VOA NEWS

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VOA news. I'm Christopher Cruise reporting.

The United States reimposed sanctions on Iran's oil industry and financial sector on Monday.

Secretary of State Mike Pompeo spoke to reporters on Monday as well. "The Iranian regime has a choice: it can either do a 180-degree turn from its outlaw course of action and act like a normal country, or it can see its economy crumble."

The measures bring back bans on the purchase of Iranian oil, which is a major part of the country's economy. It follows through on President Trump's promise to roll back relief that Iran received [with] as part of the 2015 international agreement to limit its nuclear program.

Iran's President Hassan Rouhani is already countering the U.S. actions.

Rouhani has told government officials that Iran will overcome the sanctions and sell its oil. "We are in the economic war situation," he says confronting a bullying enemy. He means the U.S. Iran has to "stand to win."

His comments will raise Mideast tensions as America's maximalist approach to the Islamic Republic takes hold.

The sanctions end all the economic benefits America granted Tehran for its 2015 nuclear deal with world powers though Iran for now continues to abide by the accord that saw it limit its enrichment of uranium.

I'm Charles De Ledesma.

The U.S. Defense Department said Monday a Russian jet made an "unsafe" intercept of an American reconnaissance plane flying in international airspace over the Black Sea.

The Russian SU-27 jet failed to establish radio contact and the Pentagon says it made two "really close" passes before engaging its afterburners that shook the entire American plane.

A Pentagon spokesman said, "There is absolutely no reason for this type of behavior."

The Russian embassy in Washington tweeted that the Russian crew was "preventing a violation of Russian airspace and followed all necessary safety procedures."

This is VOA news.

The husband of Asia Bibi, a Pakistani Christian woman acquitted for blasphemy after eight years on death row, says it is not safe for the family to remain in Pakistan. Ashiq Masih said he has applied for asylum in Europe.

He told VOA's Urdu Service that the family has requested asylum in Spain and France, and is waiting for a response.

He also said he hasn't been able to contact his wife and he doesn't know where she is being held.

In the United States, congressional candidates and high-profile supporters are using the final full day before the midterm elections to try to sway voters.

The nation's major political parties are battling for control of the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives.

Voters on Tuesday will choose who will fill all 435 seats in the House and 35 of the 100 Senate seats.

In addition to the congressional races, 36 of the 50 U.S. states are electing governors on Tuesday.

Media rights organizations are calling on officials in Cameroon to release five journalists detained without charges in the past month after they reported on the country's unrest. TV host Mimi Mefo is the latest journalist believed to be targeted by Cameroon officials for her critical reporting.

Correspondent Moki Edwin Kindzeka reports from Yaoundé.

While Cameroon authorities accused the reporters of "propagating false information," none of them have been officially charged.

Cameroon Communication Minister Issa Tchiroma says everyone should stop publishing information that jeopardizes Cameroon's unity.

"What is unacceptable is the fact that the journalists would lie (to) the international community to exert influence on President Biya to get the journalist released."

The Union of Cameroon Journalists is calling for authorities to immediately release the reporters.

Gunmen in Cameroon have kidnapped 80 students and their principal from a Presbyterian school in the country's restive northwestern region.

The kidnappers say the children can return to school only after the gunmen have achieved their dream of independence.

The trial of accused Mexican drug lord Joaquin "El Chapo" Guzman began Monday in New York with jury selection.

Guzman has pleaded not guilty to charges of running a massive drug trafficking operation in North America. The charges carry a mandatory life prison term.

Security around Guzman has been tight ahead of the trial. He twice escaped from maximum security prisons in Mexico.

Opening statements are expected to begin on November 13.

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