

AP Poll: Police Killings of Blacks Voted Top Story of 2014

By David Crary
The Associated Press

NEW YORK — The police killings of unarmed blacks in Ferguson, Missouri, and elsewhere — and the investigations and tumultuous protests they inspired — was the top news story of 2014, according to The Associated Press' annual poll of U.S. editors and news directors.

In a year crowded with dramatic and often wrenching news developments around the world, the No. 2 story was the devastating outbreak of Ebola in West Africa, followed by the conflict in Iraq and Syria fueled by the brutal actions of Islamic State militants.

Among the 85 voters casting ballots, first-place votes were spread among 15 different stories. The Ferguson

entry received 22 first-place votes, Ebola 11 and the Islamic State story 12.

The voting was conducted before the announcement that the United States and Cuba were re-establishing diplomatic relations and Sony Pictures' decision to withdraw its film "The Interview" in the wake of computer hacking and threats.

Last year's top story was the glitch-plagued rollout of President Barack Obama's health care overhaul, followed by the Boston Marathon bombing. The continuing saga of "Obamacare" made this year's Top 10 as well, coming in fifth.

The first AP top-stories poll was conducted in 1936, when editors chose the abdication of Britain's King Edward VIII.

Here are 2014's top 10 stories, in order:

Police Killings

Some witnesses said 18-year-old Michael Brown had his hands up in surrender, others said he was making a charge. But there was no dispute he was unarmed and shot dead by a white police officer in Ferguson. In New York City, another unarmed black, Eric Garner, was killed after a white officer put him in a chokehold during an arrest for unauthorized cigarette sales. After grand juries opted not to indict the officers, protests erupted across the country, punctuated by chants of "Hands up, don't shoot" and "I can't breathe." In both cases, federal officials launched investigations.

Ferguson



Protesters gathered in North Portland Aug. 14 to protest the shooting of Michael Brown, an unarmed 18-year-old black man in Ferguson, Mo. Using the slogan "Hands Up Don't Shoot" the protesters briefly stopped traffic at the intersection of Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard and Alberta Street. Some drivers honked in frustration while others got out of their cars and put their hands up in a show of support.

Ebola Outbreak

The first wave of Ebola deaths, early in the year, attracted little notice. By March, the World Health Organization was monitoring the outbreak. By mid-summer, it was the worst Ebola epidemic on record, with a death toll now approaching 7,000, mostly in Liberia, Sierra Leone and Guinea. A Liberian man with the disease died at a Dallas hospital, followed by a few other cases involving U.S. health workers, sparking worries about the readiness of the U.S. health system.

Islamic State

Militant fighters from the

Islamic State group startled the world with rapid, brutal seizures of territory in Iraq and Syria. The U.S. and its allies responded with air strikes, hoping that Iraqi and Kurdish forces on the ground could retake captured areas. Revulsion toward Islamic State intensified as it broadcast videos of its beheadings of several Western hostages.

US Elections

For months, political oddsmakers sought to calculate if Republicans had a chance to gain control of the U.S. Senate. It turned out there was no suspense — the Republicans won 54 of the Senate's 100 seats, expand-

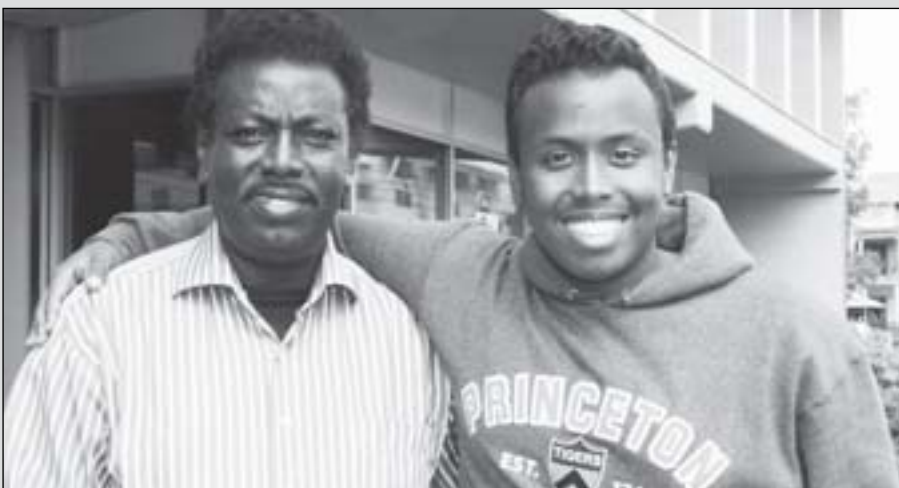
ed its already strong majority in the House of Representatives, and gained at the state level, where Republicans now hold 31 governorships.

Obamacare

Millions more Americans signed up to be covered under President Barack Obama's health care initiative, but controversy about "Obamacare" raged on. Criticism from Republicans in Congress was relentless, many Republican-governed states balked at participation, and opinion polls suggested most Americans

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Bound for Princeton



Ahmed Gedi, right, and his father Dawood Mohamed. A Franklin High School student, Gedi was one of just two Oregon high school students selected for the prestigious LEDA scholars program at Princeton University this summer. LEDA, short for Leadership Enterprise for a Diverse America, aims to help gifted students from low-income backgrounds attend top colleges and universities.

Seattle Pride



Seattle Pride Parade Celebrity Grand Marshall George Takei waves at the crowd that lined 4th Avenue for the 40th Annual Seattle Pride Parade Sunday, June 29 in Downtown Seattle. A record crowd estimated at 150,000 attendees made the Emerald City ring out with cheers.

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