

Greece asks for a third bailout plan

CNN ONLINE

The Greek government has formally requested a third international bailout to help pay its debts, and prevent economic collapse and ejection from the euro.

The European Stability Mechanism, which acts as Europe's financial rescue fund, confirmed Wednesday that Greece has applied for a new bailout package.

Greece has already received two massive bailouts worth roughly 240 billion euros (\$265 billion), but needs more. The latest bailout program ended last week. Greece then missed a big debt payment to the International Monetary Fund, becoming the first developed economy to default to the fund.

The Greek government has asked for the new rescue package to run for three years and promised to introduce fresh economic reforms in exchange for the money. It also hinted that it would like some form of debt relief

from earlier bailouts.

The European Union is expected to decide Sunday whether to grant another bailout program, once it receives more details about Greece's economic plans.

The IMF recently estimated Greece will need at least 50 billion euros (\$55 billion). But analysts say the figure will be much higher since the IMF analysis was conducted before Greek banks were forced to shut down, wreaking even more havoc on the economy.

Years of overspending and mismanagement have left the Greek economy in a deep crisis. The government has essentially run out of money, banks have been closed for over a week and will remain go through today, and cash withdrawals have been capped for individuals and businesses.

Regular people have even stopped driving because they want to conserve any cash they have.

Experts say Greece could soon be

forced to print its own currency and ditch the euro if leaders can't agree on a new rescue package.

A 'Grexit' would be unprecedented in the history of the EU, since members join with the expectation that they will never leave.

But it's been exceedingly difficult for European leaders to reach a deal with Greece -- and negotiations have dragged on for months -- because creditors such as Germany don't want to simply give the nation more money without the promise that it will get its financial house in order.

The lack of a breakthrough means Greek banks are almost guaranteed to stay shut until at least Monday.

On Sunday, the leaders of all 28 European Union countries will hold a summit where they will ultimately decide Greece's fate in the euro. They warned that any bailout deal would come with much tougher requirements than a previous deal offered, which the Greeks rejected in a referendum earlier this month.



Pope Francis greets Bolivian native children next to Bolivian President Evo Morales during a welcoming ceremony in El Alto, a plateau over La Paz, 4,000 meters above sea-level, on his first visit to Bolivia yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

SYRIA CONFLICT

Bomb, rockets kill 19 civilians in Aleppo

AFP, Beirut

At least 19 civilians, including five children, were killed by a Syrian regime barrel bomb attack and rebel rocket fire in Aleppo, a monitoring group said yesterday.

Fifteen of the civilians, among them four of the children and a pregnant woman, were killed in a barrel bomb strike on Wednesday evening on a rebel-held district of the divided northern city, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said.

"The children were aged under 10," said Observatory chief Rami Abdel Rahman.

The crude explosives-filled container hit a building in the northeastern neighbourhood of Karam al-Bek in as residents were sitting down to break the daytime fast observed during the Muslim holy month of Ramadan.

An AFP journalist saw men screaming as they carried the lifeless body of a boy out of the partly collapsed building before covering him with a make-shift shroud.

COLD WAR TENSIONS

UK used people in chemical warfare trials

INDEPENDENT.CO.UK

During the Cold War, the British Government used the general public as unwitting biological and chemical warfare guinea pigs on a much greater scale than previously thought, according to new historical research.

In more than 750 secret operations, hundreds of thousands of ordinary Britons were subjected to 'mock' biological and chemical warfare attacks launched from aircraft, ships and road vehicles.

Up until now historians had thought that such operations had been much less extensive. The new research, carried out by Ulf Schmidt, Professor of Modern History at the University of Kent, has revealed that British military aircraft dropped thousands of kilos of a chemical of 'largely unknown toxic potential' on British civilian populations in and around Salisbury in Wiltshire, Cardington in Bedfordshire and Norwich in Norfolk.

Substantial quantities were also dispersed across parts of the English Channel and the North Sea. It's not known the extent to which coastal towns in England and France were affected.

The research reveals, for the first time, that around 4600 kilos of the chemical, zinc cadmium sulphide (now thought to be potentially carcinogenic, on account of its cadmium content) were dispersed from ships, aircraft and moving lorries between 1953 and 1964.

Professor Schmidt's investigation – published on 9 July as a book, Secret Science

– has revealed that commuters on the London underground were also used as guinea pigs on a substantially larger scale than previously thought.

The new research has discovered that a hitherto unknown biological warfare field trial was carried out in the capital's tube system in May 1964.

The secret operation – carried out by scientists from the government's chemical and biological warfare research centre at



Porton Down, Wiltshire – involved the release of large quantities of bacteria called Bacillus globigii. The scientists were keen to discover whether 'long distance travel of aerosols' in the tube network 'was due to transportation within trains' or through the tube's air ventilation systems.

At the time, the government thought that Bacillus globigii bacteria were harmless – but they are today regarded as a cause of food poisoning, eye infections, and even septicaemia.

ETHNIC VIOLENCE

Algeria govt mobilises army in south

AFP, Guerara

Algeria was mobilising the army yesterday after 22 people were killed in the worst ethnic clashes between Berbers and Arabs in years, as more details emerged of the violence.

The fighting erupted late on Tuesday in the town of Guerara in the M'zab valley, a UNESCO world heritage site on the edge of the Sahara that has seen mounting tensions between its Berber and Arab communities.

An AFP photographer who toured the town yesterday saw makeshift barricades of tyres and wheelbarrows erected between the rival neighbourhoods and burned out homes, shops and cars.

After crisis talks on Wednesday, President Abdel Aziz Bouteflika ordered the army to restore order across the province but the AFP photographer saw no troop reinforcements yet deployed in Guerara.

A Berber leader told AFP that 16 of the dead were from his community and three were Arabs.

Myanmar president vows free and fair polls

AFP, Yangon

Myanmar's president yesterday reaffirmed his vow to hold a "free and fair" election after the country set the date for what many hope will be the most democratic vote in a generation for the former junta-run nation.

Millions will cast their votes in historic general elections on November 8 that are likely to be the first time in 25 years that Aung San Suu Kyi and her opposition party have taken part in a nationwide poll.

"As the first civilian government in many years, we have a responsibility and we promise to try our best to ensure that the upcoming general election is clean, free and fair," said President Thein Sein, in a national radio address a day after the poll date was confirmed.

The Myanmar leader, a former general, has been cheered by the international community for unleashing political and economic reforms that have cracked open the country's isolation, sparking the end of most Western sanctions.

But as elections loom, fears have grown that the nation, which was ruled by the military for nearly half a century, might be back-pedalling on its democratic transition.

Suu Kyi, who is barred from becoming



president by the junta-drafted constitution, has failed in her efforts to change the charter, locking horns with the military's formidable 25 percent parliamentary voting bloc and effective amendment veto.

The 70-year-old Nobel laureate has yet to formally announce participation in the polls, although her National League for Democracy (NLD) party says it has already prepared a long-awaited policy platform.

Myanmar's main opposition is expected to make sweeping gains at the elections.

It won 1990 polls by a landslide but was not allowed to take power by military rulers who kept Suu Kyi under house arrest for 15 years.

She remained locked up during the country's last general elections in 2010, which were won by Thein Sein's Union Solidarity and Development Party -- manufactured by the former junta and dominated by retired generals -- amid an NLD boycott and widespread accusations of cheating.

Observers now hope the November elections will be the freest in Myanmar's recent history, with its Union Election Commission (UEC) welcoming a slew of foreign observers.

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