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Israeli TV producer calls for 'Gaza holocaust, gas chambers'

An Israeli broadcaster has caused outrage after he called for Israel to carry out a Holocaust against the people of Gaza.

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The backlash against Barashi's comments come as Israel carries out multiple war crimes and crimes against humanity in Gaza [Getty]



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A famous television producer in [Israel](#) has come under intense scrutiny following the uncovering of a series of inflammatory social media posts in which he called for a

Elad Barashi, who has worked in the Israeli entertainment industry for several years, sparked outrage after posting on X: "Good morning, let there be a Shoa (Holocaust) in Gaza."

In another post, he wrote, "I can't understand the people here in the State of Israel who don't want to fill Gaza with gas showers... or train cars... and finish this story! Let there be a Holocaust in Gaza."

"Who is the fool who says there are 'innocents' in Gaza? Who is the despicable scoundrel who wants to let them flee to Arab countries or Europe freely?"

The comments, originally written in Hebrew in February and widely circulated online, were met with immediate condemnation by human rights groups and Palestinian advocacy organisations. They described the remarks as openly genocidal and indicative of escalating dehumanisation in the rhetoric surrounding Israel's war on Gaza.

Barashi's posts appeared to advocate for actions directly referencing the methods used during the Nazi genocide of European Jews, including gas chambers and deportation trains.

The timing of the remarks amid a worsening humanitarian crisis in Gaza due to Israel's intensification of its war and blockade on Gaza further fuelled the backlash.

The controversial statements quickly drew the attention of international media, highlighting the gravity of Barashi's language. Critics have called for an official response from Israeli broadcasting authorities and questioned the silence of major networks associated with the producer.

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Barashi is mostly affiliated with Channel 14, a far-right television network widely seen as Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's favoured platform for interviews and messaging.

There has been no public apology or statement from Barashi as of yet, and his X account remains active. However, calls are mounting for his removal from public broadcasting and legal action under Israeli incitement laws.

Meanwhile, social media users — including some from Israel — have denounced the comments as a stain on the country's moral standing and an affront to the historical memory of the Holocaust itself.

The incident comes at a time of heightened tension and scrutiny over public discourse in Israel regarding Gaza, which has included what many consider as "genocidal incitement" by media figures and politicians.

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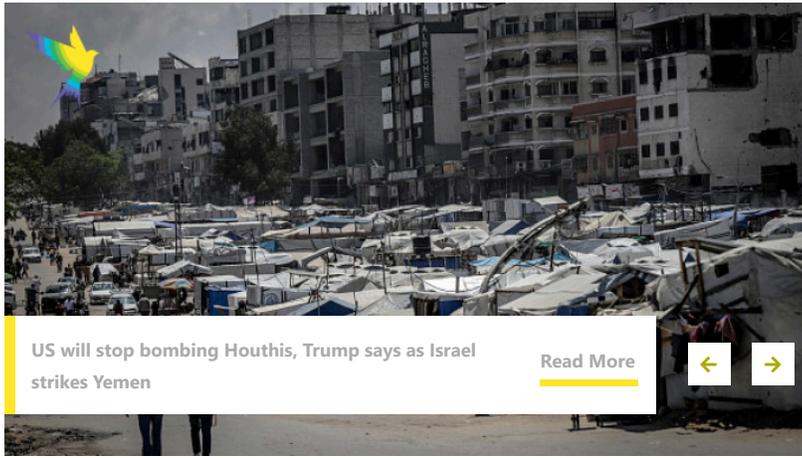
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Huge dust storm sweeps into Iran, affecting millions

A heavy dust storm swept into Iran from neighbouring Iraq on Tuesday, affecting millions and forcing schools and offices shut

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A heavy dust storm sweeps through the Iraqi capital, Baghdad [Muntazer Uday Sahib/NurPhoto via Getty]

Iranian authorities ordered schools and offices closed in seven western provinces Tuesday as [a dust storm swept in from neighbouring Iraq](#), with around 13 million people told to stay indoors.

The storm affected regional countries like Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and Qatar.

Khuzestan, Kermanshah, Ilam and Kurdistan provinces were all affected, and state television cited local officials as blaming the closures on high levels of accumulated dust.

Government and private offices also shut in several provinces including Kermanshah and Ilam, as well as Khuzestan in the southwest.

Zanjan in the northeast and Bushehr in the south were also hit.

Bushehr, nearly 1,100 kilometres (680 miles) south of Tehran, was given an Air Quality Index of 108 on Tuesday, rated "poor for sensitive groups".

That figure is more than four times higher than the concentration of air microparticles deemed acceptable by the World Health Organization.

Iran's meteorological authorities said the conditions were caused by "the movement of a large mass of dust from Iraq towards western Iran".

State television reported low visibility in some areas and urged people to remain inside and wear face masks if they had to go out.

Last month, a similar dust storm in Iraq grounded flights and sent thousands of people to hospital with breathing problems.

On Monday, Iran's IRNA state news agency said more than 240 people in Khuzestan province had been treated for respiratory issues because of the dust.

A spokesperson for the emergency services also told Tasnim news agency on Tuesday that nine people had died as a result of storms in Iran over the past seven days, ending on Monday.

"Four of the deaths were caused by strong winds and falling objects, and five were caused by lightning strikes," it added.

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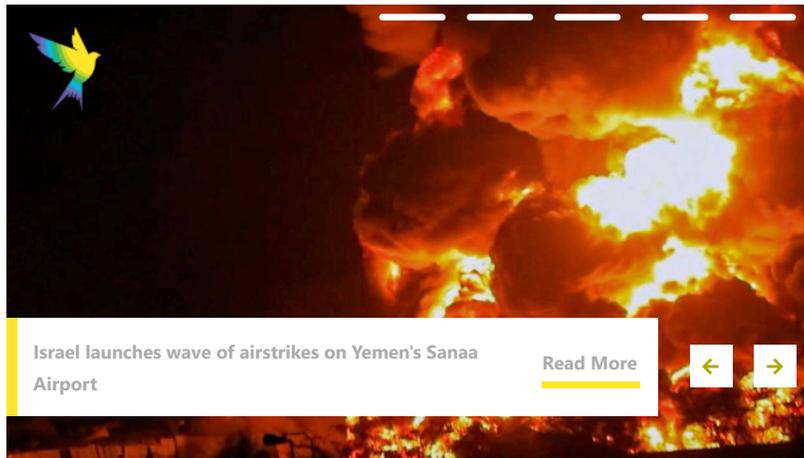
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Sudan government declares UAE 'aggressor state', cuts ties

Sudan's army-aligned government has cut off ties with the UAE for the Gulf state's alleged support for the RSF paramilitary group in the country's war

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Sudan's army-aligned government has repeatedly accused the UAE of supplying the RSF with weapons - claims that Abu Dhabi has denied [Getty]

Sudan's army-aligned government on Tuesday severed diplomatic ties with the United Arab Emirates, declaring the Gulf country an "aggressor state", the [Sudanese defence minister](#) said.

In a televised speech, Yassin Ibrahim said Sudan was "severing diplomatic relations with the UAE", withdrawing its ambassador and shutting its embassy and consulate in the Gulf country.

He accused the country of violating Sudan's sovereignty through its "proxy", the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF), which has been at war with the army since April 2023.

"The entire world has witnessed, for more than two years, the crime of aggression against Sudan's sovereignty, territorial integrity and the safety of its citizens by the UAE, acting through its local proxy, the terrorist RSF militia," the minister said.

Sudan's army-aligned government has repeatedly [accused the UAE of supplying the RSF with weapons](#) - claims that Abu Dhabi has denied.

The Sudanese government's decision comes hours after [drones struck Port Sudan](#) - the country's de facto capital which until recently had been spared the violence - for the third consecutive day.

Ibrahim said the UAE escalated its involvement by supplying the RSF with "strategic advanced weapons" after battlefield victories by the army, which in March [reclaimed control over the capital Khartoum](#).

He added that Sudan would "respond to the aggression by all means necessary to preserve the country's sovereignty" and "protect civilians".

The war in Sudan has killed tens of thousands, displaced 13 million and created the world's largest displacement and hunger crises.

The conflict has effectively divided the country in two, with the army controlling the north, east and centre while the RSF dominates nearly all of the western Darfur region and parts of the south.

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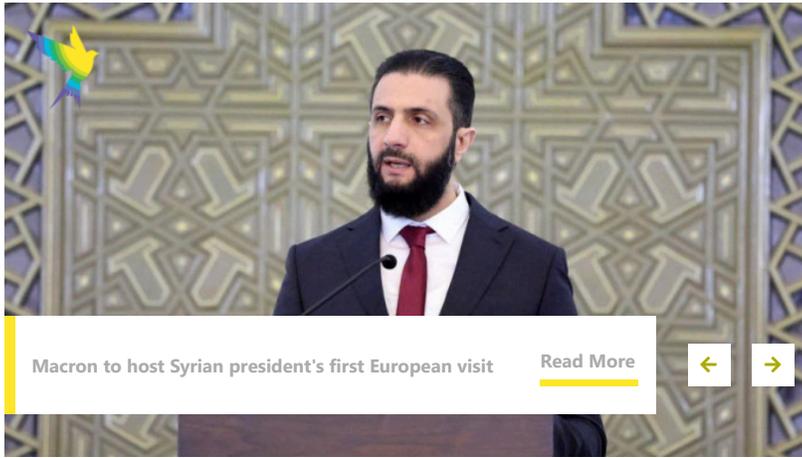
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Dozens of former Eurovision contestants call for Israel ban over Gaza war

Over 70 former Eurovision contestants have called on the EBU to ban Israel from this year's contest, accusing its broadcaster of complicity in the war on Gaza.

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Mae Muller, who represented the UK in 2023, was a signatory of Tuesday's letter [Getty]



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More than 70 former Eurovision contestants, including UK entrants Mae Muller and Bianca Nicholas, have signed an open letter urging the European Broadcasting Union (EBU) to exclude Israel from this year's Eurovision Song Contest, citing Israel's brutal war on Gaza.

Published on Tuesday by Artists for Palestine UK ahead of the Eurovision finals on 17 May, the letter accuses Israel's public broadcaster KAN of complicity in what the signatories describe as "genocide against the Palestinian people in Gaza".

The artists argue that allowing Israel to participate in the EBU was "normalising and whitewashing its crimes".

"We refuse to allow music to be used to whitewash crimes against humanity," the letter reads. "The EBU must act now and prevent further discredit and disruption to the festival."

Among the signatories are Charlie McGettigan, who won Eurovision for Ireland in 1994, Portugal's 2017 winner Salvador Sobral, and Thea Garrett, Malta's 2010 entrant.

The artists include performers, songwriters, lyricists, and creatives from across Europe.

"I believe that the Israeli government has been and is inflicting genocide on the people of Palestine, and for that reason, Israel should be barred from competing in this year's Eurovision Song Contest," said McGettigan.

The letter also claims that the inclusion of KAN in the 2024 contest and the "total impunity" for Israel's delegation made last year's event "the most politicised and unpleasant in the competition's history".

Widespread backlash

Criticism of KAN includes its 2024 broadcast commentary, which drew widespread backlash after it described Norwegian band Gåte as "sons and daughters of Amalek", invoking a biblical term previously used by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to refer to Palestinians.

Gåte, who signed the letter, said: "We were there. We saw what happened. We spoke to the EBU about it." The artists further accused the EBU of double standards, citing its 2022 decision to ban Russia following its invasion of Ukraine.

"It can't be one rule for Russia and a completely different rule for Israel," said Garrett. "You bomb, you're out."

Some of the signatories have previously voiced political concerns about Eurovision's platforming of Israel. Salvador Sobral, who holds the record for the highest Eurovision score, appeared at the 2024 Goya Awards with a "Gaza" sticker and called for an end to the arms trade and a ceasefire.

Mae Muller, who represented the UK in 2023, wrote on social media after that year's final: "Watching news reports on Israel invading Rafah directly after watching them celebrate their 328 votes on Eurovision is the most dystopian s*** I have ever witnessed."

The *New Arab* has contacted the EBU for comment on Tuesday's letter.

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Calls to ban Israel from Eurovision have intensified following its devastating war on Gaza, which has killed tens of thousands of Palestinians and plunged the enclave into a humanitarian catastrophe.

Iceland's national broadcaster joined those of Slovenia and Spain in publicly opposing Israel's participation this year.

Despite mounting opposition, Eurovision Director Martin Green has said there were no plans to block Israel's participation.

Israel's contestant this year, Yuval Raphael, an alleged 7 October survivor, is set to perform a song about the aftermath of the Hamas-led attack, despite Eurovision's official ban on political messages.

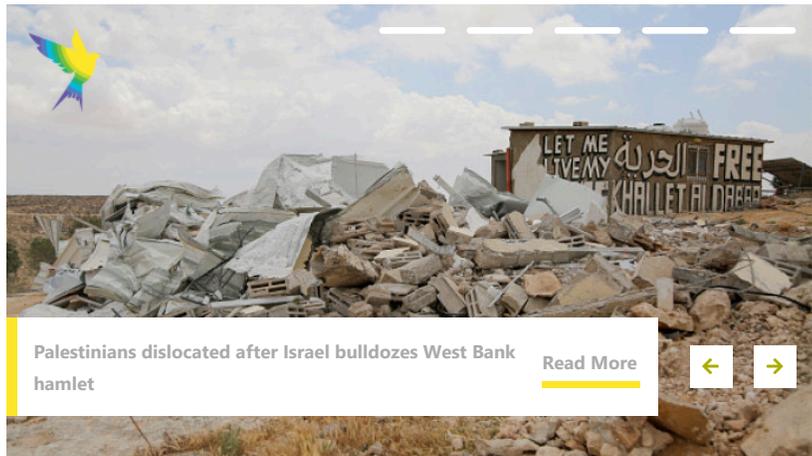
In last year's competition, Israeli singer Eden Golan came in fifth place amid widespread controversy. The Israeli delegation was accused of harassing contestants and journalists who criticised Israel's actions in Gaza.

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Turkey thwarts 1,300 pagers bound for Lebanon days after attacks – report

Turkey reportedly intercepted 1,300 pager devices rigged with explosives en route to Lebanon, days after similar devices were used in deadly attacks by Israel.

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Turkey thwarted a bomb plot after seizing a shipment of pagers in Istanbul [Getty]

Turkey's National Intelligence Organisation (MIT) reportedly intercepted 1,300 weaponised pagers intended to kill or wound alleged [Hezbollah](#) members in Lebanon, just days after the [Israeli pager attacks](#) in September last year.

Details which emerged a year later revealed that 1,300 pager devices and 710 chargers rigged with explosives were seized from a cargo at Istanbul Airport on their way to Lebanon from [Hong Kong](#).

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The operation to seize the devices followed an Israeli attack that killed at least 51 people and wounded 3,000 others in Lebanon, including women, children and medics, after pagers and other wireless communication devices detonated.

Turkish outlet *Sabah* revealed that MIT had received details about the shipment and started inspecting ports and airports, leading them to discover that the delivery was set for 27 September.

Turkish authorities found that the shipment had arrived in Istanbul a day before the Lebanon explosions and weighed 850kg. The shipment consisted of 61 boxes and was labelled under the name of a shipment of food choppers.

Istanbul's prosecutor's office called for the shipment to be confiscated and for it to be transferred to a crime lab for further analysis after its authorities suspected it had bomb equipment in it.

Analysis later revealed that three grams of a white explosive material were placed inside each pager's battery clock, along with detonator fuses. Some batteries further contained a brown explosive material that was 'injected' into them while it was still in liquid metal form.

Experts in Turkey also found that the devices could be detonated remotely through signals or when they overheated.

Lebanon's former Prime Minister Najib Mikati reportedly thanked Turkey's President Recep Tayyip Erdogan in December last year for thwarting the bomb plot, Turkish media reported.

The September pager attacks in Lebanon were particularly devastating due to their deceptive nature. The devices reportedly emitted a notification alert, causing victims to instinctively hold the pagers close to their faces to inspect the message, at which point the devices detonated.

The proximity of the blasts caused severe facial injuries, with shrapnel tearing into victims' eyes, resulting in widespread blindness and permanent disabilities.

In November last year, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu confessed to ordering the deadly pager explosions during a cabinet meeting.

Netanyahu also last month gifted US Senator [John Fetterman](#) a silver-plated pager, in celebration of the attack. In a video shared by the prime minister's office, Fetterman said that he "loved" the operation in which Israel launched a coordinated attack against Hezbollah.

Last week, Israel honoured three masked Mossad operatives for their role in the deadly and indiscriminate operation.

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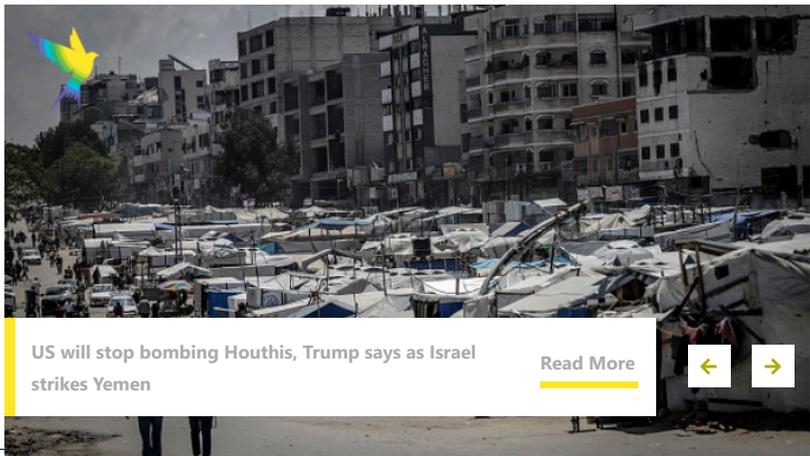
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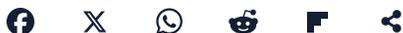
Germany's Merz elected chancellor after surprise setback

Germany's conservative leader Friedrich Merz won a second vote in parliament Tuesday to become the country's 10th post-war chancellor

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Merz has long vowed to revive Germany's ailing economy and strengthen Berlin's role in Europe [Tobias Schwarz/AFP via Getty]

Germany's conservative leader Friedrich Merz won a nail-biter second vote in parliament Tuesday to become chancellor after he lost the first round in a stunning early setback.

Merz, 69, scored an absolute majority of 325 against 289 in the second secret vote in the lower house of parliament to become the new leader of Europe's biggest economy.

Merz's eventual win was bittersweet as the initial defeat - the first such outcome in Germany's post-war history - pointed to rumblings of discontent within his uneasy

A *Bild* daily headline called the outcome of a day of high political drama "the Happy End after the Betrayal".

Merz takes over at the helm of a coalition between his CDU/CSU alliance and the centre-left Social Democrats (SPD) of former chancellor Olaf Scholz.

President Frank-Walter Steinmeier appointed Merz as post-war Germany's 10th chancellor before the new premier's expected visit to Paris and then Warsaw on Wednesday.

"With a slight delay, but all the more heartfelt, my congratulations on your election," Steinmeier told Merz at Bellevue Palace in Berlin. "I wish you every success in what lies ahead."

Merz's bumpy victory caps a long ambition to lead Germany, which was first foiled decades ago by party rival Angela Merkel who went on to serve as chancellor for 16 years.

'Power vacuum over'

Nonetheless, his eventual triumph means that "the six-month power vacuum at the heart of Europe is over," wrote analyst Holger Schmieding of Berenberg Bank.

Schmieding said that Merz's initial setback "suggests that he cannot rely on full support from the two parties backing his coalition... That will sow some doubts about his ability to pursue the policy agenda."

But, "despite today's temporary upset," he added, "Merz has a proven ability to recover from temporary setbacks. For example, it had taken him three attempts to become head of his CDU party - but he still made it in the end."

The far-right Alternative for Germany (AfD) especially had cheered the initial political blow to Merz, who has vowed to restore stability in Berlin after six months of political turmoil



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since Scholz's government collapsed in November

"Merz should step aside and the way should be cleared for a general election," AfD co-leader Alice Weidel said earlier in the day, calling the first-round result a "good day for Germany".

Merz has vowed a crackdown on irregular immigration, in part to reduce the appeal of the AfD, which was last week designated a "right-wing extremist" group by Germany's domestic spy service.

The first secret vote was expected to be a formality but turned to disaster for Merz when he failed to muster the required absolute majority, falling short by six votes.

The early setback for Merz stunned Germany and set off frantic crisis meetings in the Bundestag, where many feared the start of a new, spiralling political drama.

'Profound upheaval'

Merz has long vowed to revive Germany's ailing economy and strengthen Berlin's role in Europe as it responds to rapid change since US President Donald Trump returned to power.

Trump has heaped pressure on European allies, complaining they spend too little on NATO and imposing tariffs that are especially painful to export power Germany.

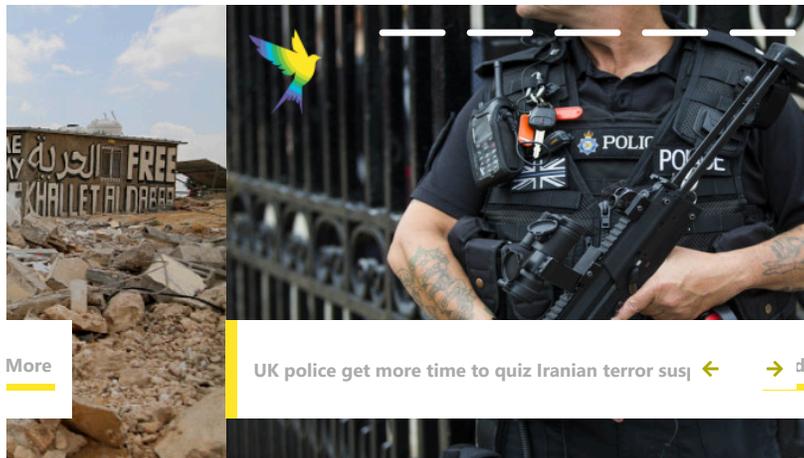
CDU parliamentary leader Jens Spahn had emphasised the urgency of a new government taking office, given the economic and geopolitical turbulence.

"The whole of Europe, perhaps even the whole world, is watching this second round of voting," Spahn said before the second vote, urging MPs to "be aware of this special responsibility".

Merz, who boasts a strong business background but has never held a government leadership post, said on Monday: "We live in times of profound change, of profound upheaval... and of great uncertainty.

"And that is why we know that it is our historic obligation to lead this coalition to success."

Capital Economics analyst Franziska Palmas however argued Merz's initial setback "does leave Merz severely weakened and suggests that hopes for more stability in German politics may be disappointed".



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