VOA NEWS

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

The White House is now saying that certain conditions must be made in agreeing to face-to-face talks between President Donald Trump and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un.

White House Press Secretary Sarah Huckabee Sanders said the U.S. is operating "from a position of strength."

"Look, what we know is that the maximum pressure campaign has clearly been effective. We know that it has put a tremendous amount of pressure on North Korea."

However, Sanders said the president will not have the meeting without seeing concrete steps and concrete actions by Pyongyang.

"And they have made some major promises. They've made promises to denuclearize. They've made promises to stop nuclear and missile testing. And they've recognized that regular military exercises between the U.S. and its ally, South Korea, will continue."

The White House is insisting that Trump's surprise acceptance to meet with Kim by May resulted from months of preparation that involved relevant U.S. government agencies.

The top United Nations human rights official called for the U.N. General Assembly to refer alleged atrocities committed against the Muslim Rohingya minority in Myanmar to be referred to the International Criminal Court for prosecution on suspicion of acts of genocide.

"What I have said is that it wouldn't surprise me, it wouldn't surprise me in the least if a court would make that finding in the future."

U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights Zeid Raad al-Hussein also urged Myanmar's government to allow monitors into northern Rakhine state to investigate what he called "suspected acts of genocide" against the Muslim majority.

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan said Turkey's military and its rebel allies have besieged the northern Syrian town of Afrin. It would mark a major advance in Turkey's military operation to sweep the Syrian Kurdish YPG from the Turkish border.

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U.S. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson arrived in Kenya Friday as part of his seven-day visit to Africa on the same day President Uhuru Kenyatta and opposition leader Raila Odinga met and vowed to reunite the country after about 100 people were killed during last year's elections.

"This is a very positive step, in our view, and while we know addressing Kenya's ethnic and political divisions will take some time and effort, today both of these men showed great leadership."

The secretary of state did say that some actions need to be taken in the country.

"We believe that there are actions that need to be taken in Kenya and that they need to correct certain actions, like shutting down TV stations and threatening the independence of the courts."

Kenyan Cabinet Secretary for Foreign Affairs Monica Juma said the shutting down of television stations was a highly isolated incident.

"So the notion that there is a restriction of the media in Kenya is actually not backed by fact and reality."

She said the incident only affected three of tens of TV stations in the country.

The United Nations warns more than two million severely acutely malnourished children in the Democratic Republic of Congo are at risk of dying.

Lisa Schlein explains how from Geneva.

Years of violence and unrest in Democratic Republic of Congo have displaced more than four and one half million people, creating widespread poverty and hunger. The United Nations refers to the DRC as one of the world's most complex humanitarian crises.

It says this catastrophic situation has worsened in recent months because of an uptick in fighting in many parts of the country.

Lisa Schlein, for VOA news, Geneva.

Sara Hemrajani has more on the world's response after President Trump placed tariffs on steel and aluminum imports.

"Some insist making methods within the U.S. is by ??? national security. Tokyo has argued its shipments do not pose a security threat.

"The decision will likely have a big impact on economic ties between Japan and the United States as well as on the global economy."

That call was echoed by South Korea and Australia on Friday.

Seoul said it may file a complaint to the World Trade Organization.

The U.S. is the world's largest importer of steel, totaling 35 million tons of raw material in 2017.

British police said around 21 people have had medical treatment after a nerve agent attack on an ex-Russian spy.

A chemical weapons specialist described to Sky News the effects of the nerve agent.

"... they crept upon them slowly, but then they would have come to a point where they had to go sit down because their muscles were ...."

Joe Parker, VOA news.

That's the latest world news from VOA.