BBC NEWS

March 19, 2025

This is the BBC News with Fiona Macdonald.

President Volodymyr Zelenskyy says Ukrainian infrastructure has been hit in a large-scale Russian drone attack, hours after Vladimir Putin told Donald Trump that Moscow would halt attacks against Ukrainian energy targets. Our correspondent James Landale is in Kyiv.

This evening there's not much evidence of any cease-fire. Not only have we been hearing the air defenses and drones in the skies above Kyiv, President Zelenskyy has in the last few moments just issued a statement in which he has said there have been numerous drone attacks across the country, not just in this region but also in the Sumy region and other parts of the country, some of them hitting hospitals and other civilian areas.

President Zelenskyy said, he made it very clear tonight that he says that what's been agreed today shows that Russia is still not ready to agree a peace deal.

The Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has said that renewed airstrikes on Gaza are just the beginning. He said Israel had resumed combat with full force. More than 400 people are reported to have been killed. Here's Lyse Doucet.

Prime Minister Netanyahu has never liked this deal. He only agreed to it in January under pressure from Donald Trump, who made it clear that he wanted the fighting to stop and some of the hostages to be released even before he entered the White House.

But now with the backing of President Trump's team, Prime Minister Netanyahu has rewritten the deal. He is saying we want Hamas to release more hostages now just to get the cease-fire extended.

Hamas says, well, that's not what we agreed and so are many leaders across the region and beyond.

An activist student who took part in pro-Palestinian protests at Columbia University in the U.S. last year has compared his arrest and detention to the way Israel imprisons Palestinians without due process.

In a letter from an immigration detention facility in Louisiana, Mahmoud Khalil, a U.S. permanent resident with Palestinian roots, has denounced his detention as unjust and racist.

Two NASA astronauts have returned to Earth, ending a nine-month stay in space which was originally supposed to last just eight days.

The SpaceX capsule carrying Butch Wilmore and Suni Williams and two other astronauts splashed down off the coast of Florida after a 17-hour journey.

This is how it sounded in Mission Control. "And splashdown, Crew-9 back on Earth." [Applause] "And SpaceX Freedom splashdown. Good main release." "Copy, splashdown. We see main chutes cut. Nick, Alex, Butch, Suni, on behalf of SpaceX, welcome home."

BBC News.

President Trump has said he will appeal against a court ruling that ordered an immediate stop to the closure of the main U.S. aid agency by Elon Musk's Department of Government Efficiency.

In his ruling, Judge Theodore Chuang said that it was likely that the attempt to close USAID violated the U.S. Constitution. He had also ordered Mr. Musk to restore access to USAID's computer systems for the agency's employees.

The President of the Democratic Republic of Congo, Félix Tshisekedi, and his Rwandan counterpart, Paul Kagame, have called for a cease-fire in eastern Congo after having direct talks in Qatar.

A joint statement said the cease-fire should be immediate and unconditional.

It's unclear whether that would stop the N23, which now controls more territory than ever. The group refused to attend peace talks in Angola on Tuesday.

The U.S. government has said there's no evidence Britain's Prince Harry received a special treatment when he applied for an American visa in 2020

A conservative think tank, the Heritage Foundation, had filed a Freedom of Information Act request, arguing the public had a right to know if the British royal had disclosed in his application that he had a history of drug use as detailed in his memoir. Our North America correspondent, Nomia Iqbal, reports.

These documents were released after a federal judge in Washington D.C. ruled in favor of the Heritage Foundation as part of a Freedom of Information request.

The Foundation had been pushing to get hold of Prince Harry's visa documents after he published his memoir "Spare" in January 2023. He described using various types of drugs to cope with his trauma.

Admitting to drug use can lead to a visa application being rejected and lying can get a person banned from entering the U.S. for life. But the agency which handles Freedom of Information requests said releasing the prince's exact status could subject him to reasonably foreseeable harm.

BBC News.