

Wikileaks Leaks Diplomatic Documents

ISTANBUL (AP) — WikiLeaks is in the process of publishing more than 500,000 Saudi diplomatic documents to the Internet, the transparency website said Friday, a move that echoes its famous release of U.S. State Department cables in 2010.

WikiLeaks said in a statement that it has already posted roughly 60,000 files. Most of them appear to be in Arabic.

There was no immediate way to verify the authenticity of the documents, although WikiLeaks has a long track record of hosting large-scale leaks of government material. Many of the documents carried green letterhead marked "Kingdom of Saudi Arabia" or "Ministry of Foreign Affairs." Some were marked "urgent" or "classified." At least one appeared to be from the Saudi Embassy in Washington.

If genuine, the documents would offer a rare glimpse into the inner workings of the notoriously opaque kingdom. They might also shed light on Riyadh's longstanding regional rivalry with Iran, its support for Syrian rebels and Egypt's military-backed government, and its opposition to an emerging international agreement on Tehran's nuclear program.

One of the documents, dated to 2012, appears to highlight Saudi Arabia's well-known skepticism about the Iranian nuclear talks. A message from the Saudi Arabian Embassy in Tehran to the Foreign Ministry in Riyadh describes "flirting American messages" being carried to Iran via an unnamed Turkish mediator.

US Report Finds Threat Undiminished

WASHINGTON (AP) — Iran's support for international terrorist groups remained undiminished last year and even expanded in some respects, the Obama administration said Friday, less than two weeks before the deadline for completing a nuclear deal that could provide Tehran with billions of dollars in relief from economic sanctions.

The assessment offered a worrying sign of even worse terror-related violence to come after a year in which extremists in the Middle East, Africa and Asia committed 35 percent more terrorist acts, killed nearly twice as many people and almost tripled the number of kidnappings worldwide. Statistics released by the State Department on Friday also pointed to a tenfold surge in the most lethal kinds of attacks.

Yet even as the Islamic State and the Taliban were blamed for most of the death and destruction in 2014, the department's annual terrorism report underscored the ongoing threat posed by Iran and its proxies across the Islamic world and beyond.

Tehran increased its assistance to Shiite militias fighting in Iraq and continued its long-standing military, intelligence and financial aid to Lebanon's Hezbollah, Syrian President Bashar Assad's embattled government and Palestinian groups Hamas and Islamic Jihad. While the 388-page study said Iran has lived up to interim nuclear deals with world powers thus far, it gave no prediction about how an Iran flush with cash from a final agreement would behave.

World powers and Iran are trying to conclude an accord by the end of the month, setting 15 years of restrictions on Iran's nuclear program in exchange for significant relief from the international sanctions that have crippled the Iranian economy.

Haitians Kicked Out Ponder Future

FONBAYA, Haiti (AP) — Saint-Soi Souverin sat on a bench resting and thinking about his plight after being uprooted from his longtime home on the other side of the border in the Dominican Republic, far from the Haitian shelter where he is staying.

Dominican authorities deported the 35-year-old farm worker along with his wife and four children early this week, leaving Souverin to ponder what he will do in Haiti — a deeply poor country that he left at age 17 to find work in the relatively more prosperous Dominican Republic.

"I'm not taking this well," he told The Associated Press in Spanish as his small daughter fell asleep on the shelter's concrete floor Thursday. "They sent me here with two empty hands. Everything I own was left behind."

The Dominican Republic has long had uneasy relations with migrant workers like Souverin and it is becoming decidedly more unfriendly.

Human rights activists worry that tens of thousands of people will face Souverin's plight in the coming weeks and months now that the Dominican government is pledging to deport non-citizens who did not submit applications to establish legal residency before Wednesday night's deadline. Most of those affected are from neighboring Haiti or of Haitian descent.

Church Victims' Families Forgive Suspect In Court

BY JEFFREY COLLINS

Associated Press

CHARLESTON, S.C. — They forgave him. They advised him to repent for his sins, and asked for God's mercy on his soul. One even told Dylann Storm Roof to repent and confess, and "you'll be OK."

Relatives of the nine people shot down during a Bible study session inside their historic black church confronted the 21-year-old suspect Friday during his initial hearing. They described their pain and anger, but also spoke of love.

"I forgive you, my family forgives you," said Anthony Thompson, whose relative Myra Thompson was killed. "We would like you to take this opportunity to repent. ... Do that and you'll be better off than you are right now."

Roof was ordered held until a bond is set on murder charges. He appeared by video from the county jail, looking somber in a striped jumpsuit and speaking only briefly in response to the judge's questions.

The victims included the Rev. Clementa Pinckney, a state senator who doubled as the church's lead pastor, and eight others who played multiple roles in their families and communities: ministers and coaches, teachers and a librarian, counselors and choir singers and the elderly sexton who made sure the historic Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church was kept clean.

A police affidavit released Friday accused Roof of shooting all nine multiple times, and making a "racially inflammatory statement" as he stood over an unnamed survivor.

The families are determined not to respond in kind, said Alana Simmons, who lost her grandfather, the Rev. Daniel Simmons.

"Although my grandfather and the other victims died at the hands of hate, this is proof — everyone's plea for your soul is proof they lived in love and their legacies will live in love, so hate won't win," she said. "And I just want to thank the court for making sure that hate doesn't win."

Felecia Sanders survived the Wednesday night attack by pretending to be dead, but lost her son Tywanza. She also spoke from Chief Magistrate James Gosnell's courtroom, where Roof's image appeared on a television screen. It is not unusual in South Carolina for the families of victims to be given a chance to address the court during a bond hearing.

"We welcomed you



CURTIS COMPTON/ATLANTA JOURNAL-CONSTITUTION/TNS

Tisa Martin, from Charleston, kneels to pray at the sidewalk memorial in front of the "Mother" Emanuel A.M.E. Church on Friday in Charleston, S.C.

Wednesday night in our Bible study with open arms. You have killed some of the most beautiful people that I know. Every fiber in my body hurts ... and I'll never be the same," Sanders told Roof.

"Tywanza was my hero," Sanders added, but then even she showed some kindness to the man accused of killing her son: "As we said in Bible Study, we enjoyed you but may God have mercy on you."

Roof bowed his head slightly. From the jail, he could hear them talking, but couldn't see them; the camera showed only the judge.

"Charleston is a very strong community. We have big hearts. We're a very loving community," said Gosnell, who urged people to find it in their hearts to help not only the nine victims, but "victims on the young man's side of the family" as well.

Roof's public defender released a statement from his family offering prayers and sympathy for the victims, and expressing "shock, grief and disbelief as to what happened that night."

"We have all been touched by the moving words from the victims' families offering God's forgiveness and love in the face of such horrible suffering," the statement said.

The comments in court seemed in keeping with a spirit evident on the streets of Charleston Friday, where people built a memorial and thousands attended a vigil to repudiate whatever a gunman would hope to accomplish by attacking one of the nation's most important African-American sanctuaries.

"A hateful person came to

this community with some crazy idea he'd be able to divide, but all he did was unite us and make us love each other even more," Mayor Joseph P. Riley Jr. said as he described plans for the evening vigil at a sports arena.

A steady stream of people brought flowers and notes and shared somber thoughts at a growing memorial in front of the church, which President Barack Obama called "a sacred place in the history of Charleston and in the history of America."

The Justice Department announced Friday that it's investigating whether it could be a hate crime or domestic terrorism. Agency spokeswoman Emily Pierce said the slayings were "undoubtedly designed to strike fear and terror into this community."

South Carolina Gov. Nikki Haley said the state will "absolutely" want the death penalty.

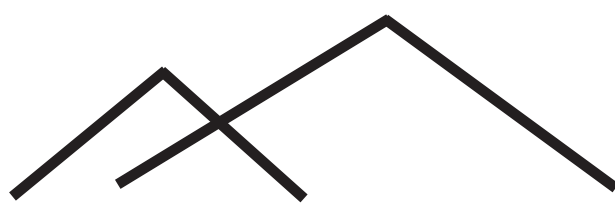
"This was an act of racial terrorism and must be treated as such," the Rev. Cornell William Brooks, president of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, said Friday in Charleston.

"This is a moment in

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