

VOA NEWS

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

The U.S. Congress formally certified President-elect Donald Trump's election victory on Monday, the four-year anniversary of the January 6 Capitol riot. Reuters correspondent Jillian Kitchener reports.

Donald Trump's election victory was formally certified on Monday.

"... for president of the United States ..."

Vice President Kamala Harris presided over the joint session of Congress, clearing the way for her former election rival to be sworn in as president later this month.

"Donald J. Trump of the state of Florida has received 312 votes."

The ceremony stood in sharp contrast to exactly four years ago, when Trump supporters stormed the Capitol in a failed attempt to block the certification of his loss.

"Well, today was obviously a very important day."

Harris spoke to reporters after she said she performed her constitutional duties.

"One of the most important pillars of our democracy is that there will be a peaceful transfer of power."

On January 6, 2021, rioters surged past police barricades, assaulting about 140 officers and causing more than \$2.8 million in damage. Multiple police officers who battled protesters died in the weeks that followed, some by suicide.

Trump continues to falsely claim that his 2020 defeat was the result of widespread fraud. He has said he plans to pardon some of those charged with taking part in the riot.

Security inside and outside the Capitol was heightened on Monday, with snowy Capitol grounds ringed by metal fences and checkpoints. The boosted security is expected to remain in place through Trump's inauguration on January 20.

Reuters correspondent Jillian Kitchener.

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The presence of Israeli troops who entered a U.N. buffer zone on the border with Syria following the fall of President Bashar al-Assad is frustrating the local population. AP correspondent Jennifer King reports.

Syrians living in the windswept buffer zone on the border with Israel tell the Associated Press they have been left to fend for themselves since Israeli troops rolled in after the collapse of the Assad regime.

In Quneitra, Israeli tanks maneuver behind a mound of dirt blocking the road to the house where Rinata Fastas lives. She says she's frustrated by a lack of action or communication by the fledgling government or the international community.

Troops have reportedly opened fire on Syrian protesters on at least two occasions, and (in) Swisah, east of the Golan Heights, Adel Subhi al-Ali sat with his 21-year-old son, who is recovering after being shot in the stomach in a protest on Christmas Day. He says the country is not ready to start a war, but they demand a solution to this issue.

Syria's new de facto leader, Ahmed al-Sharaa, has publicly said Syria is not seeking a military conflict with Israel.

I'm Jennifer King.

Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau announced on Monday that he will step down after nearly a decade in office. Reuters correspondent Olivia Zollino reports.

"I intend to resign as party leader, as prime minister, after the party selects its next leader."

Trudeau was facing mounting pressure, including from Liberal legislators, to quit amid polls showing the party will be crushed in the next election.

Trudeau also said Parliament would be suspended until March 24.

The 53-year-old Trudeau took office in November, 2015 and won reelection twice, making him one of Canada's longest-serving prime ministers. But he saw his popularity dip two years ago as public anger over high prices and a housing shortage grew.

The next election must be held by late October, regardless of who the leader is.

Parliament was due to return this month and opposition parties had vowed to bring down the government as soon as they could.

Reuters correspondent Olivia Zollino.

The first U.S. bird flu death has been reported. Health officials in the state of Louisiana announced the death on Monday of a person who had been hospitalized with severe respiratory symptoms. Health officials have said the person was older than 65, had underlying medical problems and had been in contact with sick and dead birds in a backyard flock.

They also said a genetic analysis had suggested the bird flu virus had mutated inside the patient which could have led to the more severe illness.

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.