

VOA NEWS

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This is VOA News. I'm Joe Ramsey.

Western governments lined up on Monday to condemn Vladimir Putin's landslide election victory as unfair and undemocratic. Reuters correspondent Alice Rizzo has more.

Here is EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell.

"This election has been based on repression and intimidation."

But China, India and North Korea congratulated the veteran Russian leader on extending his rule by a further six years.

The contrasting reactions underscored the geopolitical fault lines that have gaped wider since Russia invaded Ukraine two years ago, triggering the deepest crisis in relations with the West since the end of the Cold War.

The Kremlin dismissed the criticism, claiming the 87 percent of the vote won by Putin during the three-day election showed that the Russian people were consolidating around him.

Reuters correspondent Alice Rizzo.

U.S. President Joe Biden warned Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Monday an Israeli military operation in Rafah would deepen anarchy in Gaza and they agreed that teams from each side would meet in Washington to discuss it, the White House said.

The United Nations humanitarian coordinator said on Monday his office could not pre-position aid for those fleeing Rafah in the event of an Israeli assault on the Gazan border town, where thousands are sheltering under tarps or makeshift tents.

"This is the entry point for all of our assistance into Gaza, and if there was to be an incursion that would be that system we have, which is already precarious and intermittent, would then be broken."

Speaking from Jerusalem, Jamie McGoldrick said the U.N. humanitarian body could not plan its Gaza aid operation [more] for more than 48 or 72 hours in advance because of conditions he described as uncertain and unstable.

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Gangs attacked affluent neighborhoods in Haiti early Monday, killing at least 24 people, according to witnesses.

The recent attacks have led to concerns gang violence would not subside in Haiti, even though Prime Minister Ariel Henry announced last week he would resign once a transitional council was established.

Notorious Haitian coup leader Guy Philippe, who was instrumental in a 2004 rebellion and has powerful ties to police, politicians and the business elite, has made an alliance with the gangs who want him to be present. VOA's Sandra Lemaire with the Creole Service says they plan to hold an inauguration may be as soon as Tuesday.

There is Guy Philippe, a former senator from the south, the Grand'Anse, which is on the southern coast of Haiti, who has joined ranks with the gangs and the gang support him. And they told him and say publicly that they want him to be recognized as the president.

Hear more on VOA's international edition.

United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres is alarmed by reports military airstrikes in Myanmar, including on Monday, have killed and injured many civilians, a U.N. spokesman said.

Myanmar has been convulsed by turmoil since the military seized power from an elected government in a 2021 coup.

Officials in Chad say close to 20 candidates will be challenging military ruler General Mahamat Idriss Déby in Chad's May 6 presidential election. Moki Edwin Kindzeka reports from neighboring Cameroon.

Transitional President General Mahamat Idriss Déby is the nominee of Chad's former ruling Patriotic Salvation Movement, or MPS party, which says he has the support of a coalition of over 200 opposition parties and about 1,000 civil society groups.

But Nasra Djimasngar, national secretary of A New Day party, and Bruce Mbaimon of the Movement of Chad's Patriots for the Republic, who are also candidates, say Déby is manipulating civil society groups to stay in office.

Moki Edwin Kindzeka, VOA News, Yaoundé, Cameroon.

Lawmakers in Gambia have rejected for now an attempt to repeal a ban on female genital cutting, which would make the West African nation the first country anywhere to make that reversal.

Activists in the largely Muslim country had warned lifting the ban would hurt years of work against a procedure often performed on girls under age 5 in the mistaken belief it would control their sexuality.

I'm Joe Ramsey, V...