VOA NEWS

February 18, 2018

From Washington, this is VOA news. I'm Anne Ball reporting.

Thousands turned out at an anti-gun rally in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, on Saturday.

Survivors of the shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School condemned gun laws and rallied against the National Rifle Association, the powerful gun rights lobbying group.

Delaney Tarr said she lost four of her close friends and is angry that suspect Nikolas Cruz legally purchased the weapon authorities say he used to kill 17 people Wednesday at the school.

"Despite the tip-off to the FBI multiple times, he was able to legally purchase an AR-15. He was able to legally purchase a semi-automatic rifle and come in to my school and ??? 17 of my people. Because of these gun laws, people I know, people that I love, have died, and I will never be able to see them again."

Florida's child welfare agency investigated Cruz after he cut himself on an online video but found him stable, according to state records.

Russia's former ambassador to the U.S. on Saturday dismissed as "fantasies" allegations of Russian interference in the 2016 U.S. presidential election.

Ambassador Sergey Kislyak says the allegations have "spoiled the trust between us."

"The trouble is that, first, I'm not sure that I can trust American law enforcement to be the most precise and truthful source of information about what Russians do. We have seen in the past so many things that proved to be non-true."

His comments came at the Munich Security Conference.

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The U.S. attorney has ordered an immediate review of how the Justice Department and the FBI, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, respond to warnings about potential mass killers.

The action follows an admission on Friday by the FBI, the top law enforcement agency, that it ignored the tip-off about a gunman who killed the 17 people and wounded 14 others at the school in Florida Wednesday.

Pope Francis has reactivated his sexual abuse advisory panel by restructuring its membership, following criticism of his handling of scandals that have staggered the Catholic Church for more than three decades.

The Vatican announced Saturday that Francis reconfirmed Cardinal Sean O'Malley of Boston, Massachusetts, to head the panel and the reconfirmation of seven members [of the] and the appointment of nine new ones.

The U.S. director of National Intelligence says the Islamic State group remains a threat despite its recent defeats in Syria and Iraq.

Dan Coats told a gathering of world leaders, diplomats and defense officials at the Munich Security Conference on Saturday that ISIS is like an octopus.

"It's like killing an octopus. We've given a knife into its heart, but the tentacles have spread."

And Coats said ISIS remains and will remain a threat.

"... partly because it's more than just a terrorist organization, it is an ideology and perhaps a theology. And the combination of ideology and theology, I think, outlasts defeats on the battlefield."

A military helicopter carrying two Mexican government officials crashed Friday during a tour of earthquake damage, killing two people on the ground.

The earthquake had struck southern Mexico Friday, causing minor damage in the state of Oaxaca, and there are no immediate reports of injuries or deaths from the earthquake.

One worker provides an account of what happened. "I was working on the 26th floor at the time. Tremor was very strong. I was scared but in this case I had to try to stay calm and evacuate the building as they told us. The tremor was so very strong and even stronger on the higher floors."

From Washington, I'm Anne Ball.

That's the latest world news from VOA.