

Syria Rebels Surrender To Assad

BEIRUT (AP) — Carrying their rifles and small bags of belongings, hundreds of exhausted Syrian rebels withdrew Wednesday from their last remaining strongholds in the heart of Homs, surrendering to President Bashar Assad a blood-stained city that was once the center of the revolt against him.

For Assad, it is a powerful victory ahead of presidential elections. For the rebels, the dramatic exit after two years of enduring grueling assaults and siege captures their sense of abandonment amid world reluctance to help shift the balance of power on the ground.

"We ate grass and leaves until there was nothing left for us to eat," said opposition activist Abu Yassin al-Homsi, who was preparing to leave with the rebels later Wednesday. "We kept urging the international community to lift the siege but there was no response," he added.

The exit of some 1,200 fighters and civilians marks a de facto end of the rebellion in the war shattered city, which was one of the first places to rise up against Assad's rule, earning its nickname as "the capital of the revolution."

Gaining virtually full control of Syria's third largest city is a major win for Assad on multiple levels. Militarily, it solidifies the government hold on a swath of territory in central Syria, linking the capital Damascus with government strongholds along the coast and giving a staging ground to advance against rebel territory further north.

Extremist Leader Surfaced In 2010

NAIROBI, Kenya (AP) — Tugging on his winter hat, the Islamic militant leader declared with a sneer: "I will sell women."

His name is Abubakar Shekau, commander of Nigeria's most feared terror group, Boko Haram. His threat to sell nearly 300 teenage school girls abducted from a school in remote northeast Nigeria came in a grainy video released this week.

The warning has vaulted the wanted terror leader into global headlines.

Even before the April 15 kidnapping, the U.S. government was offering up to a \$7 million reward for information leading to the arrest of Shekau, whom the U.S. has labeled a specially designated global terrorist.

"He's isolated, he's increasingly extremist and he's delusional enough to think he could bring down the Nigerian state," said J. Peter Pham, the director of the Africa Center at the Washington-based Atlantic Council, who wrote a 2012 report called "Boko Haram's Evolving Threat."

'Hundreds' Killed On Nigerian Border

LAGOS, Nigeria (AP) — Islamic militants killed hundreds of people in an attack on a border town in Nigeria's remote northeast, escalating the country's violent insurrection in which more than 270 schoolgirls have been kidnapped.

As many as 300 people were killed when a band of extremists attacked the town of Gamboru Ngala, on Nigeria's border with Cameroon, according to local press reports. The attack and hundreds of casualties were confirmed Wednesday by Borno state information commissioner Mohammed Bulama who spoke to The Associated Press by telephone Wednesday. Shops and homes were set ablaze and razed in the attack, he said.

The news of the attack adds to Nigeria's growing crisis from the Islamic extremists' violent campaign of bombings, attacks and abductions. The militant Boko Haram rebels are holding captive 276 teenage students, after abducting them from their boarding school in Chibok, also in northeastern Borno state.

In the attack on Gamboru Ngala the militants sprayed gunfire into the crowds of people at a busy market that was open Monday night when temperatures cool in the semi-desert region, reported *ThisDay* newspaper.

Nigerian federal Senator Ahmed Zannah said the attack lasted about 12 hours, according to the newspaper. The insurgents set homes on fire and gunned down residents who tried to escape from the flames, reported the paper.

No Improvement In Reading, Math

WASHINGTON (AP) — Handing out dismal grades, the Nation's Report Card says America's high school seniors lack critical math and reading skills for an increasingly competitive global economy.

Only about one-quarter are performing proficiently or better in math and just 4 in 10 in reading. And they're not improving, the report says, reinforcing concerns that large numbers of today's students are unprepared for either college or the workplace.

Scores on the 2013 exam in both subjects were little changed from 2009, when the National Assessment of Educational Progress was last given to 12th-graders. The new results, released Wednesday, come from a representative sample of 92,000 public and private school students.

The report follows the just-released and seemingly more encouraging research that U.S. high school graduation rates in 2012 reached 80 percent, a record.

One possible explanation is that lower-performing students who in the past would have dropped out of school are now remaining in the sampling of students who take the exam, said John Easton, acting commissioner of the Education's Department's National Center for Education Statistics.

Bosworth

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The suit is pending, and Bosworth said Wednesday she wouldn't comment beyond the affidavit.

A fifth former Bosworth employee, Dave Baumeister, the former communications coordinator of Preventive Health Strategies, said he was paid everything he was owed. But Baumeister said he left the nonprofit in July 2013 out of concerns that employees were expected to perform work for her campaign. U.S. tax code prohibits nonprofit organizations from participating in political campaigns either for or against a candidate.

Bosworth, 42, founded the mission-based health care nonprofit Preventive Health Strategies in 2011 and opened a private practice medical clinic in Sioux Falls called Meaningful Medicine.

Bosworth reported income of less than \$18,000 from three contracts for the two years 2012 and 2013, and she reported no income for her husband, Chad Haber, in a filing with the Senate Ethics Committee. Rules require candidates to report any candidate or spousal income of more than \$1,000. She also listed a debt of a business line of credit of between \$500,000 and \$1 million, according to the filing.

She has said most of those financial problems stemmed from a drawn-out battle with the South Dakota Board of Medical and Osteopathic Examiners, which had reprimanded her in 2012 for employing a physician assistant who was not licensed.

Bosworth has said that she stood up to the board and paid a price.

Her campaign also has fallen into debt even though Bosworth raised \$772,000 in the first three months of 2014, more than front-runner former Gov. Mike Rounds and the other candidates. But she spent \$674,000, mostly on direct mail fundraising, according to her latest Federal Election Commission report. The campaign has been using Base Connect, a direct mail fundraising company that helps conservative candidates, organizations and political action committees.

Her campaign ended the quarter about \$193,000 in the red.

Bosworth said campaign funds are meant to be spent, not accumulated.

"If we have 1 cent left on Election Day, we messed up," she said. "These supporters don't give me their money for me to store away and use it as a future trust fund."

Most of the contributions came from unlisted donors giving less than \$200 each, and more than 98 percent of the itemized contributions were from out-of-state donors.

Bosworth said the FEC report doesn't show "thousands of donors" from South Dakota who gave small amounts to the campaign.

"The most contribution I've ever given to a campaign is 50 dollars, and those are the people who are attracted to the story, the people who can afford to give 10 and 20 dollars," she said. "And they don't show up on that report."

Putin: Troops Have Pulled Back From Ukraine Border

BY PETER LEONARD AND JIM HEINTZ
Associated Press

DONETSK, Ukraine — Russian President Vladimir Putin said Russia has pulled back its troops from the Ukrainian border and called for Sunday's referendum on autonomy in Ukraine's restive east to be postponed.

There were no immediate signs, however, that either move was truly happening or that they would cool Ukraine's worst crisis in decades. NATO and Washington said they saw no evidence of a Russian pullback and the pro-Russia insurgents behind the referendum haven't agreed to go along with Putin's proposal.

In a Moscow meeting with Swiss President Didier Burkhalter, Putin said Russian troops have been pulled back to their training grounds and locations for "regular exercises," but didn't specify whether those locations were in areas near its border with Ukraine.

A Russian Defense Ministry spokesman declined to say where the troops were now positioned.

But White House spokesman Josh Earnest said the U.S. had "no evidence" of a pullback and NATO chief Anders Fogh Rasmussen told reporters "we have not seen any sign that Russia is withdrawing its troops."

Putin also reiterated Russia's demand that Ukraine's military halt all operations against the pro-Russia activists who have seized government buildings and police stations in at least a dozen towns in eastern Ukraine.

Ukraine launched an offensive late last week to take back the buildings and towns under insurgent control. At least 34 people, including many rebels, have died in that offensive, the government said.

Many had feared that Sunday's vote would be a flashpoint for further violence between the rebels and Ukrainian troops. Insurgents were calling the ballot a vote on giving regions more autonomy — but Kiev authorities feared it could be a pretext for separatists or those who want the region to join Russia.

Russia annexed Ukraine's Black Sea peninsula of Crimea in March after

residents there held a vote and overwhelmingly backed secession.

"We believe that the most important thing is to create direct, full-fledged dialogue between the Kiev authorities and representatives of southeast Ukraine," Putin said. "Because of this, we ask that representatives of southeast Ukraine, supporters of federalization in the country, postpone the May 11 referendum in order to create the necessary conditions for such a dialogue."

A spokesman for the militant group in eastern Ukraine that calls itself the Donetsk People's Republic was quoted by Russia's ITAR-Tass news agency as saying the group would discuss Putin's proposal on Thursday.

However it is unclear how much influence Moscow has with the insurgents. The Kiev government and Western countries allege Russia is fomenting the unrest, but Russia denies it has agents there. Last month, after Russia, Ukraine, the U.S. and the European Union reached a pact calling for Ukrainian militants to disarm, the insurgents in the east flatly rejected it, saying Russia had not negotiated on their behalf.

Many Donetsk residents appear eager to go ahead with the vote.

"That Putin's personal opinion. He's a very wise man, but we have decided to do things our own way: To become the Donetsk Republic," said Ludmila Radchenko, 52, standing in a city square.

If the insurgents go ahead with the referendum, that could bolster Moscow's contention it is not directing the unrest. But it could also anger Western countries and increase the pressure for additional sanctions against Russia.

The referendum has been hastily arranged, with ballot papers being churned out by two clattering photocopy machines. There's been negligible campaigning for it, mostly consisting of graffiti. Many sidewalks have been spray-painted from stencils showing the word "referendum" next to a crossed-out swastika, reflecting the insurgents' contention that the government which took power in Kiev in February is fascist.

"Do you support the act of proclamation of independent sovereignty for the

Donetsk People's Republic?" the referendum asks.

Despite the phrasing, organizers say only after the vote is held will they decide whether they want actual independence, greater autonomy within Ukraine or annexation by Russia.

The head of the insurgents' elections commission was confident Wednesday that the ballot would successfully take place.

"We are certain that people are fully familiar with the issues," Denis Pushilin told The Associated Press.

Ukraine, meanwhile, is holding a nationwide presidential election on May 25. After his meeting with Burkhalter, who also is chairman-in-office of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, Putin said that presidential election was a "step in the right direction" but reiterated Russia's long-standing contention that it should be preceded by constitutional reforms.

The interim government in Kiev says Russia has no business telling it what type of government to set up and has been trying to interfere with the presidential vote for months.

Russia consistently characterizes Ukraine's acting government as putschists; they took power after President Viktor Yanukovich fled to Russia in February after months of protests in which more than 100 people died from sniper fire and in clashes with police. A democratic presidential election, however, could undermine Russia's stance.

In Berlin, a leading Ukrainian presidential candidate said he was prepared to negotiate some decentralization of power as the pro-Russia insurgents in the east have demanded. But Petro Poroshenko, a billionaire chocolate magnate, added that some insurgents in the eastern region understand only force and that restoring law and order was a key priority.

"We should speak to the people living in the east — speak and understand them," said Poroshenko. "(But) for those people who are terrorists, we should find out the right language they understand — and that would be the language of force."

"We should have zero tolerance for terrorists," he added.

Marathon Suspect: Statements Should Be Thrown Out

BY DENISE LAVOIE
AP Legal Affairs Writer

BOSTON (AP) — Lawyers for Boston Marathon bombing suspect Dzhokhar Tsarnaev argued Wednesday that statements he made to authorities after he was arrested should be thrown out because he was questioned for 36 hours in a hospital room while suffering from gunshot wounds and without being told his rights.

The lawyers said in a flurry of pretrial court filings that federal agents began questioning Tsarnaev about 20 hours after he arrived at the hospital in critical condition and his statements can't be considered voluntary.

Federal investigators questioned him days after last year's deadly bombing without formally telling him of his right to a lawyer under a public safety exception allowed

when there's concern about an ongoing threat. But defense attorneys said the questioning continued "despite the fact that he quickly allayed concerns about any continuing threat to public safety, repeatedly asked for a lawyer, and begged to rest." They said his treatment included painkillers that impaired his judgment and increased his susceptibility to pressure.

Tsarnaev was shot and his brother, Tamerlan Tsarnaev, was killed during a gunbattle with police on April 19, 2013, four days after the marathon bombing. His lawyers said he had gunshot wounds to his head, face, throat, jaw, left hand and legs.

The lawyers said his rights also were violated when his appearance in court was delayed to complete the interrogation, during which he told authorities about how the bombs were built and about the brothers' activities before

and after the bombing.

"Agents made clear by word and deed that they would not allow him to see a lawyer until they had finished questioning him," his defense team's filing said.

Also on Wednesday, the defense asked the judge to declare the federal death penalty unconstitutional, citing recent bungled executions and arguing there's mounting evidence innocent people have been executed.

Tsarnaev's lawyers said the U.S. Constitution's protection against cruel and unusual punishment prohibits the application of the death penalty because it's not authorized under Massachusetts law.

They cited "worldwide revulsion over the recurring spectacle of botched executions," including one that left an Ohio inmate snorting and gasping during the 26 minutes it took him to die in January and another that left an Oklahoma

inmate straining to lift his head off a pillow after supposedly being rendered unconscious last month.

The lawyers also asked the judge to bar federal prosecutors from arguing that targeting the crowded athletic event last year is a factor a jury should consider when weighing his possible punishment if he's convicted.

The lawyers said the decision to bomb the marathon shouldn't be an "aggravating factor" in determining whether he should receive the death penalty because prosecutors also argue he committed the offense after substantial planning to cause death and commit an act of terrorism.

"Stated differently, the allegation that Tsarnaev targeted the marathon is simply a more specific statement of the substantial planning allegation," Tsarnaev's lawyers wrote in a court filing.



With Fondest Memories

We remember those who have passed away and are especially dear to us.

On Saturday, May 24th we will publish in print and online at Yankton.net a Memorial Day section devoted to those who are gone but not forgotten.

**Aneta Burrows**
Dec. 30, 1960-Nov. 8, 2002
Your courage and bravery still inspire us all, and the memory of your smile fills us with joy and laughter.
Dan, Ann & Sarab

Select one of the verses below to accompany your tribute.

<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. We hold you in our thoughts and memories forever.2. May God cradle you in his arms, now and forever.3. Forever missed, never forgotten. May God hold you in the palm of His hand.4. Thank you for the wonderful days we shared together. My prayers will be with you until we meet again.5. The days we shared were sweet. I long to see you again in Gods heavenly glory.6. Your courage and bravery still inspire us all, and the memory of your smile fills us with joy and laughter.7. Though out of sight, you'll forever be in my heart and mind.	<ol style="list-style-type: none">8. May the light of peace shine on your face for eternity.9. May God's angels guide you and protect you throughout time.10. You were a light in our life that burns forever in our hearts.11. May God's graces shine over you for all time.12. You are in our thoughts and prayers from morning to night and from year to year.13. We send this message with a loving kiss for eternal rest and happiness.14. May the Lord bless you with His graces and warm, loving heart.15. I have written my own message and it is included.
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Name of deceased _____
Date of birth _____ Date of passing _____
Number of selected verse _____ OR Personal message (25 word limit) _____

Print your name here _____ Phone Number _____
Address/City/State/Zip _____

To remember your loved one in this special way, send \$12.00 per listing, up to 25 word verse and \$5 for photo.

Fill out the form and mail to:
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**Deadline: Friday,
May 16, 2014, 5pm**