

So. Africa Finds Itself At Political Crossroads

JOHANNESBURG (AP) — Inside a Catholic church that once served as a major rallying point for anti-apartheid activists, the image of a gray-suited Nelson Mandela appears in stained-glass window that also features angels and the cross.

Worshippers here prayed Sunday for the hospitalized 94-year-old former president, who remains almost a secular saint and a father figure to many in South Africa, a nation of 50 million people that has Africa's top economy.

Mandela's admission to the hospital this weekend for unspecified medical tests sparked screaming newspapers headlines and ripples of fear in the public that the frail leader is fading further away.

And as his African National Congress political party stands ready to pick its leader who likely will be the nation's next president, some believe governing party politicians have abandoned Mandela's integrity and magnanimity in a seemingly unending string of corruption scandals. That leaves many wondering who can lead the country the way the ailing Mandela once did.

"When you have someone that's willing to lead by example like he did, it makes things easier for people to follow," said Thabile Manana, who worshipped Sunday at Soweto's Regina Mundi Catholic church. "Lately, the examples are not so nice. It's hard. I'm scared for the country."

Syria's Civil War Spills Into Lebanon Again

BEIRUT (AP) — Syria's civil war spilled over into neighboring Lebanon once again on Sunday, with gun battles in the northern city of Tripoli between supporters and opponents of President Bashar Assad's regime that left four dead.

Nine Syrian judges and prosecutors also defected to the opposition. It was the latest setback for the regime, which appears increasingly embattled with rebels making gains in northern Syria and near Damascus, the capital.

The defecting judges posted a joint statement online urging others to join them and break ranks with Assad's regime. There have been several high-level defections over the past year, including Assad's former prime minister.

In Geneva, the United Nation's Special Representative for Syria and the Arab League, Lakdhar Brahimi, met with Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Mikhail Bogdanov and U.S. Deputy Secretary of State William Burns to discuss the crisis in Syria. They said in a joint statement that the situation in Syria was "bad and getting worse," adding that a political process to end the conflict was "still necessary and still possible."

Russia and the United States have argued bitterly over how to address the conflict, which began with peaceful protests against Assad in March 2011 and escalated into a civil war that has killed an estimated 40,000 people. Activists said another 45 were killed on Sunday.

Chavez's Designated Successor Named

CARACAS, Venezuela (AP) — The man President Hugo Chavez wants to succeed him is an intensely loyal 50-year-old former bus driver who has long served as the international face of Venezuela whenever the socialist president wasn't soaking up the limelight himself.

Nicolas Maduro had been foreign minister since 2006. Chavez then tapped him as his vice president three days after winning re-election on Oct. 7.

If the cancer-stricken Chavez survives until his Jan. 10 inauguration but dies during the first four years of his term, the constitution says that Maduro would take over temporarily and that new elections should be held within 30 days.

Chavez told Venezuelans on Saturday night if he isn't able to stay on he wants them to elect Maduro as his successor.

Same-Sex Couples Begin Marrying In Wash.

SEATTLE (AP) — Same-sex couples in Washington state began reciting wedding vows at events across the state Sunday, on the first day they could marry after the state's gay marriage law took effect.

About 140 couples had registered to marry at Seattle City Hall, which had set up five separate chapels to accommodate the revelers. Starting at 10 a.m., cheers and applause regularly broke out as another couple's marriage became official. Weddings at city hall were to continue through 5 p.m.

Mayor Mike McGinn, who greeted couples as they arrived, called it a "great day, a joyous day."

"It's really wonderful," he said. "A new civil right is going to be recognized in this great civil institution."

Keith Bacon and Corianton Hale of Seattle, who celebrated their six-year anniversary the night before, hugged and kissed to loud cheers and camera flashes as they took their vows before one of the 16 local judges who volunteered to officiate the weddings on Sunday.

HOLIDAY CHEER!



MOLLY RILEY/POLARIS VIA ABACA PRESS/MCT
President Barack Obama hugs the Christmas elves while attending the "Christmas in Washington" concert at the National Building Museum in Washington Sunday. The annual holiday concert was scheduled to feature something nontraditional this year: a performance by South Korean rapper and Internet sensation PSY, who's just apologized for using what he says was "inflammatory and inappropriate language" during anti-U.S. protests at concerts in 2002 and 2004.

Special Ops Forces Praised After Afghanistan Rescue

By The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — A member of a U.S. special operations team was killed during a weekend rescue mission in Afghanistan that freed an American doctor abducted by the Taliban outside of Kabul five days ago.

President Barack Obama praised the special forces on Sunday, saying the mission was characteristic of U.S. troops' "extraordinary courage, skill and patriotism."

A spokesman for U.S. forces in Afghanistan said Dr. Dilip Joseph of Colorado Springs, Colo., was rescued early Sunday, local time, in eastern Afghanistan. Joseph, a medical adviser for Colorado Springs-based Morning Star Development, was rescued after intelligence showed he was in imminent danger of injury or possible death, according to the U.S. military.

The U.S. did not immediately identify the special operator killed in the mission.

"He gave his life for his fellow Americans, and he and his teammates remind us once more of the selfless service that allows our nation to stay strong, safe and free," Obama said in a statement.

In a separate statement Sunday, Defense Secretary Leon Panetta said, "In this fallen hero, and all of our special operators, Americans see the highest ideals of citizenship, sacrifice and service upheld."

Morning Star, a relief group that helps rebuild communities in Afghanistan, said



Panetta

in a statement that Joseph was uninjured and would probably return home in a few days. The group also said two of his co-workers were freed by their captors about 11 hours before the rescue, after hours of negotiations were conducted over three days.

Morning Star said the three workers were abducted by a group of armed men while returning from a visit to one of the organization's rural medical clinics in eastern Kabul province. The group said the three workers were taken into mountains about 50 miles from the Pakistan border.

The relief group said it would not reveal the identity of the other two men because they live and work in the region. The group said it did not pay ransom to obtain their release.

Morning Star praised those who helped get their workers back unharmed, singling out "courageous members of the U.S. military who successfully rescued Mr. Joseph as they risked their own lives doing so."

The group also offered thanks to local Afghan elders and local leaders "who made visits and appeals to the captors advocating for the release of the hostages."

OBITUARIES

Vincent Wright

The memorial service for Vincent E. Wright, 47 of Wagner will be 2:00 p.m. Wednesday, December 12, 2012 at St. John the Baptist Catholic Church in Wagner, with inurnment in the parish cemetery.

Crosby-Jaeger Funeral Home of Wagner is in charge of the arrangements.

Vincent Edward Wright, son of George Wright and Marilyn (Wampol) Wright, was born December 27, 1964 at Gettysburg, SD. He died Thursday, December 6, 2012 in a fire at the Downtown Hotel in St. Charles, MN. Vince attained the age of 47 years, 10 months and 10 days.



Wright

Vince attended Webster Grade and Middle School in Yankton and Yankton High School through his sophomore year. He earned his GED while working for the SD Job Corps in Nemo in 1982.

Vince worked as a cook in Nemo. He joined the US Navy in 1983 and served for three years. While in the Navy, he had one of the three highest scores in intelligence. After his time in the Navy, Vince worked as a security guard in Boston, MA. He also spent over eight years traveling throughout the U.S. and overseas. Vince helped his Mother care for his Grandpa Wampol for 11 years.

Vince loved the Minnesota Twins, Timberwolves, Vikings and Nebraska Huskers. In his younger years, he enjoyed playing basketball and softball. Vince enjoyed fishing and driving around the country. He especially loved to listen to his Grandpa Wampol play the accordion.

Thankful for having shared his life are his mother, Marilyn Wright of Avon; his father, George

Wright of Sioux Falls; brother, Virgil of Yankton; two nieces; one nephew; two great nieces and another on the way; two step sisters: Cheryl Peifer of St. Paul, MN and Glenda Sunderman of Humboldt; one step brother, Randy Wright of Sioux Falls; aunt and uncle Agnes and Norman Nedved of Wagner; two step aunts: Alyce Frandsen of Lake Andes and DeLores (Gordon) Thomas of Turlock, CA; and several cousins.

Vince was preceded in death by his grandparents and step uncles Raymond Brodsky and Ejner Frandsen.

Yankton Press & Dakotan
December 10, 2012

Albert Brue

Albert A. Brue, 76, of Yankton, South Dakota, died Dec. 6, 2012, at Avera Sacred Heart Hospital in Yankton.

Funeral services will be 2 p.m. Wed., Dec. 12, 2012, at Wass Funeral Home in Centerville, SD.

Visitation with the family present is 5-7 p.m. Tuesday at Wass Funeral Home with a prayer service at 7 PM.

Albert was born May 25, 1936, in Turner County, SD, to Gustav M. and Esther (Nelson) Brue. He attended country school, Centerville High School, and attended agriculture classes at SDSU in Brookings. As a young man Albert worked for Cushing Construction and married Mary Jane



Brue

Shahan in January of 1958.

Albert farmed and had dairy cattle in the Wakonda area for many years. He was an "iron man," or a steel recycler, and made many trips to Sioux Falls and Yankton hauling junked cars and scrap iron. After retiring from the farming business, Albert worked for Sears installing household appliances.

He is survived by his son, Duane (Debbie) Brue of Yankton; five daughters, Lori (Larry) Hawley of Elk Point, Linda (Gene) Norman of Albuquerque, NM, Karen (Dennis) White of Charleston, IL, Diane Brue of Madelia, MN, and Janelle Brue of Mankato, MN; seven grandchildren, two great-grandchildren, and his brother, Harlan (Brenda) Brue of Wakonda, SD.

His parents preceded him in death.

Yankton Press & Dakotan
December 10, 2012

Helen Ripple

Helen Ripple, 92, of Yankton died Friday, Dec. 7, 2012, at Avera Sister James Care Center, Yankton.

Mass of Christian Burial is at 10:30 a.m. Wednesday, Dec. 12, at St. John the Baptist Catholic Church, Lesterville, with the Rev. Joe Forcelle officiating. Burial will be in the Polish Cemetery, rural Lesterville.

Visitations begin at 2 p.m. Tuesday at Opsahl-Kostel Funeral Home & Crematory, Yankton, with a rosary at 7:30 p.m. followed by a Scripture service at 8 p.m. Visitations will resume one

hour prior to the service at the church.

Merle Dwyer

Merle V. Dwyer, 98, of Wakonda died Friday, Dec. 7, 2012, at Wakonda Heritage Manor, Wakonda.

Funeral services are at 11 a.m. Thursday at Hansen Funeral Home, Irene.

Visitations are 5-7 p.m. Wednesday at the funeral home.

For obituary and online condolences, visit hansenfuneralhome.com.

Willa Kirwan

Willa Mae Kirwan, 74, of Ft. Randall died peacefully at her home in Ft. Randall Saturday, Dec. 8, 2012.

Funeral Memorial Mass is at 10 a.m. Wednesday, Dec. 12, at St. Anthony's Catholic Church, Fairfax. Inurnment will be in St. Anthony's Catholic Cemetery.

Rosary/Wake services are at 7 p.m. Tuesday at the church.

Crosby-Jaeger Funeral Home, Wagner, is in charge of arrangements.

Cliff

From Page 1

raising tax rates on the wealthy — might not be wise.

"There is a growing group of folks looking at this and realizing that we don't have a lot of cards as it relates to the tax issue before year end," Corker told "Fox News Sunday."

If Republicans agree to Obama's plan to increase rates on the top 2 percent of Americans, Corker added, "the focus then shifts to entitlements and maybe it puts us in a place where we actually can do something that really saves the nation."

Besides getting tax hikes through the Republican-dominated House, Corker's proposal faces another hurdle: Democrats haven't been receptive to GOP proposals on the entitlement programs. Senate Democratic Whip Dick Durbin, D-Ill., on Sunday was skeptical about proposals to increase the eligibility age for Medicare from 65 to 67. He said he doesn't see Congress addressing the complicated issue of Medicare overhaul in the three weeks remaining before the end of the year.

"I just don't think we can do it in a matter of days here before the end

of the year," Durbin said. "We need to address that in a thoughtful way through the committee structure after the first of the year."

And hard-line fiscal conservatives in the House are holding fast to their position.

"No Republican wants to vote for a rate tax increase," said Rep. Jeb Hensarling, R-Texas, chairman of the House Republican Conference.

Added Rep. Marsha Blackburn, R-Tenn.: "I'm not sure there is support for the rate hikes. There is support for revenue by cleaning up the code."

Still, at least one House Republican has said there is another way. Rep. Tom Cole, of Oklahoma, has said Obama and Boehner should agree not to raise tax rates on the majority of Americans and negotiate the rates for top earners later. Cole said Sunday that most House Republicans would vote for that approach because it doesn't include a rate hike.

"You know, it's not waving a white flag to recognize political reality," Cole said.

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Our care and concern does not end with the funeral service. This week we remember with family and friends the anniversary of the deaths of:

Gladys Merkwan
who passed away on
December 13, 2011

Robert Meyer
who passed away on
December 15, 2011

This remembrance is brought to you free of charge. If you have a loved one you would like remembered, contact us at Opsahl-Kostel Funeral Home & Crematory. Guiding and serving families with compassion and trust.

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