VOA NEWS

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From Washington, this is VOA news. I'm Jonathan Jones reporting.

A suicide blast killed at least six civilians in eastern Afghanistan Sunday and wounded 13 others.

The bomber was on a motorcycle and apparently tried to reach the venue of a massive pro-government rally in Jalalabad, the capital of Nangarhar province. But Afghan security forces intercepted him far away from the event, prompting him to donate explosives strapped to his body.

A provincial government spokesman told VOA that one woman and a child were among the dead. There have been no claims of responsibility for the violence.

Kurdish forces in Syria announced Sunday that they had regained control of a key area east of the Euphrates River from Islamic State militants.

The People's Protection Units, or YPG, thanked Russian forces as well as the United States-led coalition for logistical and air support in retaking Deir al-Zour's eastern countryside.

At a news conference on Sunday, the group's spokesperson said that he had hoped for more coordination, however, with the two international powers.

President Trump has not yet made a decision on whether he will officially recognize Jerusalem as the capital of Israel. At least that's what his adviser and son-in-law Jared Kushner said Sunday.

Kushner spoke at an annual conference on U.S. policy in the Middle East in Washington. He said, "He's still looking at a lot of different facts, and when he makes his decision, he'll be the one to want to tell you, not me."

Kushner's comments follow reports in the past few days that Trump, indeed, will most likely declare Jerusalem as the capital of Israel during a speech scheduled for Wednesday.

This is VOA news.

White House national security adviser General HR McMaster says the possibility of war with nuclear armed North Korea "is increasing every day." He said dictator Kim Jong Un is "getting closer and closer and there's not much time left."

McMaster spoke at a forum on Saturday in California.

"And so it's immensely important that we work together with all of our allies, partners, everyone internationally, to convince Kim Jong Un that the continued pursuit of these capabilities is a dead end for him and his regime."

McMaster said Americans should feel safe attending the Winter Olympics in South Korea in February. He said President Trump is sending a "strong, presidential delegation to the Olympics."

The U.N. refugee agency reports the number of refugees who have fled into Zambia to escape militant violence in two provinces of the Democratic Republic of Congo has now topped 12,000.

Correspondent Lisa Schlein reports for VOA from UNHCR headquarters in Geneva.

The agency reports more than 8,400 Congolese refugees have arrived in Zambia in just the last three months, indicating a worsening of the situation in southeastern Democratic Republic of Congo.

Government forces reportedly are killing many civilians in response to the rebellion in Haut-Katanga and Tanganyika Provinces against the continued rule of the country's president, Joseph Kabila.

To put the increasing instability in the country in perspective, UNHCR spokesman Babar Baloch notes more than four million people are internally displaced in DRC. He tells VOA within the past month alone, 200,000 more people have fled their homes.

"When you do the math, the rough total of internal displacement comes to around 6,500 people being displaced each day."

Baloch says some 80 percent of the refugees are women and children, driven out by the extreme brutality of rampaging militias.

Lisa Schlein, for VOA news, Geneva.

In a series of Sunday morning tweets from the White House, President Trump attacked his own Federal Bureau of Investigation and he said he never asked then-FBI Director James Comey to stop investigating his one-time national security adviser Michael Flynn about his contacts with Russia's ambassador to Washington.

"The FBI's reputation," said President Trump, "is in Tatters, the worst in History!"

There is more on these and other late breaking and developing stories, from around the world, around the clock, at voanews.com and on the VOA news mobile app. I'm Jonathan Jones reporting from the world headquarters of the Voice of America in Washington.

That's the latest world news from VOA.