

VOA NEWS

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This is VOA News. I'm Alexis Strobe.

Over a million Palestinians crammed in the [southern cit...] southern Gaza city of Rafah are bracing for further assault as Israel orders them to move further south towards the Egyptian border during its war with Hamas. Lucy Fielder from Reuters has more.

Israeli forces are gearing up for a ground assault in the southern Gaza city of Rafah and have ordered Palestinian residents there to move ever further south.

The United Nations is warning Israel against a mass displacement of Palestinians from the Gaza Strip.

"We would not support in any way forced displacement, which goes against international law."

More than half of Gaza's 2.3 million people are sheltering in Rafah. Arab nations, especially neighbors Egypt and Jordan, strongly oppose any Israeli attempt to push Palestinians over the border. Egypt says it will not allow such movement onto its territory.

Israel has dismissed all suggestions that mass displacement is on its agenda. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's office says it has ordered the military to develop a plan to evacuate the population of Rafah.

Lucy Fielder from Reuters.

A Russian drone strike has killed several people in Ukraine's second largest city. AP correspondent Karen Chammas reports.

Firefighters in Kharkiv worked tirelessly to control a massive fire after a Russian drone strike hit civilian infrastructure. The blaze burned down 15 private houses, according to Kharkiv's regional governor.

Kharkiv's Mayor Igor Terekhov posted a defiant video on his Telegram channel in which he said. "the Russian aggressor is destroying our hero city, Kharkiv, but we will overcome this. We will win."

Ukraine's Air Force said air defense systems destroyed 23 out of 31 Iranian Shahed drones launched by Russia overnight.

I'm Karen Chammas.

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Senegalese President Macky Sall Saturday defended his decision to postpone elections Saturday as a violent protests against the move continues. VOA's Jeff Caster reports.

In an interview with the Associated Press Saturday, his first since announcing the delay a week ago, Sall brushed off allegations the decision was unconstitutional and that he created a constitutional crisis, saying the country needed more time to resolve controversies over the disqualification of some candidates and a conflict between the legislative and judicial branches of government.

But much of the public fears that Sall, who faces term limits, is just seeking to delay leaving office.

Sall spoke to the AP inside the presidential palace in the capital, Dakar, while outside, hundreds of protesters took to the streets, burning tires, throwing stones and blocking traffic as security forces used tear gas to disperse them.

Jeff Caster, VOA News.

Spanish police on Saturday scuffled with a group of farmers and lorry drivers in Madrid as they tried to access [ma..., a] a road in a bid to block it. One of several protests sweeping the [EU sweeping agai...] the EU against the bloc's environmental rules and what workers see as excessive taxes and the tape.

Since Tuesday, Spanish farmers have joined peers from Germany, France, Italy, Portugal and Belgium in daily protests that include blocking several highways and ports.

Shortly after the vote, hundreds of protesters walked around the Madrid stadium before trying to access a main highway via a dirt road. Using force, dozens of police officers managed to stop them from doing so.

Pakistan has hit back at criticism over the conduct of its parliamentary elections, which were held amid sporadic militant attacks and an unprecedented suspension of all mobile phone services. More from VOA's Tommie McNeil.

Pakistan insists the vote was peaceful and successful. Saturday, strongly worded reaction from the Foreign Ministry came after the U.S. State Departments said Thursday's vote was held under undue on restrictions on freedoms of expression, association and peaceful assembly.

The European Union has also said it "regrets the lack of a level playing field."

No political party has gained a simple majority in the election, but independent candidates backed by imprisoned former Prime Minister Imran Khan took a lead in the vote count.

Tommie McNeil, VOA News.

More than 100 people turned up to protest over the 2026 Milan-Cortina Olympics despite the inclement weather. Around 150 people gathered in the pouring rain on Saturday outside the construction site for the Olympic Village in Milan.

Many held banners and placards against what organizers of the protest called, quote, "the most unsustainable Games ever." One sign was in the shape of the Olympic logo of five rings, with the words "concreting," "gentrification," "greenwashing," "privatization" and "eviction" written in the circles.

The march was organized by the Unsustainable Olympics Committee against the rising costs and environmental damage.

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