

Intolerant acts surge as British referendum result sinks in

By **RAPHAEL SATTER** and **PHILIPPA LAW**
Associated Press

LONDON — An Eastern European family in Rugby finds dog excrement shoved through its mailbox. A Londoner nearly gets into a fight over drunken slurs shouted on a crowded subway car. A Polish teenager in Gloucestershire is taunted with threats of deportation at her high school.

In the wake of last Thursday's vote to leave the European Union, Britain has seen a surge in xenophobia expressed in taunts, threats and worse. For many, foreign- and native-born, the U.K. has suddenly become much scarier place.

"Before Friday we lived in a tolerant society," said Oana Gorcea, a 32-year-old Romanian who has lived in Britain since she was a teenager. "I've been here 13 years, but I've never felt like I had to hide where I came from. But from Friday, things completely changed."

Gorcea, who works for a multinational company in Rugby, about 85 miles northwest of London, said her street was being patrolled by "English commandos who walk around and try to intimidate non-white non-English people." The talk of the neighborhood was the dog feces shoved through a local immigrant family's mailbox.

Gorcea's story and others like it have been echoing across social media for days. Eastern Europeans, Muslims — even Americans and Germans — have reported acts of intimidation and harassment. Victims describe an emboldened angry fringe emerging to crowd over Thursday's vote; a T-shirt sported by a man at an Armed Forces Day parade in the working class London borough of Havering over the weekend seemed to sum up the new attitude:

"YES! WE WON! NOW SEND THEM BACK."

British reporters across the country have seen the resurgence of racism up close and personal. Adam Boulton, a presenter for Britain's Sky News, posted a message to Twitter saying he and his family had witnessed three separate incidents of when-are-you-going-home?-style abuse aimed at Europeans over the weekend. Channel Four's Ciaran Jenkins said that within a five-minute span in the northern England town of Barnsley, three



A man wearing an anti-immigration T-shirt walks during Armed Forces Day Parade on Saturday in Romford, England. Britain's Prime Minister David Cameron and the Mayor of London Sadiq Khan warned Monday that abuse directed at immigrants wouldn't be tolerated, after a series of incidents were reported following the country's decision to leave the European Union.

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— **Oana Gorcea**, Romanian living in Britain

people had shouted "Send them home!" BBC reporter Sima Kotecha said that she was in "utter shock" after having returned home to the southern England town of Basingstoke and been abused with a racial slur she hadn't heard "since the 80s."

Police are investigating vandalism at a Polish cultural center in west London and incidents in Cambridgeshire in which cards were given to Polish residents calling them "vermin" and ordering them to leave the country. The National Police Chiefs' Council said there had been a 57 percent rise in hate crime complaints in the past four days compared to the same period last month.

Britain's sizeable Muslim community has also found itself caught up in the anti-immigrant backlash. Miqdaad Versi, assistant secretary-general of the Muslim Council of Britain, said that "hundreds of hate crimes" had been reported across the country.

"The type of language that has been used, like 'go back to your own country,' 'we voted this way, now you have to get out,' that type of language indicates there is some sort of link" to the referendum, he said.

Those who championed the campaign to pull Britain from the EU have condemned the attacks.

"I've never, ever, ever encouraged or condoned behavior like that, and I never, ever would," said United Kingdom Independence Party leader Nigel Farage, before adding that "the real prejudice is the prejudice that's been there for a decade or more against anybody that dares stand up against the establishment, anybody that dares to say that we shouldn't be part of the EU."

Other politicians didn't buy it.

"The leaders of the Brexit campaign have engendered an atmosphere where some people believe it is open season now for racism and xenophobia," said lawmaker Harriet Harman, a former leader of the opposition Labour Party.

For the victims, the link between the referendum and the abuse is clear. Immigration was a key issue in the campaign, with Farage posing in front of a massive, truck-drawn poster carrying a photograph of hundreds of swarthy migrants under the words "Breaking Point." Many "leave" voters cited the influx of foreigners as a

top concern.

"Just because of one referendum ... it's coming out like woodworms," said Julie Sauter Daoud, a French-German national who has lived in Britain most of her life. On Sunday she got a firsthand encounter with xenophobia when two men overtook her car shouting, "Go home, you (expletive) German."

She said the attack, which happened while she was driving down a residential street in the northern English city of Sheffield, left her so shaken she was even scared to speak French to her youngest child at the supermarket.

"It's terribly sickening," she said in a telephone interview. "The first time ever in my life. Ever." She paused for a second. "Probably not the last time now."

The 44-year-old's story is one of hundreds filling a Facebook group called "Worrying Signs," which is gathering evidence of the recent surge in intolerance. By late Monday the site was jammed with stories and photographs of sinister graffiti and even broken windows. Polish-British national Natalia Nicholls wrote on the site that her 14-year-old sister was taunted by boys at her high school in the Cotswolds region of England who boasted that "now we can get rid of the Polish and the blacks." Corinne Abrahams, 24, said she was returning from a music festival when she nearly got into a fight with an inebriated man yelling anti-foreigner epithets on the London subway.

BRIEFLY

UK credit rating slashed, Cameron insists economy is robust

LONDON (AP) — Prime Minister David Cameron insisted Monday that Britain's shock vote to leave the European Union won't send the economy into a tailspin, even as the country was stripped of its top credit rating and stock markets and the pound continued a downward spiral.

Calling the vote a "seminal event" that "will lead to a less predictable, stable and effective policy framework in the U.K.," Standard & Poor's knocked the U.K.'s sovereign rating by two notches, from AAA to AA. Hours later, Fitch Ratings followed suit, downgrading the country to AA, from AA+.

Both agencies said they were keeping a negative outlook on their ratings, which means they could downgrade the country further. Standard and Poor's cited risks to the economy and public finances, the pound's role as an international reserve currency and "risks to the constitutional and economic integrity of the U.K." as Scotland's strong vote to remain in the EU could raise the prospect of another referendum on Scottish independence.

Speaking earlier in the day as the House of Commons met for the first time since last week's referendum, Cameron insisted the British economy was robust and could withstand the shockwaves.

"It is clear that markets are volatile, there are some companies considering their investments and we know this is going to be far from plain sailing," Cameron told lawmakers. "However, we should take confidence from the fact that Britain is ready to confront what the future holds for us from a position of strength."

Volkswagen reaches \$14.7B settlement

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — Volkswagen would repair or buy back polluting diesel vehicles and pay each owner as much as \$10,000 under a \$14.7 billion deal the car maker has reached to settle lawsuits stemming from its emissions cheating scandal, a person briefed on the settlement talks said Monday.

The figure would be the largest auto scandal settlement in U.S. history and a huge step in Volkswagen's efforts to address the legal fallout from its admission that its vehicles were designed to fool emissions tests.

The deal sets aside \$10 billion to repair or buy back roughly 475,000 polluting Volkswagen vehicles with 2-liter diesel engines, and to compensate each owner with an additional payment of between \$5,100 and \$10,000, the person said. The person asked not to be identified because the deal will not be filed in court until Tuesday, and a judge has ordered attorneys not to talk about it before then.

How VW would repair the vehicles to bring them into compliance with clean air laws has not yet been finalized, the person said.

Owners who choose to have VW buy back their cars would get the clean trade-in value from before the scandal became public on Sept. 18, 2015. The average value of a VW diesel has dropped 19 percent since just before the scandal began. In August of 2015, the average was \$13,196, and this May it was \$10,674, according to Kelley Blue Book.

Judge: Mississippi law creates inequality for gay marriage

JACKSON, Miss. (AP) — Mississippi clerks cannot cite their own religious beliefs to recuse themselves from issuing marriage licenses to same-sex couples, under a ruling a federal judge handed down Monday.

The effect of the ruling by U.S. District Judge Carlton Reeves is that the state can't enforce part of a religious objections bill that was supposed to become law Friday. Reeves is extending his previous order that overturned Mississippi's ban on same-sex marriage. He says circuit clerks are required to provide equal treatment for all couples, gay or straight. He also said that all 82 circuit clerks must be given formal notice of that requirement.

Mississippi's religious objections measure, House Bill 1523, was filed in response to last summer's U.S. Supreme Court ruling that legalized gay marriage nationwide. That ruling is called the Obergefell case, after the man who filed it.



Paramedics rush a stabbing victim away on a gurney Sunday after members of right-wing extremists groups holding a rally outside the California state Capitol building in Sacramento clashed with counter-protesters, authorities said.

California police panned for slow response to Capitol clash

SACRAMENTO, Calif. (AP) — Authorities were anticipating violence as a white nationalist group planned a demonstration at the California Capitol, and they brought in more than 100 officers to patrol the grounds.

But after 10 people were hurt Sunday, they faced criticism Monday about whether they were properly prepared or too slow to get involved when the demonstration quickly turned violent in a clash with a larger group of counter-protesters.

"It was basically a free-for-all," said Cres Vellucci, an observer with the National Lawyers Guild. "I was just appalled that nothing seemed to be done."

He said his group was there to watch for police overreaction, but in this case the opposite happened. The

California Highway Patrol and Sacramento city police failed to separate about 30 members of the Traditionalist Worker Party from about 300 counter-protesters who rushed to confront them, he said.

Law enforcement was slow to protect people who were attacked and slow to get them medical help, Vellucci said.

"We're not going to escort people from city streets or wherever they're coming from," said CHP spokesman Officer George Granada. "Everything turned out fairly well. There was violence, but it could have been a lot worse."

No officers or bystanders were hurt and less than \$1,000 in damage was done to the Capitol when a window in a security pavilion was broken, Granada said.

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