

VOA NEWS

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This is VOA News. I'm Alexa Strobe.

The main U.N. aid agency operating in Gaza [sa...] said on Saturday that acute malnutrition was accelerating in the north of the Palestinian enclave as Israel prepared to send a delegation to Qatar for new cease-fire talks on a hostage deal with Hamas. Emma Jehle from Reuters reports.

The source told Reuters Israel's delegation will be led by the head of its Mossad intelligence agency, David Barnea. Hamas presented a new weeks-long cease-fire proposal, including a hostage and prisoner exchange, which Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's office said was still based on unrealistic demands.

The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees said one in three children under the age of two in northern Gaza is now acutely malnourished.

The U.N. has said it faces "overwhelming obstacles" getting aid in while Israel, which controls crossings, blames U.N. agency's for slow delivery.

Israel has warned it's planning to launch a new offensive in Rafah, the last relatively safe city in the crowded enclave. Netanyahu's office has said civilians would be evacuated, but it did not give a time frame for the attack.

Emma Jehle from Reuters.

AP correspondent Norman Hall reports on the West condemnation of forced Russian elections in occupied areas of Ukraine.

Russians are voting in three days of presidential elections certain to extend President Vladimir Putin's rule for six more years. Voting is also taking place in illegally annexed regions of Ukraine.

Forced voting in the occupied territory was condemned in debate at the United Nations Security Council. U.S. Ambassador Linda Thomas Greenfield: "Let's call this what it is: It's a blatant propaganda exercise."

British Ambassador James Kariuki says the voting will never be recognized. "These elections are a sham because of a simple truth: you cannot hold legitimate elections in someone else's country."

Ukraine also rejects the voting in annexed areas.

I'm Norman Hall.

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Judicial documents show that top Brazilian military leaders declared to police that former President [Bolsonaro] Bolsonaro presented to them a plan to reverse the results of the 2022 election he lost, but they refused and warned him that they would arrest him if he tried it. VOA's Tommie McNeil has more.

The testimonies are of Bolsonaro's former Army and Air Force commanders before the police. It was released by the Supreme Court and it is the first direct mention to the right-wing leader as a person planning a move to change the results of the 2022 election. That election was won by his rival Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva. The statement by Bolsonaro's commanders add to his legal woes.

Tommie McNeil, VOA News.

Niger's ruling military junta has revoked with immediate effect a military accord that allows military personnel and civilian staff from the U.S. Department of Defense on its soil, junta [spokespers...] spokesperson Colonel Amadou Abdramane said on Saturday.

The decision follows a visit by U.S. officials this week which was led by Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Molly Phee and included General Michael Langley, commander of the U.S. Africa Command.

There were about 1,100 troops in Niger as of last year, where the U.S. military operates out of two bases, including a drone base known as Air Base 201, built near Agadez in central Niger at a cost of more than \$100 million.

Since 2018, the base has been used to target Islamic State militants and [JNAM] JNIM, an al-Qaeda affiliate, in the Sahel region.

A Hong Kong court on Saturday sentenced 12 people to prison terms for more than four years to nearly seven years in a high-profile rioting case linked to the storming of the city legislature during a pro-democracy protest in 2019. Ryan Chang from Reuters reports.

The legislative council break-in on July 1, 2019 saw protesters smashing windows streaming inside the building in public anger over an extradition bill that would have allowed authorities to send people to mainland China for trial.

It was a pivotal moment in the months of civil unrest in the city, which marked the boldest uprising against the Chinese Communist Party since the 1989 Tiananmen Square protests in Beijing.

In sentencing, District Judge Li Chi-ho described the incident as a "serious" blow to the city's rule of law. He sentenced actor Gregory Wong, who was earlier found guilty of rioting, to six years and two months in prison.

Ryan Chang from Reuters.

Vaughan Gething has won the Welsh Labour Party leadership contest and is set to become the first Black leader of Wales' semi-autonomous government.

Gething, who is currently Welsh economy minister, beat Education Minister Jeremy Miles in a race to replace First Minister Mark Drakeford. Gething needs to be confirmed next week by the Welsh parliament, the Senedd, where Labour is the largest.

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