

VOA NEWS

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

The U.S. has sent Israel a letter warning it risks losing American weapons funding unless it allows far more humanitarian aid into Gaza. AP correspondent Sagar Meghani reports.

"The letter was not meant as a threat."

But rather, White House national security spokesman John Kirby says it was meant to reiterate a sense of U.S. urgency.

"... about the need for an increase, a dramatic increase in humanitarian assistance."

The U.S. is giving Israel 30 days to, among other things, speed the aid flow, which had ramped up after a similar letter in April.

But State Department spokesman Matthew Miller says the flow has dropped sharply.

"... by over 50 percent from where it was at its peak."

The letter comes amid growing U.S. frustration as Israel has defied repeated requests to scale back operations against Hamas.

Sagar Meghani, Washington.

Former U.S. President Donald Trump is refusing to say whether he's spoken with Russian President Vladimir Putin since Trump left the White House.

"Well, I don't comment on that, but I will tell you that, if I did, it's a smart thing. If I'm friendly with people, if I have a relationship with people, that's a good thing, not a bad thing, in terms of a country."

The Republican presidential candidate Tuesday was pressed on his communication with the Russian president during a wide-ranging and sometimes contentious interview at the Economic Club of Chicago.

Trump touted his relationship with Putin as well as the authoritarian leaders of North Korea and China.

"I had a very good relationship with President Xi and a very good relationship with Putin and a very good relationship with Kim Jong Un, who is a nuclear force that you won't even believe."

Journalist Bob Woodward reports in his new book Trump had as many as seven private phone calls with Putin since leaving office.

This is VOA News.

An independent commission in Bangladesh formed after the August ouster of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina is investigating enforced disappearances during her rule. VOA's Sarah Zaman reports from the capital, Dhaka.

Rights groups say over 700 people, mostly political opponents and rights activists, went missing during Hasina's last 15 years in office.

Ayesha Ali's son, Abdul Quader Bhuiyan Masum, has been missing since December 2013.

"I keep waiting for my son to call me ma once again, for him to say, 'Mother, how are you?'"

Bangladesh's interim government formed a five-member commission to investigate cases of enforced disappearances.

Ali hopes it will help her find her son.

Working behind closed doors, the commission is a real hope for many. But the pace of its work is frustrating to some.

Sarah Zaman, VOA News, Dhaka.

Floods have brought devastation to parts of western Central Africa over the past several months. Reuters correspondent David Doyle has more.

Over the last few months, heavy rains have flooded every one of Chad's 23 provinces.

In northern Nigeria, a dam burst with devastating consequences.

Ancient buildings have been damaged in Niger's desert town, Agadez. And amid that destruction, the human cost -- more than 1,460 people dead, according to the U.N. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs.

??? is the director of meteorological observations and forecasting at Chad's National Meteorological Agency.

"Houses have collapsed, bridges have given way, roads have completely been destroyed and vehicles have been swept away, especially in the northern regions."

According to a 2021 study in the Journal of Hydrology, the Sahel region is increasingly threatened by floods. The study described widespread havoc and devastation as becoming commonplace.

Reuters correspondent David Doyle.

Florida residents hard-hit by Hurricane Milton are getting back on their feet. AP correspondent Julie Walker reports.

In the wake of Hurricane Milton, some Florida areas continue flooding because of cresting rivers.

Meanwhile, recovery work continues. Governor Ron DeSantis says the state's disaster fund has raised about \$12 million and counting.

"Through the disaster fund, we've been able to cut red tape and we've been able to get assistance to people who need it."

He also says power is back for most of the state.

"You're even without power for a few hours, it could be a real pain in the rear end, but we had over 50,000 linemen. These folks really got to work."

And free gas is still available at 10 state depots.

I'm Julie Walker.

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