VOA NEWS

June 20, 2018

From Washington, this is VOA news. I'm Christopher Cruise reporting.

President Trump is to meet with Republican lawmakers late Tuesday to talk about immigration legislation. Criticism has been growing over his policy of separating children from their parents at the U.S. southern border with Mexico as they illegally enter the United States.

The House of Representatives is set to vote later in the week on two immigration bills, including provisions that would stop the separation of children from their parents at the border.

Associated Press correspondent Sagar Meghani reports.

The administration suggested yesterday it would oppose any fix aimed solely at the separations, but it says today it's looking at a bill introduced by Senator Ted Cruz. He is among Republicans increasingly joining Democratic calls to stop the separations.

Two immigrations bills the House will vote on this week are likely to fail and top Trump ally Mark Meadows says he'll introduce another as a backup.

Sagar Meghani, at the White House.

China on Tuesday called President Trump's threat to place more tariffs on Chinese exports to the U.S. "extreme pressure and blackmail." China threatened to retaliate.

On Monday, Mr. Trump said he will impose tariffs of 10 percent on another $200 billion of Chinese goods "if China refuses to change its practices."

Russia has announced retaliatory measures in response to the U.S. move to impose tariffs on foreign steel and aluminum.

In a statement Tuesday, Russia said it has decided to apply retaliatory measures in accordance with the World Trade Organization's rules to compensate for damage incurred by the U.S. tariffs.

Russia said additional tariffs will be applied to a range of U.S. imports, but it didn't name them.

This is VOA news.

Italy's far-right anti-immigrant interior minister, Matteo Salvini, has announced plans to count the ethnic Roma community living in the country and deport those without Italian nationality.

Correspondent Sabina Castelfranco reports.

Reaction to Matteo Salvini's idea to expel all non-Italian Roma has come from all sides.

Salvini, who heads the Northern League party, has been very clear about not wanting anyone who is illegal on Italian soil. He set off a storm of controversy in Europe last week when he refused to let a charity ship carrying more than 600 mainly African migrants dock in Italy.

Salvini said his ministry is looking at what he called "the Roma question" and wanted to see "who and how many" there were. Salvini was particularly clear that he did not want what he described as "these criminals" to be kept in Italian prisons and was looking at ways to deport them.

Sabina Castelfranco, for VOA news, Rome.

The United States has left the United Nations Human Rights Council.

Associated Press correspondent Ed Donahue reports.

U.N. Ambassador Nikki Haley threatened to withdraw last year if reforms were not made.

"... the council ceases to be worthy of its name."

Secretary of state Mike Pompeo says the membership in the Human Rights Council is questionable.

"... authoritarian governments with unambiguous and abhorrent human rights records, such as China, Cuba and Venezuela."

Haley says the U.S. is not backing away from human rights.

"On the contrary, we take this step because our commitment does not allow us to remain a part of a hypocritical and self-serving organization."

No country has ever dropped out of the U.N. Human Rights Council voluntarily.

Ed Donahue, Washington.

The oil ministers of the OPEC cartel gathered Tuesday to discuss whether to increase production of crude and help limit a rise in global energy prices.

The officials arrived in Vienna ahead of the official meeting on Friday when they will also confer with Russia, a non-OPEC country that since late 2016 has cooperated with the cartel to limit production.

Analysts expect the group to discuss an increase in production of about a million barrels a day, ending the output cut agreed on in 2016.

The cut has since then pushed up the price of crude oil by about 50 percent.

And in Yemen, Saudi-backed government forces mounted a fierce assault Tuesday on the airport in the rebel-held city of Hodeida.

You can find more on these and other late breaking and developing stories, from around the world, around the clock, at voanews.com and on the VOA news mobile app. I'm Christopher Cruise, VOA news.

That's the latest world news from VOA.