

Truck Bomb At Baghdad Market Kills 67

BAGHDAD (AP) — In one of the deadliest single attacks in postwar Baghdad, a truck bomb shattered a popular fruit-and-vegetable market in a teeming Shiite neighborhood Thursday, killing 67 people and wounding more than 150 others.

Militants from the self-described Islamic State claimed responsibility for the bombing that incinerated much of the Jameela market in the district of Sadr City. The dead and wounded were carried away in blood-soaked blankets and garbage bags amid the charred and twisted stalls and spilled produce.

The Sunni extremist group, which holds about a third of Iraq and neighboring Syria, said it targeted a gathering place for Shiites and vowed more attacks. It often attacks military checkpoints or predominantly Shiite areas with the goal of undermining confidence in the government's security efforts.

When it launched its major onslaught across northern Iraq last year, the Islamic State group vowed to continue on to Baghdad, but a mobilization of volunteer Shiite fighters deterred any significant attacks on the capital at that time.

For the past two weeks, thousands of Iraqis have staged protests calling on the government to take a firm stance against corruption and reckless spending. Many see the corruption in the security forces as a major cause for its failures.

Croatia Says Hostage Was Handed To IS

SARAJEVO, Bosnia-Herzegovina (AP) — The alleged beheading of a Croatian hostage in Egypt took a sinister new turn Thursday with the revelation that a criminal gang kidnapped him, then demanded a ransom from his employer before turning him over to the Islamic State group.

The French geoscience company that the 30-year-old oil and gas surveyor worked for said it tried in vain to contact his abductors after receiving their emailed demand for cash.

The kidnapping and apparent beheading of Tomislav Salopek, who was snatched in broad daylight on the outskirts of Cairo, is the first of its kind involving a foreigner in Egypt. It is sure to deal a blow to the government's efforts to project stability and buttress an economic turnaround following years of unrest in the wake of Egypt's Arab Spring.

It will also likely rattle companies with expatriate workers in Egypt and cast a cloud over hopes of boosting international investment in the country.

Christophe Barnini, the chief spokesman for Salopek's employer, CGG Ardiseis, said the company received an email with a ransom demand eight days after his July 22 kidnapping, but it included no contact number and multiple responses to the address it came from went unanswered. The company's emails asked for proof of life and included a telephone number for the kidnappers to contact, Barnini said, adding that CGG was acting on directives from Croatian and Egyptian authorities.

EPA Results Reveal Spill's Toxic Stew

SILVERTON, Colorado (AP) — It will take many years and many millions of dollars simply to manage and not even remove the toxic wastewater from an abandoned mine that unleashed a 100-mile-long torrent of heavy metals into Western rivers and has likely reached Lake Powell, experts said Thursday.

Plugging Colorado's Gold King Mine could simply lead to an eventual explosion of poisonous water elsewhere, so the safest solution, they say, would be to install a treatment plant that would indefinitely clean the water from Gold King and three other nearby mines. It would cost millions of dollars, and do nothing to contain the thousands of other toxic streams that are a permanent legacy of mining across the nation.

Federal authorities first suggested a treatment plant for Gold King more than a decade ago, but local officials and owners of a nearby mine were reluctant to embrace a federally-sponsored cleanup.

"They have been not pursuing the obvious solution," said Rob Robinson, a retired abandoned mines cleanup coordinator for the U.S. Bureau of Land Management. "My hope is this has embarrassed the hell out of them and they're going to finally take it seriously."

The Gold King delay illustrates a problem dwarfing the 3 million-gallon waste plume accidentally released by contractors working for the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency: There are about 500,000 abandoned mines nationwide, and only a fraction have been dealt with, despite decades of effort.

Health Law Sign-Ups Pushing Higher

WASHINGTON (AP) — Nearly a million people signed up for health insurance under President Barack Obama's law even after the official enrollment season ended, helping push the share of uninsured Americans below 10 percent and underscoring how hard it could be for Republicans to dismantle the program.

The Health and Human Services Department said Thursday that 943,934 new customers have signed up since open enrollment ended on Feb. 22, benefiting from "special enrollment periods" keyed to life changes and other circumstances.

It's a flexible feature also common to the coverage people get through work. Sign-up opportunities for those experiencing changes such as having a baby or losing a job that came with health insurance are available year-round through HealthCare.gov and its state-run counterparts.

High Court Abolishes State's Death Row

HARTFORD, Conn. (AP) — Connecticut's highest court on Thursday ordered the state's death row emptied out, ruling that a 2012 law abolishing capital punishment for any future crimes must be applied to the 11 men facing execution for offenses committed before it took effect.

In a sharply divided 4-3 ruling, the court declared the death penalty violates the state's constitution, "no longer comports with contemporary standards of decency and no longer serves any legitimate penological purpose."

Michael Courtney, who heads the capital defense unit for the state's Office of the Public Defender, said the decision could be "very helpful nationally."

"The United States Supreme Court may consider these very issues under the federal constitution in the fall," he said.

The Connecticut court's ruling cited factors that have come up in other states to abolish the death penalty including racial and economic disparities in its use, the costs involved with appeals, the cruelty of the wait for execution and the risk of executing innocent people.



BRANDON WADE/FORT WORTH STAR-TELEGRAM/TNS

Hundreds gather for a Unity, Peace and Prayer Rally at Cornerstone Baptist Church in Arlington, Texas, on Wednesday, Aug. 12. Arlington police chief Will Johnson, Arlington mayor Jeff Williams, pastors Dwight McKissic and Gary Smith led a discussion about the issues surrounding the fatal shooting of black teenager Christian Taylor by white Arlington police officer Brad Miller.

Officer Fired For Shooting Football Player May Face Charges

BY EMILY SCHMALL
Associated Press

FORT WORTH, Texas — A police officer fired after fatally shooting an unarmed black college football player during a suspected burglary at a Texas car dealership could face criminal charges or civil lawsuits by the man's family members. Former officer Brad Miller's attorney has criticized the firing as political, after the police chief said in dismissing him that the deadly confrontation was unreasonable. Authorities say the Tarrant County District Attorney could present the case to a grand jury within weeks.

The death of 19-year-old Christian Taylor came days before the anniversary of the death of Michael Brown, an unarmed, black 18-year-old who was fatally shot by a white police officer in Ferguson, Missouri, and is the latest incidence of black men being killed by police.

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

The Arlington police department is awaiting a toxicology report on Taylor, who can be seen in security footage from the lot breaking out the windshield of a car on the lot and then driving his vehicle into the glass showroom. There is no footage of the shooting itself. Police also must complete their criminal investigation and are waiting for ballistics analyses.

The case will then be turned over to the district attorney to present to the grand jury. If a grand jury decides no charges against Miller are warranted, the Taylor family could file a civil rights claim alleging wrongful death in state or federal court.

HOW DOES A CRIMINAL GRAND JURY WORK IN TEXAS?

Texas lawmakers approved a change in May eliminating

the controversial system under which judge-appointed commissioners nominate prospective jurors, rather than being randomly chosen. That system was in place for hundreds of Houston police shootings that didn't result in any officer indictments. Federal courts stopped using a similar method decades ago.

The change takes effect Sept. 1. The Tarrant County grand jury was empaneled in July, so the case could be heard under the old system.

WHAT ARE THE PROSPECTS FOR AN INDICTMENT?

In firing Miller, Arlington Police Chief Will Johnson said he made mistakes that led to the shooting, such as pursuing Taylor without telling his supervisor. Johnson said he had "serious concerns" about Miller's use of deadly force.

Houston criminal defense attorney Joel Androphy, who is not involved in the case, says that in Texas, law enforcement officers are rarely indicted in such cases. "It's almost impossible to indict a law enforcement officer, and it is impossible to convict one of a shooting," he said.

Miller has said he was in fear, and thought Taylor was "actively advancing" and could overpower him. Androphy thinks Miller's testimony would sway a grand jury toward no indictment. Under Texas law, lethal force is justified to protect property.

WHAT'S HAPPENED BEFORE?

In May, the previous Tarrant County grand jury voted that no charges were warranted against a police officer who fatally shot Ruben Garcia Villalpando, an unarmed Mexican immigrant, in a February traffic stop. A rare indictment came in 2009, against a white Houston police officer who fatally shot Robbie Tolan, the black son of a former major

league baseball player, outside his home.

Elsewhere, there have been several high-profile indictments of officers.

A South Carolina grand jury returned an indictment in June against a white former police officer who shot and killed an unarmed black man. Officer Michael Slager of the North Charleston police was captured on video firing eight shots at Walter Scott on April 4 as Scott ran away.

A grand jury also indicted all six Baltimore officers in the death of Freddie Gray, who died in police custody this year.

Snider says his client "made decisions in the heat of a violent confrontation to save his and other officers' lives."

"A four day 'investigation' and media theatrics are not even close to due process," Snider said.

Police spokeswoman Tiara Richard said neither Johnson nor the department had a response to Snider's statement.

Texas criminal defense attorney Philip Hilder, who is not involved in the case, said that Miller wasn't entitled to due process because he wasn't a permanent employee.

HOW DOES TAYLOR'S FAMILY RESPOND?

Taylor's father, Adrian Taylor, told *The Washington Post* after word came of Miller's firing that he and his family were more concerned with burying their son.

"I'm not a man of revenge, and the results can't bring my son back," he said.

"Right now I just feel sorry for my family and his family and for the whole nation," Taylor said. "I just hope it makes a change because this is happening too much."

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- **YHS Homecoming**, deadlines September 8, publishes September 15
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