

09/04/21 Saturday

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US Judge Temporarily Blocks Texas Pro-Life Group From Enforcing New Abortion Ban
by [Gaby Arancibia](#)

Texas' newly signed legislation is considered one of the most restrictive abortion bans implemented since the 1973 passage of Roe v. Wade, which determined that state laws banning abortions were unconstitutional.

A Texas state judge provided a narrow win to abortion providers on Friday after enforcing a temporary restraining order against a pro-life group and its associates, effectively preventing the anti-abortion groups from enforcing the state's six-week abortion ban.

The ruling of District Judge Maya Guerra Gamble in Austin, Texas, offers a temporary reprieve from whistleblower lawsuits allowed under Texas' S.B.8. It specifically places a halt on suits from Texas Right to Life, the nonprofit group's legislative director and 100 other unidentified individuals.

The order was filed by Planned Parenthood South Texas Surgical Center, Planned Parenthood of Greater Texas Surgical Health Services, Planned Parenthood Center for Choice, and Planned Parenthood Center for Choice abortion provider Dr. Bhavik Kumar.

"The Court finds that S.B. 8 creates a probable, irreparable, and imminent injury in the interim for which plaintiffs and their physicians, staff and patients throughout Texas have no adequate remedy at law if plaintiffs, their physicians, and staff are subjected to private enforcement lawsuits against them under S.B.8," Gamble wrote in her [three-page ruling](#).

"The Court further finds that granting this request preserves the status quo preceding this controversy and follows precedent from the Supreme Court of Texas."

Planned Parenthood has praised the ruling.

"We are relieved that the Travis County district court has acted quickly to grant this restraining order against Texas Right to Life and anyone working with them as deputized enforcers of this draconian law," Helene Krasnoff, who serves as vice president for public policy litigation and law with the Planned Parenthood Federation of America, said in [statement](#).

"This restraining order offers protection to the brave health care providers and staff at Planned Parenthood health centers throughout Texas, who have continued to offer care as best they can within the law while facing surveillance, harassment, and threats from vigilantes eager to stop them."

"But make no mistake: this is not enough relief for Texas. Planned Parenthood will continue fighting for the millions of Texans affected by S.B. 8., doing everything we can under the law to restore Texans' federal constitutional right to access abortion," she concluded.

A preliminary injunction hearing on the matter is scheduled for September 13, with Gamble's order set to expire on September 17.

Uber, Lyft to Cover Legal Fees of Any Drivers Sued Over Texas Law

The Friday development came on the heels of reports indicating that ride-sharing giants Lyft and Uber would both be covering the legal fees for drivers who are sued under Texas' restrictive abortion law.

"Drivers are never responsible for monitoring where their riders go or why. Imagine being a driver and not knowing if you are breaking the law by giving someone a ride," Lyft said in a [release](#).

"Similarly, riders never have to justify, or even share, where they are going and why. Imagine being a pregnant woman trying to get to a healthcare appointment and not knowing if your driver will cancel on you for fear of breaking a law. Both are completely unacceptable."

Businesses like Uber, Airbnb and Square were born in recessions. Now, the effects of COVID-19 are forcing existing businesses to reinvent themselves, and some of today's most significant business obstacles will spark new startups offering innovative solutions. (AP Photo/Steven Senne)

The announcement also saw Lyft vow to donate \$1 million to Planned Parenthood.

A similar effort was subsequently aired by Uber, whose CEO Dara Khosrowshahi tweeted that "drivers shouldn't be put at risk for getting people where they want to go."

While Texas' legislation does not allow lawsuits to be filed against patients, it does allow for suits against individuals who are aiding in the procedure, which would include doctors, clinic workers and rideshare drivers for offering rides to the clinic. Offenders could be fined some \$10,000.

The Texas law was signed by Texas Gov. Gregg Abbott (R) in May, however, it took effect on Wednesday. The US Supreme Court later stunned many after it turned down an emergency request from abortion providers to block the initiative in a 5-4 vote.

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New York AG Suggests Emergency Housing for Basement Dwellers in City After Ida Deaths

NEW YORK (Sputnik) - New Yorkers living in unapproved basement apartments need to be given emergency housing by city authorities to stop more from being killed in floods like those caused by this week's Hurricane Ida, State Attorney General Letitia James said Friday.

"I'm calling on New York City to provide special emergency housing vouchers to all New Yorkers living in unregulated basement apartments," James said in an announcement issued via Twitter. "We saw the devastation caused by Ida, and we cannot risk another New Yorker losing their life due to unsafe but desperately needed housing."

At least seven people were killed in New York City between Wednesday and Thursday from flooding and other carnage caused by Ida. The hurricane originally struck the state of Louisiana before moving up the toward Canada, killing a total of 61 people across eight US states along the way.

Video footage shared online captured instances in which the city's treasured subway system was overwhelmed with the rushing waters, a development that forced authorities to temporarily shutter stations.

In New York City, most of the deaths occurred when people were trapped in flooded basement apartments. Mayor Bill de Blasio announced on Friday that going forward, when flash floods were forecast, the city would go door-to-door in neighborhoods with high concentrations of such apartments and evacuate residents.

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20 Years Later - Cartoon

The September 11 terrorist attacks were carried out by 19 hijackers associated with the al-Qaeda* terrorist group – 15 of whom had Saudi roots and close ties to high-ranking Saudi officials. In spite of these facts, the Saudi government has remained firm that it played no role in the attacks.

With the 20th anniversary of the 2001 terrorist attacks just days away, US President Joe Biden signed an executive order on Friday ordering government agencies to release declassified information related to the attacks.

The Friday release hit the airwaves as the American president was headed toward the US Gulf Coast to examine the aftermath of the devastating Hurricane Ida.

Biden's order specifically states he is "directing the Department of Justice (DoJ) and other relevant agencies to oversee a declassification review of documents related to the Federal Bureau of Investigation's September 11th investigations."

The DoJ had initially announced that it would be conducting a review of such information in August, just as Biden was being hit with [renewed backlash](#) – specifically from victims' families. The declassified information is expected to be publicly released over the next six months.

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'QAnon Shaman' in US Capitol Riot Pleads Guilty to Felony Obstruction - Justice Dept.

WASHINGTON (Sputnik) - Jacob Anthony Chansley, also known as "QAnon Shaman," pleaded guilty to crimes stemming from his participation in the Capitol building riot on January 6, the Department of Justice said on Friday.

"Jacob Anthony Chansley, a.k.a. Jake Angeli, 34, of Phoenix, Arizona, pleaded guilty today to obstruction of an official proceeding, a felony, for his role in the crimes related to the breach of the U.S. Capitol on Jan. 6, which disrupted a joint session of the U.S. Congress that was in the process of ascertaining and counting the electoral votes related to the presidential election," the Department said in a release.

Chansley was among the crowd that broke into the US Capitol building and proceeded to the Upper West Terrace inside the building where the election certification proceedings were taking place, the release said.

Chansley faces up to 20 years in prison and a period of supervised release. Sentencing has been scheduled for November 17, the release said.

The defendant has become the most recognized participant of the riot due to his extravagant outfit, which included bull horns and a fur headdress. He was arrested on January 9 and has been in custody ever since.

After being taken into custody, Chansley garnered headlines after he went on a hunger strike after the facility he was being held in failed to provide him with organic food. He was [ultimately moved](#) to the Alexandria Detention Center in Virginia after a federal judge ruled his jailers had to adhere to his dietary restrictions.

Taking part in a [March interview](#) for CBS News' "60 Minutes+," Chansley told viewers that he did not believe his actions during the storming of the Capitol constituted an "attack." The eyebrow-raising interview went on to see the self-avowed shaman explain that his participation in the riot was him attempting to "bring divinity" to the federal government.

The deadly January 6 riot saw thousands of Trump supporters enter the US Capitol in a bid to protest the lawmakers efforts to certify the 2020 election results. The chaos that ensued during the day's events saw authorities shot one protester dead, and later charge over 500 people for participating in the event.

Former US President Donald Trump raised alarm among his base after spouting unsubstantiated claims that the election results in several US states were invalid due to voter fraud, which effectively robbed him of an election victory.

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Israel Strikes Targets in Syria, Air Defense Destroys 21 of 24 Missiles - Russian Military

Washington (Sputnik) - The Israeli Air Force attacked targets in Syria, the Syrian air defense destroyed 21 of 24 missiles with Russian-made Buk and Pantsir systems, Rear Adm. Vadim Kulit, the deputy head of the Russian Center for the Reconciliation of Warring Parties in Syria, said on Friday.

"Around 1:30 a.m. on September 3, four Israeli Air Force F-15 tactical fighters struck 24 guided missiles on targets in the Syrian Arab Republic from Lebanese airspace," Kulit said at a briefing. He noted that the Syrian air defense on duty had destroyed 21 missiles from the Russian-made Buk-M2E and Pantsir-S1 systems in service with the Syrian Armed Forces.

Reports from Syrian state media at the time indicated that air defenses had engaged with multiple "[hostile missiles](#)" over the Damascus skyline, just moments after netizens relayed via social media reports that a jet aircraft had been heard over Lebanon.

Various video and photo content of the incidents were shared across social media early Friday. The latest comes on the heels of a report from open source researcher INTELsky that indicated an Israel was "highly likely" to carry out an attack on neighboring Syria. The notion was largely based on the fact that Israeli aircraft had been spotted surveilling the region.

US Aware of Iran's Interest in Targeting Current, Former US Officials - Blinken

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WASHINGTON (Sputnik) - The United States is aware of Iran's ongoing interest to plot against Americans, including current and former US officials, Secretary of State Antony Blinken said on Friday.

Earlier in the day, the United States imposed sanctions on four Iranian nationals with links to Iran's intelligence agency who allegedly plotted to kidnap US citizen Masih Alinejad.

"Beyond this specific plot, the United States remains aware of ongoing Iranian interest in targeting other American citizens, including current and former US officials," Blinken said in a news release.

Blinken added that the United States refuses to tolerate efforts to intimidate independent journalists or to silence dissidents, especially US citizens.

Earlier Friday, the Treasury Department listed Alireza Shahvaroghi Farahani, Mahmoud Khazein, Omid Noori and Kiya Sadeghi as the designated individuals.

The FBI accused the four men of participating in an alleged plot to kidnap Alinejad, an Iranian-American activist. The four were indicted in the US District Court for the Southern District of New York on several charges including conspiracy related to kidnapping.

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US Senator to Introduce Bill Honoring 13 Killed in Kabul with Congressional Gold Medals

WASHINGTON (Sputnik) - US Senator Steve Daines (R-MT) announced on Friday that he will introduce a bill awarding Congressional Gold Medals to the 13 American service members killed in the suicide attack at the Kabul airport last week.

"13 heroes bravely gave all to protect Americans and our allies. It's fitting for Congress to recognize their sacrifice in a historical moment for our nation with the Congressional Gold Medal," Daines said in a tweet.

Congressional Gold Medals are the highest award that the US Congress can bestow for distinguished achievements and contributions both in the military and civilian realms.

Although Daines – a Republican representing the US state of Montana – is currently the only sponsor of the bill, a spokesperson for his office told The Hill on Friday that he is looking for co-sponsors for the legislation on both sides of the aisle.

The bill will act as the Senate's companion legislation to a bill introduced in the House of Representatives on Tuesday by over 150 congresspeople, which would similarly award posthumous Congressional Gold Medals to the 13 fallen military service members.

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French Foreign Ministry Reports Possible Leak of Personal Data From Hacked Visa Website

Washington (Sputnik) - The website France-Visas was hacked last month and the personal information of some French visa applicants might have been stolen, the French foreign ministry said on Friday.

"On August 10, 2021, a module of the France-Visas platform was subject to a computer attack which was quickly neutralized. Nevertheless, personal data recorded when applying for a visa (e-mail addresses and identity data) could have been stolen," the ministry said in a statement. The leaked data does not include financial or any other sensitive information, so in case of misuse, it will have limited effects, the ministry added.

Together with the French interior ministry, the foreign ministry immediately implemented security measures to prevent similar incidents in the future, it said.

An investigation was opened into the cyberattack.