

News in brief

Third suspect in slaying of bishop

GUATEMALA CITY (AP) — A third military suspect was arrested Saturday in the 1998 slaying of a Roman Catholic bishop whose office had issued a human rights report critical of the military.

Army guard Jose Obdulio Villanueva was detained in the city of Quezada, about 40 miles east of the capital, police spokesman Gerson Lopez said.

In February 1998, Obdulio had been sentenced to five years in prison for shooting a milkman who had careened into a presidential parade two years earlier.

On April 7, 1998, an appeals court ruled that he could go free if he paid the equivalent of 84 cents for each day he was to serve, or a total of about \$1,500.

Bishop Juan Gerardi was bludgeoned to death in his garage on April 26, 1998, two days after presenting a report blaming the military and pro-government death squads for most of the deaths during Guatemala's 36-year civil war, which ended in 1996.

On Friday, National Civil Police arrested Guatemalan army Capt. Byron Lima Oliva and his father, retired Col. Disrael Lima Estrada, in connection with the slaying and took them under heavy guard to a Guatemala City prison.

At least 40 dead in Indonesia

JAKARTA, Indonesia (AP) — Violence across Indonesia claimed at least 40 lives over the past few days, authorities and news reports said Sunday, as bloodshed continues to plague this sprawling Southeast Asian nation.

Clashes between Muslims and Christians broke out in eastern Indonesia, leaving dozens dead and destroying hundreds of homes. Associated Press Television News footage from the island of Haruku, 1,600 miles east of Jakarta, showed at least 24 bodies lying on the ground.

Several ships could be seen arriving bringing in Christian fighters. No soldiers or police were present, and hundreds of houses and several churches in Haruku and Sameth, the island's two main towns, were on fire. It was impossible to get a precise number of how many people died in the violence.

Local military chief Brig. Gen. Max Tamaela said the fighting started after a Muslim mob attacked and burned a church on Sunday morning.

Scarred by Chechen war, refugee children struggle

SLEPTSOVSKAYA, Russia (AP) — Grammar class at the makeshift school for Chechen refugees starts like it does anywhere in Russia: the children stand, say a polite hello to their teacher and promptly sit down.

Beyond that, very little is the same. The class at the Sputnik camp takes place in a large plastic tent where January temperatures hover around freezing, children study bundled in winter coats and the sound of a plane overhead sends some students diving under their desks in fear.

Many Chechen refugees are determined to bring some normalcy to their children's lives, creating camp schools and trying to help them cope with memories of bombing and death in breakaway Chechnya.

But damp conditions and poor nutrition leave many children sick or weak, while the scars of years of war leave them scared or deeply cynical about the future.

"The children in these refugee camps are spending their lives in war," Lamara Umarava, a psychologist who works with the children at the Sputnik camp in Sleptsovskaya, just west of the Chechen border, said.

"They do not have the experience of life in normal living conditions."

According to the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees, children make up 30 percent to 40 percent of the estimated 240,000 refugees who have fled Chechnya, where the Russian military has been fighting militants since September.

Many of the children also fled Chechnya during the 1994-96 war between Russian troops and Chechen separatists.

Children at the camps do what kids do anywhere: they play tag, they tease, and when there's snow on the ground, they sled down nearby hills or build snowmen.

Some camps have schools. At the Sputnik camp, refugee

Scarred by Chechen war, refugee children struggle

teachers instruct children on Russian grammar, mathematics, Russian literature, English and history.

But many parents do not send their children to school because they do not have winter boots or coats, or for fear they will catch infections from their classmates.

Other children appear to have more on their minds than learning.

Eleven-year-old Zendi Alikhan, meandering alone around a snow-covered field near the tent where his family lives, fled the Chechen capital Grozny after two months of living in a basement to hide from Russian airstrikes. He says he spent part of the time staring at the mangled bodies of several neighbors killed in a bombing raid.

"There was a basement, we sat there with our dead neighbors. One of them didn't have a throat because a piece of a bomb hit it."

— Zendi Alikhan  
Eleven-year-old refugee

He could not remember when he got to the refugee camp he now lives in, called Severny.

Like many children interviewed at refugee camps in Ingushetia, a republic on Chechnya's western border, Alikhan said he is desperately bored, spending his days cutting wood and fetching water.

"It's not interesting at all," 16-year-old Zaurbek Versayev, who has lived in the Sputnik camp for two months, said. "Every day we go cut wood, go look for coal. What else is there to do?"

Doctors said the children are particularly susceptible to illness because they rarely get fruits or vegetables, and that a flu epidemic going through some of the camps has left many bedridden.

"We had 58 come in today, 72 yesterday, and 108 the day before — all under the age of 15," Ilza Khaidara, a doctor from Grozny who works at a clinic set up in a train car at one camp, said.

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Kohl scandal reaches into France

BERLIN (AP) — The web of secret money transfers trapping Germany's conservatives in a financing scandal widened Sunday with allegations that the French government of Francois Mitterrand funneled millions of dollars to support former Chancellor Helmut Kohl's 1994 re-election.

The scandal — which has involved money trading hands in suitcases, arms deals stretching from Canada to Saudi Arabia, and the suicide of a party accountant — took a further bizarre twist Sunday after a fake statement was faxed to news media saying Kohl was ready to name anonymous donors to the Christian Democratic party.

Kohl told the Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung newspaper that the fax was a forgery and reiterated that he would not identify the donors from whom he has admitted soliciting \$1 million that was kept off party books.

"I don't have the intention to make such a statement," Kohl was quoted as saying.

Angela Merkel, party secretary-general, was meeting with senior party leaders Sunday evening to review an audit of the party's finances.

She told reporters that accountants were unable to clarify where \$5.7 million in party money had come from, although \$1 million were believed to be from Kohl's anonymous donors.

The audit was to be made public Monday, but Merkel said it revealed nothing new about the part of the scandal disclosed over the weekend involving Mitterrand, who died in 1996, and the French oil company Elf-Aquitaine.

ARD television reported Saturday that Mitterrand arranged payment of \$15.7 million to the Christian Democrats and that the money was transferred as part of alleged bribes totaling \$44 million paid by Elf-Aquitaine for its 1992 purchase of the former East German Leuna refinery.

The alleged bribes have long been the subject of investigation by Swiss and French prosecutors.

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— Former Chancellor Helmut Kohl

influenced government decisions under Kohl, who was chancellor from 1982-98, and he also is the subject of a criminal investigation.

Kohl stepped down as honorary chairman of the Christian Democratic party last week under pressure from party leaders who demanded he identify the donors.

Some party officials have even hinted of possible legal action against Kohl to compel him to reveal the donors.

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