

VOA NEWS

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

Israel delayed a cabinet vote Thursday on the long-awaited cease-fire deal that would pause the fighting in the Gaza Strip and release dozens of hostages. AP correspondent Joe Fetterman has more from Jerusalem.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu says there still is no agreement. He's blaming Hamas. He says the group is trying to make last-minute changes to the deal. Hamas denies these allegations and says it's committed to the agreement.

Two hardline partners in Netanyahu's governing coalition have come out against the deal and threatened to possibly bring down the government over it. It's not clear how serious this crisis is, but it has forced Netanyahu to delay a planned cabinet vote that was meant to ratify the agreement.

AP correspondent Joe Fetterman.

U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken on Thursday defended President Joe Biden's administration's policies on the Gaza War as protests interrupted his final news conference. AP correspondent Sagar Meghani reports.

At the State Department, Blinken called the Gaza cease-fire deal a relief for Israelis and Palestinians alike.

"It's also a moment of historic possibility for the region and well beyond," saying he expects the deal to be implemented this weekend.

"How does it feel to have your legacy be genocide?"

But as he spoke, people in the room accused Blinken of ignoring Israeli violence against Palestinian civilians. "Criminal! Why aren't you in the Hague?" They were rare, if not unprecedented, protests in the State Department briefing room.

Blinken says questions about how the U.S. handled the war are fair "and they'll be asked for a long time," but says the administration had to focus on one thing, "where we could actually get an end to a conflict, an end to suffering, and the prospect of something better."

Sagar Meghani, Washington.

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South African authorities face growing anger over their handling of a standoff with illegal miners trapped in an abandoned gold mine. Police said on Thursday the death toll from the incident has reached at least 87. AP correspondent Karen Chammas reports.

Authorities may face an investigation over their initial refusal to help the miners and instead smoke them out by cutting off their food supplies.

Community groups launched their own rescue attempts when authorities said last year they would not help the hundreds of miners because they were what they called "criminals."

Michael Charles, a community volunteer helping the rescue operation, told the AP "This government make a plan and they must go to court, they must account for these bodies. I risk my life to go there to save people."

The miners are suspected to have died of starvation and dehydration, although no causes of death have been released.

I'm Karen Chammas.

It could be a week or more before homeowners in the Los Angeles area are allowed to check on their fire-damaged properties. More than 80,000 people are still under evacuation orders and many do not know what, if anything, is left of their houses, apartments and possessions.

County Fire Chief Anthony Marrone says residents eager to enter burned areas to see what's left of their homes or search for valuables need to be patient. He says the rubble can contain asbestos, lead or other dangerous materials.

The popular short video app, TikTok, may soon be unavailable to its 170 million American users. AP correspondent Haya Panjwani reports.

The U.S. Supreme Court could decide on Friday about whether TikTok should shut down in a few days under a federal law that seeks to enforce its sale by the Chinese company that owns the social media platform.

Two Democratic senators are urging President Joe Biden to extend the TikTok deadline by 90 days.

"We're asking for more time." Democratic Senator Ed Markey. "Even as we're debating, TikTok users are flocking to a Chinese app with no reported presence in the United States."

Currently, federal law requires that the video sharing platform divest itself from its China-based parent company, ByteDance, or shut down its U.S. operations this weekend.

President-elect Donald Trump's pick for national security adviser, Florida Representative Mike Waltz, also said in an interview this week that Trump is exploring options to preserve TikTok.

Haya Panjwani, Washington.

That wraps up this update, but the world and news never stop. For additional updates, visit our website, [voanews.com](https://www.voanews.com). I'm Joe Ramsey, VOA News.