VOA NEWS

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

Zimbabwe's state-run newspaper has published photos of President Robert Mugabe meeting with army commander Constantino Chiwenga as talks continue on a resolution to the political turmoil and the likely end to Mugabe's decades-long rule.

Chatham House analyst Knox Chitiyo cautions against speculation but negotiations could indicate "there are strong rumors that he will be stepping down in the next few days. I think this still needs to be verified but it's, it's very, very clear that we're talking a matter of days now."

Chitiyo says the military has wanted a dignified exit for Mugabe, who has ruled since independence from white majority rule in 1980.

At least 10 people have been killed and many more wounded by a suicide bomb attack near a political gathering in Kabul, Afghanistan.

A city police spokesman told VOA eight security officers, including a senior police commander, were among the dead in the attack.

The bomber wanted to enter an event hall where supporters of Balkh province Governor Attah Mohammad Noort had gathered to "honor" his national services. But tight security around the venue prompted the attacker to blow himself up at an outer security post.

The Islamic State terrorist group claimed responsibility for the attack.

Cambodia's Supreme Court has dissolved the country's main opposition party in a ruling likely to cement Prime Minister Hun Sen's already expansive grip on power.

Thursday's unanimous ruling by the nine-member court also bans 118 members of the now-defunct Cambodia National Rescue Party from any political activity for the next five years.

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Mohammed Yusuf reports Kenya's Supreme Court is in its last day of hearing arguments on two petitions contesting results of the October 26 presidential election.

The two petitions were filed by a former lawmaker, Harun Mwau, and two human rights defenders, Njonjo Mue and Khalef Khalifa. The petitioners argued the electoral commission committed illegalities by going ahead with the election despite opposition leader Raila Odinga pulling out of the race.

The human rights defenders, Mue and Khalifa, argued the electoral commission did not conduct the presidential election in all 290 constituencies as required by the constitution.

The commission failed to deliver voting materials to some opposition strongholds in the west of the country due to violent protests.

But Attorney General Githu Muigai said this should not be a reason to annul the election.

The Supreme Court is expected to rule Monday on whether Kenyatta's win will stand or be annulled again.

Mohammed Yusuf, for VOA news, Nairobi.

French President Emmanuel Macron has invited Lebanon's recently resigned Prime Minister Saad Hariri for visit. He is expected to depart within 48 hours.

Lebanese President Michel Aoun refused to accept Hariri's resignation, accusing the Saudis of holding him hostage. Edward Yeranian reports that Saudi Arabia still denies the charge.

Saudi Foreign Minister Adel Jubeir has again insisted Lebanese Prime Minister Saad Hariri is "not being detained against his will" in Saudi Arabia, while accusing Iran and its Hezbollah proxy militia of trying to dominate Lebanon and meddling in Yemen and Bahrain.

Saudi Arabia regards Hezbollah as a terrorist organization and last week accused Lebanon of having declared war on it because of Hezbollah's role [and another] in other Arab countries.

Russia's Justice [Minister] Ministry has warned several U.S. government-funded news outlets they could be designated as "foreign agents" under a new bill that is yet to be fully approved. Philip Alexiou has the story.

The bill comes in response to U.S. demands that Russian state-funded RT TV register as a foreign agent.

The Justice Ministry said Thursday it has notified the U.S. government-funded Voice of America and Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, along with its regional outlets, that they could be designated as foreign agents under the new law.

The bill was endorsed by Russia's lower house on Wednesday but needs to be approved by the upper house and signed by President Vladimir Putin to become law.

Philip Alexiou, VOA news.

Evidence is emerging of possible attempts by Moscow to influence Britain's referendum on leaving the European Union.

Researchers have identified thousands of social media accounts that promoted anti-EU messages or sought to whip up political and racial tensions.

I'm Steve Miller in Washington.

That's the latest world news from VOA.