

Boko Haram Retakes Nigerian Town

MAIDUGURI, Nigeria (AP) — Boko Haram fighters seized back the border town of Marte in northeastern Nigeria and attacked outlying villages Friday, weeks after the military said it had contained the Islamic extremists in a forest stronghold, an official said.

Deputy Gov. Zannah Umar Mustapha of Borno state also said officials fear hundreds of female suicide bombers have slipped into the state capital, Maiduguri.

They could have used the panic that ensued Wednesday night when hundreds of insurgents tried to attack Giwa Barracks, on the outskirts of Maiduguri, but met fierce resistance from troops who were firing heavy artillery for hours.

Twenty civilians were killed by the military cannon fire, according to Muhammad Gava, a spokesman for a civilian defense group that fights Boko Haram. Another 16 people died, including soldiers and civilian fighters, according to Gava.

It was the first major assault by Boko Haram since a multinational force from neighboring countries joined re-armed Nigerian troops to drive the insurgents out of dozens of towns and villages where they had declared an Islamic caliphate.

The offensive began at the end of January and by mid-March the military and government officials said the main fighting force of the insurgents was hemmed into the vast Sambisa Forest.

Baltimore Prosecutors Seek Gag Order

BALTIMORE (AP) — Baltimore prosecutors are seeking a gag order as they pursue a criminal case against six city officers in the case of Freddie Gray, a 25-year-old man who died a week after suffering a spinal injury while in police custody.

A court document that references the gag order, obtained by The Associated Press, is dated Wednesday. Assistant State's Attorney Antonio Gioia wrote that the gag order motion was mailed to defense attorneys.

Rochelle Ritchie, a spokeswoman for State's Attorney Marilyn Mosby, confirmed Friday the office is seeking a gag order. She declined to provide further details.

A gag order typically prevents attorneys and witnesses from publicly commenting on or releasing information about a particular case.

Mosby announced the charges, which range from second-degree misdemeanor assault to "depraved-heart" murder, in a lengthy news conference one day after receiving an investigative report from police. The May 1 announcement came after more than a week of protests that on two occasions gave way to rioting, prompting Democratic Mayor Stephanie Rawlings-Blake to implement a curfew and Republican Gov. Larry Hogan to declare a state of emergency for the city.

Many Republicans Running For Pres.

SCOTTSDALE, Ariz. (AP) — Never have more than 10 candidates taken the stage for a televised Republican presidential debate. Wish the GOP luck in trying to keep it that way.

With the party's first debate set for August, Republicans must decide to either allow what could become a nationally televised circus act, or figure out how to fairly whittle down a field likely to include eight current or former governors, four senators, two accomplished business executives and a renowned neurosurgeon.

More than a half-dozen contenders have already begun to lobby party officials for access in a debate season that could be unlike any other.

The GOP has an advantage in drawing "one of the most diverse, broad" fields it's ever had, said Saul Anuzis, a former Republican National Committee member from Michigan. "But what if by the first debate we still have 10 to 15 viable candidates? That's going to be a zoo."

Part of the problem is basic math. In a 90-minute debate featuring so many candidates, there would be only enough time for opening and closing statements and two, maybe three questions — with no time left over for the interaction between candidates that makes for an actual debate.

Prime Minister Marries Partner

LUXEMBOURG (AP) — The prime minister of Luxembourg married his partner on Friday, a year after the tiny Roman Catholic nation approved a law allowing same-sex marriage.

Xavier Bettel did so five years after Iceland's prime minister married her partner in the first same-sex wedding of a ruling government leader in Europe.

"I wish for everybody to be as happy as I am, thank you to the Luxembourg people and to everyone, I do not make any distinctions, thank you," Bettel told a crowd of well wishers outside the capital's city hall.

Bettel at first said he wanted to have a very private wedding, but by Friday morning, he had already posted a picture of himself with Belgian partner Gauthier Deste-

nay on his Twitter profile page. The official ceremony at Luxembourg City Hall was held late Friday afternoon.

Bettel, a 42-year-old lawyer, heads the free-market DP liberals, who entered a coalition government with the Socialists and the Greens to end 34 years of Christian Democrat reign in Luxembourg.

BY DENISE LAVOIE

AP Legal Affairs Writer

BOSTON — A jury sentenced Dzhokhar Tsarnaev to death Friday for the Boston Marathon bombing, sweeping aside pleas that he was just a "kid" who fell under the influence of his fanatical older brother.

Tsarnaev, 21, stood with his hands folded, his head slightly bowed, upon learning his fate, sealed after 14 hours of deliberations over three days. It was the most closely watched terrorism trial in the U.S. since the Oklahoma City bombing case two decades ago.

The decision sets the stage for what could be the nation's first execution of a terrorist in the post-9/11 era, though the case is likely to go through years of appeals. The execution would be carried out by lethal injection.

"Now he will go away and we will be able to move on. Justice. In his own words, 'an eye for an eye,'" said bombing victim Sydney Corcoran, who nearly bled to death and whose mother lost both legs.

Karen Brassard, who suffered shrapnel wounds on her legs, said: "We can breathe again."

Three people were killed and more than 260 wounded when Tsarnaev and his brother set off two shrapnel-packed pressure-cooker bombs near the finish line of the race on April 15, 2013. The Tsarnaevs also shot an MIT police officer to death during their getaway.

The 12-member federal jury had to be unanimous for Tsarnaev to get the death penalty. Otherwise, the former college student would

have automatically received a sentence of life in prison with no chance of parole.

In weighing the arguments for and against death, the jurors decided among other things that Tsarnaev showed a lack of remorse. And they emphatically rejected the defense's central argument — that he was led down the path to terrorism by his big brother.

"Today the jury has spoken. Dzhokhar Tsarnaev will pay for his crimes with his life," said U.S. Attorney Carmen Ortiz.

Tsarnaev's father, Anzor Tsarnaev, reached by phone in the Russian region of Dagestan, let out a deep moan upon hearing the news and hung up. Tsarnaev's lawyers had no comment as they left the courtroom.

The attack and the ensuing manhunt paralyzed the city for days and cast a pall over the marathon — normally one of Boston's proudest, most exciting moments — that has yet to be lifted.

With Friday's decision, community leaders and others talked of closure, of relief, of resilience, of the city's Boston Strong spirit.

"Today, more than ever, we know that Boston is a city of hope, strength and resilience that can overcome any challenge," said Mayor Marty Walsh.

Tsarnaev was convicted last month of all 30 charges against him, including use of a weapon of mass destruction. Seventeen of those charges carried the possibility of a death sentence; ultimately, the jury gave him the death penalty on six of those counts.

Tsarnaev's chief lawyer,

death penalty specialist Judy Clarke, admitted at the very start of the trial that he participated in the bombings, bluntly telling the jury: "It was him."

But the defense argued that Dzhokhar was an impressionable 19-year-old led astray by his volatile and domineering 26-year-old brother, Tamerlan, who was portrayed as the mastermind of the plot to punish the U.S. for its wars in Muslim countries.

Tamerlan died days after the bombing when he was shot by police and run over by Dzhokhar during a chaotic getaway attempt.

Prosecutors depicted Dzhokhar Tsarnaev as an equal partner in the attack, saying he was so coldhearted he planted a bomb on the pavement behind a group of children, killing an 8-year-old boy.

To drive home their point, prosecutors cited the message he scrawled in the dry-docked boat where he was captured: "Stop killing our innocent people and we will stop." And they opened their case in the penalty phase with a startling photo of him giving the finger to a security camera in his jail cell months after his arrest.

"This is Dzhokhar Tsarnaev — unconcerned, unrepentant and unchanged," prosecutor Nadine Pellegrin said.

The jurors also heard grisly and heartbreaking testimony from numerous bombing survivors who described seeing their legs blown off or watching someone next to them die.

Killed in the bombing were Lingzi Lu, a 23-year-old

Boston University graduate student from China; Krystle Campbell, a 29-year-old restaurant manager; and 8-year-old Martin Richard, who had gone to watch the marathon with his family. Massachusetts Institute of Technology police Officer Sean Collier was gunned down in his cruiser days later. Seventeen people lost legs in the bombings.

The speed with which the jury reached a decision surprised some, given that the jurors had to fill out a detailed, 24-page worksheet in which they tallied up the factors for and against the death penalty.

The possible aggravating factors included the cruelty of the crime, the killing of a child, the amount of carnage and lack of remorse. The possible mitigating factors included Tsarnaev's age, the influence of his brother, and his turbulent, dysfunctional family.

The jury agreed with the prosecution on 11 of the 12 aggravating factors cited. In weighing the mitigating factors, only three of the 12 jurors found Tsarnaev acted under the influence of his brother.

Tsarnaev did manage to escape a death sentence in the killing of the MIT officer, after prosecutors admitted they do not know which brother pulled the trigger.

Tsarnaev did not take the stand at his trial, and he slouched through most of the case, a seemingly bored look on his face. In his only flash of emotion during the months-long case, he cried when his Russian aunt took the stand.

Obama Vows To Keep Arab Allies Secure

BY BRADLEY KLAPPER

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Charging toward an Iran nuclear agreement, President Barack Obama is assuring Arab allies that they are safe from the threat of an empowered Tehran as he seeks to shore up some of America's most critical security partnerships. However, Obama's claim of winning Arab support for his nuclear diplomacy appears far from certain.

After a rare Camp David summit, the president on Thursday pledged Washington's "ironclad commitment" to the Sunni governments of the Persian Gulf and even spoke of authorizing U.S. military force if their security is endangered by Shiite Iran or anyone else. The United States, he vowed, will "use all elements of power to secure our core interests in the Gulf region, and to deter

and confront external aggression against our allies and partners."

Obama invoked the start of a "new era of cooperation" that would last for decades to come, even as Saudi Arabia and others in the region

are deeply unnerved by the prospect of an accord with Iran that would impose a decade-long freeze on its nuclear program and potentially provide it tens of billions of dollars' worth of relief from international sanctions.

The Sunni governments came to Washington looking for assurances that Obama would pair his diplomatic effort with a broader strategy to push back against Iran's expanding influence in the Middle East.



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