

Top Stories

King Fahd of Saudi Arabia announced dead



BREAKINGNEWS

King Fahd of Saudi Arabia has now been confirmed dead by various sources. Fahd suffered a stroke in 1995, and his half-brother, Crown Prince Abdullah, had acted as the de-facto regent of the country since then. On 27 May 2005, the Saudi government announced that the king had been hospitalised. He remained in hospital until his death.

Burundian Hutu extremists have killed 300 civilians in the last two months



BREAKINGNEWS

The Burundian Hutu-extremist group Palipehutu-FNL (commonly known as FNL), has killed 300 civilians in the last two months, according to local sources. Burundi's Radio Publique Africain has reported the discovery of three mass graves in the provinces of Bubanza, and Bujumbura-Rurale - an FNL stronghold.

Featured story

Serbian goal keeper debuts in Croatian football club Rijeka



A goal keeper from Serbia and Montenegro, Dragan Žilić, made his league debut for Croatian football club Rijeka against Cibaliija. Žilić's appearance caused

disturbance among some of Rijeka's fans, Armada, who did not approve of having a Serbian player in their outfit.

Wikipedia Current Events

- One person has been killed and another injured in an explosion on a Russian nuclear-powered submarine in dock for decommissioning.

Wikipedia Current Events

- Leaked communications between two U.S. military prosecutors reveal internal doubts about the military commission system established to try Guantanamo Bay detainees. In separate emails, the prosecutors allege that the commission system is rigged in favour of the prosecution and that the cases being pursued are "marginal". In Australia, the Australian Government came under renewed pressure to withdraw its support for the commissions, under which Australian citizen David Hicks would be tried.
- Vice-President John Garang of Sudan, a central figure in the new peace deal ending the Second Sudanese Civil War, is reported dead with 13 other people in a aircraft crash near the Uganda-Sudan border.
- King Fahd of Saudi Arabia has died in a hospital at the age of 83. It was believed that he was in poor health and entered the hospital on May 27 with acute pneumonia. Crown Prince Abdullah, who had been effective regent for years, accedes to the throne. Defence Minister Prince Sultan will be the new Crown Prince.
- New European Union directive banning tobacco advertising comes into effect
- President Bush circumvents the Senate after a five-month impasse to appoint John Bolton as the United States Ambassadors to the United Nations.

Three battalions of the Royal Irish Regiment to disband as part of NI peace process



The Camp Flag of the Royal Irish Regiment.

The General Officer Commanding Northern

Ireland, Lieutenant-General Sir Redmond Watt, has confirmed that the Royal Irish Regiment (RIR) — one of only two remaining fully Irish infantry regiments in the British Army — is to have its three 'home service' battalions disband on 1 August 2007, affecting some 3,000 soldiers of the regiment. It comes after the Provisional IRA declared that their armed campaign against the British is over.

The RIR is one of the largest regiments in the British Army, and once consisted of eleven battalions, formed by the amalgamation of the Royal Irish Rangers and the Ulster Defence Regiment in 1992. It now numbers five battalions: one regular (1 RIR); one territorial (Royal Irish Rangers); and three 'home service'.

The 'home service' battalions consist mostly of part-time volunteers who can only serve in Northern Ireland with the main objective of supporting the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI). Their existence will end on the same day as Operation Banner — the Army's support of the PSNI.

Lieutenant General Watt said in a statement: "With the end of Operation Banner there will be no military requirement for the Home Service battalions and they will disband. The 1st Battalion, The Royal Irish Regiment and the Royal Irish elements of the Territorial Army will continue the traditions of the Regiment."

With the IRA's declaration, the British Armed Forces have already begun to drawdown its garrison in Northern Ireland, envisaged to be reduced to just 5,000 troops by 2007, from its current 10,000. A number of observation posts and bases are already being dismantled.

Unlike much of the British Army, the RIR had been unaffected by the restructuring of the British Armed Forces that began earlier this year.

The move has been welcomed by Nationalists, while Unionists have criticised

it. The DUP leader, Ian Paisley, has described government plans as "dishonest and dangerous" and that it was a "surrender to the IRA".

Sudan's Vice President killed in helicopter crash

John Garang, recently sworn in as Vice President of the Sudan, was confirmed dead after his helicopter disappeared yesterday. Sudanese state television initially reported him to be alive but it now appears Mr. Garang died after his helicopter crashed.

Garang became Vice President in a historic deal, which ended the southern rebellion after 20 years of fighting. The deal created a government of national unity, giving hope to many that problems endemic to the region, including the Janjaweed militia in Darfur, could finally be solved and that the Muslim north could come to liveable terms with the Christian south.

Garang was making an official trip to Uganda when bad weather struck; his helicopter had not arrived at its destination and was out of contact leading many to fear the worst.

The BBC reports that "large-scale" rioting has broken out in the Sudanese capital Khartoum, with supporters of Mr. Garang battling armed police. Disturbances are also reported in the south of the country. Some southerners believe that the Sudanese authorities were behind the crash, according to USA Today, which draws parallels with the shooting down of a plane carrying Rwanda's President Habyarimana in 1994. Habyarimana's assassination helped trigger Rwanda's infamous genocide, recently portrayed in the movie "Hotel Rwanda".

Garang's party, the Sudan People's Liberation Movement, has appealed for calm, insisting that his death was an accident.

In a press release published on the website AllAfrica.com, Uganda's President Museveni appeared to be keeping an open mind about the circumstances of the crash, which he says took place on the Ugandan-Sudanese border. "The helicopter was a recently overhauled executive helicopter that has served us well for the last 8 Years", he is quoted as saying, detailing a number

of technical improvements recently made to the craft. In the same statement, Museveni announces the creation of a panel of experts to investigate the crash. "We have also approached a certain foreign government to rule out any form of sabotage or terrorism", he says.

King Fahd of Saudi Arabia announced dead



King Fahd (right) meeting with George H. W. Bush in 1990.

It has been confirmed that King Fahd bin Abdul Aziz of Saudia Arabia has died.

Fahd suffered a stroke in 1995, and his half-brother, Crown Prince Abdullah, had acted as the de-facto regent of the country.

On May 27, the Saudi government announced that the king had been hospitalized. He remained until his death Monday.

Fahd succeeded King Khalid after being Crown Prince and First Deputy Prime Minister, a position he held since 1975.

Adbullah will be crowned as king in a later ceremony, while Minister of Defence and Aviation Prince Sultan bin Abdul Aziz has been named the new Crown Prince.

Fahd was the eleventh son of the founder of the Saudi kingdom, King Ibn Saud, and the fifth king of the modern kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

Bush appoints John Bolton United States' ambassador to the United Nations



John R. Bolton (file)

In a televised press statement at 14:00 UTC today, President of the United States George W. Bush announced that he was appointing John R. Bolton to the position of the United States' ambassador to the United Nations.

Stating that Mr. Bolton had received support from "a majority of Senators", but had been "unfairly denied the up-or-down vote that he deserved" by the "delaying tactics of a few", Mr. Bush announced that the post had stood vacant for long enough during what he termed "a war", and that he was "exercising his constitutional authority" to make the appointment.

"This post is too important to leave vacant any longer, especially during a war and a vital debate about U.N. reform," Bush said during an announcement in the Roosevelt Room of the White House. Bolton appeared with him and spoke briefly. "I am profoundly grateful and deeply humbled," Bolton said. "It will be a distinct privilege to be an advocate for America's values and interests at the U.N."

The President can make an appointment without the approval of the Senate while the Congress is in recess, but the term of such a "recess appointment" expires at the end of the Congressional session. The next session begins January 3, 2007.

The move comes despite a letter to the President last week saying that Mr. Bolton was "not truthful" while answering questions before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in March, and should not be given a recess appointment. The New York Times reports the letter was signed by 36 senators -- 35 Democrats and one Independent.

Some senators, including Republicans, have raised questions regarding Mr. Bolton's history of criticizing the United Nations, his treatment of subordinates, and over charges that he has tried to influence intelligence assessments to conform to his views, the Times reports.

During confirmation hearings, Republican Senator George Voinovich described Bolton as "the poster child of what someone in the diplomatic corps should not be." Because of Voinovich's opposition, Bolton's nomination was sent to the floor of the

Senate without a recommendation.

"At a time when we need to reassert our diplomatic power in the world, President Bush has decided to send a seriously flawed and weakened candidate to the United Nations," said Senate Democratic Leader Harry Reid of Nevada. "The reason Bolton is being recess appointed is because the president chose to stonewall the Senate. Mr. Bolton could have had his up or down vote had President Bush given senators the information they needed. Instead, Bolton arrives at the United Nations with a cloud hanging over his head."

"The president has done a real disservice to our nation by appointing an individual who lacks the credibility to further U.S. interests at the United Nations. I will be monitoring his performance closely to ensure that he does not abuse his authority as he has in the past," said Sen. Christopher Dodd, D-Conn.

"We will work with him as the ambassador and representative of the president and the government," U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan said. "We look forward to working with him, as I do with the other 190 ambassadors".

Sen. John Cornyn, R-Texas, praised the president for using his authority "to end the obstruction against John Bolton." Cornyn said, "This is an important position and it's critical that it not remain vacant any longer. Bolton is exceptionally well qualified to fill this role at this time."

Anthony Walker murdered in racial attack in Liverpool, England

A black A-level student from Huyton, Merseyside, England has been murdered with an axe in what police have called a racist crime. He was 18 years old. Over 800 racist and religious hate incidents have been reported in London since July 7; a sharp increase from before the bombings.

A hooded man in his 20s directed a torrent of racist abuse at Anthony Walker who was at a bus stop outside the Huyton Park pub where Walker waited with his white girlfriend and cousin.

The three walked away from the racial abuse without retaliating, but a gang of up to four white men caught up with them as

they crossed McGoldrick Park. Mr. Walker's girlfriend and cousin ran to get help. When they returned, they found Mr. Walker on the ground with an axe embedded in his skull. He died at 0525 BST on Saturday 28 July 2005.

As of Monday, 1 August 2005, 05:00 GMT, Merseyside Police have arrested a 17-year-old boy. They released an 18-year-old held on Sunday morning.

The story has sent shockwaves across the country, being the front-page story of The Independent and Daily Mirror on August 1st [1] [2], echoing the murder of Stephen Lawrence in 1993, again an ambitious 18-year-old black student.

This article contains first-hand journalism by a Wikinews Reporter.

Guantanamo prosecutors call trials a "fraud"



Guantanamo Bay, Cuba

According to leaked emails, two former prosecutors allege that the US military commissions at Guantanamo Bay are fraudulent and rigged.

The Australian Broadcasting Corporation reported that one prosecutor, Major Robert Preston, wrote that the process was perpetrating a fraud on the American public. "I consider the insistence on pressing ahead with cases that would be marginal even if properly prepared to be a severe threat to the reputation of the military justice system and even a fraud on the American people," Maj Preston wrote. "Surely they don't expect that this fairly half-arsed effort is all that we have been able to put together after all this time."

Captain John Carr, the second prosecutor, wrote to his supervisor: "You have repeatedly said to the office that the military panel will be handpicked and will not acquit these detainees and that we only needed to worry about building a record for the review panel."

"There is absolutely no evidence that it is rigged." Brig Gen Hemingway stated in defence to these claims, "In each of the four cases which have been referred, the appointing authority John Alterburgh made an independent determination that the evidence was sufficient to warrant trial."

Poland accuses Belarus of human rights violations



Belarus borders with Russia, Ukraine and 3 EU members: Latvia, Lithuania and Poland

Poland has called for the EU to assist curtailing what it has called human rights abuses in Belarus. Belarusian papers describe this as a 'dirty political game', and part of a 'cold war' waged on president Alexander Lukashenko.

The Belarusian Riot police with guns and dogs siezed the headquarters of the Union of Poles in Belarus, an association representing the 400 thousand ethnic minority Polish people living in western areas of Belarus that were part of Poland until World War II.

Earlier this year, Amnesty International reported a "pattern of deliberate obstruction, harassment and intimidation of human rights defenders" in Belarus. Reporters Without Borders recently accused the Belarusian authorities of hounding and arresting journalists from the country's Polish minority. Lukashenko has recently closed the country's main Polish newspaper, printing a bogus paper instead with the same name that praised his regime. Lukashenko accused Poland of an attempt to overthrow his regime by stirring up a peaceful revolution in Belarus like the "orange revolution" in Ukraine last year.

The dispute between Poland and Belarus escalated further as Poland responded by recalling its ambassador from Belarus for indefinite consultations and called on the

European Union to impose sanctions on the Belarusian leadership.

Polish Foreign Minister Adam Rotfeld said a clampdown is under way, aimed at destroying "all elements of political pluralism and independence" in Belarus. France expressed her solidarity with Poland on the issue of human rights in Belarus a day after the EU said it was worried about the situation in the country.

The European Union will finance radio and TV programs to be broadcasted to Belarus.

Burundian Hutu extremists have killed 300 civilians in the last two months



The Burundian Hutu-extremist group Palipehutu-FNL (commonly known as FNL), has killed 300 civilians in the last two months, according to local sources.

Burundi's Radio Publique Africain has reported the discovery of three mass graves in the provinces of Bubanza, and Bujumbura-Rurale - an FNL stronghold.

"Some of them are killed because the FNL accuses them of collaborating with national defence forces, and others are assassinated simply because they have deserted the movement", army spokesman Adolphe Manirakiza is quoted by Reuters as saying.

The FNL, a hardlined splinter group of the "Partie pour la libération du peuple Hutu", has been fighting the Burundian government since the mid-1990s. Civilians have borne the brunt of the violence, according to human rights groups. The organisation has consistently been linked with remnants of the Rwandan Hutu militia who carried out the 1994 genocide, and is believed to share a similar ideology.

In August last year, the FNL admitted responsibility for the massacre of 152 Congolese Tutsis at the Gatumba refugee camp in western Burundi. Rwandan and Congolese groups are also believed to have taken part in the attack. The FNL later claimed that the refugee camp was a military

base. UN investigators found no evidence for the allegation, and human rights groups pointed out that most of the dead were women and children.

Although the FNL is known for its hostility to the Tutsi ethnic group, many of its victims have been Hutus accused of disloyalty.

Burundi's ruling FRODEBU party was recently accused by their electoral rivals of employing FNL fighters to disrupt the country's first polls since 1993. FRODEBU denied the charges, but admitted "political collaboration" with the group.

Speaking to Reuters, FNL spokesman Pasteur Habimana admitted that his group had killed civilians in recent months, but said that those killed had been "people who are sent by the army with a mission of eliminating our fighters by giving them poison". Habimana also accused the Burundian army of attacking civilians.

Australian warship sunk as artificial reef

The Royal Australian Navy (RAN) warship HMAS Brisbane was sunk yesterday as an artificial reef off the coast of Mudjimba, Sunshine Coast, Queensland.

Brisbane was one of three Charles F. Adams-class guided-missile destroyers built for the RAN. She was launched at Bay City, Michigan in the United States on 5 May 1966.

She saw service in the Vietnam and Gulf wars before decommissioning on 19 October 2001.

The bridge and other parts of the ship were removed and preserved at the Australian War Museum in Canberra.

Brisbane was filled with approximately 200 tonnes of concrete and 38 small charges were placed around the hull. The charges were detonated by Queensland Premier Peter Beattie, sinking Brisbane within five-minutes.

Thousands of people watched the spectacle, including Brisbane's former commanding officer, Rear-Admiral Geoffrey Loosli.

The tourist industry hopes that Brisbane will become a popular diving site, attracting up to 10,000 divers annually, bringing around \$20 million Australian dollars.

A number of warships have recently been sunk as artificial reefs. The British Royal Navy's HMS Scylla was sunk as one in Western Europe on 27 May 2004. The Canadian frigate HMCS Nipigon was sunk in 2003 on the St. Lawrence River, near Rimouski, Quebec.

Serbian goal keeper debuts in Croatian football club Rijeka



A goal keeper from Serbia and Montenegro, Dragan Žilić, made his league debut for Croatian football club Rijeka against Cibaliža. Žilić's appearance caused disturbance among some of Rijeka's fans, Armada, who did not approve of having a Serbian player in their outfit.

However, the game played yesterday proved that only a minority of fans have such strong nationalistic sentiments.

A group of about 200 Rijeka's fans present at the game started chanting songs such as: "Žilić go away" (Žiliću odlazi), "Hang Serbs on trees" (Srbe na vrbe), and "Fuck fudbal (Serbian), I like nogomet (Croatian)" (Jebeš fudbal, ja volim nogomet).

However, most of the other observers did not sing along, while the opposition's fans chanted in support of Žilić. In the 60th minute, a group of 200 fans left the stadium in protest, while the rest of the stadium kept singing supportive songs.

At the end of the game, the entire stadium applauded the Rijeka team. "I congratulate my team for greatly played game. Armada? That story had been told. I hope that support of fans was clear. I don't want to spread hate on that topic, I am only interested in club's results," Žilić said.

Hollywood-like car hijacking in Belgrade

An unidentified person hijacked a car with a child in it after Eyub Igrim left it to do shopping at a gas station in Belgrade. Igrim, a Turkish citizen, was in transit through Serbia.

After Igrim left the car, a person got into it and attempted to escape. Igrim jumped on the hood of the car, but the thief did not stop driving. "I jumped on the hood, and he drove me for 3.5km, after which he made a sharp right turn and I fell off. That's all I can remember," said Igrim.

The thief threw the child out of a moving car, but the child was unhurt. Meanwhile, a citizen was chasing the thief in his own car from the gas station. In the Bežanijska Street, the thief lost control and crashed, after which the two men started fighting. A third car arrived soon, and the hijacker got into it and ran away.

The police think that the hijacker left his documents in an initially stolen car.

Milošević may be jailed in Russia

According to the Sunday Times, Slobodan Milošević, a former Serbian President currently standing trial before the International Criminal Tribunal for Yugoslavia accused of war crimes, may serve his sentence in Russia if convicted.

"He first asked for it two years ago and the idea was rejected, but over the past 15 months there have been more talks and the British and Americans have both quietly said they are okay with it. They want this thing over with," a Tribunal official said, according to the Sunday Times.

Milošević's wife, Mirjana Marković, is currently living in Moscow, and it is believed that their son Marko Milošević is also there. Both are wanted by Serbian authorities.

The news was met with disapproval among victims of Milošević's regime, as Russia is a traditional Serbian ally, and Putin's regime has generally been supportive of Milošević, so he may get preferential treatment.

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Today in History

216 BC - Carthaginian forces led by Hannibal destroyed a Roman army at the Battle of Cannae.

1870 - Tower Subway, the world's first underground railway, opened in London.

1903 - The Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization and Bulgarians in the Ottoman Empire carried out the Ilinden Uprising.

1934 - Adolf Hitler became Führer of Nazi Germany.

1990 - Iraq invaded Kuwait, triggering the Gulf War.

Quote of the Day

"When are you people going to learn? It's not about who's right or wrong. No denomination's nailed it yet, and they never will because they're all too self-righteous to realize that it doesn't matter what you have faith in, just that you have faith. Your hearts are in the right place, but your brains need to wake up. I have issues with anyone who treats faith as a burden instead of a blessing. You people don't celebrate your faith; you mourn it." ~ "Serendipity" in Dogma, by Kevin Smith

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