

Rise In Ankle Bracelets Hurts Monitoring

Three decades after they were introduced as a crime-fighting tool, electronic ankle bracelets used to track an offender's whereabouts have proliferated so much that officials are struggling to handle an avalanche of monitoring alerts that are often nothing more sinister than a dead battery, lost satellite contact or someone arriving home late from work.

Amid all that white noise, alarms are going unchecked, sometimes on defendants now accused of new crimes.

Some agencies don't have clear protocols on how to handle the multitude of alerts, or don't always follow them. At times, officials took days to act, if they noticed at all, when criminals tampered with their bracelets or broke a curfew.

"I think the perception ... is that these people are being watched 24 hours a day by someone in a command center. That's just not happening," said Rob Bains, director of court services for Florida's Ninth Judicial Circuit Court, which this spring halted its monitoring programs after two people on the devices were accused in separate shootings.

At least 100,000 sex offenders, parolees and people free on bail or probation wear ankle bracelets that can sound an alarm if they leave home without permission, fail to show up for work or linger near a playground or school.

New Clashes Kill 2 In Egypt

CAIRO (AP) — Escalating the confrontation after clashes that left 83 supporters of Egypt's ousted Islamist president dead, the interim government moved Sunday toward dismantling two pro-Mohammed Morsi sit-in camps, accusing protesters of "terrorism" and vowing to deal with them decisively.

Morsi's Muslim Brotherhood denounced Saturday's bloodshed as evidence of the brutality of the military-backed regime. But many accused the group's leaders of trying to capitalize on the loss of life to win sympathy after millions took to the streets in a show of support for the military chief who ousted Morsi in a coup.

Gen. Abdel-Fattah el-Sissi said he would take the popular support as a mandate to deal with violence and "potential terrorism" — a thinly veiled reference to a widely expected crackdown on Morsi supporters in the sit-in camps in Cairo and against radical Islamists in the Sinai peninsula who have been waging deadly attacks against security forces since Morsi was ousted in a July 3 military coup.

The coup followed days of mass protests by millions of Egyptians demanding that Morsi step down after a year in office as Egypt's first elected president. The monthlong sit-ins have been the launch pad of street protests that often ended violently when Morsi's supporters clashed with opponents or security forces.

Islamists led by the Brotherhood staunchly reject the new post-Morsi leadership and insist the only possible solution to the crisis is to reinstate him. Meanwhile, the interim leadership is pushing ahead with a fast-track transition plan to return to a democratically elected government by early next year.

Second Body Pulled From N.Y. River

PIERMONT, N.Y. (AP) — A day after a bride-to-be was pulled dead from the Hudson River, the body of her fiancé's best man was found a mile downstream Sunday, the second victim of a nighttime crash involving a speedboat and a barge north of New York City.

The deadly collision left the groom-to-be grieving for his intended and his best friend, while facing surgery for his own injuries as another friend is charged with manslaughter — two weeks before the wedding day.

"I don't think you can put words to what we have to tell these families," Rockland County Sheriff Louis Falco said as he announced that a body believed to be that of Mark Lennon, 30, the best man, was found Sunday morning.

At the church where Lindsey Stewart and Brian Bond, both 30, would have been married Aug. 10, the pastor said their lives "were filled with hopes and dreams, and that has been snuffed away."

Stewart, Bond, Lennon and three others were on a speedboat that crashed Friday night into a barge holding equipment for the construction of a replacement for the Tappan Zee.

Pope Draws 3 Million In Rio

RIO DE JANEIRO (AP) — An estimated 3 million people poured onto Rio's Copacabana beach Sunday for the final Mass of Pope Francis' historic trip to his home continent, cheering the first Latin American pope in one of the biggest turnouts for a papal Mass in recent history.

Speaking from a white stage and looking out over the enormous crowd, Francis urged young Catholics to go out and spread their faith "to the fringes of society, even to those who seem farthest away, most indifferent."

"The church needs you, your enthusiasm, your creativity and the joy that is so characteristic of you!" he said to applause in his final homily of the World Youth Day festivities.

Later Sunday, he issued a more pointed message to the region's bishops, telling them to better look out for their flocks and put an end to the "clerical" culture that places priests on a pedestal — often with what Francis called the "sinful complicity" of lay Catholics who hold the clergy in such high esteem.

Israel OKs Prisoner Release

Move Clears Way To Resume Peace Talks

BY KARIN LAUB
Associated Press

JERUSALEM — A divided Israeli Cabinet agreed Sunday to release 104 long-term Palestinian prisoners convicted of deadly attacks, clearing a hurdle toward resuming Mideast peace talks and giving U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry his first concrete achievement after months of shuttle diplomacy.

The U.S. said preliminary talks would begin Monday. Release of the prisoners is linked to progress in the talks, meaning many could well remain behind bars.

Neither side appeared upbeat, despite the possibility of renewed talks. Each has blamed the other for the lack

of success in 20 years of negotiations, and Kerry's success so far has been only to get the parties back to the table.

The prisoner release, approved 13-7 with two abstentions, is a key part of the Kerry-brokered deal.

Next, Israeli and Palestinian teams meet in Washington on Monday, the State Department spokeswoman said, to prepare for six to nine months of negotiations on setting up a Palestinian state alongside Israel.

The State Department said Kerry called Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas and invited them to send teams to Washington.

State Department spokeswoman Jan Psaki said in a statement that talks

Florida Apartment Gunman Described As Lonely, Angry

BY CHRISTINE ARMARIO
Associated Press

HIALEAH, Fla. — The gunman who went on a shooting rampage at his South Florida apartment building, killing six people, was a lonely man who spoke about having pent up anger, those who knew him said Sunday.

Pedro Vargas, 42, lived on the fourth floor of a barren, concrete apartment complex in the Miami suburb of Hialeah with his elderly mother. He rarely spoke with others there, and confided to a man who worked out at the same gym that he liked to work out his anger by lifting weights and trying to get big.

"He'd just say this was the only thing that would keep him normal, pulling out all the anger in the gym," Jorge Bagos told The Associated Press.

Bagos said the gunman expressed frustration over bad experiences with women and losing all his hair from using steroids.

On Friday night, Vargas set a combustible liquid on fire in his apartment, sending the unit into flames, police said. Building manager Italo Piscioti and his wife went running toward the smoke. Vargas opened his door and shot and killed both of them, Lt. Carl Zogby, a spokesman with the Hialeah Police Department said.

Vargas then went back into his apartment and began firing from his balcony. One of the shots struck and killed Carlos Javier Gavilanes, 33, who neighbors said was returning home from his son's boxing practice.

Vargas then stormed into a third-story apartment, where he shot and killed a family of three: Patricio Simono, 64, Merly Niebles, 51, and her 17-year-old daughter.

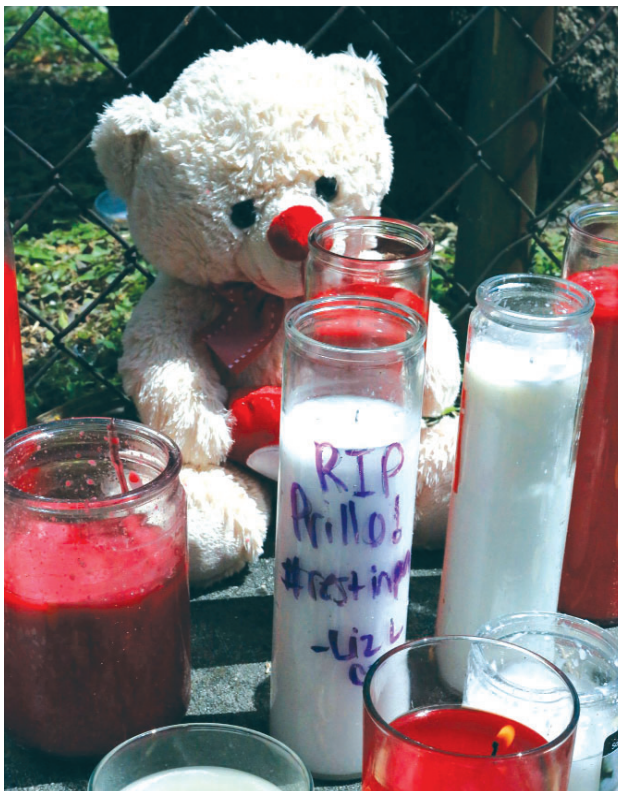
For eight hours, police followed and exchanged gunfire with Vargas throughout the five-story apartment complex as terrified residents took cover in bathrooms and huddled with relatives, sometimes so close to the gunfire they could feel the shots. In the final hours, Vargas took two people captive in a fifth-story unit. Police attempted to negotiate with him, but the talks fell apart and a SWAT team swarmed in, killing Vargas and rescuing both hostages.

On Sunday, neighbors strug-

gled to remember anything more than cursory exchanges with Vargas. He was often seen taking his mother, who used a walker, to run errands and go to doctor appointments. Sometimes, he greeted residents and politely held open doors. Other times, he could be noticeably anti-social.

One woman recalled how she would see him wait for the elevator, only to then take the stairs if he saw someone was inside when it arrived. And neighbors never saw him with anyone other than his mother.

"He looked very alone," said Isael Sarmiento, 42, who lived on the same floor as Vargas, across an open, gray and red concrete terrace. "I saw it in his face sometimes, like he was someone who had spent many years alone."



HECTOR GABINO/EL NUEVO HERALD/MCT
A memorial for shooting victims is shown on Sunday in front of the apartment complex in Hialeah, Florida, where six people were killed by gunman Pedro Alberto Vargas.

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