contracts, revoke security clearances and fire employees.

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Trump has made more than 100 threats to prosecute or punish perceived enemies

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On Wednesday, April 9, Trump ordered criminal probes into two former Trump administration officials, saying one was "guilty of treason" — a crime, Trump has noted, that is punishable by death. That same day, he signed an order targeting a law firm for alleged "election misconduct."

The next day, Thursday, Trump's former personal attorney, who is now the U.S. attorney for New Jersey, announced criminal investigations into the state's Democratic governor and attorney general over immigration policies.

That Friday, his administration sent a series of sweeping demands to Harvard University, including an end to diversity programs, audits to ensure "viewpoint diversity" and bans on certain student groups.

This agenda of retribution has defined the early days of the second Trump administration.

The list of targets now exceeds 100, according to NPR's review, ranging from some of the United States' most prominent Democratic politicians to international students who were unknown to the general public. The FBI's arrest last week of a Wisconsin judge for allegedly obstructing Immigration and Customs Enforcement has raised additional concerns that the administration may also be targeting

members of the judiciary. While discussing the case on Fox News, Attorney General Pam Bondi described some judges as "deranged" and added "no one is above the law."

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Trump has enlisted a wide spectrum of major and minor government agencies in his retaliation campaign. Among those agencies, NPR has found, are the departments of Justice, Defense, Homeland Security, Education, and Health and Human Services, along with the IRS, the General Services Administration, the Federal Communications Commission, the Office of the Director of National Intelligence, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission and even the Federal Housing Finance Agency.

At the same time, Trump has continued to pursue personal lawsuits aimed at imposing financial penalties on companies and news organizations that have angered him.

Some of the president's allies argue that his actions mark the end of what they call the "weaponization" of law enforcement that began under President Joe Biden.

"We now see no political prosecutions, no sham indictments, no fake grand jury proceedings, but instead a way of looking at the Department of Justice in terms of restoration and ensuring that the rule of law will be carried out going forward," said John Lauro, who served as Trump's personal defense lawyer, at an event

moderated by the conservative Federalist Society.

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"We are approaching 100 days of the new admin and nobody has gone to jail yet," lamented Laura Loomer, a far-right activist who has informally advised Trump both during the campaign and in office.

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Chilling effects and legal battles

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However, when Trump's targets have pushed back in court, judges have frequently sided with them, blocking Trump administration actions on constitutional or legal grounds.

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"The framers of our Constitution would see this as a shocking abuse of power," said federal judge Loren Alikhan, who blocked the Trump administration from implementing an executive order targeting the law firm Susman Godfrey.

Despite these judicial rebukes, the targets of Trump's actions say they still face dire consequences, including the loss of income and detention in ICE facilities. Others are dealing with the stress, fear and expense of defending against federal investigations. Many with Trump in the past worry they could be next.

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"I'm often times very anxious myself about using my voice, because retaliation is real," said Republican Sen. Lisa Murkowski of Alaska, in a meeting with constituents this month.

Multiple sources declined to interview requests from NPR, citing fears that speaking out will put them in greater danger.

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"What you see here is just an assault on our most fundamental rights, almost in every single sector," said Amanda Carpenter, a former top aide to Republican Sen. Ted Cruz and a conservative critic of Trump who now works with the nonprofit

group Protect Democracy. "You pick the things that you care about — Donald Trump is working at a very rapid pace to exercise, control and command over that area."

We and our partners process data to provide: With Trump asserting total control over the executive branch, his long history of statements attacking his perceived enemies and threatening retribution provides a window into the administration's motivations. Many of his statements reviewed by NPR suggest motivations based on personal grievances, partisan politics and a desire for payback.

NPR repeatedly asked the White House for an interview for this story. The White House did not respond.

In all, NPR's review identified seven major groups that the administration has targeted:

Click on each category to jump to the section.

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Political opponents

Investigative reporters

Lawyers and law firms

Investigations

Some of Trump's most frequent targets are the people who previously investigated him or his allies.

Investigating the investigators

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8 people or groups that investigated Trump

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Adam Kinzinger

Former U.S. representative
Revocation of security clearance
(Source)

Jan. 6 prosecutors

Former government employment
Revocation by the Department of Justice
(Source)

Members of special counsel Jack Smith's prosecution team

Former government employment
Revocation by the Department of Justice
(Source)

Liz Cheney

Former U.S. representative
Revocation of security clearance
(Source)

Prior to his return to office, Trump faced four separate criminal prosecutions — one of which led to a conviction in New York on 34 felony counts, which he is appealing. In addition to those criminal prosecutions, he was also subject to civil investigations by the New York attorney general and a congressional inquiry into the violent Jan. 6, 2021, attack on the U.S. Capitol.

Throughout his 2024 campaign, Trump made no secret of his anger toward the investigators, referring to the officials involved as "career criminals" who "should go to jail."

Since taking office, the Trump administration has acted on those threats with Justice Department investigations, firings and the revocation of security clearances.



NPR INVESTIGATION: JANUARY 6, 2021

FBI agents, prosecutors fear retribution from Jan. 6 rioters pardoned by Trump

Letitia James, the attorney general of New York, is one of his targets. James' office successfully sued Trump and his companies for fraud in 2024.

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At a rally in 2024, Trump said James "should be arrested and punished accordingly," echoing earlier social media threats demanding her prosecution.

This month, the Federal Housing Finance Agency sent the Justice Department a memo that said James "appears to have falsified" property records in multiple real estate transactions. The agency asked the Justice Department to consider criminal prosecution. The existence of the criminal referral was first reported by conservative host Laura Ingraham on Fox News.

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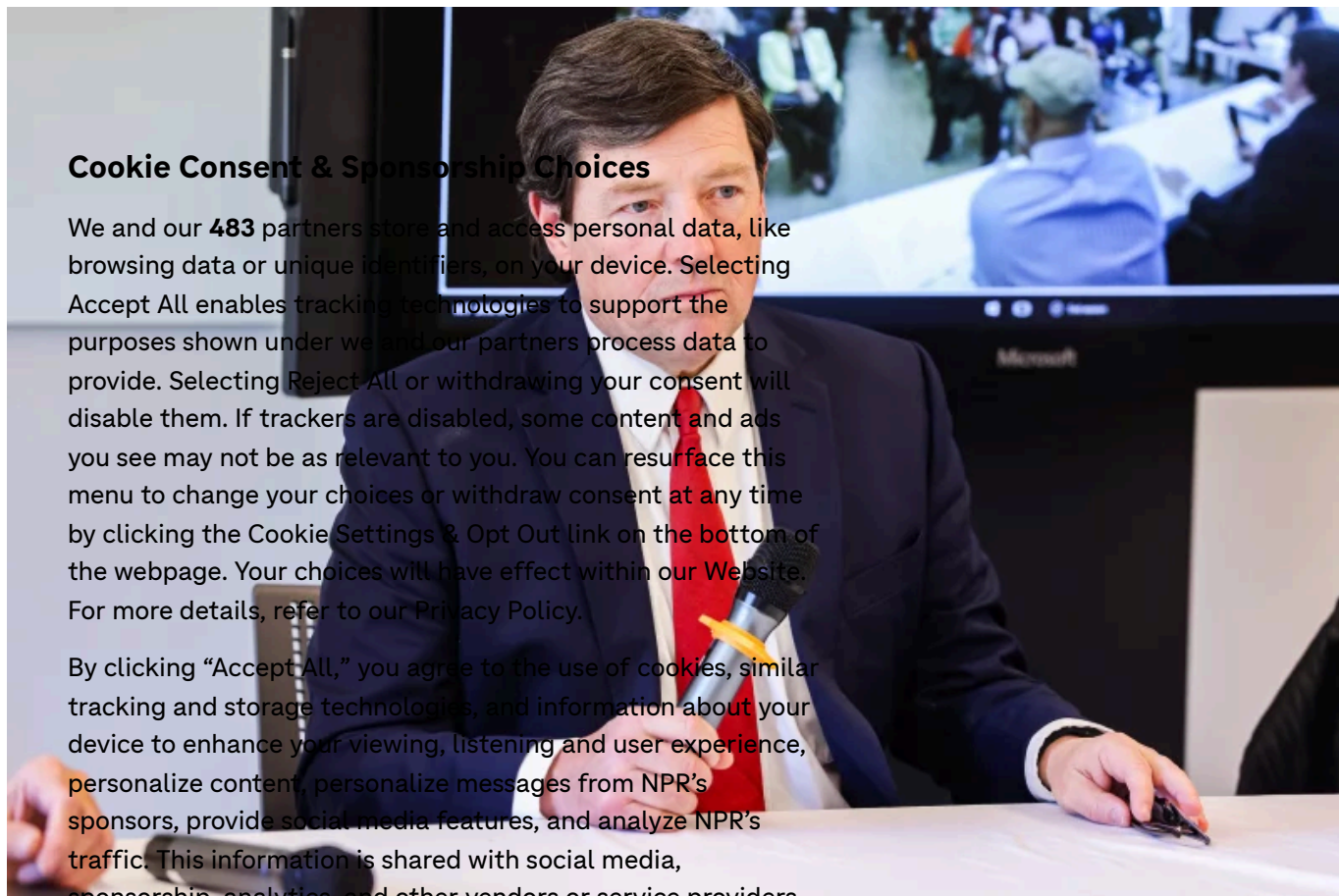
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James called the allegations against her "baseless" and "nothing more than a revenge tour."

Trump responded by posting a segment from the right-wing media outlet Newsmax in which the anchor called James a "sociopath" and said the criminal referral amounted to "karma."

Some of the Trump administration's other targets for criminal inquiries include people he has railed against for years for their roles in investigations in his first term.



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The interim U.S. attorney for the District of Columbia, Ed Martin, attends an Anacostia Coordinating Council monthly meeting in Washington, D.C., on March 25.

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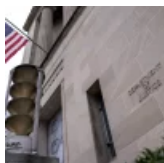
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This month, the interim U.S. attorney for the District of Columbia, Ed Martin, notified Aaron Zelinsky — a former prosecutor on special counsel Robert Mueller's Russia probe — that he was under investigation. Trump also issued an executive order barring another member of Mueller's team, Andrew Weissmann, from federal employment and revoking his security clearance.

"I was retaliated against"

The administration has also taken action against prosecutors of the pro-Trump mob that attacked the U.S. Capitol on Jan. 6.

Those actions follow Trump's comments on the campaign trail attacking the prosecutors and FBI agents who investigated the Jan. 6 attack, as well as the police officers who defended the Capitol building.



NPR INVESTIGATION: JANUARY 6, 2021

Why a DOJ prosecutor resigned, telling coworkers and bosses 'you serve no man'

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In 2023, Trump reposted a message on social media that "The cops should be charged and the protesters should be freed."

Sean Brennan, a former assistant U.S. attorney who worked on dozens of Jan. 6 prosecutions, told NPR in an interview that he and his colleagues expected that the Trump administration would likely end any ongoing or future Jan. 6 prosecutions. After all, Trump had referred to the rioters as "patriots," "political prisoners," and "hostages."

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Trump's decision to immediately issue mass pardons for Jan. 6 defendants, including the most violent, was a "slap in the face" to the officers who were violently assaulted while defending the Capitol, Brennan told NPR.

Days later, along with more than a dozen other Jan. 6 prosecutors, Brennan received a letter from Martin, who had just become interim U.S. attorney for the District of Columbia.

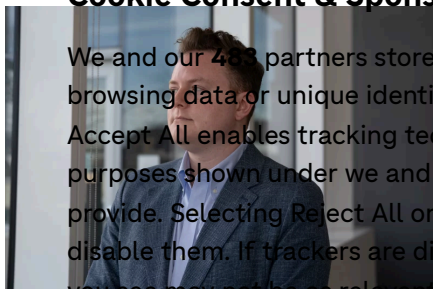
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The letter informed Brennan that he would be fired.

"In very plain language, it says I was terminated for prosecuting Jan. 6 cases, and the letter classifies that as a 'grave national injustice,'" said Brennan. "I don't think there's anything that could be clearer in saying that I was retaliated against for taking actions that were well within the law but that were politically unfavorable to the people in charge."

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Sean Brennan is a former assistant U.S. attorney in the Capitol Siege Section of the Justice Department's "Capitol Siege Section" did its work. He was fired shortly after Trump took office.

Zayrha Rodriguez/NPR

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"I stand by all of the work I did," he said. "Of course, the threat of investigations are scary, but do I believe that they would actually yield any damning results? Absolutely not."

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This month, Brennan signed a letter along with other Jan. 6 prosecutors calling for a bar investigation into whether Martin's conduct violates legal ethics.

Martin did not respond to NPR's requests for comment.

Throughout his presidential campaign, Trump claimed he was the victim of political persecution by Democrats.

Threats and actions against political opponents

13 political opponents

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We and our partners process data to provide: Revocation of security clearance

Phil Murphy

New Jersey governor

Investigation by the Department of Justice

(Source)

Joe Biden

Former president

Revocation of security clearance

(Source)

Chuck Schumer

U.S. senator

Investigation by the Department of Justice

(Source)

Robert Garcia

U.S. representative

Investigation by the Department of

"Crooked Joe Biden is a threat to Democracy!" Trump posted on social media last year. "His weaponization of the DOJ against his Political Opponent is so

outrageous that even his supporters are saying that it must end, now. Our Country has never seen anything like this before, and hopefully never will!"

Rep. Robert Garcia, a Democrat from California, says that in his first 100 days, Trump has already weaponized the Justice Department to go after his own political opponents, including Garcia himself.

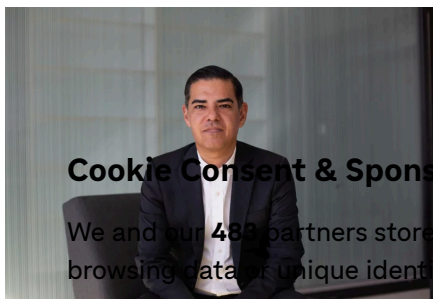


INVESTIGATIONS

New deputy FBI director Dan Bongino previously called for imprisoning Democrats

In February, Garcia said on CNN that Democrats needed to fight back against the slashing of government funding by Elon Musk and his Department of Government Efficiency.

"What I think is really important, and what the American public wants, is for us to bring actual weapons to this bar fight," he said. "This is an actual fight for democracy, for the future of this country."



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Democrat Rep. Robert Garcia and our partners process data to California's President Trump. Also, already weaponized the Justice Department to go after his own political opponents, including Garcia himself.

Mhari Shaw/NPR

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In an interview with NPR, Garcia said that "any reasonable person" would recognize that he was speaking metaphorically.

"These are figures of speech. We've all heard them before," he said.

Soon after, Garcia received a letter from Martin on official Justice Department letterhead saying that his statement "sounds to some like a threat to Mr. Musk."

"We take threats against public officials very seriously," Martin wrote, asking Garcia to "clarify" his comments and respond within one week.

Garcia told NPR that he believes Martin's intent was clear.

"It was 100% to silence me," he said. "But also to send a message to other Democrats, other elected officials, other leaders, that if you dare stand up to Elon Musk and actually take him on, that you can expect that the DOJ will be

weap

Garcia did not formally respond and has had no further communication with Martin's office.

He wasn't alone: Martin sent similar letters to Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer, regarding criticism Schumer leveled against conservative Supreme Court justices, and to Democratic Rep. Eugene Vindman of Virginia, asking for a "clarification" about his financial disclosures. Vindman, who served in the Trump administration, had provided evidence that helped lead to Trump's first

impeachment. An inspector general investigation found that the first Trump administration retaliated against Vindman.

Although no concrete action appears to have come from Martin's letters yet, Garcia said the implications are clear.

"If a member of Congress can be intimidated by the acting U.S. attorney or the Department of Justice, I mean, what's to stop them from going after any other American?" Garcia said.

Other prominent Democrats and former officials in the Biden administration have also faced direct threats and actions from the Trump administration.

Trump revoked the security clearances of his Democratic opponents in the 2016, 2020 and 2024 presidential races — former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, former President Joe Biden and former Vice President Kamala Harris — blocking their access to classified information. He also ordered an investigation into ActBlue, a fundraising platform for Democrats and left-leaning causes, and called it an "ILLEGAL SCAM" on social media.

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On his first day in office, Trump revoked the security clearances of dozens of officials who had signed a 2020 open letter questioning the authenticity of Hunter Biden's laptop.

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In March, Trump also announced that Hunter Biden and Ashley Biden, the former president's daughter, would lose protection from the U.S. Secret Service.

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"Disloyal" former officials messages from NPR's sponsors, provide social media features, and analyze NPR's traffic. This information is shared with social media, sponsorship, analytics, and other vendors or service providers.

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11 former Trump administration officials

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Revocation of government security detail. Actively scan device characteristics for identification. Store and/or access information on a device. Personalised advertising and content, advertising and content measurement, audience research and services development.

Trump demands loyalty from those who work in his administration, and he has said that the biggest mistake of his first term in office was picking "bad" and "disloyal people" for key positions.

Now, more than 10 former officials from his first administration are facing actions including criminal investigation, the loss of government security details and the revocation of security clearances.

Eugene Vindman

representative, former national security official

igation by the Department of Justice

(Source)

Alexander Vindman

er national security official

ation of security clearance

(Source)

Fiona Hill

er national security official

ation of security clearance

(Source)

John Bolton

er national security adviser

Chris Krebs, appointed by Trump in 2018 as the director of the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency, was fired in 2020 after contradicting Trump's false claims of election fraud and debunking election-related conspiracy theories.

This month, in the Oval Office, Trump referred to Krebs as a "wise guy," a "fraud" and a "bad guy."

He then signed a memo revoking Krebs' security clearance and directing both the Justice Department and the Department of Homeland Security to open investigations into him.

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Chris Krebs, former director of the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency, testifies during a Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee hearing to discuss election security and the 2020 election process on Dec. 16, 2020. President Trump pushed baseless claims of voter fraud during the 2020 presidential election, which Krebs called the most secure in American history.

Greg Nas/Pool/Getty Images

"So we'll find out whether or not it was a safe election," Trump said as he signed the order. "And if it wasn't, he's got a big price to pay."

In response, Krebs resigned from his position with the cybersecurity firm SentinelOne to focus on defending himself from the investigation. Krebs told *The*

Wall Street Journal that Trump's action amounted to "the government pulling its levers to punish dissent."

Miles Taylor, who served in multiple roles at the Department of Homeland Security during the first Trump administration, anonymously wrote an op-ed in *The New York Times* in 2018 in which he accused Trump of "erratic behavior" and said his leadership style was "impetuous, adversarial, petty and ineffective." Trump railed against *The New York Times* for publishing the essay and, on the day it was published, posted on Twitter, "TREASON?" Taylor revealed himself as the op-ed's author just before the 2020 presidential election.

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Trump has now ordered the Justice Department and the Department of Homeland Security to investigate Taylor.

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 "I think I'm guilty of treason," Trump said as he signed the memo targeting Taylor.

"Dissent isn't unlawful," Taylor posted on social media in response to Trump's order. "It certainly isn't treasonous. America is headed down a dark path."

Trump has also stripped government protection from Dr. Anthony Fauci, who was a leader in the U.S. government's COVID-19 response, and former national security adviser John Bolton, both of whom have faced credible threats. Trump dismissed safety concerns, saying, "They all made a lot of money. They can hire their own security too."

The Defense Department has also opened an investigation into retired Gen. Mark Milley, the former chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, whom Trump has accused of treason.

A crackdown on student protests

8 protesters

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List of Partners (service providers or vendors)

- Deportation order

Badar Khan Suri

n University postdoctoral fellow

ICE detention
deportation order

[\(Source\)](#)

Yunseo Chung

mbia University student

Deportation order

[\(Source\)](#)

Momodou Taal

rnell University student

Deportation order

[\(Source\)](#)

Ranjani Srinivasan

mbia University student

Deportation order

[\(Source\)](#)

Since March, the Trump administration has moved to arrest and deport international students for participating in protests against Israel's war in Gaza.

The White House has not accused them of crimes but argues their actions were antisemitic, disruptive and harmed U.S. foreign policy.

The policy is in line with Trump's long-standing threats against protesters. He has said that critics of conservative Supreme Court justices "should be put in jail" and that people who burn the American flag "should get a one-year jail sentence." During Black Lives Matter protests in 2020, Trump posted on Twitter, "when the looting starts, the shooting starts."

In 2023, amid rising campus protests against Israel's response to the Oct. 7 attack by Hamas-led militants, Trump pledged: "we will revoke the student visas of radical, anti-American and antisemitic foreigners at our colleges and universities, and we will send them straight back home."

The administration now defends its policy to deport protesters, whether they're on student visas or are lawful permanent residents.

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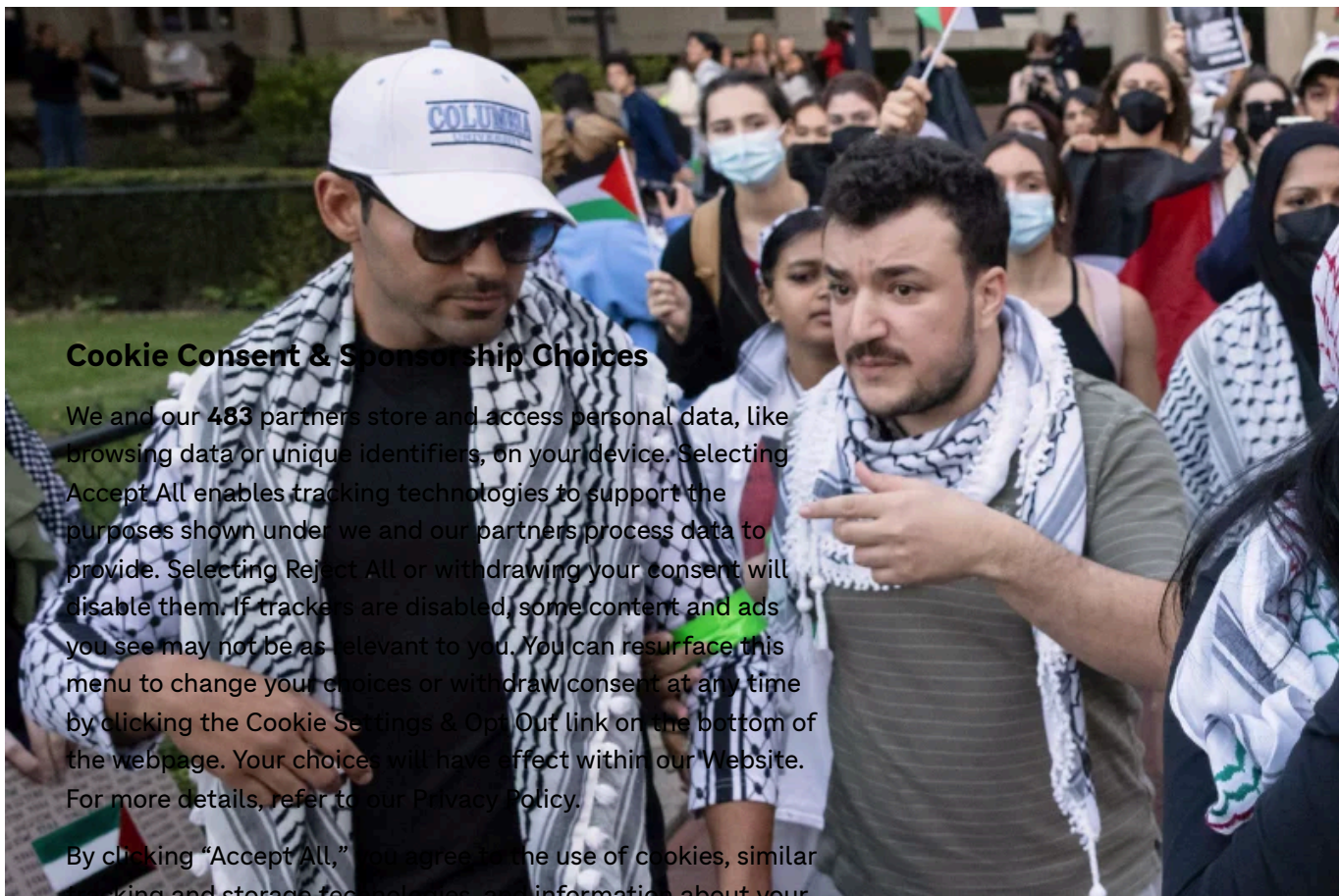
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"This is not fundamentally about free speech," Vice President Vance told Fox News. "Yes, it's about national security, but it's also more importantly about who do we as an American public decide gets to join our national community?"

The students and their attorneys say the government is punishing students for constitutionally protected speech.

The State Department has said it has revoked hundreds of visas for a variety of reasons, and at least seven deportation cases are tied directly to students' Gaza-related activism.



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Mohsen Mandawil (left) and Mahmoud Khalil participate in a pro-Palestinian protest at Columbia University in New York City in 2022. Personalize content, personalize messages from NPR's sponsors, provide social media features, and analyze NPR's traffic. This information is shared with social media, sponsorship, analytics, and other vendors or service providers.

One of those cases involves Mahmoud Khalil, a Columbia University graduate student with a green card, who played a prominent role in Gaza campus protests.

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We and our partners process data to provide: Khalil, whose wife is a U.S. citizen, was arrested by plainclothes government agents and was sent to an ICE detention facility in Louisiana, which the government's own inspectors have cited for failing to meet safety standards. Khalil remains in ICE custody while he challenges the government's effort to deport him.

Khalil's wife, Noor Abdalla, told NPR's *Morning Edition* that her husband's arrest by plainclothes government agents was "probably the most terrifying thing that's ever happened to me."

"Exercising your First Amendment rights is not illegal," she said. "I think what's so scary about this and what people need to realize is the fact that you can kidnap someone basically from their home for going to a protest."

"The universities are the enemy"

8 universities

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(Source)

Brown University

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(Source)

Cornell University

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University of Pennsylvania

tion of security clearance
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For years, Trump and Vance have railed against American universities.

"We are going to choke off the money to schools that aid the Marxist assault on our American heritage and on Western civilization itself," Trump said in 2023.

"The days of subsidizing communist indoctrination in our colleges will soon be over."

Vance gave a 2021 speech titled "The Universities Are the Enemy" and later said that universities had mainstreamed what he called "the anti-whiteness movement."

Now in office, the Trump administration has launched investigations into dozens of universities, citing failures to protect students from antisemitism and alleged civil rights violations related to diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) policies. The

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administration has also studied billions of dollars in funding from universities, and

Trump has floated a plan to revoke Harvard University's tax-exempt status.

Trump himself has made it clear that his goals with the actions against universities go beyond enforcing the law and involve changing campus politics.

In one post on Truth Social, he complained that Harvard had hired "almost all woke, Radical Left idiots and 'birdbrains'" and he specifically criticized the

university for hiring two Democratic former mayors to teach.

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"Perhaps Harvard should lose its Tax Exempt Status and be Taxed as a Political Entity if it keeps pushing political, ideological, and terrorist inspired/supporting 'Sickness?'" he wrote in another post.

This month, the administration sent a letter to Harvard with sweeping demands, including a third-party audit to ensure "viewpoint diversity in admissions and hiring," a government-supervised review of Harvard programs for "antisemitism or other bias" and a full end to DEI initiatives. Harvard rejected the demands, calling them a violation of academic freedom and the First Amendment.



"The university will not surrender its independence or relinquish its constitutional rights," attorneys for the university wrote in a letter to the administration. "Neither Harvard nor any other private university can allow itself to be taken over by the federal government."

People walk through a gate as they exit Harvard Yard on the campus of Harvard University in Cambridge, Mass. **Cookie Consent & Sponsorship Choices**
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The Trump administration responded to Harvard's defiance by freezing more than \$2.2 billion in government funding to the university.

Joseph Prezioso/AFP via Getty Images

The majority of the government funding that Harvard receives goes toward hospitals and medical research.

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The university has filed a lawsuit against the government, alleging constitutional violations.

Cornell University, Northwestern University, the University of Pennsylvania and Columbia University have also faced hundreds of millions of dollars in cuts to federal support.

Columbia has refused to some policy demands by the Trump administration, including an overhaul of its Middle East studies programs and a ban on its partners process data to provide

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Columbia's acting president later said in a statement: "We would reject any agreement in which the government dictates what we teach, research, or who we hire."

The campaign has extended beyond funding. Martin, the interim U.S. attorney for the District of Columbia, wrote to Georgetown Law, denouncing its DEI programs as "unacceptable." He said his office would not consider job applicants from institutions that "teach and utilize DEI."

The dean of Georgetown Law, William Treanor, called Martin's demands unconstitutional. "The First Amendment protects a university's right to determine

its own curriculum," he wrote. "We expect all Georgetown-affiliated candidates will continue to receive full and fair consideration."

"Sleazeball" lawyers and law firms

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17 attorneys or law firms

LAW FIRMS THAT HAVE MADE AGREEMENTS WITH THE ADMINISTRATION

Cadwalader, Wickersham & Taft

(Source)

Paul, Weiss, Rifkind, Wharton & Garrison

- Revocation of security clearance
- Termination of government contracts or funding
- Blocking of access to government buildings
- Hiring ban

(Source)

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Latham & Watkins

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Employment Opportunity Commission

Mark Zaid has worked as a national security lawyer in Washington, D.C., for about three decades, representing clients from agencies like the CIA, the FBI and the National Security Agency.

"I'm an employment lawyer — I just happen to represent spies," Zaid told NPR.

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Few lawyers do what Zaid does, in part because it requires a security clearance.

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"I had what's called TS/SCI — top secret/sensitive compartmented information — which is the highest clearance level," he said.

Then Zaid found himself on the opposite side of Trump. For more details, refer to our Privacy Policy.

In 2019, Zaid "began presenting a whistleblower in the Trump administration who raised concerns about Trump's phone call with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy — a call that ultimately led to Trump's first impeachment.

Trump ranted against the whistleblower and Zaid himself, calling him a "sleazeball." He posted on Twitter that Zaid "should be investigared [sic] for fraud!"

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"My clearance was revoked without any due process, without any notification of why my clearance was revoked," Zaid told NPR.



He said that losing his security clearance "stops my ability from representing any number of clients," and that he plans to challenge the administration's action.

Mark Zaid has worked as a national security lawyer in Washington, D.C., for about three decades, representing clients from agencies like the CIA, the FBI and the National Security Agency. In March 2025, Trump revoked Zaid's security clearance.

Mhari Shaw/NPR

"It is pretty wild to think that the most powerful people in the world are targeting you," Zaid said, "because all you're doing is trying to make sure they abide by the rule of law."

In addition to Zaid, the Trump administration has targeted more than two dozen major law firms, revoking security clearances, banning access to federal buildings, terminating government contracts and initiating investigations by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission.

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"We have a lot of law firms and we're going after them because they were very dishonest people," Trump told Fox News in March. "They were very, very dishonest."

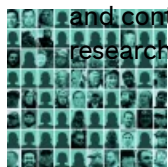
Multiple firms have said that Trump's actions would potentially force them to close.

The president of the American Bar Association, William R. Bay, told NPR in March that Trump's motivation was clear.

"Lawyers and law firms are being targeted for suing the government or representing someone the government does not like," said Bay, who called the administration's actions "troubling." Since that interview, the Justice Department staff has been barred from attending American Bar Association events.

Trump's written orders targeting law firms cite specific clients and causes he opposes.

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NPR INVESTIGATION: JANUARY 6, 2021

Trump gave pardons to hundreds of violent Jan. 6 rioters. Here's what they did

Trump's order targeting Covington & Burling cites its work for former special counsel Jack Smith, who brought two federal indictments against Trump, which were dismissed after the 2024 election. (Trump has repeatedly said Smith should himself be prosecuted.) The order against Perkins Coie mentions ties to Hillary Clinton and the liberal philanthropist George Soros. And the order against Susman

Godfrey claims the firm "spearheads efforts to weaponize the American legal system and degrade the quality of American elections," likely referring to its representation of Dominion Voting Systems in defamation lawsuits against Trump allies.

Law firms have responded in different ways to Trump's actions.

Four firms sued the administration, alleging constitutional violations – and judges sided with all four, blocking enforcement of the orders.

"The government has sought to use its immense power to dictate the positions that law firms may and may not take," Judge AliKhan in a hearing regarding the case brought by Susman Godfrey. "The executive order seeks to control who law firms are allowed to represent. And this immensely oppressive power threatens the very foundation of legal representation in our country."

But nine other law firms struck deals with the Trump administration. In exchange for avoiding retaliation, they pledged to provide millions of dollars in pro bono work to causes backed by Trump, along with ending firm DEI efforts.

Paul Weiss was the first law firm to sign an agreement with Trump.

"It was very likely that our firm would not be able to survive a protracted dispute with the Administration," the chairman of Paul Weiss, Brad Karp, said in a firm-wide email. Many lawyers and legal experts have criticized the firms that decided to strike agreements with the administration, arguing such deals undermine legal independence and checks on Trump's power.

We and our partners process data to provide: "I think that his goal here is to kneecap effective pro bono representation and public interest representation challenging him," said Rachel Cohen, an attorney who resigned from one of the firms that made a deal with Trump – Skadden, Arps.

AliKhan said in court that she wished firms "were not capitulating as readily" to the administration.

"Law firms across the country are entering into agreements with the government out of fear that they will be targeted next," AliKhan said, "and that coercion is plain and simple."

"The enemy of the people"

16 media groups or figures

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Trump's hostility toward the news media has become a defining feature of his career in both business and politics. "Much of our news media is indeed the enemy of the people," he declared in 2018.

During his 2024 campaign, and now in office, he repeatedly called for the Federal Communications Commission to revoke the licenses of broadcasters whose coverage he disliked. He also said journalists who refuse to reveal confidential sources should be jailed.

Disney

Investigation by the Federal Communications Commission

(Source)

CBS

Investigation by the Federal Communications Commission
Federal lawsuit by Trump

(Source)

The Associated Press

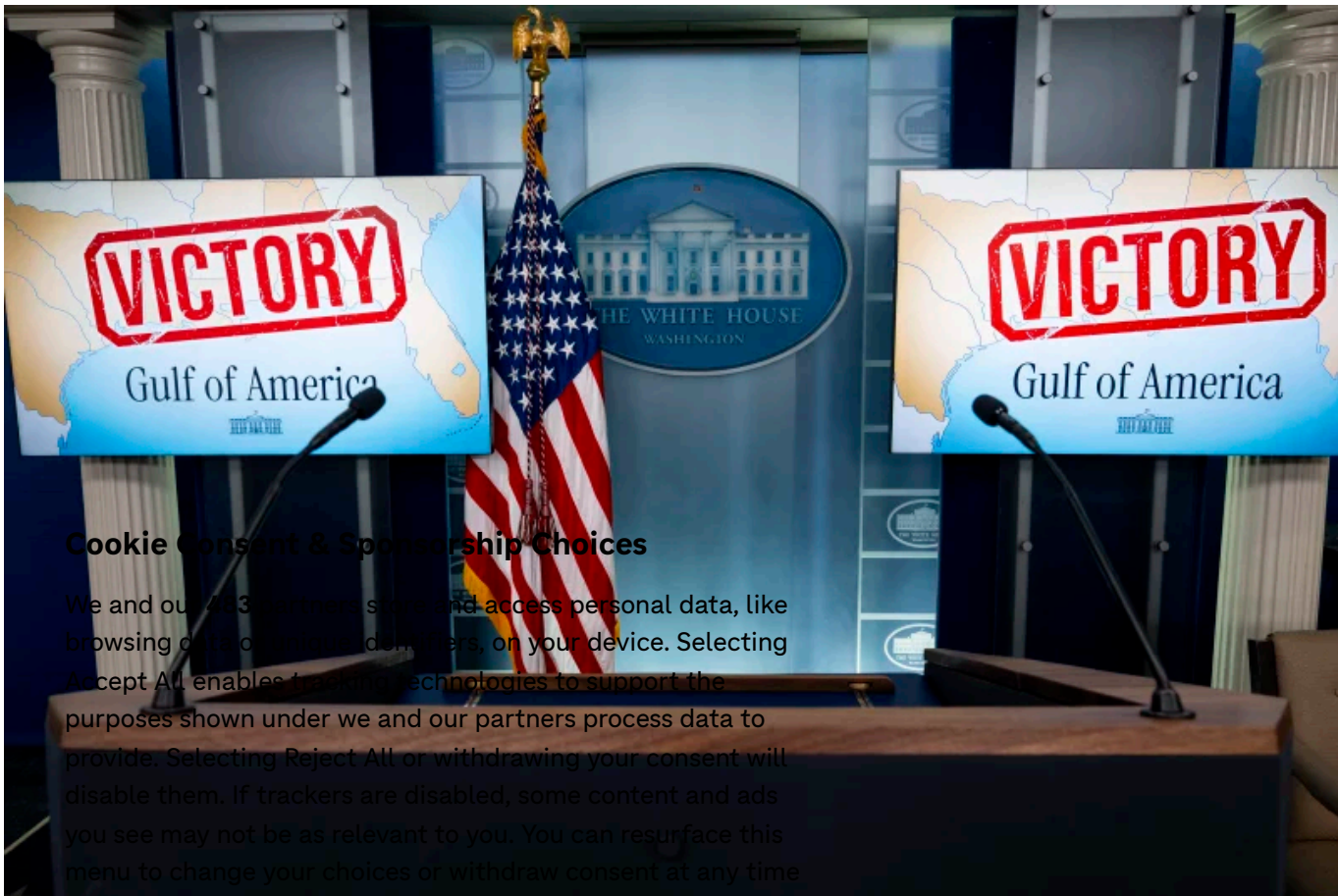
Former White House press pool
Denied access to the White House

(Source)

ABC

Investigation by the Federal Communications Commission

(Source)



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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. Screens display a "Victory" message on a map with a Gulf of America label in the Brady Press Briefing Room at the White House on Feb. 24. The White House banned The Associated Press from access to the Oval Office and certain events after it refused to adopt Trump's new designation for the Gulf of Mexico, which he renamed "the Gulf of America." For more details, refer to our Privacy Policy.

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personalize content, personalize messages from NPR's advertising partners, and for other purposes. We are going to hold these firms accountable, she said as justification for blocking the AP's access to certain events. This information is shared with social media, sponsorship, analytics, and other vendors or service providers.

The White House was violating its First Amendment rights, Federal Judge Trevor McFadden, a Trump appointee, agreed, ruling the government had retaliated against the AP for protected speech. The administration is appealing. We and our partners process data to provide you with a better browsing experience, analyze site usage, and assist in our marketing efforts. We use cookies to enhance navigation, analyze site usage, and assist in our marketing efforts. (Policies can be found in the privacy policy section) We and our partners may use and access personal data, like browsing data or device identifiers, on your device. Selecting Accept All enables tracking technologies to support the purposes shown under we and our partners process data to provide. Selecting Reject All or withdrawing your consent will disable them. If trackers are disabled, some content and ads you see may not be as relevant to you. You can resurface this menu to change your choices or withdraw consent at any time by clicking the Cookie Settings & Opt Out link on the bottom of the webpage. Your choices will have effect within our website.

In his personal capacity, Trump is also suing CBS News over a *60 Minutes* interview with Kamala Harris, and the Iowa-based pollster J. Ann Selzer, whose Iowa survey ahead of the 2024 election showed Harris leading. Although Trump ultimately won the state by more than 13 percentage points, he alleged that Selzer's poll constituted fraud and "election interference."

Selzer's attorneys said that Selzer's poll is clearly protected by the First Amendment.

"If a claim like this were successful, it would have a tremendous chilling effect on anybody's ability to report the news or to make estimates of how they think voters might react in a given situation," said Bob Corn-Revere, the chief counsel of the Foundation for Individual Rights and Expression, which is representing Selzer. "If you happen to be wrong, then those who dislike the speech on the other side of the political spectrum, whether it's left or right, would be able to suppress speech they don't like."

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Trump's attorneys in the case did not respond to NPR's request for an interview.

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Corn-Revere told NPR that even though he believes Trump's lawsuit is frivolous, it still has put a strain on Selzer and sent a message to other media organizations.

"Bottom line," he said, "it's all about power."

This story was edited by Barrie Haralymon. The audio story was produced by Monika Evstatieva. Research by Barbara Van Woerkom; copy editing by Preeti Aroon; photo editing by Emily Bosle; and graphics and design by Connie Hanzhang Jin.

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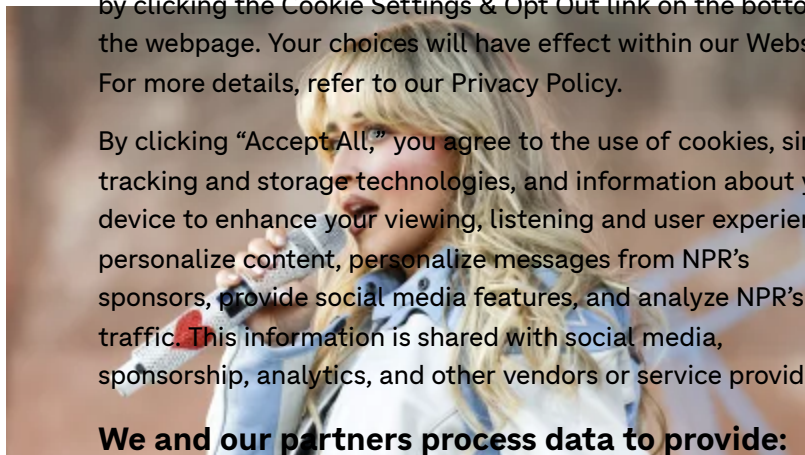
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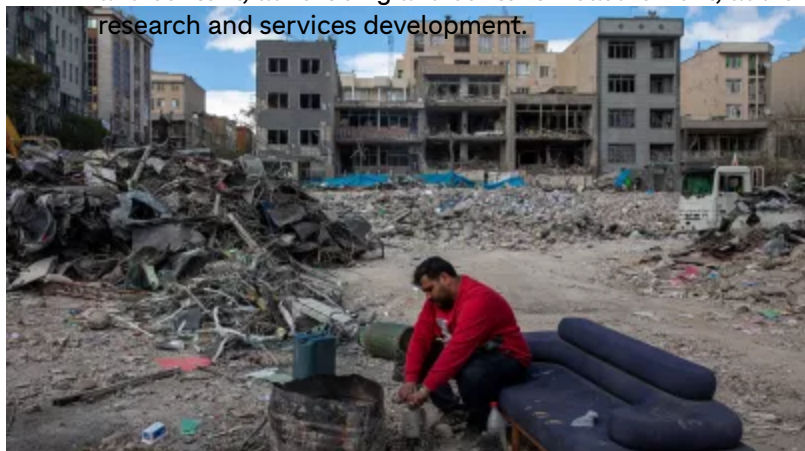
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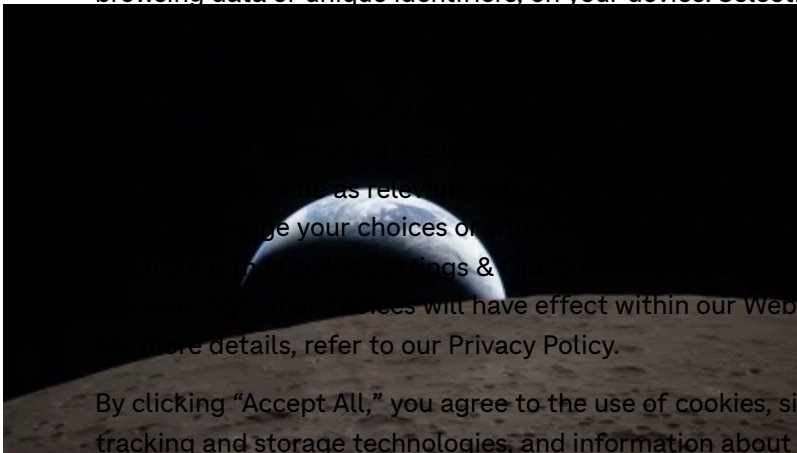


U.S. and Iran agree to 2-week ceasefire, suspending Trump's threat to annihilate Iran



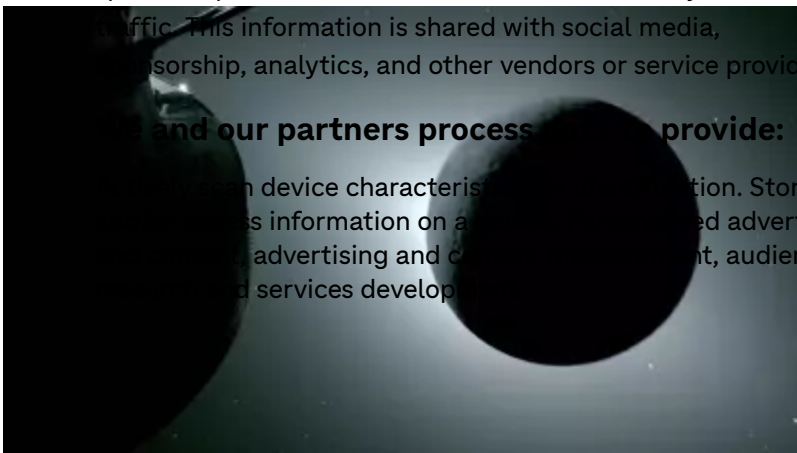
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SPACE **The Artemis II crew saw parts of the moon never seen before. Here's what they said**



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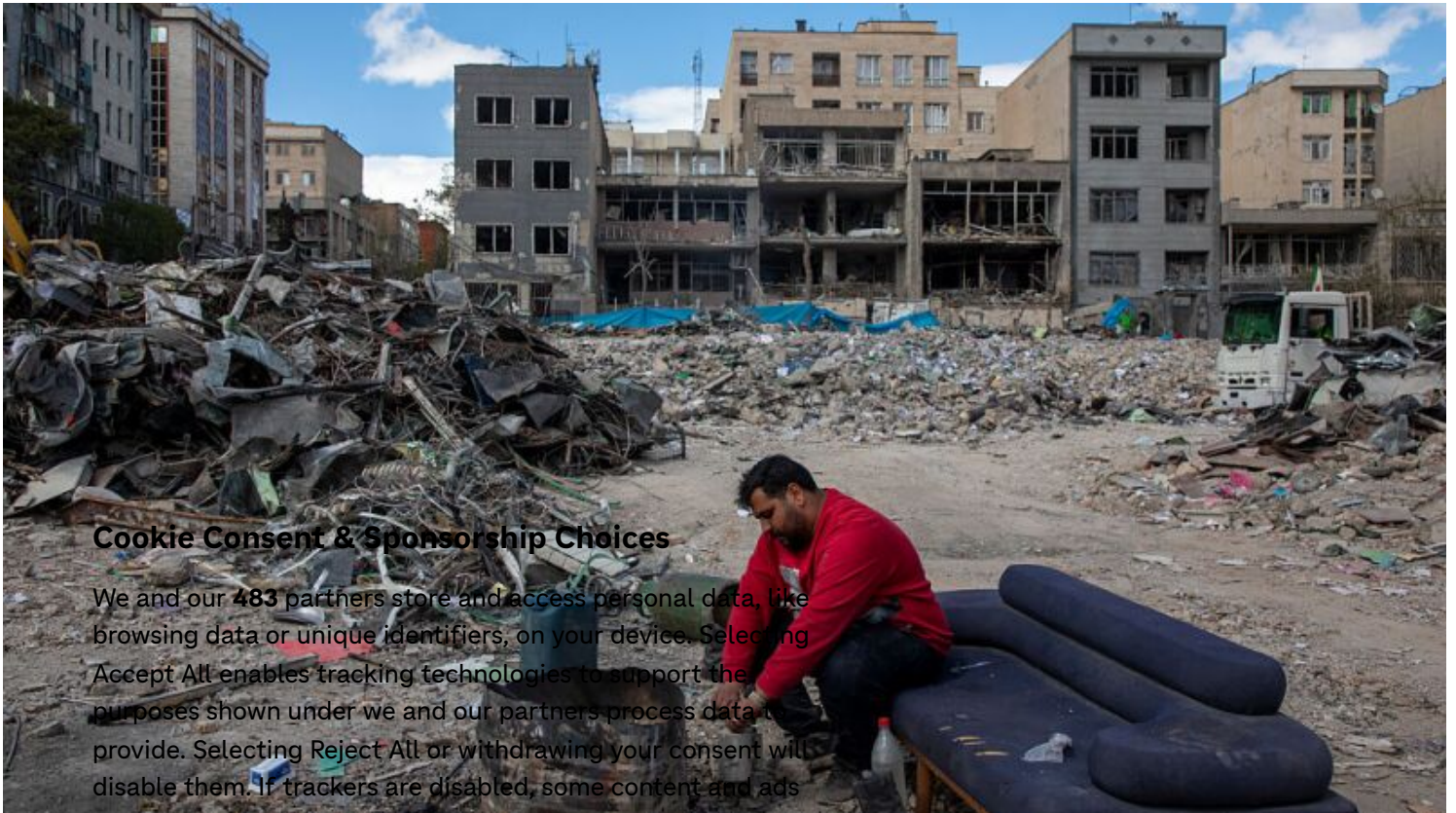
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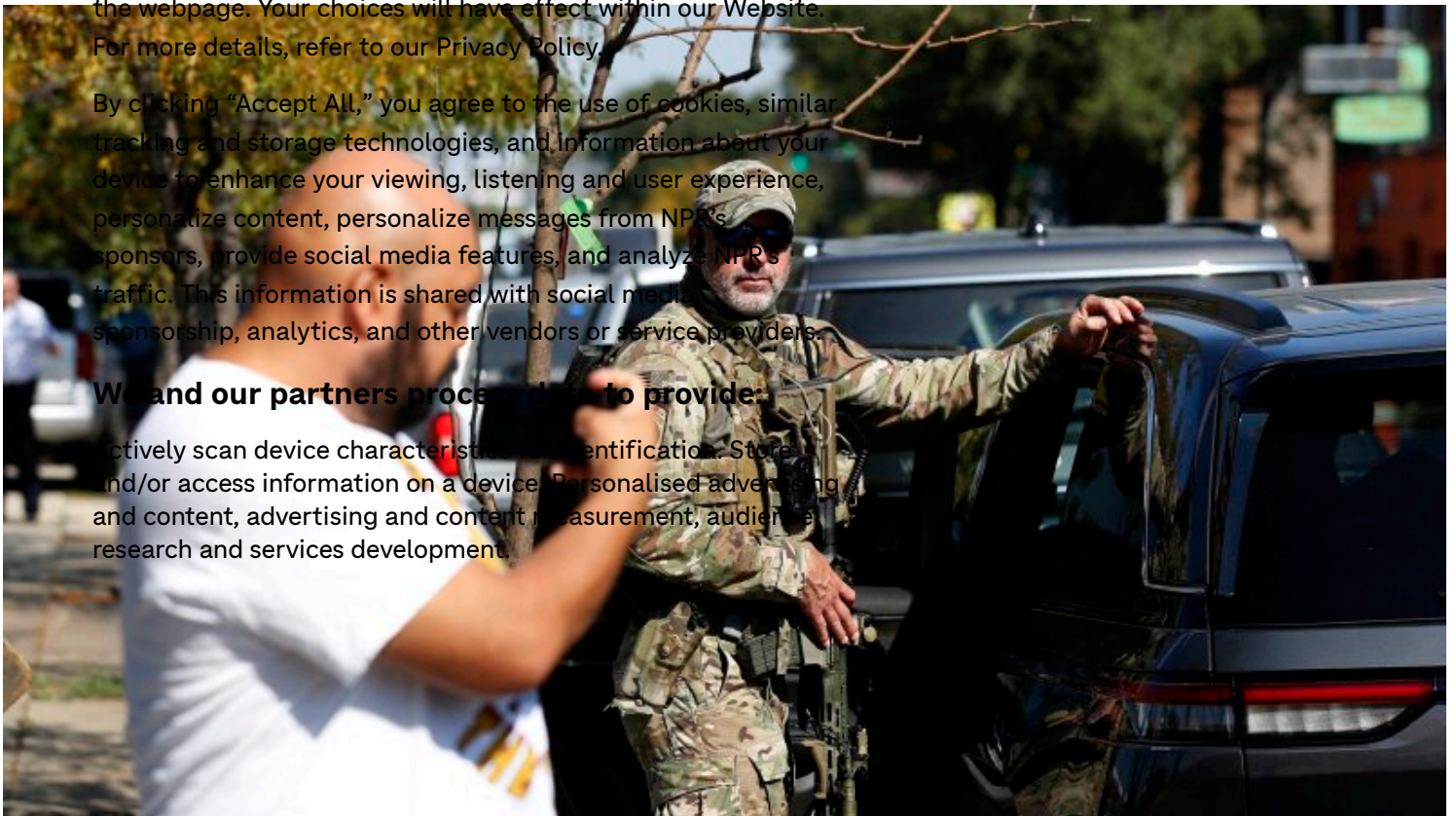
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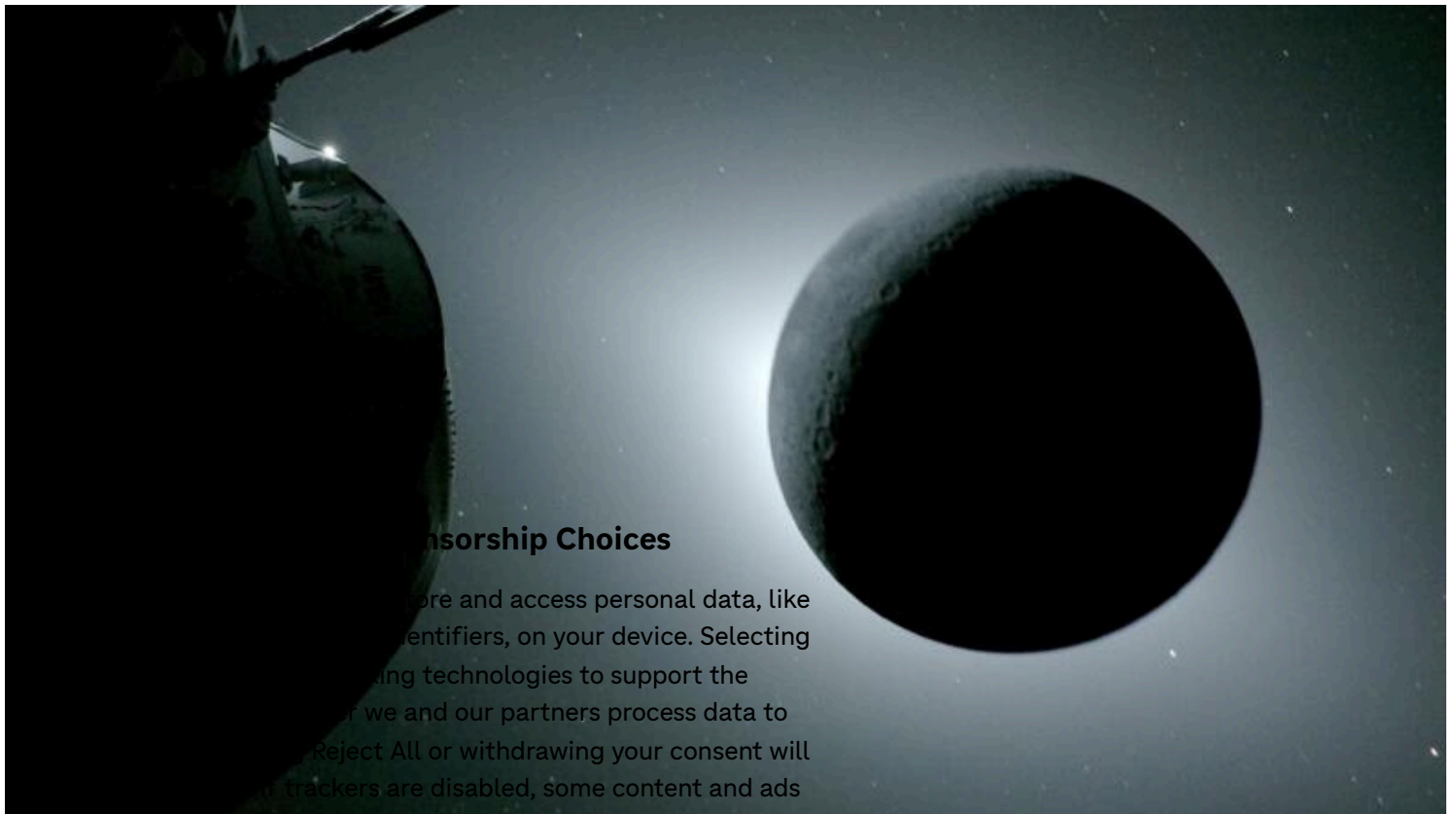
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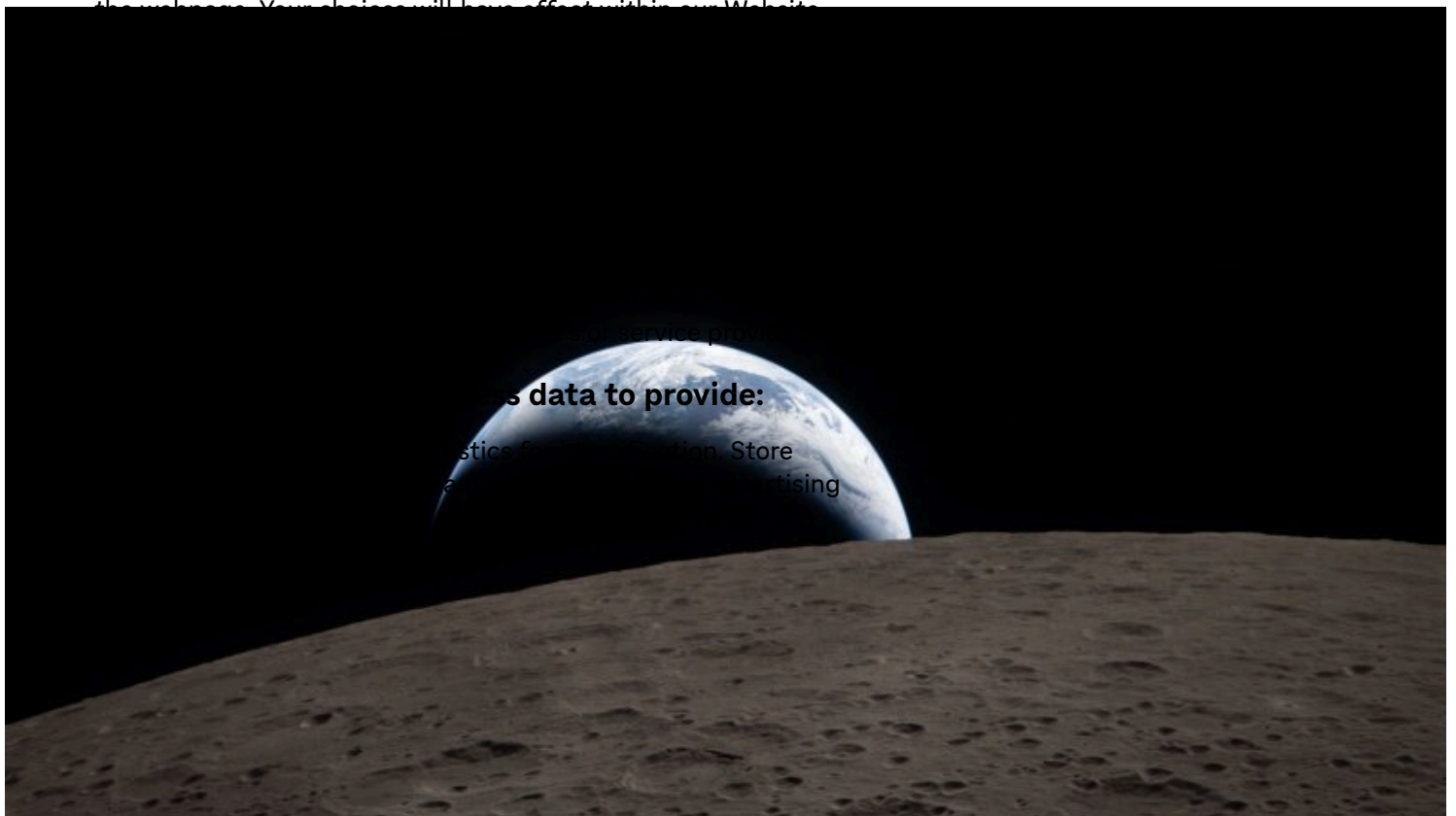
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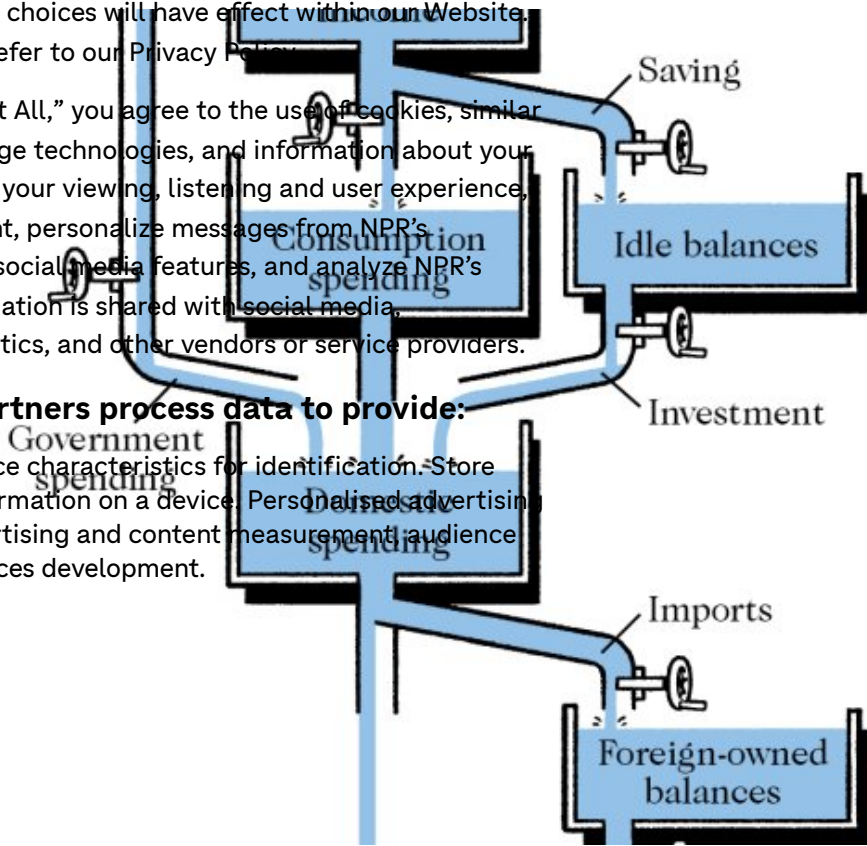
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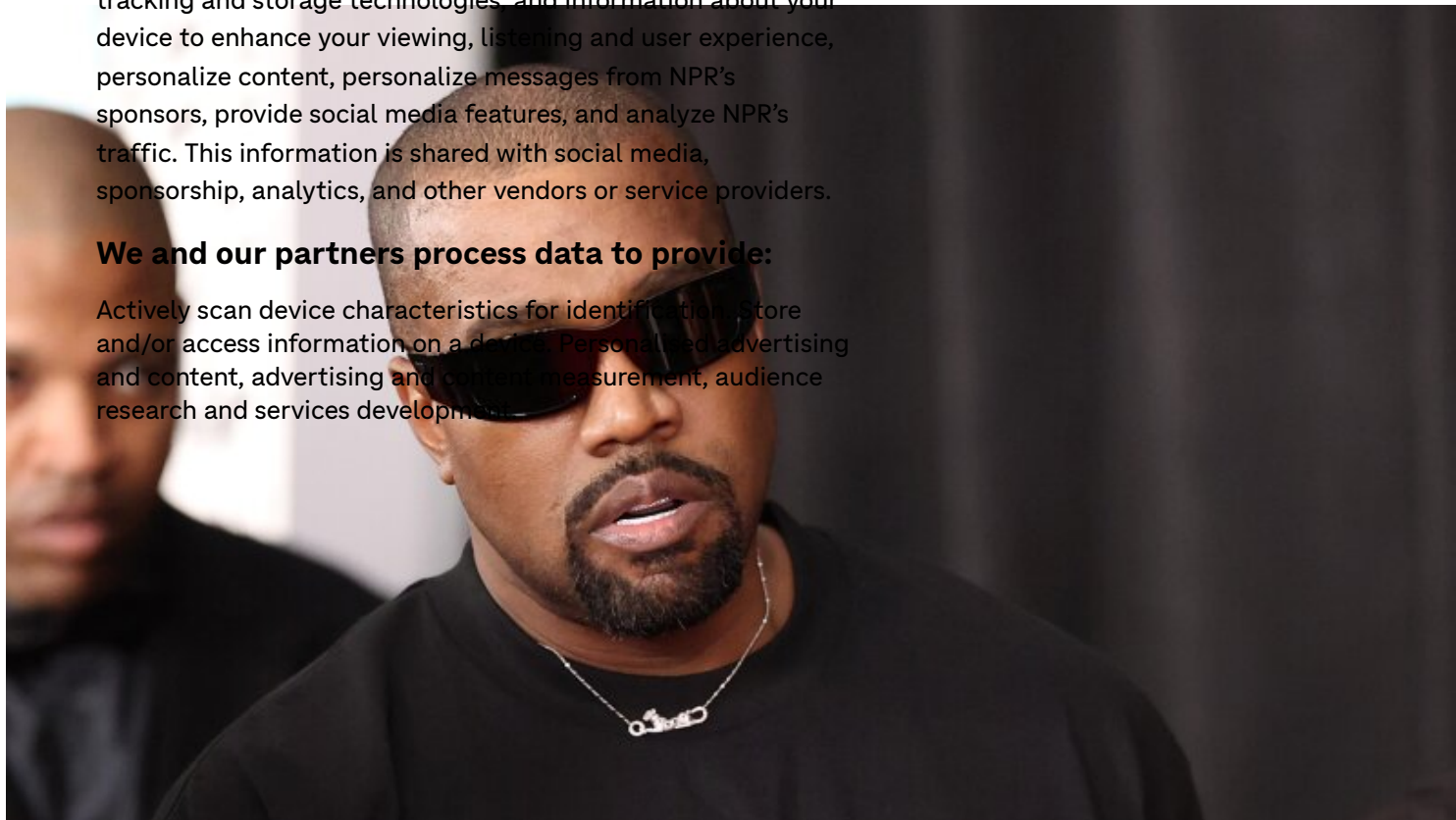
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Congressional Democrats raise alarm over Trump's comments on Iran

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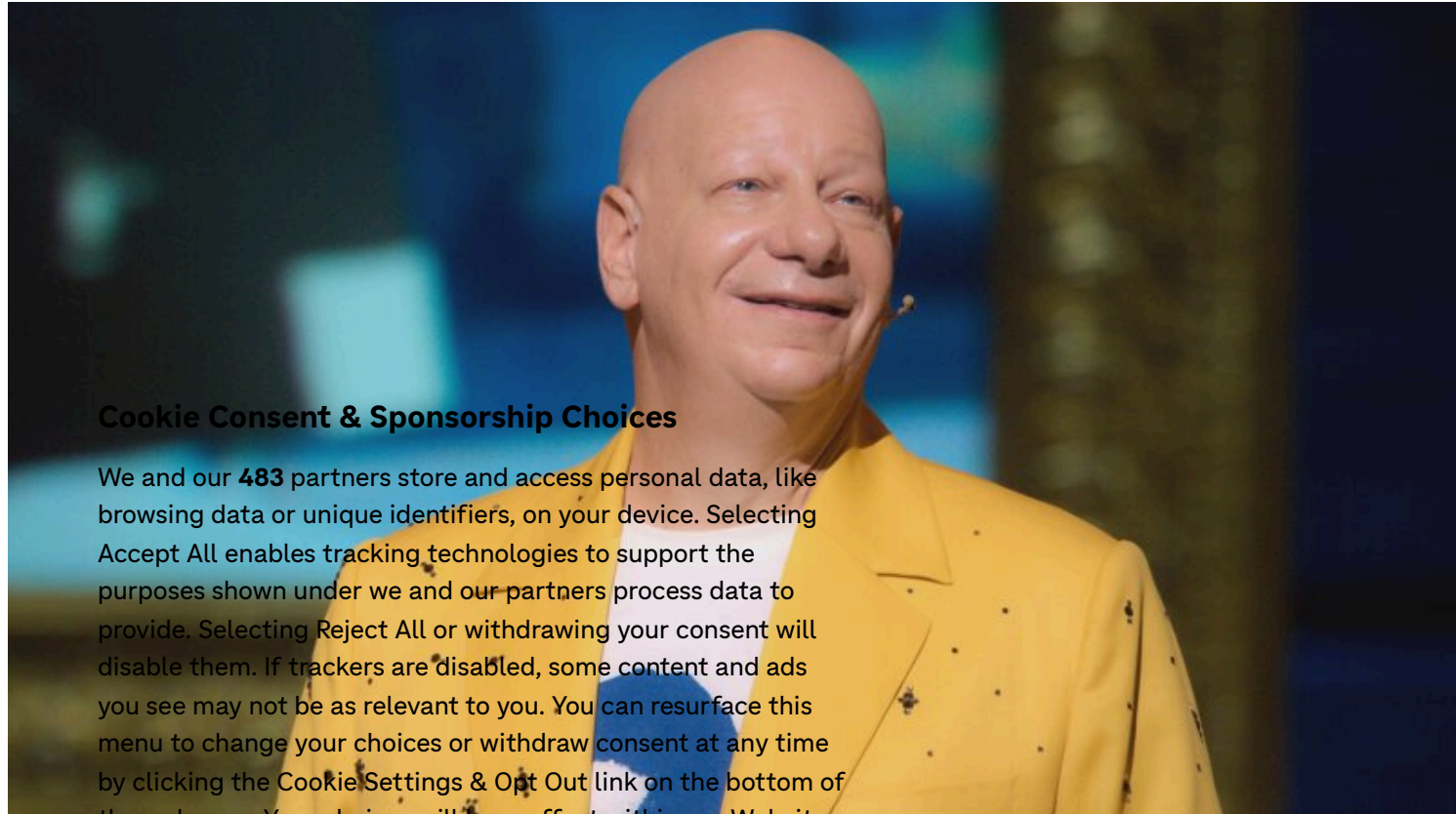
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MUSIC

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



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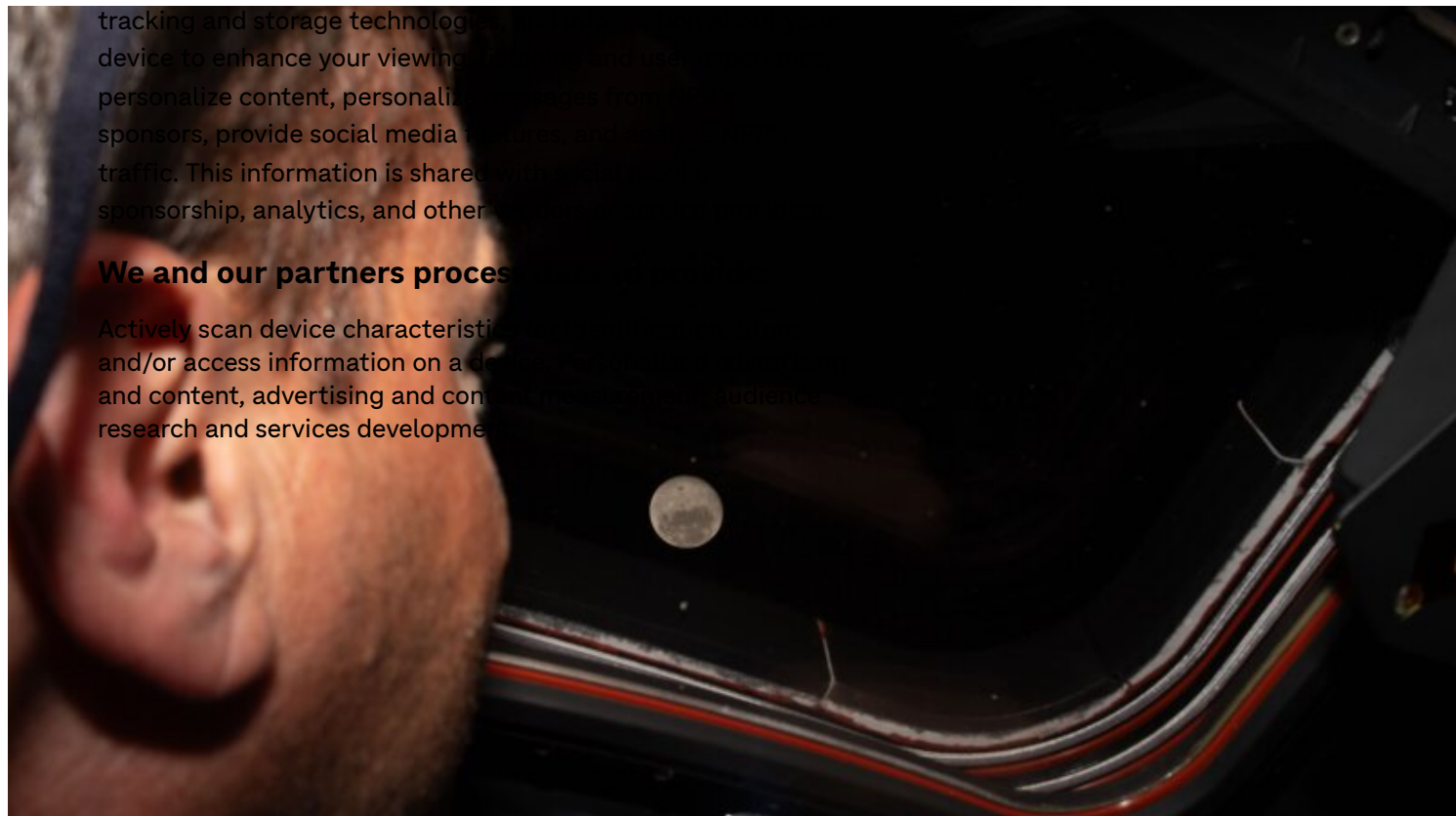
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Now cancer-free, 'Roastmaster' comic Jeff Ross still finds humor in loss

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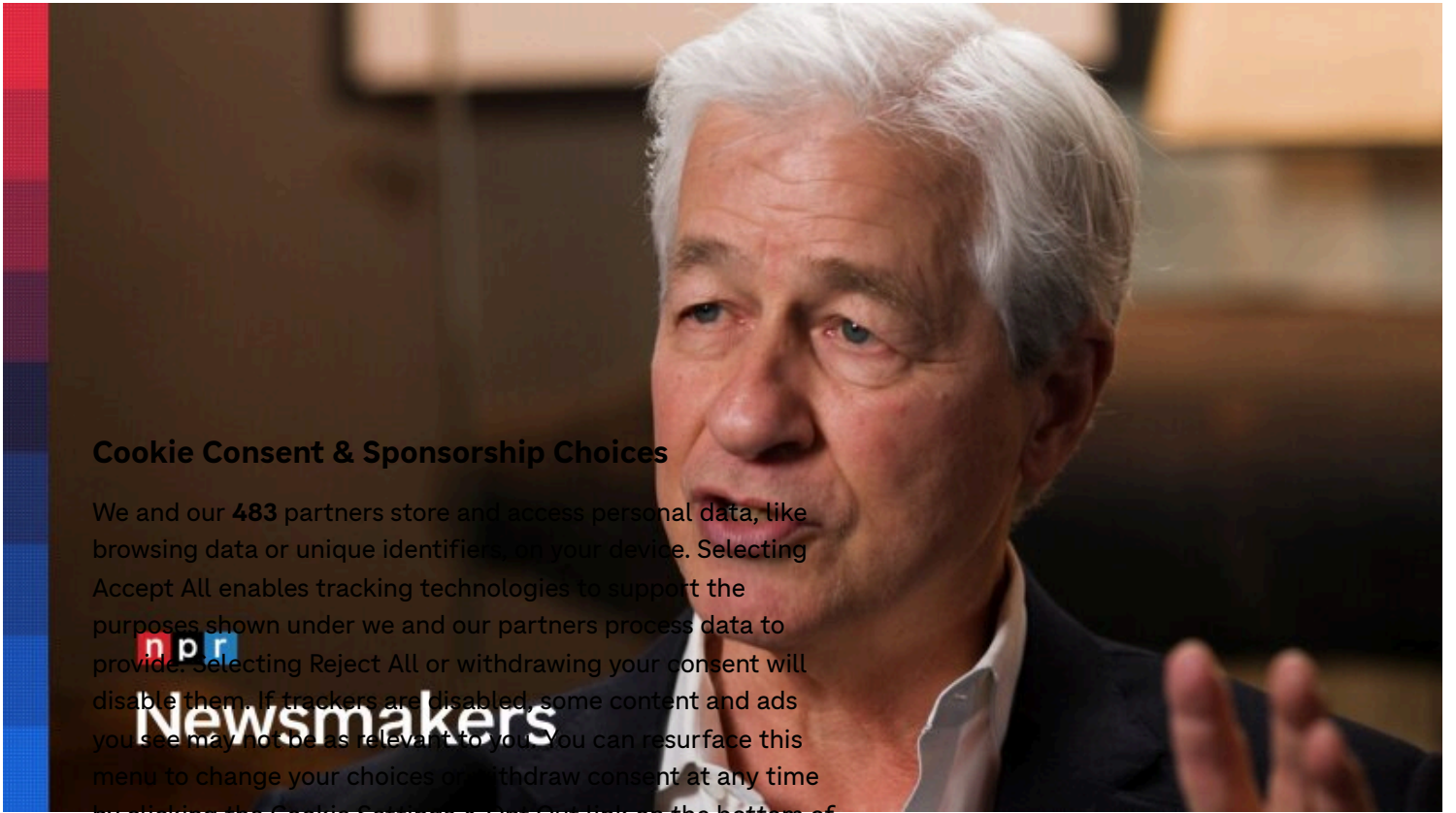
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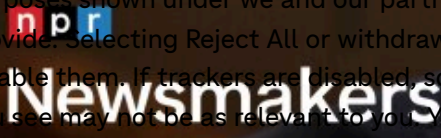
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Astronauts suggest naming a moon crater 'Carroll' after their commander's late wife



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CEO of nation's largest bank says Iran war raises risk of 'bad economic outcomes'



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