VOA NEWS

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From Washington, I'm Anne Ball reporting.

Russia is objecting to a draft U.N. resolution Thursday intended to implement a 30-day pause in fighting across Syria and lift the siege on the town of Eastern Ghouta.

Moscow requested the Security Council meeting and its ambassador dismissed as not possible the proposed cease-fire and accompanying aid deliveries along with large scale medical evacuations. The U.S. supports the cease-fire measure.

And earlier Thursday, State Department spokesperson Heather Nauert said Russia bears responsibility for the high number of civilian deaths in Eastern Ghouta in the past few days.

Anger and concern is growing among a group of parents in northern Nigeria, who say as many as 100 of their daughters are still missing after an attack by the Boko Haram militants.

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The International Atomic Energy Agency reports Thursday that Iran is continuing to comply with the 2015 international accord that curbs Tehran's nuclear weapons development. The report concludes that Iran is honoring key aspects of the deal and that the United States, China, Russia, France, Germany, Britain and the European Union reached with Iran in exchange for lifting the sanctions.

Trump has threatened to pull out of the agreement, citing disastrous flaws he says in the agreement. He has pushed for overhauling the Iran pact but other countries have rebuffed him and have continued to support the agreement.

New charges were filed Thursday by U.S. special counsel Robert Mueller against President Donald Trump's former campaign manager Paul Manafort and his business associate, Rick Gates.

The new indictment was expected and adds allegations of tax evasion and increases the amount of money Manafort is accused of laundering to ($)30 million.

The charges against Manafort and Gates don't relate to any allegations of misconduct related to Trump's campaign.

Meanwhile, the U.S. President Donald Trump spoke about gun control Thursday with state and local leaders. He says the they are working at getting guns out of the hands of dangerous criminals and raising the age to buy assault-style rifles, ending the sale of so-called "bump stocks" that increase the fire power of some weapons.

"We're going to do strong background checks. We're going to work on getting the age up to 21 instead of 18. We're getting rid of the bump stocks and we're going to be focusing very strongly on mental health because here's a case of mental health."

The United Nations refugee agency says protests by Congolese refugees in Rwanda have turned violent. Several people were injured and police have fired in the air to disperse them.

Jeff Caster has the details.

Tensions are high over cuts in food rations.

U.N. official Daniel Ionita says refugees refused to return to Kiziba camp in western Rwanda despite pleas from government officials.

The demonstrations demanding better living conditions or relocation began Tuesday.

Rwanda hosts over 17,000 refugees from Congo. Most are women and children.

The World Food Program cut rations by 25 percent in January because of low funding and further cuts are possible.

Jeff Caster, VOA news.

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