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| <p>A Hero teacher who saved the life of a seriously ill pupil by giving her one of his kidney is to be honoured with an MBE. Ray Coe stepped in to rescue Alya Ahmed Ali, 13, after learning she was desperate for a donor. The 53-year-old father-of-one said he was left shocked and proud after learning he had been recognised in the Queen's New Year Honours list. Teacher Ray Coe, pictured left, is set to be awarded an MBE after he stepped in to rescue pupil, Alya Ahmed Ali, 13, pictured right, after learning she was desperate for a kidney donor . The special needs coordinator at Royal Docks Community School, Custom House, east London, has been awarded the gong for services to education and the community. He took part in the life-saving kidney transplant to rescue Alya, who suffers from a deadly condition called hydrocephalus, or water on the brain, which has led to severe learning difficulties. They have since become very close - and Mr Coe even spent part of Christmas with Alya and her grateful family. 'It was a bit of a shock to be made an MBE,' said modest Mr Coe. 'I was not expecting it at all. The special needs coordinator at Royal Docks Community School, Custom House, east London, pictured above with Alya, has been awarded the gong for services to education and the community . Mr Coe, pictured with Alya and her father Ahmed Ali, said he was still a bit 'perplexed' and added: 'I don't see it as anything that no-one else would do' 'It's a very proud moment and there's a huge sense of honour.It seems like it's just spiralled. 'I never thought for a moment that it would become as big a story as it did. 'I'm still a bit perplexed, because I don't see it as anything that no-one else would do. 'For me the greatest thing to come out of it has been becoming a real part of Alya's family.' Mr Coe is a teacher at Royal Docks Community School in east London, where Alya is a pupil . Alya's dad, Ahmed Ali, 47, of Stratford, east London, said after Ray brought his daughter back from the brink: 'He has given Alya much more than just the gift of life.He's an amazing man, we owe him so much.' School head Wendy Bower also saluted Mr Coe, saying: 'Ray has gone above and beyond with the call of duty with this selfless and noble act. 'He's a very humble and modest man.The whole staff are in admiration for his kindness. 'He has given a new life to Alya and her whole family.' Summary: Teacher Ray Coe gave pupil Alya Ahmed Ali,13, one of his kidneys . The teenager desperately needed a donor after suffering from renal failure . The father-of-one, 53, has been awarded an MBE in the New Year Honours . He said he was not expecting it, but described it as a proud moment.</p> | <p>A teacher saved a pupil's life by donating a kidney. The pupil, Alya Ahmed Ali, had renal failure and needed a donor. The teacher, Ray Coe, was honored with an MBE for his selfless act.</p> | <p>Teacher Ray Coe, from Royal Docks Community School in east London, saved the life of his student Alya Ahmed Ali, 13, by donating one of his kidneys. Alya, who suffers from hydrocephalus, was in desperate need of a donor. Mr. Coe's selfless act earned him an MBE in the New Year Honours list for his services to education and the community. Despite his modesty, he expressed pride in the recognition. The gesture has deeply touched Alya's family and the school community, with Alya's father expressing immense gratitude and the school head praising Mr. Coe's selflessness.</p> |
| <p>(CNN) -- Palestinian journalists are finding reporting increasingly difficult in the face of the growing abuse toward them by Palestinian security forces in the West Bank and Gaza, according to a report released Wednesday by Human Rights Watch. The report, "No News is Good News: Abuses Against Journalists by Palestinian Security Forces," criticizes Palestinian Authority forces in the West Bank and Hamas security forces in Gaza, saying they are abusing local journalists and limiting press freedom in the Palestinian territories. The 35-page report focuses on seven incidents in the West Bank and two in Gaza, saying they are "cases in which security forces tortured, beat, and arbitrarily detained journalists, confiscated their equipment and barred them from leaving the West Bank and Gaza." Human Rights Watch cites a report issued by the Palestinian Center for Development and Media Freedom that says there was a 45% increase in the number of physical attacks, arrests, confiscation of equipment and limitation of movement in the year 2010. "We respect the Human Rights Watch report and other human rights organizations in what they do on the ground, and we have the readiness to investigate each case," said Maj. Gen. Adnan Dmeiri, spokesman for the Palestinian Authority security services. But, he said, "Why don't they consult us and ask us ... before publishing these reports?" He said the security services will investigate and "bring people to justice. The PA has no agenda to violate the rights of human beings and especially the rights of the journalists. We trust our justice system and the freedom of journalists is a priority of all things." Most of the abuses against journalists are connected to the rift between Fatah, which controls the West Bank's Palestinian Authority, and Hamas, which controls Gaza, according to the report. Pro-Hamas journalists are targeted by the Palestinian security forces in the West Bank and pro-Fatah journalists are targeted by the Hamas security in Gaza. The report stresses that the West Bank security forces have "virtual impunity for serious human rights violations" and states that the "utter failure of the (Palestinian Authority) leadership to address the prevailing culture of impunity for such abuses suggests that they reflect government policy." "We don't accept the comparison between us and the militia in Gaza," Dmeiri said. He said his organization has no political agenda and "we don't hold and detain people on their background. We detain people if they have criminal or security threats or matters that threaten the internal security." Large sums are donated to the Palestinian Authority security forces in the West Bank by the United States and the European Union. Human Rights Watch calls on the donor countries to condition their support to those security services by making sure that Palestinian Authority officials investigate and punish security personnel for their abuses. Attacks on International journalists in Gaza also have increased in the past couple of months. In March 2011, as journalists were covering a demonstration in Gaza calling for reconciliation between Fatah and Hamas, the offices of Reuters, CNN and NHK were raided by Hamas security forces. Efforts to get a response from Hamas officials were not immediately successful. The Tel Aviv-based Foreign Press Association released a statement expressing its "grave concern" that Hamas security forces "brutally attacked photographers and cameramen, beating them, breaking equipment and confiscating photos and video footage." The organization called the developments the latest in a "string of chilling attacks on reporters in Gaza." The United States and European Union have</p> | <p>Palestinian security forces abuse journalists and limit press freedom in the West Bank and Gaza, according to a report by Human Rights Watch. The report criticizes the Palestinian Authority and Hamas for their role in the incidents. The rift between Fatah and Hamas is the main cause of the violence.</p> | |

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| <p>designated Hamas as a terrorist organization. Human Rights Watch describes itself on its website as "one of the world's leading independent organizations dedicated to defending and protecting human rights." CNN's Kareem Khadder contributed to this report. Summary: NEW: Palestinian security forces say they will investigate the allegations . The Human Rights Watch report focuses on seven incidents in the West Bank and two in Gaza . Journalists were "tortured, beat, and arbitrarily detained," the report says . The rift between Fatah and Hamas is behind most of the incidents, it says.</p> | | |
| <p>WASHINGTON (CNN) -- Terrorists are likely to use a weapon of mass destruction somewhere in the world in the next five years, a blue-ribbon panel assembled by Congress has concluded. Police watch over travelers at New York's Grand Central Terminal before Thanksgiving. They are more likely to use a biological weapon than a nuclear one -- and the results could be devastating, the chairman of the commission told CNN. "The consequences of a biological attack are almost beyond comprehension. It would be 9/11 times 10 or a hundred in terms of the number of people who would be killed," former Sen. Bob Graham said. He cited the flu virus that killed millions of people in 1918 as an example. "Today it is still in the laboratory, but if it should get out and into the hands of scientists who knew how to use it for a violent purpose, we could have multiple times the 40 million people who were killed 100 years ago," he said. Watch how officials worry about a biological terror attack » . The U.S. government "needs to move more aggressively to limit" the spread of biological weapons, the commission said in its report. Graham warned that such measures would be costly, but were necessary. "The leadership of this country and the world will have to decide how much of a priority ... they place on avoiding the worst weapons in the world getting in the hands of the worst people in the world," he said. "It is not going to be cheap. It is not going to be accomplished without some sacrifices. It won't be accomplished without putting this issue ahead of some other competing national and international goals. But I think our safety and security depend upon doing so," he added. Graham said a biological attack was more likely than a nuclear one because it would be easier to carry out. Biological weapons "are more available," he said. "Anthrax is a natural product of dead animals. Other serious pathogens are available in equally accessible forms." "There are so many scientists who have the skills to convert a pathogen from benign, helpful purposes into an illicit, very harmful weapon," he added. But the commission warned that there is also a threat of nuclear terrorism, both because more countries are developing nuclear weapons and because some existing nuclear powers are expanding their arsenals. "Terrorist organizations are intent on acquiring nuclear weapons," said the report, which was published Tuesday on the Internet and will be officially released Wednesday. CNN obtained a copy of the report Monday evening. It cited testimony before the commission from former Sen. Sam Nunn, who said that the "risk of a nuclear weapon being used today is growing, not receding." The report recommends a range of measures, including increased security and awareness at biological research labs and strengthening international treaties against the spread of biological and nuclear weapons. "Many biological pathogens and nuclear materials around the world are poorly secured -- and thus vulnerable to theft by those who would put these materials to harmful use, or would sell them on the black market to potential terrorists," the report warned. The commission expressed particular concern about the nuclear programs of Iran and North Korea, and about Pakistan, which it described as "the intersection of nuclear weapons and terrorism." While observing that Pakistan is a U.S. ally, the report said, "the next terrorist attack against the United States is likely to originate from within the Federally Administered Tribal Areas" in Pakistan. The tribal areas lie in northwest Pakistan where the government exerts little control; the United States says it is a haven for militants from both Pakistan and neighboring Afghanistan. Congress created the commission to investigate and report on WMD and terrorism in line with a recommendation from the 9/11 Commission, which compiled a report on the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks on the United States. Commissioners heard testimony from more than 250 experts from around the world over the course of their six-month investigation. CNN's Jeanne Meserve contributed to this report. Summary: NEW: Next terror attack on U.S. likely to originate in Pakistan tribal areas, report says. Terrorists with biological weapons could kill millions, panel's chairman says. Biological attack more likely than nuclear attack, report says. Number of nations with nuclear weapons also growing, panel says.</p> | <p>A possible terrorist attack on the U.S. using a biological weapon in the next five years is likely to originate in Pakistan's tribal areas, a blue-ribbon panel has warned. The chairman of the commission said such an attack could kill millions and that the consequences would be devastating. He cited the flu virus that killed millions of people in 1918 as an example. The report also said that a biological attack was more likely than a nuclear one because it would be easier to carry out. The commission recommended a range of measures, including increased security and awareness at biological research labs and strengthening international treaties against the spread of biological and nuclear weapons. The report expressed particular concern about the nuclear programs of Iran and North Korea, and about Pakistan, which it described as a haven for militants from both Pakistan and Afghanistan. The U.S. government "needs to move more aggressively to limit" the spread of biological weapons, the commission said. The report was published on the Internet and will be officially released Wednesday.</p> | |
| <p>The U.S. Supreme Court on Tuesday refused to stop Texas from implementing a part of a new abortion law that requires doctors to get admitting privileges at a hospital within 30 miles of the clinic where they're providing abortion services. A federal appeals court had reinstated the key part of the law, which is considered among the most restrictive in the country. Abortion-rights groups, which say more than a third of centers that had provided abortions in Texas have since stopped, then asked the Supreme Court to overturn the appeals court ruling. "We may not vacate a stay entered by a court of appeals unless that court clearly and 'demonstrably' erred in its application of 'accepted standards,'" Justice Antonin Scalia wrote in support of Tuesday's order. "Reasonable minds can perhaps disagree about whether the Court of Appeals should have granted a stay in this case. But there is no doubt that the applicants have not carried their heavy burden of showing that doing so was a clear violation of accepted legal standards -- which do not include a special 'status quo' standard for laws affecting abortion," he wrote. Four justices -- Stephen Breyer, Ruth Bader Ginsburg, Sonia Sotomayor and Elena Kagan -- dissented. Justices dismiss state law restricting medical abortions . The original lawsuit, filed in U.S. District Court in Austin by Planned Parenthood on behalf of more than a dozen women's health care providers across Texas, alleged the state's new abortion law violates the constitutional rights of women and puts unreasonable demands on doctors who perform abortions. The bill originally failed to gain approval because of a</p> | <p>The U.S. Supreme Court declined to halt Texas' implementation of a controversial abortion law that requires doctors to have admitting privileges at nearby hospitals. Abortion-rights groups have challenged the law, which they say is one of the most restrictive in the country, with more than a third of Texas abortion clinics ceasing operations. Justice Antonin Scalia wrote in support of the stay, stating that the court would not vacate it unless there was clear error in applying legal standards. He argued that the applicants did not meet the burden of proof. A group of four justices dissented, expressing their disagreement with the decision.</p> | <p>The U.S. Supreme Court declined to block a restrictive abortion law in Texas, which requires doctors to obtain admitting privileges at nearby hospitals. The decision, supported by Justice Antonin Scalia, drew dissent from four justices. Planned Parenthood filed a lawsuit against the law, arguing it violates women's rights. State Senator Wendy Davis criticized the decision, while Governor Rick Perry praised it, emphasizing Texas' commitment to protecting the "culture of life."</p> |

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| <p>Democratic filibuster led by state Sen. Wendy Davis. Gov. Rick Perry then called the Legislature into a second special session to continue consideration of the bill. Davis, who is running for governor, blasted Tuesday's decision. "Clinics will close and women's health will be hurt because of this law. This is an abuse of power by politicians in Austin. I trust women to make their own decisions and will continue to work to make sure that women and mothers are safe and have access to adequate health care," she said in a statement. Perry cheered the ruling. "This is good news both for the unborn and for the women of Texas, who are now better protected from shoddy abortion providers operating in dangerous conditions. As always, Texas will continue doing everything we can to protect the culture of life in our state," he said. Supreme Court justices dismiss another Oklahoma law on abortion . Summary: Four U.S. Supreme Court justices dissent in the ruling .</p> <p>Wendy Davis: "This is an abuse of power by politicians"</p> <p>Texas governor vows to protect the "culture of life in our state"</p> | | |
| <p>(CNN) -- Tour de France race director Christian Prudhomme has confirmed the 2013 race -- the centenary edition -- will start on the French island of Corsica. Corsica, which lies off the southern French coast, will host the first three stages of the race from Porto-Vecchio to Calvi, the first time the Tour has ever visited. Prudhomme told AFP: "For the hundredth edition of the race, we wanted to go somewhere new, somewhere spectacular. "In Corsica, we have all of that. We have everything in place for an enchanting start to the race," he added. The opening 201.5km stage from Porto-Vecchio to Bastia is likely to favor the sprinters, while the 153km second stage from Bastia to Ajaccio, is expected to see the climbers come to the fore. The third stage is relatively short, just 145km from Ajaccio to Calvi. Every French region has hosted a stage of the Tour but the race has never previously crossed over to Corsica, the birthplace of Napoleon Bonaparte, for logistical reasons. The 2012 Tour de France will begin in the Belgian city of Liege on June 30. Summary: The 2013 Tour de France will start from the French island of Corsica .</p> <p>Three stages will be held on the island, the first time the Tour has visited .</p> <p>2013 marks the 100th edition of the biggest cycle race in the world .</p> | <p>The 2013 Tour de France will start from the French island of Corsica, which is the first time the race has visited the island. This marks the 100th edition of the biggest cycle race in the world.</p> | <p>The 2013 Tour de France, marking its 100th edition, will commence on the French island of Corsica, a first in its history. Corsica will host the first three stages of the race, from Porto-Vecchio to Calvi, offering a mix of terrain favoring both sprinters and climbers. This decision aims to infuse novelty and spectacle into the prestigious race.</p> |
| <p>ISLAMABAD, Pakistan (CNN) -- Shazia knows what she sees when she looks in the mirror: a woman, feminine, delicate, attracted to beauty. But when others look at Shazia they see something else: a misfit. Shazia dances for the cameras at a party. "People start staring at me in such a manner as if an animal from the jungle has come into the city." Shazia says. Shazia belongs to Pakistan's community of eunuchs. It is a term here that loosely refers to transsexuals, transvestites or hermaphrodites, like Shazia, who are born with both male and female sex organs. For Shazia what nature created, has made a life of hell. "I get so confused. I feel very strange that Allah could have made me a boy, or he could have made me a girl, but this way, neither boy nor girl. This life is very strange. It is a bad life," Shazia said. "I do not want to accept this life. Had it been legal to commit suicide I would have done it." When she was a child, Shazia said she had no doubt that she felt more a girl than a boy. Watch Shazia handle stares from men Â» . "When I used to go to school there used to be benches for boys on one side and girls on the other; my teacher always made me sit with the girls." she said. Shazia left home when she was in her early teens. She said it was to save her family embarrassment and shame. Like other eunuchs in Pakistan, she has lived in colonies. They are often shunned by their families and forced to make a living by begging or as prostitutes. The colonies can be brutal places, where young people are often beaten and exploited. When Shazia was 17, she says she was drugged and the head of the colony performed brutal surgery severing Shazia's penis. But Shazia has survived the taunts, the humiliation and the savagery; now she is fighting back. Shazia has formed an action group and is campaigning for eunuchs like her to get proper recognition. Right now her state identity card lists her as a male. She wants to be counted as a whole person. Shazia has found a champion, human rights lawyer, Muhammad Aslan Khaki. Dr. Khaki presented a petition to the Supreme Court, leading to the first register of eunuchs in Pakistan. The court has ordered Pakistan's government departments to carry out a survey and recommend measures to fully integrate eunuchs into society without prejudice. In earlier centuries eunuchs were seen as having the power to bring good luck. For Shazia and others, their luck may finally be changing. Summary: Pakistan's eunuch community campaigns for proper recognition .</p> <p>In Pakistan the term covers transsexuals, transvestites, hermaphrodites .</p> <p>Shazia, a hermaphrodite, tells how her penis was removed at 17 .</p> <p>She says she feels she is a woman, but her identity card calls her male .</p> | <p>Pakistan's eunuch community campaigns for proper recognition.</p> <p>Shazia, a hermaphrodite, tells how her penis was removed at 17. She says she feels she is a woman, but her identity card calls her male.</p> | <p>Shazia, a member of Pakistan's eunuch community, campaigns for recognition and rights. Eunuchs in Pakistan, including transsexuals, transvestites, and hermaphrodites, face societal rejection and often resort to begging or prostitution. Shazia's struggle with her identity is compounded by a lack of legal recognition. Despite enduring brutal surgery at 17, she fights for proper recognition and integration into society. With the support of human rights lawyer Muhammad Aslan Khaki, efforts are underway to address this issue, including a petition to the Supreme Court for official recognition and integration measures.</p> |
| <p>By . Harriet Hernando . An elderly man was filmed riding his mobility scooter down a street – even though it was flooded and had turned into a river. While cars lay abandoned in the road, the unnamed pensioner ploughed on regardless, much to the hilarity of the bystanders filming him. The incredible video was shot in Arnhem, Netherlands, when it was blighted with flooding after the river Rhine burst its banks. The low-lying Netherlands has been fighting back water for more than a thousand years when farmers first built dikes to protect their land. Now a complicated network of canals and pumping stations cover the country keeping it high and dry. But as this video shows, a bit of flooding is nothing the Dutch can’t handle. The news comes as a British pensioner caused chaos on the M1 motorway by riding his scooter the wrong way down the hard shoulder. The 85-year-old escaped unharmed after being escorted home by the police. Making waves: Pensioner drives down the flooded road where others were forced to abandon their cars in Arnhem, Netherlands . Summary: The elderly man drives down the road where cars lie abandoned .</p> <p>He shows that a bit of flooding is nothing the Dutch can't handle .</p> <p>Is filmed by amused onlookers as he battles through the floods .</p> | <p>A Dutch pensioner drives through flooded streets, causing amusement among onlookers. The Netherlands has a long history of fighting water, with a complex network of canals and pumping stations keeping the country dry. Despite the flooding, the pensioner shows that the Dutch can handle it.</p> | <p>In Arnhem, Netherlands, an elderly man fearlessly navigates his mobility scooter down a flooded street, amusing bystanders who filmed the scene. Despite abandoned cars and submerged roads due to the Rhine river flooding, the man's journey highlights the Dutch resilience against water, aided by their extensive canal and pumping system.</p> |

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| <p>By . Jessica Jerreat . A Minnesota air stewardess has finally welcomed home her three adopted daughters seven years after she first met the girls in a Guatemalan orphanage. Suann Hibbs met her daughters in 2008, but when the Guatemalan government cut back on foreign adoptions the family were left in legal limbo. It took seven years, 30 trips abroad and a lot of help from Senator Amy Klobuchar before officials finally allowed Ms Hibbs to take the three sisters home last week. Scroll down for video . Mother's love: Suann Hibbs hugs one of her three adopted daughters . It is a dream come true for Ms Hibbs who had been keen to become a mother for years. 'I still feel like this is so surreal. I . mean, I just have to pinch myself. When they come in, in the morning . and crawl in bed with me. I just have goose bumps thinking about it,' she told CBS News. When she first met the children, twins Savanna and Sophia were one-year-olds and their sister Sydney was a newborn. 'I just fell in love with them as soon as I saw them. I just thought morally, I just can't let them go,' Ms Hibbs, who is not married and found the girls through a church adoption group, said. The adoption agency Ms Hibbs had used estimated that within six to nine months the paperwork would be completed and the girls would be with her in Edina, Minneapolis. But the process was massively delayed as developing countries including Guatemala started to restrict foreign adoptions while they tackled problems with fraud and child trafficking. Family: Twins Savanna and Sophia were a year old and their little sister Sydney was a newborn when Suann first met them . Growing up: By the time the sisters finally arrived at their new home the twins were 8 and Sydney was 7 . In November 2007, her adoption case was put on hold during a country-wide investigation, and it looked as though she may lose her children. While the case was being slowly processed the three sisters were moved between several orphanages and foster homes. The constant moving made it hard for Ms Hibbs to keep track of them, and also meant that the girls have not had any formal education. 'They needed a permanent home,' Ms Klobuchar, who met Guatemalan officials on Ms Hibbs' behalf, said. Settling in: After living in several orphanages the sisters finally have a permanent place to call home . 'It took a little time, but . they got to the right place and allowed these children to be adopted.' She added: 'A lot of times when you personally meet . with the ambassador like I did and you tell the story of these three . little girls and this mother who has been trying for seven years, they . listen.' Although the girls, now aged eight and seven, speak only a little English, they are settling into their new home well. They will start school in a couple of weeks and attend summer classes to help them catch up with their new classmates. Summary: Suann Hibbs was left in legal limbo after Guatemala put hold on foreign adoptions . Air stewardess turned to senator for help to bring the sisters back to Minneapolis .</p> | <p>A Minnesota air stewardess finally welcomed her three adopted daughters home after seven years of legal limbo. The sisters were adopted from a Guatemalan orphanage and had been living in various orphanages and foster homes. With the help of Senator Amy Klobuchar, the family was finally able to bring the girls to Minneapolis. The sisters are settling into their new home and will start school soon.</p> | <p>Suann Hibbs, a Minnesota air stewardess, faced legal limbo when Guatemala halted foreign adoptions, leaving her unable to bring her three adopted daughters home. After seven years, 30 trips abroad, and assistance from Senator Amy Klobuchar, the sisters finally arrived in Minneapolis. Despite the challenges, the girls, aged eight and seven, are settling into their new home and preparing to start school soon.</p> |
| <p>Paris (CNN) -- French officials Tuesday condemned an Israeli airstrike on Gaza that wounded its consul, his wife and their daughter, calling on Israel to avoid civilian casualties. "France strongly deplores the consequences of this air strike," a statement from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Paris announced. "While France is committed to security in Israel, it reaffirms the imperative need to avoid attacks on civilians. This imperative was reaffirmed to the Israeli authorities." The consul, Majdi Shakoura, was at home with his family in the northern end of Gaza when the airstrike hit about 200 meters (650 feet) away, the Foreign Ministry said. The strike blew out their windows, and they were struck by shards of flying glass, the ministry said. Capt. Aryeh Shalikar, an Israeli military spokesman, told CNN the airstrike was aimed at Palestinian militants who fired a rocket into southern Israel late Sunday. Shalikar said the Israel Defense Forces "never received any official statement from any source" regarding injuries to Shakoura or his relatives. "The IDF wishes to convey that missiles are being fired at Israeli civilians from terrorists, and it has no intention of harming civilians when it returns fire at terrorists," he said. Palestinian security and medical officials said one person died and several others were wounded in the airstrike, which they said struck a Hamas naval building in northern Gaza. A Hamas security official said two Israeli rockets struck the building. France has a consulate and a cultural center in Gaza "to support the population," the Foreign Ministry said. France has helped build water and sewer systems and rebuild hospitals in Gaza, which is ruled by the Islamic movement Hamas. The United States, European Union and Israel classify Hamas as a terrorist organization, and Israel has maintained a controversial blockade of Gaza since Hamas took power in 2007. CNN's Naima Benallal in Paris and Izzy Lemberg in Jerusalem contributed to this report. Summary: NEW: French consul, family hit by flying glass, ministry says . France calls on Israel to avoid civilian casualties . Israel says the strike was in response to Palestinian rocket fire .</p> | <p>France condemns an Israeli airstrike that injured its consul, his wife, and their daughter. The French government urges Israel to avoid civilian casualties and emphasizes the importance of security in Israel while condemning attacks on civilians. The consul and his family were at home when the airstrike hit their house, causing injuries and damage. Israel claims the strike was in response to Palestinian rocket fire, but Palestinian security and medical officials say one person died and several others were wounded. France has a consulate and a cultural center in Gaza to support the population, and it has helped build infrastructure in the area. The United States, European Union, and Israel classify Hamas as a terrorist organization, and Israel maintains a blockade of Gaza.</p> | |
| <p>(CNN)Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi has called for a "religious revolution," asking Muslim leaders to help in the fight against extremism. In a speech celebrating the birthday of the Prophet Muá,ammad, which coincided with New Year's Day, he said they had no time to lose. "I say and repeat, again, that we are in need of a religious revolution. You imams are responsible before Allah. The entire world is waiting on you. The entire world is waiting for your word ... because the Islamic world is being torn, it is being destroyed, it is being lost. And it is being lost by our own hands," el-Sisi said. "We need a revolution of the self, a revolution of consciousness and ethics to rebuild the Egyptian person -- a person that our country will need in the near future," the President said. El-Sisi, himself a pious man, was elected in May after leaving the military to run for the office. A former defense minister, he led the ouster of Mohamed Morsy -- the Islamist who was Egypt's first democratically elected President -- and has long positioned himself as a more secular option, and defender against extremist views. "It's inconceivable that the thinking that we hold most sacred</p> | <p>Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi calls for a "religious revolution," asking Muslim leaders to help in the fight against extremism. He says they have no time to lose and the Islamic world is being torn apart. "It's inconceivable that the thinking that we hold most sacred should cause the entire Islamic world to be a source of anxiety, danger, killing and destruction for the rest of the world," he says. He calls for a "religious revolution" and says they need a revolution of the self. "We will build</p> | |

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| <p>should cause the entire Islamic world to be a source of anxiety, danger, killing and destruction for the rest of the world. Impossible that this thinking -- and I am not saying the religion -- I am saying this thinking," el-Sisi said. He continued: "This is antagonizing the entire world. It's antagonizing the entire world! Does this mean that 1.6 billion people (Muslims) should want to kill the rest of the world's inhabitants -- that is 7 billion -- so that they themselves may live? Impossible!â€" While el-Sisi's speech included some powerful language, H.A. Hellyer, a nonresident fellow at the Center for Middle East Policy at the Brookings Institution and research associate at the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University, said the President has made similar statements in the past. "There is little to suggest (el-Sisi) is interested in some sort of Lutheran reformation of Islam. By all accounts, he's quite comfortable with the prevailing leadership of the Azhari establishment. "If anything, he wants to empower it further in order to push forward a counternarrative against radical Islamism. The real question is: How credible can such a state-empowered counternarrative be?" Hellyer said. On Tuesday, the President visited the main Coptic cathedral in Cairo to attend a Christmas mass and make a short speech. He is the first president to attend such a mass since the revolution. "We will build our country together. We will accommodate each other. We will love each other," el-Sisi said in that speech. Summary: President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi speaks to celebrate the birthday of the Prophet Muá¸ammad .</p> <p>"We need a revolution of the self, a revolution of consciousness," he says .</p> | <p>our country together. We will accommodate each other. We will love each other," he says in a Christmas mass speech.</p> | |
| <p>(CNN) -- A 24-year-old woman in a hospital bed fighting off flesh-eating bacteria has to be told repeatedly -- each time she wakes up -- what has happened, her parents told CNN on Monday. The medication Aimee Copeland is given leads her to forget each time she falls asleep. "It's scary to her," said her mother, Donna Copeland. She asks where she is and "doesn't understand." Yet Aimee Copeland -- who has lost a leg and part of her abdomen to the virulent bacteria and may lose more, including her fingers -- is keeping her spirits strong, her father said. Can I get this flesh-eating bacteria? "We really don't see the suffering side of it. We see the miraculous survival," Andy Copeland said. "I think that's the story that's inspired us, that's the story that's inspired, I think, the nation at this point." On Facebook, he wrote that doctors have used words like "astonishing," "confounding" and "mind-boggling" to describe the young woman's recovery. The master's student in psychology at the University of West Georgia was out with friends on May 1 near the Little Tallapoosa River, about 50 miles west of Atlanta, when she grabbed onto a homemade zip line. It snapped. The accident left her with a gash in her left calf that took 22 staples to close. Three days later, when the pain continued, a friend took her to an emergency room, where she was diagnosed with necrotizing fasciitis and flown to Augusta for surgery. She had contracted the flesh-devouring Aeromonas hydrophila. The bacterium is "remarkably common in the water and in the environment," according to Dr. Buddy Creech, an assistant professor of pediatric infectious diseases at Vanderbilt University. "When it gets into those deeper tissues, it has a remarkable ability to destroy the tissues that surround it in sort of this hunt for nutrition," he said. "When it does that, those tissues die, and you see the inflammation and the swelling and the destruction that can be very difficult to control." In most cases, people contract the bacteria by swallowing them, resulting in diarrhea. Aimee Copeland's case was much more rare. Her wound became infected, "and the infection (ran) wild," Creech said. A blog set up by the University of West Georgia psychology department said Aimee Copeland will suffer the loss of her fingers. "However, physicians have hope of bringing life back to the palms of her hands, which could allow her the muscle control to use helpful prosthetics. They are awaiting a safe time before embarking on surgery for this." Speaking to CNN on Monday, her father said doctors were assessing "day by day, or even hour by hour." Copeland has told his daughter that one day, the family will celebrate Aimee Day -- when she will be able to breathe on her own. "We're going to celebrate that day forever for the rest of your life," he told her. "It's the day that my daughter was delivered from this horrible, horrible disease." If there's anything to be learned, Andy Copeland said, it's not to use homemade zip lines. Aimee Copeland's parents say that when she wakes up, she expresses concern about finishing her thesis. In her studies, she has focused on eco-psychology -- the idea that harmonizing with nature can be a powerful tool in ensuring one's psychological health and vitality. CNN's Josh Levs, Greg Botelho and Brooke Baldwin contributed to this report. Summary: The medication Aimee Copeland is given leads her to forget what has happened .</p> <p>She may lose her fingers .</p> <p>Doctors have already amputated one of her legs and part of her abdomen .</p> <p>Her father promises they will one day celebrate her ability to breathe on her own .</p> | <p>A 24-year-old woman fighting flesh-eating bacteria has to be told repeatedly what has happened. She may lose her fingers and has already lost a leg and part of her abdomen. Her father promises they will celebrate her ability to breathe on her own.</p> | <p>Aimee Copeland, 24, fights flesh-eating bacteria, but medication causes her to forget each time she wakes up. Despite losing a leg and part of her abdomen, she remains spirited. Doctors are assessing her condition, and her parents promise to celebrate her recovery. She may lose her fingers, but there's hope for prosthetics. Her studies in eco-psychology keep her focused, even amidst her ordeal.</p> |
| <p>A prankster dad may win the award for cruelest joke after he tricked his wife into thinking he threw his toddler son off of the balcony. Roman Atwood set up cameras and enlisted the help of his two sons in an elaborate attempt to frighten his unassuming wife and fool her into thinking he'd accidentally killed their toddler son. The stunt, which was posted on YouTube on November 30 and already has almost 5 million views, begins with Atwood playing with his son, who is dressed in a Spider-Man costume covering his face, on the top floor of their Los Angeles, California home. Like any other day: A loving mother returns to her home in Los Angeles where she finds her husband Roman Atwood playing with their toddler son who is dressed in a Spider-Man costume . The switcheroo: Roman Atwood enlists the help of his elder son who leads the toddler into the other room then hands his dad the small dummy dressed in the same costume as his son . The launch: Roman Atwood pretends to throw his son over the balcony as his wife lets out a shriek and rushes towards what she believes is her fallen son . Atwood and his son are greeted lovingly by the</p> | <p>Roman Atwood set up cameras and enlisted the help of his two sons in an elaborate attempt to frighten his unassuming wife. He pretended to throw their son, dressed in a Spider-Man suit, over the balcony by using a dummy dressed in the same costume. His wife was less than pleased and told him that he'd be sleeping on the couch.</p> | <p>Roman Atwood, a prankster dad, orchestrated an elaborate hoax to scare his wife, making her believe he had thrown their toddler son off the balcony. With the help of his sons, he replaced the child with a dummy dressed as Spider-Man and staged the fall. The prank, posted on YouTube, garnered millions of views but left his wife furious, sentencing him to sleep on the couch.</p> |

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| <p>boy’s mother, who is then sent downstairs 'to grab them some water' so that they can prepare the prank behind her back. Atwood enlists the help of his older son who leads his younger brother into the other room then substitutes the toddler for a dummy, which Atwood then tosses over the railing. His wife runs downstairs and screams in paralyzing fear as she sees the boy falling to the ground below and laying motionless on the ground as though he had died. She unveils the boy's mask to reveal a dummy under the costume and then proceeds to shoot a disgusted glance at her husband. 'Why would you do that?!' she screams still trembling in shock. 'It's just for fun,' Atwood responds as he shrugs his shoulders . She then sentences her husband to a lonely night of sleeping on the couch and gives him a little kick in the groin before she storms out of the room. Petrified: The concerned mother rushes towards the dummy she believes to be her badly injured son . Unmasked: the mother removes the mask to see the damage done and sees what she thought was her son is nothing more than a dummy . Horrified: Atwood's wife tells him that he'll be sleeping on the couch and gives him a kick to the groin before leaving the room in a huff . Summary: Roman Atwood set up cameras and enlisted the help of his two sons in an elaborate attempt to frighten his unassuming wife . Atwood pretends to throw their son, dressed in a Spider-Man suit, over the balcony by using a dummy dressed in the same costume . His wife was less than pleased and told him that he'd be sleeping on the couch .</p> | | |
| <p>John McCain's office is denying reports that Syrian rebels the senator was pictured with were responsible for the kidnap of Lebanese Shi'ites. According to the Lebanese press, two of the men pictured with Mr McCain had taken eleven people from Lebanon hostage. Nine of the pilgrims are still being held a year after they were taken hostage as they returned to Beirut from a pilgrimage in Iran. Rebel meeting: Senator John McCain has been accused of posing with members of Northern Storm . As negotiations continue for the release of the remaining hostages, the Daily Star in Beirut claims to have identified two of the men pictured with Mr McCain as being with the Northern Storm group believed to be behind the kidnapping. Mr McCain's spokesman Brian Rogers told Buzzfeed: 'A number of the Syrians who greeted . Senator McCain upon his arrival in Syria asked to take pictures with . him, and as always, the Senator complied.' He added it 'would be regrettable' if any of the men turned out to be the suspected kidnappers, Mohamed Nour and Abu Ibrahim. The senator's spokesman added that Mr McCain did not condone 'the kidnapping of Lebanese Shia pilgrims . or [have] any communication with those responsible'. Secret visit: John McCain made a brief stop in Syria to meet leaders of the rebel opposition on Monday . Anwar Ibrahim, one . of the men taken hostage by the Northern Storm group, claims he recognized . Mohammad Nour, chief spokesman and photographer for the kidnappers, . standing next to Mr McCain. 'I recognized him immediately. He was the photographer who was brought in to take our photos. He works with the kidnappers. He knows them very well,' Mr Ibrahim told the Daily Star. He also claims to have recognized another man associated with the hostage-takers. However, Mr Rogers said none of the people Mr McCain met on his brief trip to Syria on Monday shared the names of the kidnappers. 'As the Syrian Emergency Task Force has . said: "Senator McCain did not go to Syria to meet with anyone named . Mohamad Nour or Abu Ibrahim. Two members of our organization were . present in the meeting, and no one called himself by either name",' he added. The senator's spokesman suggested the story could be part of the Assad-regime's propaganda, adding: 'It’s not surprising that the . pro-Hezbollah forces supporting the Assad regime who originally promoted . this distortion would seek to smear anything and anyone supporting the . Syrian opposition.' Secret visit: Senator McCain poses with Syrians during his meeting with the rebel opposition fighting Assad . Mr McCain traveled to Syria to meet leaders of the rebel opposition, who have asked the U.S for weapons and airstrikes against Hezbollah and Assad's forces. Since the civil war began after peaceful protests were met with violence about two years ago, at least 80,000 people have been killed. Mr McCain has been critical of President Obama for not taking enough action in the crisis, according to Politico. Summary: Northern Storm members pictured with McCain, Lebanon claims . Kidnappers have been holding nine pilgrims hostage for a year .</p> | <p>The Daily Star in Beirut claims to have identified two of the men pictured with Senator McCain as being with the Northern Storm group believed to be behind the kidnapping of Lebanese Shi'ites. The senator's spokesman denies any communication with the suspected kidnappers and suggests the story could be part of the Assad-regime's propaganda.</p> | <p>Reports linking Syrian rebels pictured with Senator John McCain to the kidnapping of Lebanese Shi'ites are denied by McCain's office. Lebanese press alleges two men photographed with McCain are associated with the Northern Storm group, responsible for holding nine pilgrims hostage. McCain's spokesman asserts the senator had no knowledge of the men's identities, suggesting the accusations could be part of Assad regime's propaganda. McCain's visit to Syria aimed at supporting rebel opposition in their fight against Assad's forces amid the ongoing civil war.</p> |
| <p>(CNN) -- Cyprus, the tiny Mediterranean island bailed out a year ago, remains "in difficulty...but not as bad as one would have expected," its finance minister Harris Georgiades told CNN during an interview in the capital city Nicosia. The country, which was given a 10 billion euro (\$13.7 billion) injection by the European Union and IMF ago after its banking system collapsed, was the smallest of the euro economies to get help during the bloc's financial crisis. Unlike the Greek economy which has seen more than a quarter of its GDP wiped out during the past five years, the finance minister said that Cyprus will lose about half that. The European Commission is now forecasting growth in 2015 after a steep contraction of 4.8% this year and 6% percent last year. According to Georgiades, the situation is "bad and I have never tried to paint a rosy picture." The country has been "dealing with shortcomings and there were significant shortcomings, we have to admit." Cypriot banks were big buyers of Greek bonds during the pre-crisis boom, before the 2004 Athens Olympics and until the bottom fell out of economy in 2008. Cyprus, crippled by losses on Greek debt, set a precedent in the euro crisis by imposing losses on bank depositors. It was a move which infuriated savers, worried investors and pushed the euro crisis back into the headlines. But Georgiades said the country's main mistake was letting the crisis escalate. "We should have seen action both on behalf of the Cypriot authorities and the EU two years ago," he said. One of the key challenges during the rebuilding effort is dealing with an estimated \$40 billion of non-performing loans which are holding back fresh lending. When asked if a "bad bank" could be set up to absorb those loans, Georgiades said the banking sector and supervisory authorities "need to work in a coordinated effort</p> | <p>Cyprus, a small Mediterranean island, received a 10 billion euro bailout a year ago after its banking system collapsed. The country is now trying to recover and rebuild, but the situation is "bad" according to its finance minister Harris Georgiades. Cyprus is also dealing with its relationship with Russia, which is now being ostracized by the West. Russia is a significant investor in Cyprus, and the country is trying to balance its relationship with Russia while also dealing with the challenges of rebuilding its economy.</p> | <p>Cyprus, despite a challenging economic situation following its banking collapse and subsequent 10 billion euro bailout, is showing signs of recovery according to Finance Minister Harris Georgiades. The country, grappling with non-performing loans and strained relations with Russia amid geopolitical tensions, seeks coordinated efforts for rebuilding.</p> |

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| <p>to deal with this problem," but added, "I would say that all the possibilities should be left on the table." Meanwhile, Cyprus' relationship with Russia is under pressure as the West increases economic pressure on Vladimir Putin's government and his allies. Relations with the West fractured after Russia's military intervention in Crimea and its amassing of troops on Ukraine's border. Russians are strategic investors in Cyprus, and wealthy individuals have long been drawn to the island and its low tax rates. A total of \$30 billion has been invested by Russian companies over the past two decades, according to the Russian statistical agency ROSSTAT, putting Cyprus just behind the Netherlands as the top EU recipients. Georgiades said Cyprus -- along with its EU partners -- was supporting a "clear coherent common stance" and was not pushing toward a "new cold war." The country's stance is based on principles of "sovereign and human rights," Georgiades said. "We believe these principles are best served with well thought cool headed action and reaction and not a rushed move into a cold war mentality," he added. READ MORE: U.S. investors and the Cyprus mess . WATCH MORE: Could Cyprus be the next luxury yacht marina? Summary: Cyprus is starting to rebuild after its banking collapse a year ago, and 10 billion euro bailout .</p> <p>The island nation's finance minister Harris Georgiades says the situation "is bad"</p> <p>As the country tries to recover, it is also dealing with its relationship with Russia .</p> <p>Russia, now being ostracized by the West, is a significant investors in Cyprus .</p> | | |
| <p>(CNN) -- A Turkish television show is offering contestants what it claims is the "biggest prize ever" -- the chance for atheists to convert to one of the world's major religions. The TV show offers converts to Islam the chance to visit Mecca. The show, called "Tovbekarlar Yarisiyor," or "Penitents Compete," features a Muslim imam, a Catholic priest, a Jewish rabbi and a Buddhist monk attempting to persuade 10 atheists of the merits of their religion, according to CNN Turk. If they succeed, the contestants are rewarded with a pilgrimage to one of their chosen faith's most sacred sites -- Mecca for Muslims, Jerusalem for converts to Judaism, a trip to Tibet for Buddhists and the chance to visit Ephesus and the Vatican for Christians. Ahmet Ozdemir, deputy director of Turkish channel Kanal T, which will air the show from September, said the program aimed to "turn disbelievers on to God." "People are free to believe anything they want. Our program does not have a say," he said, according to Turkish newspaper Hurriyet. Contestants will be judged by a panel of eight theologians and religious experts prior to going on the show to make sure their lack of faith is genuine. But the show has been condemned by Turkish religious leaders. The head of the country's supreme council of religious affairs, Hamza Aktan, told CNN Turk that it was "disrespectful" to place different faiths in competition with each other and accused Kanal T of using religion to boost ratings. "To do such a thing for the sake of ratings, not only with Islam but with all religions is disrespectful," said Aktan. "Religion should not be the subject of this type of program." Although Turkey has a predominantly Muslim population and culture, religion is a sensitive subject because of the country's staunchly secular constitution which outlaws most displays of faith in public life. Last year the Islamist-influenced government of Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan clashed with the country's constitutional court when judges overturned the efforts of Erdogan's AK Party to lift a ban on female students wearing headscarves at public universities. Aylin Yazan at CNN Turk contributed to this story. Summary: Turkish TV show features imam, Catholic priest, Jewish rabbi, Buddhist monk .</p> <p>Religious leaders attempt to persuade atheists to "convert" to their faith .</p> <p>Show has prompted criticism from religious groups who say it is "disrespectful"</p> | <p>The news article reports on a Turkish TV show that offers atheists the chance to convert to Islam, Judaism, Buddhism, or Christianity in exchange for a pilgrimage to Mecca, Jerusalem, Tibet, Ephesus, or the Vatican. The show is criticized by religious leaders who say it is disrespectful and unfair to place different faiths in a competition. The article also mentions the recent clash between the Turkish government and the constitutional court over the ban on female students wearing headscarves at public universities.</p> | <p>A Turkish television show, "Penitents Compete," invites atheists to convert to one of the world's major religions, offering the chance to visit sacred sites like Mecca, Jerusalem, or Tibet as a reward. Featuring representatives from Islam, Christianity, Judaism, and Buddhism, the show aims to persuade contestants of the merits of each faith. However, it has faced criticism from religious leaders who deem it disrespectful to place different faiths in competition and use religion for ratings.</p> |
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