

**NEWS IN BRIEF 14**

May 11th – 22nd 2026

## THE GUARDIAN

The far-right activist Tommy Robinson told tens of thousands of supporters to prepare for the “battle of Britain” during a rally in London on Saturday.

Robinson, whose real name is Stephen Yaxley-Lennon, drew tens of thousands of supporters on to the streets of central London for the second year running in an event where Islamophobic and ethnonationalist hate speech and flyers were distributed to the crowds.

Organisers claimed that millions had attended his “unite the kingdom” march, but police estimated the number of demonstrators to be far lower, at about 60,000. Last September’s march was attended by 150,000 people.

## LOS ANGELES TIMES

The World Health Organization on Sunday declared the Ebola disease outbreak caused by a rare virus in the Democratic Republic of Congo and neighboring Uganda a public health emergency of international concern, after more than 300 suspected cases and at least 88 deaths.

The WHO said the outbreak does not meet the criteria of a pandemic emergency like COVID-19, and advised against the closure of international borders.

## THE ECONOMIST

Sir Keir Starmer faced the most serious threat yet to his leadership of Britain’s Labour Party, and thus as prime minister, after several ministers resigned from the government and party rivals circled to launch a leadership challenge. This came after Labour suffered a heavy defeat in elections in Scotland and Wales and council elections in England, which suggested that the populist-right Reform UK is on course to be the biggest party at a general election. One of the ministers who resigned, Wes Streeting, the health secretary, said it was clear Sir Keir would not lead Labour into that next election.

## BBC NEWS

A US official has struck down security funding allotted for President Trump's White House ballroom project from a proposed spending package, in a win for Democrats.

The Senate rule-keeper ruled against the use of taxpayer funds in the bill on Saturday, after Democrats argued that security money doesn't belong in it.

Trump has said private donors will fund the \$400m ballroom as Republicans have sought to use a portion of \$1bn in taxpayer funds for Secret Service security upgrades.

Republicans are seeking the funds to bolster presidential safety following a shooting at a gala Trump attended in April at a hotel. The administration also tried to fast-track the project after the incident.

## CBS NEWS

High gas prices pushing more Americans to public transit



<https://www.cbsnews.com/video/high-gas-prices-pushing-more-americans-to-public-transit/>

## ABC NEWS

Trump's takeaways from high-stakes summit in China with Xi



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z5WpJ83h9f4>

THE ECONOMIC TIMES  
(India)

South Korea's first-ever humanoid robot monk Gabi takes Buddhist vows



[https://youtu.be/uav4xbE\\_HqE?si=Kcve2ZlFZQo2lrEa](https://youtu.be/uav4xbE_HqE?si=Kcve2ZlFZQo2lrEa)

**The release of the UFO files won't satisfy conspiracy theorists – but it certainly serves Trump's agenda***The Guardian*, Sat 16 May 2026

The US Department of Defense released the first batch of its UFO files last week at the direction of the president, Donald Trump, who promised to make them public “based on the tremendous interest shown”.

Trump's right, of course. Nearly half of Americans believe aliens have visited Earth, and many believe that the government is hoarding the evidence in some shadowy laboratory or military base. This conspiracy began in 1947 at Roswell, New Mexico, when the Roswell army airfield issued a news release about the crash of a “flying disc”, and has never truly gone away.

But why now? The release of these files is partly due to a decade of sustained pressure by a group of dubious UFO lobbyists, such as “whistleblower” Luis Elizondo, Jeremy Corbell and Blink-182's Tom DeLonge, who have tapped into the US's bedrock of unreality and made a fortune in book deals, History Channel “documentaries” and speaking gigs.

The UFO conspiracy also happens to be perfect for Trump. Releasing the files fits neatly into his playbook. Ever since descending the escalator in Trump Tower in 2015, the president has positioned himself as a political outsider who will expose the dark hand of the deep state that pulls the strings from the shadows.

Conspiracy theories are closed feedback loops and offer convenient get-out clauses. If the files contain proof that the men from Ork are with us, Trump emerges as the hero. But when these files inevitably don't provide the smoking raygun, he can claim that the deep state is so deep it can even hide information from the president.

The UFO conspiracy also pleases his cronies. The vice-president, JD Vance, said he has an “obsession” with UFOs, but he doesn't think their pilots are little green men – he thinks they are demons. The secretary of state, Marco Rubio, suggested in a UFO documentary that the government could be in possession of alien tech. The flying saucers also provide a decent hiding spot for Trump, a galactically unpopular president who is suffocating in scandal and calamity. These files are a great distraction from his unlawful actions in Venezuela and Iran.

And if the first government release is anything to go by, then ufologists worldwide are going to be very disappointed. So far, the files have produced a rather underwhelming collection of unsubstantiated close encounters, images and videos featuring grainy blobs and blurs that don't come close to evidence of an alien invasion.

[...] I was originally swayed by the modern UFO wave when the New York Times revealed in 2017 that the Pentagon had a secret UFO programme. The subsequent UFO hearings, featuring whistleblowers making outlandish claims about stowed spaceships and their “non-human” pilots, convinced me to travel across the US chasing aliens. By the end of my journey I had learned far more about human beings, especially those from the US, than about extraterrestrials.

Far from being a cosmic visitor, ET represents a giant slice of Americana. It began shortly after the second world war, when the US emerged as the world's superpower. Such a position creates a paradox. When you're at your most powerful, you're at your most vulnerable. Ask any alpha lion in the savannah.

The postwar US was a place of fear, witch-hunts, blacklists and red scares followed by decades of scandal – think the JFK assassination, Vietnam and Watergate. The Hollywood sci-fi boom overlaid this terror of the other, of shadowy puppeteers. All of this history explains why aliens permeate the American mind.

Even the most sophisticated and credentialed UFO enthusiasts appear to be influenced by their imagination and emotions rather than evidence. When I spoke to the Harvard astronomer Avi Loeb, who once speculated that a comet passing through the solar system could be debris from an alien spaceship, he envisioned aliens as enlightened sages who will descend on us with omniscient wisdom and shepherd us to a utopia. This struck me as a materialist version of god. Religion dressed in a white coat.

This is not to say that conspiracies don't exist. They do. But they usually take place right in the open. Believe it or not, the US government does not need to screw you behind your back. It does it straight to your face. In 2008, greedy Wall Street bankers wilfully broke the economy, the government bailed them out and people paid for it. It has spent most of the past two decades tearing up the social contract, and pointing the finger at minorities and migrants.

[...] Americans should stop thinking about what their government might be hiding in the shadows and get angry about what it is actually doing under their noses. The truth is out there – it's right in front of you.

<b>a 'genda</b> = ici, goals, plans	<b>to hoard:</b> amasser	<b>a 'whistle,blower:</b> un lanceur d'alerte
<b>to tap into sth:</b> exploiter qch	<b>'bedrock:</b> socle, base	<b>'playbook</b> = strategy
<b>the deep state</b> = an alleged (prétendu, présumé) secret network of especially nonelected government officials and sometimes private entities operating extralegally to influence and enact government policy		
<b>cronies</b> / 'krəʊniz/: copains	<b>flying saucer</b> / 'sɔːsə/: soucoupe volante	
<b>if the first government release is anything to go by:</b> si l'on en croit, si l'on se fie à la première publication du gouvernement		
<b>,under'whelming:</b> franchement décevant	<b>to be swayed by (a wave):</b> être emporté par	
<b>A,meri'cana</b> = materials concerning or characteristic of America, its civilization, or its culture		
<b>to ,over'lay:</b> recouvrir, se superposer à	<b>to screw sb (▲ slang)</b> : rouler, arnaquer	