

BBC NEWS

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BBC News with Chris Barrow.

President Trump has said the U.S. will end its war against Iran in the next two to three weeks with or without a deal. "When we feel that they are for a long period of time put into the stone ages and they won't be able to come up with a nuclear weapon then we'll leave. Whether we have a deal or not is irrelevant. Now it's possible that we'll have a deal because they wanna make a deal. They wanna make a deal more than I wanna make a deal. But in a fairly short period of time we'll be finished."

Mr. Trump said Washington had achieved its war aims but correspondents say that if the U.S. ends hostilities while Iran remains in control of the Strait of Hormuz it will be seen as a defeat. It would also keep the price of oil high though stock markets in Asia have reacted positively to Mr. Trump's statement.

In the latest incident of commercial shipping in the Gulf being caught in the crossfires of the Iran conflict, a tanker has reportedly been hit by an unknown projectile off the coast of Qatar. The strike is thought to have caused damage to the vessel's hull above the waterline though to what extent is not yet clear. The ship's crew are reported to be safe.

Pope Leo has said he hopes President Trump is looking for an "off-ramp" to end the war in the Middle East. His comments were unusually direct. "I'm told that President Trump recently stated that he would like to end the war. Hopefully he's looking for an off-ramp. Hopefully he's looking for a way to decrease the amount of violence of bombing which would be a significant contribution to removing the hatred that's being created in the Middle East and elsewhere."

The U.S. State Department says it's aware of the reported kidnapping of a female American journalist in Iraq's capital Baghdad. It said it was working to ensure her swift release.

In a statement U.S. officials said they'd warned the woman identified as Shelly Kittleson by a news outlet she worked for of threats against her.

Russia's Defense Ministry says a military transport plane has crashed after contact was lost as it flew over Crimea. All 29 passengers and crew were killed. With the latest for us, here's Ali McConnell.

Russia says a search and rescue team has located the wreckage of the Antonov 26 aircraft. A statement blamed the crash of the Soviet-era twin-engined turboprop plane on a technical malfunction and Russian media reports say it flew into a rock face.

Russia has occupied Crimea since seizing it from Ukraine in 2014. Kyiv has not commented on the crash but has regularly targeted Russian assets on the peninsula. In September Ukrainian military intelligence reported destroying two Antonov 26 aircraft in a drone strike.

Ali McConnell with that report.

This is the latest world news from the BBC.

The Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy has said he'll ask U.S. mediators to convey to Russia Kyiv's offer of an Easter ceasefire on energy infrastructure. Mr. Zelenskyy said he'd be talking to the U.S. negotiators Steve Witkoff and Jared Kushner as well as the NATO Secretary-General Mark Rutte on Wednesday. Earlier the Kremlin said it had not seen clearly formulated initiatives for such a truce.

President Trump has signed an executive order aimed at tightening rules for voting by post ahead of November's midterm elections when his Republican Party will be seeking to defend its narrow majorities in Congress. Mr. Trump has repeatedly attacked America's electoral systems and continued to push the false claim that his 2020 election defeat was the result of voter fraud.

Any move to force changes to state-run election systems is likely to face immediate legal challenges.

The brother and sister-in-law of Virginia Giuffre have urged King Charles to meet them and survivors of the late sex offender Jeffrey Epstein during his state visit to the United States later this month. Sky and Amanda Roberts spoke to the BBC as Adam Fleming explains.

In statement to Newsnight tonight, they said "King Charles III's visit will come at a deeply personal time for our family. His arrival comes just two days after the one-year anniversary of the death of our beloved sister Virginia Roberts Giuffre. We strongly urge King Charles to meet with us and survivors and hear what we have to say."

In men's football, the four-time world champions Italy have missed out on qualification for this year's World Cup after losing on penalties to Bosnia-Herzegovina in their playoff final. It marks the third consecutive time that the fallen European giants have failed to make it to the tournament.

Turkey, Sweden and the Czech Republic have joined Bosnia in securing their ticket to the finals as have the Democratic Republic of Congo.

That's the latest BBC News.