

VOA NEWS

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This is VOA News. I'm Alexis Strobe.

Russia blasted the main children's hospital in Kyiv with a missile in broad daylight on Monday and rained missiles down on other cities across Ukraine, killing at least 36 civilians in the deadliest wave of airstrikes for months. Alice Rizzo from Reuters reports.

After the strike, hundreds of local residents flocked to the hospital, offering water and assistance.

Kyiv Mayor Vitali Klitschko said the emergency service workers could hear people under the rubble and were racing to save them. The attack on the capital was one of the largest of the war, he added.

After the attack, President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, who was in Poland for a news conference, held a minute of silence and said Ukraine would "retaliate" for the strikes.

The Russian Defense Ministry said its forces carried out strikes on defense industry targets and aviation bases in Ukraine. Moscow has repeatedly denied targeting civilians and civilian infrastructure. However, its attacks have killed thousands of civilians since it launched its full-scale invasion in February, 2022.

Alice Rizzo from Reuters.

After recent years of mistrust, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan attends the NATO summit in Washington starting Tuesday, hoping to reset relations with Western allies. Dorian Jones reports from Istanbul.

Analysts say Erdoğan goes to the Washington meeting on a good footing, having resolved contentious issues that dogged previous NATO summits. Analysts suggest that Turkey's growing importance in Africa, Central Asia and the Caucasus could be an incentive for the U.S. administration to increase its cooperation with Ankara.

A May meeting in Washington between Erdoğan and Biden was cancelled amid differences over Israel's war in Gaza and analysts say that could again prevent a meeting at the NATO summit.

Dorian Jones, VOA News, Istanbul.

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Senior U.S. officials [in Cairo] are in Cairo for talks to achieve a cease-fire between Israel and Hamas, but gaps still remain between the two sides.

White House National security spokesperson John Kirby told reporters on Monday. "But we wouldn't have sent a team over there if we didn't think that we had a shot here, and we're gonna to take every shot we can to see if we can't get this cease-fire deal in place."

Kirby said CIA Director Bill Burns and U.S. Middle East envoy Brett McGurk were in Egypt meeting with their Egyptian, Israeli and Jordanian counterparts, adding that there would be, quote, "follow-on discussions in the next few days."

A Russian court sentenced a playwright and a theater director each to six years in prison on Monday for, quote, "justifying terrorism," concluding a trial that rights campaigners had said demonstrated Russia's intolerance of artistic freedom. Christie Kilburn from Reuters reports.

Director Yevgenia Berkovich and playwright Svetlana Petriychuk were arrested in May of 2023 over their production of a play about Russian women who marry Islamic State fighters.

The women said they had staged the play because they opposed terrorism rather than support it.

The seven-week trial was the most prominent prosecution of Russian cultural figures over their content since Moscow sent troops to Ukraine in 2022. Both women denied guilt.

As the police truck left court, people chanted the women's names.

"Of course we will appeal this verdict, although there is little hope," defense lawyer Ksenia Karpinskaya told supporters.

Christy Kilburn from Reuters.

Opponents of Louisiana's Ten Commandments law want a judge to block it before the new school year starts. AP correspondent Jackie Quinn has more.

Parents and others who are challenging the Louisiana law that requires the Ten Commandments be posted in every public school classroom are asking a federal court to block the controversial law from taking effect before schools open in early August. They are also asking for an expedited briefing and hearing schedule.

Opponents, many from non-Christian faiths, say the law violates the First Amendment's protections of religious freedom. Supporters say posting the Ten Commandments is appropriate in schools, saying they're part of the foundation of U.S. law.

I'm Jackie Quinn.

Rwanda's government says it is aware of the United Kingdom's intention to terminate its plan to deport asylum seekers to the East African country.

In a statement late Monday, the office of the Rwandan government [*spokespen] spokesman said the deal had been initiated by the U.K. "to address the crisis of irregular migration affecting the U.K. - a problem of the U.K., not Rwanda."

British Prime Minister Keir Starmer said Saturday that the Rwanda deportation plan, quote, "was dead and buried before it started."

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