

VOA NEWS

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This is VOA News. I'm Alexis Strobe.

French authorities issued preliminary charges against Telegram messaging app CEO Pavel Durov. AP correspondent Lisa Dwyer reports.

Allegations against Russian-born Durov, who is also a French citizen, include that his platform is being used for child sexual abuse material and drug trafficking, and that Telegram refused to share information with investigators when required by French law.

The loudest outrage over Durov's arrest appears to be from Russia, who says it's an infringement upon freedom of speech, even though Russia also sought to block the app for allowing opposition activists to use the platform and try to force them to hand over information from the 2013-2014 uprising in Ukraine that led to the ousting of a pro-Kremlin president.

I'm Lisa Dwyer.

At least nine Palestinians were killed in a major Israeli offensive in Jenin, Tulkarm and Tubas on the occupied West Bank, Palestinian health authorities said on Wednesday. Reuters correspondent Fiona Jones reports.

The assault is one of the largest seen in the West Bank for months. And it followed a series of smaller raids in the area over recent weeks.

The Israeli military said this strike had killed three militant fighters.

The armed factions of Hamas, Islamic Jihad and Fatah said they were detonating bombs against Israeli troops in the West Bank.

The Israeli military said Wednesday's operation followed a sharp rise in militant activity in recent months, with more than 150 attacks involving shooting or explosives from Tulkarm and Jenin in the past year.

Thousands of Palestinians have been arrested in raids and more than 660 fighters and civilians have been killed in the West Bank and East Jerusalem since the war in Gaza began, according to Palestinian Health Ministry figures.

Reuters correspondent Fiona Jones.

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The U.N. World Food Programme is investigating two of its top officials in Sudan over allegations including fraud and concealing information from donors about its ability to deliver food aid to civilians amid the nation's dire hunger crisis, according to 11 people with knowledge of the probe. Freddie Joyner from Reuters has more.

Five of the sources who spoke to Reuters say investigators are looking at whether WFP staff sought to hide the alleged role of Sudan's army in obstructing aid amid a brutal 16-month war with a rival paramilitary for control of the country.

When asked about the probe, the WFP said "allegations of individual misconduct related to irregularities in pockets of our operation in Sudan" are under urgent review by its inspector general's office.

Meanwhile, the U.S. government's aid agency, USAID, the single largest donor to the WFP, said the allegations were "deeply concerning" and "must be thoroughly investigated."

Battling severe hunger on many fronts, the World Food Programme is currently seeking close to \$23 billion in funding to feed millions of people.

Freddie Joyner from Reuters.

French prosecutors say a [33] 33-year-old man accused in an arson attack on a synagogue last weekend said he wanted to defend Palestinians and change Israel's policy in Gaza. A police officer was injured after the suspect set multiple fires around the Beth Yaacov synagogue Saturday in the Mediterranean resort town of La Grande-Motte.

France's national [counterterror...] counterterrorism prosecutor's office says the suspect was handed preliminary terrorism charges Wednesday along with two other people suspected of helping him.

Opponents of Nicolás Maduro take to the streets to revive protests disputing the results of the Venezuelan election. AP correspondent Haya Panjwani has more.

The demonstrations in the capital, Caracas, come exactly a month after the fraught July 28 vote in which Maduro was declared the winner despite strong evidence that opposition candidate Edmundo González won by a nearly 2-1 margin.

In weeks of on-again, off-again demonstrations, the opposition's rallying cry has been constant but so far ineffective. Opponents are demanding that election officials publish results from each polling station that they say would expose Maduro's attempts to steal the election.

I'm Haya Panjwani.

A jury in Nevada has found a Democratic former Las Vegas-area politician guilty of murder in the killing of an investigative journalist who wrote articles critical of his conduct in elected office. The verdict was read Wednesday in Clark County District Court.

A penalty phase now begins to decide if Robert Telles faces life in prison. He's been in jail since his arrest several days after the Las Vegas Review-Journal reporter Jeff German was found dead outside his home in September, 2022.

Prosecutors presented overwhelming evidence against Telles, including DNA tying him to German's killing. Telles insisted he was, quote, "framed" in the case.

I'm Alexis Strobe, VOA News.