VOA NEWS

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( VOA) news. I'm Christopher Cruise reporting.

Two Reuters news agency reporters have been convicted of violating Myanmar's secrecy laws. They were sentenced on Monday to seven years in prison.

Associated Press correspondent Charles De Ledesma reports American officials in Myanmar are very unhappy about the ruling.

The embassy says the conviction of two Reuters reporters is "deeply troubling for all who support press freedom and the transition toward democracy."

The two have been found guilty of violating the colonial-era Official Secrets Act while reporting on government abuses against the country's Rohingya Muslims.

American diplomats say "the clear flaws in this case raise serious concerns about rule of law and judicial independence in Myanmar, and the reporters' conviction is a major setback to the government of Myanmar's stated goal of expanding democratic freedoms."

Like other diplomats in Myanmar, they're calling for the journalists' immediate release.

I'm Charles De Ledesma.

An American serviceman was killed in eastern Afghanistan Monday and another wounded in what a NATO statement called an apparent insider attack. The wounded service member is in stable condition.

The number of migrants arriving in Europe has fallen, but the rate of death has risen sharply, especially for those crossing the Mediterranean Sea.

A new report released Monday by the U.N. refugee agency says 2,276 people died last year trying to cross the Mediterranean. That is one death for every 42 arrivals.

But so far this year, 1,095 people have died. That is one death for every 18 arrivals, and in June, one person died for every seven arrivals.

The report notes there are 19 active conflicts in Africa and conflicts in the Middle East that are causing people to flee their homes.

This is VOA news.

Iranian officials say they support an impending Syrian offensive to recapture the last remaining major opposition stronghold. Iran says the Idlib region in northwestern Syria should be cleared of what it calls "terrorists."

The U.N. special representative to Libya is urging warring militias to respect a cease-fire in the Libyan capital, Tripoli.

Correspondent Edward Yeranian reports for VOA from Cairo.

Efforts to mediate a cease-fire in the Libyan capital continue despite intermittent shelling and gunfire concentrated to the south of the capital, Tripoli.

U.N. envoy Ghassan Salame has invited the warring sides to talks at an undisclosed location Tuesday.

Meanwhile, Libya 24 news channel tweeted a photo Monday of a delegation of Libyan leaders that was trying to mediate a cease-fire between the warring militias.

Edward Yeranian, for VOA news, Cairo.

The Democratic Republic of Congo's top court on Monday excluded opposition leader Jean-Pierre Bemba from December's presidential election because of a witness tampering conviction at the International Criminal Court.

Bemba is a popular former vice president. He was one of the leading candidates to replace the outgoing president, Joseph Kabila.

His defeat by Kabila in the [twenty] 2006 election touched off deadly clashes in the capital Kinshasa between his supporters and state troops.

The English-speaking regions of Cameroon see thousands of children that have failed to show up for class.

Correspondent Moki Edwin Kindzeka has an explanation for the phenomenon from Bamenda, Cameroon.

There are only a few vehicles and people on the main commercial street in Bamenda, a town in Cameroon's English-speaking northwest. Most shops and businesses are closed.

And, despite September 3rd being the first day of the school year, there are no children seen headed to class.

Most schools in the northwest have been closed since 2016, when fighting broke out between Cameroon's military and armed separatists who want to create an English-speaking state.

Moki Edwin Kindzeka, for VOA news, Bamenda, Cameroon.

The Senate Judiciary Committee will question President Trump's nominee to the Supreme Court on Tuesday.

The 53-year-old federal appeals court Judge Brett Kavanaugh is approved by the Senate. He could serve on the court for a lifetime.

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