

# VOA NEWS

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I'm VOA's Joe Ramsey with your worldwide news update.

The Israeli army chief said on Wednesday the military is preparing for a possible ground operation in Lebanon. Reuters correspondent Zachary Goelman reports.

A Reuters camera captured the moment an Israeli airstrike hit a target in the coastal Lebanese city of Tyre on Wednesday. Israel has widened its airstrikes in Lebanon against Iranian-backed Hezbollah militants.

In a video released by the Israeli military, the country's army chief told troops the strikes were meant to prepare for a possible ground operation.

Even as he spoke, high-level diplomats pushed to stop the fighting in both Gaza and Lebanon.

U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken: "... we've been working tirelessly with partners to avoid a full-blown war ..."

Israeli airstrikes have targeted Hezbollah leaders and hit hundreds of sites deep inside Lebanon. Lebanese hospitals have filled with the wounded since Monday.

Hezbollah rocket fire since October has forced hundreds of thousands of Israelis to flee the border region. Israeli authorities said northern Israel was hit by heavy Hezbollah barrages on Wednesday morning.

Reuters correspondent Zachary Goelman.

Russian President Vladimir Putin said on Wednesday any nation's conventional attack on Russia that is supported by a nuclear power will be considered a joint attack on his country. The strong new warning to the West was outlined in a revision of Moscow's nuclear doctrine.

The threat was clearly aimed at discouraging the West from allowing Ukraine to strike Russia with longer-range weapons and appears to significantly lower the threshold for the possible use of Russia's nuclear arsenal.

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Former U.S. President Donald Trump on Wednesday described Ukraine in bleak terms, raising questions about how much he'd be willing to concede in a negotiation over the country's future. AP correspondent Sagar Meghani reports.

"Ukraine is gone."

Trump argues Ukraine should have made concessions to Vladimir Putin before Russia's 2022 invasion.

"Any deal, even the worst deal, would have been better than what we have right now."

While Trump has long railed against U.S. backing for Ukraine, he's rarely discussed the conflict in such a detail as he did during a North Carolina appearance and as Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said to pitch the White House this week on what he calls a "victory plan."

"What deal can we make? [the, the] It's, it's demolished"

During an event with Zelenskyy hours later, President Biden sounded the opposite tone.

"Mr. President, we all, we all stand by your side."

Sagar Meghani, Washington.

South African officials say the remains of 49 freedom fighters who died while exiled in Zimbabwe and Zambia during the struggle against white minority rule in South Africa have been returned to the country.

The bodies were received on Wednesday by government officials and family members at a military base in the capital, Pretoria, after being exhumed in Zambia and Zimbabwe for reburial in the country of their birth.

South Africa is planning a massive mouse eradication project on a sub-Antarctic island to stop an invasive species from wiping out precious sea birds that nest there. Kate Bartlett reports.

Marion Island, in the southern Indian Ocean almost 2,000 kilometers from Cape Town, is a remote and windswept South African territory that's home to extensive bird life, including the wandering albatross.

But those birds face an unusual threat: predatory mice that have been feasting on their chicks.

"The mice were introduced accidentally in the early 1800s, so some 200 years ago now. They came ashore - they were essentially stowaways on the vessels of the early seal hunters that visited the island."

That was Anton Wolfaardt, a conservationist who is leading the program to eradicate the mice.

A similar project has been undertaken before. In the 1940s, feral cats were introduced to Marion Island to try to control the mice, but then the felines started preying on the seabirds.

The cats were successfully eradicated in the early 1990s, although that, of course, left the mice to flourish.

Kate Bartlett, VOA News, Johannesburg.

That wraps up this update, but the world and news never stop. For additional updates, visit our website. I'm Joe Ramsey, VOA News.