VOA NEWS

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From Washington, this is VOA news. I'm Joe Parker reporting.

"When the United States grows, so does the world."

As expected in Davos, Switzerland, President Donald Trump spoke about trade regulatory reform and a strong economy while touting the United States is a good place to do business.

"The world is witnessing the resurgence of a strong and prosperous America. I'm here to deliver a simple message: There has never been a better time to hire, to build, to invest and to grow in the United States."

Nariman Behravesh is the chief economist of the IHS market consulting firm. "Well, I think the economy is doing very well, and as a result of that, more and more people have jobs and are getting reasonable incomes. How much of that is because of Mr. Trump and how much of that is because of what happened before. In other source of debate, some of that is because of Mr. Trump in the sense that businesses are more optimistic with him, and therefore investing and spending more."

Also in Davos, President Trump dismissed *New York Times* and *Washington Post* stories that he wanted to fire special counsel Robert Mueller in June but backed off when the White House counsel threatened to resign rather than follow the order.

"Fake news, folks. Fake news." "What's your message today?" "Typical *New York Times* fake stories."

Mueller is investigating allegations that the Trump campaign colluded with Russia during the 2016 presidential election.

Kenya's opposition says it will swear-in Raila Odinga as president next week. Opposition leaders maintain that it was Odinga who won the 2017 presidential election over the declared winner, President Uhuru Kenyatta.

Kenyatta was named the winner of the election in August, but the Supreme Court overturned the results.

Tuesday is the day set for Odinga's so-called inauguration.

Government officials have said that such an event would be an act of treason.

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The South Sudan government has reacted angrily to remarks made by U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Nikki Haley, in which she called the government an "unfit partner" to the U.N.

A South Sudanese Foreign Ministry official said on Friday that Haley's remarks threaten to undermine relations between the U.S. and South Sudan.

"One woman told me about being gang raped. She told me about how the soldiers ripped her baby out of her arms and threw him in the fire."

Haley did not mince words about President Salva Kiir's government as she addressed the U.N. Security Council on Wednesday.

"His government and his soldiers have caused the suffering of millions of South Sudanese people. To his credit, he didn't try to deny it."

Haley also accused President Kiir of promoting three generals who she said led the slaughter of innocent South Sudanese women, children and elderly people. These are the same generals who were sanctioned by the Security Council in 2015.

A fire described as South Korea's deadliest in about a decade raced through a hospital on Friday, leaving at least 37 people dead. The death toll, revised from an earlier figure of 41, is expected to rise. Three of the dead are medical staff, according to officials, who also say many of the dead suffered smoke inhalation.

At least 140 people were injured when the blaze broke out in the emergency room of Sejong Hospital in the southeastern city of Miryang. Officials say the six-story hospital was not equipped with a sprinkler system as it was not required under current law.

The U.N. refugee and migration agencies say the bodies of at least 30 Somalis and Ethiopians were found drowned this week off the Yemeni coast near Aden. They are believed to have been traveling in a smuggler's boat.

Lisa Schlein reports for VOA from the agency's headquarters in Geneva.

Survivors say the overcrowded boat was packed with 152 Somalis and Ethiopians heading for Djibouti. They tell aid workers the boat capsized amid reports of gunfire being used against the passengers.

U.N. refugee spokesman William Spindler says it is not surprising that a prolonged conflict, such as Yemen, would expose vulnerable refugees and migrants to human rights violations.

"Yemen is one of the most dangerous places in the world as it's in the middle of a terrible conflict, on the verge of famine, with a cholera epidemic and so on. And, yet refugees and migrants continue to arrive."

Aid agencies say the people are so poor they resort to desperate measures.

Lisa Schlein, for VOA news, Geneva.

And this is Joe Parker with VOA news.

That's the latest world news from VOA.