

WORLD IN BRIEF

Associated Press

Children in California home were strangled, waterboarded

FAIRFIELD, Calif. — Prosecutors allege in court documents filed Wednesday that 10 children rescued from a Northern California home were punched, kicked, strangled, shot with a BB gun and subjected to waterboarding by their father, and their mother did nothing to stop it.

The details of the alleged abuse were included in a motion to increase the bail of Ina Rogers, 31, who was charged with nine counts of felony child abuse Wednesday in Solano Superior Court. Rogers did not enter a plea, but has previously denied allegations her children were harmed. She also faces 1 count of child neglect involving all 10 children.

“On a continuous basis the children were getting punched, strangled, bitten, shot with weapons such as crossbows and BB guns, hit with weapons such as sticks and bats, subjected to ‘waterboarding’ and having scalding water poured on them,” Solano County Deputy District Attorney Veronica Juarez wrote in the bail request.

Since announcing Monday that they had removed the children from the home where they say torture was carried out “for sadistic purposes,” prosecutors have refused to discuss further details of the allegations against Rogers and her husband Jonathan Allen, 29. He has pleaded not guilty to nine counts of felony child abuse and seven counts of felony torture. He is being held on \$5.2 million bail. Records show the 10 children removed from the house March 31 are 6 months to 12 years old, but the documents do not specify which child suffered which injuries.

The motion states that when Fairfield Police arrived at the two-story house in a suburb 46 miles northeast of San Francisco on March 31, they found the children “huddled together on the living room floor” in a home littered with feces and trash.

“The children appeared to be skittish and spoke with speech impediments,” she wrote.

Juarez alleges Rogers assisted in the abuse and “dissuaded the children” from reporting their injuries, which included broken arms. On Wednesday, Judge William J. Pendergast set bail at \$495,000 for Rogers, saying she “may not be a danger to the public at large, but these charges make clear she is a danger to the children.”

In veiled shot at Trump, Tillerson warns democracy at risk

WASHINGTON — Former Secretary of State Rex Tillerson took a veiled shot at President Donald Trump on Wednesday, warning that a growing national crisis of ethics and integrity has put American democracy at risk.

In remarks to graduates of the Virginia Military Institute, Tillerson lamented assaults on facts that he said would lead to a loss of freedom if not countered. And he said that only societies able to pursue the truth and challenge alternate realities can be truly free.

“When we as people, a free people, go wobbly on the truth, even on what may seem to be the most trivial of matters, we go wobbly on America,” Tillerson said. “If we do not as Americans confront the crisis of ethics and integrity in our society among our leaders in both public and private sector, and regrettably at times in the nonprofit sector, then American democracy as we know it is entering its twilight years.”

Tillerson did not mention his former boss by name Wednesday, but alluded to some policies of the Trump administration by decrying those who neglect or ignore longstanding allies or deny that free trade is an engine of global growth.

School bus collides with dump truck



AP Photo/Seth Wenig

A school bus and dump truck collided today on Interstate 80 in Mount Olive, N.J., ripping apart the bus, knocking it on its side and injuring multiple people. State police said an unknown number of children were on the bus, but they didn't know how serious the injuries are.

“We must never take these long-held allies for granted,” he said, in apparent reference to Trump overruling the advice of his former top diplomat and others and withdrawing from some international agreements, threatening import tariffs.

On free trade, which Trump has questioned, Tillerson noted that much of the developed world saw it as a net positive. “But many here at home still have a way to go to fully embrace the global economy and to recognize that with these changes come both challenges and opportunities,” he said.

Tillerson was asked to be VMI’s commencement speaker before Trump fired him by tweet in mid-March after months of tension between the men over policies including climate change, trade, the Middle East and North Korea. Trump later explained that he didn’t see eye to eye with Tillerson, the former ExxonMobil CEO, and had more in common with CIA chief Mike Pompeo, who took over as secretary of state.

Senate backs effort to restore ‘net neutrality’ rules

WASHINGTON — Senate Democrats, joined by three Republicans, pushed through a measure Wednesday intended to revive Obama-era internet rules that ensured equal treatment for all web traffic, though opposition in the House and the White House seems insurmountable.

Republicans on the short end of the 52-47 vote described the effort to reinstate “net neutrality” rules as “political theater” because the GOP-controlled House is not expected to take up the issue and the Senate’s margin could not overcome a presidential veto. Democrats, however, were undeterred, saying their push would energize young voters who are tech savvy and value unfettered access to the internet. “This is a defining vote. The most important vote we’re going to have in this generation on the internet,” said Democratic Sen. Edward Markey of Massachusetts, who sponsored the measure.

At issue are rules that the Federal Communications Commission repealed in December that prevented providers such as AT&T, Comcast and Verizon from interfering with internet traffic and favoring their own sites and apps. Critics, including the Trump administration, said overregulation was stifling innovation, and they backed the FCC’s move, which is still set to take effect next month.

Markey said net neutrality has worked for the smallest voices

and the largest, but he said internet service providers are trying to change the rules to benefit their interests.

Republicans said they were willing to work with Democrats on enshrining the principle of net neutrality in legislation. But they wanted to also ensure that regulatory efforts didn’t get in the way of innovation and quickly evolving internet services.

Sen. John Thune, R-S.D., said the internet thrived long before the Obama administration stepped in with rules in 2015, and he predicted that when the FCC repeal is in place, consumers won’t notice a change in their service.

Trump draws rebuke for ‘animal’ remark at immigration talk

WASHINGTON — While railing against California for its so-called sanctuary immigration policies, President Donald Trump referred to some people who cross the border illegally as “animals” — drawing a sharp rebuke from Democratic leaders for the harsh rhetoric.

Trump’s remark at a meeting with local leaders was in response to a comment about MS-13 gang members.

“We have people coming into the country, or trying to come in — and we’re stopping a lot of them,” Trump said during the immigration roundtable after Fresno County Sheriff Margaret Mims complained about state restrictions that limit cooperation with federal immigration authorities. “You wouldn’t believe how bad these people are. These aren’t people. These are animals.”

Trump has repeatedly referred to members of the violent street gang as “animals” in speeches, rallies and at White House events. He has also used the term to describe terrorists and school shooters.

Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., responded on Twitter to the president, saying, “When all of our great-great-grandparents came to America they weren’t ‘animals,’ and these people aren’t either.”

Trump was joined at the Wednesday White House meeting by mayors, sheriffs and other local leaders from California who oppose the state’s immigration policies and who applauded his administration’s hard-line efforts.

“This is your Republican resistance right here against what they’re doing in California,” said Assemblywoman Melissa Melendez, coopting a term used by Democrats opposed to Trump’s presidency. She, like others, said the president and his policies were far more popular in the state than people realize.

They were criticizing legislation Gov. Jerry Brown signed into law last year that bars police from asking people about their immigration status or helping federal agents with immigration enforcement. Jail officials can transfer inmates to federal immigration authorities if they have been convicted of one of about 800 crimes, mostly felonies, but not for minor offenses.

Congo’s Ebola outbreak spreads to a city of over 1 million

KINSHASA, Congo — Congo’s Ebola outbreak has spread to a crossroads city of more than 1 million people, authorities said today in a troubling turn that marks the first time the vast, impoverished country has had to fight the lethal virus in an urban area.

Medical teams rushed to track down anyone thought to have had contact with infected people, while the World Health Organization continued shipping thousands of doses of an experimental vaccine. A total of 44 cases of Ebola have been reported in Congo since last week: three confirmed, 20 probable and 21 suspected, according to WHO. Twenty-three people among those cases have died.

Up to now, the outbreak was confined to remote rural areas, where Ebola is easier to contain. The virus, which is spread by bodily fluids, can travel more easily in heavily populated areas.

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