VOA NEWS

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

For the second time in as many months, the U.S. House of Representatives has condemned hateful speech in all forms in an attempt by Democrats to end a controversy over one of their own member's remarks that were deemed anti-Semitic by many.

The vote was 407-23.

Although it did not mention Democratic freshman Congresswoman Ilhan Omar of Minnesota by name, the vote was intended as a rebuke for comments she made at an event last week, in which she suggested that Jewish or staunchly pro-Israel members of Congress have a dual loyalty to the United States and to Israel. The remarks came on the heels of a tweet that Omar made earlier this year about Jews and money, while discussing the influence of the highly influential lobbying group, American Israel Public Affairs Committee, on lawmakers' policy decisions on Israel.

Former Trump lawyer Michael Cohen is suing the president's company for failing to pay his legal bills.

We get details from AP correspondent Warren Levinson.

Michael Cohen says the Trump Organization promised to pay his legal bills, but it stopped after federal agents seized the papers of the former Trump fixer last spring.

Cohen's lawsuit says he was paid $1.7 million to cover legal costs. But since the payment stopped around the time he raised the possibility of cooperating with prosecutors, he has run up another $1.9 million in legal bills.

Cohen is scheduled to report to prison in May to start serving a three-year sentence for tax crimes, lying to Congress and campaign finance violations stemming from his role in hush money payments to Trump paramours.

Warren Levinson, New York.

A down day on Wall Street, with all three major indices closing the day in negative territory.

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Three dozen countries, including 28 EU members, called on Saudi Arabia Thursday to release 10 female activists and cooperate with a U.N.-led investigation into the murder of journalist Jamal Khashoggi at its Istanbul consulate.

Francesca Lynagh of Reuters reports.

The detained women, some of whom campaigned for the right to drive, have allegedly been subjected to electric shocks, flogging, sexual assault and other forms of torture.

"We are particularly concerned about the use of the counter-terrorism law and other national security provisions against individuals peacefully exercising their rights and freedoms."

The statement was also signed by Canada and Australia and marks the first move against the kingdom at the U.N. Human Rights Council since it was set up in 2006.

Those in the non-signing camp included the U.S.A., Turkey, Israel and Switzerland.

There was no immediate Saudi reaction.

Francesca Lynagh of Reuters.

Hundreds more men, women and children trudged out of Baghuz, Syria Thursday, increasingly defiant that the Islamic State group's defeat was imminent.

U.S.-backed Syrian Democratic Forces officials expressed hope that this latest exodus of both IS followers and those kidnapped or enslaved by the terror group would be the last.

Meanwhile across the globe, the commander of U.S. forces in the Middle East, General Joseph Votel, warned against any complacency in the fight against ISIS.

"The ISIS population being evacuated from the remaining vestiges of the caliphate largely remain unrepentant, unbroken and radicalized."

Over the past four days, more than 8,000 people have left Baghuz.

U.S. officials, while confident that Islamic State's self-declared caliphate is in its final days, have warned that many more IS fighters could be lurking in the tunnels beneath the village.

A top French cardinal has announced his resignation after being found guilty of covering up a pedophilia scandal involving a priest in his diocese.

From Paris, Lisa Bryant has more on the verdict issued shortly after a landmark sexual abuse summit at the Vatican.

In a statement to the media shortly after being handed a six-month suspended prison term, Cardinal Philippe Barbarin said he would be submitting his resignation to Pope Francis within days. Barbarin said independently of his personal fate, he wanted to express compassion for sexual abuse victims in his Diocese of Lyon. He said they and their families would be in his prayers.

One of Barbarin's lawyers, Jean-Felix Luciani, told French radio the cardinal would appeal the conviction.

Lisa Bryant from Paris.

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