

VOA NEWS

March 23, 2024

This is VOA News. I'm Alexis Strobe.

(The) Islamic State group claims responsibility for the Moscow attack in a statement posted on social media. AP correspondent Norman Hall reports.

The Islamic State group has claimed responsibility for an attack in Moscow that Russia's Federal Security Service says killed at least 40 people and left scores wounded. The authenticity of the claim has not been verified.

Russian officials say several assailants sprayed the crowd with gunfire and set fire to the venue. The attack targeted the Crocus City Hall, a large music venue on the city's western edge.

The attack took place as crowds gathered for performance by the famous Russian rock band Picnic. Russian News Reports said concert goers were being evacuated, but that an unknown number could have been trapped by the blaze.

I'm Norman Hall.

The United Nations Security Council on Friday turned down a resolution calling for an immediate cease-fire in Gaza and an Israel-Hamas hostage deal after Russia and China vetoed the measure proposed by the United States. Emma Jehle from Reuters reports.

U.S. Ambassador Linda Thomas-Greenfield told the Security Council that the two nations had "cynical" and "petty" reasons, saying they opposed the resolution simply because it was penned by the U.S. and criticized both countries for not condemning Hamas's October 7 attack on Israel.

Russian Ambassador Vassily Nebenzia said the resolution was "exceedingly politicized" and contained an effective green light for Israel to mount a military operation in Rafah. Zhang Jun, China's ambassador, said the U.S. resolution fell short of expectations by only setting preconditions for a cease-fire and echoed Russia's comments.

The U.S. has wanted any Security Council support for a cease-fire to be linked to the release of hostages held by Hamas in Gaza, vetoing three previous cease-fire resolutions put forward by the council.

Emma Jehle from Reuters.

For additional stories 24 hours a day, visit [voanews.com](https://www.voanews.com). This is VOA News.

According to a new United Nations report published Friday on World Water Day, as many as 2.2 billion people still live without access to safe drinking water and 3.5 billion lack access to decent sanitation. VOA's Rick Pantaleo has more.

The U.N. report called "Water for prosperity and peace" suggests that tensions over water are intensifying conflicts throughout the world.

Li Lifeng is the director of the Land and Water Division of the U.N.'s Food and Agricultural Organization in Rome.

"Without water, there's no life. Without water, there's no food. So water is the indispensable natural resources for sustainable development, for agriculture, for any different economic sector."

Li Lifeng adds that among the countries most affected by water scarcity is Zimbabwe, which since last year is battling a devastating drought that aid agencies blame on El Niño and climate change.

Rick Pantaleo, VOA News.

The White House says President Joe Biden plans to host Iraqi Prime Minister Mohammed Shia al-Sudani next month. The visit comes as the countries hold formal talks about winding down the mission of a U.S.-led military coalition formed to fight the Islamic State group in Iraq.

The two nations [have d...] have a delicate relationship due in part to Iran's considerable sway in Iraq, where a coalition of Iran-backed groups brought al-Sudani to power in October 2022.

Chaos in the streets of New Delhi on Friday as supporters of an anti-corruption crusader and one of India's most consequential politicians of the past decade protested against his arrest. VOA's Steve Karesh reports.

Arvind Kejriwal, who is New Delhi's top elected official, was arrested Thursday night by the federal Enforcement Directorate, which is controlled by Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government.

The agency accused Kejriwal's party and ministers of accepting one billion rupees in bribes from liquor contractors.

In the lead up to the general election, which starts April 19, India's opposition parties accused the government of misusing its power to harass and weaken its political opponents.

"This arrest is a political vendetta. Modi can't defeat Arvind Kejriwal. That's why he was arrested."

Modi's party denies using law enforcement agencies to target the opposition and says the agencies act independently.

Steve Karesh, VOA News.

Venezuelan opposition powerhouse María Corina Machado has named a substitute for her presidential bid while she fights a government ban on her running for office.

The announcement came as Machado faced increasing political repression from the government of President Nicolás Maduro as well as pressure from foreign leaders and fellow government opponents to abandon her candidacy.

She told reporters that college professor Corina Yoris will be registered as an opposition faction's presidential candidate ahead of a Monday deadline.

For additional stories 24 hours a day, visit voanews.com. I'm Alexis Strobe, VOA Ne...