

BBC NEWS

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Hello, I'm Neil Nunes with the BBC News.

President Trump says the United States has launched a deadly strike against the Islamic State group in northwest Nigeria. Writing on social media, he described them as "Terrorist Scum" and accused them of targeting and killing primarily innocent Christians. More from David Waddell.

Sectarian violence in Nigeria isn't new. Boko Haram has been targeting churches and Christian schools since 2009. Monitoring groups say Christians and Muslims are being killed in roughly equal numbers. But the government there is blaming Boko Haram and Islamic State in northwestern Nigeria for a recent wave of abductions, ostensibly for ransom.

Last month, President Trump threatened to send troops "guns a-blazing", as he put it, if Christians continued to be killed. The Nigerian government says the jihadists aren't targeting members of a particular religion.

President Volodymyr Zelenskyy has said he's had an hour-long phone conversation with President Trump's envoy Steve Witkoff and the president's son-in-law Jared Kushner on how to end the war with Russia. Details from ???.

Today's discussions came a day after President Zelenskyy released details of a 20-point plan agreed by Ukrainian and U.S. envoys over the weekend. That plan included new proposals addressing the main sticking point, territorial concessions. It proposes the establishment of a demilitarized zone in eastern Ukraine, security guarantees and a setting up of free economic zones.

The draft plan has evolved from a document agreed by Mr. Witkoff with Russian negotiators several weeks ago. That plan was widely dismissed as more of a Russian wish list. Moscow has not yet commented on the latest proposals, but has so far not shown any willingness to compromise.

Brazil's former president, Jair Bolsonaro, has endorsed his son's bid for the presidency in next year's elections. Flávio Bolsonaro read out his father's message in front of the hospital where the former president has undergone a hernia operation. More now from Anbarasan Ethirajan.

For the surgery, the 70-year-old former president was allowed to temporarily leave the prison where he is serving a 27-year sentence for plotting a coup. Mr. Bolsonaro, who served as president between 2019 and 2022, argues that he is a victim of political persecution.

The far-right former leader has been grappling with health issues since being stabbed in the stomach during the 2018 presidential campaign.

Flávio, currently a senator, said the signed letter by his father sought to clarify any doubt about his father's support for his presidential bid.

The authorities in Venezuela have released at least 60 prisoners who had been arrested during demonstrations against the re-election of President Nicolás Maduro in July last year. Human rights organizations say the conditions under which they have been freed are unclear.

World News from the BBC.

The Israeli military has said it has killed a senior member of Iran's powerful Quds Force in Lebanon. The IDF said the man whom it identified as Hussein Mahmoud Marshad al-Jawhari, had been involved in planning attacks against Israel from Lebanon and Syria.

The Quds Force is the overseas arm of Iran's Revolutionary Guards and has played a significant role in many regional conflicts from Syria to Yemen.

Voters in Somalia's capital Mogadishu have been casting their ballots in municipal elections, the first direct elections in the country, for nearly 60 years. The Election Commission chief said the vote passed without incident and the counting of ballots would start soon. ??? reports.

The election took place under tight security with the city on lockdown. There were 1,600 candidates contesting 390 local council seats in Mogadishu. Although opposition parties chose not to participate, local observers say the vote was free, fair and peaceful.

This is considered a significant milestone for the country's future politics and signals the end of clan-based politics. Analysts view this vote as a crucial test for the next year's presidential election.

The French President Emmanuel Macron's office says he is fully engaged in securing the release of the French researcher Laurent Vinatier from a Russian prison. Mr. Vinatier was sentenced to three years for not declaring himself a foreign agent. He was working in Russia for a Swiss conflict resolution organization. France says Mr. Vinatier was being held arbitrarily.

King Charles has called for "compassion, reconciliation" and unity in his annual Christmas Day message as wars and tensions raged around the world. The British monarch said it was enormously encouraging to find people of different faiths longed for peace.

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