

Monday 11-02-20

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'Life-Threatening' Hurricane Eta to Strike Central America, Bring 'Catastrophic' Conditions by [Gaby Arancibia](#)

Hurricane Eta, the 28th named storm of the 2020 Atlantic hurricane season, rapidly intensified into a Category 3 cyclone Monday, and is due to soon strike Central America, bringing with it severe winds and inches of rain that are expected to create landslide conditions.

The US' National Hurricane Center [indicated in its latest release](#) that the powerful storm is forecast to make landfall sometime Tuesday as a "major hurricane" anywhere from Nicaragua's Sandy Bay Sirpi to the country's border with Honduras.

At present, the cyclone is roughly 85 miles from Cabo Gracias a Dios, a cape situated between the Nicaragua-Honduras border, and moving at a pace of 9 mph. Eta has reached maximum sustained wind speeds of 120 mph.

"Life-threatening storm surge, catastrophic winds, flash flooding, and landslides expected across portions of Central America," reads the hurricane agency's bulletin. "Satellite data indicate that Eta continues to rapidly strengthen."

Hurricane-force winds have been recorded some 25 miles out from the storm's eye, whereas tropical storm-force winds are said to extend outward up to 115 miles.

While the cyclone is expected to weaken somewhat after making landfall and moving inland, forecasters have warned that the powerful hurricane's heavy rains are of major concern for all of Central America.

Nicaragua and Honduras alone are forecast to endure anywhere between 15 to 25 inches, with isolated portions experiencing up to 35 inches of rain. Elsewhere, in Guatemala, Belize, Panama and Costa Rica, residents may see up to 25 inches of rain. El Salvador, Southern Haiti and the Cayman Islands have the lowest anticipated rainfall in the region, at just 3 to 5 inches. As for storm surge, the tide in areas along Nicaragua's coastline may see water levels spike by as much as 12 to 18 feet, whereas Honduras may experience a 3 to 5-foot surge along its coast.

Although the storm is registering as a Category 3 hurricane, forecasters anticipate the cyclone may rate much higher on the [Saffir-Simpson Hurricane Wind Scale](#) in the coming hours.

Examining satellite data, Ryan Maue, chief scientist with the US' National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, [noted Monday via Twitter](#) that Eta appears to have developed a [pinhole eye](#), which suggests that the cyclone will turn into a very powerful hurricane.

Maue predicts that should Eta's pinhole eye remain, "then obviously intensity forecasts may need to be increased to near Category 5" status. The last cyclone to reach Category 5 was Hurricane Lorenzo, which also garnered much attention for [having appeared so far to the east](#). Even more concerning, [Maue explained in a separate post](#) that some hurricane models suggest Eta could stick around in the Caribbean for a longer period of time than most storms - possibly one to two weeks.

“Global models e.g. [The European Center for Medium-Range Weather Forecasts] indicate a re-birth into [a] monster storm in the Caribbean next week,” Maue stated. It’s anyone’s guess how Eta may develop, as officials have stressed that it’s still much too early to know for certain. The 2020 hurricane season still has one more month to go, ending on November 30.

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Clashing Deer Spill Fight Onto Roadway - Video Club

Locals near London’s Richmond Park recently earned quite the surprise when a pair of dueling stags decided to throw down in a patch of greenery. Video shared on Facebook by Lander Zudaire shows the two deer going head-to-head, with one stag eventually crashing into the side of a momentarily stopped car. “I thought I was safe keeping enough distance ... but clearly I was wrong,” Zudaire wrote of the Wednesday incident.

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Photos: White House Foists ‘Non-Scalable’ Fence, Choppers Buzz DC Ahead of US Election by [Morgan Artyukhina](#)

Amid fears of social unrest in the aftermath of US elections on November 3, businesses in many cities are boarding up windows, even as some business leaders urge calm. The White House has also fortified itself, erecting the “non-scalable” fence seen in response to mass protests earlier this year.

Boards, Fences Go Up Prior to Vote

Around the White House, a new steel fence is being put up like that erected in June amid the nationwide Black Lives Matter protests that rocked the country in the wake of the police killing of George Floyd, a 46-year-old Black man in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Washington, DC, saw huge demonstrations, some of which destroyed shop windows and set fires, after which the DC government and [US President Donald Trump dispatched thousands of national guardsmen](#) and federal police to crush the protests.

Workers move a stack of fencing near a security checkpoint on the South side of the White House, the day before the U.S. presidential election, in Washington, U.S., November 2, 2020. Most of the black steel fence was taken down in mid-June, but elements remain around Lafayette Park, a public square across the street from the White House that was a common site

for expressions of political dissent across the spectrum before [Trump had the park violently cleared on the evening of June 2](#) in preparation for a photo op by a local church.

According to NBC, the new fence will encompass the same area fortified in June, including the White House grounds and Ellipse and incorporating the fence around Lafayette Park.

Washington's Metropolitan Police Department [told NBC on Sunday that 250 guardsmen](#) were on standby in case they are needed after the election.

In another disturbing echo of the June military deployment, helicopters have been spotted making very low passes around downtown, where airspace is closed to all but police and military aircraft.

However, one such chopper spotted Monday [was likely a radiation "sniffer" helicopter operated](#) by the US Department of Energy, which has been [monitoring background radiation in the city](#) for weeks. Its flight path on Monday resembled a grid, zigzagging across the city at barely 100 feet above the ground.

Shops in US Capital Board Up

Plywood was [seen adorning an increasing number of shops](#) in DC's shopping districts on Monday, especially luxury retail outlets like Louis Vuitton, Alexis Bittar and Roche Bobois.

Increased Risk of Violence

A recent report by the non-governmental crisis mapping organization Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project (ACLED) and research group MilitiaWatch concluded that Pennsylvania, Georgia, Michigan, Wisconsin and Oregon face the highest risk of violence by right-wing groups in the aftermath of the US elections, while North Carolina, Texas, Virginia, California and New Mexico face a more moderate risk.

"Ahead of the election, right-wing militia activity has been dominated by reactions to recent social justice activism like the Black Lives Matter movement, public health restrictions due to the ongoing coronavirus pandemic, and other perceived threats to the 'liberty' and 'freedoms' of these groups," [the October 21 report notes, warning that](#) the typically highly competitive groups have "coalesced around this period of heightened political tension, and have even brought Proud Boys and QAnon-linked groups into the fold. While some groups have indicated that they are receptive to calls for deescalation and conflict avoidance, they remain vulnerable to hardline elements that may work clandestinely towards violent action aimed at dominating public space around the election."

Fears of violence, especially in the case of widespread voting issues or an extremely close vote result, have only been fanned by Trump's continued waffling on a commitment to a peaceful transfer of power if she should lose.

"We're going to have to see what happens," [Trump told a White House reporter in late September](#). He also told the [right-wing, pro-Trump gang Proud Boys to "stand by"](#) when prompted during a debate with Democratic rival Joe Biden to denounce white supremacist groups. Amid widespread backlash following the debate, Trump [denied any knowledge of the Proud Boys](#), telling them to "stand down and let law enforcement do their work."

However, business leaders have warned shops putting up boards not to alienate their customers.

Leona Agouritis, the executive director of the Golden Triangle Business Improvement District that operates much of the capital city's downtown area, [told WTOP on Monday](#), "The city has indicated that they are not expecting to have any protest or violence or any kind of incidents in

the city based on what they know at this point. At least that's what they have told us. They are not recommending that people board up based on the information they have right now." Likewise, Stephanie Martz, general counsel of the National Retail Federation, cautioned during a recent video conference featuring dozens of brands that boarding up shop prematurely could alienate people. "You are sending a message when you do that. You don't want to necessarily engage in this kind of grim forecasting," [she said, according to United Press International](#).

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Photos: 'Retired' F-117 Fighters Caught Taking Off From Nevada Base for First Time in Years by [Morgan Artyukhina](#)

For the first time in more than a decade, F-117 Nighthawk stealth fighters have been spotted flying out of Nellis Air Force Base in Nevada. While retired from service 12 years ago, some have continued flying with the US Air Force for research purposes. However, their move to Nellis could signal a major reduction of secrecy around their activities.

Even though it was retired from active service more than a decade ago, the world's first stealth aircraft is still flying in limited numbers, and its highly secretive research missions have apparently taken it to a much more public venue than it's enjoyed in recent years: Nellis Air Force Base in Nevada. [According to The Drive's The War Zone](#), it's the first time the Nighthawk has been seen at Nellis in 12 years.

Aviation photographer Santos Caceres snapped several stunning, high-definition photos of one of the F-117s taking off at Nellis on October 30.

As [The War Zone reported](#), the jet's appearance at Nellis came after an even more high-profile trip to Marine Corps Air Station Miramar in San Diego, California, where it's likely the aircraft took part in North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD) air defense exercises. [Sputnik has reported how the Nighthawks](#) are likely still being used as testbeds to further hone both the development of low-observable technology and the best ways to detect stealth aircraft, as more and more nations [acquire jets with the technology](#).

That research, if occurring, is likely their primary role at Tonopah Test Range, [part of the sprawling Nevada Test and Training Range](#) that also includes Area 51.

The Miramar and Nellis trips aren't the F-117's only public appearances recently. In March, the angular, black jet made a close pass over Death Valley, California, [in a location known as "Star Wars Canyon"](#) because of its austere terrain.

Pentagon to Move Forward With Palletized Munition Program for C-17 Transport Plane by [Morgan Artyukhina](#)

The US Air Force has awarded Lockheed Martin a contract to ready its C-17 Globemaster III transport planes for launching cruise missiles using a "palletized munition" deployment method tested on several aircraft earlier this year.

The defense contracting giant announced last week it had received a \$25 million contract from the US Air Force Strategic Development Planning and Experimentation (SDPE) Office to further develop the Palletized Munitions Experimentation Campaign.

[According to a company news release](#), the contract aims for a system-level demonstration in 2021 to really flesh out what's possible with this novel weapon-launching design.

"Despite the Palletized Munitions program being relatively new, it's moving very quickly" Lockheed Martin Advanced Strike Systems Director Scott Callaway said in the release.

In May, the Air Force Research Lab tested the palletized munition concept for the first time by [rolling a modified cargo pallet out the back of an MC-130J Hercules](#) transport aircraft carrying what observers estimated to be two simulated AGM-154 Joint Stand-Off Weapon (JSOW) glide bombs. A second test in September saw a pallet carrying at least one simulated AGM-158 Joint Air-to-Surface Standoff Missile (JASSM) cruise missile [launched out the back of a C-17 Globemaster III transport](#), the plane now chosen as the base on which to expand the program.

The palletized munition concept is an attempt at keeping existing airframes relevant while getting around the need to spend years of effort and billions of dollars either designing or ordering more bombers. However, the effort to find what has variously [been called a "missileer," "arsenal plane" and "bomb truck"](#) was also tried out on existing bombers, and [both the B-1B Lancer and B-52 Stratofortress are slated to carry](#) some of the new generation of long-range missiles being developed by the Pentagon.

"A Palletized Munitions capability could enable various airlift aircraft to employ a range of weapons en masse via a self-contained, roll-on/roll-off palletized system, and may offer an alternative way for the Air Force to bring more mass to the fight," Dr. Dean Evans, the SDPE's Palletized Munitions Experimentation [program manager, said in September](#).

This won't be the first time a cargo plane has been modified to sport offensive capabilities: the US military operates several [versions of the C-130 Hercules that can fire machine guns](#), rotary cannons and even a 105-millimeter howitzer at ground targets. Before that was the AC-47 Spooky, a modified C-47 transport plane with similar weapons.

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Austrian Chancellor Vows 'Decisive Action' Against Vienna Attack, Military to Assist in Probe by [Morgan Artyukhina](#)

Following a wave of violent attacks in Vienna on Monday night, Austrian Chancellor Sebastian Kurz has vowed "decisive action against the perpetrators of this hideous terrorist attack."

In [a statement posted on Twitter late Monday night](#), Kurz said the military would take over some police duties in order to let officers concentrate on chasing down the [perpetrators of a series of shootings across the capital](#) in which more than a dozen people have been wounded.

"We will never allow ourselves to be intimidated by terrorism and will fight these attacks resolutely by all means," Kurz said.

"The whole country is thinking about the victims, the injured and their families, to whom I express my deepest condolences," he continued. "We thank the leaders of the European Union and our international partners for their sympathy and the expressions of solidarity."

On Monday evening, at least 15 people were shot by possibly up to seven perpetrators in a series of shootings across the capital city [that began near the city's main synagogue](#). One of the victims, a police officer, has died of his wounds, and another seven have serious injuries, according to local media.

There had been reports of hostage-taking, but a spokesperson for the Akakiko restaurant [refuted those claims in a comment given to Sputnik](#).

Police in Vienna have recommended people stay away from public places, as not all the perpetrators have yet been found. However, one was shot to death by police.

The incident comes in the wake of a series of attacks across France in recent weeks [that has seen three killed in Nice](#) and a [man killed in a Paris suburb](#). The attacks have been prompted by a series of offensive caricatures of the Muslim prophet Mohammad.

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US Election's Effect on Assange Case Unclear as Trump, Biden Never Debated on Free
by [Morgan Artyukhina](#)

WikiLeaks co-founder Julian Assange's British extradition trial won't be decided until January, but the effect of the US presidential election on his ultimate fate is hard to predict, since his case and the dangers posed to freedom of the press was never a topic for the candidates to debate, a journalist told Sputnik.

Taylor Hudak, [co-founder of Action for Assange](#) and the [editor of acTVism Munich](#), told [Radio Sputnik's Fault Lines](#) on Monday that the court scheduling [the ruling in Assange's case for January 4, 2021](#), was a purposeful move to hold it until after the November 2020 elections in the United States.

[Interview begins at 70:45]

"The judge herself admitted this," Hudak told hosts Shane Stranahan and Jamarl Thomas, noting it points "to the larger question of: could Assange's situation be impacted by the results of the US election? It's very difficult to tell at this point, and there are differing opinions on both sides."

Edward Fitzgerald, a lawyer on Assange's defense team, has said if US President Donald Trump wins reelection, ["it will be all the worse" for Assange](#).

However, Democratic contender Joe Biden is also on record as [having called Assange a "high-tech terrorist"](#), although he has said nothing about the extradition trial or the charges against Assange as of yet.

"We don't really know, because this was not an issue that was addressed, I don't think, ever during the campaign," she noted.

"But we do know that Assange tried under Trump's DoJ [Department of Justice], and it did come out in court that Trump allegedly personally requested for Assange to be arrested. And, of

course, the secretary of state right now, [Mike Pompeo, has been very vocal about his dislike for WikiLeaks](#) as an organization. So, neither of the candidates have been positive when it comes to Assange and the larger issue of press freedoms in the United States and throughout the world.”

Hudak said Assange’s case was clearly political in nature, pointing to the attempt via former US Rep. Dana Rohrabacher (R-CA) to negotiate the trading of a pardon for Assange in exchange for him pointing the finger at the source of the 2016 Democratic National Committee email leaks - [an offer reportedly made at Trump’s direction](#).

“I’m not sure how the judge is going to rule. Based off of her history, it doesn’t seem that she will be preventing the extradition, because she has I think around a 96% rate of granting extradition, so the chances are quite high,” Hudak noted of Judge Vanessa Baraitser, who is a district judge at Westminster Magistrates’ Court. “But, of course, this will go to the appeals court.”

However, Hudak noted that “it would be a real, impactful way to stand up to” the US intelligence community, with whom Trump is often at odds, if he granted Assange a pardon. “I think he would be more likely to do so in his second term than he would in his first term, of course, because it’s a ‘controversial move’ to make. But Trump is very unpredictable, and it’s difficult to tell how this all will play out.”

“I think some of the important issues right now have to do a lot with the censorship that we’re seeing, and it’s really coming from the Democrats,” the journalist noted. “There is both an authoritarian Right but there is also an authoritarian Left, and when it comes to the censorship that we have been seeing - and this does kind of link to the overall theme of WikiLeaks - the censorship that we have been seeing is very, very concerning as it relates to this US election.” “Mark Zuckerberg of Facebook said during a CBS interview that they’re going to block political and campaign ads [during] the last few days prior to the election. That is essentially censoring information. YouTube channels have been taken down; this is largely done to accounts and to journalists who are critical of Joe Biden, who are speaking about, of course, Hunter Biden’s laptop and [those revelations that were published in the New York Post](#),” Hudak told Sputnik. “This attack on the free press through Julian’s case is very consequential, and it also emboldens more censorship and emboldens more attacks on free speech and free press,” she said, noting it “makes it seem like it’s a normal and acceptable thing to do, especially when there isn’t any pushback from the media - and there really hasn’t been, which is why I was saying earlier, it’s really a shame that we did not hear the candidates’ perspective on issues related to the free press.”

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Trump Rallies Linked to Over 30,000 COVID-19 Infections, 700 Deaths - Study

A new study by Stanford University economists has found that US President Donald Trump’s campaign rallies between June and September may have caused around 30,000 COVID-19 infections and more than 700 deaths.

The [study](#), released Friday, was based on COVID-19 data maintained by Johns Hopkins University and evaluated the impact of 18 rallies that took place between June 20 and September 30 of this year.

The study was not based on individual COVID-19 infections that were traced back to Trump rallies. Instead, the researchers compared the spread of SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19, in areas surrounding the locations of the rallies to its spread in similar locations throughout the US that did not host rallies.

Through their analysis, the researchers concluded that thousands of people may have become infected with the novel coronavirus by attending Trump's rallies.

"Our analysis strongly supports the warnings and recommendations of public health officials concerning the risk of COVID-19 transmission at large group gatherings, particularly when the degree of compliance with guidelines concerning the use of masks and social distancing is low," the researchers wrote.

"The communities in which Trump rallies took place paid a high price in terms of disease and death."

B. Douglas Bernheim, a study author who also serves as the chair of Stanford's Economics Department, [told Politico](#) that the purpose of the study is to help policymakers understand the relation between large public gatherings and COVID-19 infections.

"There's currently this very important debate going on about the costs and benefits of lockdowns, restrictions and so forth," Bernheim told the outlet. "It's important that debate be informed by good information."

However, the White House has called the study "flawed."

"As the president has said, the cure cannot be worse than the disease, and this country should be open armed with best practices and freedom of choice to limit the spread of COVID-19," White House spokesperson Judd Deere said in a statement obtained by Politico.

Trump campaign spokesperson Courtney Parella also said that supporters at rallies have their temperature checked, are given masks and are provided with hand sanitizer.

"Americans have the right to gather under the First Amendment to hear from the president of the United States, and we take strong precautions for our campaign events," Parella said.

Michael Mina, an epidemiologist at the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, has warned against drawing strong conclusions from the study.

"There are better ways to look at this data through actual infectious disease epidemic lenses. It offers a data point, but nothing I would want to draw any strong conclusions from. It is also so overtly political that it makes it hard to distinguish if there were decisions made out of perhaps unrecognized bias," Mina told Politico.

However, Eleanor Murray, an assistant professor of epidemiology at the Boston University School of Public Health, said the study "applies an appropriate method with some good robustness and sensitivity checks."

"If the key underlying assumption is realistic, then the answer is probably something that could be relied upon," Murray said.

The [latest data](#) by Johns Hopkins shows that there have been more than 9.2 million documented cases of COVID-19 in the US and more than 231,000 deaths as a result.

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Peru's Machu Picchu Reopens for Tourism After COVID-19 Lockdown

Peru's greatest tourist attraction, the Incan citadel of Machu Picchu, reopened on Sunday after being closed for nearly eight months due to the COVID-19 pandemic, as the number of cases in the South American country steadily decreases.

Due to safety concerns, each day, only 675 tourists will be able to visit the 15th-century fortress located in the Eastern Cordillera of southern Peru, which is about 30% of the total number of daily visitors before the COVID-19 pandemic, [AFP reported](#). An Incan ritual took place on Sunday evening to thank the gods for the citadel's reopening.

"Today, Machu Picchu opens. It opens with [health and safety] protocols, it opens to say that we are reactivating ourselves but with responsibility and great prudence, because we see everything happening in the world [with the pandemic]," Peruvian Foreign Trade and Tourism Minister Rocio Barrios announced in a Sunday speech, adding that opening Machu Picchu shows the world that "we Peruvians are resilient."

Despite the fact that the tourist attraction has reopened, visitors will still be expected to maintain social distancing.

According to AFP, the COVID-19 pandemic has greatly impacted the thousands of people in Peru whose income depends on the country's tourism industry.

People in the Cusco region where the citadel is situated have been greatly affected in particular. Many stores, restaurants and other tourism-related businesses went bankrupt before a lockdown that lasted for more than 100 days was lifted in July.

Taxi driver Eberth Hancco, who works at the airport in Cusco, the former capital of the Incan Empire, told AFP that his income has been greatly affected by COVID-19. "The situation has been very bad, because Cusco depends on tourism," [he told the outlet](#).

Before the pandemic, there were around 80 hotels in the town of Ollantaytambo, which is also an Incan archaeological site in southern Peru.

"At least half of them have gone bankrupt," Joaquin Randall, head of the local hotel and restaurant association, told AFP.

"The formal hotels that pay taxes have been able to access government aid," he added, but informal establishments have not.

Machu Picchu was declared a World Heritage Site by the [United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization](#) in 1983.

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US Bipartisan Immigration Policies Protect Expansion of 'Detention and Deportation Machine'

Maru Mora-Villalpando, immigrant rights activist and organizer, joined Radio Sputnik's Political Misfits Monday to discuss the past four years of US immigration policy and how US President Donald Trump's actions have matched his rhetoric.

Trump on Friday [declared November 1](#) a day of remembrance for Americans killed by undocumented immigrants as he continues to promise to reinforce policies to curb undocumented immigration if reelected.

"We are now used to outrageous things that this administration would do just to continue fueling their hate base and anti-immigrant base. It's not surprising in a way, because one of the very first actions that this administration took when they got to the White House was to create a phone line to report undocumented people," Mora-Villalpando told show [hosts Michelle Witte and Bob Schlehuder](#).

"The reality is that propaganda works for them [the Trump administration], so they will continue going as slow as possible in order to continue creating more base and getting more votes," she added.

"I would say they had a lot of successes," Mora-Villalpando responded when asked about whether the Trump administration's actions have matched its anti-immigrant rhetoric.

"I think it was possible because the infrastructure was already there. It didn't take them a lot of time or a lot of effort to do so. That's why when [former US President Barack] Obama left, we were saying you need to undo the machine," Mora-Villalpando added.

According to the [Center for Migration Studies](#), Trump signed several executive orders in January 2017 that threaten the rights of immigrants and refugees in the US. One order directed the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to design and construct a wall along the US-Mexico border, and another suspended visa-issuance to the Muslim-majority countries Iran, Iraq, Sudan, Syria, Libya, Somalia and Yemen.

The Trump administration has also attempted to reject applications for the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program, an Obama-era immigration policy that allowed young, undocumented individuals who had arrived in the US as children to be given work permits and a renewable, two-year period of deferred action on deportation.

"We've seen how they've come against specific communities ... They have been very successful in that. What they've not been very successful in is, for example, the building of the wall - because first of all, that wall already existed, but they have not been able to expand it as they wanted to. I think they have not been able to win a lot of lawsuits that they filed. They have not been able to diminish the power of sanctuary cities and the power of states to decide on their own," Mora-Villalpando explained.

If Democratic presidential candidate Joe Biden wins the election, some positive changes to US immigration policy may follow, Mora-Villalpando noted. She added, however, that she doesn't have high expectations for a Biden administration.

"We think that there are going to be a lot of immediate changes, a lot of reversals. Biden has already agreed to some of them ... We also know that they are willing to undo the [children's detention](#)," Mora-Villalpando explained.

"What we haven't seen is that they are willing to undo the entire detention machine ... We have asked for a moratorium of 100 days, the first hundred days of his [Biden's] presidency to have a moratorium on deportations. We haven't gotten a complete agreement on that ... We don't have high expectations of Biden. We know him as a vice president that protected the expansion of

the detention and deportation machine,” Mora-Villalpando noted, also noting that Biden expanded the criminal justice system, to the detriment of Black people. “Democrats or Republicans, they have always been against us. This is the reality we face,” she added.

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Twitter Names Fox News, CNN Among Seven ‘Official Sources’ for US Election

With less than two days left before the conclusion of the 2020 US presidential election, Twitter has announced it will follow data derived from a total of seven news outlets that are said to have unbiased, verified decision desks regarding ballot counts and results.

Twitter Support announced Monday that Tuesday night election data on the social media platform will be provided by ABC News, the Associated Press, CNN, CBS News, Decision Desk HQ, Fox News and NBC News.

“We’ll consider a result official when announced by a state election official, or when calls are made by at least two of the [seven] national news outlets that have dedicated, independent election decision desks,” [read the tweet](#) within a thread on the platform’s 2020 election approach.

This comes a day after US President Donald Trump reportedly told confidants he will preemptively declare victory in the presidential race if it appears that he is ahead.

It’s unclear where Trump, who has denied making such a statement, will get his election data.

“I think it’s a terrible thing when ballots can be collected after an election. I think it’s a terrible thing when states are allowed to tabulate ballots for a long period of time after the election is over,” he said, [as reported by Axios](#).

Trump, for the past several months, has expressed distrust in the mail-in ballot system while also personally using it. His parroting of conspiracy theories and misinformation resulted in [Twitter flagging and “fact-checking” a number of his tweets](#).

The US president has also floated the idea that the results of the November 3 election could be decided by the US Supreme Court, which recently saw [Justice Amy Coney Barrett](#) added to the bench following an expedited US Senate confirmation hearing.

The social media platform’s support team also reserved the right to flag tweets about election results issued by users whose accounts fall under certain criteria. Posts may also be flagged if they reach 25,000 likes or a combined 25,000 quote tweets and retweets.

“We’ll be prioritizing the presidential election and other highly contested races where there may be significant issues with misleading information,” the issuance read.

Netizens attempting to retweet a post with the tentative “misleading information” label will [receive a prompt](#) which references “official sources.”

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Twitter Names Fox News, CNN Among Seven 'Official Sources' for US Election
by [Evan Craighead](#)

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The US president has also floated the idea that the results of the November 3 election could be decided by the US Supreme Court, which recently saw [Justice Amy Coney Barrett](#) added to the bench following an expedited US Senate confirmation hearing.

The social media platform's support team also reserved the right to flag tweets about election results issued by users whose accounts fall under certain criteria. Posts may also be flagged if they reach 25,000 likes or a combined 25,000 quote tweets and retweets.

"We'll be prioritizing the presidential election and other highly contested races where there may be significant issues with misleading information," the issuance read.

Netizens attempting to retweet a post with the tentative "misleading information" label will [receive a prompt](#) which references "official sources."

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Videos: Scientists Rediscover Chameleon Last Seen Over a Century Ago
by [Evan Craighead](#)

Voeltzkow's chameleon (*Furcifer voeltzkowi*), a unique and evasive species, has been rediscovered by German researchers in its natural habitat of Madagascar some 100 years after it seemingly disappeared.

A research paper authored by Frank Glaw and [published in the Salamandra German Journal of Herpetology](#) on October 30 announced that German researchers in Madagascar had rediscovered *F. voeltzkowi* “in its natural habitat close to its type locality” while on “a targeted expedition.”

“Our rediscovery expedition was conducted at the end of the rainy season from 25 March to 3 April 2018 in the Mahajanga region in northwestern Madagascar,” [the report detailed](#).

Within months, a chameleon of the species will hatch during the rainy season, grow rapidly, spar, mate and die. Female *F. voeltzkowi* in particular are said to exude colorful patterns while encountering males, pregnant or stressed.

The report highlighted that scientists believe the short life span of *F. voeltzkowi* partly contributed to the species getting “lost” for decades. On top of that, the rainy season “makes it difficult and unlikely to record this species, since most roads in its distribution range are not accessible.”

“Our planet is probably facing the beginning of an enormous extinction of species, often referred to as the ‘sixth mass extinction’, the ‘Holocene extinction’ or the ‘Anthropocene extinction,’” the study noted.

“Rediscoveries of ‘lost’ species are very important as they provide crucial data for conservation measures and also bring some hope amidst the biodiversity crisis.”

“These animals are basically the mayflies among vertebrates,” Glaw, the curator of reptiles and amphibians at the Bavarian State Collection of Zoology, [told the Associated Press](#).

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Man’s Best Friend: DNA Evidence Shows Dogs Are Humans’ Oldest Companions
by [Victoria Teets](#)

A newly published scientific study on canine DNA has concluded that our animal best friends also happen to be our oldest ones.

The research fills in some of the gaps in the natural history of our close animal companions. Dogs were the first domesticated animal, but little was previously known about their population history and to what extent it is linked to humans.

The analysis, titled “Origins and Genetic Legacy of Prehistoric Dogs” and [recently published in the journal Science](#), reveals that dog domestication can be traced as far back 11,000 years ago, during the end of the last Ice Age, confirming that dogs were indeed domesticated before any other known species.

An international team of researchers “sequenced 27 ancient dog genomes and found that all dogs share a common ancestry distinct from present-day wolves, with limited gene flow from wolves since domestication but substantial dog-to-wolf gene flow.”

After examining the ancient canines’ genomes, the researchers compared them to each other and to their modern-day counterparts.

The researchers also analyzed the data alongside human genomes and found aspects of dog population history which mirror that of humans, because people took their animal companions with them when they moved. This includes "Levant-related ancestry in Africa and early agricultural Europe," the study notes.

However, some other aspects differ, such as the "impacts of steppe pastoralist expansions in West and East Eurasia and a near-complete turnover of Neolithic European dog ancestry."

The research states that by 11,000 years ago, "at least five major ancestry lineages had diversified, demonstrating a deep genetic history of dogs during the Paleolithic" era, and that these canine companions were widespread across the Northern Hemisphere at this time. While European colonialism spread the continent's dog varieties across the world, traces of the older breeds that preceded them remain.

The New Guinea singing dog is one representative of a lineage found in dogs across Asia and Oceania

Dr. Pontus Skoglund, co-author of the study and group leader of the Ancient Genomics laboratory at London's Crick Institute, [told BBC News](#):

"Dogs are really unique in being this quite strange thing if you think about it, when all people were still hunter gatherers, they domesticate what is really a wild carnivore - wolves are pretty frightening in many parts of the world."

"The question of why did people do that? How did that come about? That's what we're ultimately interested in."

Skoglund added that it was unclear when or where the domestication began. "Dog history has been so dynamic that you can't really count on it still being there to readily read in their DNA. We really don't know - that's the fascinating thing about it."

Greger Larson, a co-author from the University of Oxford, told BBC:

"Dogs are our oldest and closest animal partner. Using DNA from ancient dogs is showing us just how far back our shared history goes and will ultimately help us understand when and where this deep relationship began."

Dogs are thought to have evolved from wolves that ventured into human camps, likely seeking food. Those that were able to trust humans were more likely to survive and reproduce, since they were less likely to starve. As their relationship with humans strengthened and they were tamed, the canines began to serve as human companions, as well as assisting in hunting or guarding duties.

These findings suggest that all dogs derive from a single, now-extinct wolf population, or a few very closely related ones.