

# VOA NEWS

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This is VOA News. I'm Joe Ramsey.

Taiwan has started the demolition of hazardous buildings which were badly damaged by the 7.2-magnitude quake that killed nine people and injured nearly 1,000 in Taiwan on Wednesday.

Excavators were seen tearing down two buildings which had been marked for demolition. A local mayor said the demolition of multiple buildings would take at least two days, with residents and businesses evacuated. She said rescuers continued their search to retrieve a body from one of the affected buildings.

Celebrity chef José Andrés said on Wednesday the Israeli attack that killed seven of his food aid workers in Gaza was a targeted attack. Reuters correspondent Chris Dignam reports.

Celebrity chef José Andrés told Reuters in an emotional interview on Wednesday that the Israeli airstrike that killed seven of his World Central Kitchen aid workers in Gaza had been deliberately targeted, and he rejected Israeli and U.S. assertions that it was a mistake.

"They were targeted systematically car by car."

Andrés said his charity group had clear communication with the Israeli military, which he said was aware of the convoy's whereabouts, and he called for investigations by the U.S. government and the home countries of every aid worker that was killed in the attack.

Reuters correspondent Chris Dignam.

Ukraine has lowered the military draft age from 27 to 25 in an effort to replenish its depleted ranks after more than two years of war following Russia's full-scale invasion.

The new mobilization law came into force Wednesday, a day after Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelenskyy signed it. Ukraine's parliament passed it last year.

Zelenskyy didn't say how many new soldiers the country expected to gain.

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France denied Russian claims that it expressed willingness to hold dialogue on Ukraine or discuss possible peace negotiations when the two countries' defense ministers spoke on Wednesday.

Two years after Moscow's invasion of Ukraine, Russia's Defense Ministry said a starting point for discussions could be the 2022 talks between the Russia and Ukraine sides in Turkey, which ended without results.

Quote, "It's not true," a French government source said. Quote, "At no moment did we show any willingness to dialogue on Ukraine or negotiations or anything like that."

NATO foreign ministers met on Wednesday to discuss how to put military support for Ukraine on a long-term footing, including a proposal for a 100 billion euro, or \$107 billion, five-year fund and a plan seen as a way to "Trump-proof" aid for Kyiv. Reuters correspondent Sean Hogan has more.

Speaking before the meeting, NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg said the proposal aims to send the message to Russia that it cannot win the war.

"What is obvious is that we need new and more money for Ukraine and we need it over many years."

He declined to confirm levels of funding and said the aim was for a decision to be taken at the July Washington summit. Under the plans, NATO would take over some coordination work from a U.S.-led ad hoc coalition known as the "Rammstein" group, a move designed in part to guard against any cut in U.S. support if Donald Trump returns to the White House, diplomats said.

Reuters correspondent Sean Hogan.

North Korea, says it tested a new hypersonic intermediate-range missile that uses solid propellants. AP correspondent Charles De Ledesma reports.

North Korea continues to expand its nuclear and missile program. State media says the test was supervised by leader Kim, who described the Hwasong-16B missile as a key piece of his nuclear deterrent. He vowed to further build up to counter his "enemies," a reference to the U.S., South Korea and Japan.

In recent years, the North has been developing more missiles with built-in solid propellants. Such weapons are easier to move and hide, and can be launched quicker than liquid-propellant missiles, which needed to be fueled before launch.

I'm Charles De Ledesma.

Diplomats at a regional Americas body on Wednesday urged Haitian politicians to move forward with a delayed plan to replace Prime Minister Ariel Henry with a transitional council, a move which could trigger the long-awaited deployment of an international security force.

The transitional council - agreed with the mediation of the Caribbean Community, or CARICOM, bloc - has been delayed for over three weeks amid factional infighting over who should be on it and what their powers should be.

I'm Joe Ramsey, V...