

South African government promises reform

JOHANNESBURG, South Africa -- The National Party government promised reform Thursday after suffering heavy losses in an election accompanied by protests and political violence in which 25 people were reported killed.

If the death toll is confirmed, it would be the highest in a 24-hour period since 69 blacks were shot to death during a peaceful protest in Sharpeville township in 1960.

In Wednesday's white parliamentary election, the Nationalists got less than 50 percent of the vote for the first time since 1953. They lost nearly a quarter of their seats to an anti-apartheid party and to a far-right group that favors strict racial segregation.

Police used shotguns, tear gas and whips on anti-election protesters in black and mixed-race townships outside Cape Town.

Essa Moosa and Associates, a prominent Cape Town law firm, said 25 people were killed Wednesday night and early Thursday in seven townships on the sprawling Cape Flats. Activists blamed most of the killings on police.

Desmond Tutu, the black Anglican archbishop, said 23 people were killed and "we expect the numbers of the dead to grow." The newspaper Grassroots said it had confirmed 15 of the bodies were in a mortuary.

South African Press Association, an independent news agency, said the Cape Flats resembled "a war zone . . . as residents danced around dozens of burning barricades blocking streets in the area and police fired repeatedly at groups of youths."

Violence resumed Thursday afternoon when police with shotguns opened fire on dancing and chanting teen-agers in the mixed-race Lavender Hill township, said a journalist at the scene. Four people were reportedly killed in the township the night before.

The Rev. Allan Boesak, a prominent activist, said the presidency of F.W. de Klerk "now sits in a pool of blood."

"I don't know how people can become vaguely excited about these elections when . . . the man with a new vision has allowed this kind of massacre to take place," Boesak said.

The outlawed African National Congress, the main black group fighting white rule, said from Harare, Zimbabwe: "The elections . . . were a farce and irrelevant to the ANC and the oppressed majority of South Africa."

De Klerk described the election result as "a clear mandate" for his party's gradual political reforms, which envision bringing blacks into the national government on a limited basis within five years.

"Seventy percent of the whites voted for parties favoring renewal and reform . . . and granting political rights," he said, linking the National Party with the liberal-minded Democrats.

He now is acting president. An electoral college is expected to give him a full five-year term next week.

De Klerk said emphasis must be "on intensive dialogue, and hopefully from that must flow real negotiations" with blacks.

The Mass Democratic Movement, which organized a nationwide defiance campaign in the past several weeks, said about 3 million people joined a general strike Wednesday. It claimed "more people participated in our protest action against the racist elections than voted."

Aoun asks for U.S. help

BEIRUT, Lebanon -- Gen. Michel Aoun said Thursday that U.S. foreign policy is "biased and shortsighted," then asked American help in what the Christian leader calls the war of liberation against Syrian troops in Lebanon.

Aoun said the U.S. withdrawal of its last diplomats Wednesday was based on "rumors, false suppositions and unconvincing reasons."

He likened the 6-month-old battle between his 20,000 Christian soldiers and a Moslem alliance led by the 40,000 Syrians to what Americans' "forefathers did . . . 200 years ago" in the Revolutionary War.

Syrians and Christians exchanged artillery fire for five hours before dawn Thursday and police reported two dead and seven wounded.

The U.S.-trained general said he would welcome the return of Ambassador John McCarthy and other American diplomats to Lebanon only if Washington recognized his Christian Cabinet as the legitimate government.

His government competes for power with a Moslem Cabinet led by acting Premier Salim Hoss. McCarthy, who had been in Lebanon since the rival regimes were created a year ago, avoided taking sides by not presenting his credentials to either.



Andy Manhart/Daily Nebraskan

Navy: Hartwig 'most likely' caused blast

WASHINGTON -- The Navy said Thursday that gunner's mate Clayton Hartwig "most likely" caused the explosion that killed 47 sailors aboard the USS Iowa by shoving a detonator between gunpowder bags in one of the battleship's huge guns.

The formal report on the explosion, the worst naval disaster since the Vietnam War, said the exact cause cannot be pinpointed since the sailors close enough to see what was going on, including Hartwig, were all killed in the fiery blast.

However, Rear Adm. Richard Milligan, presenting the official conclusions at a Pentagon briefing, pointed out that most evidence "pointed to Hartwig, whose job would have put him closest to the gun."

He cited an FBI psychological profile of Hartwig "with the opinion that he took his own life and hoped it looked like an accident."

Milligan said Hartwig was a "loner" and a man with "low self-esteem" who had a series of male "principal friends" throughout his life. But the admiral and other military briefers said "there is no substantive proof" that Hartwig was homosexual "and there is no mention of that in the report."

After more than four months of investigation, the Navy concluded, "The explosion was most probably caused by an intentional act. The weight of evidence indicates that some type of detonation device was deliberately placed between the powder bags being rammed into the breech of the center gun."

As evidence, the investigators cited "foreign material" found in the gun barrel.

"The most likely person with the access, knowledge and possible motivation to accomplish this act has been identified as Gunner's Mate 2nd Class Clayton M. Hartwig, U.S. Navy, the center gun captain in turret H at the time of the explosion," the Navy said.

Medellin 'wizard' comes to trial

ATLANTA -- The reputed financial wizard of the Medellin cocaine cartel arrived under guard at a tiny, out-of-way airport before sunrise Thursday, the first of Colombia's "extraditables" brought to the United States for trial.

The extradition of Eduardo Martinez Romero, an alleged money-launderer for the drug cartel that is believed to supply 80 percent of America's cocaine, came days after President George Bush declared war on Latin America's cocaine barons.

Martinez, 36, was put on a Drug Enforcement Administration plane in Bogota on Wednesday night. He arrived at 4 a.m. outside Atlanta at Charlie Brown Airport, an airfield used mostly by private planes, and was whisked to court by helicopter.

Hours later, after the government obtained an interpreter for him, he appeared before U.S. Magistrate Joel M. Feldman and told him he speaks only Spanish and does not fully comprehend the money-laundering charges against him.

Feldman postponed arraignment until Monday and ordered Martinez held without bail at an undisclosed site. Defense attorney Ed Garland said even he had not been told where Martinez was being held.

The Medellin cartel's reputed money man is on the United States' list of so-called "extraditables," Colombia's most important drug kingpins.

Spire says he won't run again

LINCOLN -- Attorney General Robert Spire announced Thursday he will not seek re-election.

In explaining his decision to leave office, Spire said, "rotation in elective office is good. The people are best served by frequent injection of fresh blood into public positions."

He said he would best address critical justice issues such as drug abuse and prisoner rehabilitation in the remainder of his term if he isn't also campaigning.

In a brief interview before his news conference, Spire, a Republican, said he hasn't decided his future plans.

"It has been a great pleasure and a great honor to serve the people of Nebraska. The opportunity to serve as attorney general has presented me with many rewarding challenges and with the opportunity as well to work with some really outstanding, really wonderful people," he said.

Don Stenberg is a candidate for the GOP nomination. Lancaster County Attorney Mike Heavican also has indicated that he soon will be in the race.

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Don't miss out on the greatest entertainment value of the summer. This Sunday, September 10, after 4 p.m., admission to the Nebraska State Fair is free (excluding parking). Four o'clock also marks the start of Last Blast on the midway where just \$8 buys you unlimited rides on Murphy's Blue Grass Carnival until closing. Runza Fun: Present Runza french fry or onion ring sacks and save one coupon per ride on the midway. Offer good daily; limit one coupon discount per ride.



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