VOA NEWS

September 22, 2018

This is VOA news. I'm David Byrd in Washington.

U.S. Deputy Attorney General Rod Rosenstein has denied allegations by *The New York Times* that he suggested that President Donald Trump be secretly recorded or that he discussed invoking the 25th Amendment to remove Trump from office.

Rosenstein, the U.S. official who heads up the investigation into Russian interference in the 2016 election, said in a statement Friday that "*The New York Times*' story is inaccurate and factually incorrect."

He said he would not further comment on the story based on anonymous sources who are biased against the department and are advancing their own personal agenda.

Rosenstein added that he wanted to be clear based on his "personal dealings with the president, there is no basis to invoke the 25th Amendment."

A source who was in the room during a meeting when Rosenstein made the remark about recording the president told VOA that the remark was "sarcastic." He said it was "never discussed with any intention of recording a conversation with the president."

President Trump has abruptly shifted course on the woman who says Supreme Court nominee Brett Kavanaugh sexually assaulted her when they were teenagers.

As AP correspondent Sagar Meghani reports, the president's tweets have drawn the ire of a key Republican.

The president had stayed away from directly challenging Christine Blasey Ford's allegation and had not even used her name. Today, he tweets if the attack was as bad as Dr. Ford says, then she would have filed charges decades ago.

Ford has said she did not report the alleged attack which happened when she was 15.

GOP Senator Susan Collins, a key vote if and when Kavanaugh comes up for confirmation, says she is appalled by the president's tweet, pointing out sexual assault is one of the most underreported crimes. But Collins stopped short of saying she believes Ford's allegation.

Sagar Meghani.

This is VOA news.

One week after Hurricane Florence hit the southeastern U.S. state of North Carolina with floods and destructive winds, some parts of that state remain underwater.

Meanwhile, as AP's Rita Foley reports, residents of South Carolina are bracing for more flooding as swollen rivers flow downstream.

The wreckage of an over-turned ferry that sank in Tanzania's part of Lake Victoria Thursday, killing dozens of people. But government officials fear the final death toll could reach as high as 200.

Initial estimates show there were more than 300 people on board.

The local district commissioner took part in the immediate rescue efforts.

"We are here to do a rescue so that if there are any alive, with god's help we rescue them. As for those who have died, we'll get them out, too. For now, we are concentrating on the rescue operation, though. As you can see, specialists have arrived."

The ferry sank just meters from the dock on Lake Victoria's biggest island.

That is a report by Reuters Anna Bevan about Tanzania's government declaring four days of mourning after more than 130 people were killed in a ferry accident on Lake Victoria.

Now let's hear from AP's Rita Foley about how residents of South Carolina are bracing for more flooding due to the effects of Hurricane Florence.

Hurricane Florence is blamed for more than 40 deaths in the Carolinas and Virginia, among the most recent victims, an 81-year-old man whose body was found in a flooded pickup truck in South Carolina.

Governor Henry McMaster: "We've never had this much rain, this much water in the state. We had the rain ??? on in South Carolina but also that fell in parts of North Carolina is coming down into a river system."

More residents have been ordered to evacuate.

North Carolina officials say parts of the main north-south route on the East Coast, I-95, remain flooded and may be closed until the end of the month.

I'm Rita Foley.

Former President Barack Obama urged voters in Pennsylvania to get out and vote in November, telling a crowd in Philadelphia they cannot afford to stay on the sidelines.

At a rally for two leading Democrats running for reelection, Governor tom Wolf and U.S. Senator Bob Casey, the former president said the only way to control the abuse of power is to vote.

"There's only one real check on bad policy, and there's only one real check on the abuse of power and that is you, the American people standing up and deciding to cast your ballot."

Obama's trip is the latest in a string of appearances the former president is making before the midterm elections on November 6.

For more on these stories, visit our website voanews.com. I'm David Byrd, VOA news.