

VOA NEWS

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This is VOA News. I'm Joe Ramsey.

Israel freed two hostages held by U.S.-designated terrorist group Hamas in Rafah on Monday in a rescue operation which killed dozens of Palestinians in the southern Gaza city where about one million civilians have sought refuge from months of bombardments. Reuters correspondent Angela Johnston reports.

In the operation, Israel says it freed two hostages held by Hamas, Israeli Argentines Fernando Simon Marman and Louis Har.

They were among about 250 people taken hostage during the October 7 raid by militants that triggered Israel's war on Gaza.

Israel said airstrikes were launched so its forces could get out. Hamas's armed wing says three hostages died in their aftermath, without elaborating.

People in the city said two mosques and several residential buildings were hit in more than an hour of strikes.

Reuters correspondent Angela Johnston.

U.S. President Joe Biden said on Monday the United States is pushing for a six-week pause in the fighting between Israel and Hamas in Gaza as a stepping stone toward a larger cease-fire.

"... we are actively working for peace, security, and dignity for both the Palestinian people and the Israeli people. And I'm working on this day and night ..."

Judges in the Netherlands have ordered the Dutch government to halt the export of F-35 fighter jet parts to Israel, citing a clear risk of violations of international law.

A trio of human rights organizations brought a civil suit against the Netherlands in December. They argue the delivery of parts for the aircraft makes the Netherlands complicit in possible war crimes.

A lower court sided with the government in January. The decision can be appealed.

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Former U.S. President Donald Trump is again distorting how NATO works by saying he once warned an alliance member about what would happen if it did not pay its bills. AP correspondent Sagar Meghani reports.

At a weekend rally, Trump said a NATO leader once asked if the U.S. would protect his nation from Russian attack. If that nation did not contribute enough to military spending,

"'You didn't pay, you're delinquent.' He said 'Yes. Let's say that happened.' No, I would not protect you. In fact, I would encourage them to do whatever the hell they want. You gotta pay."

But that's not how it works. NATO members are expected to devote 2 percent of their GDP to defense, but they don't actually pay to be in NATO, whose founding document calls for collective defense - an attack on one ally is an attack on all.

Sagar Meghani, Washington.

Former U.S. President Donald Trump is asking the Supreme Court to extend the delay in his election interference trial and ultimately find him immune from prosecution on charges he plotted to overturn his 2020 election loss.

His lawyers filed an emergency appeal with the court on Monday, just four days after the justices heard Trump's separate appeal to remain on the presidential ballot.

Condolences are pouring in after Kenyan marathon world record-holder Kelvin Kiptum died in a car crash in western Kenya late Sunday night. VOA's Nairobi Bureau Chief Mariama Diallo has this report.

"Kelvin Kiptum was a star," said a social media post Monday from Kenyan President William Ruto.

Ruto noted that Kiptum was only 24 yet had triumphed in several major competitions. "His mental strength and discipline were unmatched. Kiptum was our future," Ruto's post said.

Kiptum was the first man to run a marathon in under 2 hours, 1 minute when he set the world record of 2 hours and 35 seconds in Chicago last October, beating the previous record holder, Kenya's Eliud Kipchoge.

Mariama Diallo, VOA News, Nairobi.

Carnival dancers have taken the biggest stage in Rio de Janeiro to pay tribute to Brazil's largest Indigenous group and pressure President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva to deliver on promises to eradicate illegal mining.

Carnival has long been a platform for samba schools to protest. Participants marched on Sunday evening, delivering their message to more than 70,000 revelers and millions watching live on television.

A year ago, Lula declared a public health emergency for the Yanomami group in the Amazon. They suffer from malnutrition and diseases such as malaria as a consequence of illegal mining.

I'm Joe Ramsey, VOA ...