

# VOA NEWS

August 31, 2024

This is VOA News. I'm Alexis Strobe.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy has dismissed the nation's Air Force commander after an F-16 crashed earlier this week. AP Washington correspondent Sagar Meghani reports.

The fighter jet was one of at least six Ukraine recently received from Western nations. The Air Force commander's dismissal came after he ripped a Ukrainian lawmaker for claiming a Patriot air defense system brought down the F-16, though the Air Force did not directly deny that's what happened.

Meantime, a Russian attack on Kharkiv killed six people. Zelenskyy points to those strikes as more evidence Western nations need to scrap restrictions on how weapons they donate can be used.

At the Pentagon: "We will engage in detailed discussions about the situation on the frontline."

Ukraine's defense minister did not mention the restrictions in his opening remarks while meeting with Pentagon Chief Lloyd Austin.

Sagar Meghani, Washington.

European Union defense ministers have agreed to boost their training program for [urok...] Ukrainian troops. AP correspondent Jackie Quinn has more.

Already, some 60,000 Ukrainian troops have undergone training outside Ukraine in coordination with NATO.

"It has been a success, a great success."

And now the European Union's High Representative, Josep Borrell, says 15,000 more will be trained by year's end.

"This war requires a constant adaptation to the modalities of the war. The training has to be shortened and adapted to the Ukrainian needs."

Meanwhile, Ukrainian commanders have told The Associated Press they blame some inexperienced fighters for losing ground to Russia. They say some of the new troops had trouble assembling weapons and some refused to fire them at enemy forces.

I'm Jackie Quinn.

You'll find expanded coverage of world news and events at our website [voanews.com](http://voanews.com) 24 hours a day. This is VOA News.

The attack on August 24 in Barsalogho, about 80 miles north of the capital Ouagadougou, is believed to be the deadliest since violence spilled over from neighboring Mali in 2015. Reuters correspondent Emma Jehle reports.

The date of the attack was verified by a Reuters source and confirmed by both the Burkina Faso military and the al-Qaeda-linked group that claimed responsibility.

A group of victims' relatives says hundreds of people were killed when jihadists opened fire on civilians digging defensive trenches on the orders of the military.

Several videos apparently released by the militants on social media and verified by Reuters showed more than 100 bodies piled in a trench, most of them in civilian clothing.

An al-Qaeda affiliate says it attacked soldiers and militia members excavating trenches and killed nearly 300, describing the victims as fighters, not civilians.

Burkina Faso's ruling junta has not said how many people were killed, but said civilians were among the victims.

Emma Jehle from Reuters.

Kosovo authorities have closed the ethnic Serb minority so-called parallel institutions in five northern municipalities. The move was immediately denounced by the United States and may further raise tensions with neighboring Serbia.

Elbert Krasniqi, [the] Kosovo's minister of local administration, confirmed the closure of five so-called parallel institutions in the north where most of the ethnic Serb minority lives, writing in a Facebook message that they "violate the Republic of Kosovo's constitution and laws."

The U.S. embassy in Kosovo reiterated in a statement Washington's "concern and disappointment with continuing uncoordinated actions" taken by Pristina.

The arrest of Telegram CEO Pavel Durov in France last Saturday is reverberating around the world. Durov is under formal investigation Wednesday over alleged illegal activities on Telegram as VOA's Henry Ridgwell reports.

French investigators say Telegram failed to comply with laws on moderating content.

Telegram has over 900 million global users. It is widely used by both the Russian and Ukrainian militaries.

Durov could seek to strike a deal with prosecutors, says TJ McIntyre, an associate professor at University College Dublin's School of Law.

"It's technically possible for Telegram to get access to the contents of communications of people who might think that they're encrypted. So that creates a treasure trove of data which intelligence authorities and a lot of jurisdictions, not just France, would no doubt love to have access to."

Henry Ridgwell, VOA News.

NASA has cut two astronauts, Zena Cardman and Stephanie Wilson, from the next crew to make room on the return trip for the two stuck at the International Space Station.

NASA's Nick Hague and Russian Aleksandr Gorbunov will launch in September aboard a SpaceX rocket. They will return with Suni Williams and Butch Wilmore in February.

I'm Alexis Strobe, VOA News.