VOA NEWS

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This is VOA news. Via remote, I'm Marissa Melton.

Family and friends honored George Floyd at a private funeral Tuesday in the U.S. city of Houston, Texas. It's been two weeks since his death in police custody in Minneapolis, Minnesota, inspired new protests against police brutality across the country.

After the funeral, Houston Police escorted the funeral procession to the cemetery where Floyd was to be buried next to his mother.

Houston's city hall was lit up Monday night in crimson and gold. Those are the colors of the high school that Floyd attended. Other cities lit up their city halls in the same colors, including Los Angeles, Boston, Las Vegas and New York City.

The public had its chance to pay respects Monday. Thousands of people streamed through The Fountain of Praise church to view Floyd's open casket. Memorials were also held last week in Minneapolis, Minnesota, where Floyd died and Raeford, North Carolina, near where Floyd was born.

Texas Republican Governor Greg Abbott was among those who paid tribute Monday. He told reporters outside the church he will include Floyd's family in discussions about police reform and he vowed that Floyd's death will not be in vain.

Dr. Anthony Fauci, President Trump's highest profile authority on the coronavirus pandemic, described COVID-19 as his "worst nightmare" on Tuesday. He made the comment in remarks broadcast to a biotechnology industry executives, according to *The New York Times*.

He said the speed at which the disease moved around the world was surprising. He said an efficiently transmitted disease can spread worldwide in six to 12 months. Yet he said, and this is a direct quote, "In a period of four months, it has devastated the whole world. And it isn't over yet."

COVID-19 is the disease caused by the coronavirus, a contagious respiratory infection that has so far sickened more than 7 million people worldwide and killed more than 408,000.

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Burundian President Pierre Nkurunziza has died after suffering what the government said was a heart attack.

The Central African nation said Nkurunziza died at the Karusi Hospital in eastern Burundi late on Monday, two days after he was hospitalized.

VOA's Central Africa service reported there was a heavy military presence around the hospital on Tuesday.

Nkurunziza's wife, Denise, was airlifted to a hospital in Kenya's capital ten days ago after contracting COVID-19, triggering rumors that the president had caught the disease as well.

Nkurunziza was due to step down on August 20 after his chosen successor, General Evariste [Ndayishim...] Ndayishimiye, won the presidential election on May 20.

According to Burundi's constitution, if the president of the country dies, he is replaced by the president of the National Assembly. There was no immediate word Tuesday on when the National Assembly leader, Pascal Nyabenda, might take office.

A former militia leader accused of war crimes in Sudan's Darfur region is now in the custody of the International Criminal Court. The ICC said in a statement Tuesday that Abu Kushayb surrendered himself voluntarily in the Central African Republic.

Kushayb is accused of commanding Janjaweed militia that attacked Darfur villages in 2003 and 2004 as part of a counter-insurgency strategy by the government of Sudan, then led by longtime president Omar al-Bashir.

The ICC issued a warrant for his arrest in 2007 that accused him of 22 counts of war crimes and 28 counts of crimes against humanity.

A date for Kushayb's first appearance before the court has not been established.

Voters in five U.S. states went to the polls Tuesday for political party primary elections, but the balloting in the southern state of Georgia was slow, with voters reporting long lines and officials saying there were problems with voting machines not working.

In the state's largest city, Atlanta, Mayor Keisha Lance Bottoms urged voters to be patient, saying the long lines and voting machine issues were widespread. She urged voters to sustain in line and cast their votes.

Elections are also being held in Nevada, South Carolina, North Dakota and West Virginia.

The spread of the coronavirus pandemic in the United States has pushed state election officials to institute new measures to allow absentee voting by mail even as President Trump has contended, without evidence, that mail-in voting will lead to widespread voting fraud.

In a continuation of a U.S.-led push to encourage intra-Afghan negotiations, Pakistan's army chief took a one-day trip to Kabul on Tuesday.

Via remote, I'm Marissa Melton. You're listening to VOA news.