

# VOA NEWS

February 6, 2024

This is VOA News. I'm Joe Ramsey.

Russia accused U.S. President Joe Biden on Monday of carrying out strikes in Iraq and Syria to boost his image as the presidential election campaign is heating up, not in retaliation for a deadly attack on American soldiers.

The United States began the airstrikes on Friday against dozens of targets linked to Iran-allied groups after three U.S. soldiers were killed in Jordan in an attack Washington blames on Iran-backed militias.

Last week's wave of U.S. airstrikes in Iraq aimed at pounding targets associated with almost 170 attacks by Iranian-backed militias on U.S. forces in the region appears to be expanding the fissure between Washington and Baghdad. VOA national security correspondent Jeff Seldin has the latest.

The Pentagon rejected Iraqi allegations that those killed were with the Iraqi security forces.

"As we conduct these strikes, we are very focused on Iranian-backed proxy groups." :Major General Pat Ryder.  
"We're striking terrorist groups that are supported by the IRGC."

Ryder says Baghdad is a valued ally, adding the U.S. is not planning for a long-term military campaign against the militias in Iraq and Syria.

Jeff Seldin, VOA News, the Pentagon.

Israeli helicopters and a tank were seen firing along the Gaza-Israel border on Monday as Israel pressed on with its offensive in some of the war's most intense combat.

The Israeli military said on Monday its forces had killed dozens of Palestinian militants during fighting in northern, central and southern Gaza over the last 24 hours. Palestinians described heavy combat in Gaza City, particularly its western areas close to the Mediterranean shore.

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Ukraine's president is floating a military shakeup, a possibility that shocking his wartime nation and worrying its Western allies. AP correspondent Sagar Meghani reports.

When he was Joint Chiefs Chairman, Mark Milley often mentioned General Valerii's illusionary.

"... my counterpart whom I talk to very frequently several times a week."

Now, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy tells an Italian broadcaster he's thinking about firing the popular military chief as part of a bigger leadership overhaul, saying the nation must be led by those convinced of victory over Russia.

Zaluzhnyi is considered a national hero. Zelenskyy strongly objected during the fall when Zaluzhnyi said the fighting was at a stalemate after Ukraine's much anticipated counteroffensive disappointed allies.

Sagar Meghani, Washington.

Volunteers in central Chile are trying to remove charred metal, broken glass and other debris in neighborhoods destroyed by forest fires that have killed at least 122 people in densely populated areas over the past three days. Hundreds of people remain missing.

The fires appeared to have diminished by Monday morning after burning intensely since Friday on the eastern edge of the city of Vina del Mar. Two other towns in the Valparaíso region have also been hit hard.

President Gabriel Borich said at least 3,000 homes had been burned down in the area.

Lawmakers in Senegal were debating extending President Macky Sall's mandate on Monday after he delayed this month's election, a move that has caused anger and unrest. Reuters correspondent David Doyle has more.

In the streets of Dakar, shouts of "Macky Sall is a dictator" and "Macky Sall is an assassin."

Crowds gathered on Monday to protest the postponement of a Senegal's February 25 election.

That decision, announced by President Macky Sall on Saturday, sparked anger and unrest over the weekend.

It's also threatened to tarnish the West African country's reputation as a bastion of democracy in a region swept by military coups.

Reuters correspondent David Doyle.

After spending more than seven decades waiting to become sovereign, Britain's King Charles has been diagnosed with a form of cancer less than 18 months since he ascended to the throne.

Buckingham Palace on Monday announced that Charles, 75, would postpone public-facing duties while he undergoes treatment but was looking forward to returning to full public duty as soon as possible.

Charles became monarch on the death of his mother, Queen Elizabeth, on September 8, 2022, having been the longest-serving heir apparent in British history. He was crowned on May 6, 2023.

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