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WORLD

U.S. issues sanctions against United Nations investigator probing abuses in Gaza

JULY 10, 2025 · 1:39 AM ET

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 By The Associated Press

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Francesca Albanese, special rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967, talks to the media during a press conference at the European headquarters of the United Nations in Geneva, Switzerland, July 11, 2023.

Salvatore Di Nolfi/AP/Keystone
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UNITED NATIONS — The Trump administration announced Wednesday that it is issuing sanctions against an independent investigator tasked with probing human

rights abuses in the Palestinian territories, the latest effort by the United States to punish critics of Israel's 21-month war in Gaza.



STATE OF THE WORLD FROM NPR

A Dangerous Quest for Food in Gaza

The State Department's decision to impose sanctions on Francesca Albanese, the U.N. special rapporteur for the West Bank and Gaza, follows an unsuccessful U.S. pressure campaign to force the international body to remove her from her post. It also comes as Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is visiting Washington this week to meet with President Donald Trump and other officials about the war in Gaza and more.

It's unclear what the practical impact the sanctions will have and whether the independent investigator will be able to travel to the U.S. with diplomatic paperwork.

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Albanese, an Italian human rights lawyer, has been vocal about what she has described as the "genocide" by Israel against Palestinians in Gaza. Both Israel and the U.S., which provides military support to its close ally, have strongly denied that accusation.

The U.S. had not previously addressed concerns with Albanese head-on because it has not participated in either of the two Human Rights Council sessions this year, including the summer session that ended Tuesday. This is because the Trump administration withdrew the U.S. earlier this year.

Albanese has urged countries to pressure Israel

In recent weeks, Albanese has issued a series of letters urging other countries to pressure Israel, including through sanctions, to end its deadly bombardment of the Gaza Strip.

She has also been a strong supporter of the International Criminal Court's arrest warrants against Israeli officials, including Netanyahu, for allegations of war crimes. She most recently issued a report naming several large U.S. companies as among those aiding what she described as Israel's occupation and war on Gaza.

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MIDDLE EAST CONFLICT

With a series of wars, Israel's military reshapes the Mideast

Albanese's campaign of political and economic warfare against the United States and Israel will no longer be tolerated." Secretary of State Marco Rubio posted on social media. "We will always stand by our partners, in their right to self-defense."

Liz Evenson, international justice director at Human Rights Watch, said the U.S. government's decision to sanction Albanese for seeking justice through the ICC "is actually all about silencing a U.N. expert for doing her job — speaking truth about Israeli violations against Palestinians and calling on governments and corporations not to be complicit."

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"The United States is working to dismantle the norms and institutions on which survivors of grave abuses rely," Evenson said in a statement. "U.N. and ICC member countries should strongly resist the U.S. government's shameless efforts to block justice for the world's worst crimes and condemn the outrageous sanctions on Albanese."

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Albanese's July 1 report focuses on Western defense companies that have provided weapons used by Israel's military, as well as manufacturers of earth-moving equipment that have bulldozed Palestinian homes and property.

It cites activities by companies in the shipping, real estate, technology, banking and finance and online travel industries, as well as academia.

"While life in Gaza is being obliterated and the West Bank is under escalating assault, this report shows why Israel's genocide continues: because it is lucrative for many," her report said.

A request for comment from the IJN's top human rights body was not immediately returned.

Israel strongly refutes Albanese's allegations

Israel's diplomatic mission in Geneva, where the 47-member Human Rights Council is based, called Albanese's report "legally groundless, defamatory, and a flagrant abuse of her office" and having "whitewashed Hamas atrocities."

Outside experts, such as Albanese, do not represent the United Nations and have no formal authority. However, they report to the council as a means of monitoring countries' human rights records.



MIDDLE EAST

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to meet President Trump Monday

Albanese has faced criticism from pro-Israel officials and groups in the U.S. and in the Middle East. The U.S. mission to the U.N. issued a scathing statement last week, calling for her removal for "a years-long pattern of virulent anti-Semitism and unrelenting anti-Israel bias."

The statement said Albanese's allegations of Israel committing genocide or apartheid are "false and offensive."

Israel's ambassador to the U.N., Danny Danon, celebrated the U.S. action, saying in a statement Wednesday that Albanese's "relentless and biased campaign against Israel and the United States has long crossed the line from human rights advocacy into political warfare."

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Trump administration's campaign to quiet criticism of Israel

It is a culmination of a nearly six-month campaign by the Trump administration to quell criticism of Israel's handling of the war in Gaza. Earlier this year, the administration began arresting and trying to deport faculty and students of U.S. universities who participated in pro-Palestinian demonstrations and other political activities.



MIDDLE EAST CONFLICT

As Israel turns its focus to Iran, the death toll mounts in Gaza — and hunger deepens

The war between Israel and Hamas began Oct. 7, 2023, when Hamas-led militants stormed into Israel and killed some 1,200 people, mostly civilians, and took 251 people captive. Israel's retaliatory campaign has killed over 57,000 Palestinians, according to Gaza's Health Ministry, which says women and children make up most of the dead but does not specify how many were fighters or civilians.

Nearly 21 months into the conflict that displaced the vast majority of Gaza's 2.3 million people, it is nearly impossible for the critically wounded to get the care they need, doctors and aid workers say.

"We must stop this genocide, whose short-term goal is completing the ethnic cleansing of Palestine, while also profiteering from the killing machine devised to perform it," **Ahmed** said in a recent post on X. **No one is safe until everyone is safe.**

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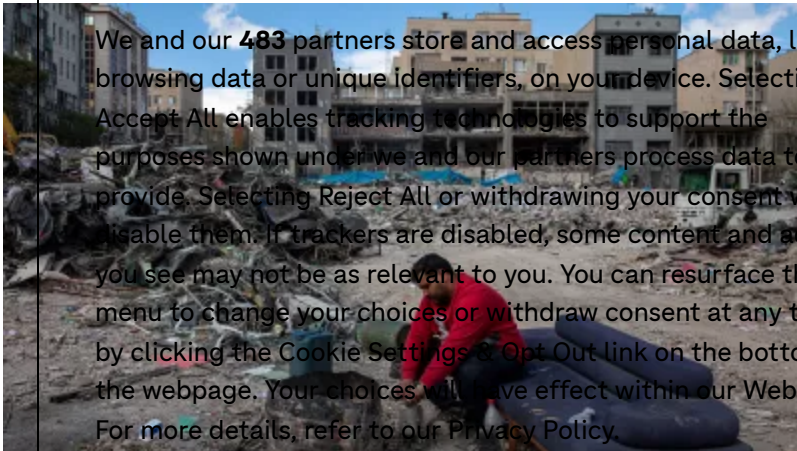
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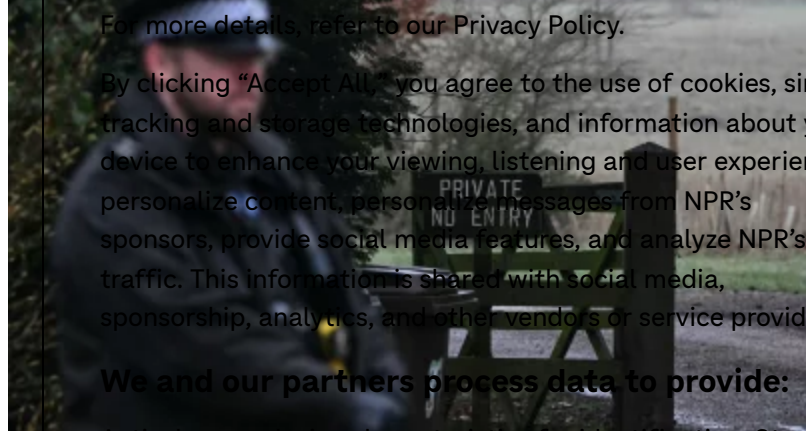
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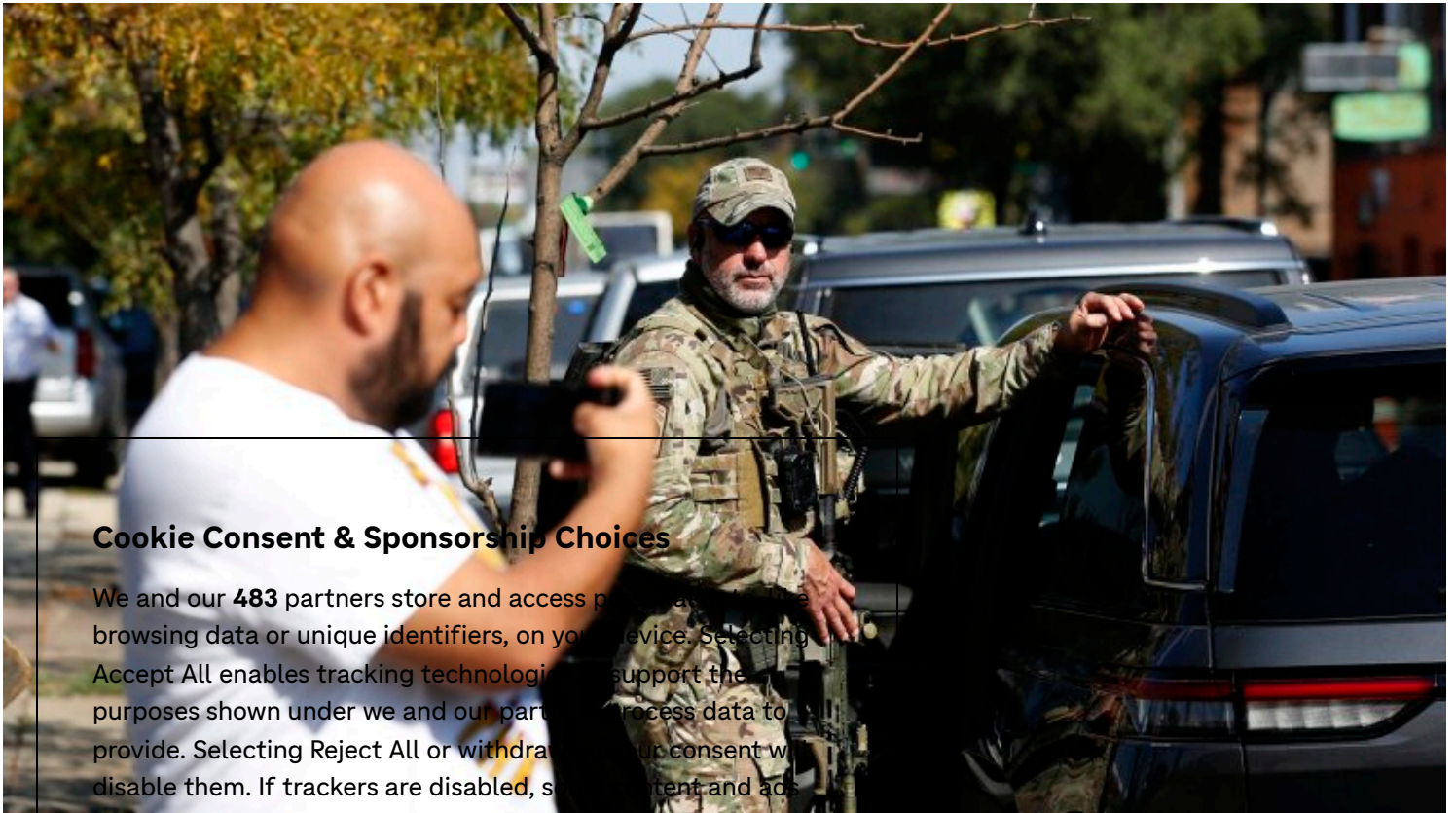
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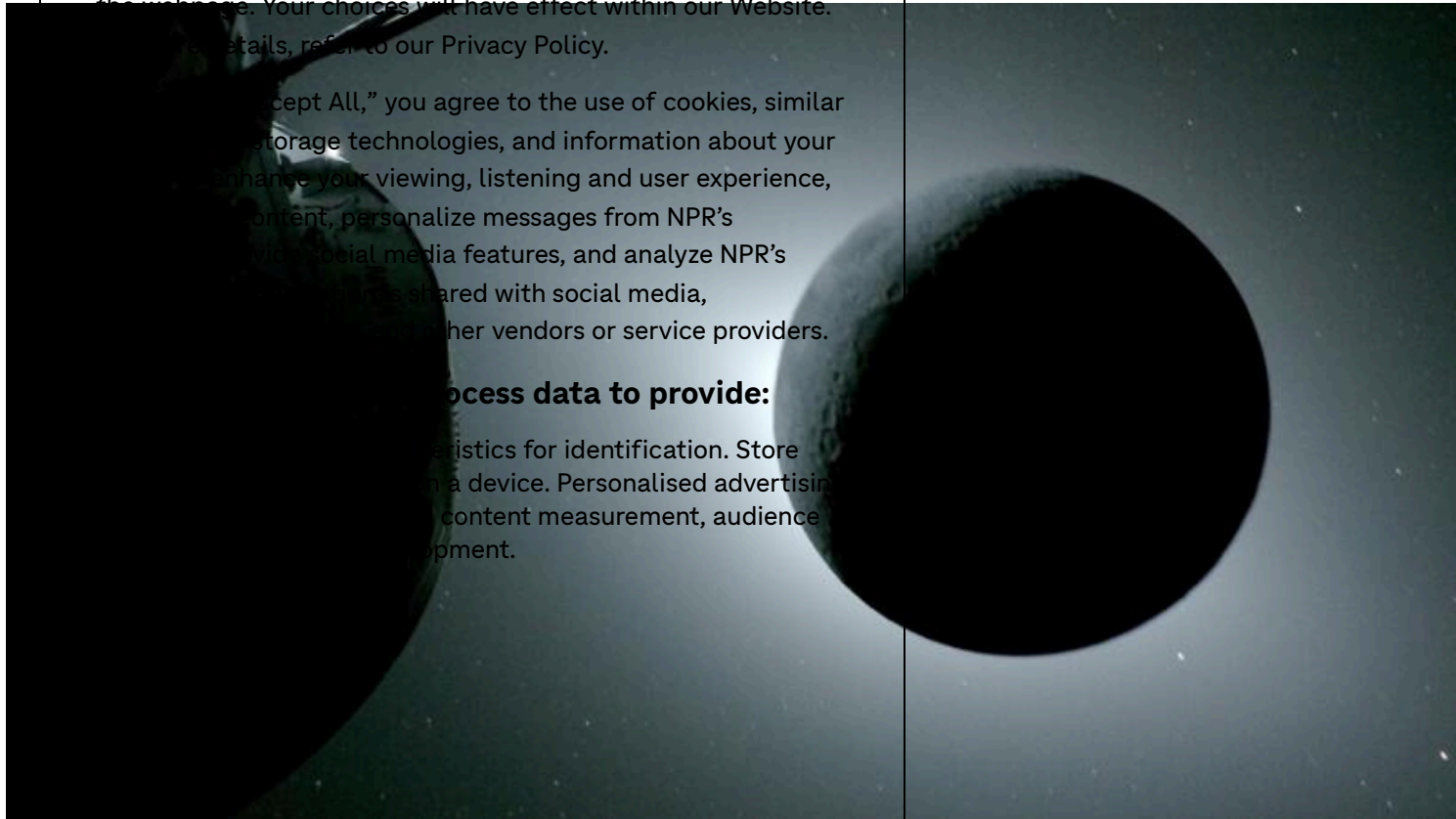
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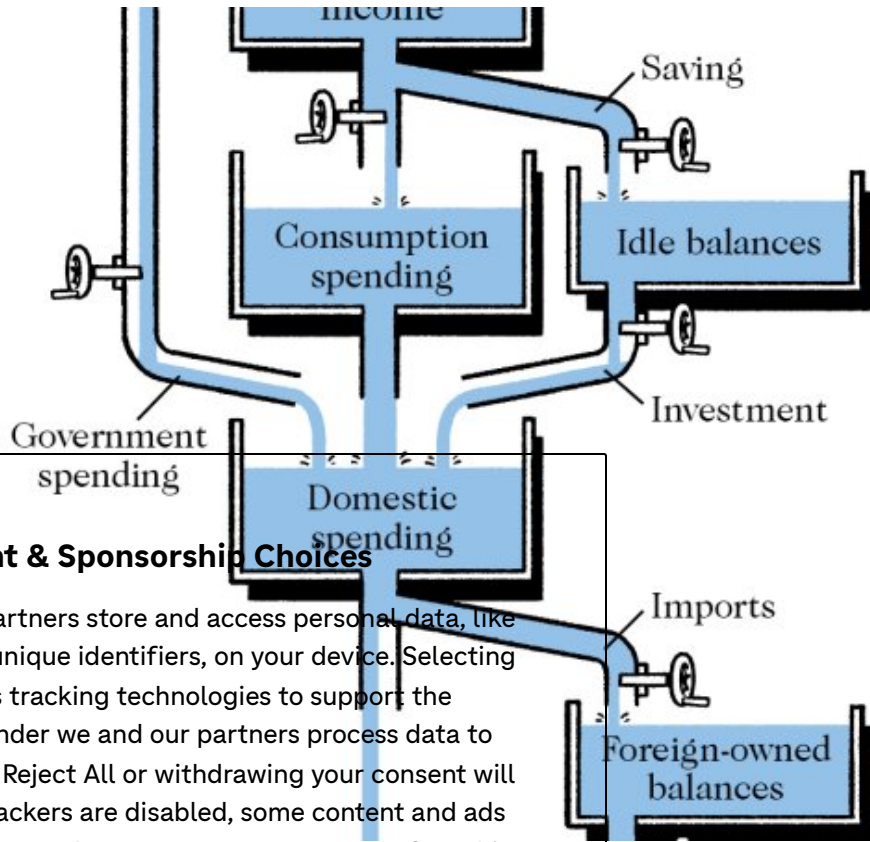
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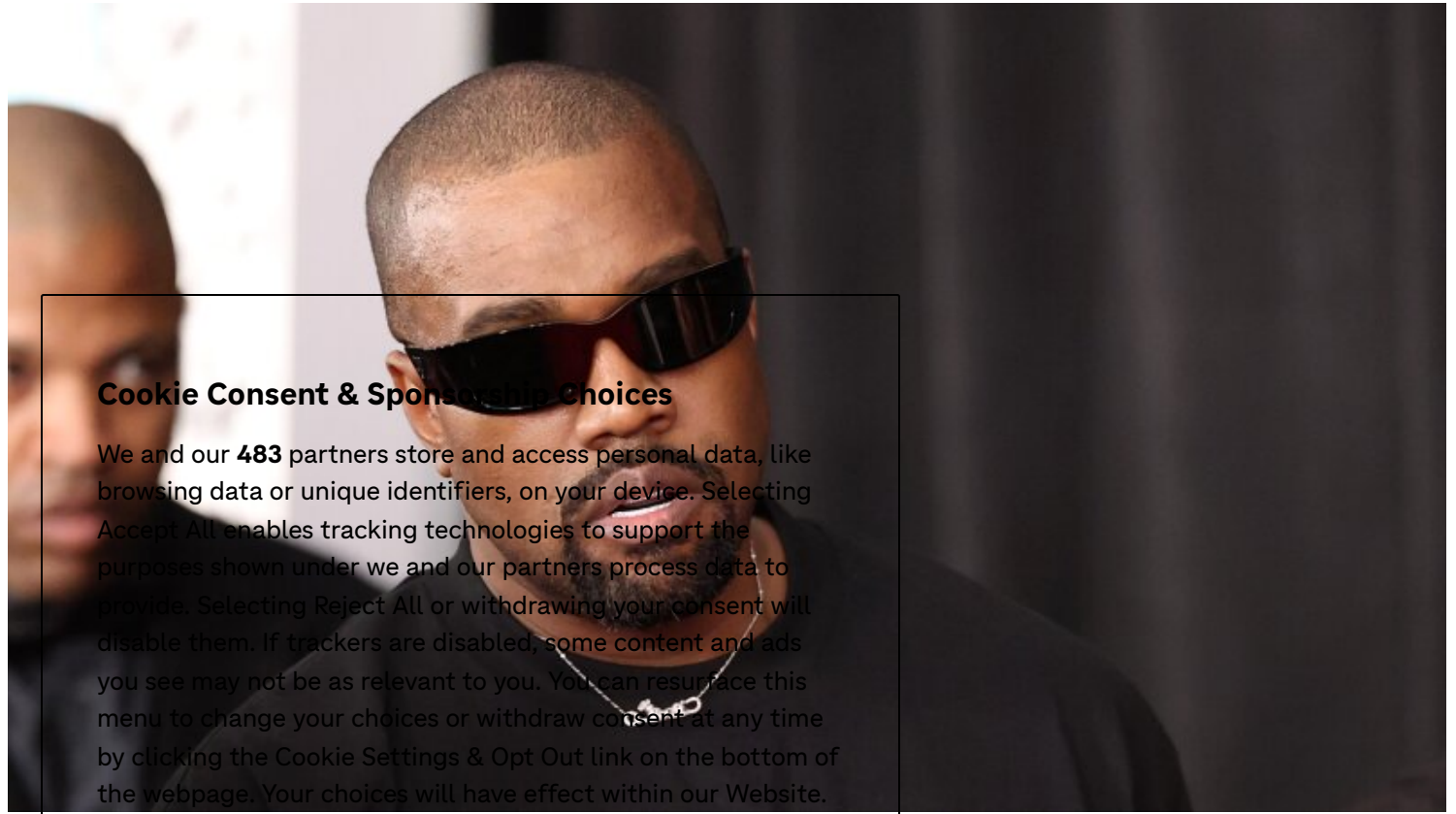
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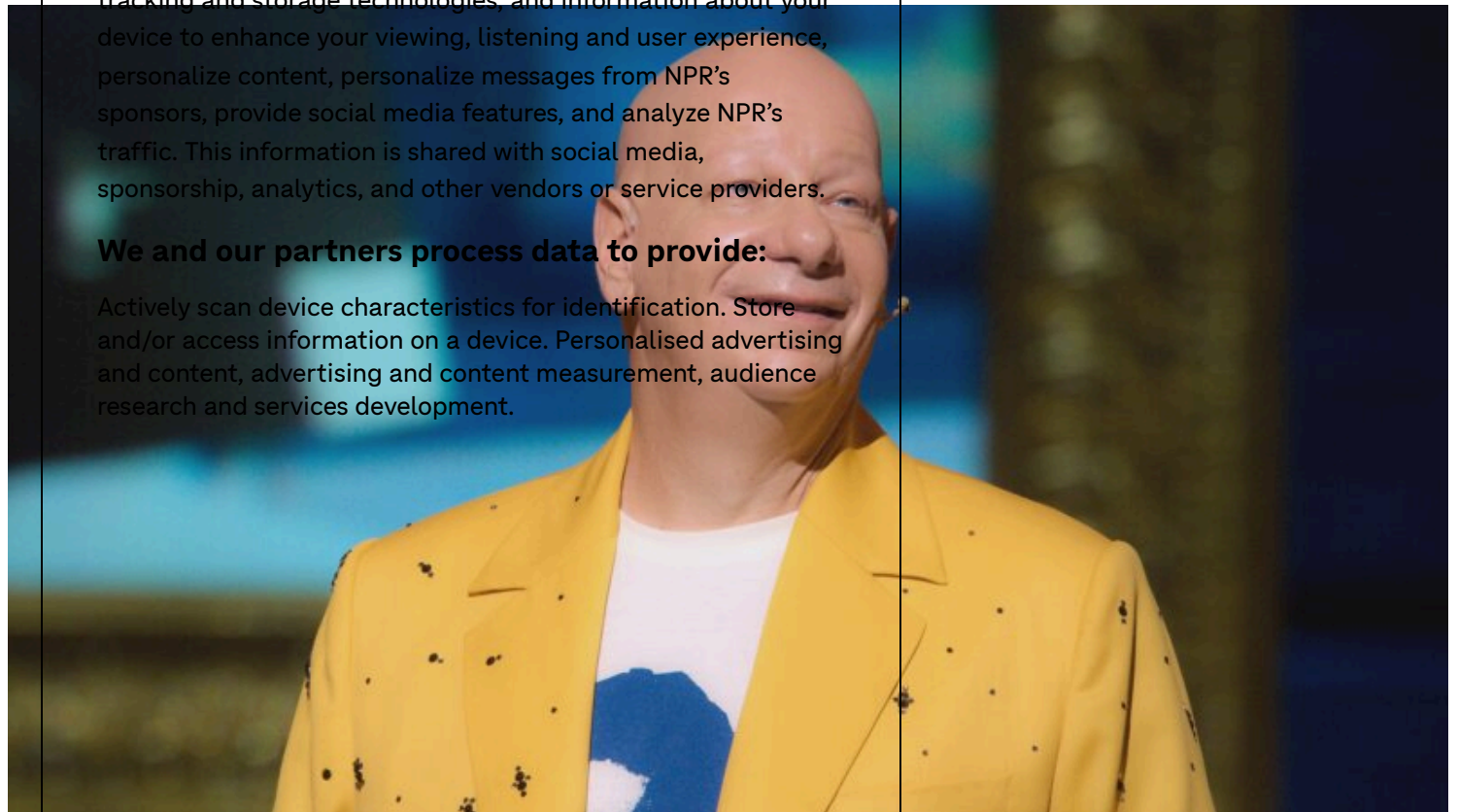
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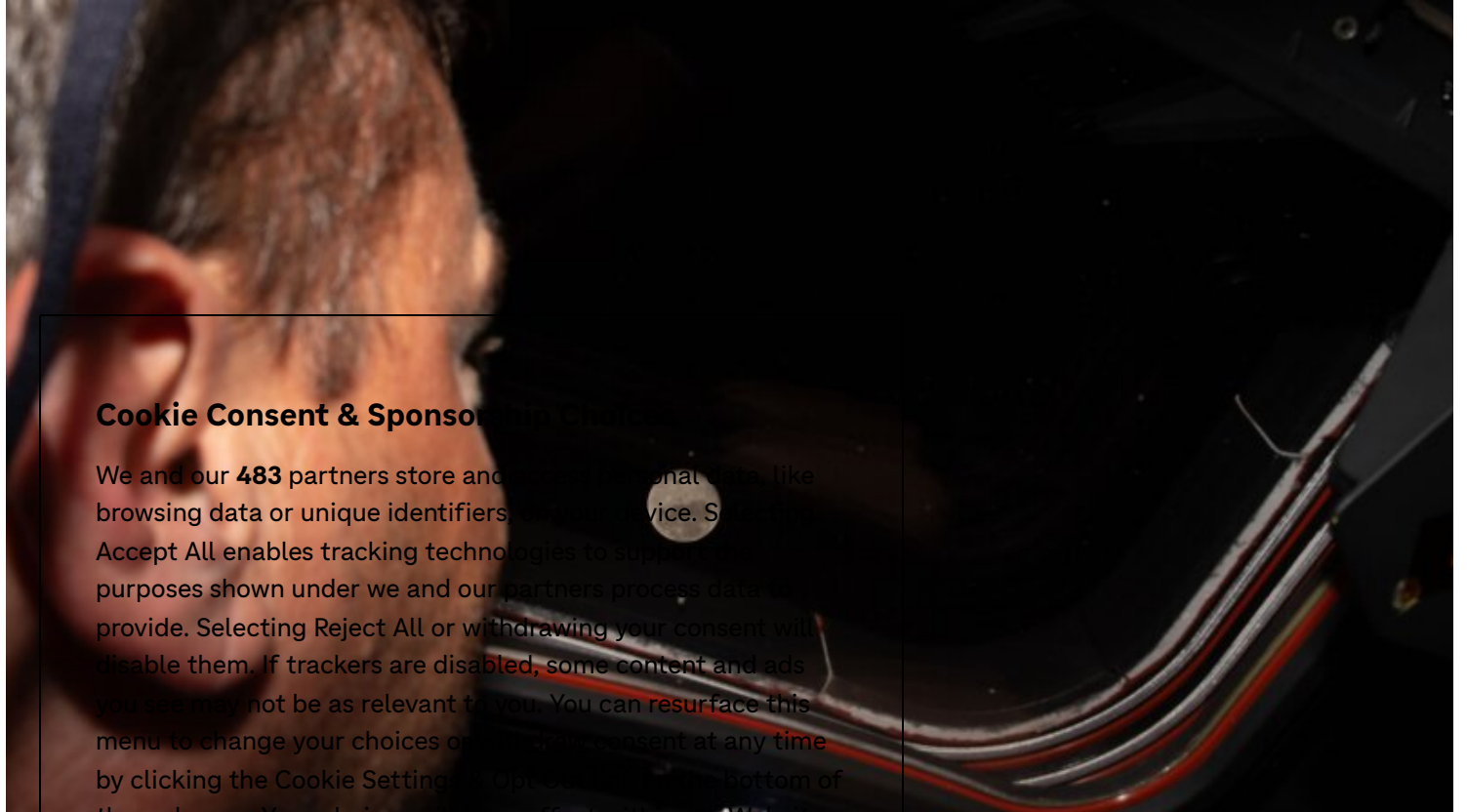
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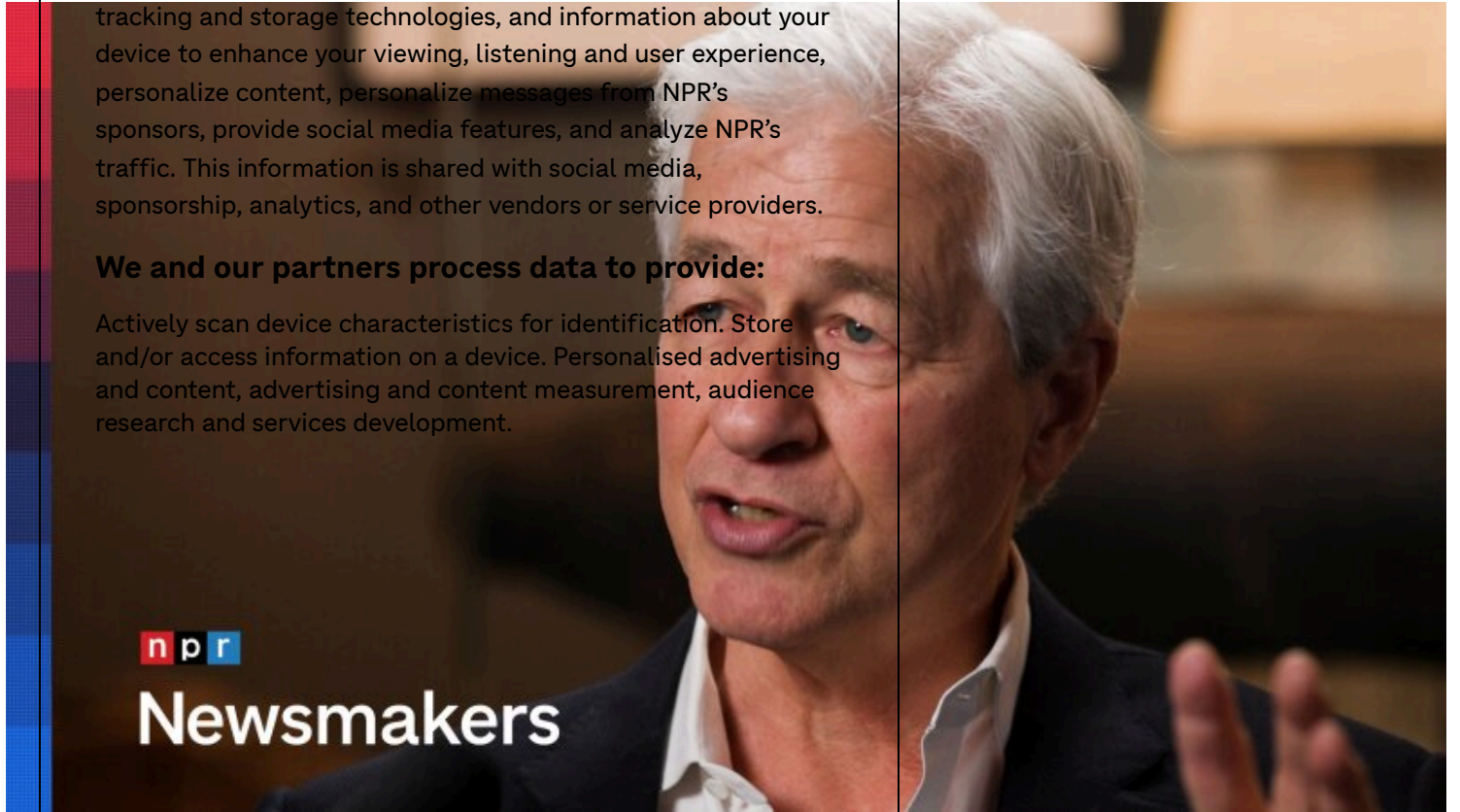
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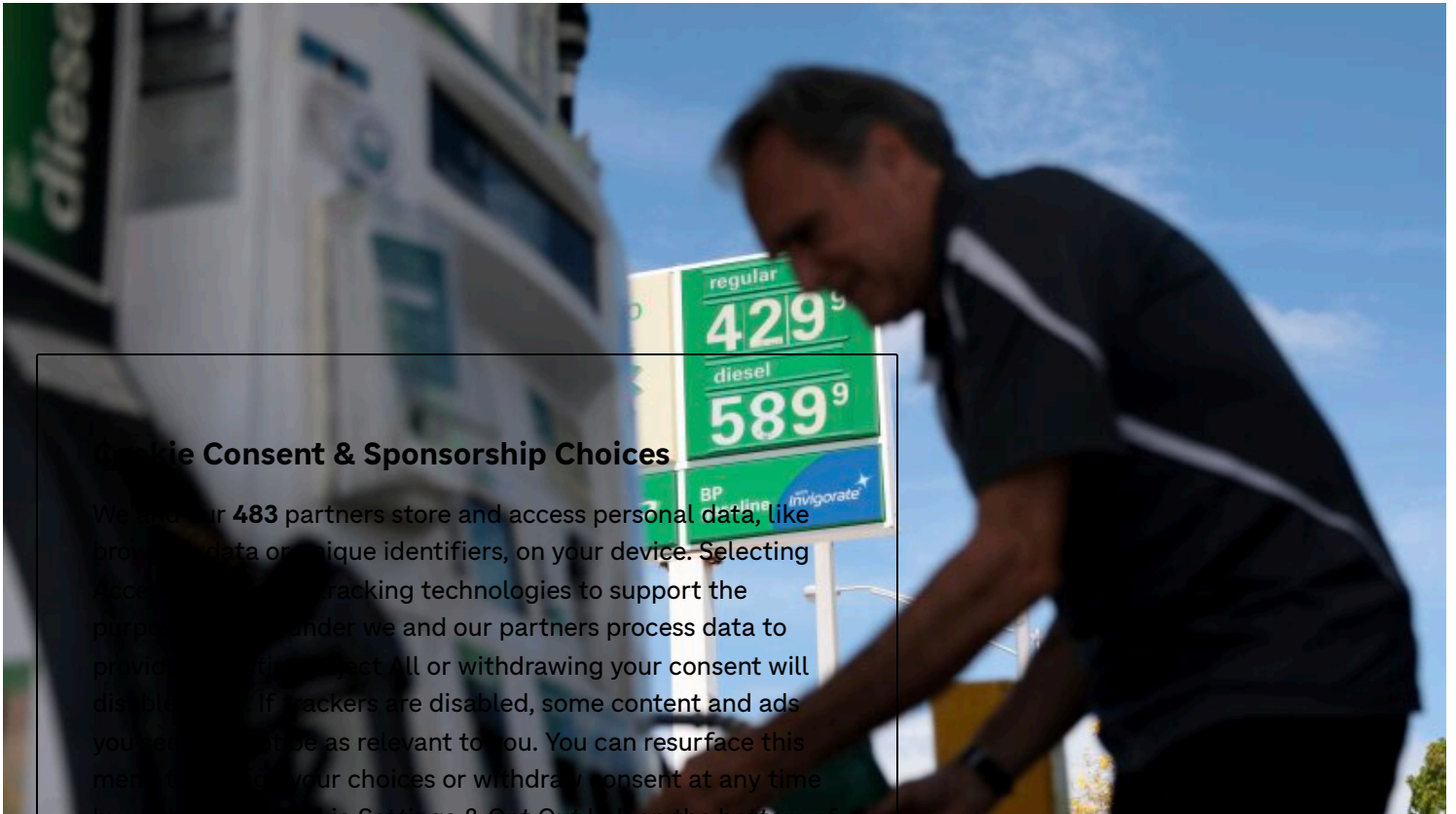
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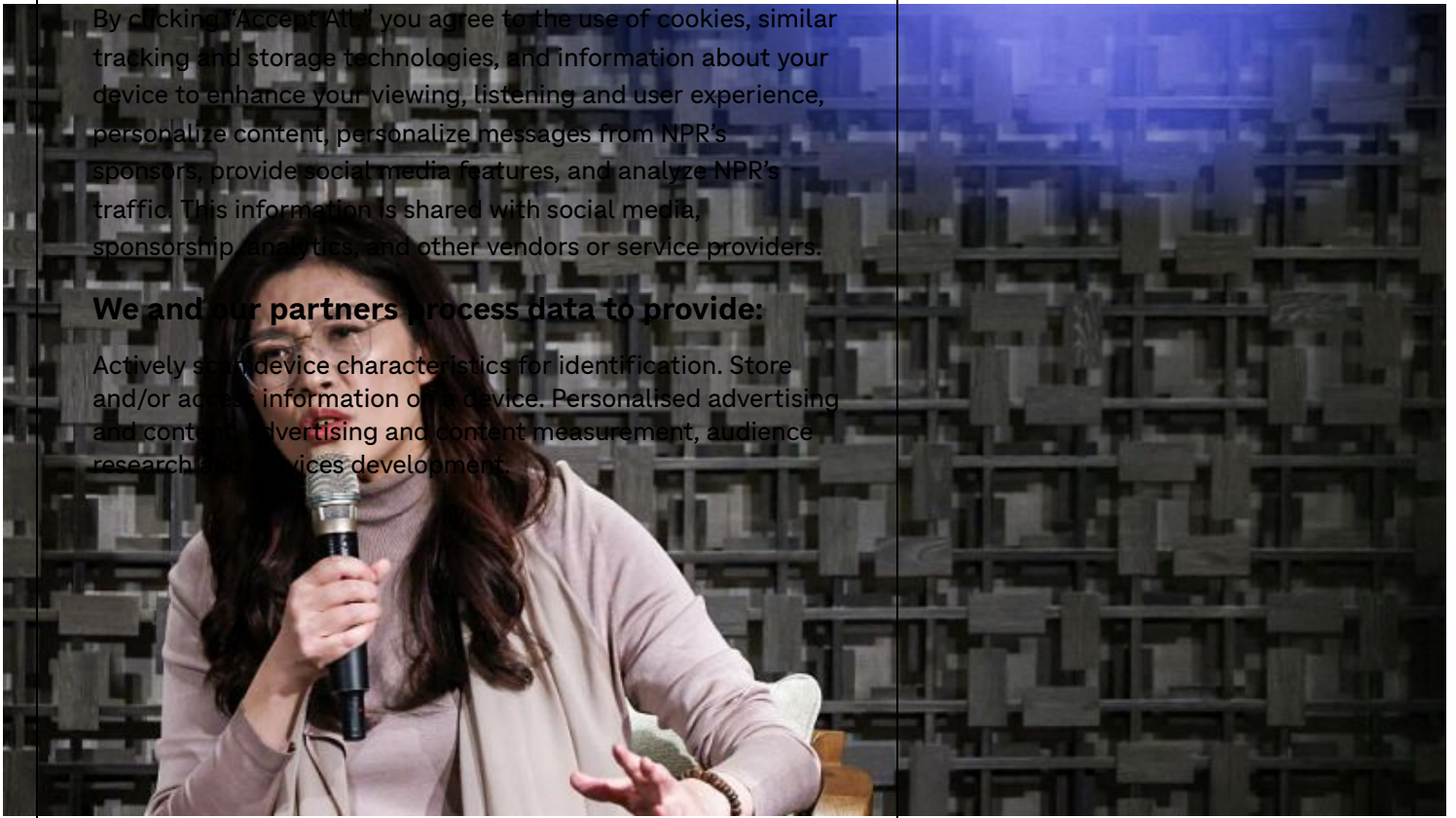
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