

Nigerian Court Throws Out Sheikh Zakzaky's Suit



Protesters in the Nigerian city of Kano, pictured in August 2016, demand the release of their leader Sheikh Ibrahim Zakzaky.

ABUJA (Dispatches) — A Nigerian court has thrown out a suit brought by a prominent Shia cleric against the military for human rights violations, lawyers in the case told AFP.

Ibrahim Zakzaky was seeking two billion naira (\$5.6 million) in damages over clashes with troops in 2015 that left some 350 of his followers dead in the northern city of Zaria.

The cleric himself was injured and his been in custody ever since. Three of his children were killed and his house was destroyed.

Lawyer Dari Bayero, representing the military, said the case in Kano was struck out for abuse of process, "as the

same suit was determined by another federal high court in Abuja".

"The court said the plaintiff (Zakzaky) cannot sue in piecemeal on the same issue at different courts but should consolidate their case in one court," he added.

But Zakzaky's lawyer, Haruna Magashi, argued the two cases were fundamentally different and they were studying the judgment before deciding whether to appeal.

"The case before the Abuja federal high court pertains to illegal detention without trial of my client by the DSS (Department of State Services)," he said.

"This particular one is about enforcement of human rights, which by law can

only be filed at a court within whose jurisdiction the crime was committed."

Zakzaky, who leads the Islamic Movement of Nigeria (IMN), has spent nearly 18 months in custody since the clashes on December 14, 2015.

A public inquiry in Kaduna state was told in April last year that nearly 350 IMN supporters were buried in a mass grave, backing up similar claims from human rights groups.

Zakzaky was shot and injured, leaving him partly paralyzed and blind in one eye.

Last December, an Abuja court called the detention of Zakzaky and his followers illegal and unconstitutional and imposed a 45-day deadline for their release.

Meanwhile, 100 IMN members who were arrested during the unrest in 2015 are standing trial for the alleged murder of a soldier killed in the violence.

In December 2016, Human Rights Watch slammed the massacre of the Shias and the Nigerian forces, whom it held responsible for the December 2015 attacks.

In April 2016, UK-based rights group Amnesty International published evidence revealing how the Nigerian military had burned people alive, razed buildings, and secretly dumped victims' bodies in mass graves in the December 2015 deadly assaults.

Jets Fly Near North Korean Border in Provocation



This handout photo taken on July 8, 2017 shows the B-1B Lancer (top) flying during a South Korea-U.S. joint live fire drill.

SEOUL (Dispatches) — U.S. bombers carried out a rare live fire drill in South Korea Saturday, flying close to the DMZ in a show of force, the South's defense ministry said.

The exercise by two B-1B Lancers, flown from Andersen Air Base in Guam, was part of a 10-hour mission with South Korean and Japanese fighter jets in response to a "series of increasingly escalatory actions by North Korea including the intercontinental ballistic missile" on Tuesday, U.S. Pacific Air Forces said.

South Korea's Yonhap news

agency said the long-range heavy bombers flew close to the tense and heavily militarized land border with the North before turning back.

Four U.S. and South Korean jet fighters joined the live fire drill, which was conducted at a range in Yeongwol County, some 80 kilometers (50 miles) south of the inter-Korean border, the South's air force said.

The long-range heavy aircraft each dropped a 2,000-pound (900-kilogram) laser-guided bunker-busting smart bomb, Yonhap said.

The U.S. statement said the B-1Bs released "inert" weapons at the Pilsung Range.

The drill simulated the two U.S. bombers destroying enemy ballistic missile batteries and South Korean jets mounting precision strikes against underground enemy command posts, the South's air force said.

En route back to Guam, the B-1Bs flew and integrated with Japanese fighter jets over the East China Sea, U.S. Pacific Air Forces said in a press statement.

North Korea on Tuesday test-fired an intercontinental ballistic missile for the first time, an apparent game-changer in its confrontation with Washington over its nuclear and missile programs.

U.S. and South Korean soldiers fired ballistic missiles simultaneously in a drill Wednesday, simulating an attack on the North's leadership "as a strong message of warning," the South's military said at the time.

The U.S. Missile Defense Agency said Friday it would soon test an anti-ballistic missile system in Alaska, days after the North demonstrated its arsenal was capable of striking parts of Alaska with the ICBM test.

At Least Seven Killed in Kashmir Violence

MUZAFFARABAD/SRI-NAGAR (Reuters) — Seven people were killed on Saturday in the disputed Kashmir region in cross-border shelling by both Pakistan and India, officials on both sides of the frontier said.

The violence occurred as protesters clashed with police in Indian-controlled Kashmir as they marked the first anniversary of the death of Burhan Wani, a militant killed by the army after urging the region's mainly Muslim population to rise up against Indian forces.

Indian authorities on Friday shut down the internet in Kashmir and sealed off his home town after Wani's supporters said they would stage demonstrations to mark the anniversary.

On Saturday a Reuters witness saw protesters wearing face masks throwing stones at police in down-

town Srinagar, the summer capital of the region. Police retaliated with teargas and stones thrown using slingshots.

Five people died on Pakistan's side of the disputed border and 10 were wounded in cross-border shelling, local police officials told Reuters.

Pakistan's government said it summoned India's Deputy High Commissioner J.P. Singh over what it called "unprovoked ceasefire violations".

The Indian army's defense spokesman said two civilians were killed on its side of the frontier and two injured due to shelling by Pakistani troops. The army responded in kind to the Pakistani shelling, he said.

The South Asian neighbors have fought two of their three wars since independence in 1947 over Mus-

lim-majority Kashmir, which they both claim in full but rule in part.

India blames Pakistan for pushing in militants from its part of Kashmir to carry out attacks, a charge denied by Islamabad.

India has been struggling to restore normality in Kashmir, deploying thousands more soldiers after Wani's killing appeared to breathe new life into a 28-year armed revolt that had ebbed, with little international attention.

A Pakistan-based Kashmiri militant commander, whom the United States last week added to its list of global terrorists, had called for a strike on Saturday to mark Wani's killing.

Syed Salahuddin's United Jihad Council, an umbrella body of anti-India militants based in Pakistan-held Kashmir, has vowed to continue its struggle to liberate Kashmir.

U.S. Gravely Isolated at G20 Summit



G20 leaders pose in Hamburg, with President Emmanuel Macron of France talking with U.S. President Trump at the left.

HAMBURG (Dispatches) — For years the United States was the dominant force and set the agenda at the annual gathering of the leaders of the world's largest economies.

But on Friday, when President Trump met with 19 other leaders at the Group of 20 conference, he found the United States isolated on everything from trade to climate change, and faced with the prospect of the group's issuing a statement on Saturday that lays bare how the United States stands alone.

Chancellor Angela Merkel of Germany, the host of the meeting, opened it by acknowledging the differences between the United States and the rest of the countries. While "compromise can only be found if we accommodate each other's views," she said, "we can also say, we differ."

Merkel also pointed out that most of the countries supported the Paris accord on climate change, while Trump

has abandoned it. "It will be very interesting to see how we formulate the communiqué tomorrow and make clear that, of course, there are different opinions in this area because the United States of America regrettably" wants to withdraw from the pact, she said.

Trump has portrayed himself as a nationalist, a unilateralist and a protectionist. What recent events have underscored, though — and especially at the G-20 — is that no nation is today large or powerful enough to impose rules on everyone else. In advancing his views, Trump has alienated allies and made the United States seem like its own private island.

But as Trump contemplates protectionism, Europe and Japan reached a landmark free trade agreement this week. Mexico and China, two of the United States' largest trading partners, have been mulling their own deal. The world is moving ahead regardless.

London Becomes Center of Modern Slavery



Construction work is carried out on the Elizabeth Tower, commonly known as Big Ben, in London on July 4, 2017.

LONDON (Dispatches) — London is a hotspot of modern slavery, with workers in hotels, restaurants and on construction sites at particular risk of exploitation, said the head of the Metropolitan police's anti-slavery unit.

Modern slavery cases surged in the first half of this year to about 820 by the end of June, compared to about 1,013 in the whole of 2016, Detective Inspector Phil Brewer told the Thomson Reuters Foundation.

There are an estimated 13,000 victims of forced labor, sexual exploitation and domestic servitude in Britain, according to government data.

One of the biggest challenges for the police is to make sure every officer in the force of 30,000 understands and reacts appropriately to modern slavery cases, Brewer said.

He said the police had faced criticism because officers had treated potential victims as suspects, so London's police now "massively relies" on relationships with charities and advocacy organizations to ensure swift support for victims.

Under the "county lines" crime

model, for example, young urban gang members are compelled and threatened to deal drugs in more rural areas. Some of these young people are now being referred as victims, a number that Brewer expects to grow.

Under the "county lines" crime model, for example, young urban gang members are compelled and threatened to deal drugs in more rural areas. Some of these young people are now being referred as victims, a number that Brewer expects to grow.

Police also needed to have much more "grown-up conversations" with companies that find modern slavery in their supply chains, to calm their fears that reporting cases would result in them being prosecuted.

"There's not really been any conversation about how companies can actually interact with policing. There's probably some reassurance that we need to do, that if you come to us and say we found this, it won't compromise your position," he said.



TRIPOLI (Dispatches) — Libyan coast guards rescued about 85 refugees off the shore east of Tripoli on Saturday but about 40 more refugees were believed to be missing, a coast guard officer said.

The refugees were rescued about six miles (10 km) north-west of the town of Garabulli after fishing boats spotted them at sea, said Muammar Mohamed Milad, a local coast guard official. "Due to the heavy load on the rubber boat, the wooden base got broken and it started sinking," said Milad. "According to the survivors about 40 others are missing, including seven children," he said. The body of one woman was had already been recovered.

LONDON (Reuters) — The firefighters who battled an inferno at a London apartment block that killed at least 80 people last month were hindered by equipment failings including the lack of a high ladder, the BBC reported on Saturday.

More than 200 firefighters and 40 engines were sent to the 24-storey Grenfell Tower on June 14, rescuing 65 people from the devastated building. But the BBC said there were radio problems and a shortage of "extended duration" breathing apparatus, which allow firefighters to work for longer. A high ladder, which might have given the fire crews a better chance of stopping the blaze from engulfing the building, did not arrive for more than 30 minutes.

HAMBURG (AFP) — For a moment at the G20 summit on Saturday the United States was represented by another Trump, when the president's daughter Ivanka took a seat at the table of world leaders.

The 35-year-old former fashion model sat around the table with Xi Jinping, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, Angela Merkel and Theresa May, diplomats and the White House confirmed. The incident fuelled longstanding allegations of nepotism against the U.S. leader, who has put family members in top White House positions. A White House official told AFP that Ivanka had been at the back of the room but "briefly joined the main table when the president had to step out."

CAIRO (AFP) — Egypt held funerals on Saturday for at least 21 soldiers killed in an attack by Daesh in the restive Sinai Peninsula, officials said.

The attack on Friday was one the deadliest against the military in a militant insurgency that has killed hundreds of policemen and soldiers in the past four years. Police and provincial officials said 21 bodies had arrived in the mainland for funerals in 11 provinces. The militants attacked several checkpoints with car bombs and heavy gunfire in a coordinated assault, for which Daesh later claimed responsibility in a statement. The military said it killed 40 of the assailants.

MILAN (AP) — Italian firefighters say eight bodies have been pulled from the rubble of a five-story apartment building that partially collapsed in a seaside town south of Naples.

The work of digging through the debris for victims ended Saturday morning, more than 24 hours after the residential building along a railway line suddenly collapsed. About 80 firefighters worked through the night with diggers, drills and by hand to locate the victims. The cause remained under investigation, but authorities say it may be linked to renovation work on the building, located along the Naples-Salerno railway line in the town of Torre Annunziata.