

## Queen Elizabeth II Reigns Supreme

LONDON (AP) — Queen Elizabeth II has reached a major milestone by becoming the longest-reigning monarch in Britain's history.

She passes Queen Victoria, her great-great-grandmother, who was on the throne for 63 years and 7 months.

Prime Minister David Cameron said Wednesday that millions on Britons would celebrate the queen's "historic moment."

"Over the last 63 years, Her Majesty has been a rock of stability in a world of constant change and her selfless sense of service and duty has earned admiration not only in Britain, but right across the globe," Cameron said.

"It is only right that today we should celebrate her extraordinary record, as well as the grace and dignity with which she serves our country."

## Clerk Released After 5 Days In Jail

GRAYSON, Ky. (AP) — The Kentucky county clerk jailed for refusing to issue marriage licenses to gay couples was released Tuesday after five days behind bars, emerging to a tumultuous hero's welcome from thousands of supporters waving large white crosses.

"I just want to give God the glory. His people have rallied, and you are a strong people," Kim Davis told the crowd after stepping outside, her arms raised like a victorious boxer, to the blaring "Rocky"-sequel theme song "Eye of the Tiger."

Her lawyer refused to say whether she would defy the courts again.

"Kim cannot and will not violate her conscience," said Mat Staver, founder of the Liberty Counsel, the Christian law firm representing Davis. As for whether she will issue licenses, Staver said only: "You'll find out in the near future."

The Rowan County clerk whose defiance has made her a hero to many on the religious right walked free after the federal judge who ordered her locked up lifted the contempt ruling against her, saying he was satisfied that her deputies were fulfilling their obligation to grant licenses to same-sex couples in her absence.

## UN Warns Hungary Of More Migrants

BUDAPEST, Hungary (AP) — Leaders of the United Nations refugee agency warned Tuesday that Hungary faces a bigger wave of 42,000 asylum seekers in the next 10 days and will need international help to provide shelter on its border, where newcomers already are complaining bitterly about being left to sleep in frigid fields.

Officials from the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees said it was sending tents, beds and thermal blankets to Hungary's border with Serbia, where for the past two days frustrated groups from the Middle East, Asia and Africa have ignored police instructions to stay put and instead have marched on a highway north to Budapest.

Commissioner Antonio Guterres accused the entire European Union of failing to see the crisis coming or take coordinated action, even though the 28-nation bloc of 508 million people should have enough room and resources to absorb hundreds of thousands of newcomers with ease.

There was needless suffering in the migration crisis "because Europe is not organized to deal with it, because the European asylum system has been extremely dysfunctional and in recent weeks completely chaotic," Guterres said. He told a news conference in Paris that it appeared "clear that if Europe would be properly organized, it would be a manageable crisis."

The EU has struggled, in part, because front-line nations such as Hungary and Greece have not put enough facilities in place to house a human flow averaging 2,000 to 3,000 a day while the vast majority of people try to push deeper into Europe and seek refugee protection in Germany, the nation accepting the greatest number by far.

## Apology Adds Chapter To Controversy

WASHINGTON (AP) — It took three interviews and five days for Hillary Rodham Clinton to say "I'm sorry."

After resisting apologizing for using a personal email account run on a private server to conduct government business as secretary of state, Clinton shifted course Tuesday.

"That was a mistake," she said of her email practice. "I'm sorry about that. I take responsibility," the front-runner for the Democratic presidential nomination said in an interview with ABC News.

Clinton's late-arriving mea culpa came just 24 hours after she insisted in an interview with The Associated Press she didn't need to apologize because "what I did was allowed." That comment came after a sit-down with NBC News on Friday, in which Clinton said only that she was sorry if her actions had caused voters any confusion.

The apology evolution is the latest chapter for an issue that has dogged Clinton's presidential campaign for months. Despite a big fundraising advantage and a slew of endorsements from party leaders, Clinton's standing with voters has slipped — multiple polls show a majority of Americans don't find her honest and trustworthy.

## Wastewater Spills Scar Land

CROSSROADS, N.M. (AP) — Carl Johnson and son Justin are third- and fourth-generation ranchers who for decades have battled oilfield companies that left a patchwork of barren earth where the men graze cattle in the high plains of New Mexico. Blunt and profane, they stroll across a 1 1/2-acre patch of sandy soil — lifeless, save for a scattering of stunted weeds.

Five years ago, a broken pipe soaked the land with as much as 420,000 gallons of oilfield wastewater — a salty and potentially toxic drilling byproduct that can quickly turn fertile land into a dead zone. The leaked brine killed every sprig of grama and bluestem grasses and shinnery shrubs it touched.

For the Johnsons, the spill is among dozens that have taken a heavy toll: a landscape pockmarked with spots where livestock can no longer graze, legal fees running into the tens of thousands and worries about the safety of the area's underground aquifer.

"If we lose our water, that ruins our ranch," Justin Johnson said. "That's the end of the story."

Their plight illustrates a largely overlooked side effect of oil and gas production that has worsened with the past decade's drilling boom: spills of wastewater that foul the land, kill wildlife and threaten freshwater supplies.

## United Airlines CEO Steps Down

United Airlines has abruptly replaced its CEO as federal officials continue to investigate the airline's ties to the former chairman of the agency that operates New York-area airports, including Newark, a key hub for the carrier.

United Continental Holdings Inc. said Tuesday that Jeffery Smisek and two other senior executives had resigned. Oscar Munoz, a railroad executive and head of United's audit committee, was named CEO and president.

Munoz's appointment was so sudden that no pay package had been worked out.

United disclosed earlier this year that the company and some of its executives had received subpoenas from a federal grand jury for information about its dealings with the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey. United said it was co-operating with the government probe and conducting its own internal investigation.

# Pope Speeds Up, Simplifies Process For Marriage Annulments

BY NICOLE WINFIELD

Associated Press

VATICAN CITY — Pope Francis radically reformed the process for annulling marriages Tuesday, overhauling 300 years of church practice by creating a new fast-track annulment and doing away with an automatic appeal that often slowed the process down.

The move, which came a week after he said he was letting all rank-and-file priests grant absolution to women who have had abortions, was further evidence of his desire to make the church more responsive to the needs of ordinary faithful.

The new law on annulments goes into effect Dec. 8, the start of Francis's Holy Year of Mercy, a yearlong jubilee during which the pope hopes to emphasize the merciful side of the church. It will speed up and simplify the annulment process by placing the onus squarely on bishops around the world to determine when a fundamental flaw has made a marriage invalid.

A Catholic needs a church annulment to remarry in the church, and a divorced Catholic who remarries civilly without one is considered an adulterer living in sin and is forbidden from receiving Communion.

The Communion issue is at the center of debate at the upcoming synod of bishops, a three-week meeting that gets underway in October. Progressive bishops favor a process by which these Catholics could eventually have access to the sacrament if they repent; conservatives say there can be no such wiggle room and that church teaching is clear that a marriage is indissoluble.

Catholics have long complained that it can take years to get an annulment, if they can get one at all. Costs can reach into the hundreds or thousands of dollars for legal

and tribunal fees, though some dioceses have waived their fees.

"With this fundamental law, Francis has now launched the true start of his reform," said Monsignor Pio Vito Pinto, the head of the Roman Rota, the church's marriage court. "He is putting the poor at the center — that is the divorced, remarried who have been held at arms' length — and asking for bishops to have a true change of heart."

Reasons for granting annulments vary, including that the couple never intended the marriage to last or that one spouse didn't want children.

The new law also says that "lack of faith" can also be grounds for an annulment, conforming to the belief of Francis and Pope Benedict XVI before him that a sacramental marriage celebrated without the faith isn't really a marriage at all.

Francis' biggest reform involves the new fast-track procedure, which will be handled by the local bishop and can be used when both spouses request an annulment or don't oppose it.

Previously, most people seeking annulments needed to go before a three-judge panel unless a regional bishop's conference gave a bishop permission to hear the case himself or to appoint one judge to handle it. The new law makes that an immediate option, meaning annulments should be easier to obtain in dioceses that don't have enough priests to make up a three-judge panel, which is especially common in poor countries.

The fast-track procedure can also be used when other proof makes a more drawn-out investigation unnecessary, such as medical records indicating that the wife had an abortion, that one spouse hid infertility or some other grave contagious disease from the other, or

that violence was used to coerce a spouse into marriage.

The law calls for the process to be completed within 45 days. The longer, regular process should take no more than a year.

Another reform is the removal of the appeal that automatically took place after the first decision was made, even if neither spouse wanted it. An appeal is still possible, but if one of the sides requests it.

Officials said that the new law is not retroactive: The abolition of the automatic appeal, for example, will only apply to annulment cases decided after Dec. 8.

In the document announcing the new law, Francis insisted that marriages remain indissoluble unions and that the new regulations aren't meant to help dissolve them. Rather, he said, the reform is aimed at speeding up and simplifying the process so that the faithful can find justice.

The overall goal, he said, "is the salvation of souls."

"It is a democratizing move focused on easing the course of reintegration into the church for women, in particular," said Candida Moss, professor of Biblical studies at the University of Notre Dame. "His actions are propelled by compassion and pragmatism: He recognizes the dangers of spousal abuse and the reality that many modern marriages are undertaken without full consideration."

Significantly, the reform places much more importance on the local bishop in handling marriage cases and reducing the need for recourse to the Vatican's own courts — part of Francis' overall reform of the Catholic Church itself to decentralize power back to local bishops, as was the case in the early church.

The reform, which was the result of a yearlong study by canonists, is the second

major initiative Francis has taken in as many weeks that may have reverberations in the United States, which he will visit later this month. The first was the change in rules about granting absolution for abortions.

Nearly half of the total annulment cases in the world come from the United States, thanks in part to its well-organized tribunal system.

The new reforms might increase the U.S. numbers further, though the Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate at Georgetown University has noted that the overall number of annulment cases in the U.S. and globally has dropped, as the world's population ages and the number of marriages celebrated in the church declines.

Already, some conservatives have criticized Francis' abortion initiative as running the risk that some might misinterpret it as a softening on the church's opposition to abortion. Conservatives have also warned that simplifying the annulment procedure could imply the church is making it easier for couples to essentially get a "Catholic divorce."

Francis has long called for the church to be less legalistic and more merciful and understanding of the needs of its flock.

In the document, Francis called for fees to be waived, except for the "just" payment of tribunal personnel. But officials told a press conference it will take time for bishops' conferences to wean themselves off the fees entirely.

Francis has previously quoted his predecessor as Buenos Aires archbishop as saying half of the marriages that are celebrated are essentially invalid because people enter into them not realizing that matrimony is a lifelong commitment.

# Venezuela Expands Anti-Smuggling Crackdown With New Closure

BY FABIOLA SANCHEZ

Associated Press

CARACAS, Venezuela — President Nicolas Maduro expanded an anti-smuggling offensive along Venezuela's frontier with Colombia and ordered the closure of the main border crossing in the country's biggest state.

The announcement late Monday was bound to deepen an ongoing diplomatic crisis with Colombia, which is struggling to absorb thousands of migrants who have fled the crackdown.

Maduro vowed to "liberate" the area subjected to the new border closure.

In just over two weeks, Maduro has closed six crossings and deported about 1,500 Colombians without legal status, blaming such migrants for a surge in crime and contraband along Venezuela's western edge.

Nearly 20,000 other Colombians, some of whom have lived in Venezuela for years, have returned voluntarily, fearing reprisals as reports spread about security forces uprooting migrants and earmarking their homes for demolition.

The flood of returnees has overwhelmed emergency shelters, leading Colombia to warn of a humanitarian crisis that could worsen if more of its estimated 5 million nationals living in Venezuela follow suit.

Colombia President Juan Manuel Santos said Tuesday that he would not be

provoked.

"We will not respond to insults," he said.

Until now, Maduro's offensive had targeted Tachira state across the border from Cucuta, a Boston-size city in Colombia that has long relied on smuggled gas, food and other goods purchased in Venezuela at bargain-base-moment subsidized prices.

In moving his focus north to Zulia state, Maduro is encroaching on a more vital economic hub around the oil metropolis of Maracaibo, Venezuela's second-largest city.

He could also face resistance from hundreds of thousands of Wayuu Indians settled on either side of the border who don't recognize the international division. The tribe has long dominated economic life on the isolated Guajira peninsula, shared by both countries on South America's northern tip, and is heavily involved in smuggling, which they don't consider an illicit act.

Venezuelan authorities said they will respect the Wayuu's traditional nomadism and increase education grant programs even as an additional 3,000 troops are deployed to Zulia.

"They are masters of their own land," Vice President Jorge Arreaza said. "They will be free to move back and forth, just not with contraband."

But members of the indigenous community were already grumbling by Tues-

day afternoon.

"We woke up very sad about the border closure. I don't think this is what we deserve, because all we do is take care of our land," said Wayuu activist Ricardo Fernandez.

Maduro also declared a state of emergency in three frontier towns in the state and said more border crossings could be closed in the coming days. In the same address, he offered to take in 20,000 refugees from the civil war in Syria.

Colombia's government did not immediately respond, but in recent days it has stepped up a diplomatic campaign against the border offensive.

Foreign Minister Maria Angela Holguin met with the United Nations' High Commissioner for Human Rights in Geneva on Monday to denounce what she called a deliberate campaign of scapegoating Colombians for Venezuela's deep-seated economic problems, such as widespread shortages and triple-digit inflation.

On Wednesday she travels to New York to meet

with U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, who last week discussed the crisis with Maduro in China.

Maduro claims to be the target of U.S.-backed conservatives in Colombia bent on toppling his socialist government while turning a blind eye to decades of political and drug-fueled violence in Colombia that has made Venezuela a haven for many of its neighbor's poor.

He repeated an offer to meet with Colombian President Juan Manuel Santos to resolve the crisis.

Santos, who had patched up relations with Venezuela after a dangerous round of saber-rattling along the border in 2008 by his hardline predecessor and the late Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez, said Monday he is open to talks if certain conditions are met.

"I am ready for dialogue but the fundamental rights, the human rights of our compatriots, must never be violated again," Santos said.

That provoked an angry retort from Maduro: "I am the only one who places conditions, because you are the aggressors."

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