

Militant group responsible for suicide bombing joins cease-fire

By the Associated Press
INTERNATIONAL
 JERUSALEM — The militant group Hamas, which claimed responsibility for a bloody weekend suicide bombing, said it joined a cease-fire called by Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat, as world leaders worked to keep the lid on Mideast violence.

Despite the efforts to calm tempers, several Palestinians were injured in exchanges of fire in Hebron and Ramallah in the West Bank today, Palestinian witnesses said.

Arafat called a meeting of his Fatah leadership and Hamas representatives late Monday. In a statement, militants of both groups said they would halt attacks as of midnight (5 p.m. EDT Monday) to give Israel a chance to "stop assassination and stop killing and destruction."

"We are going to stop our military actions in our lands," read the leaflet released by military wings of Hamas and Fatah.

Such a joint statement is unusual,

and a Hamas leader in Ramallah, Hassan Yousef, said today he was not sure it was authentic. But neither he nor any other leaders of the two groups would say the statement was wrong.

Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon declared a unilateral cease-fire two weeks ago, but Palestinians dismissed it as a publicity stunt.

NATIONAL
 SANDPOINT, Idaho — Sheriff's deputies have recovered ammunition and five guns amid the feces-strewn squalor where the six McGuckin children lived in the north Idaho woods.

The arrest of their mother, JoAnn, last week prompted the children to hole up in the ramshackle home for five days, keeping officials at bay with the help of their 27 dogs. The children surrendered to sheriff's deputies Saturday and were taken to a hospital.

A hearing was scheduled today to

determine if they should remain in state custody or be returned to her care.

JoAnn McGuckin, 46, was arrested on a felony child neglect charge. But on Monday Judge Barbara Buchanan said she would release her if McGuckin agreed to not violate custodial orders involving six of her children and not to contact them without authorization.

McGuckin's lawyer, Bryce Powell, told the judge his client would not accept the conditions.

During their initial search of the property on Monday, prosecutor Phil Robinson said Bonner County sheriff's deputies recovered the firearms and found a house littered with dog feces. Detectives also found a full bucket in the bathroom that the children were using as an indoor toilet after the home's water was shut off, he said.

ALLIANCE, Ohio — Residents of

this small town are holding their breath — literally and figuratively — to see if an ill teen-ager becomes the third victim of a meningitis outbreak that has already killed two high school students.

Some residents have donned surgical masks. Store shelves are being emptied of disinfectant wipes. Fear and confusion have spread in and around this blue-collar city of 23,000 in northeast Ohio.

Two Beloit West Branch High School students, Jonathan Stauffer, 15, and Kelly Coblentz, 16, died more than a week ago after contracting a blood infection caused by a strain of the bacteria *Neisseria meningitidis*. School officials suspect the two, who were friends, may have shared a water bottle at a school picnic last month.

Christin Van Camp, 18, a student at Marlinton High School, about 15 miles away, was diagnosed Saturday with a bacteria which causes meningitis, a disease of the brain, and meningococemia, a blood infection. She remained in intensive care Monday

night.

Local and state health officials and the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention were awaiting test results today to see if Van Camp has the same strain of the bacteria as the other two. If so, thousands of people in and around Alliance may have to be vaccinated.

LIVINGSTON, Texas — Frustrated and angry, the family of murder victim Pamela Moseley Carpenter say they'll keep fighting to see the mentally retarded man convicted of her killing put to death.

"Pam wouldn't have quit on us and we're not going to quit on her," Ellen May, Carpenter's niece, said Monday after the U.S. Supreme Court threw out the death sentence of Johnny Paul Penry, who was convicted of Carpenter's 1979 murder and sentenced to die twice.

The high court, in a 6-3 decision Monday, said jurors in Penry's case did

not have clear instructions on how to weigh his mental condition when they decided Penry should die by lethal injection.

The case of Penry, whose lawyers say has the mind of a 7-year-old and plays with coloring books, reversed a federal appeals court that upheld the jury instructions.

The Supreme Court did not rule on the constitutionality of executing the mentally retarded. That will be argued in the fall in a North Carolina case.

CULPEPER, Va. — Six people have been charged in a deadly soccer game brawl that authorities say began on the sidelines with combatants using knives and machetes.

Milton Grijalva, of Fredericksburg, died Sunday shortly after being stabbed.

At least three others were injured, including Roger Condes, 21, and Israel Jimenez, 21, who suffered stab wounds to the neck and lungs.



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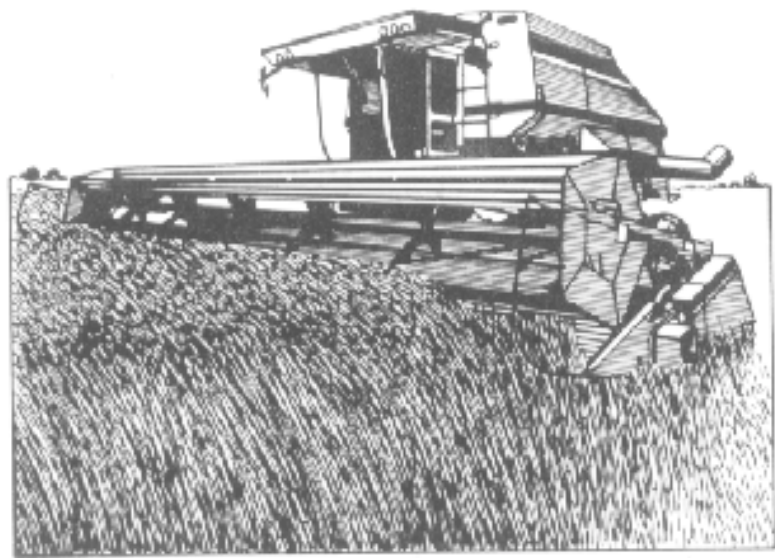
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