

# VOA NEWS

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

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu declared on Tuesday the cease-fire in Gaza would end and the military would resume fighting Hamas until it was defeated if the Palestinian militant group did not release hostages by midday Saturday. Reuters correspondent Freddy Joyner reports.

"In light of Hamas's announcement of its decision to violate the agreement and not release our hostages, last night I ordered the military (the IDF) to gather forces inside and around the Gaza Strip. This operation is being carried out at this time. It will be completed in the very near future."

It was not immediately clear if Netanyahu meant Hamas should release all hostages held in Gaza or just the three who had been expected to be released on Saturday under the cease-fire.

His office did not immediately respond to a Reuters request for comment.

Hamas has gradually been releasing hostages since the first phase of a cease-fire began on January 19. But on Monday, the militant group said it would not free any more individuals until further notice over accusations Israel was violating the deal by conducting several deadly shootings, holding up some aid deliveries and impeding the return of Gazans to the strip's north.

Israel denies holding back aid and says it has fired on people who disregarded warnings not to approach Israeli troops.

That was Reuters correspondent Freddie Joyner.

President Donald Trump said during a press conference on Tuesday that "not much" was given to Russia in exchange for the release of American school teacher Marc Fogel.

"Not much. No, they were very nice. We were treated very nicely by Russia, actually. I hope that's the beginning of the relationship where we can end that war and ..."

Fogel had been detained in Russia since August, 2021 and was serving a 14-year sentence.

His release comes as Trump seeks to improve relations with Moscow as part of broader efforts to end the war in Ukraine.

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Trump's ultimatum to Hamas received a mixed reaction from Israelis for whom the release of the hostages remains top priority. VOA's Jeff Caster reports.

Hamas's spokesman Sami Abu Zuhri said Tuesday Trump needs to remember there is an agreement which must be respected by both parties.

Jerusalem resident Hagit Herman told the Reuters news agency she thought Trump's intentions may have been good, but the message was wrong.

"I think Trump has good meanings, but I think now he's not on it. I think he must go in another way. I think the most important thing is to get back our people to Israel and not push it and not threaten the Hamas because that's not the way."

Trump did say that Israel might want to override him regarding his suggestion the cease-fire be cancelled and said he might speak to Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on the issue.

Jeff Caster, VOA News.

Canada has named a former deputy commissioner with the Royal Canadian Mounted Police as the country's new fentanyl czar. Officials hope to show the U.S. it is working to prevent production and distribution of the synthetic opioid.

Kevin Brosseau has served as an RCMP deputy commissioner and the senior Mountie in the province of Manitoba. More recently, he was deputy national security and intelligence adviser to the prime minister.

President Donald Trump recently threatened to impose steep tariffs on all goods from Canada, citing the southbound flow of migrants and drugs, including fentanyl.

Vice President J.D. Vance warned leaders at a Paris summit against killing the growth of artificial intelligence with "excessive regulation." AP correspondent Karen Chammas reports.

Speaking at the summit in Paris, Vice President Vance said, "We feel very strongly that AI must remain free from ideological bias and that American AI will not be co-opted into a tool for authoritarian censorship."

He also used his speech to world leaders, tech bosses and researchers to repeatedly push back against what he called "excessive regulation" of the rapidly growing AI industry.

Concerns over AI's potential dangers have loomed over the summit, particularly as nations grapple with how to regulate a technology that is increasingly entwined with defense and warfare.

I'm Karen Chammas.

Iraq's top court has thrown out a legal challenge that had temporarily halted three controversial laws passed last month by the country's parliament.

The measures include an amendment to the country's personal status law to give Islamic courts increased authority over family matters, which critics have said would erode women's rights.

They also include a general amnesty law that opponents say would allow the release of people involved in public corruption and embezzlement, as well as militants who committed war crimes.

The third bill aimed to return lands confiscated from the Kurds under the rule of Saddam Hussein, which some fear would lead to the displacement of Arab residents.

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