VOA NEWS

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VOA news. I'm Christopher Cruise reporting.

Preliminary results from Sweden's parliamentary election Sunday found one of Europe's liberal nations taking a decided turn to the right.

The anti-immigration Sweden Democrats, which wants the country to leave the European Union and put a freeze on immigration, appeared poised to become the third largest party in parliament.

Reuters correspondent Saskia O'Donoghu reports.

Sweden took in more asylum seekers per capita than any other country in Europe in 2015, magnifying worries about the welfare system that many voters already believe is in crisis.

Sweden Democrat leader Jimmie Akesson has promised to sink any government that refuses to give his party a say in policy, particularly on immigration.

But with some kind of cooperation between parties in the center-left and center-right blocs the only other alternative, and with both options unpalatable to the traditional players, forming a government could take weeks.

With most ballots counted, the ruling center-left Social Democrats had 28 percent of the vote trailed by the Moderates with 19 percent and the nationalist Democrats with almost 18 percent.

Final results are expected later Sunday.

The Sweden Democrats have neo-Nazi roots.

The head of the United Nations refugee agency said Sunday that an estimated eight million Afghans do not live in their homes.

Filippo Grandi was in Afghanistan and Pakistan on Sunday. He said millions of people are displaced internally or are in other countries after fleeing conflict, poverty, unemployment and a worsening drought.

He said unless schools and clinics are built and social services are provided, it would be extremely difficult to encourage Afghans living in exile to come back to their country.

This is VOA news.

Russia and Syria have launched airstrikes on Idlib over the weekend. Idlib is Syria's last rebel-controlled region. At least four civilians died.

As the attacks on Idlib intensify, the U.N. is trying to negotiate an end to the Syrian conflict. Senior officials from Russia, Turkey and Iran will meet in Geneva on Monday for two days to talk about writing a new constitution for the country.

Correspondent Lisa Schlein reports for VOA from the site of the talks.

U.N. Special Envoy for Syria Staffan de Mistura views these talks as the curtain-raiser on a renewed political process for Syria. The aim is to help this conflict-ridden country transition to a more democratic society.

De Mistura says the focus of the two-day meeting will be to establish a Syrian-led and Syrian-owned constitutional committee. The task of the committee will be to rewrite the Syrian constitution, paving the way for new elections.

"But, we have reached a point, due to many circumstances in realpolitik, that the constitutional committee can be and should be now the entry point for what we call a credible political process, as long as the constitutional committee is credible as well."

And that is a major sticking point.

Nineteen people were killed in a plane crash in South Sudan Sunday.

At least 22 people were on the plane when it went down. It was flying from the international airport in the capital, Juba, to the city of Yirol.

Members of the U.S. Congress continue to show concern about reports of chaos in the White House.

Associated Press correspondent Shelley Adler reports.

Senate minority Dick Durbin expressed grave concern. "It isn't like his blizzard of bizarre tweets. We are talking about consistent reporting over and over again about unpredictable, unprepared, unstable behavior by this president."

To the other side of aisle, Republican, Ben Sasse, who compares the White House to a reality show. "The drama of the Woodward quotes and the drama of these op-eds. What you'd like is the president to not worry so much about the short-term of staffing but the long-term of vision casting for America. Pull us together as a people. Help us deliberate about where we should go and then build a team of great, big-cause, low-ego people around you."

Both Sasse and Durbin were on the Meet the Press.

Shelley Adler, Washington.

A powerful hurricane is headed toward the U.S. East Coast.

The National Hurricane Center in Miami predicts it will move between Bermuda and The Bahamas Tuesday and Wednesday and will strike the U.S. southeastern coast by Thursday as a "extremely dangerous" major hurricane.

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