

# VOA NEWS

December 28, 2024

Hi, I'm VOA's Alexis Strobe with your worldwide news update.

Gaza's Health Ministry says Israeli troops have stormed one of the last hospitals operating in the territory's north and forced many of the staff and patients outside.

Friday's incident was the latest assault on Kamal Adwan Hospital. Staff say it has been hit multiple times in the past three months by Israeli troops waging an offensive against Hamas fighters in the surrounding neighborhoods.

Israel's military says Hamas uses the hospital as a base. It did not provide evidence and hospital officials have denied it.

President Frank-Walter Steinmeier on Friday dissolved Germany's lower house of parliament to pave the way for snap elections on February 23. This follows the collapse of the three-way coalition government of Chancellor Olaf Scholz. Reuters correspondent Sean Hogan has more.

Scholz lost a confident vote in parliament earlier this month after the departure of Finance Minister Christian Lindner's Free Democrats left his governing coalition without a legislative majority.

The vote also kicked off election campaigning in earnest, with conservative challenger Friedrich Merz asserting that the incumbent government had imposed excessive regulations and stifled economic growth.

Steinmeier said that problem-solving must become the core business of politics again after the elections in February. The president also called for the election campaign to be conducted fairly and transparently.

"One more thing, of course, hate and violence must have no place in this election campaign and neither should what they are preparing. Denigration, intimidation, violence, all that is poison for democracy, all of this damages our democracy. We must outlaw violence."

The conservatives hold a comfortable lead of more than 10 points over the Social Democrats in most polls.

That was Reuters correspondent Sean Hogan.

This is VOA News.

The White House says a ninth telecoms firm has been hit by a massive Chinese espionage campaign. AP correspondent Lisa Dwyer reports.

There have been at least eight telecommunications companies as well as dozens of nations affected by the Chinese hacking blitz known as "Salt Typhoon."

The ninth victim was identified after the Biden administration released guidance to companies on how to hunt for Chinese culprits in their networks.

Though the FBI has not publicly identified any of the victims, officials believe senior U.S. government officials and prominent political figures are among those whose communications were accessed.

I'm Lisa Dwyer.

President-elect Donald Trump has asked the Supreme Court to pause the potential TikTok ban from going into effect until his administration can pursue a political resolution to the issue.

Trump's request Friday came as TikTok and the Biden administration filed opposing briefs to the court.

Oral arguments are scheduled for January 10 on whether the law, which requires TikTok to divest from its China-based parent company or face a ban in the U.S., unlawfully restricts speech in violation of the First Amendment.

The brief filed by Trump's team asks the court to delay the law's January 19 deadline.

China probes personal disputes after mass killings and many fear further infringement on freedoms. AP correspondent Charles De Ledesma reports.

A court in China has sentenced a man to death for killing 35 people last month by driving into a crowd.

Fan Weiqiu was venting his anger because he was unhappy with his divorce settlement, the court in the southern city of Zhuhai explained as it handed down the sentence on Friday.

The victims were exercising at a sports center.

The attack, one of several in late October and November, has raised national concern about mass killings in China and spurred Chinese leader Xi Jinping to order local governments to take steps to prevent future extreme cases, as Xi says. Local leaders should examine personal disputes that could trigger aggression from marital troubles to disagreements over inheritance.

I'm Charles De Ledesma.

Nigeria's military says an airstrike targeting an armed group in northwestern Nigeria mistakenly killed at least 10 civilians.

The villagers were killed on Christmas Day when the air force targeted a logistics base of the Lakurawa insurgent group in the Silame area of Sakoto State.

On Thursday, the Sakoto State government said the air force mistakenly shelled the villagers in the early hours of Wednesday in an attempt to dislodge the insurgents from the area.

However, on Friday, a defense spokesperson said the Lakurawa insurgents were directly hit by munitions and that the civilians died from "secondary explosions."

That wraps up this update, but the world and news never stop. For additional updates, visit our website. I'm Alexis Strobe, VOA News.