

VOA NEWS

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This is VOA News. I'm Joe Ramsey.

A draft resolution at the United Nations Security Council calling for an immediate cease-fire in Gaza, not linked to Israeli hostages being released, was vetoed by the United States on Tuesday. The U.S. has proposed calling for a temporary cease-fire as soon as practicable on the condition all hostages are released. Reuters correspondent Chris Dignam has more.

Israel's U.N. ambassador said the word "cease-fire" was being mentioned as if it was, quote, "a magical solution."

"A cease-fire achieves one thing and one thing only - the survival of Hamas."

Washington traditionally shields Israel from U.N. action and has been averse to the word cease-fire in any resolution. But the draft resolution it proposed could signal a shift as the U.S. text echoes language that President Joe Biden said he used last week in extensive talks with Israel Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, in which he pushed for a temporary cease-fire.

Reuters correspondent Chris Dignam.

Hamas is a U.S.-designated terrorist group.

The World Food Programme said on Tuesday it has paused deliveries of food to isolated northern Gaza because of increasing chaos across the territory, hiking fears of potential starvation.

The U.S. will announce a major package of sanctions against Russia later this week over the death of opposition leader Alexei Navalny and the two-year Ukraine war, President Joe Biden said on Tuesday.

"I told you we'd be announcing sanctions on Russia. We'll have a major package announced on Friday."

The White House says the package will hold Russia accountable for what happened to Mr. Navalny and for its actions over the course of the war in Ukraine without providing details on the sanctions measures.

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The bullet-riddled body of a man found in Spain is now believed to be that of Russian defector Maksim Kuzminov, who escaped across the front line and into Ukraine last year with an army helicopter. AP correspondent Jennifer King reports.

The body was found February 13 in La Cala, near the eastern port city, Alicante. He had been shot half a dozen times and run over by a car.

Spain's Civil Guard said they found documents on the body that initially identified him as a 33-year-old Ukrainian, but police now believe it was the man who defected by flying into Ukraine with the help of Ukrainian intelligence.

According to the Russian state news agency Tass, the head of Russia's Foreign Intelligence Service told journalists Kuzminov was a traitor and a criminal who became a, quote, "moral corpse," unquote, as soon as he started planning his crime.

Reports said a burning car was found near the area later, but the Civil Guard could not confirm that it was the one used in the attack.

I'm Jennifer King.

Prosecutors said on Tuesday a former FBI informant charged with making up a multimillion-dollar bribery scheme involving U.S. President Joe Biden, his son Hunter and a Ukrainian energy company had contacts with officials affiliated with Russian intelligence.

Prosecutors said in a court filing, urging a judge to keep Alexander Smirnov behind bars while he awaits trial.

The African Development Bank is warning the rising cost of energy, food and other commodities in several African countries, including Angola, Ethiopia and Kenya, could trigger social unrest. Already, people in Africa's most populous country, Nigeria, have been marching to protest the high cost of living. Timothy Obiezu reports from Abuja.

The bank said in its 2024 forecast that energy and food price[s] increases, along with a currency depreciation in Angola, Ethiopia, Kenya and Nigeria, could spark internal conflict despite Africa showing overall economic growth.

The bank also said conflicts in Eastern Europe and the Middle East could trigger supply disruptions, exacerbate inflation across the world and make Africa's situation more precarious. This, as protests over hunger and the cost of living grow in Nigeria.

Timothy Obiezu, VOA News, Abuja, Nigeria.

South Africa's President Cyril Ramaphosa has announced the highly anticipated national election will be held on May 29.

Ramaphosa's ruling African National Congress, the party once led by Nelson Mandela, is expected to face a stern test to retain its majority in South Africa's seventh fully democratic national election since the end of the apartheid system of forced racial segregation in 1994.

The ANC has been in government for 30 years, but several polls this year saw it's slipping in the national election for the first time.

I'm Joe Ramsey, VOA ...