

VOA NEWS

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

Georgia's most powerful man won a parliamentary election on Saturday, according to early official results, a victory that opposition politicians refused to recognize, alleging "falsification." Reuters correspondent Trevor Koroll reports.

With 70 percent of precincts counted, those results showed the ruling Georgian Dream party had won 53 percent of the vote, the electoral commission said.

The Georgian opposition initially also celebrated victory, and some monitors reported election violations.

But a parallel count operated by one of the opposition parties showed Georgian Dream in a strong position to win a majority.

Though it lost out to the combined opposition in parts of the capital, Tbilisi, it won margins of up to 90 percent in some rural areas.

However, opposition parties are contesting the results and said they would not accept them, with the leader of the Coalition for Change party calling it a, quote, "constitutional coup," according to the Interpress news agency.

Georgian Dream's billionaire founder, Bidzina Ivanishvili, the opposition and foreign diplomats had cast the election as a watershed moment that would decide if Georgia moves closer to the West or leans back towards Russia.

If victory for Ivanishvili's Dream party is confirmed, it would be a blow to the EU's hopes of bringing more former Soviet republics into its orbit.

That was Reuters correspondent Trevor Koroll.

In a statement posted to X on Saturday, Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian gave his condolences to the families of the four people, all with the military air defense, killed in Israel's first ever open attack on Iran early Saturday.

The president also warned against future attacks. Pazeshkian wrote, "Enemies of Iran should know these brave people are standing fearlessly in defense of their land and will respond to any stupidity with tact and intelligence."

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Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy says North Korean troops are poised to join the war and cancels the U.N. chief's visit. AP correspondent Rica Ann Garcia reports.

Western officials have warned that North Korean forces joining the conflict could extend the almost three-year war and would have geopolitical consequences reaching as far as the Indo-Pacific region.

The possibility has alarmed leaders and deepened diplomatic tensions.

A senior official in the Ukrainian government told the AP that Zelenskyy had canceled a planned visit to Kyiv by U.N. Secretary-General António Guterres.

A photograph of Guterres shaking hands with Russian President Vladimir Putin caused an outcry in Ukraine.

I'm Rica Ann Garcia.

The conservative Liberal National Party in Australia's Queensland state was on track on Sunday to end almost a decade of center-left Labor government after a general election held on Saturday.

According to the Electoral Commission of Queensland, votes were still being counted on Sunday, but a partial count showed the Liberal National Party was polling well at a primary vote of 41.9 percent, with the governing Labor Party at 32.8 percent.

Commonwealth leaders ending a week-long summit in Samoa said on Saturday the time had come for a discussion on whether Britain should commit to reparations for its role in the transatlantic slave trade. Reuters correspondent Diane To reports.

Though Britain has long rejected calls for financial compensation for nations affected by slavery, at a news conference, Commonwealth Secretary-General Patricia Scotland read out the statement noting the issue's importance to the group's 56 members who are mostly former British colonies.

"The time has come for a meaningful, truthful and respectful conversation towards forging a common future based on equity."

The statement did not mention what form reparations should take.

"So we agreed a plan here in Samoa to boost investment across the Commonwealth."

British Prime Minister Keir Starmer told a separate news conference that the summit's reparation discussions have not been about money.

That was Reuters correspondent Diane To.

In 1882, the U.S. Navy shelled a southwest Alaska Tlingit village and then burned what was left of the homes, food caches and canoes. Conditions were so severe that winter, elders sacrificed their own lives so children could eat.

On Saturday, the U.S. Navy apologized during a ceremony in Angoon marking the bombing. A Navy spokesperson calls the apology "warranted" and "long overdue."

The attack was one of a series of conflicts between the American military and Alaskan natives in the years after U.S. bought the territory from Russia in 1867.

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