VOA NEWS

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VOA news. I'm Christopher Cruise reporting.

Syria's main jihadist group signaled on Sunday it would abide by the terms of a Russian-Turkish deal to prevent a Syrian government offensive on rebel-held Idlib. The announcement came the day before a critical deadline. It [sets up the deal], that is, sets up a de-militarized zone running 15 to 20 kilometers deep into the rebel territory that must be evacuated of all heavy weapons and all jihadist groups by Monday.

Tahrir al-Sham is the jihadist alliance spearheaded by al-Qaeda's former Syrian affiliate previously known as the Nusra Front. It said it had accepted the deal.

Saudi Arabia on Sunday reacted strongly to President Trump's threat of "severe punishment" if the kingdom is found to be involved in the disappearance of Saudi dissident and journalist Jamal Khashoggi.

He has been missing since October 2 when he entered the Saudi consulate in Istanbul.

Many reports say he was killed in the building.

In an official statement read on government-run TV, Saudi Arabia says threats of economic sanctions, political pressures, or the repeating of false accusations will not undermine the kingdom or its position in the world.

It's bowing to respond with greater action to any attempt to punish it, noting the kingdom's economy has an influential and vital role in the global economy.

The comments followed remarks by President Trump that Saudi Arabia could face severe punishment. At the White House Saturday, he told reporters "Let's determine what happened first. There's plenty of things we can do that are very tough."

However, he noted he would oppose the cancellation of arms sales to Saudi Arabia.

Associated Press correspondent Ben Thomas.

Two suicide attacks have killed 15 people in Baidoa, north of the Somali capital Mogadishu.

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Nineteen migrants, including children, were killed Sunday when their truck veered off the road and rode over off a bridge in western Turkey. The nationalities of the migrants have not been released.

Another group of migrants are preparing to travel to Mexico from their native Honduras. They say they're leaving the country because of death threats, extortion and violence from powerful street gangs.

More than 1,000 men, women and children, including infants, are on the march.

UNICEF, the U.N. Children's Fund, says the vast majority of children living in areas of eastern Democratic Republic of Congo, where some people have been infected with Ebola, have returned to school now where they're being taught ways to avoid infection.

Clean-up and recovery efforts continue in areas of Florida damaged by an especially powerful hurricane last week.

Senator Marco Rubio said on Sunday that there are probably victims yet to be found.

The death toll from the storm stands at 18. Hundreds of thousands of people are without electricity. Many thousands are without a home and some don't even have enough food or water.

A medical charity is calling for the immediate evacuation of all refugees and asylum-seekers from Naru and an end to Australia's controversial offshore detention policy.

Correspondent Phil Mercer reports for VOA from Sydney.

The medical charity says it's concerned for the more than 100 asylum-seekers and refugee children on Nauru, citing fears about post-traumatic stress, attempted suicide and self-harm.

Nauru is one of two locations in the South Pacific used by Australia to process asylum-seekers. The other on Manus Island in Papua New Guinea closed last October after local judges ruled it unconstitutional because of the poor conditions at the camp.

The World Bank says it will send financial aid to Indonesia to help it recover from last month's earthquake and tsunami. More than 2,000 people died in the coastal city of Palu.

The bank says it will send up to a billion dollars in recovery and rehabilitation money. More than 80,000 people in the devastate areas are still displaced.

German Chancellor Angela Merkel's conservative allies lost their absolute majority in Bavaria's state parliament by a wide margin on Sunday, according to projections.

The Christian Social Union was on course to take just over 35 percent of the vote, down from 47.7 percent five years ago.

That would be the socially conservative party's worst performance in Bavaria, which it has traditionally dominated since 1950.

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