

US takes steps to deport alleged Nazi to Germany

By M.R. KROPKO
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CLEVELAND (AP) — The U.S. government said Tuesday it is asking German officials for travel documents needed to deport accused World War II Nazi guard John Demjanjuk, who is charged in Europe with 29,000 counts of accessory to murder.

Immigration and Customs Enforcement provided an e-mail to The Associated Press showing that it has contacted the German government in its effort to deport Demjanjuk, once accused but ultimately cleared of being a notorious guard at the Treblinka concentration camp in occupied Poland.

The 88-year-old suburban Cleveland man was charged in Germany in March with crimes

while working as a guard at Sobibor, a Nazi death camp in Poland.

His son, John Demjanjuk Jr., said Tuesday that his father remains at home and is not in federal custody.

The German warrant seeks the deportation or extradition of Demjanjuk, who lives in Seven Hills and denies involvement in any deaths.

Prosecutors in Munich, Germany, said Demjanjuk (pronounced dem-YAHN'-yuk) will be formally charged in front of a judge once he is extradited.

"In this capacity, he participated in the accessory to murder of at least 29,000 people of the Jewish faith," the prosecutor's office has said. It is handling the case because Demjanjuk spent time at a refugee camp in the area after the war.

The suspect's family has said he is in poor health and unable to travel.

"My dad spent a few hours in the emergency room the other day," John Demjanjuk Jr. said. "He is being treated for kidney stones at present."

He said his father has chronic kidney disease, along with other serious ailments.

Kurt Schrimm, head of the special German prosecutors' office that has hunted Nazis since 1958 and who asked Munich prosecutors to pursue Demjanjuk's extradition, declined to comment Tuesday.

Efraim Zuroff, the top Nazi hunter at the Simon Wiesenthal Center, a Los Angeles-based human rights organization, welcomed the development.

"We're very pleased that these steps are being taken to facilitate

Demjanjuk's extradition to Germany so that he can be tried and can be given an appropriate punishment for his heinous crimes during World War II," Zuroff told The Associated Press by phone from Jerusalem.

German Justice Ministry spokesman Ulrich Stauderle said he could not confirm that U.S. authorities had requested any specific documents, but reiterated that the German government was working closely with the U.S. to secure Demjanjuk's extradition or deportation.

Demjanjuk became a naturalized U.S. citizen in 1958 and has never been convicted of war crimes in a domestic court. But a federal judge in Cleveland in 2002 stripped him of his U.S. citizenship, saying prosecutors proved in a trial to determine his

citizenship status that he served the Nazi regime for more than two years during World War II as a guard.

He was accused in 1977 of concealing a past as a notorious Nazi death camp guard known as "Ivan the Terrible" at Treblinka. He was extradited to Israel in 1986 and two years later was sentenced to death after being found guilty of war crimes and crimes against humanity.

He appealed, and in 1993 Israel's top court ruled 5-0 that Demjanjuk was not "Ivan the Terrible." He was allowed to return to the United States.

The chief U.S. immigration judge ruled in 2005 that Demjanjuk could be deported to Germany, Poland or Ukraine. The U.S. Supreme Court in May declined to hear an appeal of the deportation ruling.

Pakistan's top judge back after turmoil

By NAHAL TOOSI
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ISLAMABAD (AP) — Pakistan's supreme court chief justice called for an end to judicial corruption after returning to bench for the first time in 16 months — brought back to resolve a political crisis that showed the country's volatility as the fight against terrorism intensifies.

Judge Iftikhar Mohammed Chaudhry also faced demands Tuesday to investigate the disappearance of hundreds of people believed detained by security forces since the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks in the United States.

Chaudhry, hailed by supporters as a fearless and independent justice, was dismissed in late 2007 when then-President Pervez Musharraf declared emergency rule, angering lawyers who protested and helped oust the U.S.-backed military ruler in 2008. It was the second time Musharraf had sought to oust Chaudhry in 2007.

Musharraf's successor, Asif Ali Zardari, had resisted demands to reinstate Chaudhry, apparently out of fears he may examine a deal that has provided Zardari protection from prosecution on

corruption claims.

Zardari relented this month, but only after thousands of demonstrators led by Nawaz Sharif, the head of the largest opposition party, were preparing to surround the parliament.

All sides in the dispute have called for reconciliation in recent days, which is likely to please the United States and other Western allies who want Pakistan to focus on battling al-Qaida and the Taliban.

Chaudhry has not said what his priorities as chief justice will be.

At the start of his first hearing Tuesday, Chaudhry thanked Pakistanis for supporting him but warned that the population often viewed the courts as corrupt.

"Lawyers should help us end corruption," he said. "You should point out those cases in which you see elements of corruption. It is a must for justice to end corruption first."

The judge is likely to face strong scrutiny, especially in politically sensitive cases like the fate of several hundred people believed detained during Musharraf's rule.

The issue could prove embarrassing to the United States because some of the missing may have been turned over to American authorities. The U.S.

Embassy in Islamabad declined comment.

The wife of one alleged victim, Zahida Sharif, said she had new hope that Chaudhry would investigate the case of her husband, a doctor who vanished in 2005 in the northwest city of Peshawar. She insisted he had no political or militant connections.

"I just want him to be fair," Zahida Sharif said of Chaudhry.

Musharraf and officials in his government acknowledged some people had been detained, saying it was necessary to combat terrorism. Others, they said, had probably joined militant groups or were fighting — or had been killed — in Afghanistan.

However, rights workers said many of the missing were nonviolent political activists. An Amnesty International report last year said more than 500 people were thought to be detained. The report noted that Supreme Court pressure had led to some releases.

Asma Jahangir, the head of the independent Human Rights Commission of Pakistan, said it had been pushing for hearings on the missing even before Chaudhry's return.

"Hopefully now we will be heard, whereas in the past we were not being heard," she said.

Firefighter investigated in string of Pa. arson

By PATRICK WALTERS
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PHILADELPHIA (AP) — Investigators are trying to determine if a firefighter charged with the latest fires in an arson-plagued suburb could be responsible for any other unsolved blazes.

Robert Tracey Jr., of Coatesville, was charged Monday with lighting two small trash fires a few blocks apart in his hometown on Friday. The fires caused no injuries or significant damage.

Tracey, 37, volunteered at the city's West End Fire Company for nearly 25 years, eventually attaining the unpaid position of assistant fire chief. He left that post last month to become a paid firefighter with the Coatesville Fire Department.

He was jailed in lieu of \$2 million bail. His wife, Tracy Tracey, said he had acknowledged being in the area but denied setting the fires.

The West End Fire Company assistant chief, Robert Pacana, was dismayed by the charges.

"No words are sufficient at conveying the anger, frustration and disappointment that the officers and members of the West End Fire Company feel regarding these allegations," Pacana said in a statement. "Should Mr. Tracey be found guilty of these charges in a court of law, he will have betrayed not only the trust of Company but also the sacred trust of the

community that he served."

Investigators with the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives are looking for any possible links between Tracey and other unsolved fires, according to assistant special agent Tom Stankiewicz. He said authorities seized clothing and lighters from Tracey's home, but were awaiting further tests.

"Obviously, we did look into his background," Stankiewicz said Tuesday, adding that neighbors spotted Tracey fleeing from the scene over the weekend. "We're trying to ascertain the motive."

Tracey's mother was forced out of her home by a fire in December, but Coatesville spokeswoman Kristin Geiger said she didn't know why he would be angry with the city.

"Arson itself is a difficult crime to understand," Geiger said. "Our firefighters are just as hurt as our citizens."

Coatesville has had 22 arsons this year and nearly 50 since February 2008. One blaze in January destroyed 15 houses, and a December fire killed an 83-year-old woman. There have been nearly 20 arsons just outside the city.

At least six suspects have been arrested in connection with the fires. One suspect had been rejected when he applied to be a firefighter in a surrounding township.

Coatesville is a distressed former steel town of 11,000 about 35 miles west of Philadelphia.