VOA NEWS

December 21, 2017

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

President Trump and his Republican supporters in Congress are celebrating the passage of a U.S. tax overhaul. It's the first major legislative victory of Trump's presidency.

The bill permanently cuts corporate taxes, temporarily cuts taxes paid by American wage and salary earners and increases the U.S. national debt by at least $1 trillion over a decade.

Democrats slammed the legislation as mortgaging America's future at home and abroad in order to pad the pockets of the wealthy.

But Republicans argued the tax cuts will rev up the economy and make American businesses more competitive at home and abroad.

The United Nations special human rights envoy to Myanmar says the government is barring her from visiting the country to assess the situation in the East Asian nation.

The announcement Wednesday by special envoy Yanghee Lee coincides with Myanmar's military disclosing the discovery of 10 bodies in a mass grave in northwestern Rakhine state, [where] which more than 600,000 Rohingya Muslims called home before they were forced to flee to neighboring Bangladesh to escape a brutal military offensive.

The grave was discovered Monday in the village of Inn Din. The army says it's conducting an investigation.

The South Korean-born Lee said she is "puzzled and disappointed" by the government's decision, which she says gives "a strong indication that there must be something terribly awful happening in Rakhine."

Roman Catholic Cardinal Bernard Law forced to resign in 2002 as archbishop of Boston over a sex abuse scandal has died. He died early Wednesday in Rome. He was 86.

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Hundreds of South Sudanese refugees have entered the Democratic Republic of Congo this week after South Sudanese government forces captured a rebel base near the border.

Correspondent Jason Patinkin has more from the town of Aba in the northern DRC.

Mary Awate fled her home to the forests when the clashes began. With her children to take care of, she spent two days hiding in the bush before reaching the Congo border on Tuesday.

She said, "We just heard the sound of the gun, especially these big ones, so everyone just started running in the bush."

The new arrivals fled to the Congolese town of Aba. More than 30,000 people had already gone there since the start of South Sudan's civil war in December 2013.

More than two million people have fled South Sudan during the war. There have been many ceasefires declared, but none have been observed.

Jason Patinkin, for VOA news, Aba, Democratic Republic of Congo.

The Ugandan parliament has overwhelmingly voted to eliminate presidential age limits, paving the way for one of Africa's longest serving leaders to rule until 2031 by a vote of 315 to 62.

The lawmakers amended the constitution to remove a measure that prevented anyone younger than 35 or older than 75 from holding the presidency.

Under the current law, President Yoweri Museveni, who is 73, would not be [able] eligible to run in the next presidential election in 2021.

The bill will become law after Museveni signs it.

The U.S. State Department confirmed Wednesday that "multiple" Americans were among those killed in a bus crash in Mexico a day earlier.

State officials in Mexico said that eight Americans, two Swedes and one Canadian were among the 12 people killed. Eighteen others were injured Tuesday as the bus traveled to Mayan ruins in the state of Quintana Roo, home to the popular resort city of Cancun.

The cause of the crash has not immediately been released.

A U.S. federal court sentenced a resident of Brooklyn, New York, to 15 years in prison on terrorism charges.

Kazakhstan citizen Akhror Saidakhmetov was charged with conspiring to provide material support to a designated foreign terrorist organization, the Islamic State. The court filings said he first expressed support for the Islamic State in 2014.

He was arrested in 2015 while attempting to board a flight to Istanbul, from where he planned to travel on to Syria.

After he serves his sentence, he will be deported.

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.