

VOA NEWS

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Hi, I'm VOA's Alexis Strobe with your worldwide news update.

The United States says there is evidence of North Korean troops in Russia, a day after Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said Kyiv had learned that two North Korean military units were training in Russia for potential combat in Ukraine. VOA Pentagon correspondent Carla Babb has a story.

The White House Wednesday raising concern about what it called a "reckless and dangerous" defense relationship.

"... not only the concern for the impact on the war in Ukraine but the impact that this could have in the Indo-Pacific, with Kim Jong Un benefiting to some degree."

National Security Communications Advisor John Kirby said Washington will reach out to Beijing to share perspectives and learn how China views the move.

He also issued this warning to Pyongyang.

"... if these North Korean soldiers decide to join the fight against Ukraine, they will become legitimate military targets."

As for Russia, Kirby said any potential deployment of North Korean troops against Ukraine would be a sign of desperation and weakness.

"... he has to farm out the fighting to a foreign country, I think, speaks volumes about how much his military is suffering and -- and how uncertain he believes, how untenable he believes his -- his situation is."

The United States promised new sanctions in the coming days, targeting those outside Russia who have fueled the Russian war machine.

Carla Babb, VOA News, Washington.

Turkey's air force has struck Kurdish militant targets in Iraq and Syria in an apparent retaliation for an earlier attack on a state-run defense company. The Turkish Defense Ministry said more than 30 targets were destroyed in the aerial offensive without providing details on the locations that were hit.

The strike came hours after suspected Kurdish militants set off explosives and opened fire at the aerospace and defense company TUSAS, killing five people and injuring more than 20 others.

Interior Minister Ali Yerlikaya said the two attackers, a man and a woman, also were killed.

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France may introduce changes to its rape law to include consent for the first time after a mass trial of rape suspects shook the country, challenging the limits of existing legislation and prompting some leading politicians to call for change. Reuters correspondent Angela Johnston explains.

At issue is the legal definition of rape in France. The country's criminal law defines it as a penetrative act or oral sex act committed on someone using "violence, coercion, threat or surprise." It makes no clear mention of the need for a partner's consent. And multiple legal experts said prosecutors have to show an intent to rape to get a guilty verdict.

The country's new justice minister recently said he is in favor of updating the law, as has President Emmanuel Macron.

It's a hotly debated issue in France, with some legal experts and activists saying consent puts scrutiny on the victim's behavior in words, rather than the accused.

France blocked the inclusion of a consent-based rape definition in a European directive in 2023.

That was Reuters correspondent Angela Johnston.

The Israeli army has accused six Al Jazeera journalists covering the war in Gaza of also being current or former paid fighters for Palestinian militant groups. Al Jazeera rejected the claims made Wednesday.

Israel cited documents it purportedly found in Gaza and other intelligence it gathered in making the accusations. It said four of the journalists are or have been affiliated with Hamas and two with Palestinian Islamic Jihad.

Al Jazeera said the accusations were "fabricated" and "part of a wider pattern of hostility" toward the pan-Arab network.

A new Microsoft report says efforts by Russia, Iran and China to sway U.S. voters may escalate. AP correspondent Haya Panjwani reports.

There are signs that their activity will grow stronger as Election Day comes closer.

The company said Russian operatives are doubling down on fake videos to smear Kamala Harris's campaign while Chinese-linked social media campaigns are criticizing down-ballot candidates who are critical of China.

Microsoft also says Iranian actors who allegedly sent emails aimed at intimidating U.S. voters in 2020 have been surveying election-related websites and major media outlets.

Russia, China and Iran have all rejected claims that they're seeking to meddle with the U.S. election.

Haya Panjwani, Washington.

The leaders of the Commonwealth group of nations will meet at a welcome banquet in Samoa in the South Pacific on Thursday, with climate change and reparations for Britain's role in the transatlantic slave trade both likely to be on the agenda.

Leaders and officials from 56 countries with roots in Britain's empire are attending with Commonwealth heads of government meeting in the small island nation that began on Monday.

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