

VOA NEWS

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

A U.S. law enforcement official said Sunday the man responsible for the truck attack in New Orleans on New Year's Day visited the city twice before. AP correspondent Julie Walker reports.

The FBI continues to say they believe Shamsud-Din Jabbar acted alone when he used a rented F-150 pickup truck to kill 14 people and injured dozens of others.

FBI special agent in charge Lyonel Myrthil says the Texas native visited the city in October and November and recorded video of Bourbon Street with eyeglasses that have a built-in camera.

"Jabbar was wearing a pair of metal glasses when he conducted the attack on Bourbon Street. But he did not activate the glasses to livestream his actions that day."

In a video before the attack, the former army soldier proclaimed support for the Islamic State militant group.

The FBI is investigating trips he made, including Cairo and Canada, in the summer of 2023.

"Our agents are getting answers ..."

The FBI also says that the IEDs Jabbar planted, which he was unable to set off because police killed him, were made of material commonly available in the U.S.

I'm Julie Walker.

Monday begins a period of mourning in New Orleans following the deadly attack. AP correspondent Donna Warder reports.

Over the weekend, New Orleans held a vigil, the only way New Orleans knows how. They gathered Saturday night. People held candles and wreaths and asked for an end to the violence.

A mass was celebrated Sunday at St. Louis Cathedral in the city. Reverend Patrick Williams told the congregation, "We can choose to fear or we can choose to hope."

I'm Donna Warder.

This is VOA News.

Six days of official funeral ceremonies marking the life and legacy of the 39th U.S. president, Jimmy Carter, are underway in his home state of Georgia, where VOA's Kane Farabaugh has more.

The sun rises over Plains, Georgia, differently these days for shop owner Philip Kurland, as he and others in this rural community of about 700 people mourn the passing of its most famous resident, Jimmy Carter.

"He's really done as much as he can for the community and for the world at this point."

Jimmy Carter is more than a former president and humanitarian to those who lived alongside him in the place he called home for a century.

"There goes my hero."

People will continue to pay their respects to President Carter in repose here at the Carter Center until Tuesday. That's when he'll be transported to the national capital region for official ceremonies there before he returns to Georgia when the official ceremonies take place in his hometown of Plains, Georgia, which will also be his final resting place.

Kane Farabaugh, VOA News, Atlanta, Georgia.

U.S. President-elect Donald Trump wants to slash government spending. A proposed advisory commission called the Department of Government Efficiency will lead the effort. VOA's Dora Mekouar reports.

Billionaire businessman Elon Musk wants to slash \$2 trillion in federal spending. He'll be co-head of the Department of Government Efficiency, a proposed Donald Trump presidential advisory commission.

It's not the first time a U.S. administration has pledged to cut government expenses, says Justin Vaughn, an associate professor of political science at Coastal Carolina University in South Carolina.

"Presidents have been talking in one way or another about downsizing or reducing the role of government since the founding of the republic."

In many cases, Congress has to agree before any cuts can be made.

Dora Mekouar, VOA News, Washington.

Local authorities say a pro-Russian breakaway region of Moldova is facing extended power cuts after being left without Russian gas supplies no longer transiting through neighboring Ukraine. Reuters correspondent Trevor Koroll reports.

Transnistria had received gas from Russian giant Gazprom through a pipeline crossing Ukraine. Those flows stopped on New Year's Day after a transit deal expired between the warring countries and Kyiv refused to extend it.

The mainly Russian-speaking enclave has lived side by side with Moldova since breaking away from it in the last days of Soviet rule.

Russia denies using gas as a weapon to coerce Moldova and blames Kyiv for refusing to renew the gas transit deal.

Reuters correspondent Trevor Koroll.

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