

## Investigator: Suharto son-in-law admits wrongdoing in kidnappings

JAKARTA, Indonesia (AP) — A general who is the son-in-law of former President Suharto has admitted wrongdoing in the kidnapping of dozens of political activists, a military investigator said today.

It remains unclear whether Lt. Gen. Prabowo Subianto gave the order to troops under his command to abduct opponents of Suharto.

A military panel is investigating Prabowo, once a fast-rising star in the military whose career was sidelined by the downfall in May of his father-in-law.

Investigators have arrested 10 members of Indonesia's special forces, alleging they were involved in the kidnapping of more than two dozen activists in 1997 and earlier this year. Fourteen people remain missing.

Those that have been released said they were abducted, tortured and questioned about their politi-

cal activities. Prabowo was in charge of the special forces at the time.

In testimony this week, Prabowo repeated an earlier pledge to take responsibility for the kidnappings if his troops were found guilty, said army chief of staff Gen. Subagyo Hadisiswoyo, who heads the tribunal.

"Prabowo has admitted wrongdoing, and will take responsibility," Subagyo said.

Subagyo did not say whether the troops accused of kidnapping were under Prabowo's command at the time.

Suharto resigned amid riots and student protests in May. Shortly thereafter, Prabowo was transferred to head a military college. He has been suspended pending the investigation.

Under new President B.J. Habibie, the military has pledged to pursue those implicated in human rights abuses.

## Nebraska Methodists react to ruling on gay weddings

OMAHA (AP) — While opinions remain divided on whether homosexual weddings should be performed in United Methodist churches, supporters of the man who may have sparked it all said the battle is only beginning.

The United Methodist Church's Judicial Council, considered the church's supreme court, ruled Tuesday that the church rule against same-sex weddings is a law, not a guideline. Pastors could be reprimanded or defrocked under the law, which takes effect immediately.

The controversy started last year in Omaha when the Rev. Jimmy Creech performed a wedding for two lesbians at the city's largest Methodist church. Creech was acquitted by a church jury in March of violating church law but he was not reappointed as pastor of First United Methodist Church in Omaha. He has since moved to North Carolina.

Creech told the Lincoln Journal Star in a phone interview that he feels the ruling is "evil."

"It's still an unjust and, I think, evil decision in the impact on people who are lesbian or gay," he said from Ocracoke Island, N.C.

Creech, who now makes his living cleaning cottages, said supporters of same-sex unions would organize to change the wording of the church's social principles. In the meantime, he said he thought

pastors who felt strongly about the issue should defy the ruling.

"It is a sad day for the United Methodist Church. I am grieving for the United Methodist Church," Creech said. "I am encouraging pastors to go ahead and celebrate a covenant ceremony in defiance to this ruling."

Nebraska Bishop Joel Martinez, who removed Creech from the Omaha church, praised the Judicial Council's decision.

"All ministers in the covenant of ordained ministry in the United Methodist Church now have clear direction on this matter," Martinez said.

"I continue to urge all United Methodists in Nebraska to be respectful in dialogue and prayerful in attitude toward all others who may hold opposing views on this matter."

Mel Semrad, a spokesman for church members who left the Omaha congregation in protest over the wedding, lauded the decision Tuesday. Semrad and about 450 others are working to start their own Methodist church in Omaha, saying they believe the Bible and church tradition do not allow gay weddings.

"First of all I think it reaffirms to the greater population of United Methodism that their beliefs in what United Methodism is (are) still real," he said. "... in this case individuals cannot rewrite nor redo the Book of

Discipline based on their own agendas."

The Book of Discipline contains United Methodist church law. There has been disagreement over whether wording in the Book of Discipline's Social Principles section that forbids homosexual marriage is a guideline or a law.

Mike McClellan, an Omaha attorney and member of First United Methodist, said he does not agree with the Judicial Council's decision. He called the decision a political one, made under pressure from Methodist bishops.

"I think that they've just really made an unfortunate decision," he said. "More than anything it just sends a bad message to gays and lesbians."

"It's difficult to convince (gays and lesbians) to be a part of our churches ... when the institution itself sends out such awful messages to them, and hateful messages."

The Rev. Charlotte Abram, new associate pastor of First United Methodist in Omaha, said she was disappointed by the ruling.

"First United Methodist Church will continue to work toward the time when the United Methodist Church will be a place where there is equality for all God's children, including gay men and lesbians," she said.

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## Congo rebels, government in loyalty fight

KINSHASA, Congo (AP) — There are three war fronts in the Congo.

Rebels and government loyalists are battling in the east and west for territory, but on the airwaves and in daily newspapers, a war is also being waged for the hearts and minds of the people.

The rebels claim sweeping gains in their march toward Kinshasa; the government says it is retaking lost ground and will

drive all the way to Kigali, the capital of its rival and neighbor, Rwanda. Somewhere in between lies the truth.

Searching for answers, an envoy from Zambia began an investigation Wednesday into charges by President Laurent Kabila that Rwanda and Uganda are aiding rebels in a drive to topple Congo's government. Both neighbors have denied Kabila's accusations.

Zambian government minister Eric Siluwamba said he also

hoped to open a dialogue between Congo and Rwanda to help ease tensions between the feuding nations.

Congo's relations with Rwanda have been deteriorating throughout Kabila's 14 months of rule, and last month he expelled Rwandan soldiers who helped him take power in the central African nation. The expulsion prompted ethnic Tutsi rebels in eastern Congo, who have close

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