

BBC NEWS

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BBC News with Fiona MacDonald.

The White House has made its first comment since President Trump sparked a row by saying that NATO troops had stayed "a little off the front lines" during the war in Afghanistan. The Dutch foreign minister described the comments as false.

The White House's deputy press secretary said only Mr. Trump was right to have stressed that "America's contribution to NATO dwarfs those of other countries." There was no direct response to the outrage caused.

Niels Jespersen from Denmark served in Afghanistan. "It was a duty to do both Denmark but also our allies who were always there for us so we also had to be there for them. The reason why Denmark went to Afghanistan was because the USFA was attacked on 9/11 and they invoked the Article 5 of the NATO agreement and as good allies we thought it was our duty to come to their aid but also because then we would hope that people would come to our aid if we ever were in need of assistance."

Dozens of members of the clergy have been arrested while protesting at Minneapolis Airport against immigration raids by ICE agents. Organizers say as many as 100 were detained.

The protest against airlines' involvement in deporting detainees is part of a wider day of "ICE out" protest.

Lisa Friedman is one of the protesters at the airport. "What is happening here is God is watching and God is weeping. It is an abomination, this cruelty and every person is a child of God deserving of dignity."

At least 200 million people across the United States are bracing for what is likely to be the largest winter storm in at least five years. Forecasters say about two-thirds of the country could be affected by freezing rain, snow and extreme cold temperatures in some places as low as minus 40 degrees Celsius.

The U.N. Human Rights Council has called for an urgent inquiry into the violent crackdown during anti-government protests in Iran. At the start of an emergency meeting in Geneva, the U.N.'s top human rights official, Volker Türk, said the true number of those killed was difficult to establish.

"My understanding is that there were peaceful protests and then there was a massive security crackdown that involved lethal force against protesters. And we don't know the exact number, but we are talking about thousands of people killed, many injured, many arrested, trials potentially going on and we need to find a way to get out of this horrible situation."

The U.S. military says it's carried out yet another airstrike on a vessel in the eastern Pacific Ocean it said was carrying drugs. Two people were killed. At least 115 people have now been killed in U.S. strikes on suspected drug boats.

World news from the BBC.

The Canadian former Olympic snowboarder Ryan Wedding has been flown to the United States after being arrested in Mexico City on charges of drug trafficking and murder. He was on the FBI's top 10 most wanted list and had been on the run for years. He's accused of running a network transporting hundreds of kilos of cocaine from Colombia to the U.S.

Uganda's opposition leader Bobi Wine says mass armed soldiers have broken into his house, beaten up his family members and isolated his wife. Bobi Wine himself went into hiding last week following a raid on his home. He has rejected the official result of last week's presidential elections as fraudulent.

Spanish prosecutors say they've dropped their investigations into the singer Julio Iglesias. Former staff had accused him of rape and other sexual offences at his mansion in the Dominican Republic but prosecutors said they didn't have jurisdiction because the alleged crimes didn't happen in Spain and the [clone] complaints didn't live in Spain.

One of the world's best known rock climbers Alex Honnold is about to begin the ascent of a skyscraper in Taiwan with no rope on live television. Honnold who is best known for starring in the Oscar-winning film "Free Solo" will attempt the 500-meter climb of Taipei 101. Steve Jackson reports.

Alex Honnold's climb, which has been heavily trailed by Netflix, is inspiring awe and unease. With no protective equipment at all, a single mistake on the ascent of one of the world's tallest towers will cost him his life.

Although Honnold is calm and very experienced with some of the greatest ever climbs under his belt, there have been questions over the ethics of screening such a high risk endeavor live to millions of people.

Since he made his record breaking climb of El Capitan in California that featured in the film "Free Solo," he's become a father. But he insists this hasn't changed his attitude to risk.

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