

Captured Syrian City A Test For Rebel Forces

BEIRUT (AP) — Since rebels seized the capital of Raqqa province in northern Syria from the government last week, they have posted guards at state buildings, returned bread prices to pre-war levels and opened a hotline that residents can phone to report security issues, anti-regime activists said Sunday.

At the same time, they have killed captured security forces in public squares and driven their dead bodies through the streets. The most powerful rebel brigades in the city are extremist Muslims and include Jabhat al-Nusra, which the U.S. government says is linked to al-Qaida.

As the first major Syrian city to fall entirely under rebel control, Raqqa is shaping up to be the best test case yet for how opposition fighters will administer territory amid Western concerns over who will fill the vacuum if President Bashar Assad is ousted. While the city's new rulers try to govern, they are struggling with the same divisions that have hampered the rebel movement's effectiveness throughout Syria's civil war.

The rising power of Islamic extremists in their ranks also could block them from receiving badly needed aid from countries that support the anti-Assad struggle but fear weapons could fall into the wrong hands. The United States recently promised \$60 million in new, non-lethal assistance to the opposition inside Syria, and other powers are considering sending arms. Most of these countries would look askance, however, at rebels who seek an Islamic state or stand accused of war crimes.

6 Teens Killed, 2 Injured In Ohio Accident

WARREN, Ohio (AP) — Ohio authorities have identified six teenagers killed in a one-vehicle SUV crash, along with two teens who were able to escape from the overturned sport utility vehicle submerged in a pond.

The Ohio State Highway Patrol says it's not believed that the eight people inside the vehicle were closely related.

Killed were 19-year-old Alexis Cayson; 14-year-old Andrique Bennett; 17-year-old Brandon Murray; and Kirkland Behner, Daylan Ray and Ramone White, all 15. All six were from Warren, in northeast Ohio.

Eighteen-year-old Brian Henry and 15-year-old Asher Lewis, both of Warren, survived.

Opposition Leader To Seek Chavez's Post

CARACAS, Venezuela (AP) — Venezuelan opposition leader Henrique Capriles is set to announce he will run in elections to replace Hugo Chavez, setting up a make-or-break encounter against the dead president's hand-picked successor, a close adviser to the candidate says.

"He will accept" the nomination, the adviser told The Associated Press. He spoke Sunday on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to discuss the decision publicly ahead of a formal announcement scheduled for later in the day.

Other opposition sources refused to comment, but a political consultant at ORC Consultores, which advises Capriles, also said he would run.

"He will put himself forward," said Oswaldo Ramirez. "History is giving Capriles Radonski an important role."

Venezuela's election commission has set April 14 as the date of the vote, with formal campaigning to start just 12 days earlier.

US-Afghan Relations Strained

BY LOLITA C. BALDOR
 Associated Press

KABUL, Afghanistan — A series of security problems and fractured relations with Afghan leaders plagued Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel's first trip here as Pentagon chief, including the Afghan president's accusations that the U.S. and the Taliban are working in concert to show that violence in the country will worsen if most coalition troops leave.

The top U.S. commander in Afghanistan, Gen. Joseph Dunford, quickly rejected the charges President Hamid Karzai made Sunday as "categorically false." But the accusations were just the latest in a series of disputes that have frayed relations between the two nations as the U.S. works to wind down the war and turn the country's security over to the Afghans.

Speaking to reporters shortly after Karzai made the comments, Dunford said the Afghan leader has never expressed such views to him but said it was understandable that tensions would arise as the coalition balances the need to complete its mission with the Afghans' move to exercise more sovereignty.



Karzai

"We have fought too hard over the past 12 years, we have shed too much blood over the past 12 years, we have done too much to help the Afghan security forces grow over the last 12 years to ever think that violence or instability would be to our advantage," said Dunford.

Dunford's comments came, however, soon after U.S. officials cancelled a news conference with Hagel and Karzai because of a security threat — just a day after a suicide bomber on a bicycle struck outside the Afghan Defense Ministry, killing nine Afghan civilians and wounding 14 others. Hagel heard the explosion from the safe location where he was meeting with Afghan officials but was never in danger.

The security problems compounded a series of flare-ups in recent weeks, including a dispute that has stalled the transfer of a U.S. prison to Afghan authority as well as Karzai's order to expel U.S. special operations forces out of Wardak province, which lies just outside the capital, because of allegations that Afghans working with the

commandos were involved in abusive behavior.

Hagel met with Karzai Sunday night and said that he discussed all the key issues with the president. He also rejected any suggestions that the U.S. is in collusion with the Taliban. Speaking to reporters traveling with him, Hagel declined to detail his conversation with Karzai but said, "I think he understands where we are and where we've been, and hopefully where we're going together."

Hagel said he's known Karzai since shortly after the invasion in late 2001, adding that such extended relationships can often be beneficial, especially when dealing with complicated issues.

The U.S. and Afghan leaders are in the midst of negotiations over the long-term presence of American forces in Afghanistan beyond the end of 2014, when all combat troops are scheduled to leave.

U.S. officials would not provide details on the security concerns that led to cancelling the news conference. They spoke on condition of anonymity because they weren't authorized to discuss the matter publicly. But Pentagon press secretary George Little said the cancellation was not due to Karzai's earlier comments about the U.S. and the Taliban.

Cardinals Say Mass, Seek Prayers Before Conclave

BY RACHEL ZOLL
 AP Religion Writer

VATICAN CITY — Cardinals took a break from maneuvering ahead of this week's papal conclave to fan out across Rome and celebrate Sunday Mass at local parishes.

The worship services provided a chance to see the cardinals up close and hear them preach two days before they enter the conclave. Roman Catholics and others packed the churches, holding up cell phones to take photos and video.

The cardinals said Mass in their titular churches, the parishes that according to church tradition are assigned to them as clergy of Rome, creating a symbolic bond with the pope. The conclave, with 115 cardinal-electors, is scheduled to start Tuesday.

The cardinals have been holding meetings and informal gatherings ahead of electing a successor to Benedict XVI. Several church leaders acknowledged the historic

moment at Mass.

"This Sunday is also special because today we prepare for the conclave," said Boston Cardinal Sean O'Malley, in his sermon at Holy Mary of Victory church. "Let us pray that the Holy Spirit illumines the church to choose a new pope who will confirm us in our faith and make more visible the love of the good shepherd."

The parish priest who introduced the cardinal was more direct, describing O'Malley as "humble, but decisive," and saying he hoped his next visit to the church would be as pontiff. The leading Italian newspaper, Corriere della Sera, has cited the Boston archbishop as a favorite, despite past resistance to the idea of a superpower pope.

Cardinal Angelo Scola of Milan, considered a top papal contender, distributed communion at Church of the Twelve Holy Apostles, and spoke on the mission of the church.

"It is to announce over and over again, even to the modern man who

is so sophisticated but sometimes lost in the new millennium, to announce always and repeatedly that the Lord's mercy is a source of hope even in these difficult times," he said. Scola waved to well-wishers as he was driven away from the church.

At Church of St. Andrew at the Quirinal, a crowd greeted Brazilian Cardinal Odilo Pedro Scherer, considered Brazil's best hope of filling the papacy. Scherer, who lived in Rome as a young priest, shook hands and hugged the faithful before celebrating Mass. He asked for prayers for the church, calling this period "certainly a difficult time, but also a joyful one and full of hope."

At the relatively young age of 63, Scherer embraces new approaches for reaching nonbelievers, while upholding Catholic orthodoxy, including rejecting same-sex marriage. Scherer joined Twitter in 2011 and in his second tweet said: "If Jesus preached the gospel today, he would also use print media, radio,

TV, the Internet and Twitter. Give Him a chance!"

Cardinal Peter Erdo, the archbishop of Esztergom-Budapest, said Mass at Basilica of Santa Balbina on the Aventine hill, where the first known Hungarian cardinal, Istvan Vancsa, was buried in the 13th century. Erdo, a canon lawyer and theologian, is considered a possible compromise candidate. He would be the second pontiff to come from eastern Europe, following Pope John Paul II.

"Let us all pray for the Conclave that will gather the day after tomorrow," Erdo said. "Let's call the Holy Spirit to descend upon the Holy Church."

OBITUARIES

Helen Kuehler Dreismeier

Helen M. Dreismeier, age 92 of Crofton, Nebraska, died on Friday, March 8, 2013 at Avera Sacred Heart Hospital in Yankton, SD.

Mass of Christian Burial will be on Tuesday, March 12, 2013 at 10:30 a.m. at St. Rose of Lima Catholic Church in Crofton with Father Michael Schmitz and Father Michael McDermitt officiating. Burial will be in St. Rose of Lima Cemetery in Crofton.

Visitation will be on Monday from 5:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. with a Vigil Service at 7:00 p.m. at the church. Visitation will begin one hour prior to services on Tuesday at the church.

The Wintz Funeral Home in Crofton is in charge of arrangements. To send online condolences or to view the video tribute, please visit www.wintzfuneralhome.com.

Pallbearers will be Helen's immediate grandchildren.

Helen was born on March 24, 1920 at Fordyce, NE to Michael and Rosie (Stratman) Koch. She grew up on a farm north of Fordyce and attended St. John the Baptist Elementary School in Fordyce. She married Clement G. (Clem) Kuehler on April 22,



Dreismeier

1946 at Fordyce. They farmed Southeast of Crofton until they moved to a farm southwest of Crofton in 1964. Clem died on May 25, 1983 at the age of 61.

Helen continued to live on the farm until she married Theodore "Ted" Dreismeier on April 21, 1990 at Crofton. They made their home in Crofton and Ted died on February 15, 2003 at the age of 95. She had been a resident of the Good Samaritan Home in Bloomfield since 2010.

Helen was a member of St. Rose of Lima Catholic Church, Guild and Christian Mothers. She enjoyed working on the farm caring for her cows, tending to her garden and taking care of her flowers. She liked to sew and made many homemade braided rugs. Helen loved to bake and made a great apple pie, green tomato pie and waffle cookies. Most of all she cherished the time she could spend with her family.

Helen is survived by 7 children and their spouses, Bonnie Jean and Richard Kool of Grand Island, NE; Clarence and LaNeda Kuehler of Crofton; Frank and Judy Kuehler of Norfolk, NE;

Wilmer and Barb Kuehler of Crofton; Art and Nancy Kuehler of Lawrence, KS; Barb and David Detweiler of Grand Island; Maryann and John Luther of Lincoln, NE; 19 grandchildren, 32 great grandchildren, 5 great great grandkids, 7 stepchildren and their spouses, Paul and Darlene Dreismeier of Omaha, NE; Kathy Brodersen of Yankton, SD; Alice and Ron Farrell of Tomball, TX; Arlis Green of Armstrong, IA; Cleone and Lee Timmerman of Norfolk, NE; Marilyn and Gary Kleinschmit of Bow Valley, NE; Mark and Sheila Dreismeier of Norfolk; 22 step grandchildren and 46 step great grandchildren.

She was preceded in death by her parents, both husbands, a son, Roman Kuehler, a brother, Roman Koch, twin granddaughters, 2 step sons-in-law, Ken Brodersen and Bill Green.

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WINTZ
 FUNERAL HOME, INC.
 Hartington * Coleridge * Crofton
 203 W. Franklin, PO Box 505
 Hartington, Nebraska 68739

Norine Peterka

Norine D. Peterka, age 91, of Yankton, died Friday, March 8, 2013 at Avera Sister James Care Center, Yankton, SD.

Mass of Christian Burial will be 10:30 a.m. Monday, March 11, 2013 at St. Benedict Catholic Church, Yankton, SD with Rev. Ken Lulf officiating. Burial will be in the Sacred Heart Cemetery.

Visitations will be from 4:00-6:00 p.m. Sunday, March 10, 2013 at the Opsahl-Kostel Funeral Home and Crematory, Yankton. Visitations will resume one hour prior to the service at the church.

Norine was born October 22, 1921 in Yankton, SD to Val & Mona (Hoyt) Rheiner. She grew up in the Yankton and Lake Andes area. She graduated from Yankton High School and for the next five years she worked for the Yankton School District. On September 27, 1944, she was united in marriage to George Peterka at Sacred Heart Catholic Church in Yankton. For eighteen years she worked for Edward



Peterka

Jones Investment in Yankton. She was a member of Royal Neighbors, Sacred Heart Hospital Auxiliary, and St. Benedict Catholic Church.

She is survived by her son Dennis (Diane) Peterka of Wa-

verly, IA; daughters Teresa (Peterka) Engel of Sioux Falls, SD and Sharon Peterka of Yankton, SD; brother Robert Rheiner of Geneva, NE; four grandchildren and four great-grandchildren.

She was preceded in death by her husband George, her parents, brother Neil Rheiner, and son-in-law Al Engel.

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OPSAHL-KOSTEL
 FUNERAL HOME & CREMATORY INC.
 Online condolences at:
www.opsahl-kostelfuneralhome.com

Jeanne Barta

Jeanne Barta, 75, of Gayville died Friday morning, March 8, 2013, at her residence.

Memorial services are at 11 a.m. Friday, March 15, at the Opsahl-Kostel Funeral Chapel, Yankton, with the Rev. David Fulton officiating.

Visitations will be one hour prior to the service at the funeral home.

Natty Clayton

Natasha Ann Clayton, beloved daughter of Mark and Barb Clayton, died at the age of 22 on Saturday, March 9, 2013, at her home in Yankton after a 2 1/2-year battle with cancer.

Funeral services are at 10:30 a.m. Wednesday, March 13, at Peace Presbyterian Church, Yankton, with Pastor Bob Cappel officiating. Burial will be at Eventide Cemetery in Woonsocket.

Visitation is 5-8 p.m. Tuesday at

Wintz & Ray Funeral Home, Yankton, with a prayer service at 7 p.m. Visitation continues one hour prior to the funeral at the church.

To send an online sympathy message, visit www.wintzrayfuneralhome.com.

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