

VOA NEWS

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This is VOA News. I'm Joe Ramsey.

The United States' Western partners in Jordan told their citizens to leave Lebanon over the weekend as Washington deploys additional military to the Middle East in what the White House describes as defensive amid fears of an Iranian military strike on Israel. VOA's Arash Arabasadi reports.

U.S. Warships and fighter jets are on their way to the Middle East to deter an all-out war and in, quote, "defense of Israel." The show of military might comes amid rapidly soaring tensions in the region following the assassination of top Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh in Tehran last week and a rocket strike on Israel's Golan Heights area that killed a dozen children on a soccer field days before.

Israel blamed the Lebanese militant group Hezbollah for the attack and struck what it said were Hezbollah targets in Lebanon. A Hezbollah commander was killed. Both Hamas and Hezbollah are backed by Iran.

Arash Arabasadi, VOA News.

Jordan's foreign minister arrived in Iran on what would be the first official visit by a senior official of a close U.S. ally in two decades. Sunday's visit comes as the U.S. and its Arab allies are trying to prevent a wider regional war after the back-to-back killings of top Iran [allowed] allied militants sparked vows of revenge against Israel.

Ukrainian pilots have started flying F-16s for operations within their nation, President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said on Sunday, confirming the long-awaited arrival of the U.S.-made fighter jets more than 29 months after Russia's invasion.

The Ukrainian leader announced the use of F-16s, which Kyiv has long lobbied for, as he met military pilots at an air base flanked with two of the jets with two more flying overhead.

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Advocates for justice of Iraq's Yazidi community say much more needs to be done more than a decade after the brutal genocide it experienced at the hands of Islamic State militants at its aftermath. For VOA, Dale Gavlak reports from Amman.

On August 3, 2014, Islamic State militants invaded Iraq's Sinjar province brutally attacking, killing, displacing, and enslaving hundreds of thousands of Yazidis in their ancient homeland in the country's north. Ten years on, more than 6,000 women and children remain captives of the Islamic State with nearly 2,800 still missing. Many of the displaced still live in camps which Iraq says will close.

Yazidi activists and religious freedom advocates say restorative justice is needed for the community to recover from the genocide and remain in Iraq.

Dale Gavlak, VOA News, Amman, Jordan.

Dozens of people were killed and scores injured in clashes in Bangladesh on Sunday as police fired tear gas and lobbed stun grenades to disperse tens of thousands of protesters calling for Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina to resign. Reuters correspondent Lauren Anthony reports.

Last month, at least 150 people were killed and thousands more were injured and arrested in violence sparked by demonstrations led by student groups protesting against quotas for government jobs.

The Interior Ministry declared an indefinite nationwide curfew starting at 6:00 p.m. local time on Sunday. It's the first time it has taken such a step during the current protest.

The unrest is the government's biggest test since deadly protests erupted after Hasina won a fourth straight term in January elections that were boycotted by the main opposition Bangladesh Nationalist Party.

Critics of Hasina, along with human rights groups, have accused her government of using excessive force to stamp out the movement, a charge she and her ministers deny.

Reuters correspondent Lauren Anthony.

British Prime Minister Keir Starmer on Sunday condemned what he described as "far-right thuggery" and said perpetrators would face the full force of the law after days of violent anti-immigration protests culminated in an attack on a hotel.

Violent protests have erupted in towns and cities across Britain after three girls were killed in a knife attack at a children's dance class in Southport in northwest England last week.

Tropical Storm Debbie is strengthening as it moves through the Gulf of Mexico toward Florida.

Forecasters at the U.S. National Hurricane Center said on Sunday the storm has maximum sustained winds of nearly 100 kilometers per hour. Forecasters predict it will become a hurricane before coming ashore.

Debbie is the fourth named storm of the 2024 Atlantic hurricane season.

I'm Joe Ramsey.