VOA NEWS

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From Washington, this is VOA news. Hello, I'm Steve Miller.

U.S. President Donald Trump struck a blow against the 2015 Iran nuclear agreement on Friday in defiance of other world powers, choosing not to certify that Tehran was complying with the agreement.

President Trump said his goal is to ensure Iran is never able to obtain a nuclear weapon.

"Based on the factual record I have put forward, I am announcing today that we cannot and will not make this certification. We will not continue down a path whose predictable conclusion is more violence, more terror, and the very real threat of Iran's nuclear breakout. That is why I am directing my administration to work closely with Congress and our allies to address the deal's many serious flaws so that the Iranian regime can never threaten the world with nuclear weapons."

While Trump did not pull the United States out of the agreement aimed at preventing Iran from developing a nuclear bomb, he gave the U.S. Congress 60 days to decide whether to reimpose economic sanctions on Tehran that were lifted under the pact.

But, "in the event we are not able to reach a solution working with Congress and our allies, then the agreement will be terminated. It is under continuous review, and our participation can be cancelled by me, as President, at any time.

That would increase tension with Iran as well as put Washington at odds with other signatories of the accord, such as Britain, France, Germany, Russia, China and the EU.

This is VOA news.

A new video released from the northern Syrian city of Raqqa shows scores of civilians fleeing in fear from areas held by the Islamic State group. They were seen reaching a neighborhood controlled by U.S.-backed fighters.

In addition, VOA's Miller Sega has news from elsewhere within the city.

Some 100 fighters from the Islamic State group handed themselves over to U.S.-backed fighters as fighting continued with remaining gunmen in a pocket inside the city.

U.S.-backed fighters of the Syrian Democratic Forces have been on the offensive in Raqqa since June and have so far captured more than 80 percent of the city under the cover of airstrikes by the U.S.-led coalition.

IS still controls the city's stadium that is believed to be a jail run by extremists, as well as the National Hospital and a small part of northern Raqqa.

Miller Sega, VOA news.

Kenyan opposition leader Raila Odinga said democracy was in jeopardy in Africa because pro-democracy activists are no longer sure that they have support of the West.

Odinga made the comments in London Friday afternoon during a lecture on the political situation in his country at a public forum.

Odinga, whose legal challenge led to the court to nullify President Uhuru Kenyatta's re-election, explained why he withdrew from the October 26 presidential re-run.

"There is no point in going to an election whose outcome is determined and the ritual where the competitor is sitting in the room ...."

But in an interview in London on the same day, Odinga told the AP he is willing to return if reforms to the electoral commission are made.

Nigeria has decided to start issuing visas on arrivals for all Africans. It's a major step toward the goal of free movement on the continent.

The African Union has advocated for a "single African passport" that aims to improve intra-African trade and has called for "the abolishment of visa requirements for all African citizens in all African countries by 2018."

Las Vegas police said Friday that there was no six-minute gap between when a gunman shot a security guard and opened fire on an outdoor concert two weeks ago, revising their previous timeline for the deadliest mass shooting in the U.S.

Initial reports from the department said there was a six-minute gap. This raised questions as to whether police and hotel security could have acted more quickly to prevent the casualties in the October 1 attack.

Gunman Stephen Paddock injured 546 individuals and killed 58 before killing himself.

From Studio 24 in Washington, I'm Steve Miller.

That's the latest world news from VOA.