

VOA NEWS

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

Israel's air force carried out several strikes on the suburbs of Beirut Monday night following an Israeli army warning to evacuate the area.

Israel said late Monday it planned to carry out more strikes in Lebanon against a Hezbollah-run financial institution it targeted the night before and which it says uses customers' deposits to finance attacks against Israel.

U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken is again in the Middle East making his 11th trip to the region since the Gaza war erupted last year and as Israel steps up attacks against Hezbollah in Lebanon.

The State Department said Blinken departed Monday for a week-long trip to Israel and several Arab countries on a visit that also comes as Israel weighs retaliation against Iran for a ballistic missile attack earlier this month.

The White House said Monday the Pentagon is investigating the unauthorized release of classified documents about Israel's military plans. AP correspondent Jackie Quinn reports.

A White House spokesman says the leak of top secret information is deeply concerning.

"We're not exactly sure how these documents found their way into the public domain."

White House national security spokesman John Kirby on the online posting of top secret documents about Israel's plans for Iran.

"We're deeply concerned and the president remains deeply concerned about any leakage of classified information into the public domain."

He says they don't know if the information was leaked to the Telegram messaging app or if there was a hack.

The documents are attributed to the National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency and the National Security Agency pointing out that Israel was moving military assets for a strike against Iran.

I'm Jackie Quinn.

This is VOA News.

Moldovans have voted by a razor-thin majority in favor of securing the country's path toward European Union membership. AP correspondent Charles De Ledesma reports.

The weekend ballot nearly caused a major setback for the pro-Western president.

Peter Stano, the EU Commission spokesman, says criminal groups tried to undermine the vote.

"We noted that this vote took place under unprecedented interference and intimidation by Russia and its proxies aiming to destabilize the democratic processes in the Republic of Moldova."

The yes vote stood at just over 50 percent, while the noes came in at 49.6.

In the presidential race that was held at the same time, incumbent Maia Sandu won the first round with 42 percent of the vote in a field of 11 but failed to win an outright majority.

I'm Charles De Ledesma.

Thousands gathered Monday on the streets of Yaoundé, jockeying to catch a glimpse of Cameroon's long-absent leader. Rumors about the death of 91-year-old President Paul Biya swirled after he disappeared from public view for over a month following an official visit to China. Moki Edwin Kindzeka has more from Yaoundé.

"Your warm welcome."

Cameroon's state radio says President Paul Biya, a few of his close advisers and his wife, Chantal Biya, are back in Yaoundé after spending close to 50 days outside the Central African state.

Biya's return was also broadcast live on state television, which showed thousands of people gathered at major junctions near Yaoundé-Nsimalen International Airport, where Biya landed.

Civilians said there was a huge military presence in Cameroon's capital when Biya arrived.

Supporters of the opposition Cameroonian Party for National Reconciliation, or CPNR, turned out to chant slogans telling Biya that he is old and should hand over power.

Moki Edwin Kindzeka, VOA News, Yaoundé, Cameroon.

The U.N.'s biodiversity summit is opening in Colombia this week, with nearly 200 countries debating how they can save nature from the current rapid rate of destruction. Reuters correspondent Olivia Zollino has more.

At COP 15 two years ago, countries agreed on more than two dozen global goals. The agreement was called the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework. It includes things like setting aside 30 percent of the Earth for conservation and mobilizing \$200 billion in nature financing.

Reuters correspondent Olivia Zollino.

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