

VOA NEWS

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This is VOA News. I'm Alexis Strobe.

A Wednesday Israeli assault on Gaza City shuts down medical facilities and kills over two dozen. AP correspondent Charles De Ledesma reports.

Israeli airstrikes early Wednesday have killed 20 Palestinians in central Gaza, including six children and three women, some of them inside a purported safe zone declared by the Israeli military.

Hospital authorities say this second straight night of deadly strikes in the central town of Deir al-Balah and nearby refugee camps come as U.S., Egyptian and Qatari mediators, as well as Israeli officials, come together in the Qatari capital Doha for talks trying to push through a long-elusive deal for a cease-fire and hostage release.

Israel and Hamas had appeared to narrow the gaps in recent days, but obstacles remain.

I'm Charles De Ledesma.

Ukraine is on an "irreversible path" to membership to the military alliance NATO, according to Finnish President Alexander Stubb at the NATO summit in Washington.

"I think it's very important to give a message to the Kremlin from here that Ukraine's path and bridge towards NATO membership is now irreversible."

It advances assurances that Ukraine will be allowed to join the Western military coalition, but only after its war with Russia ends.

In another boost, the U.S., the Netherlands and Denmark announced Wednesday that the first NATO-provided F-16 are on their way to Ukraine and would be flying this summer following months of preparation.

In their most [se...] serious rebuke against Beijing, NATO allies have called China a, quote, "decisive enabler" of Russia's war against Ukraine and expressed concerns over China's nuclear arsenal and its capabilities in space.

The sternly worded final communiqué Wednesday makes clear that China is becoming a focus of the military alliance. It came as 36-NATO members gathered in Washington.

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President Joe Biden's reelection campaign is facing new peril as two allies weigh in on his future. AP Washington correspondent Sagar Meghani has the story.

On MSNBC former House Speaker Nancy Pelosi said it's up to the president to decide if he should stay in the race rather than her saying he should stay in.

"We're all encouraging him to make that decision because time is running short."

The president insists he will not step aside just weeks after hosting a glitzy Biden campaign fundraiser.

Actor George Clooney says it's time to end the campaign. He writes in a *New York Times* op-ed the Joe Biden he saw last month was not the Biden of 2020, but another House lawmaker calling on him to step aside.

The president will face another public test tomorrow at a news conference wrapping up the NATO summit.

Sagar Meghani, Washington.

French President Emmanuel Macron says he will give time to the country's political parties to build a, quote, "Republican" majority at the National Assembly before he could decide on a new prime minister after no party won a majority in Sunday's legislative elections.

Macron's comment came in a letter published by several French media outlets as political leaders of various parties have been trying to project themselves as the only solution to the current political turmoil after the inconclusive results.

Australia, along with the United States and the United Kingdom, are (is) accusing a state-sponsored Chinese spy agency of cyber espionage. VOA's Phil Mercer reports.

The Australian Signals Directorate, the national cyber intelligence agency, has accused a group called APT40 - meaning Advanced Persistent Threat - of widespread hacking on behalf of a branch of China's Ministry of State Security.

The agency said Tuesday that the hackers were trying to plunder information by infiltrating old and forgotten computers that were still connected to sensitive government and business networks, and that the threat was "ongoing."

It's the first time Australia has directly attributed malicious cyber espionage to a state-sponsored group in China.

Phil Mercer, VOA News.

Mexico's president has announced that his successor is planning to build passenger train lines running from the capital to cities on the U.S. border.

President Andrés Manuel López Obrador fleshed out Wednesday a proposal made by his successor, president-elect Claudia Sheinbaum, that [the] the projects could grow to be nearly double the size of López Obrador's railways building programs, which included the \$30 billion Maya tourist train of the Yucatán Peninsula.

The cost of that and other railways has led López Obrador's administration to post a budget deficit [for] of nearly 6 percent of GDP while experts question how much the trains will actually be used.

I'm Alexis Strobe, VOA New(s).