

Violence continues in Trinidad

Prime minister, 30 others spend fourth day hostage

By DAN SEWELL
Associated Press Writer

PORT-OF-SPAIN, Trinidad — Sporadic rifle and machine-gun fire rang out yesterday around two buildings where Moslem extremists held the prime minister and about 30 other people hostage for the fourth day.

A spokesman for the radicals said a tentative agreement was reached to end the standoff and an Anglican minister said an agreement was likely yesterday. There was no government confirmation of either report.

The shooting was reported at the state-run Trinidad and Tobago Television complex and at the parliament building, where rebels took Prime Minister Arthur N.R. Robinson and other eight government ministers hostage Friday. The buildings are about a mile apart.

Later, heavy gunfire punctuated by explosions was heard at the television complex.

"A major fire is going on," said a diplomatic source, speaking on condition of anonymity.

Three buildings in the area were set ablaze, witnesses said.

A citizens-band operator said a fellow operator who lives near the television station told him police and soldiers had successfully stormed the complex and were headed for the parliament building.

But Army chief Col. Ralph Brown denied that police stormed the complex. He said troops opened fire on the television station when the rebels, who are led by Moslem extremist Abu Bakr, tried to leave the building.

"Some of his men tried to come out, and we are not letting them out," Brown said. It was unclear whether the rebels tried to surrender or escape.

Brown chief said he did not think there were any casualties among the hostages.

"Everything is under control," he said.

Brown said negotiations to end the



Smoke rises from the vicinity of the state-owned Television House (center) in Port-of-Spain, Trinidad. Automatic weapons fire was centered yesterday on the television station where employees were reported taken hostage by Muslim extremist rebels on Friday.

siege were still under way at midday, adding: "Everything is possible if you talk."

Rev. Knolly Clarke, an Anglican minister who was negotiating between the rebels and the government, said a peaceful solution was likely yesterday. "Yes, today. The end is in sight," he said.

In Washington, State Department deputy spokesman Richard Boucher refused to comment on reports that U.S. military assets were being deployed near Trinidad. He said, however, "there are no plans for U.S. military intervention."

Boucher said there have been no reports of injury to the estimated 6,000 Americans living in Trinidad.

In New York, U.N. Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar said he was following the situation in Trinidad "with great anxiety."

As the fighting raged at the television station, Kwasi Attiba, a rebel spokesman inside the parliament building who was reached by telephone, said a tenta-

tive agreement had been reached to resolve the crisis.

Attiba said the accord called for Robinson to resign immediately and to be replaced by Deputy Prime Minister Winston Dookeran, a widely respected moderate. Elections would be held within 90 days, he said.

Robinson won the 1986 parliamentary election by a landslide. Under the constitution, the next elections do not have to be held until 1991.

The rebels claim Robinson's government is corrupt and responsible for widespread poverty in this once oil-rich country. They claimed on Saturday to have wired Robinson with explosives and threatened to blow him up if a rescue attempt was made.

Unconfirmed reports said more than 20 people have been killed in fighting since Bakr, leader of a black Moslem commune, stormed Parliament. A medical officer at the state hospital said Monday he could confirm only five deaths, including that of a policeman.

Fla. may contact dentist's patients

By CURT ANDERSON
Associated Press Writer

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. — Patients of a Florida dentist who may have given a woman AIDS could be tracked down and asked to take AIDS tests, but couldn't be told why, officials said Monday.

Florida law protects the identity of anyone who has AIDS, even from those who may have been infected by the person.

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control last week described a case involving a 21-year-old college student who may have gotten AIDS from her dentist during a tooth extraction. The dentist was diagnosed with AIDS three months earlier and wore gloves and a mask.

State health officials have made no public comment about published reports that the woman was from somewhere in Florida.

Two sources, however, confirmed Monday on condition they not be identified, that it was a Florida dentist.

The CDC said the case was the first in the nation involving a health professional possibly transmitting AIDS, although researchers could not positively say how the woman got infected. But the CDC did rule out more conventional ways of getting the disease such as sexual encounters or intravenous drug use.

The name of any Florida resident who has acquired immune deficiency syndrome or who tests positive for the AIDS virus is confidential under Florida

law, said spokesman Steve Konicki of the Department of Health and Rehabilitative Services.

While officials wouldn't confirm publicly that the CDC case originated in Florida, they were willing to say that if it did, the state has the ability to track down the dentist's patients to urge them to be tested for AIDS.

"If this was a Florida case, HRS would be able to contact patients of the doctor," said Brian Ballard, Gov. Bob Martinez's chief of staff. "I can assure you that HRS understands their mission is public safety."

The patients would not be told, however, that their connection to the dentist was the reason they were asked to take an AIDS test, Konicki said.

That same confidentiality protection applies to anyone with AIDS to encourage them to disclose names of people to whom they may have transmitted the disease.

"The intent of the law, the confidentiality part of the law, is that it only goes to the identity of somebody who's infected," said state Rep. Lois Frankel, chairwoman of the task force that produced a sweeping 1988 Florida AIDS law.

"Confidentiality is an important part of contact tracing," she said. "You can't force someone to give you the name of a partner."

Questions were raised about the laws that protect patient records of doctors and dentists, which would be one of the only ways to obtain names.

Alleged bubblegum threat backfires on store owner

FORT LAUDERDALE, Fla. (AP) — A grocery store manager was arrested for threatening three young girls with a loaded .357-caliber revolver after they offered him three cents for a nickel's worth of bubble gum.

The children ran home from the store and told their mother, who called police.

The store manager, identified as Abdullah Shaheen, was arrested and charged with three counts of aggravated assault and one count of extortion. He denied the accusation.

Police and the children said they

walked to Sami's Food Mart on Sunday and placed their usual three cents on the counter for bubble gum. They said Shaheen told them: "Put five cents up there."

The children said they told him they always paid three cents for the gum. He pulled out the gun and pointed it in the face of 7-year-old Donetta Curry, police said.

"He took out the gun and pointed it at me," Donetta said later. "So I put five cents up there. I ran and told my mama. I was scared he was going to shoot me."

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