VOA NEWS

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From Washington, this is VOA news. I'm David Byrd reporting.

U.S. President Donald Trump on Friday hit back against the political firestorm that has enveloped his White House over the forced separation of children from their migrant parents.

As AP's Warren Levinson reports, Trump talked tough after meeting with so-called "angel families," the families of those killed by illegal immigrants.

The president hosted about a dozen people who had family members killed by unauthorized immigrants in an event whose underlying theme seems to be "you want to talk about family separation?" or "show your family separation."

"These are the American citizens permanently separated from their loved ones."

Trump took issue with studies demonstrating immigrant populations have lower crime rates, insisting other country are sending the United States their worst and that once here they are committing crimes at rates ignored by the news media thanks to, in Trump's telling, "the weakest immigration laws in the history of the world."

I'm Warren Levinson.

President Trump said Friday that Republican lawmakers should abandon efforts to pass an immigration bill until after the November mid-term elections. He also blamed Democrats for their lack of support for a pair of immigration measures.

On Twitter, the president said "Republicans should stop wasting their time on Immigration until after we elect more Senators and Congressmen/women in November."

On Capitol Hill, Republican Congressman Mike Coffman of Colorado said he hopes members will not take the president's tweets seriously.

"I hope my colleagues disregard that and that we move forward. It is a critical issue for the country. It shouldn't have to wait till after the next election."

Democrats are hopeful they will win enough seats in November to gain a majority in the House. They are also hoping to pick out some seats in the Senate, but the prospects of gaining control there are not as bright.

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U.S. President Donald Trump threatened to impose a 20 percent tariff on vehicles assembled in the European Union and shipped to the United States in retaliation for European tariffs on American imports.

On Friday, the day that new EU tariffs went into effect, Trump tweeted, "... if these Tariffs and Barriers are not soon broken down and removed, we will be placing a 20% Tariff on all of their cars coming into the U.S."

The EU action is the latest response to President Trump's decision to increase taxes on imported steel and aluminum.

Fighting continued around the Red Sea port of Hodeida in Yemen on Friday even as reports said the Iranian-backed Houthi rebels might be willing to cede the port to a U.N. team.

However, as Edward Yeranian reports, Arab media say the Houthis are denying that claim.

Scattered fighting continued in and around Hodeida Friday as the Saudi-led coalition and Yemeni forces loyal to the internationally-recognized government consolidated gains around the city and made small advances in several places.

Saudi-owned al Arabiya TV claimed that the government of Abdrabbou Mansour Hadi now controls around 85 percent of Yemen. VOA could not independently confirm the claim.

Despite reports that the Iranian-backed Houthis are losing ground, the group's leader, Abdel Malek al Houthi, continued to insist that reinforcements are being brought in to bolster forces loyal to his group.

Edward Yeranian, for VOA news, Cairo.

A damning United Nations human rights report accuses the government of Venezuela of operating within a climate of total impunity, where security forces are not held accountable for even the most heinous crimes.

The report documents what it calls "credible, shocking" accounts of extrajudicial killings during so called crime-fighting operations carried out since July of 2015.

Ravina Shamdasani is a U.N. human rights spokeswoman. "The failure to hold security forces accountable for such serious human rights violations suggests that the rule of law is virtually absent in Venezuela."

The U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights is recommending the U.N. Human Rights Council establish a commission of inquiry to look into the situation.

OPEC ministers agreed Friday to increase oil output, a move that could ease supply fears and lower world prices.

The agreement theoretically sees OPEC raising crude oil production by a million barrels a day, but analysts say the output will be quite a bit less.

For more, visit our website. I'm David Byrd in Washington.

That's the latest world news from VOA.