

VOA NEWS

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This is VOA News. I'm Joe Ramsey.

United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres on Thursday condemned the Wednesday attack on a school run by the U.N. Palestinian refugee agency, UNRWA, that left six of its staffers dead.

U.N. spokesperson Stéphane Dujarric: "This incident raises the number of UNRWA staff killed in this conflict to 220. The Israeli defense forces have stated that they had targeted a command-and-control center in the compound. This incident must be independently and thoroughly investigated."

UNRWA said the school compound in central Gaza had been serving as a shelter for displaced people and said the attack resulted in the highest death toll among its staff in a single incident.

U.S. Attorney General Merrick Garland on Thursday denounced increasing threats against the Justice Department. AP correspondent Sagar Meghani reports.

Garland said they faced everything from conspiracy theories to threats of violence.

"Through your work, you have made clear that the Justice Department will not be intimidated by these attacks. But it is dangerous and outrageous that you have to endure them."

Garland's remarks came amid GOP claims the Biden administration has weaponized the Justice Department to go after Donald Trump. The attorney general says department employees have made clear they do not "bend to politics."

Sagar Meghani Washington.

U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken is wrapping up a three-nation Ukraine-focused European tour in Poland after hearing repeated appeals from Ukrainian officials to use Western-supplied weaponry for long-range strikes inside Russia.

Blinken traveled to Warsaw on Thursday after spending a day in Kyiv with British Foreign Secretary David Lammy.

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A non-profit group committed to preventing and resolving deadly conflict says the Islamic State in Somalia has become an important economic influence for terrorism. Mohammed Yusuf reports.

Islamic State in Somalia may not be as active on the battlefield as its local counterpart, the al-Qaeda-linked terror group al-Shabab, which controls large parts of southern and central Somalia. However, the International Crisis Group says in a report released Thursday IS-Somalia is building relations with other IS branches and is able to disperse money to finance terror operations in other African countries.

Omar Mahmood is a senior researcher with the International Crisis Group. He says that IS-Somalia plays a bigger role externally than al-Shabab.

Mohammed Yusuf, VOA News, Nairobi.

Peru's government has declared three days of national mourning over the death of former President Alberto Fujimori. The government also granted him a state funeral despite his convictions on human rights abuses and corruption.

Fujimori, who governed the South American country with an increasingly authoritarian hand between 1990 and 2000, died of cancer on Wednesday at a home in the capital, Lima.

A court ruling over a humanitarian pardon had freedom from prison in December.

Faith leaders gather in a U.S. state of Ohio town on Thursday, condemning immigrant rumors disparaging Haitians. AP correspondent Jackie Quinn reports.

Experts say it's nothing new to disparage migrants who move into established communities. But the president of the Springfield, Ohio, NAACP isn't having it.

"I am calling on Trump, I'm calling on JD Vance, to retract their messages to offer a, a, an apology."

That's Denise Williams heard on Dayton 24/7, outraged by Donald Trump spreading a rumor that Haitian migrants have been eating people's pets.

"No, they are not eating pets and as our government said, no.

I'm Jackie Quinn.

U.S. health officials say they don't know how a person [in the state of the] in Missouri caught bird flu, but they believe it may be a rare instance of a "one-off" standalone illness.

Official said on Thursday they have not yet determined how the person caught the virus. They also have not been able to confirm the exact strain of flu.

The case raised questions about the possibility of human-to-human transmission, but they say there is no evidence of that.

Unusual flu strains that come from animals are occasionally found in people. This year alone, health officials identified seven human cases of swine flu in the United States.

I'm Joe Ramsey.