VOA NEWS

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From Washington, this is VOA news. I'm Larry London in Washington.

A United Nations Relief and Works Agency spokesman says in Syria that the Assad regime continues to use aircraft and artillery to pound districts of the capital held by the Islamic State group, including homes and relief centers, that have now been turned into death camps and many areas are unsafe.

Chris Gunness is calling for restraint and urging for the evacuation of the wounded.

"We were seeing intense clashes on the ground. We were seeing firepower from the air, as well. So of course, even in their homes, people are unsafe. In addition, there is absolutely no public infrastructure. The last remaining hospital in Yarmouk camp has become completely unfunctional. There are very, very few health care options, very little food, very little water, no electricity. Things are absolutely appalling for civilians."

Meanwhile, an international chemical weapons monitor group says a team of inspectors collected samples on Saturday at the site of an alleged gas attack two weeks ago in the Syrian town of Douma.

North Korea says it will never use or transfer nuclear weapons or technology unless there are threats made against them.

White House Legislative Affairs Director Marc Short tells NBC's "Meet the Press" that the U.S. and North Korea still have yet to come to an understanding of the meaning of denuclearizing the Korean peninsula.

"I think there has to have a sit-down conversation to get to that point. But I think from our perspective, it means full denuclearization. No longer having nuclear weapons that can be used in warfare against any of our allies."

President Trump says he is looking forward to his summit with North Korean leader Kim Jong Un.

And you're listening to VOA news in Washington.

French President Emmanuel Macron is urging U.S. President Donald Trump to stick with the Iranian nuclear accord, arguing there is no "Plan B."

Macron tells the broadcast "Fox News Sunday" that he thinks the 2015 deal curbing Iran's nuclear ambitions is imperfect. But the French leader, who begins a state visit to Washington Monday, asks, "What do you have as a better option?"

Trump has vowed to withdraw from the Iran deal by May 12 unless U.S. and European negotiators agree to fix what he calls its serious flaws.

The U.N. refugee agency is appealing to armed groups in southern Libya to allow humanitarian access to thousands of people displaced by fighting to provide urgently needed relief.

Lisa Schlein reports for VOA from UNHCR headquarters in Geneva.

Libya has been riven by division and conflict since the 2011 Arab Spring uprising, which toppled former dictator Moammar Gadhafi. Rival governments and multiple armed factions are keeping the society in a state of perpetual chaos. Tribal fighting is a regular and disruptive occurrence in the region of Sabha city, some 760 kilometers south of the capital Tripoli.

Mahecic says the UNHCR was able to seize, what he calls a window of opportunity this past week to deliver urgently needed relief items to hundreds of displaced families in the city of Murzuk. This town, one of the hubs of Libya's modern slave trade, is located about 135 kilometers south of Sabha.

That's Lisa Schlein reporting.

Hundreds of mourners paid their respect on Saturday at the funeral of Barbara Bush. The former first lady of the United States selected her second eldest son and former Florida Governor Jeb Bush to deliver the eulogy.

"The last time I was with her, I asked her about dying. Was she ready to go? Was she sad? Without missing a beat, she said, ‘Jeb, I believe in Jesus and He is my savior. I don't want to leave your dad but I know I'll be in a beautiful place. Mom, we look forward to being with you, and Robin and all of God's children. We love you."

She was the wife of the 41st U.S. president, George H.W. Bush, and the mother of George W. Bush, the country's 43rd president.

In addition to her family, former presidents Barack Obama and Bill Clinton attended Bush's funeral in the southern city of Houston, Texas.

First Lady Melania Trump was also at the invitation on the service, as were former first ladies Michelle Obama and Hillary Clinton.

Each year on April 22, many people stop to think about the health of the world environment, and like a New Year's Day for nature, many make Earth Day resolutions that will treat the world around them better.

I'm Larry London.

That's the latest world news from VOA.