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Event Calendar

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Date	Event	Location/Time	Other Information
9-13 Apr 2018	LEIU/IALEIA Training Event	Marriott Hotel, 700 West Convention Way Anaheim, CA 92801 (714) 750-8000	http://www.ialeia.org/2018_conference.php
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HEADLINE	01/01 Seattle PD new interim chief
SOURCE	http://komonews.com/news/local/seattle-pd-gets-new-interim-chief
GIST	<p>SEATTLE -- Dressed in her workout clothes, only hours after going to bed after ringing in the new year with her predecessor, Seattle's newest police chief hefted boxes up and down the hall to her new office.</p> <p>On Monday, Carmen Best, a 26-year department veteran, took over the department as the interim leader. The 52-year-old has been the second-in-command, as deputy chief, for nearly three and a half years.</p> <p>"Of course my heart lies here in Seattle," Best said emphatically on Monday. "What would be better than to work your way through an organization that you love, in a city that you love, in a place that I'm from and end my career there."</p> <p>Best grew up in Tacoma and attended Eastern Washington University. After graduating, she enlisted in the Army then returned here to work at an insurance company. She said she met her husband, Larry Best, before joining the department. The couple have two grown daughters.</p> <p>She said she "took a chance and applied for the Seattle Police Department and I've never looked back."</p> <p>Best said that if someone asked her four years ago, when she was the captain of the South Precinct, that she'd be leading the department after Chief Kathleen O'Toole she would have been incredulous.</p> <p>"Four years ago I probably would not have seen myself being the Chief," Best said, adding that she's now "ready."</p> <p>Best said she has worked closely with O'Toole to learn how to lead the department. O'Toole, when she announced her resignation at City Hall last month, praised Best.</p> <p>Mayor Jenny Durkan, last month, announced that a search committee will help locate the next Chief of Police.</p> <p>"Whoever the next chief is will have a very large task of making sure that we continue reforms, that we stay in compliance and that we continually improve as a police department," Durkan said last month.</p>

	<p>O'Toole was brought in to help the department through Department of Justice oversight and reform. The department has been under federal oversight since 2012; they've been ordered to overhaul many policies including officers' use of excessive force.</p> <p>While the search committee will look across the country for a permanent replacement for O'Toole, many community members in Seattle support Best staying put.</p> <p>"I don't think there's anyone out there in America who can beat her record," said Rev. Harriett Walden. "She's come up through the ranks and there's a lot to be said about rank and file."</p> <p>Best put out a memo to officers just after taking over the department at midnight, a note to the public came out Monday morning. In it she said the department will focus on reducing crime, offering excellent service, be professional, be efficient and use data to fight crime.</p> <p>"Ultimately I really want to humanize the police department to the community we serve, so people realize we're a part of the community, not apart from the community," Best said.</p> <p>Best added that she will be naming her replacement as Deputy Chief, as well as filling a few other positions, on Tuesday.</p>
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HEADLINE	01/02 Africa heads in different directions
SOURCE	https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/jan/02/africa-heads-different-directions-politically-economically
GIST	<p>African leaders will meet in Addis Ababa at the end of January to discuss the good news and the bad across the continent. The 30th summit of the African Union will take place under the slogan "Towards a peaceful, prosperous and integrated Africa". The objective is a laudable one, but still distant.</p> <p>Alex Vines of the London thinktank Chatham House says that the watchwords of 2018 will not be "Africa rising", now broadly seen as overly optimistic, but "Africa diverging" – politically and economically.</p> <p>"The different paths that different parts of the continent are taking will be ever more apparent. So you'll have something pretty hopeless in central Africa and more positive trajectories in southern and western Africa. A general trend is the continued decline of longstanding leaders," Vines said.</p> <p>When Yahya Jammeh of Gambia refused to submit to the results of a general election that ended his 21-year rule in 2016, pressure from Senegal, Liberia and Nigeria forced him to step down. The example was noted elsewhere – as was the fall of Robert Mugabe after 37 years and the departure of José Eduardo Dos Santos in Angola after four decades.</p> <p>Many other long-standing rulers are looking increasingly fragile.</p> <p>In the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), where unrest, humanitarian need and economic decline are likely to intensify through 2018, Joseph Kabila, now in his 16th year of power, may be forced to hold elections and even to stand down.</p> <p>"He may be gone by the end of the year or about to go. He's a rich man but not a strong man. He's in place partly because the Kinshasa elite can't work out who they want to be his successor," said Vines.</p> <p>One early upset could be the premature end of Jacob Zuma's second term as president of South Africa. Theoretically in office until 2019, the election of Cyril Ramaphosa at the end of 2017 as leader of the ruling African National Congress, after a contentious party conference vote, may force him to step down.</p> <p>On the security front, tens and possibly hundreds of millions of people remain at risk of famine and related</p>

diseases such as cholera, while huge numbers are likely to be displaced. The DRC is now one of the biggest humanitarian crises in the world.

Rather than bringing stability, the prospect of elections in Libya and South Sudan are expected to exacerbate tensions and fuel violence, according to a recent report by Acaps, a non-profit venture that supports humanitarian aid workers with daily monitoring and analysis of 150 countries.

“If 2017 did not look good, predictions for 2018 are no better: violence and insecurity are likely to deteriorate in ...Democratic Republic of Congo, Libya, Ethiopia, Mali, Somalia,” the Acaps director, Lars Peter Nissen wrote.

But even in countries facing massive humanitarian crises there are places – often towns – that are doing better. The north-east of Nigeria has been devastated by the ongoing insurgency of Boko Haram, the Islamist militant movement. Yet Lagos is booming.

A key emerging trend that is likely to be reinforced in 2018 is Africa’s growing status as a frontline in the fight against Islamist extremism.

The US military has ramped up its presence across a swathe of the continent from the Lake Chad basin to the Horn and has intensified operations. These are likely to lead to increased casualties among all involved – US special forces, civilians and the militants.

French troops and tens of thousands operating under the authority of the United Nations or the African Union will also continue operations that at best are just about containing the spread of groups linked both to al-Qaida and the Islamic State.

Few are optimistic that such efforts will dramatically improve the situation.

Jihadist groups exploit opportunities provided by weak governance, said Stephanie Wolters, head of the peace and security research programme at the Institute for Security Studies in Pretoria.

“Insurgency, migration, trafficking, banditry all stem from the absence of a strong state that is delivering services to its people,” Wolters said.

Political and ethnic as well as religious violence across the continent have been rising since historic lows several years ago.

Not all is linked to extremist religious ideologies. Conflict between pastoralists and sedentary communities is likely to continue to intensify, exacerbated by climate change. East Africa is likely to suffer from extreme weather events, notably drought. The flow of migrants within Africa, or towards Europe, is unlikely to slow.

“Propping up heads of state who say they will crack down on terrorism or migration when these are the kinds of rulers and government which drive people to extreme measures like migration or joining a jihadi group is not a strategy that is going to bring results,” said Wolters.

There will be divergence, too, on the economic front. Growth in sub-Saharan Africa overall is forecast to rise to 3.4% in 2018 but with wide variations.

Political uncertainty has held growth back in the biggest economies on the continent. Ghana is tipped by the World Bank as the fastest growing economy in Africa next year, followed by Ethiopia and Tanzania.

A final divergence may be in relations with external powers. Washington’s interest in Africa is minimal, with scores of top official policy-making and ambassadorial posts still unfilled.

China, though its attitudes and interventions are frequently misrepresented, retains a strong focus on the

continent. France is likely to try to expand outside its traditional sphere of influence – as signalled by President Emmanuel Macron in November.

The UK will look to historic ties in places like Zimbabwe or Nigeria to project influence post-Brexit, though it may find imperial nostalgia or the advantages of the anglosphere have less attraction in Bulawayo or Abuja than in Tunbridge Wells.

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HEADLINE	01/01 NATO's logistical battle to deter Russia
SOURCE	https://www.ft.com/content/90345ab8-dff5-11e7-a8a4-0a1e63a52f9c
GIST	<p>When the last US Abrams battle tanks left Germany in 2013, it marked the end of a 69-year presence, and told of a western military alliance untroubled by potential problems on Europe's borders. Just a few years later American armour is again fanning out across the continent's east with a mission not just to show strength to an emboldened Russia, but to test whether the mundane matter of logistics might hobble Nato's response to any provocative action.</p> <p>The scores of US fighting vehicles that in September rolled on to the docks in Gdansk in Poland were the latest to join an urgent effort to test the obstacles to rapid Nato deployment in Europe.</p> <p>Russia's 2014 annexation of Crimea tops a list of security worries that have brought the "peace dividend" era after the fall of the Berlin Wall to an abrupt end. General Robert Neller, the US marine corps commandant, warned US troops stationed in Norway late last month that he felt "there's a war coming". His spokesperson later said the general did not believe a battle imminent, but was stressing the need "to be ready for the full spectrum of conflict".</p> <p>Just a week earlier, a senior Russian official had accused Nato of forcing Moscow against its will into "military competition in the centre of Europe".</p> <p>"After the wall came down . . . it didn't even occur to anybody that we would have to be moving across eastern Europe in any kind of military formation," says General Ben Hodges, until recently commander of the US Army Europe. "We all thought Russia was going to be our partner. Everybody started downsizing their military as fast as they could."</p> <p>Now, a senior Nato official says the alliance is "looking at all those things we forgot how to do". He admits the pact — or at least some of its members — could have been quicker to heed warnings from events such as a wide-ranging cyber attack in Estonia in 2007 and the brief Russia-Georgia war in 2008. "All of the indicators were there," he says. "We took our eye off the ball."</p> <p>Others in Nato dispute that it has been too slow to adjust to big changes in the international security environment. But officials in both the alliance's sprawling Brussels headquarters and the capitals of its 29 member states agree that there is an urgent need to sharpen operations in Europe. Both Nato and the EU have launched multi-pronged initiatives to address logistics concerns from easing transport bottlenecks to reforming time-consuming border customs procedures.</p> <p>The military overhaul in Europe is providing a new test of Nato's capacity for reinvention, nearly 70 years after it was founded. The alliance is now trying to demonstrate its ability to protect a post-cold war frontier that stretches from the Arctic Circle to northern Syria.</p> <p>The challenges facing Nato range from the capabilities of cash-strapped European militaries, to the commitment of President Donald Trump's US administration and the intentions of President Vladimir Putin's Russia. Nato also faces questions about whether its scaled-up territorial security is proportionate — or risks provoking the very kind of conflict it is supposed to prevent.</p> <p>"Nato certainly doesn't want a new cold war, [but] the world has changed and therefore Nato has to</p>

change,” says Jens Stoltenberg, the pact’s secretary-general, who took over less than a year after the Crimea conflict began. “For the first time in our history, we need to do crisis management beyond our borders and at the same time step up . . . our efforts for collective defence in Europe.”

The process has intensified since Mr Trump took office. The US leader shocked Nato allies in May when he failed to reiterate American support for the pact’s Article 5 provision, under which members commit to each other’s mutual defence. Since then, he and other US officials have made more reassuring statements but he has also urged, even more directly than previous US administrations, European members to spend more on defence. He claimed in November that this pressure had yielded results: “Billions and billions of dollars are pouring in,” he said. “Nato, believe me, is very happy with Donald Trump and what I did.”

European countries, who make up the overwhelming majority of Nato members, have signalled that they are taking common security more seriously. All but three of the EU’s 28 member states last month launched the so-called Permanent Structured Cooperation (Pesco) to boost defence co-operation.

A Dutch-led initiative to improve military mobility around Europe, looking at obstacles from red tape to inadequate infrastructure, has been approved under Pesco. It is intended to dovetail with a report on the same subject due from the EU’s European Defence Agency in the spring. Halbe Zijlstra, Dutch foreign minister, has said the military mobility work “should enable the EU to better ensure our own security”.

The flurry of activity reflects the scale of the rethink on the defence of Europe since the Crimea conflict began. After the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 Nato redirected its operations into international conflicts such as Afghanistan and more recently Libya. US army personnel in Europe fell to just a tenth of its postwar peak of about 300,000, as Washington’s focus shifted to Afghanistan, Iraq and the rise of China.

Now the Nato alliance has set up what it styles a deterrent air, land and sea presence in its eastern member states.

There is a “tripwire” first line of defence of about 4,500 Nato troops in forward bases in Poland and the Baltic states of Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia. Since 2015, a US armoured brigade of about 3,300 personnel has been based on rotation in Europe.

The relatively small size of the alliance’s eastern resources inevitably leads to the question of what would happen if Russia, or another power, decided to test Nato’s strength. Russian troops could be on the outskirts of Tallinn, Estonia’s capital, within 60 hours of an attack starting, a study by the Rand Corporation claimed in 2016. Nato says a “spearhead” reinforcement contingent of 5,000 troops could start deploying anywhere in Europe “within days”. This year the spearhead force will be led by Italy, whose capital Rome is more than 2,000km from Tallinn.

The logistical problems run deeper than distance. In central and eastern Europe, where many countries were either in the Soviet Union or part of its Warsaw Pact, infrastructure is sometimes sparse or dilapidated. Bridges, tunnels, roads, railways and ports in western Europe have not been constructed in the past 25 years to carry large numbers of heavy US military vehicles. “They are no longer building bridges in Europe with a 70-tonne capacity capable of supporting the weight of an Abrams tank,” observes Doug Lute, former US permanent representative to Nato.

The quantity and variety of glitches is intimidating: a six-hour delay to shipments crossing between Poland and Lithuania due to a change in rail gauge; the obstacles military vehicles face clearing the many Polish railway stations that have only one siding (Warsaw says most stations have more than one); the limitations of Bremerhaven, a German North Sea port, where access is via a single road gate that allows only a total of 1,500 vehicles per day in and out.

The investment the EU and Nato make in improving and reviving infrastructure will ultimately be a “political decision”, says Michael Linick, a contributor to the Rand report. “The more aggressive their posture towards Russia, the more necessary this is.”

Gen Hodges says the European Reassurance Initiative — a US fund set up after the Crimea operation and worth \$3.4bn in 2017 — has already financed improvements to railheads so tanks can be unloaded more quickly. Other priorities should include transporters for heavy equipment and fuel storage facilities. “This is stuff that we could put money into immediately,” he adds.

Administrative constraints add a further layer to the deployment challenge. Border checks can be suspended to allow swift movement in the event of a crisis. But in the absence of such a red alert, commanders have to observe domestic rules such as German laws that ban heavy vehicles from the roads at certain times. Nato says it has made a priority of cutting border processing times for troops and materiel from as much as three weeks in some member states to a target of five days.

Western military planners are also under pressure to solve often longstanding problems of incompatible equipment, from radios to fuel nozzles.

Europe’s 28 militaries are themselves an unruly collection of vehicles and weapons. According to a report in October by the Nato parliamentary assembly, which brings together legislators from member countries, the continent has 20 types of fighter jet, compared with six from the US; 29 varieties of destroyer and frigate, compared with just four for the US; and 17 versions of main battle tanks, compared with one produced by its largest member. “Clearly in Europe we have huge waste,” says one EU diplomat. “Everybody has their own defence industry — and no one wants to give theirs up.”

Money shortages also threaten Nato ambitions — even though the alliance’s members spent an estimated \$946bn on defence last year. In 2016, only four of the European members — the UK, Poland, Estonia and Greece — met an alliance target to spend the equivalent of 2 per cent of gross domestic product on their militaries. They are expected to be joined by Romania this year, while Latvia and Lithuania have also committed to reaching the goal. EU funds aimed at projects in the union’s poorer regions and worth €63.4bn for the 2014 to 2020 period, are being eyed as a potential source of infrastructure finance.

Many analysts still rate a direct Russian attack on a member state unlikely, arguing that a greater threat is posed by cyber or hybrid warfare — a blend of the conventional and the digital. But European officials insist Moscow has been probing militarily: Russian aircraft movements in or near Baltic state airspace have risen, while naval activity is at its highest level since the cold war. Russian submarines have been deployed in areas such as the Black Sea, eastern Mediterranean and around crucial undersea transatlantic communications cables, Nato officials say.

Moscow has in turn branded Nato’s build up, including the deployment of missile defence systems in Europe, as an aggression aimed at encircling Russia. Alexander Grushko, the country’s ambassador to Nato, condemned last month what he calls the alliance’s “genetic code [which] manifests itself in search for a ‘big enemy’ in the east against which it’s necessary to defend”.

In September, when Moscow held its Zapad military exercise on Russia’s western edge, extra Nato member state soldiers, ships and aircraft spread out around the Baltic territories. It was a small taste of the much larger deployment task for which Nato strategists and EU countries have begun to prepare.

Nato’s new priorities are in one sense the long-delayed fallout from its decision to expand to Russia’s borders by taking in former eastern bloc countries as members after 1999. That growth has placed expensive responsibilities and demands on the alliance’s European members. The question now is whether a continent already facing growing tensions from rising populism to Brexit is ready to shift to a higher military alert.

“Nobody really expected Crimea to happen, but it did,” says another European diplomat. “Now you look and you see: there could be a million things that impede the quick movement of armed forces we need.”

HEADLINE	01/02 Syria backs Iran against protests
SOURCE	https://apnews.com/51836085189049b1a8c39b1dad791416/The-Latest:-Syria-backs-Iran-against-'conspiracy'-protests
GIST	<p>TEHRAN, Iran (AP) — The latest on protests in Iran (all times local):</p> <p>11:15 p.m.</p> <p>Syria has expressed solidarity with Iran where clashes between protesters and security forces over the past days have left several people dead and wounded.</p> <p>Syria is Iran’s strongest ally in the Arab world and Tehran has been a main backer of Syrian President Bashar Assad since the country’s conflict began in 2011, pumping hundreds of millions of dollars into the Syrian economy.</p> <p>A Syrian Foreign Ministry statement released Tuesday blasted the U.S. administration and Israel for expressing support to Iran’s protesters. It blamed the U.S. and Israel for destabilizing the region.</p> <p>The ministry said Iran’s sovereignty should be respected and no one should interfere in Tehran’s internal affairs.</p> <p>“Syria is confident that Iran’s leadership, government and people will be able to defeat the conspiracy,” the Syrian ministry said.</p> <p>—</p> <p>12:15 p.m.</p> <p>The head of Tehran’s Revolutionary Court has reportedly warned that arrested protesters could potentially face death penalty cases when they come to trial.</p> <p>Iran’s semi-official Tasnim news agency quoted Mousa Ghazanfarabadi on Tuesday as saying: “Obviously one of their charges can be Moharebeh,” or waging war against God. That’s a death penalty offense in Iran.</p> <p>Ghazanfarabadi also was quoted as saying some protesters will come to trial soon on charges of acting against national security and damaging public properties. He also stressed that attending rallies not sanctioned by Iran’s Interior Ministry, which oversees police, was illegal.</p> <p>Iran’s Revolutionary Court handles cases involving alleged attempts to overthrow the government.</p>
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HEADLINE	01/01 Tax on medical devices resumes
SOURCE	https://apnews.com/74299e93db9f4de9af48a654ec8045d2/Tax-on-medical-devices-to-resume-after-2-year-suspension
GIST	<p>BOSTON (AP) — While much of corporate America will enjoy a tax cut in the new year, one industry is getting a tax increase it has fought hard but so far unsuccessfully to avoid.</p> <p>A 2.3 percent excise tax on medical device manufacturers went back into effect Monday after a two-year hiatus. It was originally imposed in 2013 as one of several taxes and fees in the Affordable Care Act that pay for expanded health insurance under the law.</p> <p>The tax was strongly opposed by the \$150 billion a year industry that produces everything from catheters to heart stents to artificial joints. In Congress, it was unpopular not only with Republicans but many Democrats from states like Massachusetts and Minnesota with large numbers of medical device</p>

companies.

Congress voted to suspend the tax for 2016 and 2017 with the widespread expectation it would be permanently abolished before 2018. But various GOP efforts to repeal the Affordable Care Act and the taxes associated with it failed, and the sweeping federal tax overhaul recently signed by President Donald Trump didn't eliminate the medical device tax either.

Industry groups including the Advanced Medical Technology Association (AdvaMed) and the Medical Imaging & Technology Alliance warn the tax will take a \$20 billion bite out of the industry over the next decade.

“What we have seen from past experience is that it comes out of funding for product development, research and the jobs associated with those things,” said J.C. Scott, AdvaMed's head of government affairs. “We fear we will see employment freezes or reductions and a slowdown in the pipeline for medical innovation.”

The slashing of the overall corporate tax from 35 percent to 21 percent may soften the blow for some manufacturers, industry officials say, but not for all. As the excise tax is applied to sales and not income, it will fall harder on smaller firms and startups with promising new products that have yet to yield profits.

Boston Scientific, a leading maker of heart stents and other devices, estimates reinstatement of the tax will cost the Marlborough, Massachusetts-based firm \$75 million in 2018. The company said when the tax was suspended it invested the savings in projects including a partnership with Mayo Clinic that combines manufacturing expertise with ideas from physicians for new products to help patients.

“The reinstatement of the device tax threatens continued investment in programs like these,” Boston Scientific said in a statement.

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HEADLINE	01/02 Claim: few colleges track student suicides
SOURCE	https://apnews.com/45f78abcfcec43e49f4c0f06b66a8b/Few-colleges-track-suicides,-despite-prevention-investments
GIST	<p>BOSTON (AP) — Nearly half of the largest U.S. public universities do not track suicides among their students, despite making investments in prevention at a time of surging demand for mental health services.</p> <p>Tabulating student suicides comes with its own set of challenges and problems. But without that data, prevention advocates say, schools have no way to measure their success and can overlook trends that could offer insight to help them save lives.</p> <p>“If you don't collect the data, you're doing half the job,” said Gordon Smith, a former U.S. senator from Oregon who became a prevention advocate after his son, Garrett, took his life in 2003 while attending college. “We need information in mental health if we're actually going to be able to better tailor health and healing.”</p> <p>The Associated Press asked the 100 largest U.S. public universities for annual suicide statistics and found that 43 currently track suicides, including 27 that have consistently done so since 2007. Most others said they don't track suicides or could provide police reports for only a few cases known among campus administrators.</p> <p>Schools that don't track suicides include some of the nation's largest, including Arizona State University and the University of Wisconsin. Officials from those schools declined to comment, but both have dealt with student suicides in the recent past, according to news reports, including at least two at Arizona State in 2017.</p>

Some others refused to provide records, citing student privacy concerns, including North Carolina State University.

The issue has come to the fore as some schools report today's students are arriving on campus less prepared for the rigors of college. Many schools have increased spending on mental health services to counter what the American Psychological Association and other groups have called a mental health crisis on campuses.

Surveys have found increasing rates of anxiety and depression among college students, but some experts say the problem only appears to be worsening because students who might have stayed silent in the past are taking advantage of the increasing availability of help.

"It's unfortunate that people are characterizing this outcome as a crisis," said Ben Locke, who runs a national mental-health network for colleges and leads the counseling center at Penn State. "It's counterproductive because it's criticizing the exact people we've encouraged to come forward."

Adding to the skepticism is that young adults in college have been found to have lower suicide rates than their peers. But they are also at an age when disorders including schizophrenia and bipolar depression often start to develop.

Federal health officials have sought to encourage data collection as part of a grant program named after Smith's son, which has awarded \$76 million to more than 230 colleges since 2005. Schools have separately spent millions on their own, often adding programs that teach basic life skills, and training staff across campus to identify students in need.

The U.S. Education Department asks colleges to collect data on student deaths but not suicides specifically, and a variety of factors can discourage schools from tracking it.

Often it's difficult to confirm the cause of death, and medical examiners don't always notify universities when a cause is determined. There are concerns about legal liability. Some families prefer to keep it private. Even schools that collect data differ on whether they count suicides that occur away from campus or during breaks.

And if the statistics become public, some schools fear it could damage their reputations.

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HEADLINE	01/02 California becomes 'sanctuary state'
SOURCE	https://www.msn.com/en-us/news/politics/with-new-year-california-becomes-sanctuary-state/ar-BBHM0gI?li=BBnb7Kz&ocid=HPCDHP
GIST	<p>California became a "sanctuary state" Monday, as a bill that Democratic Gov. Jerry Brown signed into law in October officially took effect.</p> <p>The law bars police in the nation's most populous state from asking people about their immigration status or participating in federal immigration enforcement activities in most cases, Fox News reported.</p> <p>The Golden State is home to an estimated 2.3 million illegal immigrants.</p> <p>"These are uncertain times for undocumented Californians and their families, and this bill strikes a balance that will protect public safety, while bringing a measure of comfort to those families who are now living in fear everyday," Brown said on the day he signed the bill.</p> <p>But the measure has drawn a rebuttal from an unidentified source, as signs mocking the law have appeared below the "Welcome to California" signs that greet motorists as they enter from Arizona and Nevada.</p>

	"OFFICIAL SANCTUARY STATE," the signs declare. "Felons, Illegals and MS13 Welcome! Democrats Need The Votes!"
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HEADLINE	01/01 Ushering in 2018 around the world
SOURCE	http://time.com/5082958/times-square-new-years-eve-new-york-cold/?xid=homepage
GIST	<p>From spectacular fireworks in Hong Kong and Australia to a huge LED lightshow at the world's tallest building in Dubai, a look at how revelers around the world rang in 2018:</p> <p>CALIFORNIA The Golden State went green when the calendar turned to 2018.</p> <p>Starting at midnight, California joined the growing list of states to legalize recreational marijuana. The moment is significant but will not be met with a non-stop pot party.</p> <p>California has allowed medical marijuana for two decades, and the state is generally tolerant of the drug, so major changes are not expected as the laws are further eased. At least not on New Year's Day.</p> <p>More than 90 outlets received licenses to sell in time for Jan. 1. None of those outlets is holding a midnight opening, but some in San Diego and the San Francisco Bay Area will be open for business starting at 6 a.m. Monday.</p> <p>Some cities, including Los Angeles and San Francisco, will have to wait at least until later in the week before licensed outlets start selling there.</p> <p>Still, some Californians ushered in the new year with marijuana.</p> <p>Johnny Hernandez was celebrating legalization — which he described as “something we’ve all been waiting for” — by smoking “Happy New Year blunts” with his cousins in Modesto.</p> <p>—</p> <p>LAS VEGAS Las Vegas police officers surrounded hundreds of thousands of tourists gathered to welcome the new year on the Strip, where just three months earlier 58 people died in the deadliest mass shooting in modern U.S. history.</p> <p>Police cruisers, dump trucks and other large vehicles blocked key intersections to try to prevent anyone from plowing into crowds filled with people wearing glittery hats, tiaras and other 2018-themed paraphernalia.</p> <p>The Nevada National Guard activated about 350 soldiers and airmen, while federal authorities also deployed additional personnel.</p> <p>A roughly eight-minute fireworks display at the top of seven of the city's world-famous casino-hotels started ten seconds before midnight Monday. Sprays of gold, red and green lightened the sky on time for 2018.</p> <p>Tourism officials expected 330,000 people to come to Sin City for the festivities on the Las Vegas Strip and downtown's Fremont Street.</p> <p>Rosy-cheeked visitors took selfies and livestreamed the celebration amid temperatures in the mid-40s (4 Celsius), much warmer than most of the U.S.</p>

NEW YORK

With a burst of confetti and fireworks, throngs of revelers ushered in 2018 in a frigid Times Square as the glittering crystal ball dropped.

It was the second-coldest on record, with the temperature only 10 degrees (minus 12 degrees Celsius) in New York at midnight.

Partygoers bundled up in extra layers, wearing warm hats and face masks, dancing and jogging in place to ward off the cold.

There was also tighter security than ever after two terrorist attacks and a rampaging SUV driver who plowed into a crowd on the very spot where the party takes place. The party went off with no major problems.

“Auld Lang Syne” and “New York, New York” played as the crowds cheered.

The coldest ball drop celebration was in 1917, when it was only 1 degree (minus 17 Celsius).

BRAZIL

Rio de Janeiro’s main party was celebrated with fireworks erupting on Copacabana beach after the clock struck midnight to usher in the new year.

After 17 minutes of a multicolored show in the skies, singer Anitta led the party on stage with her single “Vai Malandra,” a song that scored 84 million views on YouTube in two weeks. Some of the city’s most traditional Carnival samba schools performed later.

New Mayor Marcelo Crivella said he believed the celebrations would bring 3 million people to the iconic beach, which would mean nearly half of Rio’s population. But locals said Brazil’s economic crisis is still impacting one of the city’s biggest parties. In 2017, 2 million people showed up at Copacabana beach, a number that hasn’t changed much over the years.

Almost 2,000 policemen patrolled the Copacabana region after yet another violent year on the streets. Rio’s hotel association said occupation is nearly total, but mostly by Brazilian tourists.

GERMANY

Germans rang in 2018 under tight security from police mindful of widespread sexual abuse of women in Cologne two years ago and of a terrorist attack on a Christmas market about a year ago.

Police in Berlin added 1,600 officers on duty and said that large bags and knapsacks would not be allowed on the Party Mile leading from Brandenburg Gate, where thousands of people celebrated at midnight. Police in Frankfurt imposed similar restrictions in the celebration area along the Main River in the country’s financial capital.

Two people died from fireworks injuries, but the country avoided a repeat of the mass groping in Cologne from 2016.

Two years ago, New Year’s in Cologne was marred by groping and theft committed against hundreds of women, in most cases by migrants. On Dec. 19, 2016, Tunisian asylum seeker Anis Amri drove a stolen truck into a Christmas market in Berlin, killing 12 people.

UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

Dubai's Burj Khalifa, the world's tallest building, has again served as the focal point of New Year's Eve celebrations — though this year authorities decided against fireworks and chose a massive LED lightshow on it.

That was in part due to safety in the city-state in the United Arab Emirates, which saw a massive skyscraper fire on New Year's Eve in 2015.

The display, running down the east side of the 828-meter-tall (2,716-foot-tall) tower, showed Arabic calligraphy, geometric designs and a portrait of the late Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan, the UAE's first president.

But a display of neighboring nations' flags didn't show Qatar's flag. The UAE joined Bahrain, Egypt and Saudi Arabia in boycotting the tiny energy-rich nation in June over allegations Doha supports extremists and has too close ties to Iran. Qatar, which will host the 2022 FIFA World Cup, denies supporting extremists and shares a massive offshore natural gas field with Tehran.

VATICAN

Bidding 2017 farewell, Pope Francis has decried wars, injustices and environmental decay which he says have "ruined" the year.

Francis on Sunday presided at a New Year's Eve prayer service in St. Peter's Basilica, a traditional occasion to say thanks in each year's last hours.

He says God gave to us a 2017 "whole and sound," but that "we humans in many ways ruined and hurt it with works of death, lies and injustices."

But, he added, "gratitude prevails" thanks to those "cooperating silently for the common good."

In keeping with past practice, the pope on New Year's Day will celebrate Mass dedicated to the theme of world peace.

AUSTRALIA

Fireworks lit up the sky above Sydney Harbor, highlighting the city's New Year's celebrations.

The massive fireworks display included a rainbow waterfall cascade of lights and color flowing off the harbor's bridge to celebrate recently passed legislation legalizing gay marriage in Australia.

More than 1 million people were expected to gather to watch the festivities. Security was tight, but officials said there was no particular alert.

Sydney officials said the event would generate about \$170 million for the city and "priceless publicity." Nearly half the revelers were tourists.

NEW ZEALAND

Tens of thousands of New Zealanders took to streets and beaches, becoming among the first in the world to usher in 2018.

As the new year dawned in this southern hemisphere nation, fireworks boomed and crackled above city centers and harbors, and party-goers sang, hugged, danced and kissed.

In Auckland, New Zealand's biggest city, tens of thousands gathered around Sky Tower as five minutes of nonstop pyrotechnics exploded from the top of the structure.

But on nearby Waiheke Island, 30 kilometers (20 miles) away, authorities canceled the planned fireworks display because of drought conditions and low water supplies for firefighters.

UGANDA

Thousands of Ugandans gathered at churches across the country to mark the end of 2017.

The raucous events, during which some preachers are known to make dubious predictions, have become such a staple of New Year's Eve festivities that the country's longtime president, Yoweri Museveni, sometimes makes time to make an appearance at a church.

Still, many in this East African country prefer to celebrate at crowded beaches on the shores of Lake Victoria or in darkened halls listening to the music of pop stars who take turns offering crowd pleasers until midnight.

Police warned revelers not to burn car tires in celebration, citing safety reasons, to discourage a favorite activity of those, especially in the countryside, who cannot afford fireworks.

RUSSIA

As Russians counted down the last moments before 2018 ticked over into each of the country's 11 time zones, President Vladimir Putin called on them to be considerate and conciliatory with each other in the new year.

"Say the most cherished words to each other, forgive mistakes and resentment, admit love, warm up with care and attention," Putin said in a televised message broadcast on Sunday just before midnight.

Moscow had fireworks and outdoor gatherings despite weather that was less than festive. Usually festooned with snow at New Year's Eve, the Russian capital slogged through a long spell of intermittent rain and constant gray skies.

JAPAN

Many Japanese celebrated the arrival of the Year of the Dog in the traditional way of praying for peace and good fortune at neighborhood Shinto shrines and eating New Year's food such as noodles, shrimp and sweet black beans.

Barbecued beef and octopus dumpling stalls were out at Tokyo's Zojoji Temple, where people took turns striking the giant bell 108 times at midnight, an annual practice repeated at other Buddhist temples throughout Japan.

North Korea's nuclear and missile programs cast a shadow over Japan's hopes for peace, said cab driver Masaru Eguchi, who was ready to be busy all night shuttling shrine visitors.

"The world situation has grown so complex," Eguchi said, adding that he also worried about possible terrorism targeting Japan. "I feel this very abstracted sense of uncertainty, although I really have no idea what might happen."

INDIA

Security was tight in the southern Indian city of Bangalore to prevent a repeat of incidents of groping and molestation of several women during New Year's Eve celebrations a year ago.

Police Commissioner Sunil Kumar said at least 15,000 police officers were on duty and were being aided by drones and closed-circuit television cameras.

A year ago, police first denied that any sexual harassment had taken place during the celebrations in Bangalore, India's information technology hub. But later, police detained at least six men after several video clips of women being attacked by groups of men spread on social media.

PHILIPPINES

Scores of people were injured by celebratory firecrackers in the Philippines, which has some of the most raucous New Year's celebrations in Asia.

Although the number of injuries has tapered off in recent years, largely due to hard economic times and government scare campaigns, the figures remain alarming. President Rodrigo Duterte signed an order confining the use of firecrackers to community-designated areas, such as near shopping malls and parks.

Many Filipinos, largely influenced by Chinese tradition, believe that noisy New Year's celebrations drive away evil and misfortune. But they have carried that superstition to extremes, exploding dangerously large firecrackers and firing guns to welcome the new year despite threats of arrest.

TURKEY

Security measures were ramped up across Turkey, which a year ago was hit by a New Year's attack that killed dozens of people.

In Istanbul, 37,000 officers were on duty, with multiple streets closed to traffic and large vehicles barred from entering certain districts. Several New Year's Eve street parties were canceled for security reasons.

Early on Jan. 1, 2017, an assailant shot his way into Istanbul's Reina nightclub, where hundreds of people were celebrating New Year's. Thirty-nine people, mostly foreigners, were killed, and 79 were wounded. The Islamic State group claimed responsibility.

On Sunday, about 100 people gathered outside the nightclub to remember the victims of the attack.

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HEADLINE	01/01 Expert: Amtrak derailment factors
SOURCE	http://komonews.com/news/local/rail-investigator-says-train-derailment-was-caused-by-more-than-just-speed
GIST	DUPONT, Wash. (KOMO) -- Speed was a contributing factor to December's deadly train derailment that killed three people near DuPont. However, a rail accident investigator said training, the track and Amtrak's culture may have also played a role.

Former train engineer John Hiatt now investigates rail accidents for law firms that have sued Amtrak in the past.

Hiatt is hearing from Amtrak employees who are questioning the company's safety culture.

"There are employees who did not want to come out because they are afraid of losing their job," Hiatt said. "The safety culture is shot and they are poised for failure."

So where will the blame lie for the Amtrak 501 derailment? It could be a year before the National Transportation Safety Board releases its findings.

What is already known is that an audio recording revealed the engineer realized the train was going too fast into the curve six seconds before the crash.

"I look at the curve...even the video of it is scary and I am an engineer," Hiatt said.

The State Department of Transportation, which received a 181 million dollar rebuild of the track, dismisses a published report that said it did not follow a 2006 plan to straighten the curve to save money.

Add to that, training for the new run was done at night and Hiatt said with some crew put into the rear locomotive facing backward.

"It's like riding in the trunk of a car to learn to drive," Hiatt said. "It doesn't make any sense at all and it was brought up at the time that this doesn't make any sense. How are these guys learning this route by riding in the reverse direction in the dark."

Drivers often encounter flashing warning lights to slow down hearing into a curve, but this train had just one static warning sign two miles ahead of the deadly curve.

The NTSB said the train was going 78 miles per hour when it derailed.

"If you do happen to miss that, there goes your only warning to take a train from 79 down to a 30 mile an hour curve that is over the top of Interstate 5 that all of these people will tell you is the most dangerous part of the entire run, is that curve right there," Hiatt said.

Sound Transit owns the track but the state Department of Transportation rebuilt the track leading into the curve, owns the locomotives, many of the rail cars, and contracted with Amtrak to operate the train and hire its crew.

KOMO News was unable to verify Hiatt's claims with Amtrak.

The line, known as the Point Defiance Bypass, has been shut down to passenger rail service until positive train control has been installed. That could happen by next summer..

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HEADLINE	12/29 Billion-dollar weather disasters on rise
SOURCE	http://www.homelandsecuritynewswire.com/dr20171229-billiondollar-weather-and-climate-disasters-on-the-rise
GIST	The National Centers for Environmental Information (NCEI) is the Nation's Scorekeeper in terms of addressing severe weather and climate events in their historical perspective. As part of its responsibility of monitoring and assessing the climate, NCEI tracks and evaluates climate events in the United States and globally, which have great economic and societal impacts. NCEI is frequently called upon to provide summaries of global and U.S. temperature and precipitation trends, extremes, and comparisons in their

historical perspective

NOAA says that from 1980 to 2017, the United States has sustained 218 weather and climate disasters in which overall damages/costs reached or exceeded \$1 billion (including CPI adjustment to 2017). The total cost of these 218 events exceeds \$1.2 trillion.

This total does not yet include the costs for Hurricanes Harvey, Irma and Maria, which are being assessed and will be included in the NCEI's fourth quarter release.

2017 in progress...

In 2017 (as of 6 October), there have been fifteen weather and climate disaster events with losses exceeding \$1 billion each across the United States. These events included 1 drought event, 2 flooding events, 1 freeze event, 7 severe storm events, 3 tropical cyclone events, and 1 wildfire event. Overall, these events resulted in the deaths of 282 people and had significant economic effects on the areas impacted. The 1980–2016 annual average is 5.5 events (CPI-adjusted); the annual average for the most recent 5 years (2012–2016) is 10.6 events (CPI-adjusted).

For the first nine months (Jan-Sept) of 2017, the United States has experienced fifteen separate billion-dollar weather and climate disasters. 2017 ties the record year of 2011 for the most (15) billion-dollar disasters for the year to date. The record number of billion-dollar disasters for an entire calendar year is 16 events set in 2011. The 2017 events include two floods, a freeze, seven severe storms, three tropical cyclones, a drought and wildfire - collectively causing 282 fatalities.

Methodology and data sources

In 2012, NCEI — then known as National Climatic Data Center (NCDC) — reviewed its methodology on how it develops Billion-dollar Disasters. NCEI held a workshop with economic experts (May 2012) and worked with a consulting partner to examine possible inaccuracy and biases in the data sources and methodology used in developing the loss assessments (mid-2013). This ensures more consistency with the numbers NCEI provides on a yearly basis and give more confidence in the year-to-year comparison of information. Another outcome is a published peer-reviewed article [“U.S. Billion-dollar Weather and Climate Disasters: Data Sources, Trends, Accuracy and Biases” \(Smith and Katz, 2013\)](#). This research found the net effect of all biases appears to be an underestimation of average loss. In particular, it is shown that the factor approach can result in an underestimation of average loss of approximately 10–15 percent. This bias was corrected during a reanalysis of the loss data to reflect new loss totals.

It is also known that the uncertainty of loss estimates differs by disaster event type reflecting the quality and completeness of the data sources used in our loss estimation. In 2016, six of the fifteen billion-dollar events (that is, the four inland flooding events, drought and Hurricane Matthew) have higher potential uncertainty values around the loss estimates due to less coverage of insured assets. The remaining nine events (that is, eight severe storm events and wildfire) have lower potential uncertainty surrounding their estimate due to more complete insurance coverage. NCEI's newest research defines the cost uncertainty using confidence intervals as discussed in the peer-reviewed article [“Quantifying Uncertainty and Variable Sensitivity within the U.S. Billion-dollar Weather and Climate Disaster Cost Estimates” \(Smith and Matthews, 2015\)](#). This research is a next step to enhance the value and usability of estimated disaster costs given data limitations and inherent complexities.

In performing these disaster cost assessments these statistics were taken from a wide variety of sources and represent, to the best of NCEI ability, the estimated total costs of these events — that is, the costs in terms of dollars that would not have been incurred had the event not taken place. Insured and uninsured losses are included in damage estimates. Sources include the National Weather Service, the Federal Emergency Management Agency, U.S. Department of Agriculture, National Interagency Fire Center, U.S. Army Corps, individual state emergency management agencies, state and regional climate centers, media reports, and insurance industry estimates.

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More information can be found in [Calculating the Cost of Weather and Climate Disasters](#).

HEADLINE	01/02 Iran protests: 20 dead, 450 arrested
SOURCE	https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/world/2018/01/02/six-days-iran-protests-least-20-dead-450-arrested/995096001/
GIST	<p>At least 20 people have died and 450 have been arrested in six days of nationwide anti-government demonstrations in Iran, the country's media reported Tuesday.</p> <p>The unrest started Thursday over economic issues such as rising prices and high unemployment, but has since widened to a more general expression of anger over alleged government corruption and discontent with Iran's clerical rulers.</p> <p>Security services have used force and tear gas to disperse crowds.</p> <p>Iranian state television reported Tuesday that nine people were killed overnight: Six rioters were killed during an attack on a police station in the town of Qahdarijan; an 11-year-old boy and a 20-year-old man were killed in the town of Khomeinishahr; and a member of Iran's paramilitary Revolutionary Guard was killed in the town of Najafabad.</p> <p>The towns are all in Iran's central Isfahan province, about 215 miles south of Tehran. The semi-official ILNA news agency reported that nationwide, 200 protesters were arrested Saturday, 150 on Sunday and 100 on Monday.</p> <p>Iran's President Hassan Rouhani sought to downplay the significance of the protests in a cabinet session Sunday. "We are a free nation and people are free to voice their protests according to the constitution. At the same time, we need to be aware criticism should be expressed in a way so as to change the situation for the better," he said.</p> <p>Still, Iran's semi-official Tasnim news agency warned Tuesday that arrested protesters could potentially face the death penalty when they come to trial.</p>
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HEADLINE	01/01 US urges support for Iran protesters
SOURCE	https://www.newsmax.com/newsfront/white-house-trump-world-wide-support/2018/01/01/id/834569/
GIST	<p>The Trump administration is lobbying countries around the world to support protesters in Iran as violent demonstrations intensify, The Wall Street Journal reported Monday.</p> <p>"We are encouraging all nations around the world to publicly condemn the government violence and to support the legitimate, basic rights of those protesting," Brian Hook, the State Department's director of policy planning, told the outlet.</p> <p>"We know that the [Islamic revolutionary Guard Corps] plays a big role in the decisions and actions of the government," he added — and pushed back on the notion that backing the protesters would only give ammunition to the regime.</p> <p>"It doesn't matter what we do, they will blame us," Hook told the Journal. "For us, this is not a complicated question. We want to take a position with moral clarity and let the protesters know they're not alone."</p> <p>Some U.S. allies have already issued their own statements on the protests, including Britain and Germany.</p> <p>The protests began Thursday over economic issues and have expanded to several cities, with some demonstrators chanting against the government and the supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei.</p> <p>The unrest was at its most violent on New Year's Eve as "armed protesters" tried to overrun military bases</p>

and police stations before security forces repelled them, killing 10 people, Iranian state television reported Monday.

The demonstrations, the largest to strike Iran since its disputed 2009 presidential election, have a total death toll of at least 13. Hundreds have been arrested.

On Sunday, Iran blocked access to Instagram and the popular messaging app Telegram used by activists to organize.

President Hassan Rouhani acknowledged the public's anger over the Islamic Republic's flagging economy — warning, however, the government will crack down on anyone considered a lawbreaker. That was echoed Monday by judiciary chief Ayatollah Sadeq Larijani, who urged authorities to confront rioters, state TV reported.

"I demand all prosecutors across the country to get involved and the approach should be strong," he said.

Some Iranians have shared President Donald Trump's tweets supporting the protesters; he's blasted Iran as "failing at every level despite the terrible deal made with them by the Obama administration."

"The great Iranian people have been repressed for many years," he tweeted Monday.

"They are hungry for food & for freedom. Along with human rights, the wealth of Iran is being looted. TIME FOR CHANGE!"

But others in Iran distrust Trump because he's refused to re-certify the nuclear deal and his travel bans have blocked Iranians from getting U.S. visas.

Brig. Gen. Massoud Jazayeri, the Guard commander and deputy chief of staff for Iran's military, said Monday that Trump's support of the protesters "indicates planning by the U.S. for launching a new sedition in Iran."

Iran's economy has improved since the nuclear deal, which saw Iran agree to limit its enrichment of uranium in exchange for the end of some international sanctions. Tehran now sells its oil on the global market and has signed deals to purchase tens of billions of dollars' worth of Western aircraft.

But that improvement hasn't reached the average Iranian; unemployment remains high, and official inflation has crept up to 10 percent — and a recent increase in egg and poultry prices by as much as 40 percent appears to have been the spark for the protests.

Trump faces a deadline late next week to tell Congress whether the nuclear deal with Iran is in America's interest. The president is expected to again withhold support for the accord while extending sanctions relief guaranteed under the deal and allowing the agreement to remain in place, the Journal reported.

But the Iranian government's actions against the protesters could color his deliberations, the Journal reported.

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HEADLINE	01/02 Iran council: protesters face death penalty
SOURCE	http://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/iran-450-protesters-arrested-days-tehran-52092203?
GIST	The latest on protests in Iran (all times local): 12:15 p.m. The head of Tehran's Revolutionary Court has reportedly warned that arrested protesters could potentially

face death penalty cases when they come to trial.

Iran's semi-official Tasnim news agency quoted Mousa Ghazanfarabadi on Tuesday as saying: "Obviously one of their charges can be Moharebeh," or waging war against God. That's a death penalty offense in Iran.

Ghazanfarabadi also was quoted as saying some protesters will come to trial soon on charges of acting against national security and damaging public properties. He also stressed that attending rallies not sanctioned by Iran's Interior Ministry, which oversees police, was illegal.

Iran's Revolutionary Court handles cases involving alleged attempts to overthrow the government.

11 a.m.

A semi-official news agency in Iran is reporting that 450 people have been arrested over three days in Tehran.

The ILNA news agency report on Tuesday quoted Ali Asghar Nasserbakht, a security deputy governor of Tehran, offering the figure.

Nasserbakht said that 200 protesters were arrested on Saturday, 150 on Sunday and 100 were arrested Monday.

The protests began Thursday over economic issues and expanded to several cities. No nationwide arrest figures have been released by authorities since the demonstrations began.

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HEADLINE	01/02 Iran TV reports 9 killed during protests
SOURCE	http://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/iran-state-tv-killed-nationwide-protests-unrest-52091832?
GIST	<p>Clashes overnight between protesters and security forces in Iran killed nine people, state television reported Tuesday, including some rioters who tried to storm a police station to steal weapons.</p> <p>The demonstrations, the largest to strike Iran since its disputed 2009 presidential election, have seen six days of unrest across the country and a death toll of at least 20.</p> <p>The protests began Thursday in Mashhad over Iran's weak economy and a jump in food prices and have expanded to several cities, with some protesters chanting against the government and the supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei. Hundreds of people have been arrested and a prominent judge on Tuesday warned that some could face death penalty trials.</p> <p>State TV reported that six people were killed during an attack on a police station in the town of Qahdarijan. It reported that clashes were sparked by rioters who tried to steal guns from the police station.</p> <p>State TV also said an 11-year-old boy and a 20-year-old man were killed in the town of Khomeinishahr, while a member of Iran's paramilitary Revolutionary Guard was killed in the town of Najafabad. It says all three were shot by hunting rifles, which are common in the Iranian countryside.</p> <p>The towns are all in Iran's central Isfahan province, some 350 kilometers (215 miles) south of Tehran.</p> <p>It wasn't immediately clear if the Revolutionary Guard member was the same fatality reported late Monday night by Iran's semi-official Mehr news agency. Mehr had said an assailant using a hunting rifle killed a policeman and wounded three others in Najafabad.</p>

	Monday marked the first night to see a fatality among Iran's security forces.
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HEADLINE	01/02 SKorea offers talks w/North on Olympics
SOURCE	http://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/korea-offers-talk-north-olympics-cooperation-52091240?
GIST	<p>South Korea on Tuesday offered high-level talks with rival North Korea to find ways to cooperate on next month's Winter Olympics in the South. Seoul's quick proposal following a rare rapprochement overture from the North a day earlier offers the possibility of better ties after a year that saw a nuclear standoff increase fear of war on the Korean Peninsula.</p> <p>In a closely watched New Year's address, North Korean leader Kim Jong Un said Monday that he was willing to send a delegation to the Olympics, though he also repeated fiery nuclear threats against the United States. Analysts say Kim may be trying to drive a wedge between Seoul and its ally Washington in a bid to reduce international isolation and sanctions against North Korea.</p> <p>Kim's overture was welcome news for a South Korean government led by liberal President Moon Jae-in, who favors dialogue to ease the North's nuclear threats and wants to use the Olympics as a chance to improve inter-Korean ties.</p> <p>Moon's unification minister, Cho Myoung-gyon, proposed in a nationally televised news conference that the two Koreas meet Jan. 9 at the shared border village of Panmunjom to discuss Olympic cooperation and how to improve overall ties.</p> <p>Earlier Tuesday, Moon spoke of what he described as Kim's positive response to his earlier dialogue overtures and ordered officials to study how to restore talks with North Korea and get the North to participate in the Olympics.</p> <p>North Korea did not immediately react. But if there are talks, they would be the first formal dialogue between the Koreas since December 2015. Relations between the Koreas have plunged as North Korea has expanded its weapons programs amid a hard-line stance by Moon's conservative predecessors.</p>
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HEADLINE	01/02 India, Pakistan share nuke information
SOURCE	http://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/uneasy-neighbors-share-information-nuclear-facilities-52092649?
GIST	<p>Uneasy neighbors Pakistan and India, who regularly trade gunfire in the disputed Kashmir region, are sticking to a 20-year-old agreement to exchange information on their nuclear installations and facilities.</p> <p>In a statement Tuesday, Pakistan's foreign ministry said the 1988 agreement requires each country to hand over the list on Jan. 1 each year, which the representatives of the two countries did on Monday. It has been adhered to every year since 1992, the statement said.</p> <p>Although neither country is signatory to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), they both became declared nuclear powers after India conducted an underground nuclear weapons test in 1998 and Pakistan followed suit a few weeks later.</p> <p>Pakistan and India have fought three wars since the 1947 creation of Pakistan from a larger India.</p>
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HEADLINE	01/01 CBP outage causes delays at airports
SOURCE	http://abcnews.go.com/US/customs-outage-delays-airports/story?id=52089500
GIST	<p>A two-hour outage in U.S. Customs and Border Protection's processing systems caused delays at some of the nation's biggest airports on New Year's Day.</p> <p>In a statement, CBP said the outage began at 7:30 p.m. and ended at 9:30 p.m. All the airports involved are currently back online, according to CBP, though some are still experiencing effects from the outage.</p> <p>"CBP took immediate action to address the technology disruption," the agency said in a statement. "CBP officers continued to process international travelers using alternative procedures at affected airports. Travelers at some ports of entry experienced longer than usual wait times as CBP officers processed travelers as quickly as possible while maintaining the highest levels of security.</p> <p>"During the technology disruption, CBP had access to national security-related databases and all travelers were screened according to security standards. At this time, there is no indication the service disruption was malicious in nature."</p> <p>New York's John F. Kennedy International Airport warned that international travelers were experiencing delays in the arrivals area due to the outage.</p> <p>Dallas/Fort Worth International Airport posted about a problem affecting its "processing times for customs" as well.</p>
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HEADLINE	01/01 Minimum wage rises in states, cities
SOURCE	http://abcnews.go.com/US/2018-hourly-wages-us/story?id=52070704&cid=clicksource_4380645_1_hero_headlines_headlines_hed
GIST	<p>The new year will bring somewhat fatter paychecks to many Americans, with more than three dozen states and cities counties raising their minimum wage.</p> <p>The federal minimum wage remains unchanged at \$7.25 per hour, where it has stayed since 2009.</p> <p>But many states and cities have raised their minimum hourly pay above the federal rate, including the 18 states and 19 cities that have set increases for 2018, according to a report by the National Employment Law Project.</p> <p>In most of the 18 states hiking their minimum hourly rates today, the increases are the result of either legislation or recent voter-approved ballot measures, and range from 35 cents in Michigan to \$1 in Maine, according to the Economic Policy Institute. Other states will have smaller automatic increases that adjust the minimum wage to keep pace with inflation.</p> <p>About 4.5 million workers around the country will benefit from the wage increases taking effect early this year, the Economic Policy Institute says.</p> <p>The 10 states raising the minimum wage as a result of legislation or ballot measures are: Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Maine, Michigan, New York, Rhode Island, Vermont and Washington, according to EPI.</p> <p>The eight states increasing their minimum wage through automatic inflation adjustments are: Alaska, Florida, Minnesota, Missouri, Montana, New Jersey, Ohio and South Dakota.</p> <p>Cities hiking the minimum hourly rate for workers range from several in California to New York City and Washington, D.C.</p>

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HEADLINE	01/01 Costa Rica investigates plane crash
SOURCE	https://www.cbsnews.com/news/costa-rica-crash-cause-investigated-killed-us-citizens-nature-air/
GIST	<p>SAN JOSE, Costa Rica -- Costa Rican investigators are working to determine what caused a charter aircraft carrying 10 U.S. citizens and two local crew members to crash in a wooded area in the country's northwest soon after takeover, killing everyone on board. Officials said Sunday evening that they were still seeking to establish the names of the Americans who died when the plane went down at midday in Guanacaste.</p> <p>They said Nature Air had provided a passenger list, but the names on it had not been confirmed.</p> <p>A family in the suburbs of New York City said five of the dead Americans were relatives on vacation. They identified them as Bruce and Irene Steinberg and their sons Matthew, William and Zachary, all of Scarsdale.</p> <p>Rabbi Jonathan Blake of the Westchester Reform Temple in Scarsdale said in a statement posted on the Temple's Facebook page and sent in an email to The Associated Press that the Steinbergs were involved in philanthropy and local Jewish groups. "This tragedy hits our community very hard," Blake wrote.</p> <p>At a news conference, Enio Cubillo, director of Costa Rica Civil Aviation, said the Nature Air charter flight crashed shortly after taking off just after noon Sunday from Punta Islita on a planned flight to the capital of San Jose. He said investigators were looking into possible causes.</p> <p>Cubillo identified the pilot as Juan Manuel Retana and described him as very experienced.</p>
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HEADLINE	01/01 Iran protests turn violent; 12 dead
SOURCE	https://apnews.com/a53371dc213c4f7ab6841ee30dea0197/Iran-state-TV:-12-killed-in-protests,-attacks-on-security
GIST	<p>TEHRAN, Iran (AP) — Nationwide protests in Iran saw their most violent night as “armed protesters” tried to overrun military bases and police stations before security forces repelled them, bringing the death toll in the unrest to at least 12, state television reported Monday.</p> <p>The demonstrations, the largest to strike Iran since its disputed 2009 presidential election, began Thursday in Mashhad over economic issues and have since expanded to several cities, with some protesters chanting against the government and the supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei. Hundreds of people have been arrested.</p> <p>Iranian state television aired footage of a ransacked private bank, broken windows, overturned cars and a firetruck that appeared to have been set ablaze. It reported that clashes Sunday night killed 10 people.</p> <p>“Some armed protesters tried to take over some police stations and military bases but faced serious resistance from security forces,” state TV reported. It did not say where those attacks occurred.</p> <p>Later Monday, state TV said clashes killed six people in the western town of Tuyserkhan, 295 kilometers (185 miles) southwest of Tehran. It said clashes in the town of Shahinshahr, 315 kilometers (195 miles) south of Tehran, killed three more. It did not say where the 10th person was killed.</p> <p>Earlier Monday, the semi-official ILNA news agency quoted Hedayatollah Khademi, a representative for the town of Izeh, as saying two people died there Sunday night.</p>
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HEADLINE	01/01 Hong Kong: anti-Beijing protests
SOURCE	http://www.straitstimes.com/asia/east-asia/anti-beijing-protesters-march-in-hong-kong
GIST	<p>HONG KONG (AFP) - Angry protesters marched through Hong Kong on Monday (Jan 1) against what they described as suppression by Beijing, days after Chinese authorities ruled that part of a city rail station would come under mainland law.</p> <p>Semi-autonomous Hong Kong has been ruled under a "one country, two systems" deal since Britain returned it to China in 1997 and enjoys rights unseen on the mainland, including freedom of speech and an independent judiciary.</p> <p>But a string of recent incidents have fuelled concern over the erosion of its autonomy and rule of law, including the jailing of prominent pro-democracy activists.</p> <p>Campaigner Joshua Wong, who joined thousands of protesters at the march Monday, said suppression by China's Communist Party government had worsened in 2017.</p> <p>Wong, 21, was jailed in August over his role in the Umbrella Movement mass pro-democracy protests of 2014 and is on bail pending an appeal against his six-month sentence.</p> <p>"In 2018, I hope that every Hong Konger can become an avenger, and win back the core values eroded by Beijing," Wong told AFP.</p> <p>Many of the protesters were angry at the so-called "co-location" agreement, which would bring part of a new rail terminus in the heart of Hong Kong under mainland law.</p> <p>The high-speed link to the sprawling southern mainland cities of Shenzhen and Guangzhou is due to open this year, with plans for a joint immigration checkpoint that would see mainland police and other officials based in the Hong Kong terminus.</p> <p>The station is on Hong Kong's famous harbourfront in Kowloon, not on the border with the mainland further to the north.</p> <p>China's top legislative body approved the project last week.</p> <p>The final stage before implementation is a vote by Hong Kong's legislative council, which is weighted towards Beijing.</p> <p>Pro-democracy lawmakers, campaigners and some in the city's legal community say the plan is a violation of Hong Kong's mini-constitution, the Basic Law, which says national laws do not apply to Hong Kong except for a few exceptions.</p>
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HEADLINE	01/01 Economic forces driving protests Iran
SOURCE	http://money.cnn.com/2018/01/01/news/economy/iran-economy-protests/index.html
GIST	<p>The biggest anti-government protests in Iran since 2009 have turned the spotlight on President Hassan Rouhani's economic record.</p> <p>Iran's economy has been picking up pace in recent years, helped by a nuclear deal that eased international sanctions.</p> <p>Growth has returned and inflation has fallen since Rouhani took office in 2013. The International Monetary Fund is projecting the economy to expand by 4.2% in the year to March 2018 -- it was</p>

contracting five years ago. And annual inflation has fallen to 10% from 34%.

But many Iranians are not feeling the benefit, and anger at the state of the economy has fueled protests that began Thursday. At least 12 people have been killed in the demonstrations, state media has reported.

Youth unemployment is high, and a new budget shows subsidies for the poor being cut while the religious establishment is protected. The big boost many had been hoping for from the nuclear deal has so far failed to materialize.

"On an expert level, and in the eyes of the International Monetary Fund, the Rouhani administration is conducting the right measures to strengthen the Iranian economy," said Adnan Tabatabai, the co-founder of CARPO, a think tank based in Germany. "But that does not mean that social justice is generated at the same time," he added.

Here's why many Iranians are losing patience over the economy:

Not enough jobs

Iran's young and educated population is full of potential, but opportunities are scarce.

The unemployment rate among those aged 15 to 29 is well over 24% according to official statistics. It's even higher among urban youth and women. The IMF has called the country's women an "untapped source of growth and productivity."

Rouhani acknowledged on Monday that unemployment is the biggest challenge. "Our economy requires major corrective surgery," he was quoted as saying by Iran, a state newspaper.

The country has been hemorrhaging talent because of the lack of opportunities. Science minister Reza Faraji Dana was quoted in 2014 as saying that 150,000 educated Iranians were leaving the country every year.

Fuel and food price rises

Cliff Kupchan, chairman of the Eurasia Group, said stagnant living standards are among the main causes of the unrest. He said there was more bad news on that front when Rouhani unveiled his budget plans last month.

The government proposed slashing subsidies on basic goods, including food, and services for the poor and increasing fuel prices by as much as 50%.

At the same time, religious institutions would be spared the austerity.

"The [proposal] angered many Iranians, as it made clearer the overwhelming extent of non-discretionary spending on religious institutions, entitlements, and other programs," Kupchan said.

No windfall from nuclear deal

When some sanctions -- including a ban on oil exports -- were lifted in January 2016 many Iranians expected a big boost to the economy, employment and their own living standards.

Oil revenues have soared, and some sectors -- such as tourism -- have benefited. But aside from a few big agreements in energy, there has not been a windfall in foreign investment in the past two years.

"Non-oil growth, where most jobs are created, remains far lower because of red tape, corruption, and other structural issues," wrote Kupchan in a research note.

Disappointment over the lack of foreign direct investment produced by the nuclear deal was contributing to the current frustration, he added.

"Expectations were far too high, partly because President Rouhani raised them to a very high level in order to gain enough support behind that agreement," Tabatabai said.

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HEADLINE	01/01 Revelers ring in 2018 w/added security
SOURCE	http://www.cnn.com/2017/12/31/world/new-years-eve-celebrations/index.html
GIST	<p>(CNN) — Throngs of revelers packed cities around the globe to usher in 2018 with public celebrations and fireworks, despite fears of terrorism and frigid weather in some places.</p> <p>In New York, hundreds of thousands of people packed Times Square in the 9-degree Fahrenheit weather, with a wind chill of 4 degrees below zero, to watch the 2018 ball drop and confetti rain down on the street. The frigid temperature made it the second coldest New Year's Eve ball drop on record in New York. The coldest ball drop still holds at 1-degree Fahrenheit in 1917.</p> <p>Law enforcement agencies had added additional security measures, including extra checkpoints, police dogs, street closures and undercover officers.</p> <p>"You will see a stronger police presence out there than we've seen, even than what we've seen in recent years. And that's prudent, given the terror events we have seen and studied around the world as well as the three incidents here in New York over the past 15 months," said NYPD Commissioner James O'Neill before the East Coast clock struck midnight.</p> <p>And in Las Vegas, where a gunman killed 58 people at a music festival in October, officials installed extra security -- including National Guard officers and snipers on rooftops -- along the famed Las Vegas Strip. Fireworks lit the sky in a synchronized spectacle over the city as the new year began.</p> <p>In San Francisco, fireworks burst over the waterfront amid a heavier-than-usual police presence. Security was intensified after a man had been arrested in December for allegedly seeking to attack a popular San Francisco tourist site on Christmas Day.</p> <p>Around the world, cities celebrated the New Year with spectacles of fireworks.</p> <p>More than a million people lined the harbor in Sydney, Australia, to watch a 12-minute fireworks show over the iconic Opera House and Harbour Bridge. Across Asia, people crowded into waterside viewing areas to see fireworks burst over Shanghai, Singapore, Hong Kong and other cities.</p> <p>After a year marred by mass shootings and deadly terror attacks, many celebrations unfolded amid heightened security.</p> <p>In London, officials deployed armed officers as part of a security plan they "developed and reviewed following the tragic incidents that have occurred throughout the year," Metropolitan Police Superintendent Nick Aldworth said.</p> <p>After a spate of sexual assaults marred New Year's Eve events in several German cities in 2015, officials in Berlin this year set up a special "safe zone" for women who feel harassed. Berlin, Cologne and other German cities also added hundreds of extra police.</p> <p>In Paris, 1,850 police officers were assigned to the Champs-Élysées amid a "double perimeter of security," Interior Minister Gérard Collomb told BFMTV.</p> <p>And almost a year after a gunman opened fire on 2017 New Year's revelers in an Istanbul nightclub,</p>

	Turkish police raided a suspected ISIS cell last week to help thwart potential attacks during the holidays.
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HEADLINE	01/01 NYE brings record cold for much of US
SOURCE	http://www.cnn.com/2017/12/31/us/new-years-eve-winter-weather/index.html
GIST	<p>(CNN) — Out with the old, in with the cold.</p> <p>With much of the Midwest and Northeast already besieged by freezing temperatures, ice and snow, the weather is going from bad to worse -- and spreading to the South -- just as revelers rang in the new year.</p> <p>In New York, hundreds of thousands of people packed Times Square in the 9-degree Fahrenheit weather, with a wind chill of 4 degrees below zero, to watch the 2018 ball drop and confetti rain down on the street. The frigid temperature made it the second-coldest New Year's Eve ball drop on record in New York. The coldest ball drop in New York City still holds at 1-degree Fahrenheit in 1917.</p> <p>But authorities had said they didn't expect the frigid temperatures to cool revelers' spirits.</p> <p>New Year's Eve is expected to be 20 to 40 degrees colder than usual across much of the United States, forecasters say. As many as 27 record lows are expected to be set on New Year's Day. And 24 record lows for January 2 are possible on Tuesday.</p> <p>That's on top of record lows set late last week, from Danville, Virginia, to Augusta, Maine.</p> <p>From Hettinger, North Dakota -- where it was minus 37 degrees Sunday morning -- and the Adirondacks of New York down to the very southern tip of Texas, more than 150 million people were under wind chill alerts in the United States on Sunday morning, more than double Saturday's 70 million.</p> <p>Of the lower 48 states, only 10 weren't under a wind chill alert, and only two of those are east of the Rocky Mountains: Florida and South Carolina.</p> <p>Southern regions unused to such temperatures could see some icy roads as an early morning hard freeze follows rain.</p> <p>"It's going to be extra bad in the South, where they are not used to dealing with it," said CNN meteorologist Allison Chinchar.</p> <p>Brownsville, Texas, on the southern border with Mexico, could see wind chill in the 20s.</p> <p>In Atlanta, which holds an annual Peach Drop, temperatures are predicted to dip to 22 degrees.</p> <p>In Boston, forecasters predict a low of minus 1, with wind chill values as low as minus 7 degrees on New Year's Eve, and 2 degrees on the first day of the year. Mayor Marty Walsh urged residents to take precautions for the bitterly cold weather.</p> <p>The arctic front that hit earlier already has brutalized parts of the United States. It was so cold in Massachusetts last week that sharks were washing up on the shoreline of Cape Cod Bay, "likely stranded due to cold shock," the Atlantic White Shark Conservancy said.</p> <p>In Rochester, New York, calls to AAA Roadside Assistance in the rural areas surged because of snow, CNN affiliate Spectrum News Rochester reported.</p> <p>"On a normal winter day in Rochester, we see about 300 calls in the metro area and much lower in the rural areas, said AAA Roadside Assistance Manager Mark Mika. "This week that's changed. In the rural areas it has jumped considerably, almost to 600 calls in one day."</p>

Beleaguered Erie, Pennsylvania, has gotten more snow in December -- 121.3 inches -- than its average for an entire winter season, meteorologist Chinchar said. And the city is forecast to get as much as 6 inches in the next two days.

There's no light at the end of the snow tunnel for much of the United States. Although it will get a few degrees warmer in the coming week, temperatures are expected to drop again late in the week.

"It's not like this is going to end and it goes back to normal," Chinchar said.

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HEADLINE	12/31 Oil production booms heading into 2018
SOURCE	https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/capitalbusiness/us-oil-production-booms-as-new-year-begins/2017/12/31/de49b50e-ee50-11e7-b3bf-ab90a706e175_story.html?hpid=hp_hp-cards_hp-card-business2%3Ahomepage%2Fcard&utm_term=.9629ce8d10c4
GIST	<p>U.S. crude oil production is flirting with record highs heading into the new year, thanks to the technological nimbleness of shale oil drillers.</p> <p>The current abundance has erased memories of 1973 gas lines, which raised pump prices dramatically, traumatizing the United States and reordering its economy. In the decades since, presidents and politicians have made pronouncements calling for U.S. energy independence.</p> <p>President Jimmy Carter in a televised speech compared the energy crisis of 1977 to “the moral equivalent of war.”</p> <p>“It’s a total turnaround from where we were in the ’70s,” said Frank Verrastro, senior vice president at the Center for Strategic and International Studies.</p> <p>Shale oil drills can now plunge deep into the earth, pivot and tunnel sideways for miles until they hit an oil pocket, Verrastro said.</p> <p>The United States is so awash in oil that petroleum-rich Saudi Arabia’s state-owned oil and natural gas company is reportedly interested in investing in the fertile Texas Permian Basin shale oil region, according to a report last month.</p> <p>That is a far cry from the days when U.S. production was on what was thought to be an irreversible downward path.</p> <p>“For years and years, we thought we were running out of oil,” Verrastro said. “It took \$120 for a barrel of oil to make people experiment with technology, and that has been unbelievably successful. We are the largest oil and gas producer in the world.”</p> <p>Shale oil drillers have spawned a revolution using high-pressure drilling, coupled with a mixture of water and sand, which breaks open — “fractures” — hard-to-reach oil pockets trapped in rock.</p> <p>The major shale oil fields are in southern and southwest Texas, Montana and North Dakota, and Oklahoma, Colorado, Wyoming and parts of Nebraska. There are also deposits east of the Mississippi in West Virginia, Ohio, Pennsylvania and New York.</p> <p>U.S. oil production averaged around 9.6 million barrels per day in 2017. The highest U.S. production based on monthly government data is above 10 million barrels per day, which dates back to 1970.</p> <p>Production hit 9.58 million barrels per day in May 2015 before prices dropped because of an oil glut.</p>

The resilience of U.S. oil producers has come as the price of crude rose above \$60 per barrel on world markets. Many shale drillers can start and stop on a dime depending on the world oil price. The sweet spot for shale profit is in the neighborhood of \$55 to \$60 per barrel.

An expanding world economy and production cutbacks by Russia and the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries have helped push prices above \$60 per barrel in recent days.

The oil-friendly Trump administration has approved the controversial Keystone XL pipeline and is reportedly considering loosening offshore oil drilling regulations.

U.S. average daily oil production of 10 million barrels a day wasn't thought possible a few years ago. Daily U.S. output plummeted to 3.8 million barrels per day in September 2005 and again in September 2008.

That's nowhere near the almost 20 million barrels per day in petroleum products that the United States consumes. But the volume of domestic production allows the United States to tamp down oil prices by maintaining supply.

The increased production "doesn't make us independent, but now we have a lot of low-cost natural gas and low-cost oil. And we have become exporters of natural gas," Verrastro said. "It's a rosy scenario. At least for now."

Brad McMillan, chief investment officer for Commonwealth Financial Network, said the various shale producers have coalesced into a few big players, resulting in more predictable production.

That results in a less volatile price.

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HEADLINE	12/31 NKorea: 'open to dialogue' w/Seoul
SOURCE	https://www.reuters.com/article/us-northkorea-missiles-kimjongun/north-koreas-kim-says-open-to-dialogue-with-south-korea-will-only-use-nukes-if-threatened-idUSKBN1EQ0NJ?il=0
GIST	<p>SEOUL (Reuters) - Kim Jong Un on Monday warned the United States that he has a "nuclear button" on his desk ready for use if North Korea is threatened, but offered an olive branch to South Korea, saying he was "open to dialogue" with Seoul.</p> <p>After a year dominated by fiery rhetoric and escalating tensions over North Korea's nuclear weapons program, Kim used his televised New Year's Day speech to call for lower military tensions on the Korean peninsula and improved ties with the South.</p> <p>"When it comes to North-South relations, we should lower the military tensions on the Korean Peninsula to create a peaceful environment," Kim said. "Both the North and the South should make efforts."</p> <p>Kim said he will consider sending a delegation to the Winter Olympics Games to be held in Pyeongchang, South Korea, in February.</p> <p>"North Korea's participation in the Winter Games will be a good opportunity to show unity of the people and we wish the Games will be a success. Officials from the two Koreas may urgently meet to discuss the possibility," Kim said.</p> <p>South Korean President Moon Jae-in has said North Korea's participation will ensure safety of the Pyeongchang Olympics and proposed last month that Seoul and Washington postpone large military drills that the North denounces as a rehearsal for war until after the Games.</p> <p>A spokesperson for Moon's office said they were still reviewing Kim's New Year's Day speech.</p>

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HEADLINE	12/31 Kim: US will never start war w/NKorea
SOURCE	https://ca.news.yahoo.com/north-koreas-kim-says-u-never-start-war-005731746.html
GIST	<p>SEOUL (Reuters) - North Korean leader Kim Jong Un said on Monday that the United States will never be able to start a war against North Korea now that his country has developed the capability to hit all of the U.S. mainland with its nuclear weapons.</p> <p>"The entire United States is within range of our nuclear weapons, and a nuclear button is always on my desk. This is reality, not a threat," Kim said during a televised New Year's Day speech.</p>
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HEADLINE	12/31 Death among homeless reach new high
SOURCE	https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/homeless/deaths-rise-amid-growing-homelessness-crisis-in-king-county/
GIST	<p>The toll of the region's homelessness crisis has been building since early in the year.</p> <p>By April, the list of people who died while homeless or without a verifiable address reached 48. In September, it passed 93, the previous year's total.</p> <p>By the close of November, the King County medical examiner's list reached 133, surpassing the previous high of 111 from 2006.</p> <p>The list is a grim indicator of what many people living without shelter and those involved in the region's fight against homelessness both acknowledge: For all the progress made toward the goal of making homelessness "rare, brief and one-time," the reality on the streets remains stubbornly unchanged.</p> <p>With an estimated snapshot count of 11,643 — more than 5,000 of whom were living outdoors during the annual survey — King County has the third-largest concentration in the nation of people living in homelessness.</p> <p>Major cities across the West Coast are experiencing similar problems, with yearly increases in Portland, Los Angeles and San Diego.</p> <p>But despite the rise in deaths and overall number of homeless people, other figures show Seattle and King County were able to deliver in 2017 on the headway promised two years ago, when both governments declared a state of emergency over homelessness.</p> <p>From October 2016 to September 2017, more than 6,000 single adults and families moved from homelessness to some form of stable housing, according to recent data from All Home, the county's coordinating agency for homeless services. The rate of people returning to the streets within a year of receiving services has been cut in half.</p> <p>Kira Zylstra, deputy director of All Home, said those strides are evidence that efforts to ease access to shelter and housing programs and make performance-based funding decisions is working.</p> <p>"At the highest levels, what we've all come to agree on is that we cannot continue to do things as we always have," Zylstra says.</p> <p>It remains to be seen whether those new strategies will make a significant dent in the number of people living rough on the county's streets and greenbelts. Scheduled for Jan. 25, the next Point in Time count, during which volunteers and paid canvassers fan out across the county to survey the local homeless</p>

population, will put those new efforts to the test.

How local elected officials handle the problem in the coming year also will fall under scrutiny. In a recent interview, Seattle Mayor Jenny Durkan tried to strike a balance between confidence in the city's current approach — using data to determine which programs are working and which aren't — and a pragmatic outlook on when the crisis might end.

“We need to stop treating this as if there's an unrealistic political deadline,” Durkan said. To make progress “we need to make sure we have strategies in place that demonstrably help people,” she added.

Still, the departments that Durkan's still-young administration oversees have set what may be lofty goals — with deadlines — based on the new strategies. In November, when Seattle rebid \$34 million in contracts to providers of homelessness services, Seattle Human Services said it planned to more than double the number of people moved out of homelessness and into stable housing by the end of next year — from 3,026 in 2017 to 7,399 in 2018.

To reach that target, Seattle has pushed through a long-planned pivot from emergency shelters where people can sleep overnight to one-stop “enhanced” facilities that give them 24-hour access and counseling to help transition into housing.

Two such shelters opened to clients this year, both with significant new funding from the city. The results so far are mixed. Moving people who sometimes have spent years on the streets is difficult work, and the shelters have not been able to move clients into housing as quickly as hoped.

For the strategy to succeed, the city's new investments in short-term rental subsidy and prevention programs designed to keep people from ever becoming homeless will also have to pan out. Durkan said the city will continue to monitor its contracted providers to ensure they do succeed.

As the medical examiner's list grows, the urgency to find solutions continues to mount.

The list itself comes with caveats. It includes people who died in hotels or hospital emergency rooms whose addresses could not be verified. Others who actually died while living on the street may not be included because their deaths weren't handled by the county office.

Still, some of the people on the list literally died on the streets. Disease and overdoses claimed some. Several others died by homicides and suicide.

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HEADLINE	12/31 Iran vows to crush anti-govt. protests
SOURCE	http://time.com/5082811/iran-protests-turn-deadly-revolutionary-guard/?xid=homepage
GIST	<p>Iran's powerful Revolutionary Guard Corps vowed to crush one of the biggest shows of dissent against the government in years, as days of confrontations between demonstrators and security forces turned deadly in a western province. Stocks fell.</p> <p>The guard — whose mandate is to safeguard the Islamic Revolution — warned late Saturday that it would respond with “a hard punch” if demonstrations didn't stop. Two protesters were killed in Dorud in the province of Lorestan late Saturday during clashes with security forces, Habibollah Khojastehpour, deputy for political affairs for the province of Lorestan, said in an interview posted on the website of Iran's state broadcaster.</p> <p>The protests, which began in the northeastern city of Mashhad on Thursday, present a serious challenge to President Hassan Rouhani and the Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei. Protesters first took aim at rising food prices and corruption, driven partly by a sense that the July 2015 nuclear deal hasn't delivered the broad economic recovery many were expecting. By Friday, the dissent spread to other areas, and</p>

evolved into a wider condemnation of the clerical establishment and security forces.

Government officials have said the protests are part of a wider attempt by Rouhani's opponents to discredit his leadership. Iran's hardline media have said justified criticism of the government has been hijacked by a wider foreign plot to sow sedition in the country.

Iran's TEDPIX Index fell 1.7 percent to 95,561.58 in Tehran on Sunday, down to the lowest level since Dec. 20, according to data on the bourse's website.

Overnight unrest in the capital Tehran was concentrated in a few major intersections, according to the semi-official Tasnim news agency. The report said bus stops had been vandalized and garbage dumpsters set on fire. There has been heavy police and security presence in restive areas, including scores of anti-riot police clad in black uniforms and helmets. The capital was quiet on Sunday.

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HEADLINE	12/31 Seattle pays ex-mayor sex abuse lawsuit
SOURCE	http://mynorthwest.com/856716/seattle-settles-lawsuit-with-man-who-accused-former-mayor/
GIST	<p>SEATTLE (AP) — The City of Seattle has settled a lawsuit filed by a man whose sexual abuse claims effectively ended the political career of former Mayor Ed Murray.</p> <p>City Attorney Pete Holmes announced late Saturday that the city will pay Delvonn Heckard \$150,000 to resolve the lawsuit, which, along with accusations by others, led to Murray's resignation in September.</p> <p>The lawsuit claimed Murray raped and molested Heckard as a teen. It also blamed the city for enabling the Democrat to use his political office to slander Heckard and others for months as the mayor denied the allegations. The AP typically does not identify alleged victims of sex abuse, but Heckard said he wants his name made public.</p> <p>"With this settlement, the city takes an important step in putting this sad chapter behind us, limiting litigation expenses and allowing Mr. Heckard to move forward with his life," Holmes said in a statement.</p> <p>Newly elected Seattle Mayor Jenny Durkan, a former U.S. Attorney, said settling the suit will let the city begin to heal.</p> <p>"As someone who has represented victims of sexual assault, I know this has caused a lot of pain and trauma for Mr. Heckard as well as many survivors," she said.</p> <p>Heckard's lawyer, Lincoln Beauregard, said Sunday that his client appreciates and accepts the city's offer. He says the case was never about money but the funds will help Heckard in his recovery.</p> <p>Murray continues to deny the allegations and in a statement said the relief of putting the case behind him is bittersweet, "tempered by the painful experience we have all undergone."</p> <p>"The lawsuit was painful for me, my husband, my family and my former staff because the allegations were untrue," Murray said. "I did not molest or have any sexual contact with the plaintiff. I was prepared to defend myself in court, as I have been doing at my own expense, but wholeheartedly agree with the city's decision to pay \$150,000 to avoid the cost and uncertainty of litigation."</p> <p>Beauregard said the lawyers who filed the lawsuit, including Julie Keys and Lawand Anderson, will donate their attorneys' fees to sexual assault recovery organizations. Beauregard Keys will donate \$25,000 to the King County Sexual Assault Resource Center. Anderson will give \$12,500 to the Harborview Sexual Assault and Trauma Unit and another \$12,500 to the Silent Task Force.</p>
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HEADLINE	12/31 Judge: police shooting settlement on hold
SOURCE	http://mynorthwest.com/856747/judge-rejects-settlement-for-man-fatally-shot-by-police/
GIST	<p>PASCO, Wash. (AP) — The family of a man shot to death after throwing rocks at police can't agree on who should receive a \$750,000 settlement.</p> <p>So, the Tri-City Herald reports , a judge has rejected the offer and placed the civil case on hold for four months while the lawyers of Antonio Zambrano-Montes' family work out an agreement.</p> <p>Court documents say Zambrano-Montes died in February 2015 after officers shot at him 17 times. Zambrano-Montes, who was high on methamphetamine, was throwing rocks at police and passing cars.</p> <p>An autopsy found he was shot five to seven times.</p> <p>The lawsuit was filed against the city of Pasco, the Pasco Police Department, Chief Bob Metzger and officers Ryan Flanagan, Adam Wright and Adrian Alaniz.</p> <p>It is not clear in court documents who will pay the settlement.</p>
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HEADLINE	12/30 State parks 2 free days in January
SOURCE	http://www.kiro7.com/news/local/need-to-get-outside-on-the-holiday-weekend-state-parks-have-two-free-days-in-january/671969158
GIST	<p>Maybe your New Year's resolution is to hike more. Maybe you just need some fresh air after a raucous party to celebrate the start of 2018.</p> <p>Either way, State Parks has your back.</p> <p>Visitors to lands managed by Washington State Parks won't need a Discover Pass for day-use visits on New Year's Day, the first of 12 free days in 2018. The next is on Martin Luther King Day, Jan. 15.</p> <p>Discover Passes are typically \$10 for one-day use or \$30 for a year, but access to parks won't cost a thing on the 12 free days.</p> <p>A pass is still needed on land run by the state Department of Natural Resources and Department of Fish and Wildlife.</p> <p>The free day on Monday also coincides with a nationwide initiative to get more people outdoors on Jan. 1, according to the parks department. About 35 parks are hosting hiking events, which the department calls "First Day Hikes."</p> <p>No Discover Pass is needed for day use of lands managed by Washington State Parks on New Year's Day. Here is a list of other free park days for 2018:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monday, March 19 Saturday, April 14 Sunday, April 22 Saturday, June 2 Saturday, June 9 Sunday, June 10 Saturday, Aug. 25 Saturday, Sept. 29 Sunday, Nov. 11 Friday, Nov. 23

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HEADLINE	12/30 Disaster prep New Year's resolution
SOURCE	http://www.king5.com/article/news/local/disaster-prep-new-years-resolution-invest-in-an-emergency-kit/281-503448946
GIST	<p>Making resolutions for the New Year? How about starting 2018 on a safer note by investing in an emergency kit, for your next power outage or our next earthquake.</p> <p>During the first few hours or days after a disaster, essential services may not be available. So people must have a plan and be ready to act on their own.</p> <p>Washington state's Emergency Management Division says you should be prepared for two weeks and offer a Two Weeks Ready brochure (PDF) that outlines what you need for your emergency kit.</p> <p>In the event of an earthquake, the agency also offers a drop, cover and hold earthquake scenario map. And you don't have to do it all at once - they offer a prep plan you can do in a year.</p> <p>KING 5's Disaster Preparation section also offers complete coverage and tips on how to prepare yourself and your families, including a printable disaster checklist, building an emergency supply kit on a budget, and how to prepare your pets for a natural disaster.</p>
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HEADLINE	12/31 SKorea: 2nd ship seized w/NKorea oil
SOURCE	http://www.foxnews.com/world/2017/12/31/south-korea-seizes-second-ship-suspected-selling-oil-to-north-korea.html
GIST	<p>South Korea announced Sunday that it has seized another ship suspected of violating U.N. sanctions by selling oil to North Korea at sea – this time a Panama-flagged one.</p> <p>The announcement Sunday came just days after South Korea said it is holding the crew of a Hong Kong-flagged ship that allegedly handed over oil to a North Korean vessel in October.</p> <p>The 5,100-ton ship, named the KOTI, is being held in the western port of Pyeongtaek-Dangjin, maritime officials told Yonhap News Agency on Sunday.</p> <p>One official said the vessel has been blocked from departing the port since Dec. 21. The KOTI's crew are mostly from China and Burma, other officials added, declining to elaborate further on an ongoing investigation.</p> <p>The other ship being investigated, the Lighthouse Winmore, is being kept in Seoul. The ship is believed to have transferred about 600 tons of refined petroleum products to a North Korean ship in international waters in the East China Sea on Oct. 19, after leaving the South Korean port of Yeosu, a South Korean Foreign Ministry official told the Associated Press on Friday.</p>
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HEADLINE	12/30 New state laws going into effect 2018
SOURCE	http://www.cnn.com/2017/12/30/us/new-state-laws-2018-trnd/index.html
GIST	<p>(CNN)Goodbye, 2017. Get ready for hundreds of new state laws that go into effect on the first day of 2018.</p> <p>Here's a look at some of them:</p>

Voter ID laws

Iowa voters will be asked to show their [IDs at the polls](#). Republicans say the law will help prevent voter fraud. In 2018, anyone who doesn't have ID will have to sign an oath verifying they are who they say they are, and will be allowed to cast a ballot. But starting in 2019, voters will be required to show their ID and those who don't have one of the accepted forms, will be offered a provisional ballot.

West Virginia also [requires voters at any election](#) to show valid ID at the poll. The state permits both non-photo and photo IDs.

What you earn and your workplace

In **California**, employers can no longer ask about your prior salary. Job applicants can volunteer that information, if they wish. [The new state law](#) prohibits employers from relying on your salary history to decide whether to make you a job offer or decide how much to offer. And job applicants can request the pay scale for a position. The law is intended to narrow the gender pay gap.

A new **Nevada** law requires employers to [grant up to 160 hours of leave](#) per year to employees who are victims of domestic violence or have family members who are victims.

Employers in **Vermont** can't request or require employees to provide their [social media content](#). The act is meant to provide social media privacy for employees.

Policing the police

California and local law enforcement agencies will not be able to use its resources, such as its funds or personnel to investigate, detain or arrest people for [immigration enforcement purposes](#). Unofficially called a "sanctuary state" bill, supporters, including California Gov. Jerry Brown says that it "prohibits the commandeering of local officials to do the work of immigration agents." But critics say it limits cooperation between [federal agencies and local law enforcement](#).

Police officers in **New Jersey** who handle [sexual assault investigations](#) are required to get training. The goal is for officers to avoid further traumatizing survivors who are reporting sexual assault.

North Carolina's driver's handbook will give instructions on [how to deal with police](#) during a traffic stop. The new law comes after people have died during traffic stops. The state law requires advice including what actions that drivers should take, to be included to the driver's handbook.

Family and divorce

New York will permit employees to take up to [eight weeks of paid family leave](#). This is for bonding with a newborn, adopted or foster child, caring for a family member who is ill, or helping with a family member who is deployed on military service.

Who gets the dog in a divorce? In **Illinois**, pets will be treated more like kids than property in splits. Pets could be subject to partial or joint custody after their owners divorce. The law only applies to "companion animals" -- not service animals.

Schools

School buses in **Tennessee** will have [more oversight](#) following a deadly crash in [Chattanooga that killed six children](#) in 2016. The law requires local school agencies to have transportation supervisors. New school bus drivers must complete a training program and must be at least 25 years old.

Illinois requires school districts to make [feminine hygiene products](#) free to students. Tampons or pads must be available in school bathrooms with students from grade 6 through 12. **California** passed a similar measure that applies to schools with low-income students.

Colleges in **Tennessee** cannot "stifle freedom of speech and expression" by issuing speech codes, establishing free speech zones or disinviting speakers based on opposition by others to the content of their speech, according to the [Campus Free Speech Protection Act](#).

Let there be pot

California becomes the latest state to legalize recreational marijuana. As long as you're over the age of 21, you can buy pot without a medical card thanks to Proposition 64, which voters approved in 2016. But marijuana may not be available right on January 1 as businesses have to apply for a state license to begin selling recreational marijuana.

People who grow marijuana in **Colorado** are [limited to 12 plants](#) at home. Those who have medical conditions are allowed up to 24 plants. Local governments can pass even stricter limits. The cap on marijuana plants is intended to prevent pot from Colorado getting sold illegally in other states.

Others

August 4 is now [Barack Obama Day, a state holiday](#) in **Illinois**. But it's a commemorative holiday, meaning you won't be getting off work or school.

Barbers can now make house calls in **Tennessee**. Before, they could only go to homes of customers who were ill. Now barbers with residential certificates can cut hair in anyone's home [regardless of their clients' health](#).

Corn is the official grain of **Illinois**.

Public officers, such as elected officials and managers, who are convicted of a felony that is relevant to their jobs, can have their pensions revoked or reduced. This was voted by **New Yorkers** in a November ballot proposal.

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HEADLINE	12/29 NKorea: nuclear development continues
SOURCE	http://www.cnn.com/2017/12/29/asia/north-korea-statement-on-nuclear-development/index.html
GIST	<p>(CNN)North Korea will remain committed to the country's nuclear development in 2018, according to a report released Saturday by state-run news agency KCNA.</p> <p>"Do not expect any change in its policy," the report read.</p> <p>"Its entity as an invincible power can neither be undermined nor be stamped out. The DPRK, as a responsible nuclear weapons state, will lead the trend of history to the only road of independence and justice, weathering all tempests on this planet," the report continued, referring to North Korea's official name, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.</p> <p>The report, titled "No Force Can Prevail over Independence and Justice," provided a timeline of the country's alleged 2017 nuclear weapon achievements, mostly focused on possible US engagement.</p> <p>North Korea will "continue bolstering the capabilities for self-defense and preemptive attack with the nuclear force as the pivot as long as the US and its vassal forces persist in nuclear threat," the report said.</p> <p>North Korea boasted about its new capability to strike "the heart of the US" and its new "status" as a "world-class nuclear power." It said it will "deal with the US's most ferocious declaration of war with fire surely and definitely."</p>
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HEADLINE	12/30 Iran: will keep building missiles
SOURCE	http://www.cnn.com/2017/10/29/middleeast/iran-rouhani-trump-nuclear-deal/index.html
GIST	(CNN)Iran's missile program is not in breach of its nuclear deal and will continue despite objections from

the United States, President Hassan Rouhani said Sunday.

Earlier this month, US President Donald Trump announced that he would no longer make regular certifications that the lifting of sanctions under the deal -- known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) -- had been in US interests.

The agreement was negotiated in 2015 with the P5 +1 powers and the European Union. The P5+1 includes Germany and the permanent members of the UN Security Council: the United States, Russia, China, France and Britain.

In an October 13 speech, Trump said the deal "was one of the worst and most one-sided transactions the United States has ever entered into" and accused Iran of committing "multiple violations of the agreement."

According to the Iranian President's official website, Rouhani in a speech Sunday questioned the US government's credibility and reliability.

"If a government like the US government states that it is not committed to an important international commitment, and its reason is that the previous administration has been tricked, then what happens with the continuity of the responsibility of the governments?" it quoted him as saying. "You are explicitly violating your previous agreements and neglecting a UN Security Council-approved agreement."

The fact that the plan does not address Iran's nuclear missile program is one reason why Trump had been dissatisfied with the agreement.

"Iran just test-fired a Ballistic Missile capable of reaching Israel. They are also working with North Korea. Not much of an agreement we have!" the US leader tweeted in late September.

In his October 13 speech, Trump said: "We cannot and will not make this certification. We will not continue down a path whose predictable conclusion is more violence, more terror and the very real threat of Iran's nuclear breakout.

But Sunday Rouhani said Iran had fulfilled its obligations on the nuclear issue and had the right to defend itself.

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HEADLINE	12/31 UN chief issues 'red alert' for world
SOURCE	http://www.cnn.com/2017/12/31/us/un-secretary-general-2018-message-intl/index.html
GIST	<p>(CNN)As the world began to ring in 2018, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres called for global unity to overcome growing challenges.</p> <p>In his New Year message on Sunday, Guterres said the world appeared to have "gone in reverse" before adding, "On New Year's Day 2018 I am not issuing an appeal, I am issuing an alert -- a red alert for our world."</p> <p>He continued: "As we begin 2018, I call for unity. ... We can settle conflicts, overcome hatred and defend shared values. But we can only do that together."</p> <p>Reflecting on his January message when he assumed the secretary-general position -- in which he called for peace -- Guterres said that conflicts have deepened, global anxieties about nuclear weapons have increased, inequalities have grown and nationalism and xenophobia are on the rise.</p> <p>He stressed cooperation and collaboration should be the way forward in 2018, saying: "Unity is the path. Our future depends on it."</p>

He then urged leaders "everywhere to make this New Year's resolution: Narrow the gaps. Bridge the divides. Rebuild trust by bringing people together around common goals."

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HEADLINE 12/31 Harvey-hit Texans still struggle

SOURCE <https://www.nbcnews.com/storyline/hurricane-harvey/harvey-hit-texans-still-struggle-recovery-amid-housing-challenges-n833291>

GIST Debbie Gillespie Stephenson just wants to rebuild her house, which was destroyed by the raging waters of Hurricane Harvey's historic flooding.

After some good Samaritans on an airboat rescued her and two grandchildren from her engulfed home, she and her husband have spent more than four months at their deer lease — a sparse structure meant only for a hunter's temporary stay — about an hour north of their Rose City, Texas, home. Until Harvey, they had lived in that same house in that same small town for the past 42 years.

But there's been no progress toward their hopes of returning. Stephenson lays the blame at FEMA's doorstep, and many in the region are facing a wide variety of challenges, bureaucratic and otherwise.

The EHF and the Kaiser Family Foundation produced a study in December 2017 that concluded that approximately a third of those who lived in the Golden Triangle — an area between Beaumont, Port Arthur and Orange, where Rose City falls — said their lives are “still very disrupted” because of the storm.

Housing and financial issues are at the top of their list.

“In the Golden Triangle area, the damage is much more significant and the recovery is going much more slowly. They could use way more resources,” said Elena Marks, president and CEO of the Episcopal Health Foundation.

Stephenson's house was so damaged that she and her husband chose to demolish it. Then, a little over a month ago, FEMA approved the couple to receive a trailer and they thought they were in luck. They'd be able to rebuild their home while living on the property.

But that temporary housing — a boon for most anyone in this hard-hit region — has only been a major setback.

“We saw this three-bedroom trailer parked perpendicular in the middle of where our house is going to go,” said Stephenson, explaining that they are now unable to build their home because a FEMA contractor placed a large trailer on their plot of land.

Stephenson and her husband had been told they would be given a smaller trailer, and they certainly didn't want it on top of their home's intended foundation. Now they don't want to move in because they need the trailer to be moved or removed before they can start building.

She and her husband even asked if the structure could be given to someone else in need — anything so that they can begin to rebuild.

Every attempt to have the trailer moved has been stymied by bureaucracy.

“We've spoken to six people at FEMA asking to get it moved,” Stephenson said. “Our understanding is that once your trailer is dropped off, then they close your case. Three of them gave me the FEMA hotline, but the number they gave is disconnected and no longer works.”

While Stephenson’s case is somewhat unique, the continued disruption in her life is not — nor is her disquiet with FEMA. Help from the federal government feels as though it’s at a standstill.

It’s a problem that affects many people on the Texas coast and in the Golden Triangle, an area east of Harris County named for the prosperity gained from the early 20th century oil boom.

“There are currently tent cities there,” Marks said. “It’s really slow going. We don’t know why. We suspect it has to do with less robust county or regional infrastructure.”

Nearly half of residents affected by Harvey in this part of Texas need help applying for disaster assistance, and 52 percent say they need help repairing damage to their homes, according to the December study. Still others share that finding an affordable permanent home or temporary housing is still beyond their reach.

Housing isn't the only issue. In Rose City, officials only just lifted a four-month-old boil advisory notice on Dec. 22 because the small town had to essentially rebuild its water treatment plant.

And with every step forward remains the ever-present memory of a storm that forced some through the most difficult period in their lives.

“I was looking through my photographs on my phone the other day, and it was almost like it was a dream,” said Becky Ames, the mayor of Beaumont, about 6 miles west of Rose City.

The EHF and KFF study found that 47 percent of those living in the Golden Triangle said that Harvey has had a negative affect on their mental health. Comparatively, nearly a third of residents in other parts of the state reported the same.

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HEADLINE	12/31 Half Puerto Rico enters 2018 w/out power
SOURCE	https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2017/12/30/puerto-rico-nearly-half-residents-without-power-three-months-after-hurricane-maria/992135001/
GIST	<p>After months of efforts to restore power to hurricane-hit Puerto Rico, electricity provider AEE said Friday that 55% of households now had electricity.</p> <p>That means that some 660,000 customers out of a total 1.5 million are still without power, AEE director Justo Gonzalez said. It was the government-owned utility's first statement since Hurricane Maria slammed into the U.S. territory on September 20.</p> <p>The town of Ciales, one of the island's 78 municipalities, is still totally without electricity. No towns in Puerto Rico have had their power networks completely restored, Gonzalez said.</p> <p>AEE said that it had given priority to restoring power to shopping centers, hospitals and factories.</p> <p>Puerto Rico's government also cautioned that a lot of work remained as crews were still uncovering unexpected damage after the Category 4 storm hit in September, blowing down power lines and crippling substations with winds of up to 154 mph.</p> <p>The island's governor, Ricardo Rosello, appealed to U.S. utility companies Friday to send 1,500 workers to Puerto Rico to speed up electricity recovery efforts.</p> <p>People around the island were surprised and frustrated by the statistics released by officials Friday.</p> <p>San Juan Mayor Carmen Yulin Cruz said in an interview earlier this week that Washington's response to the storm was inadequate and that President Trump was the "disaster-in-chief."</p>

"He was disrespectful to the Puerto Rican people; he was disrespectful to the American people who were leaving their homes to come help us here," she told ABC News.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has estimated that power will likely be completely restored to the island by May.

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HEADLINE	12/30 Disasters pound North America 2017
SOURCE	http://abcnews.go.com/Technology/wireStory/disasters-pound-north-america-2017-globally-52058582
GIST	<p>North America couldn't catch a break in 2017. Parts of the United States were on fire, underwater or lashed by hurricane winds. Mexico shook with back-to-back earthquakes. The Caribbean got hit with a string of hurricanes.</p> <p>The rest of the world, however, was spared more than usual from the drumbeat of natural catastrophes. Preliminary research shows there were fewer disasters and deaths this year than on average, but economic damages were much higher.</p> <p>While overall disasters were down, they smacked big cities, which were more vulnerable because of increased development, said economist and geophysicist Chuck Watson of the consulting firm Enki Research.</p> <p>In a year where U.S. and Caribbean hurricanes set a record \$215 billion in damages, according to insurance giant Munich Re, no one in the continental U.S. died from storm surge, which traditionally is the No. 1 killer during hurricanes. Forecasters gave residents plenty of advance warning during a season where storms set records for strength and duration.</p> <p>"It's certainly one of the worst hurricane seasons we've had," National Weather Service Director Louis Uccellini said.</p> <p>The globe typically averages about 325 disasters a year, but this year's total through November was less than 250, according to the Centre for Research on the Epidemiology of Disasters at the University of Louvain in Belgium. They included flooding and monsoons in South Asia, landslides in Africa, hurricane in Ireland, and cyclones in Australia and Central America. Colombia experienced two different bouts of floods and mudslides.</p> <p>Disasters kill about 30,000 people and affect about 215 million people a year. This year's estimated toll was lower — about 6,000 people killed and 75 million affected.</p> <p>Was it random chance, statistical quirk or better preparedness? Experts aren't certain, but say perhaps it's a little bit of each.</p> <p>"This has been a particularly quiet year," said Debarati Guha-Sapir who heads the disaster research center. "The thing is not to be ... complacent about this."</p> <p>But quiet depends on where you live.</p> <p>The U.S. had gone more than a decade without a Category 3 storm or larger making landfall on the mainland. The last few Septembers — normally peak hurricane month — had been record quiet until this year when Harvey, Irma, Jose and later Maria popped up and grew to super strength in no time, said Colorado State University hurricane researcher Phil Klotzbach.</p> <p>"September was just bonkers. It was just one after the other, you couldn't catch a break," he said.</p>

There were six major Atlantic hurricanes this year; the average is 2.7. A pair of recent studies found fingerprints of man-made global warming were all over the torrential rains from Harvey that flooded Houston.

Researchers at the University of South Carolina estimated that economic damages from this year's disasters, adjusted for inflation, were more than 40 percent higher than normal, mostly because of Harvey, Irma and Maria. By many private measures, Harvey overtook Katrina as the costliest U.S. hurricane, but the weather service hasn't finished its calculations yet.

Much of the damage and deaths — storm surge and otherwise — from hurricanes striking the Caribbean are still unknown. The National Hurricane Center hasn't finished tallying its data.

Uccellini of the weather service said warmer than normal waters and unusual steering currents made the hurricanes especially damaging, combined with booming development in disaster-prone areas.

"We are building in the wrong places. We are building in areas that are increasing in risks," said Susan Cutter, director of the Hazards and Vulnerability Research Institute at the University of South Carolina.

Wildfires blazed nearly year-round in the U.S. fanned by relentless winds and parched conditions. Some 9.8 million acres of land have burned, mostly in the West, nearly 50 percent more than the average in the past decade. A wildfire that ignited in early December in Ventura and Santa Barbara counties northwest of Los Angeles grew to be the largest in California history.

Scientists connect drier weather after heavy rains — leading to buildup of fuel that can catch fire and burn easily — to a combination of both man-made warming and a natural La Nina, the climate phenomenon that's the flip side to El Nino, said Georgia Tech climate scientist Kim Cobb.

Worldwide significantly fewer people and less land were affected by drought this year, and extreme heat waves were less severe compared to the past.

Landslides were more frequent and deadlier this year, mostly because of the Sierra Leone landslide that killed 915 people, Guha-Sapir said.

Earthquakes worldwide were dramatically down. As of mid-December, there had been only seven earthquakes of magnitude 7 or larger compared to a normal year of about 15. Two powerful quakes struck Mexico in September including one that hit on the anniversary of the devastating 1985 Mexico City quake.

The back-to-back Mexico quakes were unrelated, said geophysicist Ross Stein of Temblor, Inc., a company that provides information about seismic risk.

"We have to remember that coincidences really do happen," he said.

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HEADLINE	12/29 CDC: flu season getting worse fast
SOURCE	http://abcnews.go.com/Health/states-high-levels-doctor-visits-due-flu-symptoms/story?id=52050122
GIST	<p>A new report released by the CDC today is showing that flu season is getting worse and fast.</p> <p>According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the number of states reporting high levels of doctor visits due to flu-like symptoms more than doubled in the last week, from 10 to 21.</p> <p>Those 21 states experiencing high activity: Alabama, Arizona, Arkansas, California, Georgia, Illinois, Indiana, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, Nebraska, Nevada, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Oregon, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, and West Virginia.</p>

	<p>The South and West reported seeing the highest rates of patients with flu-related symptoms.</p> <p>This season's vaccine is only 10 percent effective against the H3N2 strain in Australia, the dominant strain of influenza.</p> <p>Influenza researchers have blamed this decreased effectiveness on the most common process of vaccine manufacturing, which uses chicken eggs. Viruses are unpredictable, and if they are raised in eggs for vaccine production, their structure may not perfectly match those found in our environment.</p> <p>Still, the CDC is cautioning that the flu will likely peak between now and the end of January. It also maintains that an annual flu vaccine is the the first and most important step in protecting against flu viruses.</p>
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HEADLINE	12/31 Palestinians call back envoy to US
SOURCE	http://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/palestinians-call-back-envoy-us-talks-future-ties-52070902?
GIST	<p>The Palestinian Foreign Minister says the Palestinian envoy to Washington is being temporarily called back for consultations over the future of relations with the United States.</p> <p>The move comes after President Donald Trump recognized Jerusalem as Israel's capital, setting off unrest and prompting the Palestinians to reject Washington as a Mideast peace broker, a role it has held for decades.</p> <p>Foreign Minister Riad Malki says Sunday that discussions would take place "to set the decisions needed by the Palestinian leadership in the coming period regarding our relations with the US." He says the envoy is expected to return to "his normal work" after the discussions.</p> <p>Trump's decision upended decades of U.S. foreign policy and countered an international consensus that the fate of Jerusalem should be determined in negotiations.</p>
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HEADLINE	12/31 Congo forces kill 7 in anti-govt. protests
SOURCE	http://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/dead-anti-government-protests-congos-capital-52068594
GIST	<p>Congolese security forces killed at least seven people and at least one policeman died amid violence as more than a thousand people demonstrated in the capital against President Kabila's refusal to step down from power, the United Nations mission in Congo and police said Sunday.</p> <p>U.N. Congo mission spokeswoman Florence Marchal said at least 82 people have been arrested across the country in connection with Sunday's protests. She condemned the use of force against peaceful demonstrators and suppression of rights.</p> <p>Human Rights Watch Central Africa director Ida Sawyer said Congolese security forces shot dead two men outside St. Alphonse church in the Matete district.</p> <p>Congo police spokesman Col. Pierrot Mwanamputu, however, said the two were killed after an altercation with police. He said a police officer also died.</p> <p>Leonie Kandolo, spokeswoman for one of the groups that organized the demonstrations, said more than 10 people were killed and several injured. She also said that dozens, including some priests, have been detained.</p>

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HEADLINE	12/31 Iran rally turns deadly; 2 killed
SOURCE	http://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/report-protesters-western-iran-killed-night-rally-52067359
GIST	<p>Iran on Sunday blocked access to Instagram and a popular messaging app used by activists to organize and publicize the protests now roiling the Islamic Republic, as authorities said two demonstrators had been killed overnight in the first deaths attributed to the rallies.</p> <p>The demonstrations, which began Thursday over the economic woes plaguing Iran and continued Sunday, appear to be the largest to strike the Islamic Republic since the protests that followed the country's disputed 2009 presidential election.</p> <p>Iranian President Hassan Rouhani also broke his silence on the demonstrations in a speech aired Sunday night, saying that people had the right to protest though the public should not be made to "feel concerned about their lives and security."</p> <p>They were fanned in part by messages sent on the Telegram messaging app, which authorities blocked Sunday along with the photo-sharing app Instagram, which is owned by tech giant Facebook.</p> <p>Many in Iran are learning about the protests and sharing images of them through Telegram, a mobile phone messaging app popular among the country's 80 million people. On Saturday, Telegram shut down one channel on the service over Iranian allegations it encouraged violence, something its moderator denied.</p>
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Cyber Awareness

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HEADLINE	01/01 Antivirus software into spying tool?
SOURCE	https://www.nytimes.com/2018/01/01/technology/kaspersky-lab-antivirus.html
GIST	<p>It has been a secret, long known to intelligence agencies but rarely to consumers, that security software can be a powerful spy tool.</p> <p>Security software runs closest to the bare metal of a computer, with privileged access to nearly every program, application, web browser, email and file. There's good reason for this: Security products are intended to evaluate everything that touches your machine in search of anything malicious, or even vaguely suspicious.</p> <p>By downloading security software, consumers also run the risk that an untrustworthy antivirus maker — or hacker or spy with a foothold in its systems — could abuse that deep access to track customers' every digital movement.</p> <p>"In the battle against malicious code, antivirus products are a staple," said Patrick Wardle, chief research officer at Digma Security, a security company. "Ironically, though, these products share many characteristics with the advanced cyberespionage collection implants they seek to detect."</p> <p>Mr. Wardle would know. A former hacker at the National Security Agency, Mr. Wardle recently succeeded in subverting antivirus software sold by Kaspersky Lab, turning it into a powerful search tool for classified documents.</p> <p>Mr. Wardle's curiosity was piqued by recent news that Russian spies had used Kaspersky antivirus products to siphon classified documents off the home computer of an N.S.A. developer, and may have</p>

played a critical role in broader Russian intelligence gathering.

“I wanted to know if this was a feasible attack mechanism,” Mr. Wardle said. “I didn’t want to get into the complex accusations. But from a technical point of view, if an antivirus maker wanted to, was coerced to, or was hacked or somehow subverted, could it create a signature to flag classified documents?”

That question has taken on renewed importance over the last three months in the wake of United States officials’ accusations that Kaspersky’s antivirus software was used for Russian intelligence gathering, an accusation that Kaspersky has rigorously denied.

Last month, Kaspersky Lab sued the Trump administration after a Department of Homeland Security directive banning its software from federal computer networks. Kaspersky claimed in an open letter that “D.H.S. has harmed Kaspersky Lab’s reputation and its commercial operations without any evidence of wrongdoing by the company.”

For years, intelligence agencies suspected that Kaspersky Lab’s security products provided a back door for Russian intelligence. A draft of a top-secret report leaked by Edward J. Snowden, the former National Security Agency contractor, described a top-secret, N.S.A. effort in 2008 that concluded that Kaspersky’s software collected sensitive information off customers’ machines.

The documents showed Kaspersky was not the N.S.A.’s only target. Future targets included nearly two dozen other foreign antivirus makers, including Checkpoint in Israel and Avast in the Czech Republic.

At the N.S.A., analysts were barred from using Kaspersky antivirus software because of the risk it would give the Kremlin broad access to their machines and data. But excluding N.S.A. headquarters at Fort Meade, Kaspersky still managed to secure contracts with nearly two dozen American government agencies over the last few years.

Last September, the Department of Homeland Security ordered all federal agencies to cease using Kaspersky products because of the threat that Kaspersky’s products could “provide access to files.”

A month later, The New York Times reported that the Homeland Security directive was based, in large part, on intelligence shared by Israeli intelligence officials who successfully hacked Kaspersky Lab in 2014. They looked on for months as Russian government hackers scanned computers belonging to Kaspersky customers around the world for top secret American government classified programs.

In at least one case, United States officials claimed Russian intelligence officials were successful in using Kaspersky’s software to pull classified documents off a home computer belonging to Nghia H. Pho, an N.S.A. developer who had installed Kaspersky’s antivirus software on his home computer. Mr. Pho pleaded guilty last year to bringing home classified documents and writings, and has said he brought the files home only in an attempt to expand his résumé.

Kaspersky Lab initially denied any knowledge or involvement with the document theft. But the company has since acknowledged finding N.S.A. hacking software on Mr. Pho’s computer and removing it, though the company said it had immediately destroyed the documents once it realized they were classified.

The company also said in November that in the course of investigating a surveillance operation known as TeamSpy in 2015, it had tweaked its antivirus program to scan files containing the word “secret.” The company said it had done this because the TeamSpy attackers were known to automatically scan for files that included the words “secret,” “pass” and “saidumlo,” the Georgian translation for the word secret.

Kaspersky continues to deny that it knew about the scanning for classified United States programs or allowed its antivirus products to be used by Russian intelligence. Eugene Kaspersky, the company’s chief executive, has said he would allow the United States government to inspect his company’s source code to allay distrust of its antivirus and cybersecurity products.

But Mr. Wardle discovered, in reverse-engineering Kaspersky antivirus software, that a simple review of its source code would do nothing to prove its products had not been used as a Russian intelligence-gathering tool.

Mr. Wardle found that Kaspersky's antivirus software is incredibly complex. Unlike traditional antivirus software, which uses digital "signatures" to look for malicious code and patterns of activity, Kaspersky's signatures are easily updated, can be automatically pushed out to certain clients, and contain code that can be tweaked to do things like automatically scanning for and siphoning off classified documents.

In short, Mr. Wardle found, "antivirus could be the ultimate cyberespionage spying tool."

Mr. Wardle said it was relatively easy to use a vulnerability in Microsoft's Windows software to manipulate the Kaspersky software. Because officials routinely classify top secret documents with the marking "TS/SCI," which stands for "Top Secret/Sensitive Compartmented Information," Mr. Wardle added a rule to Kaspersky's antivirus program to flag any documents that contained the "TS/SCI" marker.

He then edited a document on his computer containing text from the Winnie the Pooh children's book series to include the marking "TS/SCI" and waited to see whether Kaspersky's tweaked antivirus product would catch it.

Sure enough, as soon as the Winnie the Pooh text was saved to his machine, Kaspersky's antivirus software flagged and quarantined the document. When he added the same TS/SCI marker to another document containing the text "The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog," it, too, was flagged and quarantined by Kaspersky's tweaked antivirus program.

"Not a whole lot of surprise that this worked," Mr. Wardle said, "but still neat to confirm that an antivirus product can be trivially, yet surreptitiously, used to detect classified documents."

The next question was: What happens to these files once they are flagged? Mr. Wardle stopped short of hacking into Kaspersky's cloud servers, where suspicious files are routinely uploaded.

However, he noted that antivirus customers, including Kaspersky's, agreed by default to allow security vendors to send anything from their machine back to vendors' servers for further investigation.

There are legitimate reasons for this: By uploading these items to Kaspersky's cloud, security analysts can evaluate whether they pose a threat, and update their signatures as a result.

Kaspersky Lab said Mr. Wardle's research did not reflect how the company's software works.

"It is impossible for Kaspersky Lab to deliver a specific signature or update to only one user in a secret, targeted way because all signatures are always openly available to all our users; and updates are digitally signed, further making it impossible to fake an update," the company said in a statement.

The company added that it applied the same security standards and maintained the same levels of access as other security vendors, and reiterated that it was willing to make its source code, threat detection rules and software updates available for audit by independent experts.

But, as Mr. Wardle's research demonstrated, an untrustworthy vendor, or hacker or spy with access to that vendor's systems, can abuse its deep access to turn antivirus software into a dynamic search tool, not unlike Google, to scan customers' computers for documents that contain certain keywords.

"And no one would ever know," he added. "It's the perfect cybercrime."

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SOURCE	https://interestingengineering.com/north-korea-is-suspected-to-be-behind-25k-cryptocurrency-hack
GIST	<p>North Korean hackers are suspected to be behind a heist played out in the summer of 2017, when a hacking group called Andariel took control of a South Korean company server and used it to mine about 70 Monero coins worth approximately \$25,000 USD. Some speculate the hacking group may have ties to the North Korean government.</p> <p>Kwak Kyoung-ju, the lead of a hacking analysis team at the South Korean government-backed Financial Security Institute says they have been investigating the hacking group who seem to be focused on raising capital.</p> <p>“Andariel is going after anything that generates cash these days. Dust gathered over time builds a mountain,” he says. It is suspected the hacking group has seized other South Korean based servers to mine cryptocurrencies in the past. The preferred currency of the group appears to be Monero. The relatively unknown coin has a strong focus on privacy and is likely to be more easily laundered than bitcoin. Monero mixes multiple transactions to make the tracing of funds more difficult.</p>
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HEADLINE	01/01 Top hacks, data breaches in 2017
SOURCE	https://www.hackread.com/2017-top-hacks-data-breaches/
GIST	<p>2017 is over, but memories of some of the biggest hacking and data breach related incidents will haunt victims for a long time. Today, we will be highlighting biggest hacking incidents of 2017 including malware attacks leading to ransomware infection or a simple email that turned out to be a phishing email and stole millions of dollars from unsuspecting users and businesses.</p> <p>These incidents also involve those which took place in the last few years but announced in 2017. So brace yourself.</p> <p>Equifax</p> <p>In July 2017, the consumer credit reporting agency Equifax suffered a massive data breach in which personal data of 143 million Americans were stolen. This means over 40% of the entire population of the United States had their personal information stolen.</p> <p>The stolen data includes names, birthdays, addresses, driver license numbers, credit card data and including social security numbers (SSNs). The company only announced the incidents to the victims and media on September 8th.</p> <p>Yahoo</p> <p>Yahoo is often in the news for wrong reasons and on October 4th, 2017 the company announced it suffered a cyber attack in which hacker stole 3 billion user accounts in August 2013. This means each and every Yahoo user had their Yahoo email and password stolen.</p> <p>HBO</p> <p>2017 was a bad year for Home Box Office (HBO) thanks to an alleged Iranian hacker who stole a massive trove of company’s data including unreleased episodes of Game of Thrones, Curb your Enthusiasm and Insecure etc.</p> <p>The hacker also stole personal data from HBO’s Viviane Eisenberg, the Network’s Executive Vice President Legal Affairs and ended up leaking it online. The data included emails and plain-text passwords for her social media, bank, work and university accounts.</p> <p>WannaCry</p>

WannaCry ransomware attack was one of the most powerful cyber attacks the online world had ever witnessed. WannaCry infection began from the United Kingdom's National Health Service (NHS) on May 12th, 2017 and took control of 200,000 outdated Windows-based devices in 150 countries.

In order to unlock their computers, attackers demanded \$300-600 ransom in Bitcoin from the victims. Although the United States blame North Korea for spreading the ransomware, there is no substantial evidence. However, whoever was behind WannaCry attack used NSA hacking tools leaked by Shadow Brokers hacking group which will be discussed later in the article.

Petya or NotPetya

In June, disk wiper malware Petya infected Ukrainian businesses, the British advertising agency WPP, FedEx, the Danish shipping firm Maersk, gas giant Rosneft and the Russian oil. The malware also used hacking tools belonging to the NSA that were leaked by Shadow Brokers.

The major victim of Petya malware was FedEx who in September revealed that it attributed a \$300 million loss to the attack while TNT had to suspend its operations.

54-hour of DDoS attack

In March, a series of denial-of-service (DDoS) attacks hit a US college that lasted for 54 hours straight. In their attack, attackers used a new variant Mirai malware botnet. During the attack, the average traffic flow measured was 30,000 RPS (Requests Per Second), and the highest peak was at 37,000 RPS. The DDoS mitigation firm Imperva Incapsula said that it was the most they have seen out of any Mirai variant so far. They reported that the attack generated more than 2.8 billion requests.

CCleaner Software

In September, the cybersecurity giant Avast revealed that its subsidiary CCleaner was hacked by unknown hackers who infected its servers with a backdoor impacting 2.27 million users. The researchers confirmed that the malicious version of CCleaner was being hosted directly on CCleaner's download server as recently as September 11, 2017.

NiceHash

On December 7, 2017, Cryptocurrency mining market NiceHash was hacked in which cybercriminals stole more than \$70 million from the company's wallet. In the incident, hackers emptied its entire Bitcoin wallet. As a result, the company's CEO had to resign from his post.

ShadowBreakers hacking NSA

Although Shadow Breakers appeared in the summer of 2016, after hacking the National Security Agency (NSA) and leaking its hacking tools and exploits. Those exploits were later on used by hackers and cybercriminals to spread WannaCry, Bad Rabbit, and Petya malware.

However, the group made a comeback and leaked yet another trove of Windows exploits. According to New York Times NSA had been "deeply infiltrated" over the years, especially after The Shadow Brokers conducted a massive data breach against its cyber infrastructure.

California voter records

On May 31st, 2017, researchers identified an incident in which a hacker stole 19 million California voter records after holding MongoDB database for 0.2 bitcoin ransom. The stolen data included names, city, phone number, home address, voting status, emails and other personal data.

The incident highlights how foreign hackers can steal US voters data with little effort.

Taringa

In August, the social media giant for Latin America Taringa suffered a data breach in which 28 million accounts were stolen and leaked online. The data included usernames, email addresses, and their passwords hashed with MD5 algorithm. The company acknowledged the hack but claimed no phone numbers and Bitcoin wallets addresses were stolen.

Combo list of 1.4 billion clear text credentials

The mother of all leaks was discovered by researchers earlier in December 2017, in which a file containing emails and clear text passwords of over 1.6 billion users. The credentials were collected from different leaks and data breaches and combined in one file.

Researchers believe it is the “largest aggregate database found in the dark web to date” beating the Onliner Spambot dump with 711 Million accounts following Exploit.in data dump in which 593 million accounts were exposed. However, the fact that the data was available in plain text format poses a huge security threat to users.

US Citizens data

A marketing firm DeepRoot that was employed by the Republican National Committee accidentally exposed data belonging to 200 million US citizens. That was around 62% of the entire population of the US. The exposed data includes information like home addresses, political views, phone numbers and even birthdays.

The data remained public for anyone to download until a security researcher reported the incident to DeepRoot. The company, on the other hand, acknowledged the leak but claimed it was never hacked. “We take full responsibility for this situation. Based on the information we have gathered thus far, we do not believe that our systems have been hacked,” said the company.

What to expect in 2018

There were several other incidents involving hack attacks leading to data breaches however in July 2017, a mid-year report by Risk Based Security (RBS) identified that there were 2,227 incidents of data breaches as of June 2017, allowing hackers to steal 6 billion records. This means that in the first six months of 2017, hackers stole more data than the total number of medical and financial records stolen in the whole of 2016.

Therefore, 2018 can be worse than 2017, since cybercriminals are becoming sophisticated in their attacks while unsuspecting users are outdated with the latest tricks and scams used by malicious elements.

Be vigilant, Happy New Year and happy browsing.

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HEADLINE	12/31 WhatsApp ends year on sour note
SOURCE	https://www.hackread.com/you-are-not-alone-whatsapp-is-down-for-many/
GIST	<p>If you are wondering why your WhatsApp is down, don't worry, you are not alone the messaging service is down for many around the world. It appears the service went down at 2:04 PM ET. The users are reporting on Twitter that they are unable to connect, send or receive messages from their friends and families.</p> <p>According to DownDetector Live Map, a service that keeps track of online platforms facing connectivity issues shows WhatsApp is suffering outage in Europe, India, Pakistan, Brazil, Venezuela, Mexico,</p>

	<p>Malaysia, Indonesia, some parts of Russia and the United States.</p> <p>It's unclear what exactly is the reason for the service interruption, it is quite possible that since it's New Year's Eve, WhatsApp servers might be overloaded. Remember, there are more than 1.3 billion monthly active users.</p> <p>There has been no comment from WhatsApp or Facebook, the company that owns the messaging giant since 2014, and bought it from the original owners for \$19 Billion. However, other messaging services like Telegram, IMO and Viber are operating without any disruption.</p> <p>WhatsApp will stop working on following devices:</p> <p>Apart from the current outage, WhatsApp previously announced that by the end of 2017 its service will no longer work on some of the smartphones including BlackBerry device running BlackBerry OS or BlackBerry 10. Before the announcement, WhatsApp already stopped working for Nokia S40, Nokia Symbian S60, Android 2.1 and Android 2.2, Windows Phone 7 and iPhone 3GS/iOS 6.</p>
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HEADLINE	01/01 Game of Thrones script leaked online
SOURCE	https://www.hackread.com/reddit-user-leaks-game-of-thrones-season-8-script-pages/
GIST	<p>Game of Thrones season 7 was marred by hacks and leaks to such an extent that apart from seasonal spoilers, hackers managed to obtain and expose personal information of the entire cast. It seems like the world's favorite, the multi-award-winner show is not going to have a smooth sail in the next season, which will be the final season of HBO's super hit show since the alleged script of season 8 has been leaked online. The makers of Game of Thrones haven't yet confirmed the leaking of the script though.</p> <p>Reportedly, a Reddit user has posted scripts of various episodes of the Game of Thrones including a page of Episode 3, two from Episode 5 and a page of Episode 6. Although we cannot say with certainty that the leaked documents contain content from the original script but a few clues regarding the happenings in Westeros after the breaching of the wall by the Night King are somewhat relatable.</p>
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HEADLINE	01/01 'Swatting' charges could be complicated
SOURCE	https://www.nbcnews.com/news/us-news/analysis-charges-against-suspect-swatting-hoax-led-death-could-be-n833881
GIST	<p>Los Angeles police have arrested Tyler Barriss on a fugitive warrant in California arising from a Thursday evening incident in Kansas, where a suspected "swatting" hoax and a phony 911 call ended in the fatal police shooting of an unarmed man, Andrew Finch.</p> <p>Prosecutors will now have to figure out what, if anything, Barriss can be charged with in connection with Finch's death.</p> <p>Charges in the case have not been filed but authorities are expected to address the case Tuesday, law enforcement sources familiar with the case told NBC News. Barriss, 25, could be charged with murder under Kansas law. Whether he could be convicted is another issue.</p> <p>Unintentional but reckless second-degree murder in Kansas is an unintentional killing committed recklessly, but so recklessly that it evinces "extreme indifference to the value of human life."</p> <p>On the other hand, reckless involuntary manslaughter is an unintentional killing committed just recklessly.</p> <p>The crimes differ only in the degree of recklessness required to prove culpability. Basic recklessness is the</p>

conscious disregard of a substantial and unjustifiable risk, which is also a gross deviation from a reasonable standard of care.

Second-degree murder recklessness is more reckless, that the defendant additionally knew the victim was in imminent danger, although death was not foreseen. This sounds a lot like intentional murder, but in Kansas, there's a difference.

Intentional murder would occur when one shoots at a person in a moving car, trying to kill that person. Second-degree reckless murder would occur when one fires a gun in the general direction of a vehicle at night, not intending to kill and strikes an occupant. The line can be hard to discern.

Barriss allegedly made the false 911 call with the specific intent that the police respond to the call and rush to the home of the person Barriss had a dispute with.

If true, Barriss acted in conscious disregard of a substantial and unjustifiable risk that Finch would be harmed; the mental element for second-degree murder is satisfied. It wouldn't matter that the call was intended only as a prank, or even that Barriss didn't intend for anyone to actually die. Second-degree murder does not require an intentional death in Kansas.

The challenge for the prosecution is not establishing the mental element. It's the causation.

Causation is a tricky concept. There are two components — causation in fact and "legal" causation. Causation in fact is shown by a cause-and-effect relationship between a defendant's conduct and the harm suffered by the victim. To prove legal causation, prosecutors must show it was foreseeable that the defendant's conduct might create a risk of harm. The harm must be the natural and probable consequence of the wrongful act.

A person who "swats" directly causes armed police officers to go to a victim's home, and also causes those officers to be prepared for an imminent threat. It's also foreseeable that sending the police with guns drawn to someone's house could probably result in a shooting death. This seems pretty straightforward, but it's not.

Expect the defense in this case to argue that the police's independent decision to shoot Finch was an intervening, "superseding" event, breaking the chain of causation.

An intervening cause harms someone after the defendant's act has been committed. It absolves a defendant of liability only if it supersedes the defendant's negligence, by breaking the connection between the initial act (calling 911) and the harm caused (the shooting).

If the likelihood that a third person may act in a particular manner is one of the hazards of the original criminal act, that act — even if criminal itself — does not prevent the original actor from being liable for causing harm.

Swatting is a relatively new phenomenon, which means there is sparse legal precedent for guidance. Courts may look to cases where a speeding motorist leads police on a high speed chase, and a pursuing police officer crashes into and kills an innocent victim.

Barriss was arrested in California in 2015 for allegedly making bomb threats to a television station in Glenadale, and was charged with two felony counts of false report of a bomb and one felony count of criminal threats. He was convicted in 2016 and sent to prison for two years and was released in January according to court documents, the Associated Press reported.

There is no federal law specifically against "swatting." U.S. Rep. Katherine Clark, D-Mass., introduced a bill in 2015 designed to address swatting.

The Interstate Swatting Hoax Act of 2015 would have imposed sentences of up to 5 years if a hoax call

	resulted in an emergency response and up to life in prison if a death resulted. The FBI estimates 400 swatting attacks occur every year, Clark said in a statement when announcing the bill.
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HEADLINE	01/02 Criminal underworld dropping bitcoin?
SOURCE	https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2018-01-02/criminal-underworld-is-dropping-bitcoin-for-another-currency
GIST	<p>Bitcoin is losing its luster with some of its earliest and most avid fans -- criminals -- giving rise to a new breed of virtual currency.</p> <p>Privacy coins such as monero, designed to avoid tracking, have climbed faster over the past two months as law enforcers adopt software tools to monitor people using bitcoin. A slew of analytic firms such as Chainalysis are getting better at flagging digital hoards linked to crime or money laundering, alerting exchanges and preventing conversion into traditional cash.</p> <p>The European Union’s law-enforcement agency, Europol, raised alarms three months ago, writing in a report that “other cryptocurrencies such as monero, ethereum and Zcash are gaining popularity within the digital underground.” Online extortionists, who use ransomware to lock victims’ computers until they fork over a payment, have begun demanding those currencies instead. On Dec. 18 hackers attacked up to 190,000 WordPress sites per hour to get them to produce monero, according to security company Wordfence.</p> <p>For ransomware attacks, monero is now “one of the favorites, if not the favorite,” Matt Suiche, founder of Dubai-based security firm Comae Technologies, said in a phone interview.</p> <p>Monero quadrupled in value to \$349 in the final two months of 2017, according to coinmarketcap.com, placing it among a number of upstart coins that that rose faster than bitcoin, the world’s most valuable digital currency. Bitcoin roughly doubled in the same period, data compiled by Bloomberg show.</p> <p>In monero’s case, criminals are snapping it up because bitcoin’s underlying technology can work against them. Called blockchain, the digital ledger meticulously records which addresses send and receive transactions, including the exact time and amount -- great data to use as evidence. Match an address to a crime and then watch the bitcoin universe carefully, and you can see the funds disappear and reappear in other locations.</p> <p>Sleuths have developed databases and techniques for digesting that information to eventually nab wrongdoers. Say, for example, a coffee shop in Berkeley is known to have a certain bitcoin address, and a wallet used by an extortionist transfers the same amount there every morning at 9 a.m. Police can stop by and make an arrest.</p> <p>Started in 2014, monero is very different. It encrypts the recipient’s address on its blockchain and generates fake addresses to obscure the real sender. It also obscures the amount of the transaction.</p> <p>The techniques are so potent that software that flags coins suspected of being obtained through crime now tags just about anything converted into or out of monero as high risk, according to Pawel Kuskowski, chief executive officer of Coinfirm, which helps exchanges and other companies avoid tainted money. That compares with only about 10 percent of bitcoin, he said.</p> <p>“What we treat ‘high risk’ is something that’s anonymizing funds,” he said in a phone interview. “How are you going to prove that these funds are not coming from illegal sources?”</p> <p>Monero is one of many privacy-focused coins, each offering different security features. Its main competitor, Zcash -- which isn’t known to have a significant criminal following -- can offer even better privacy protection. Instead of creating fake addresses to hide senders, it encrypts their true address. That</p>

	makes it impossible to identify senders by looking for correlations in addresses used in multiple transactions to pinpoint the real one -- a vulnerability for monero.
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HEADLINE	12/31 Bitcoin turns into new e-hawala route
SOURCE	http://www.newindianexpress.com/thesundaystandard/2017/dec/31/bitcoin-turns-into-new-e-hawala-route-spotlight-on-cross-border-criminal-syndicates-1740717.html
GIST	<p>NEW DELHI: Investigating agencies are scrambling to uncover criminal money laundering cartels exploiting bitcoins, the virtual currency that has stormed global financial markets with prices rising by nearly 1,000 per cent in 2017.</p> <p>The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) has already started probes in at least six cases and a Deputy Inspector General-level officer has been tasked to dig deeper into illegal activities of traders of digital money who, the agency claims, are violating the regulatory framework and aiding hawala operators.</p> <p>In a recent top-level meeting, CBI officials disclosed the details of the cases but acknowledged obstacles in unravelling the end point as most players are operating through a dark net. They have also sought help from law enforcement agencies in Seychelles, Poland, France, Cyprus and the United States to access details of syndicates using the crypto currency in India for criminal activities.</p> <p>Internal documents accessed by The Sunday Standard shows the primary concern for the government is to cripple suspected criminal networks trading in digital money for alleged terror funding, money laundering, drug and human trafficking.</p> <p>Some officials have observed that bitcoins are turning into a new 'e-hawala route' for money launderers. Since demonetization, a large number of people in India are trading in virtual currency, which is not authorised and monitored by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) and financial institutions.</p> <p>The investigators also pointed out that virtual currency, due to complete anonymity, offers the easiest and fastest route to transfer illicit proceeds and deliver hawala money bypassing the conventional trade route.</p>
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HEADLINE	12/31 'Forever 21' stores breached for months
SOURCE	https://www.techspot.com/news/72514-forever-21-pos-system-breached-months-exposing-customer.html
GIST	<p>It seems Equifax isn't the only company that's accidentally exposed sensitive customer information this year. Popular clothing retailer Forever 21 had its payment system compromised at retail locations throughout the country for several months during 2017.</p> <p>After hiring "leading payment technology and security firms" to assist with their investigation into the issue, the company discovered that some POS systems at certain Forever 21 store locations had their built-in encryption mechanisms switched off, which allowed malware to be installed. This malware in turn allowed hackers to search for and likely obtain sensitive customer credit card data.</p> <p>"In most instances, the malware only found track data that did not have a cardholder name," Forever 21's official customer notice reads. "But occasionally the cardholder name was found."</p> <p>These hacks reportedly took place at "varying times" between April 3rd and November 18th, 2017, leaving the company's customer base vulnerable for roughly 8 months - though it's possible that at certain Forever 21 locations credit card data stored in system logs prior to April 3rd could also have been exposed.</p> <p>The company has made it clear that the length of time each affected POS system was vulnerable varies</p>

greatly from store to store. "In some stores, this scenario occurred for only a few days or several weeks," Forever 21 said in a statement. "and in some stores this scenario occurred for most or all of the timeframe."

Forever 21 has not yet released any specific information regarding how they plan to prevent these issues from happening in the future, though they have promised to "[continue working with] security firms to enhance [their] security measures." That said, the company has advised their customers to obtain copies of their credit reports and consider placing a fraud alert on their credit files if they have reason to believe they may have been affected by this data breach.

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HEADLINE	12/31 Snowden: Telegram app 'unsafe'
SOURCE	https://www.hackread.com/snowden-explains-why-telegram-messenger-is-unsafe/
GIST	<p>For years, the ex-NSA (National Security Agency) whistleblower Edward Snowden has been raising awareness about so-called secure messaging applications or programs and publically criticised apps like Skype, Google Allo, and Telegram.</p> <p>In fact, NSA documents leaked by him showed how Microsoft handed over plain text Skype chats of users to the agency. But today, citing the tense situation in Iran, the whistleblower has posted a series of tweets explaining why Telegram Messenger app is unsafe and it can be secured with little effort.</p> <p>In his first tweet, Snowden wondered why an app like Telegram has unsafe and censorable public channels when it claims to provide secure messenger service. According to Telegram FAQ page, "Channels are a tool for broadcasting public messages to large audiences."</p> <p>He then gave a brief background of Telegram in Iran due to the sudden political unrest and protests against the government and how the authorities can use Telegram app to track user conversations for political advantages since Iran has more than 40 million people using the app.</p> <p>Earlier today, Telegram shut down a channel that called for "violent protests" against the Iranian government. It happened after Mohammad-Javad Azari Jahromi, Iranian telecommunications minister, tweeted Pavel Durov, the CEO, and founder of Telegram.</p> <p>And then came the suspension order from the CEO...</p> <p>Snowden, on the other hand, highlighted the fact that due to its public channels the company will face pressure from the Iranian government. The latest example of it is the suspension of "amadnews" Telegram channel.</p> <p>Snowden then tweeted to Durov and reminded him of what happened when he was forced from Russia for not doing enough favors at Vkontakte (VK), a Russian-based online social media and social networking service founded by Durov.</p> <p>He also advised Telegram to come up with features that may help the people by keeping the service accessible "even after the block" by authoritarian regimes. Moreover, Snowden questioned why Telegram still encourages "dangerous cloud messaging instead of secret chats."</p> <p>Snowden advised Durov to convert all Iranian Telegram users accounts to 2FA (Two Factor Authentication) and teach them how to use Tor bridges. According to Tor Project, bridges relays are Tor relays that are not listed in the main Tor directory. Since there is no complete public list of them, even if user ISP is filtering connections to all the known Tor relays, they probably will not be able to block all the bridges.</p> <p>Remember, Snowden is a big fan of encrypted messaging app Signal and advises his followers to use</p>

	Signal. In fact, in one of his tweets, he mentioned using Signal app every day. The only issue with Signal app is that it asks users to submit their phone numbers while signing up. However, there are some steps you can follow to sign up for Signal without giving out your phone number.
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HEADLINE	12/30 La. man busted for Nigeria prince scam
SOURCE	https://www.scmagazine.com/louisiana-man-busted-in-nigerian-prince-scam/article/733758/
GIST	<p>A 67-year-old Louisiana man faces 269 counts of wire fraud and money laundering for his part in a Nigerian prince email scam.</p> <p>Michael Neu of Slidell, La., the alleged middle man in the scheme was snared after an “extensive” 18-month probe, the Slidell Police Department said.</p> <p>Authorities said Neu “participated in hundreds of financial transactions, involving phone and internet scams, designed to con money from victims from across the United States.” Some of those dollars were wired to co-conspirators in Nigeria.</p> <p>The investigation is ongoing and is expected to reach beyond the U.S. borders, according to a release from the police department.</p>
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Terror Conditions

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HEADLINE	01/02 Abubakar Shekau appears in video
SOURCE	https://guardian.ng/news/abubakar-shekau-appears-in-video-amid-surge-in-boko-haram-attacks/
GIST	<p>Boko Haram leader Abubakar Shekau released a video message on Tuesday claiming a series of attacks in northeast Nigeria during the festive season.</p> <p>The shadowy leader released his first video message in months amid a surge in violence casting doubt on the Nigerian government’s claim that the jihadist group is defeated.</p> <p>“We are in good health and nothing has happened to us,” said Shekau in the 31-minute video message spoken in the Hausa language common across northern Nigeria.</p> <p>“Nigerian troops, police and those creating mischief against us can’t do anything against us, and you will gain nothing,” he said.</p> <p>“We carried out the attacks in Maiduguri, in Gaboru, in Damboa. We carried out all these attacks.”</p> <p>The video then shows footage from a Christmas Day attack on a military checkpoint in Molai village on the outskirts of the northeast Nigerian city of Maiduguri, which the military said was thwarted by troops after one hour of battle.</p> <p>Boko Haram fighters in torn clothes were shown shooting from the back of battered pickup trucks.</p> <p>Shekau’s message comes during an acceleration of Boko Haram attacks and just days after the jihadists killed 25 people outside Maiduguri, the birthplace of the Islamist insurgency.</p> <p>In December, Boko Haram attacked convoys of Nigerian soldiers and dispatched suicide bombers into crowded markets in towns across northeast Nigeria.</p> <p>At least 50 people were killed in November when a suicide bomber blew himself up at a mosque in</p>

	<p>Adamawa state.</p> <p>But Nigerian President Muhammadu Buhari said in his New Year address that Boko Haram has been “beaten”.</p> <p>“Isolated attacks still occur, but even the best-policed countries cannot prevent determined criminals from committing terrible acts of terror,” said Buhari.</p> <p>Shekau, a leader known for his lengthy, wild-eyed video messages, took over Boko Haram in 2009 after the death of its founder Muhammad Yusuf.</p>
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HEADLINE	01/02 Malaysian ISIS militant inciting terror
SOURCE	https://www.thestar.com.my/news/nation/2018/01/02/msian-is-militant-seen-inciting-terror-he-and-two-other-extremists-go-on-to-execute-their-captives-i/
GIST	<p>KUALA LUMPUR: A new video has emerged showing a Malaysian Islamic State (IS) militant inciting extremist action along with two other militants, before executing three captives.</p> <p>The eight-minute, 12-second clip, which starts with footage of atrocities committed by IS in various countries including France, shows the militants calling on Muslims to launch attacks in their own countries if they are unable to join the terror group in Syria and Iraq.</p> <p>The Malaysian, identified as 25-year-old Muhammad Aqif Heusen Rahizat, can be seen urging Muslims to rise up.</p> <p>He is accompanied by Singaporean Abu Akil Al-Singapuri@Kamal and a third, unidentified militant.</p> <p>“Do you still have any reason for being left behind from rising up?” Muhammad Aqif said in the video at the 2:32 mark.</p> <p>Abu Akil is also heard urging militants to stay firm as the fighting has just begun.</p> <p>“We will never stop until we cleanse the land from east Asia to west of Africa,” he said.</p> <p>At the end of the video, the three militants are shown fatally shooting three individuals, believed to be their prisoners.</p> <p>Intelligence sources said the video was first aired on Khayr Wilayah – one of the official media for IS – on Dec 29 in Arabic and English.</p> <p>Other sources said Muhammad Aqif, who is also known as Abu Sufyan Malayzi, left for Syria on Dec 28, 2013.</p> <p>“The suspect, who is from Kluang, Johor, went to Syria and joined the Ajnad Al-Syam militant group, which also has former PAS leader and ISA detainee Mohd Lotfi Ariffin as a member.</p> <p>“After Mohd Lotfi’s death on Sept 14, 2014, Muhammad Aqif joined IS,” a source told The Star.</p> <p>It is learnt that Muhammad Aqif managed to convince his older brother Muhammad Afiq Heusen to join him in Syria along with Ummi Kalsom Bahak, who was detained at the KLIA 2 on Oct 5, 2014.</p> <p>It is believed that Ummi Kalsom was planning to marry Muhammad Aqif once she got to Syria.</p> <p>Sources said Muhammad Aqif was not active on social media and preferred to lie low compared to other</p>

	<p>high-profile Malaysian militants – until the emergence of this video.</p> <p>“Authorities believe the suspect is still in Abu Kamal, which is at the border between Syria and Iraq,” a source said.</p> <p>The video, intelligence sources said, showed that Muhammad Aqif is still active with IS despite the devastating losses suffered by the terror group as a result of assaults by the Syrian and Iraqi armies, aided by Russia and the United States.</p>
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HEADLINE	01/02 Israel strikes Hamas target in Gaza
SOURCE	https://www.rt.com/newsline/414779-israeli-jets-strike-hamas-target-gaza/
GIST	<p>The Israeli Air Force carried out a strike against a Hamas facility in the Gaza Strip in the early hours of Tuesday, following Monday night rocket fire by the militant group.</p> <p>“In response to the rocket fired towards Israel earlier this evening, an IAF aircraft targeted a military compound belonging to the terrorist organization Hamas in southern Gaza. The IDF holds Hamas accountable for events in Gaza,” the Israel Defense Forces said on its Twitter page.</p> <p>Earlier, Israeli news outlets reported that a rocket had been launched from the Gaza Strip toward the Eshkol regional community. The projectile fell in an open area with “no injuries” or damage reported by the IDF.</p>
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HEADLINE	01/01 Baghdad: first bomb blast of 2018
SOURCE	https://www.iraqinews.com/iraq-war/first-bomb-blast-2018-leaves-security-personnel-wounded-baghdad/
GIST	<p>Baghdad (IraqiNews.com) A tribal fighter has been profoundly wounded in a bomb blast in west of Baghdad, a security source said on Monday.</p> <p>“A bomb placed under a vehicle, driven by a member of the Tribal Mobilization Forces, exploded at noon, while passing at al-Radwaniyah region, west of Baghdad,” the source told Alghad Press.</p> <p>“Security troops cordoned off the blast scene,” the source said, adding that the ambulance transferred the injured to nearby hospital.</p> <p>The blast is considered the first in Baghdad in 2018.</p>
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HEADLINE	01/02 Bomb blast near Baghdad market
SOURCE	https://www.iraqinews.com/iraq-war/three-people-injured-bomb-blast-near-baghdad-market-2/
GIST	<p>Baghdad (Iraqinews.com) – Three people were wounded in a bomb blast near a popular market in Baghdad on Tuesday, a security source was quoted saying.</p> <p>“An explosive charge went off near an overcrowded market at Shatt al-Taji area north of Baghdad, leaving three people injured,” the source told Baghdad Today.</p> <p>“Security troops cordoned off the blast scene,” the source said, adding that the ambulance transferred the injured to a nearby hospital.</p>

	Earlier in the day, two army personnel were injured as a bomb blast targeted an army patrol at Al Tarmia area north of Baghdad.
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HEADLINE	01/02 Nigeria: 700 abductees escape captivity
SOURCE	https://citizentv.co.ke/news/700-abductees-of-boko-haram-escape-captivity-nigerian-military-186903/
GIST	<p>Nigeria’s military says more than 700 people abducted by the Islamist militant group Boko Haram have escaped captivity in the northeast of the country.</p> <p>Army spokesman, Col. Timothy Antigha, said the escaped captives were given shelter at a military holding facility in the northeastern town of Monguno, in Borno state.</p> <p>Antigha did not say over what time period the captives escaped or whether or not they are still being sheltered by the military. There has been no independent verification of the army’s claim.</p> <p>In a statement, Antigha said the abductees included men, women and children, and he said most were forced to work as farm laborers by the insurgents on various islands in Lake Chad. He said the military was monitoring the escaped captives to ensure there are no militants hiding among them.</p> <p>The spokesman said the captives’ escape was connected to a recent armed forces operation against the militants, named Deep Punch II. He said the operation was aimed at “destroying Boko Haram infrastructure and logistics; such as communication centers, fabrication yards, bomb-making equipment, vehicles and other means of sustenance.”</p> <p>In a New Year’s address, Nigerian President Muhammadu Buhari said that Boko Haram had been beaten. Boko Haram has killed about 20,000 people in its eight-year long insurgency aimed at turning parts of Nigerian into a staunchly-Islamic state.</p> <p>Police, civilians, churches, and mosques, have been among its targets for attacks.</p> <p>Last Monday, on Christmas, Nigerian soldiers say they thwarted an attempted terrorist attack by suspected Boko Haram militants on the city of Maiduguri.</p> <p>Army officials gave no details on what happened.</p> <p>But one a local militia leader told the French News Agency the militants used the cover of a civilian convoy to approach a military checkpoint outside the city and started firing.</p> <p>Soldiers responded with their own gunfire. Reinforcements from inside Maiduguri rushed to the scene, driving off the would-be terrorists.</p>
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HEADLINE	01/01 Malaysia fear: threat of dirty bomb
SOURCE	http://www.todayonline.com/world/supporters-malaysia-may-build-bombs-radioactive-materials
GIST	<p>KUALA LUMPUR — Fears are growing that fighters from the Islamic State (IS) group, including their sympathisers in Malaysia, may attempt to build bombs using radioactive materials.</p> <p>This concern is especially real as the Malaysian police have recorded no less than 20 cases involving radioactive and nuclear materials which have “gone missing” over recent years.</p> <p>While some may have been retrieved, the whereabouts of many others remain unknown.</p>

Perturbed by the combination of “missing radioactive goods and IS”, sources in security agencies said it was crucial for the counter-terrorism division to aggressively trace the missing radioactive materials.

“Normally, these cases will be investigated by the police’s Criminal Investigation Department. However, it should not be treated as a usual case of theft,” the sources said.

“There is a need to trace who the perpetrators are, their background, contacts and find out their motives. These are all vital information that must be cross-checked to ensure that these dangerous materials do not fall into the wrong hands.”

The sources also warned that terrorists might make use of radioactive and nuclear materials which had not been categorised as “controlled items”.

“There are two groups of radioactive and nuclear materials: those which are controlled and monitored by the authorities, and the others that we cannot control as they are stolen or improperly disposed off.”

Concerns about security threats in South-east Asia intensified when Indonesian security forces recently foiled an attempt by militants to detonate a dirty bomb.

A dirty bomb is a conventional bomb that contains radioactive material.

The plot was foiled when police raided homes and arrested five suspects in Bandung, West Java in August last year. After the raids, police spoke of a plan to explode a “chemical” bomb but provided no other details.

The militants had hoped to transform low-grade radioactive Thorium 232 (Th-232) into deadly Uranium 233 (U-233). When combined with powerful home-made explosive triacetone triperoxide (TATP), the concoction can create a “nuclear bomb”, according to an instruction manual used by the militants and reviewed by Reuters.

Malaysia has been on high alert since gunmen linked to the IS launched multiple attacks in Jakarta in January 2016 and has arrested hundreds of people over the past few years for suspected links to militant groups, and has arrested hundreds of people over the past few years for suspected links to militant groups.

Malaysia’s Atomic Energy Licensing Board (AELB) director-general Hamrah Mohd Ali cautioned the authorities against underestimating terrorists’ knowledge and capabilities in utilising radioactive and nuclear materials to produce dirty bombs.

He said his agency had, several times, found abandoned radioactive materials with unclear origins and purpose.

“We also had a case recently where AELB was called by the police following information on possible radioactive materials being disposed of at a carpark of a hotel in Kuala Lumpur. We went there and confirmed that it was radioactive, but we have no idea where it came from,” he told the New Straits Times.

He said those abusing radioactive materials could be held liable under the Atomic Energy Licensing Act 1984 to a maximum of 10 years imprisonment, a fine of no less than RM100 million (S\$32.83 million), or both.

Those involved in offences involving nuclear materials without intention or knowing that it is a form of nuclear material could be jailed for a minimum of five years, fined up to RM5 million, or both.

The authorities can also use either the Criminal Procedure Code or Strategic Trade Act 2010 against those who were found guilty of causing deaths by using radioactive and nuclear materials for criminal purposes.

	Mr Hamrah revealed that the AELB had crippled attempts in the country's ports by parties shipping in scrap metal contaminated with radioactive compounds.
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HEADLINE	01/02 Pentagon changes approach ISIS fight
SOURCE	http://www.executivegov.com/2018/01/james-mattis-dod-to-change-approach-against-islamic-state-militants-in-2018/
GIST	<p>Defense Secretary James Mattis has said the Defense Department will modify how it conducts operations to defeat the Islamic State militant group in 2018, DoD News reported Friday.</p> <p>Mattis told reporters Friday that coalition forces will work to hunt down the remaining members of the militant group and work with the Iraqi government to equip troops and police who will help locate and eliminate potential threats to the country.</p> <p>He added U.S. troops will also shift from a terrain-seizing approach in Iraq and Syria to stabilization efforts such as establishment of water and electrical systems, reopening of schools and sweeping of improvised explosive devices, he added.</p> <p>Communications between coalition forces and Russia have continued to aid operations in the region and coalition forces work to disrupt the terror group's physical caliphate, according to Mattis.</p> <p>The defense secretary also noted that the destruction of the physical caliphate will help diminish the potential recruitment of more people who plan to support the terror group as well as minimize the appeal of life under the organization's rule.</p>
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HEADLINE	12/29 Terrorism: numbers, trends, outlook
SOURCE	http://www.homelandsecuritynewswire.com/dr20171229-terrorism-numbers-trends-outlook
GIST	<p>The Institute of Economics & Peace (IEP) and the National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START) a few weeks ago have issued the fifth release of the Global Terrorism Index, which provides a comprehensive summary of global trends in terrorism covering the last seventeen years. This year, the average country score within the index deteriorated by 4 percent and reflects the increasing spread of terrorism. There were 77 countries that experienced deaths from terrorism, which is an increase from 65 the year before. Two thirds of all countries experienced a terrorist attack in 2016.</p> <p>The most affected countries improve</p> <p>IEP notes that despite this, there are positive trends. Since 2014 there has been a 22 percent reduction in deaths from terrorism compared to the peak of terror activity in 2014, with 6,827 fewer people killed. Terrorism has fallen significantly in Syria, Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Nigeria. Nigeria recorded the biggest decrease in terrorism, with 3,100 fewer people killed compared to the previous year. This reflects both the success of the Multinational Joint Task Force against Boko Haram as well as fractures within the group.</p> <p>Afghanistan also improved, with 14 percent fewer deaths compared to the previous year. This decline in deaths from terrorism reflects the Taliban's engagement in more traditional conflict activities against the Afghan National Guard, focused on territorial gains rather than terrorist activity. Syria has seen the most dramatic increase in terrorism over the last decade with the increase coinciding with the start of the conflict in 2011. However, in 2016 it recorded the first reduction since 2011, with deaths from terrorism decreasing 24 percent from the previous year to 2,102.</p> <p>Pakistan also recorded a decrease in the number of people killed by terrorism with a 12 percent reduction to 956 deaths. This is the lowest number of deaths since 2006, and reflects a slight decrease in the activity</p>

of Sindh in southeast Pakistan. The Khorasan Chapter of the Islamic State and Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan placed greater focus on Afghanistan.

Terrorism in the OECD

In 2016, OECD countries experienced the most deaths from terrorism since the September 11 attacks in 2001. There has been a 67 percent increase in attacks and a nearly 600 percent increase in deaths from terrorism since 2014. However, the index shows that a significant portion of these deaths resulted from a small number of attacks that inflicted very high casualties. Three attacks accounted for 44 percent of all deaths from terrorism in OECD countries between 2014 and June 2017.

ISIL has been driving this increase in deaths, but attacks attributed to the group appear to have peaked in 2016 with a notable decrease in the first six months of this year. A similar trend can be seen with ISIL inspired attacks. This apparent decline coincides with ISIL's diminishing capacity following its territorial losses in Iraq and Syria. France has suffered from this rise in terrorism, and among OECD countries, the country has witnessed the highest number of fatalities over the last three years and accounts for 43 percent of all deaths. Terrorist attacks related to ISIL caused 92 percent of deaths in France.

Since the September 11 attacks, terrorism in the United States has remained relatively low although the Pulse nightclub shooting in Orlando resulted in 50 deaths. However, there has been a notable increase in attacks by lone actors, with the country suffering more of this type of attack than any other OECD country. Greater investment in counterterrorism by OECD nations is paying dividends, with more ISIL attacks being thwarted. In 2016, two out of three ISIL involved attacks were foiled compared to about 50 percent of ISIL inspired attacks.

The impact of ISIL

Three of the four deadliest terrorist groups – Boko Haram, the Taliban and al Qaeda – all caused fewer fatalities in 2016. However, ISIL was an exception to this trend and was responsible for killing 9,132 people last year. If deaths attributed to ISIL affiliates are included, then ISIL actually caused the deaths of over 11,500 people. The majority of these deaths occurred in Iraq, where they are responsible for over 18,000 deaths between 2013 and 2016. To put this in perspective, 40 percent of these deaths occurred in 2016.

In 2016, the terrorist organization's activities affected 308 cities in 15 countries around the world, four more than the previous year. ISIL affiliated groups killed a further 2,417 people and undertook attacks in another 11 countries, although this is six less than the previous year. The group's most devastating presence was in Iraq and Syria, which together accounted for over 93 percent of ISIL's attacks. ISIL has primarily been responsible for driving an increase in deaths throughout developed countries, including a number of those in Europe. The group has successfully carried out attacks in 18 of the 33 OECD countries since 2014, which now accounts for three quarters of all deaths from terrorism.

Global outlook

Just five countries account for three quarters of all deaths from terrorism: Iraq, Afghanistan, Syria, Nigeria, and Pakistan. These same countries have been the most affected by terrorism every year since 2013. For the first time Turkey was one of the ten most affected countries, due to the increased activity of ISIL and the Kurdistan Worker's Party.

Six of the ten most impacted countries were involved in internal conflict, which has facilitated and led to an increase in terrorism. With the exception of India, each of the ten countries has a single terrorist group that is responsible for the majority of deaths. Some countries, such as Yemen, have been impacted by events which have led to the rise of terrorist groups. In other countries, such as Libya and Syria, terrorism has followed the destabilization of the government, while in others, such as Afghanistan and Iraq, terrorism has resulted from a foreign power invasion.

The index shows there is a strong statistical relationship between the intensity of a conflict and the impact of terrorism. Countries with the highest number of battle-related deaths such as Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan and Yemen also have very high levels of terrorism. This correlation helps explain why the largest increase

in the impact of terrorism occurred in the Middle East and North African region, yet the Central America and the Caribbean region has consistently had the lowest impact from terrorism since 2002.

IEP notes that data for the GTD is collected and collated by the National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START); a Department of Homeland Security Center of Excellence led by the University of Maryland. The GTD is considered to be the most comprehensive global dataset on terrorist activity, and has now codified over 170,000 terrorist incidents.

Key findings

- *Deaths caused by terrorism decreased* by 13 per cent from 2015 to 2016. There were 25,673 deaths in 2016. This is the second consecutive year that the number of deaths from terrorism have decreased. Deaths have now fallen by 22 per cent since the peak in 2014.
- *Four of the five countries with the highest impact from terrorism recorded a reduction in the number of deaths*; Afghanistan, Nigeria, Syria and Pakistan. Together with Iraq, these five countries accounted for three quarters of all deaths from terrorism in 2016.
- *Nigeria saw the greatest reduction in deaths*, with 3,100 fewer people killed by terrorism in 2016 than in 2015. This was due to an 80 per cent reduction in the number of people killed by Boko Haram.
- *There were also substantial decreases in deaths from terrorism in Yemen, Afghanistan and Syria*, which collectively witnessed over 500 fewer deaths in 2016 than in the prior year.
- *However, the global GTI score deteriorated by 4.4 per cent* between 2015 and 2016 due to a record number of countries experiencing at least one death from terrorism.
- *A total of 77 countries recorded at least one death*. This is an increase from 65 countries in 2015.
- *Iraq experienced a 40 per cent increase in deaths in 2016* in reflecting the increased intensity of ISIL activity following attacks by the Iraqi Armed Forces to reclaim several major urban centers.

Trends

- *Since 2002, eight of the nine regions in the world experienced an increase in terrorism*. North America was the only region to experience a reduced impact.
- *Over the last 15 years, South Asia experienced the most terrorist activity* while Central and South America were least affected. The MENA region had the sharpest increase in terrorism.
- *Egypt and Turkey witnessed very large increases in terrorism* following government crackdowns. In Egypt, terrorism deaths increased nine-fold and in Turkey this figure has increased by 16 times.
- *Globally, attacks against civilians increased by 17 per cent* from 2015 to 2016. The primary targets of terrorists are private citizens and property.
- *Deaths from terrorism have risen in tandem with battle-related deaths*. From 2006 to 2016, deaths from terrorism increased 67 per cent while battle deaths increased by 66 per cent.
- *Terrorist attacks are deadlier in conflict-affected countries* where there is an average of 2.4 fatalities per attack in 2016 compared to 1.3 fatalities in non-conflict countries.

Terrorism in OECD countries

- *There have been nearly 10,000 deaths from terrorism in OECD countries between 1970 and 2016* with 58 per cent of these deaths occurring prior to 2000.
- *The OECD accounted for one per cent of global deaths from terrorism in 2016*. This is an increase from 0.1 per cent in 2010.
- *The first six months of 2017 recorded fewer deaths* than the corresponding period for 2016. The first half of 2017 recorded 82 deaths compared to 265 for the whole of 2016.
- *Since 2014, there has been a shift in tactics toward simpler attacks* against non-traditional targets. ISIL has also shown that attacks against soft targets using unconventional tactics are more likely to be effective than elaborate schemes.
- *Since 2014, ISIL-directed or ISIL-inspired attacks have occurred in 18 of the 33 OECD countries* and account for three quarters of all deaths.

Characteristics of terrorists

- *Over the last 17 years, 99 per cent of all terrorist deaths* occurred in countries that are either in conflict or have high levels of political terror.
- *There are multiple paths to radicalization* and individuals can exhibit both high and low levels of

education, income, religious or political knowledge.

- *Relative deprivation can also be a driver of terrorist recruitment* as it leads to the creation of an ‘us vs them’ mentality.
- *In the last ten years lone actor terror attacks have increased in OECD countries*, from one in 2008 to 56 in 2016. The greatest number of these attacks have occurred in the United States.

Terrorist groups

- *The four deadliest terrorist groups were responsible for 59 per cent of all deaths in 2016.*
- *ISIL was the deadliest group in 2016* with a 50 per cent increase in deaths from its previous peak in 2015. The group killed 9,132 people in 2016 with the majority of these deaths occurring in Iraq.
- *However, ISIL is now near complete military defeat in Iraq and Syria* and has a greatly diminished revenue base and capacity. ISIL’s revenue is estimated to have declined threefold from \$81 million per month in 2015 to \$16 million per month in 2016.
- *ISIL undertook directed attacks in 15 countries*, which is four more than the previous year. ISIL-affiliated groups killed a further 2,417 people and undertook attacks in 11 other countries, although this is fewer than in 2015.
- *The three other most deadly terrorist groups, Boko Haram, al-Qa’ida and the Taliban*, were each responsible for fewer deaths from terrorism in 2016.
- *There are many ways in which terrorist groups end.* Since 1970, around a third of groups have ended following the attainment of their political goals, a third due to internal splintering and a third following defeat by the military or police.

Economic terrorism

- *The global economic impact of terrorism was \$84 billion in 2016.* This represents a seven per cent decline from the previous year and a 19 per cent decline from the peak in 2014.
- *This calculation is conservative* and does not include costs associated with countering terrorism and countering and preventing violent extremism nor the indirect costs on business from terrorism.
- *The four largest terrorist groups have diverse revenue sources* including money transfers, donations, trafficking, taxation and extortion.
- *The cost of conducting an attack in Europe has decreased significantly* with a shift towards simpler attacks. Most attacks in Europe cost less than \$10,000 in total. This means most attacks are self-funded and do not require any external support.

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Read more in [Global Terrorism Index 2017: Measuring and understanding the impact of terrorism](#) (Institute of Economics & Peace and the National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START), 2017)

HEADLINE	01/01 General: ISIS defeated; ideology remains
SOURCE	https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2018-01-01/u-s-general-citing-gains-warns-islamic-state-still-a-danger
GIST	<p>The U.S. general commanding forces against the Islamic State said it has lost 98 percent of the land it claimed and 7.7 million people have been liberated from its control, but warned the group could continue as a shadow terror outfit operating without a base.</p> <p>Army Lieutenant General Paul Funk, commanding general of Combined Joint Task Force - Operation Inherent Resolve, said a coalition that has grown to 74 nations reclaimed 65,000 square kilometers (25,096 square miles) of land from the Islamic State, also known as ISIS or Daesh, in 2017. Yet he warned the allies can’t let up.</p> <p>"Their repressive ideology continues," Funk said in a New Years message posted to the coalition Facebook page. "The conditions remain present for Daesh to return, and only through coalition and international efforts can the defeat become permanent."</p> <p>Last week, the group claimed responsibility for three suicide attacks in Kabul that killed as many as 41 people and wounded 80 at the Afghan Voice Agency and Shiite-run Tebyan cultural center. That followed</p>

	<p>a November strike against a Kabul television station that killed two guards and wounded 20, as well as an October attack on a mosque that killed more than 30 worshippers.</p> <p>Syrian Democratic Forces are in the final stages of liberating the middle Euphrates Valley from Islamic State and Iraq is rebuilding after fully expelling Daesh, according to a coalition statement announcing the video. The statement also praises the "hundreds of brave Iraqis and Syrians who gave their lives for their nations" in 2017 as well as coalition service members and civilians who died last year.</p>
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HEADLINE	01/01 US withholds military aid from Pakistan
SOURCE	http://www.foxnews.com/politics/2018/01/01/trump-withholding-millions-in-aid-to-pakistan-as-accuses-country-giving-safe-haven-to-terrorists.html
GIST	<p>The Trump administration has decided to withhold millions in military aid to Pakistan as the president accuses the Muslim-majority nation of harboring terrorists and telling “lies” to the United States.</p> <p>“The United States does not plan to spend the \$255 million in [Fiscal Year] 2016 Foreign Military Financing for Pakistan at this time,” a National Security Council official told Fox News on Monday.</p> <p>The official added, “The president has made clear that the United States expects Pakistan to take decisive action against terrorists and militants on its soil, and that Pakistan’s actions in support of the South Asia Strategy will ultimately determine the trajectory of our relationship, including future security assistance.”</p> <p>The Trump administration will continue to “review Pakistan’s level of cooperation,” the official said.</p> <p>Earlier Monday, President Trump, in his first tweet of 2018, said that the United States “has foolishly given Pakistan more than 33 billion dollars in aid over the last 15 years, and they have given us nothing but lies & deceit, thinking of our leaders as fools.”</p> <p>“They give safe haven to the terrorists we hunt in Afghanistan, with little help. No more!” the president tweeted.</p> <p>The New York Times reported last week that the Trump administration had been considering withholding \$255 million in aid to Pakistan to demonstrate its dissatisfaction with how they confront terrorism in their country.</p> <p>The administration already had delayed sending the aid in August.</p>
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HEADLINE	12/31 Claim: Houthis recruit child soldiers
SOURCE	http://gulfnews.com/news/gulf/yemen/al-houthis-step-up-recruitment-of-child-soldiers-1.2149775
GIST	<p>Aden: Al Houthis have stepped up the recruitment of child fighters, picking young boys from schools and orphanages in the capital Sana’a, which is controlled by the extremist militia, several media reported, including the London-based daily Al Sharq Al Awsat.</p> <p>Educationists in Sana’a, speaking on the condition of anonymity for security reasons, told Al Sharq Al Awsat on Thursday that “in the previous two weeks, the militia has stepped up its recruitment among schoolboys in Sana’a, and extended the recruitment [drive] to Hajjah, Mahweet, Dhamar, and Raymah”.</p> <p>The militia “imposes on the boys the lectures of its leader Abdul Malek Al Houthi and audio records that call for jihad”, said the sources.</p> <p>The sources said the militia “lately stepped up their recruitment inside orphanages they control, through</p>

rousing songs and ideological lectures. They indoctrinate the students intellectually and religiously before taking them to military recruitment camps.”

At the beginning of this school year, the Sports Minister in Al Houthis’ self-proclaimed government Hassan Zaid had called for the closure of all schools and sending all the students to fight against the legitimate government.

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HEADLINE	12/31 Va. man arrested; charged in terror probe
SOURCE	https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/immigration/virginia-man-arrested-charged-with-attempting-to-obstruct-terrorism-investigation/2017/12/30/24ae25d8-eda8-11e7-b698-91d4e35920a3_story.html?utm_term=.daf09904bfd4
GIST	<p>Federal authorities arrested and charged a Sterling, Va., man with attempting to obstruct a terrorism investigation on Friday, accusing him of acting in a manner that was “indicative of an individual planning and researching how to conduct an attack,” according to records filed in federal court.</p> <p>The filing says Sean Andrew Duncan, who moved to Sterling from western Pennsylvania in June, had owned a phone that revealed prolific research into materials relating to the Islamic State, terrorist attacks, weapons, surveillance tactics and body armor.</p> <p>He will make his initial appearance in court on Tuesday following an arrest on the 46900 block of Courtyard Square that involved his alleged destruction of a computer thumb drive that authorities suspect may have contained evidence of criminal activity.</p> <p>Neither Duncan nor his relatives could be located for comment. As of Saturday evening, it was unclear whether Duncan had legal representation.</p> <p>Federal investigators first became aware of Duncan’s activities in February 2016, according to a court affidavit submitted by Special Agent Katherine Campo. A relative had reported to the FBI that Duncan had converted to Islam, possibly radicalized, and had begun praising the beheadings of Westerners in the Middle East. Around that time, he and his wife, who is not identified in court records, booked a trip to Istanbul departing from Dulles International Airport, but were denied entry to Turkey and returned to the United States, where federal agents interviewed him, according to the affidavit.</p> <p>Shortly after, Duncan allegedly deleted his Facebook account and changed his cellphone number, which ended in “7730,” the same ending authorities believed was also associated with a Twitter account that contained an Arabic phrase that roughly translated to “The Islamic State.”</p> <p>Investigators began building their case based on information provided by an unnamed source referred to as a co-conspirator who was in the custody of a foreign government for trying to join the Islamic State. The filing says the source told investigators Duncan was an American contact who had not only wanted to join the terrorist organization, but to orchestrate a domestic attack, according to the affidavit.</p> <p>Communicating through an encrypted mobile messaging application, the source told investigators that Duncan shared articles from an Islamic State news outlet and said he agreed Muslims should attack their own countries.</p> <p>Once, according to the affidavit, the source claimed to have criticized non-Muslim women for wearing shorts that expose their bodies. In response, Duncan allegedly told the source to “try this,” sending a link to an article published by an al-Qaeda magazine titled, “How to build a bomb in the kitchen of your mom.”</p> <p>Twice, the source said, Duncan had asked her to travel to Syria with him and become his wife, and twice she refused, according to the affidavit.</p>

	<p>The case deepened in June. That was around the time when Duncan’s infant child died. While investigating what happened — the cause of death in the autopsy report was inconclusive — the Allegheny County Police Department in Pennsylvania obtained Duncan’s phone. A copy of it quickly came under FBI scrutiny. Investigators, according to court records, found hundreds of searches that involved terrorism-related activities between March and June. They included Islamic State-related materials, terrorist attacks, searches for hidden cameras, body-worn cameras, military-style combat gear, bulletproof armor, M-4 rifle magazines, an AR-15 rifle, a YouTube video on how to “reinforce door with a barricade,” and the leader of the Islamic State, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, the filing states.</p> <p>On Friday, as federal agents forcibly entered his home, Duncan ran out the back door, barefoot, clenching a plastic bag in his fist, according to court records. The clear plastic bag contained a thumb drive that had been broken into pieces and submerged into a frothy, bubbly liquid.</p> <p>“I believe that the thumb drive was snapped in pieces because Duncan altered, destroyed, and mutilated it in order to impede and obstruct the FBI’s investigation of him for attempting to provide material support to terrorists,” Campo, the agent, wrote in the affidavit.</p> <p>The arrest marks the latest in a series of cases made since 2015 against Northern Virginia men whom authorities have alleged had connections to the Islamic State. Another Sterling man, Mohamed Bailor Jalloh, was arrested in July 2016 and accused of trying to plan a domestic terrorist attack on behalf of the Islamic State.</p>
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HEADLINE	12/31 Russia indicts market blast terror suspect
SOURCE	https://www.reuters.com/article/us-russia-blast-suspect/russia-indicts-st-petersburg-blast-suspect-on-terrorism-charges-investigators-idUSKBN1EP0E9
GIST	<p>MOSCOW (Reuters) - Russia’s Investigative Committee said on Sunday it had indicted on terrorism charges a suspect who allegedly organized and carried out a bombing that injured 13 people in a St. Petersburg supermarket this week.</p> <p>The committee said in a statement that the suspect, whose identity has not been disclosed by investigators, “deliberately made and planted a homemade explosive device” that exploded on Wednesday at a branch of the Perekrestok supermarket chain in Russia’s second city.</p> <p>The suspect told investigators he had been motivated by “hatred toward the organizers and participants” of mindset training sessions he used to attend, the committee said without providing further detail.</p> <p>Investigators said the suspect had also hidden two USB drives near the site of the blast containing information about his actions and photographs of the explosive device.</p> <p>The suspect will undergo psychological testing to assess his sanity. Investigators said has been followed by mental health professionals since the age of 19 for undisclosed issues. The indictment did not say how old he is now.</p> <p>The Islamic State militant group claimed responsibility for the blast but did not provide evidence to support its assertion.</p>
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HEADLINE	12/31 Understanding REAL ID rules for 2018
SOURCE	https://durangoherald.com/articles/201733
GIST	If you’re worried about whether your driver’s license is compliant with new REAL ID requirements for domestic air travel, you can relax for now.

A grace period for meeting the new rules is set to expire Jan. 22. But licenses from 27 states plus Washington, D.C., are already compliant with federal REAL ID standards, according to the U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

Another 23 states have been granted extensions for meeting the new rules, according to DHS. That means you can continue to use noncompliant licenses from those states for domestic air travel for now.

Three of those states that received extensions have approvals pending for being certified as fully compliant with REAL ID requirements: Louisiana, New York and Michigan.

The federal government will stop accepting noncompliant licenses as ID for domestic flights on Oct. 1, 2020. The REAL ID licenses are designed to be counterfeit-resistant with secure features such as holograms.

Passports

Of course, U.S. passports and passport cards remain acceptable alternative documents for use instead of a driver's license for air travel. Several other types of government-issued ID are also acceptable, such as Global Entry and other "trusted traveler cards."

Minors

According to DHS, the Transportation Safety Administration "does not require children under 18 to provide identification when traveling with a companion within the United States," though their companion needs acceptable ID.

License options and timing

Some states are now offering more than one type of noncommercial driver's license. In New York, for example, three options are offered: a standard driver's license that cannot be used as ID for air travel or border crossings; a REAL ID-compliant license for use on domestic flights; or an Enhanced license, which is acceptable for land or sea entry to the U.S. when crossing borders from Canada, Mexico or the Caribbean, as well as on domestic flights.

Some states do not yet offer REAL ID licenses. Minnesota, for example, expects to offer them later in 2018.

If your current license is not REAL ID-compliant and it is not due for renewal until after the Oct. 1, 2020 deadline, you may want to get one that meets the new rules ahead of your renewal date.

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HEADLINE	12/31 Syria battles on two fronts
SOURCE	https://apnews.com/5b133bd87db24c98bf0133c8b850fe65/Battles-on-2-fronts-as-Syria-closes-out-another-violent-year
GIST	<p>BEIRUT (AP) — Government forces battled with rebels and al-Qaida militants on two fronts in Syria on Sunday as the country prepared to close out another violent year since the country descended into civil war in 2011.</p> <p>Rebels supported by an al-Qaida-linked cell renewed their assault against pro-government forces that have been holding a vast pocket of the Damascus suburbs under siege, said the Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights. A second front between many of the same groups saw fresh fighting in northwest Syria, along the border between Idlib and Hama provinces, according to the Observatory and Syrian military media.</p> <p>The fighting outside Damascus was concentrated around the contested town of Harasta and a nearby military installation. The insurgents flanked the installation on Sunday, trapping an unknown number of</p>

<p>Return to Top</p>	<p>pro-government forces inside, reported the Observatory. The local, activist-run Ghouta Media Center reported fierce clashes and dense government airstrikes.</p> <p>Twenty-one soldiers and 26 rebels and al-Qaida fighters were killed in two days of clashes, according to the Observatory’s director, Rami Abdurrahman.</p> <p>Rebels first attacked the installation seven weeks ago. The government responded with waves of indiscriminate air strikes and artillery attacks that killed more than 250 civilians in what are called the eastern Ghouta suburbs of Damascus, which are still under rebel control.</p> <p>The Syrian Civil Defense search-and-rescue group, also known as the White Helmets, said shelling and rocket fire killed 19 people in eastern Ghouta on Saturday, one day after medical evacuations were completed to save the lives of 29 others. The Red Cross and Red Crescent took three days to evacuate 29 patients from the besieged suburbs to receive urgent medical care at government hospitals in Damascus.</p> <p>The U.N. says government forces are holding 400,000 people under siege in eastern Ghouta. The region was once a hotbed of protest against President Bashar Assad’s government. The subsequent crackdown on demonstrations in Ghouta and other parts of the country in 2011 sparked the ongoing civil war that has killed more than 400,000 people and displaced half of Syria’s population.</p>
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HEADLINE	12/31 Claim: residents saved lives Egypt attack
SOURCE	https://apnews.com/b79c1510debc4e3e82c09770cb73301c/Witnesses:-Residents-prevented-much-worse-attack-in-Egypt
GIST	<p>CAIRO (AP) — Witnesses to an attack outside a Coptic Christian church in Egypt that left nine people dead said it was residents and worshippers, not police, who kept the death toll from soaring even higher. One man in particular — a 53-year-old resident who pounced on the gunman as he was reloading his automatic rifle — likely saved dozens of lives.</p> <p>Police initially were praised for their quick response to the attack Friday on the church and a nearby Coptic Christian-owned store, but witnesses told The Associated Press that the deadly assault lasted 20 minutes and it took another 10 minutes before police arrived and shot and wounded the assailant.</p> <p>Worshippers slammed the church’s iron gate closed to prevent the assailant from entering and killing more people, the witnesses said Sunday. They credited the brave actions of the man who jumped the gunman as he was reloading his AK-47 with preventing an even worse bloodbath.</p> <p>The accounts painted a picture of Christian-Muslim unity in the face of danger as courageous residents pelted the assailant with rocks as he fled the church after the attack, occasionally pausing to fire warning shots from his automatic weapon.</p> <p>The attack began around 10:30 a.m. when Mass at the Mar Mina church in the southern Cairo suburb of Helwan had just finished and worshippers were starting to make their way home.</p> <p>Magdy Adel, a 65-year-old Christian retiree who runs a stationary store near the church, sheltered five worshippers who took cover inside his shop — three elderly women, an elderly man and a middle-aged woman. He pulled down the store’s shutters and hid on the sidewalk behind a car to keep an eye on the attacker.</p> <p>“The terrorist was very agitated when they closed the church’s iron gate and he could not go inside,” Adel said. “He had a lot of ammunition and kept shooting at the gate, killing some people inside.”</p> <p>Another witness, Mustafa Mahmoud, was on the street a short distance from the church when the assailant opened fire. At first he thought the gunman was a plainclothes officer assigned to guard the church but he</p>

quickly found out otherwise.

“His first victim was a policeman guarding the church. He shot him but did not instantly kill him. A young man who rushed out from the church was killed right away. When a second policeman emerged, he shot him in the leg and he was dragged back inside the church by worshippers,” Mahmoud said.

“Later, the terrorist finished off the first policeman with a few shots to the chest,” said the 39-year-old computer engineer and father of two.

The Christian owner of a store that sells wooden coffins — Mahmoud only knew his first name, Wadie — was shot dead, and when his wife ran out of the church to check on him she was shot dead too.

“Their daughter was shot and wounded,” he added.

Mahmoud said the gunman later moved away to look for the motorbike he rode to the site, but residents had by then hidden it to deny him a getaway. “He still had ample chance to get away but seemed not to want to. He was either suicidal or deranged,” he said.

Mahmoud was among dozens of men who pursued the gunman, taking shelter behind cars and inside building entrances to avoid being shot. When the assailant was pinned to the ground by a man identified by local media as 53-year-old Salah el-Mougi they rushed toward the assailant.

“We all hit him, and I was about to smash his dead with a rock, but the police wanted him alive and they fired in the air to disperse us,” said Mahmoud.

The assailant was shot and wounded by a senior police officer, according to local media accounts.

One video posted on social media Sunday showed the final minutes before the gunman was shot. Wounded in the leg and shoulder, he sat up and appeared to be reloading his rifle when el-Mougi pounced on his back.

“That was divine luck. He would have shot me had I hesitated for a second,” el-Mougi told the pro-government Seventh Day newspaper, adding that he wanted to prevent the assailant from potentially using a suicide belt or explosives.

The attack was claimed by the Islamic State group, whose local affiliate is spearheading an insurgency in Egypt’s Sinai Peninsula that has in recent months grown in sophistication and brutality.

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HEADLINE	12/31 Afghan funeral bombing kills 18
SOURCE	https://www.afp.com/en/news/23/18-dead-attack-afghan-funeral-officials-doc-vi2p52
GIST	<p>An explosion at a funeral in Afghanistan's restive east on Sunday killed at least 18 mourners and wounded another 13, officials said, capping a deadly year for ordinary Afghans.</p> <p>There was no immediate claim of responsibility for the blast which authorities initially said was caused by a suicide attacker but now believe was triggered by explosives attached to a motorcycle.</p> <p>The Taliban said on Twitter they had nothing to do with the incident -- the latest violence to claim the lives of civilians in the war-torn country.</p> <p>"The explosion was caused by a motorcycle bomb our investigation has concluded," Nangarhar governor spokesman Attaullah Khogyani told AFP.</p> <p>The governor's office put the death toll from the attack near the provincial capital Jalalabad at 18, with 13</p>

	wounded. The explosion happened during the funeral ceremony for a former governor of Haska Mina district who died recently of natural causes, a statement from the governor's office said.
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HEADLINE	12/31 Thousands missing after Iraq victories
SOURCE	http://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/thousands-remain-missing-iraqs-victories-52067678
GIST	<p>Since Mosul was declared liberated in July, residents have submitted more than 3,000 missing-persons reports to Nineveh's provincial council, according to council member Ali Khoudier. Most of them are men or teenage boys. Some were arrested by IS during the group's extremist rule; others were detained by Iraqi forces on suspicion of extremist ties.</p> <p>Regardless, Iraqi government bureaucracy, inefficiency and neglect have left thousands of families across Iraq hanging as the country's leadership celebrates the defeat of IS.</p> <p>In a small garden outside of a Mosul courthouse, dozens wait to hear if investigators have news of their missing relatives. They cling to thick files of papers: identity documents, official forms, glossy family photos and "missing person" advertisements from a local paper. It is unlikely they will hear good news.</p> <p>"It will be years before these people know what exactly happened to their relatives," said an investigator, as anxious relatives tapped on the windows behind his desk and hovered at his office door.</p> <p>The investigator, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said the Iraqi government doesn't have enough forensic experts to exhume the dozens of mass graves discovered as territory has been retaken from IS. And the country's judicial system isn't equipped to efficiently process the thousands of detainees scooped up by security forces.</p> <p>Some 20,000 people are being held at detention centers across Iraq on suspicion of ties to IS, according to a report from Human Rights Watch this month.</p> <p>In Anbar province, where victory was declared in the cities of Ramadi and Fallujah more than a year ago, more than 2,900 people remain missing, according to Mohammed Karbouli, a member of Iraq's parliamentary committee on defense and security from Anbar. He said those missing from Anbar are becoming a symbol of the lack of trust between Anbar's mostly Sunni residents and the Shiite-dominated central government in Baghdad.</p> <p>When parents don't know the fate of their children, he warned, "tensions emerge."</p> <p>Just south of Mosul, an unthinkable number of Iraqis are believed to be buried in a natural sinkhole that became one of the Islamic State group's most infamous mass graves. Some Iraqi officials estimate as many as 4,000 people were tossed into the cavernous, natural crevasse in the barren desert on the road linking Mosul to Baghdad— some already dead, others still living and buried alive.</p>
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Suspicious, Unusual

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HEADLINE	01/02 NC victims told of destroyed rape kits
SOURCE	https://apnews.com/35cb47fd1f1548c3a46f5befb0d71bd5/In-unusual-step,-victims-told-of-destroyed-rape-kits
GIST	FAYETTEVILLE, N.C. (AP) — When Veronica was raped more than 13 years ago, she says neither the police nor the hospital staff believed her story that a longtime friend attacked her while his mother was in

the next room.

“I was treated like a female crying wolf,” said Veronica, who says the man raped her while she was unconscious. She believes he drugged her drink.

She was surprised, earlier this year, when she got a call from the initial investigating officer, John Somerindyke, who apologized for how she was treated and for something that Veronica didn’t yet know: Her rape kit was among 333 kits that Fayetteville police had thrown away.

Years after the kits were discarded, Fayetteville police began working with a crisis group to call the victims and tell them what happened.

The Joyful Heart Foundation, which works to end the backlogs, says Fayetteville police may stand alone in the effort to contact survivors about trashed rape kits. “I don’t know of any others that have taken it on like Fayetteville has by apologizing to survivors and to communities and trying to do what they can to fix it,” said Ilse Knecht, director of advocacy and policy for the foundation, founded by actress Mariska Hargitay.

Backlogs of untested rape kits have surfaced as a problem at police departments around the country. The foundation knows of at least 200,000 untested rape kits nationwide, Knecht said.

The kits, about the size of a shoe box, had been collected in Fayetteville between 1995 and 2008. Police began throwing them away in 1999 to make space in the evidence room. Somerindyke, now a lieutenant, discovered the kits were missing in February 2015 when he reviewed unsolved rape cases.

Of the 333 destroyed kits, 52 belonged to women whose cases had resulted in arrests, leaving 281 survivors with unsolved cases and no rape kits as evidence. Instead of simply moving on and vowing to do better in the future, the Fayetteville Police Department announced what happened and then called victims individually, including those cases in which arrests had been made.

“We felt it was the right thing to come forward,” Somerindyke said. “We felt like they had the right to know what had happened to their kit.”

The department enlisted the help of Rape Crisis Volunteers of Cumberland County, which got grant money and hired a victim’s advocate to make the calls. The advocate, Danielle Sgro, said victims’ responses ran the gamut. Some were angry or sad their kits were destroyed and said the calls stirred up memories they’d pushed aside. But others were grateful that someone cared enough to call.

Veronica, who agreed to let the AP use her first name, but not her last, said she’s among the grateful ones. The Associated Press doesn’t typically publish names of sexual-assault victims.

“There was an apology for things not being handled how they should have been,” said Veronica, 34, who joined the Air Force after her attack and moved around the country before settling in Fayetteville again. “He (Somerindyke) was interested in rectifying that as much as possible in the now. That’s beyond appreciated.”

In 90 percent of the cases involving the destroyed rape kits, someone was reached or the victim was no longer living, Somerindyke said.

Gathering evidence for a rape kit “is a humiliating, long, traumatic experience,” said Deanne Gerdes, executive director of Rape Crisis Volunteers. But she finds the response of the Fayetteville Police Department heartening.

“It happened. The kits were thrown away,” she said. “But the Fayetteville Police Department is now doing something about it. ... If you reached out to any other jurisdiction, if they were honest, they would say yes, we have kits sitting on the shelf or yes, we threw kits away.”

Somerindyke said, "We could have and should have done better."

Since 2009, it's been illegal in North Carolina to destroy a rape kit. And by Jan. 1, law enforcement agencies must report the number of untested rape kits in their possession to the State Crime Laboratory.

Veronica had been friends with her attacker for years when she went with him in June 2004 to the home he shared with his mother and drank part of an alcoholic beverage that she's certain was laced with something that knocked her out. She woke up on his bed "and I knew I had been violated," she said.

She escaped the house, and friends took her to a hospital. Veronica recalls that during the original investigation, Somerindyke seemed like he was just going through the motions. But when he called to tell her about the destroyed rape kit, "I didn't know it was the same guy at all," Veronica said. "He had a very genuine heartfelt interest in righting wrongs."

Police reopened Veronica's case, but without the rape kit, the district attorney declined to prosecute, Somerindyke said. However, the man whom she identified as her rapist is now behind bars on a murder charge. She plans to attend his trial and hopes to see her attacker sentenced to many years behind bars.

But the rest of the saga that began more than 13 years ago is behind her. "I don't feel like a victim or a survivor," she said. "I feel like a warrior."

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HEADLINE	01/01 Co. shooting suspect sparked warnings
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SOURCE	http://abcnews.go.com/US/suspect-shooting-killed-deputy-injured-sparked-warnings-law/story?
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GIST	The man authorities say killed one Colorado sheriff's deputy and wounded four others was an Iraq War veteran who allegedly made threats to the law school from which he graduated years earlier.
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Matthew Riehl, 37, was identified by Douglas County Sheriff Tony Spurlock as the man who was initially causing a disturbance that summoned cops to his apartment two times on Sunday.

The first visit by authorities was at around 1:30 a.m. local time in response to a noise complaint. Four hours later, officials returned to Riehl's home for a domestic disturbance complaint, where they were shot "very, very quickly" in what the sheriff described as an "ambush-type of attack."

Douglas County Deputy Zackari Parrish, 29, was killed, Spurlock said. He is survived by his wife and two young children.

The wounded deputies -- Mike Doyle, 28; Taylor Davis, 30; Jeffrey Pelle, 32; and Castle Rock Police Officer Tom O'Donnell, 41 -- were said to be in stable condition.

The two civilians in neighboring apartments were shot during the standoff but the injuries were not considered life-threatening, Spurlock said.

Back on Nov. 6, Riehl, who served in the Wyoming National Guard and was deployed to Iraq in 2009 before being honorably discharged in 2012, was the subject of an email sent out by the University of Wyoming College of Law Assistant Dean Lindsay Hoyt with a subject line that read: "Suspicious Person."

In it, students were warned about receiving "information about suspicious behavior involving a former student," the email, acquired by ABC News, states. Students, staff and faculty were informed that there were "no direct threats" to any of them the school administration was notifying them as a "precaution."

Hoyt encouraged students to be on the lookout and "immediately notify" campus police "if they observe the former student or his red Ford 'Foxbody' Mustang with Colorado plates in the area of the Law School."

Photos of both Riehl and his Ford were attached to the email.

The email was provoked by "rambling, nonsensical messages" posted on Riehl's Facebook page, Chad Baldwin, a University of Wyoming spokesman, told ABC News.

He confirmed that Riehl, who authorities say died after engaging in Sunday's gunfight with officials, graduated from the law school in 2010.

Baldwin characterized the posts as "alarming in nature" and as a result, he said the university's police opened a probe and notified law enforcement in Colorado.

"The nature of those posts was alarming enough that there was concern for the safety of the law school," he said.

The Douglas County Sheriff's department began monitoring Riehl's YouTube page because he had been tagging them in his postings, officials said.

The sheriff said Riehl fired around 100 bullets.

He described the attack as an ambush because the suspect knew they were coming in to investigate the disturbance.

"It was more of an ambush-type attack on our officers," he said. "He knew we were coming and we obviously let him know we were there to investigate the disturbance."

Spurlock said the suspect "had encounters with [the] law throughout [the Denver] Metro area."

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HEADLINE	12/29 Man dies in Snohomish Co. custody
SOURCE	http://www.kiro7.com/news/north-sound-news/40-year-old-man-dies-after-being-handcuffed-by-snohomish-county-deputies/671103550
GIST	<p>EVERETT, Wash. - The Snohomish County Multiple Agency Response Team is investigating after a man died after he was taken into police custody in Everett.</p> <p>Snohomish County deputies were called to the 13300 block of Highway 99 on Friday at 8:30 p.m. for a report that a 40-year-old man had assaulted his father at their home.</p> <p>Two deputies arrived to find the man in the home's driveway.</p> <p>He was put into handcuffs and deputies requested aid a minute later. CPR was performed, but the man was pronounced dead at about 9:25 p.m.</p> <p>Both deputies were hired by the sheriff's office a little over a year ago and will be placed on administrative leave, as is standard procedure.</p> <p>The Snohomish County Multiple Agency Response Team is a team of detectives from various Snohomish County law enforcement agencies who respond to and investigate police use of force incidents and in-custody deaths.</p> <p>When the SMART investigation is complete, results will be forwarded to the Snohomish County Prosecuting Attorney, who will make the determination if the use of force was justified.</p>
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HEADLINE	01/01 Liverpool blaze burns 1,400 cars
SOURCE	https://www.reuters.com/article/us-britain-fire/blaze-destroys-hundreds-of-cars-melts-floors-of-liverpool-car-park-idUSKBN1EQ163?il=0
GIST	<p>LIVERPOOL, England (Reuters) - Hundreds of cars were reduced to burned-out shells in a dramatic multi-story blaze in a car park on the waterfront of the northwestern English city of Liverpool on New Year's Eve, emergency services said on Monday.</p> <p>Images showed the remains of vehicles and the building coated in thick, gray dust although no-one was hurt. The blaze even melted the concrete floor of the structure in part of the seven-floor block, rendering it unstable, firefighters said.</p> <p>All the estimated 1,400 vehicles in the car park, which has 1,600 spaces, were destroyed, Merseyside Police said.</p> <p>Firefighters said an accidental fire within a vehicle caused other cars to ignite.</p> <p>Many of those affected had been visiting the city for an international horse show in the adjacent Liverpool Echo Arena and were left stranded on New Year's Eve. Liverpool City Council opened a reception center for those unable to get home.</p>
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HEADLINE	12/31 Fancy lattes get break on sugar tax
SOURCE	https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/politics/fancy-lattes-get-break-on-seattles-new-sweetened-beverage-tax/
GIST	<p>Where and when is a sweetened beverage not a taxable sweetened beverage?</p> <p>In Seattle, when the drink is a Caramel Macchiato from Starbucks — 42 grams of sugar in a Venti, the largest size. Or a Caramel Brulée Latte with whipped cream — 68 grams of sugar in a Venti.</p> <p>The city's new tax on the distribution of sweetened beverages, syrups and concentrates, which starts Monday, excludes drinks that list milk as their first ingredient.</p> <p>That rules out taxes for chocolate milk and eggnog, obviously. But some coffee-shop drinks also will be spared, said Mark Watterson of Seattle's Finance and Administrative Services Department, which drew up rules for the tax. Flavored lattes at Starbucks list milk as their primary ingredient.</p> <p>The picture was less clear earlier this year, when the City Council was considering the tax proposed by then-Mayor Ed Murray.</p> <p>Murray's initial plan excluded "in-store prepared coffee beverages" from the tax. Then he changed his tack, asking the council to exempt milk drinks instead.</p> <p>The mayor's office insisted beverage syrups used by coffee shops would be taxed at the point of distribution — 1.75 cents for each ounce of beverage the syrups end up being part of. But the office said some exceptions would be determined later, during the rule-making process.</p> <p>That process is now complete, and here's what the rules say.</p> <p>A distributor will owe the tax on every bottle of syrup sold to a coffee shop. But if the shop uses some of the bottles to make milk-based drinks and gives the distributor a signed statement saying so, the city will give the distributor a break on the tax for those bottles, Watterson said.</p>

	<p>And what about those sugar-high-inducing blended beverages, like the flavored Frappuccino drinks that Starbucks sells?</p> <p>Like lattes, Frappuccino drinks include milk. But their first ingredient is ice, so the tax should apply. Watterson didn't want to comment on specific products, but he confirmed that ice counts as an ingredient.</p> <p>Starbucks, which spent \$7,500 lobbying Seattle officials in the second and third quarters of 2017, doesn't like the tax and urged its customers to contact the City Council after the measure passed in June.</p> <p>"We are concerned about the harmful economic impact this measure will have on the hundreds of Seattle's coffee shops, beyond just Starbucks, and their customers," spokesman Reggie Borges said in an email last week.</p>
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HEADLINE	12/31 Pharmacists slow dispensing OD drug
SOURCE	https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/health/2017/12/31/pharmacists-slow-dispense-lifesaving-overdose-drug/985368001/
GIST	<p>Gale Dunham, a pharmacist in Calistoga, Calif., knows the devastation the opioid epidemic has wrought, and she is glad the anti-overdose drug naloxone is becoming more accessible.</p> <p>But Dunham said that so far, she has not taken advantage of a California law that allows pharmacists to dispense the medication to patients without a doctor's prescription. She said she plans to take the training required at some point, but has not yet seen much demand for the drug.</p> <p>"I don't think people who are heroin addicts or taking a lot of opioids think that they need it," Dunham said. "Here, nobody comes and asks for it."</p> <p>In the three years since the California law took effect, pharmacists have been slow to dispense naloxone, which reverses the effects of an overdose. They cite several reasons, including low public awareness, heavy workloads, fear that they won't be adequately paid and reluctance to treat drug-addicted people.</p> <p>In 48 states and Washington, D.C., pharmacists have flexibility in supplying the drug without a prescription to patients, or to their friends or relatives, according to the National Alliance of State Pharmacy Associations. But as in California, pharmacists in many states, including Wisconsin and Kentucky, have divergent opinions about whether to dispense naloxone.</p> <p>"The fact that we don't have wider uptake ... is a public health emergency in and of itself," said Virginia Herold, executive officer of the California State Board of Pharmacy. She said both pharmacists and the public need to be better educated about the drug.</p> <p>Pharmacists are uniquely positioned to identify those at risk and help save the lives of patients who overdose on opioids, said Talia Puzantian, a pharmacist and associate professor of clinical sciences at Keck Graduate Institute School of Pharmacy in Claremont, Calif.</p> <p>"There's a Starbucks on every corner. What else is on every corner? A pharmacy. So we are very accessible," Puzantian told a group of pharmacy students recently as she trained them on providing naloxone to customers. "We are interfacing with patients who may be at risk," she said. "We can help reduce overdose deaths by expanding access to naloxone."</p> <p>Opioid overdoses killed 2,000 people in California and 15,000 nationwide in 2015.</p> <p>Naloxone can be administered via nasal spray, injection or auto injector. Prices for it vary widely, but insurers often cover it. The drug binds to opioid receptors, reversing the effect of opioids and helping someone who has overdosed to breathe again.</p>

More than 26,500 overdoses were reversed between 1996 and 2014 because of naloxone administered by laypeople, according to the National Institute on Drug Abuse. Since then, the drug has become much more widely available among first responders, law enforcement officers and community groups. The drug is safe and doesn't have serious side effects, apart from putting someone into immediate withdrawal, according to the institute.

Information on how many pharmacists are dispensing naloxone is limited, but one study last year showed access to the drug at retail pharmacies increased significantly between 2013 and 2015 from previously small numbers.

Interviews and available evidence from around the U.S. indicate that pharmacists have varying perspectives. In Kentucky, for example, one study found that 28% of pharmacists surveyed were not willing to dispense naloxone.

In Pennsylvania, pharmacists weren't exactly lining up to hand out naloxone when the state passed a law in 2015 allowing them to do it, said Pat Epple, CEO of the Pennsylvania Pharmacists Association. She said there were some initial obstacles, including the cost of the drug and pharmacists' limited awareness of the law. The association worked with state health officials to raise awareness of naloxone among patients and pharmacists and reduce the stigma of dispensing it, Epple said.

Wisconsin is also among the states that allow pharmacists to dispense naloxone. Sarah Sorum, a vice president at the Pharmacy Society of Wisconsin, said the state's pharmacists want to expand their public health role and help curb the opioid epidemic. But reimbursement has been a challenge, she said.

Not all health plans cover the full cost of the drug, and pharmacists also are concerned about getting paid for the time it takes to counsel patients or their relatives.

California and other states require pharmacists to undergo training before they can dispense naloxone to patients who don't have a doctor's prescription. Puzantian and others say that in California not enough pharmacists are getting the training, which can be taken online or in person and can cost a few hundred dollars.

So far, the California State Board of Pharmacy has trained between 450 and 500 pharmacists, and the membership-based California Pharmacists Association has added an additional 170. Other smaller organizations also offer the naloxone training, according to the association. There are about 28,000 licensed pharmacists in the state.

Once trained, California pharmacists who provide naloxone must screen patients to find out if they have a history of opioid use. They also must counsel people requesting the drug on how to prevent, recognize and respond to an overdose.

Some say training requirements are an unnecessary barrier, especially given the high level of education already required to become a pharmacist.

Some of the bigger pharmacy chains, including CVS, Rite Aid and Walgreens, have made the drug available without a prescription in the states that allow it. Walgreens announced this year that it would stock the nasal spray version of naloxone at all of its pharmacies. It said it offers the drug in 45 states without requiring the patient to have a prescription.

Peter Lurie, president of the Center for Science in the Public Interest, said not every pharmacy has to dispense naloxone for people to have access to it. "But the greater the number of dispensing pharmacies the better," he said, adding that it is "especially important in more sparsely populated areas."

Corey Davis, deputy director of the Network for Public Health Law, said making naloxone available over the counter would also increase access, since people could buy it off the shelf without even talking to a

	<p>pharmacist.</p> <p>Bryan Koschak, a community pharmacist at Shopko in Redding, Calif., said people should go to a hospital or doctor's office for naloxone. "I am not champing at the bit to do it," he said. "It is one more thing on my plate that I would have to do."</p>
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HEADLINE	12/31 UK border plan: 'special volunteer force'
SOURCE	http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-5223661/Bizarre-plan-launched-Dads-Army-Border-Force.html
GIST	<p>A 'Dad's Army' of unpaid border guards is set to be Britain's first line of defence against terrorists, people smugglers and organised crime gangs at hundreds of vulnerable air and sea ports.</p> <p>The 'Special Volunteer Force' will police isolated marinas, harbours and airfields but astonishingly, according to union officials opposed to the scheme, they will have no powers to interrogate or arrest suspects.</p> <p>Described by critics last night as 'risky' and 'farical', the move follows a series of damning official reports warning that marinas and small airports, where there are no rigorous border checks, could allow illegal immigrants, terrorists and criminals to sneak into Britain undetected.</p> <p>The Mail on Sunday has discovered that, in a trial run, around 50 volunteers – who will report to the full-time Border Force – will patrol England's East Coast with plans for the scheme to be expanded later to cover Britain's 7,000 miles of coastline.</p> <p>It is understood volunteers will also be used to man border checks at airfields used by light aircraft flying to and from Europe.</p> <p>Last year David Anderson, the Government's former adviser on terrorism law, warned that Britain's small ports and harbours could be used by Islamic fanatics trying to sneak back to the UK from Syria and Iraq.</p> <p>A separate report published in July by David Bolt, the Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration, raised fears that sleepy ports and harbours, where checks are virtually non-existent, could be exploited by illegal immigrants and crime gangs smuggling weapons and drugs. Last night, Yvette Cooper, Chairman of the influential Home Affairs Select Committee, said it was wrong to use volunteers in the place of fully-trained staff.</p> <p>She said: 'Filling the gaps with volunteers because of budget and staffing cuts raises very serious questions about border security and the Home Office commitment to this important public service. We will be calling for evidence on this proposal as part of our inquiry [into post-Brexit border security].'</p> <p>Last night the Home Office confirmed that it is consulting with police about how best to deploy the volunteers. A spokesman said: 'Border Force is currently considering the potential benefits of a Border Force Special Volunteer Force and is in discussion with other law enforcement agencies such as local police to understand how they use volunteers in addition to their existing workforce.'</p> <p>The Home Office refused to give any details on how the volunteers would be vetted and what training they would get.</p> <p>But the PCS union – which represents many among Border Force's 8,000 staff – said the pilot scheme is likely to be rolled out in 2018.</p> <p>The volunteers will be part of mobile units that would cover several ports and harbours.</p>

	A senior union official said if the volunteers see or hear anything suspicious, then they will have to call in properly trained Border Force officers who have arrest and investigative powers. He said: ‘These volunteers will be like eyes and ears, but nothing else. This is trying to police the borders on the cheap.’
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HEADLINE	12/31 Venezuela stokes world’s fastest inflation
SOURCE	https://money.usnews.com/investing/news/articles/2017-12-31/venezuela-raises-minimum-wage-40-percent-stoking-worlds-fastest-inflation
GIST	<p>CARACAS (Reuters) - Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro announced a 40 percent increase to the minimum wage as of January, a move that will foment what many economists already consider hyperinflation in the oil-rich but crisis-stricken nation.</p> <p>In his televised year-end address, leftist Maduro said the new wage level would protect workers against what he calls Washington's "economic war" to sabotage socialism.</p> <p>"Good news!" said the former bus driver and union leader, speaking next to a Venezuelan flag in a midday address.</p> <p>Most economists say the government is in fact fomenting a vicious cycle in a country already wrestling with the world's fastest inflation.</p> <p>To counter those price increases, Maduro has been raising the minimum wage, but quickening inflation coupled with a depreciating bolivar currency has plunged millions into poverty.</p> <p>Venezuelans will now earn some 797,510 bolivars a month, factoring in food tickets, or just over \$7 on the widely used black market index. Millions will still be unable to afford three meals a day, while the increase is likely to stoke inflation further. Prices went up 1,369 percent between January and November, according to figures released earlier this month by the opposition-led Congress, which estimated the 2017 rate would top 2,000 percent. The Venezuelan government no longer publishes inflation data on a regular basis.</p> <p>Opposition politicians say Maduro's refusal to overhaul Venezuela's state-led economic model and stop excessive money printing will only create more misery in 2018.</p>
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HEADLINE	12/29 Mining govt. data for historical events
SOURCE	https://www.upi.com/Science_News/2017/12/29/Data-scientists-mine-government-data-for-evidence-of-historical-events/5381514578683/?utm_source=fp&utm_campaign=ts_sn&utm_medium=16
GIST	<p>Dec. 29 (UPI) -- Researchers have developed a way to mine electronic government records for evidence of significant historical events.</p> <p>For journalists and historians, sorting through government records is a tedious but important job. Though many government records aren't released until after a news event has come and gone, once published, the documents can shed new light historical happenings.</p> <p>Data scientists at Columbia University in New York have developed a way to more quickly and efficiently identify insightful and important government documents.</p> <p>Researchers tested their new data mining methodology on newly available classified records dated between 1973 and 1977. The records include 1.4 million declassified cables, as well as metadata related to 400,000 documents delivered via diplomatic pouch.</p>

Each document is tagged with codes relevant to its subject matter. UNGA marks documents related to the United Nations General Assembly, for example. Cables related to South Vietnam are coded VS. Finland-related messages are tagged FI.

When plotted along a timeline, these codes reveal spikes corresponding with world events. UNGA spikes correspond with the annual assembly, while a large uptick in VS messages corresponds with the fall of Saigon in April of 1975.

These spikes are rather obvious. For more useful insights, scientists compared the messaging timeline with corresponding background activity -- the news as it was being reported at the time.

The technique allowed researchers to rank the significance of world events, and to identify important events that were missed by journalists at the time.

For example, scientists identified several spikes to government records related to administrative problems, such as transport issues and changes to the visa records system.

"The ranking finds a wide range of other important events, such as the Carter administration's prioritization of human rights, the president of Egypt, [Anwar Sadat](#)'s surprise visit to Israel in 1977, the Southeast Asian 'Boat People' crisis of 1975-76, the 1973 Yom Kippur War and Portugal's withdrawal from Angola in 1975-76 and so on," as [reported by the MIT Technology Review](#).

The researchers published the results of their data mining analysis [online at arXiv.org](#).

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HEADLINE	12/31 Israel pipeline to remain a mystery
SOURCE	https://www.reuters.com/article/us-israel-pipeline/israeli-pipeline-once-a-link-to-iran-will-remain-a-mystery-idUSKBN1EP0C3
GIST	<p>JERUSALEM (Reuters) - An oil pipeline company established decades ago by Israel and Iran, and a new Israeli company that is meant to replace it, can continue to operate secretly, an Israeli parliamentary committee ruled on Sunday.</p> <p>The Eilat-Ashkelon Pipeline Co (EAPC) was a joint venture set up in 1968, when the two nations were friendly, to transport Iranian oil via Israel to the Mediterranean. Ties were cut after Iran's 1979 Islamic revolution, and the enemies are now locked in arbitration that could be worth billions of dollars.</p> <p>Although Iranian oil no longer flows through the pipeline, EAPC has become a major distributor of oil in Israel, with ambitions to become a leading trade hub.</p> <p>It also added a reverse-flow system so oil from the Black or Caspian Seas can be shipped from Eilat, Israel's southernmost city and port, to southern Asia and the Far East, and increased its storage capacity for traders in the region.</p> <p>Israel, worried about national security, maintains tight control over EAPC, to the extent that articles about its business dealings must pass through the military censor.</p> <p>Instead of renewing EAPC's concession, which came up this year, Israel formed a new company with the same initials, the Europe Asia Pipeline Co, owned by the government. It will take over the original EAPC's responsibilities by September, with an option to extend the handover period an additional six months.</p> <p>Parliament's Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee said in a statement on Sunday that it had extended the gag order on EAPC for five more years and broadened it to include the new company, known as EAPC-B, as well.</p>

	<p>Calls to end the secrecy surrounding EAPC emerged after its pipe burst in 2014, spilling millions of liters of oil into a desert nature reserve in Israel's worst spill.</p> <p>After an Israeli environmental group petitioned the Supreme Court, the gag order was narrowed slightly to exclude issues like environmental impact and safety measures. The company's primary dealings, including the sources of oil and how it is used, are still under censorship.</p>
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Crime, Criminals

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HEADLINE	01/02 ADL: 67% rise anti-Semitic incidents
SOURCE	http://www.jpost.com/Diaspora/ADL-report-67-percent-increase-in-US-antisemitic-incidents-in-2017-522624
GIST	<p>There was a 67 percent increase in antisemitic incidents across the United States from January 1 to September 30, 2017 in comparison with the same period in 2016, according to the Anti Defamation League's annual report on an antisemitism.</p> <p>1,299 antisemitic incidents were reported during this period, including physical assaults, vandalism and attacks on Jewish institutions.</p> <p>Presenting the ADL's annual report on an antisemitism to the Knesset's Immigration, Absorption and Diaspora Committee on Monday, ADL's Israel director Carol Nuriel stressed that the recorded surge in antisemitism does not present the whole picture, as many incidents are not reported. The underreporting of incidents is often due to the fact that victims are frightened of reporting them, or because of the problematic nature of identifying the attack as antisemitic.</p> <p>Nuriel noted that of the incidents reported, there has been a disturbingly high number of antisemitic bullying and vandalism incidents in schools and college campuses across the US. Incidents in K-12 grade schools in 2017 more than doubled over the same period in 2016 (269, up from 130). On college campuses, a total of 118 antisemitic incidents were reported in the first three quarters of 2017, compared to 74 in the same period of 2016 – an increase of 59 percent.</p> <p>MK Nachman Shai (Zionist Union), Chairman of the Knesset Caucus to strengthen Israel-Diaspora ties, described the figures presented by Nuriel as "inconceivable."</p> <p>"These figures testify to demons emerging from the bottle and are now threatening to blacken the attitude toward Jews throughout the world," he said.</p> <p>According to Yaakov Hagoel, vice-chairman of the World Zionist Organization, a recent survey conducted by his organization among American Jews revealed that 70 percent of American Jews experienced an antisemitic event in the past year, and only 12 percent had not experienced any antisemitic incidents in their lives.</p>
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HEADLINE	01/01 Study: retail fraud on rise
SOURCE	https://kaplanherald.com/2018/01/01/retail-fraud-is-on-the-rise-as-firms-grapple-for-options/
GIST	<p>Fraudulent retail transactions are on the rise, especially as more shoppers turn to the internet to ring up purchases, making tracking consumers more onerous and costly.</p> <p>The level of fraud as a percentage of retailers' revenues has climbed to 1.58 percent year to date from 1.47 percent a year ago, according to a study by LexisNexis Risk Solutions, an Atlanta-based data analytics</p>

provider. The group surveyed more than 650 risk and fraud executives from retail organizations.

“Merchants selling physical and digital goods often apply a one-size-fits-all program to fight fraud, and they use a limited set of solutions,” Kimberly Sutherland, a senior director of LexisNexis’ fraud and identity management strategy, said in a statement.

“These less advanced and less sophisticated legacy solutions do not appear to be working, given the sharp rise in costs and volume of successful fraud attempts.”

Driving the increases in fraud for many retailers this year are more international transactions and new payment options, such as mobile wallets, the study found.

Retailers say it’s still difficult to verify a shopper’s identity online, and there’s a lag between the time an order is placed and when that transaction is confirmed, which opens the door for more errors or fraudulent activity.

LexisNexis has found more retailers are investing in fraud monitoring, but the technology isn’t always “optimal” or effective.

For example, companies must also take into consideration their trustworthy customers, whom they don’t want to turn away when being overly protective, said Lindsay Sakraida, a marketing director at DealNews.

This is especially true as retailers craft their own procedures for returns, where crime can skyrocket around the holiday shopping season.

“Return fraud is a major problem for the retail industry, but [stores] still want to encourage shoppers to shop with them, and they don’t want to make it too difficult to make a return,” Sakraida said. “Return policies become a way for customers to know if they want to be a loyal shopper.”

A 2017 survey by the National Retail Federation has found that retail return fraud losses will cost companies as much as \$15 billion this year.

This type of crime often involves an individual first stealing merchandise, and then trying to return those items for a gift card or other currency. Some criminals have even targeted major retailers, including , to take advantage of lenient return policies to fuel their drug addictions.

“Self checkouts are one area where thieves love to go,” said Bob Moraca, NRF’s vice president of loss prevention. “There is a price of doing business. ... Retailers just have to continue to work with law enforcement and prosecutors to protect their assets and brands.”

Moraca’s team found that retailers are expecting, on average, 11 percent of their total sales to be returned this year. And 11 percent of those returns are then expected to be fraudulent, which is slightly up from 2015, according to NRF’s survey of 63 retailers.

Moraca said criminals are also getting more creative in counterfeiting store receipts, which can then be used to process a fraudulent return more seamlessly, if an employee doesn’t notice the difference.

While less prevalent than other methods, Moraca said this tactic is on the rise.

In turn, retailers are looking for solutions that aren’t too aggressive. This could include making a receipt necessary for a return, compressing the window of time within which a return can be made, or requiring the item’s original packaging to still be intact. Demanding a form of identification is another tactic most retailers use to keep track of frequent violators.

This past year, nearly 30 percent of retailers have altered their return policies to address organized retail crime, more than in 2015 and 2016, NRF said.

HEADLINE	01/01 Key Peninsula: property crime on rise
SOURCE	https://keypennews.com/property-crime-on-the-rise-across-key-peninsula/
GIST	<p>Most crime on the Key Peninsula is not dangerous or violent, but its impact on individuals is significant, said Pierce County Prosecutor Mark Lindquist. “I understand the impact of property crime; it is a total violation,” he said.</p> <p>Neighborhoods, the Pierce County Sheriff’s Department and Lindquist are all working to address crime on the KP.</p> <p>RoxAnne Simon of Safe Streets described the importance of neighborhoods as a first line of defense. “We are the eyes and ears,” she said. “The best crime deterrent is a nosy neighbor.”</p> <p>Simon also serves on the KP Community Council and co-advises the KP Youth Council. She moved to the Key Peninsula in 2005 and has worked for Safe Streets for three months. She is in the KP Community Council office in Key Center Wednesday mornings to meet with residents who have questions or want to organize their neighborhoods.</p> <p>Simon has information to help communities mobilize, including warning signs to post and a house watch form for residents to provide information needed to effectively report an incident to law enforcement. She has met with residents from Lake of the Woods, Palmer Lake and Wauna, among others. She also meets regularly with the sheriff’s department to share information.</p> <p>Lt. Rusty Wilder, the sheriff’s detachment commander overseeing the peninsula, mountain and foothills detachments, said that over the last five years there have been significant increases in identity theft, motor vehicle theft and theft from vehicles.</p> <p>“We have experienced some increases in property crimes on the Key Peninsula,” he said. “The increases may be the result of a multitude of reasons, but we have recognized a connection between the overall population growth, the opioid epidemic and ‘serial’ criminals.”</p> <p>“I’m very proud of the recent arrests by our peninsula deputies that have resulted in several career criminals being arrested for burglaries, car prowls and thefts,” he said. “I’m also very proud of our recent proactive efforts to address alcohol-related traffic violations, drug possession and property crimes.”</p> <p>Some community members have complained that even when an arrest is made, the suspect is back within days. Lindquist said that people have a constitutional right to bail. After an arrest, the person is taken into custody and arraigned; a judge sets bail based on danger to the community and risk of flight. Because these are both usually low for property theft, offenders can be released on bail relatively easily.</p> <p>“We want to hold repeat offenders accountable and get early offenders into treatment if root causes like drug use or mental health issues are an issue,” he said.</p> <p>Lindquist also described the High Priority Offenders Program established in Pierce County in 2016, based on a successful program in New York City.</p> <p>Using data, intelligence and modern technology, the program identifies repeat offenders. The prosecutor then seeks a higher bail and longer sentences. According to Lindquist, they are seeing positive results: 70 percent of high-priority offenders have remained in custody following arrest, as compared to roughly 20 percent of non-high-priority offenders. More than 85 percent have been sentenced to prison, compared to a state average of 37 percent. The average length of felony sentences for these repeat offenders is nearly four times the state average.</p>

	<p>Wilder said the HPO program may not have a big impact on the cycle of arrest and nearly immediate return of offenders to our area because the program focuses on felonies, and most of the crime on the Key Peninsula is at a misdemeanor level. According to the Pierce County website, theft of property valued up to \$250 is a misdemeanor.</p> <p>Simon acknowledged that reducing property crime is a slow process. “The sheriff’s department is working hard and we need to work hard, too,” she said. “If you experience or witness a crime, call it in, even if it is not an emergency and no one will come out immediately. If it doesn’t get recorded, it is like it never happened.</p> <p>“What works best to prevent these crimes is just being out there,” she said. “If you see someone who you think is suspicious, don’t be confrontational. If you do speak to them, just ask if they are lost or if you can help them.”</p>
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HEADLINE	01/02 Brazil: deadly prison riot; escapes
SOURCE	http://time.com/5083643/brazil-prison-riot-brasilia/?xid=homepage
GIST	<p>Nine inmates were killed and dozens escaped during a New Year’s Day prison riot in a city near Brasilia, the Brazilian capital. Fourteen inmates were also injured in the melee, Reuters reports.</p> <p>The riot in the Colonia Agroindustrial prison, which is on the outskirts of the city of Goiânia, began when armed gang members invaded three cellblocks inhabited by a rival faction. Attackers set mattresses on fire and burned the bodies of those who were killed, according to the Associated Press.</p> <p>Prison officials regained control of the facility with the help of military police within about two hours, but more than 106 inmates escaped during the mayhem, according to local newspaper O Estado de São Paulo.</p> <p>Authorities later recaptured nearly 30 of the escapees, which included members of both gangs. An additional 127 inmates who broke free voluntarily turned themselves in, AP reports.</p> <p>Violence is not uncommon in Brazil’s sprawling and overcrowded prison system, which is dominated by gangs and drug trafficking syndicates.</p>
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HEADLINE	12/31 Federal weapons prosecutions rise
SOURCE	https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2017/dec/31/pro-anti-gun-forces-cheer-as-prosecutions-rise-for/
GIST	<p>Federal weapons prosecutions jumped nearly 11 percent over the last year as the government gets more serious about the one part of the gun debate all sides can agree on: enforcing the laws already on the books.</p> <p>It’s the third straight year of increased prosecutions, countering a decline that began under President George W. Bush and continued in the early years of President Obama.</p> <p>The 8,235 weapons prosecutions in fiscal year 2017 were up from 7,488 a year earlier, according to data collected by the Transactional Records Access Clearinghouse (TRAC) at Syracuse University.</p> <p>The three most common charges were for violations of laws prohibiting felons from having a gun, enhanced penalties for the use of a gun during a crime, and unlawful possession of a gun by an illegal immigrant.</p> <p>In a rare moment of unity, advocates on both sides of the issue cheered the trend in prosecutions.</p>

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HEADLINE	01/01 Criminal illegals get shorter sentences
SOURCE	https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2018/jan/1/criminal-illegal-immigrants-get-shorter-sentences/
GIST	<p>Had Sharafat Ali Khan been an American citizen, he likely would have been sentenced to 37 months in prison for masterminding a smuggling ring that brought more than 100 illegal immigrants from Pakistan and Afghanistan to the United States.</p> <p>Instead, a federal judge in the District of Columbia sentenced Khan to only 31 months in October because he's a deportable alien.</p> <p>It's one of the quirks of the American justice system. Because illegal immigrants and other criminal aliens usually aren't released into halfway houses for fear they'll abscond, they can — at least in some courtrooms — get a lesser sentence all around.</p> <p>U.S. District Judge Reggie B. Walton, who sentenced Khan, said that if he'd given the human trafficker the full 37-month prison term, “the penalty that you experience is in fact be greater than the punishment U.S. citizens endure.”</p> <p>Not satisfied with that leniency, Khan — who pleaded guilty — has filed a notice to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit, the very panel that set the precedent for an illegal immigrant to get a reduced sentence in a 1994 case. The appellate court ruled that a judge has the discretion to impose a reduced sentence because of immigration status.</p> <p>It's unclear how often it happens or in how many cases it would apply among the current prison population. The 1994 decision has been cited dozens of times since it was issued, but not all of the cases addressed the halfway house concern.</p> <p>The appellate courts for the 2nd, 10th and 11th Circuits have ruled the other way, saying that reducing a sentence amounts to rewarding a felon for not being a citizen.</p> <p>In the Atlanta-based 11th Circuit, a Burmese national, who had been convicted of selling cars with altered identification numbers, asked for a reduced sentence. He said a it would enable him to apply for asylum in the U.S., and he feared political persecution and torture in Myanmar because his father had spoken out against the government before the family fled to America.</p> <p>The appeals court rejected that request.</p> <p>“The effect of permitting a downward departure [reduced sentence] on these grounds would be to favor aliens with more lenient sentences than citizens of this country who commit the same crime and have the same criminal history,” Chief Judge Edward E. Carnes wrote in the 2003 case in the 11th Circuit.</p> <p>Chief Judge Carnes said that, if anything, the law suggests aliens can be subject to harsher sentences than citizens.</p> <p>Legal experts, however, note that judges do have a large amount of leeway, based on Supreme Court decisions on sentencing guidelines, and say Judge Walton was within his rights in reducing Khan's sentence.</p> <p>Solomon Wisenberg, a partner at the law firm Nelson Mullins Riley & Scarborough in Washington, D.C., said a judge can elect to issue a reduced sentence to a deportable alien if the felon were to face charges and punishment in his or her home country, or were to be extradited elsewhere to face trial after serving the punishment in the U.S.</p>

Kevin McCarthy, a professor at John Jay College of Criminal Justice, said that while he agrees with Judge Walton's reasoning for Khan's reduced sentence, he himself wouldn't have deleted a full six months from the criminal's sentence.

"Where I disagree with the reasoning of this judge is his notion that an imagined punishment scale balances if one side has six months [in a] halfway house and the other side has zero additional incarceration," Mr. McCarthy said.

"The math would have been rough, but a more logical decision would have cut the prison sentence by, say, three months to have arguable equivalency with eliminating six months in a halfway house," he said.

The federal Bureau of Prisons has more than 35,000 non-U.S. citizens in custody.

"The vast majority of non-U.S. citizen inmates are transferred to the custody of ICE [Immigration and Customs Enforcement] upon completion of their sentence, and it is our understanding that most are subsequently deported," said a Bureau of Prisons spokesman.

Judge Walton said he decided to cut Khan's sentence, in part, because the pace of deportations is tricky.

The Trump administration insisted in court that Khan could be sent back to his home in Pakistan quickly. But Khan's lawyers argued it could take a long time, forcing him to remain in ICE custody while it clears paperwork and gets official permission from Pakistan.

"I don't know how long it's going to take for you to be deported," Judge Walton told Khan.

Deportable aliens are those in the country illegally or whose crimes invalidate their visitor status or green card.

Under Bureau of Prisons policy, they are not allowed to serve out the last part of their sentences in halfway houses. Sex offenders and inmates with medical issues or behavioral problems also cannot complete their sentences in halfway houses.

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HEADLINE	01/01 Yakima: 2nd shooting suspect arrested
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SOURCE	http://mynorthwest.com/857490/second-suspect-arrested-in-may-killing-of-yakima-bicyclist/
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GIST	YAKIMA, Wash. (AP) — Yakima Police have arrested a second suspect in the fatal drive-by shooting of a bicyclist in May.
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Yakima County prosecutors have charged 19-year-old Jeremiah Luciano Peralez with first-degree murder. Authorities say Peralez was driving the SUV that struck 31-year-old Emilio Phelan shortly before he was shot by a passenger in that vehicle.

Authorities say Phelan was killed after the suspects reportedly saw him flash a rival gang sign.

The Yakima Herald-Republic says witnesses told Yakima police they saw an SUV speeding away after shots were fired.

Both suspects are being held in lieu of \$1 million bail.

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HEADLINE	01/01 Distracted driving law takes effect
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SOURCE	http://www.kiro7.com/news/local/grace-period-ends-for-washington-states-distracted-driving-law/673578639
GIST	<p>There will be no more warnings for Washington state drivers who hold their cellphones.</p> <p>Starting Monday, the grace period ended on the updated distracted driving law.</p> <p>Washington State Patrol educated drivers for six months in an education mode rather than a citation mode.</p> <p>The law bans using cellphones, tablets, laptops and video games while driving.</p> <p>If caught, drivers can get a \$136 ticket for the first offense.</p> <p>A second offense will cost \$234 if it occurs within five years.</p> <p>Additional behavior that interferes with safe driving, such as grooming, smoking, eating or reading, could result in a \$99 ticket if a driver is pulled over for another offense.</p> <p>Fatalities in the state caused by distracted driving increased 32 percent from 2014 to 2015, according to the Washington Traffic Safety Commission.</p> <p>The new law was put into effect to help make roads safer.</p>
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HEADLINE	01/01 Pike Place merchant reports \$20K theft
SOURCE	http://q13fox.com/2018/01/01/pike-place-merchant-claims-20000-in-losses-after-cart-thief-steals-entire-inventory/
GIST	<p>SEATTLE, Wash. — Inside her Georgetown studio, blacksmith Erica Gordon is already hard at work.</p> <p>“This is just not going to be a quick thing to replace,” said Gordon, owner of Steel Toe Studio. “The biggest loss for me is the labor.”</p> <p>The artisan handcrafts leather belts, buckles and fine jewelry. And she is now being forced to rebuild her business.</p> <p>“I make every single thing with my hands and these tools so its an enormous amount of work to make again,” said Gordon.</p> <p>For the last four years, Gordon has sold her products among 200 other local merchants at Pike Place Market.</p> <p>"I've been doing this about 20 years and it's a really, really tough way to make a living," said Gordon.</p> <p>Making surveillance photos of someone stealing \$20,000 worth of her product at the market Friday night even harder to stomach.</p> <p>"I texted my cart pusher and asked him where the cart was and I found him and he said 'It's gone'," described Gordon.</p> <p>The cart pusher—often hired by merchants to store their stuff at the end of the night--had accidentally left one cart behind.</p> <p>"I was like 'Oh you're joking', and he was like 'No it's gone' and then it became apparent that he had found security that morning at 6 a.m. with the remains of the dolly and some empty bins," described Gordon.</p>

	<p>A crime of opportunity--after someone stole not just her hard work--but her livelihood.</p> <p>"It's devastating. I didn't get mad. I mostly—I'm just really sad," said Gordon. "I had a quiet ugly cry in private for a few minutes until I could hold it together."</p> <p>With almost no product to sell, the shop owner says she's going to have to take a hiatus from selling at the market--estimating it will take a minimum of 6-8 weeks until she can create enough new merchandise to come back.</p> <p>Estimating it'll take far longer to get her inventory back to what it used to be. Other Pike Place vendors say they wish they had more security and that theft at the market is a constant problem.</p> <p>Pike Place Market released surveillance video of the incident. Seattle Police confirmed the theft--but have not yet identified a suspect. Pike Place Market officials say they have security staffed all over the market 24 hours a day and that they have at least 3 security guards on-site at all time.</p>
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HEADLINE	01/02 Illegal drug use, sales spike in Iraq
SOURCE	http://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/drug-sales-soar-iraqs-basra-amid-nationwide-spike-52091830
GIST	<p>The rows of self-harm scars that course upward on the teenager's forearms from her wrists nearly to her elbows are reminders of dark times.</p> <p>At age seven, the now 19-year-old was diagnosed with sickle-cell anemia, a hereditary disease that comes with painful symptoms, including inflammation of the hands and feet and frequent infections. She became a regular visitor to a hospital where she was given Tramadol, an opioid medication that brought some relief.</p> <p>Eventually, though, she began obtaining the medication even when there was no pain.</p> <p>"When I reached 15, I became addicted to it and wanted to take it no matter how," she said, her face pale and lips bluish. She described how she would cut her arms with a razor when she was high or depressed. She agreed to discuss her addiction with The Associated Press only on condition of anonymity because of the stigma attached to addiction in Iraq.</p> <p>She is part of a phenomenon in Iraq's southern Basra province, where illegal drug use and sales have reached previously unseen levels, mainly among youths, over the last three years. Basra is at the forefront of a nationwide spike in drug sales and consumption that has transformed Iraq from merely a corridor for drug trafficking to neighboring countries.</p> <p>Since late 2014, arrests for drug dealing and use have nearly doubled in Basra compared to 2011-2014, a senior police officer with the province's anti-narcotics department said. From October 2015 to December 2017, police arrested 4,035 dealers and users, he said. In 2017 alone the number of arrested late in the year stood at 3,479, the officer said. He spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to speak to the media.</p> <p>A Health Ministry official said nationwide the numbers have also nearly doubled in the same three-year period, though specific numbers were not immediately available. He, too, spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to speak to the media.</p> <p>Government officials and activists blame Iraq's porous borders, a widespread ban on alcohol, and corruption and unemployment as reasons for the increase. Though the problem nationwide is low compared to neighboring countries, it is expanding, said Dr. Emad Abdul-Razzaq, the federal Health</p>

Ministry's adviser on psychological wellness. "The reports we have indicate that there is an increase," he said.

Drug use is most prevalent in Basra, followed by Baghdad and Maysan provinces, authorities say.

Basra borders Iran and Kuwait — two countries where drug use is widespread — and is home to Iraq's only outlet to the Persian Gulf, from which commercial goods enter the country, making it more vulnerable to trafficking. Large amounts of drugs have been seized in goods containers at Basra ports and border crossings.

The most popular narcotic in Iraq, Abdul-Razzaq said, is crystal methamphetamine, the white crystalline drug produced in neighboring countries and ingested by inhaling, smoking or injecting. Locals simply call it "crystal." Others turn to drugs prescribed for relieving pain and treating psychological disorders, such as Parkizol, Valium and Somadril as well as morphine-based derivatives like codeine.

During Saddam Hussein's rule, sales and possession of narcotics could be punished by a death sentence, which curbed smuggling. However, with the removal of the death sentence after the 2003 U.S.-led invasion that toppled Saddam, Basra saw an increase in the smuggling and sales of narcotics, including new ones like hashish and methamphetamine.

Psychiatrist Aqeel al-Sabbagh said he believes the official statistics on drug abuse don't reflect the reality in the province.

"When we try to talk to the addicts about others they know, we get the feeling there are whole areas that are completely plagued," he said.

Al-Sabbagh's colleague, Nazhat Najim, said crystal meth is the most popular substance in Basra, with 62.1 percent of the country's consumption located in the province. It's followed by Tramadol and hashish. The most affected are between the ages of 18 and 30, with 10 to 12 percent of them women, he said.

Al-Sabbagh, who heads the psychiatry department at Basra General Hospital, said the country lacks specialized rehabilitation centers and medicine and suffers from a severe shortage of psychiatrists, psychologists and social workers. He advises his patients to seek treatment abroad — mostly Iran, Jordan and Egypt.

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HEADLINE	01/01 Tennessee: 3 shot NYE party
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SOURCE	http://www.foxnews.com/us/2018/01/01/officials-2-officers-1-civilian-shot-at-tennessee-club.html
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GIST	NEWBERN, Tenn. — Officials say two police officers and a civilian have been injured after shots were fired at a party at a club in Tennessee.
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The Tennessee Bureau of Investigation says in a news release that two officers with the Newbern Police Department responded to a disturbance call about 3 a.m. Monday at Douglas Cafe, which was having a New Year's Eve party.

The release says shots were being fired when the officers arrived. Both officers and a civilian were shot. The TBI says all were taken to a hospital for treatment, but their conditions were not available.

The TBI is investigating the shooting at the request of 29th District Attorney General Danny Goodman. The agency will give him its findings for review.

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HEADLINE	01/01 Alabama NYE shooting; 4 wounded
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SOURCE	https://www.cbsnews.com/news/4-shot-at-alabama-new-years-eve-party/
GIST	<p>HUNTSVILLE, Ala. — Four people are being treated at a Huntsville, Alabama hospital after being wounded in a shooting at a New Year's Eve party, reports CBS affiliate WHNT.</p> <p>Emergency crews arrived to find three people shot, an 18-year-old and two who police say are in their 20s. All three suffered life-threatening injuries. Another person with less serious injuries was also brought to a hospital in a private vehicle.</p> <p>Huntsville police say the incident, which occurred outside a business called the Palladium Event Center, involved multiple shooters.</p> <p>Police haven't made any arrests in the case.</p>
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HEADLINE	12/31 Baltimore: record high murder rate
SOURCE	https://www.npr.org/2017/12/31/574824963/baltimore-residents-blame-record-high-murder-rate-on-lower-police-presence
GIST	<p>For the third year in a row, Baltimore, Md., has had more than 300 murders, reaching a new record of murders per number of residents in 2017.</p> <p>Some residents attribute the high murder rate to relaxed police patrols in the city following high-profile cases of police brutality. Officers have backed off in neighborhoods, like the one where Freddie Gray was arrested.</p> <p>The Rev. Kinji Scott, a pastor in Baltimore who's held positions in local city government, says the opposite needs to happen.</p> <p>"We wanted the police there," Scott says. "We wanted them engaged in the community. We didn't want them beating the hell out of us, we didn't want that."</p> <p>He's among activists who are calling for police reform to reduce the violence in Baltimore and several other high-crime cities across the U.S. that he says haven't seen change. That change begins with a conversation between the communities directly involved, Scott says.</p> <p>"We need the front line police officers and we need the heart of the black community to step to the forefront of this discussion," he says. "And that's when we're going to see a decrease in crime."</p>
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HEADLINE	01/01 New Jersey: 4 killed NYE shooting
SOURCE	http://www.cnn.com/2018/01/01/us/long-branch-new-jersey-shooting/index.html
GIST	<p>(CNN) — A 16-year-old boy is in custody after four people, including his parents and sister, were shot to death in a Long Branch, New Jersey, home on New Year's Eve, authorities said Monday.</p> <p>Officers responded to a 911 call about shots fired at the home about 15 minutes before midnight on Sunday, according to a news release from Monmouth County Prosecutor's Office.</p> <p>The bodies of 42-year-old Linda Kologi, 44-year-old Steven Kologi, 18-year-old Brittany Kologi and Mary Schultz, a 70-year-old friend who lived with the family, were found inside.</p> <p>Authorities said the teen -- who they did not immediately name -- was taken into custody without incident. It's unclear whether anyone else was in the house at the time of the shooting.</p>

	<p>Investigators believe a "Century Arms semiautomatic rifle" was used in the deadly shooting, according to the news release.</p> <p>The circumstances surrounding the killings -- including the motive -- were unclear.</p>
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HEADLINE	01/01 Chicago fewer murders in 2017
SOURCE	http://www.cnn.com/2018/01/01/us/chicago-murders-2017-statistics/index.html
GIST	<p>(CNN) — Chicago saw nearly a 16% decline in murders in 2017 from the previous year, according to statistics released by police in the early hours of New Year's Day.</p> <p>The city recorded 650 murders in 2017, a drop from 771 murders in 2016 -- which had been the deadliest year in nearly two decades.</p> <p>Chicago Police Department attributed the decrease in murders and shootings to "hard work by officers, adding more sworn personnel, investing in new technology to drive our smart policing strategy, and increasing partnerships."</p> <p>In 2017, the city had 2,785 shooting incidents and 3,457 shooting victims, which was a decrease from the 3,550 shooting incidents and 4,349 shooting victims in 2016, according to the newly released statistics.</p> <p>"I am proud of the progress our officers made in reducing gun violence all across the city in 2017, but none of us are satisfied," said Chicago Police Superintendent Eddie Johnson in a statement. "In 2018, we are going to work to build on the progress we made last year -- to reduce gun violence, to save lives and to find justice for victims."</p> <p>Police also said that total citywide crime complaints had fallen by 2% and that they had made 27% more gun arrests in 2017.</p> <p>Although the number of killings are down from 2016, the murders were still above most annual tallies in Chicago for the past decade. The number of yearly homicides in Chicago had hovered between 400 and just about 500, between 2007 and 2015.</p>
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HEADLINE	12/31 Corrosive chemical sprayed in car lot
SOURCE	http://www.king5.com/article/news/crime/corrosive-chemical-sprayed-on-cars-in-seattle-lot/281-503844891
GIST	<p>Up to 30 cars were damaged at a car lot in Lake City after they were doused with a dangerous substance, causing damage to set in.</p> <p>Seattle police are investigating the incident at Wild West Cars and Trucks. Workers arrived at the lot Sunday expecting a busy day of making deals but were surprised by what they found instead.</p> <p>"This is about the fourth or fifth time it's happened. We believe it (the chemical) to be aircraft stripper," owner Randy Lindquist said.</p> <p>The business has high definition surveillance cameras which show how it happened. Just before 3:00 a.m., a car that appeared to be a new Toyota Camry drove along the lot. A person sitting in the backseat of the car leaned out the window and could be seen spraying something on the cars.</p> <p>"It will start to remove the paint until the car is stripped down and it will continue to remove the paint and wear on the rubber surfaces of the car," Lindquist said.</p>

	<p>Workers had to clean the cars before they could even open for the day.</p> <p>“We've put a lot of heart running this as a family business,” Jennifer Lindquist said. “We work six days a week and within 20 seconds, 30 seconds someone can take three, four months of hard work to pay for the damage.”</p> <p>Randy Lindquist believes the attacks stem from a personal dispute that happened years ago. Seattle police came out to take a report, but the business says since it's a repeat problem, they want results.</p> <p>“I just want more involvement from the police department to get it stopped,” Randy said. The business will have to repaint the cars and replace the damaged fixtures so they can be sold, and they will have to pay the entire cost.</p>
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HEADLINE	12/31 Colorado shooter was known to police
SOURCE	http://abcnews.go.com/US/multiple-deputies-active-situation-denver-area-residents-asked/story?id=52069187
GIST	<p>The suspect in a shooting that left one Colorado sheriff's deputy dead and four others wounded was a man known to local law enforcement for rants against "dirty cops" and the local sheriff that he posted online, officials said.</p> <p>The Douglas County Coroner's office identified the suspect as Matthew Riehl, 37, and said the investigation is ongoing.</p> <p>The Douglas County Sheriff's department had been monitoring Riehl's YouTube page because he had been tagging them in his postings, officials said.</p> <p>The shooting, in which the suspect was also killed, occurred after police responded to a call about a disturbance at an apartment complex in an affluent suburban county outside of Denver, authorities said.</p> <p>Two other people living in adjacent apartments in the complex were also shot in the incident, police said. Except for the deputy who was killed, none of the other victims suffered life-threatening injuries, Douglas County Sheriff Tony Spurlock said at a press conference on Sunday afternoon.</p> <p>Deputy Zackari Parrish, 29, had been on the Douglas County Sheriff's Office as a sheriff's deputy for only seven months after transferring from Castle Rock Police Department.</p> <p>The shootings occurred after deputies responded to a call at about 5:15 a.m. to what they thought was a domestic problem at the Copper Canyon Apartment complex, but which turned out to be a disturbance unrelated to any domestic dispute.</p> <p>"It wasn't a husband-wife or partner type of thing," he said.</p> <p>The sheriff added that it was the second call to address located at 3404 East County Line Road in Highland Park four hours earlier for a noise disturbance call, but he said when they arrived "there was no noise" and "they couldn't find any evidence there was any issue going on."</p> <p>He said on the second call, "the suspect made a ton of noise" and four officers arrived at the same time to investigate what was originally believed to be a domestic disturbance.</p> <p>"They went into the house at the same time," Spurlock said> He said they were let in by a male tenant who lived with the barricaded suspect.</p>

The officers attempted to talk to the man who was making the noise, and Spurlock said they were even talking and "asking him questions" before he "barricaded himself."

"It was almost immediately after that" that the suspect inside a bedroom with a weapon, which Spurlock would only characterize as "a rifle," started firing on the officers.

"All of them were shot very, very quickly," he said. "They all went down."

The sheriff said the suspect fired around 100 bullets. He described the attack as an ambush, because the suspect knew they were coming in to investigate the disturbance.

"It was more of an ambush type attack on our officers," he said. "He knew we were coming and we obviously let him know we were there to investigate the disturbance."

The officers were all shot and "went down within seconds of each other," but only four of them were able to "crawl to safety," Spurlock said.

Parrish was apparently "not conscious," and he was also shot multiple times, Spurlock said.

"When he was shot and the other officers went down around him and they tried to pull him out but were unable to," he said. "[He] continued to shoot at the officers over Zack."

He said the rifle-firing suspect didn't have any known rap sheet but "had encounters with law throughout [Denver] Metro area."

The other officers who survived this morning were: Deputy Mike Doyle, 28, Deputy Sheriff Taylor Davis, 30, Deputy Jeffrey Pelle, 32, and 41-year-old Castle Rock Police Officer Tom O'Donnell. All are listed in stable condition, Spurlock said.

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HEADLINE 12/31 Orlando: highway shootings injure 5

SOURCE <https://www.seattletimes.com/nation-world/police-florida-highway-shut-down-after-shootings-5-wounded/>

GIST ORLANDO, Fla. (AP) — Police say five people were wounded in shootings that shut down a Florida highway.

In an Orlando Sentinel report, Orlando Police Lt. Jonathan Bigelow said authorities briefly closed Interstate 4 and Kirkman Road due to “the sheer size of the scene” early Sunday.

Police said witnesses described people in two cars shooting at each other along both roadways. Kirkman Road cuts through part of Orlando’s tourist district.

Donnie Portillo said he was driving his family back to New Jersey when their car was hit by gunfire on Interstate 4. Portillo told the newspaper he heard bullets hitting his vehicle’s roof and he saw people in two cars shooting at each other.

Officers found two cars damaged by gunfire stopped along the highway.

Police said five people were hospitalized with gunshot wounds. The victims’ names were not released.

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HEADLINE 12/31 Australia navy huge Mideast drug haul

SOURCE	https://tenplay.com.au/news/national/december-2017/australian-navy-seizes-huge-illegal-drug-shipment-in-middle-east
GIST	<p>The Australian Navy has captured its largest ever illegal drug haul, seizing nearly eight tonnes of hashish and 69 kilograms of heroin while conducting security operations in the Arabian Sea.</p> <p>The HMAS Warramunga intercepted three vessels between 27 and 29 Dec in an operation coordinated over three days – finding illegal drugs with an estimated street value of approximately \$415 million.</p> <p>Commanding Officer HMAS Warramunga, Dugald Clelland, said he crew “prepared extensively” for the operation.</p> <p>“A thorough search by the boarding parties uncovered a large quantity of hashish and heroin intended for distribution around the world,” he said.</p> <p>The Commander of Australian Forces in the Middle East, Major General John Frewen, said a seizure of this size “will impact on the flow of narcotics around the world and the use of drug money to fund extremist organisations”.</p> <p>The illegal drugs were transferred to HMAS Warramunga for later disposal at sea.</p> <p>The Task Force continues to promote maritime security in the Middle East Region which is currently commanded by Australia and supported by a combined Australian-Canadian staff.</p>
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HEADLINE	12/30 Vehicle break-ins soar in San Francisco
SOURCE	http://www.sfchronicle.com/crime/article/SF-vehicle-break-ins-at-record-levels-police-try-12464043.php
GIST	<p>Vehicle break-ins have continued to soar this year in San Francisco, on top of already epidemic numbers, despite recent efforts by police to stop such crimes with more officers on the street.</p> <p>Auto break-ins were up in every police district from the start of the year through the end of November, accounting for a 26 percent increase over the same period last year, according to the most recent data provided by the San Francisco Police Department.</p> <p>At the same time, the rate of arrests for auto break-ins has dropped since last year from just below 2 percent to 1.6 percent.</p> <p>From Jan. 1 to the end of November, San Francisco had 28,395 auto break-ins — about 85 a day — and already more than in any previous full year. The hardest-hit area was the Mission District, where car break-ins have gone up 86 percent from last year.</p> <p>The latest data come after the Police Department decided in September to eliminate its 18-person citywide Patrol Bureau Task Force, instead assigning more officers to foot patrol in hopes of deterring criminals.</p> <p>The different approach, however, doesn’t appear to be discouraging thieves. At the same time, residents and visitors have become more aggravated.</p> <p>In 2011, the San Francisco Police Department reported 10,197 vehicle break-ins. That number rose to 26,040 in 2015 and to 24,624 in 2016. This year’s record of more than 28,000 will be higher once break-ins from the holiday shopping season are tallied.</p> <p>While the worst-hit area was the Mission, auto break-ins went up in each of the city’s 10 police districts. In the Central District, which includes Fisherman’s Wharf and North Beach, auto break-ins were up 35 percent. In the Northern District, where tourists’ cars are often targets at the Palace of Fine Arts and</p>

Alamo Square, they were up 34 percent. In the Richmond police district, with Golden Gate Park as its southern border, break-ins were up 22 percent.

“There is a lot more work to be done, and we’re definitely not satisfied with what the statistics are telling us,” San Francisco Police Chief Bill Scott, who took command in January, said Friday.

Scott has deployed uniformed officers to areas of the city that have the most auto break-ins, and those areas have seen a decline, he said.

“We know that it matters, when we focus and we deploy,” he said. “The issue for us and the challenge is we can’t be everywhere, and we just don’t have that many officers to do that. The next-best thing is to deploy where incidents are happening.”

But while the number of auto break-ins may dip in areas with heavier police patrols, the numbers are rising citywide, possibly indicating that criminals simply move to parts of the city with fewer officers.

Six weeks ago, Scott created a citywide General Crimes Investigation Unit. The 48-person team, including 13 civilians with the crime analysis unit, will look into auto break-ins, along with home burglaries, robberies and bicycle thefts.

“One of the things we continue to see is there are a small amount of people that do this for a living,” he said. “They break into cars. They’re organized. Oftentimes they transcend district boundaries and city boundaries.” Auto break-ins are up 33 percent in Oakland this year and roughly 6 percent in San Jose, according to data provided by the cities’ police departments.

Scott isn’t alone in trying to stem the number of break-ins.

In September, the Board of Supervisors passed legislation requiring rental car companies to remind customers not to leave valuables inside their vehicles and to lock the doors. Another city law passed that month prohibits rental companies from displaying bar codes and advertisements marking them as rentals.

The break-ins have become so prevalent that they are already an issue in next year’s election.

And for those who are ripped off, hopes of seeing the offender brought to justice probably won’t ever be realized.

“Here is the statistical truth about car burglaries: Very, very few of them get solved,” Scott said. “It’s a pervasive issue. It’s a real problem for us in the city, and we just have to keep working to get better at it.”

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HEADLINE	12/31 Unresolved: teen killers merit parole
SOURCE	https://apnews.com/201a05efb5f043c38bff98d78768cd64/Ruling-but-no-resolution-on-which-teen-killers-merit-parole
GIST	<p>Nearly two years after the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that prison inmates who killed as teenagers are capable of change and may deserve eventual freedom, the question remains unresolved: Which ones should get a second chance?</p> <p>Now the ruling — which came in the case of a 71-year-old Louisiana inmate still awaiting a parole hearing — is being tested again in that same state, where prosecutors have moved in recent months to keep about 1 in 3 former juvenile offenders locked up for the rest of their lives.</p> <p>“There is no possible way to square these numbers with the directive of the Supreme Court,” said Jill Pasquarella, supervising attorney with the Louisiana Center for Children’s Rights, which found that district attorneys are seeking to deny parole eligibility to 84 of 255 juvenile life inmates whose cases are</p>

up for review.

Some prosecutors countered that the heinousness of some of the crimes makes these inmates the rare teen offenders the court said could still be punished with life behind bars.

“In this community, some of the most violent crimes we’ve had have been committed by juveniles,” said Ricky Babin, district attorney for Ascension, Assumption and St. James parishes, who has filed motions seeking new life-without-parole sentences in four of five cases.

The moves by Louisiana prosecutors echo the aggressive approach in Michigan, where district attorneys are seeking to keep two-thirds of 363 juvenile life inmates behind bars for good. That state’s cases have been on hold for months now awaiting a ruling on whether judges or juries should decide them.

The friction prompts agreement by prosecutors and advocates that the nation’s highest court likely needs to step back into the debate over how the U.S. punishes juvenile offenders.

“It’s definitely clear now that the court does need to ... clarify that life without parole is unconstitutional for all children,” said Jody Kent Lavy, director of the Campaign for the Fair Sentencing of Youth. “We’ve seen in certain states, in certain jurisdictions, that the standard that was set by the court ... is one that prosecutors and judges don’t necessarily feel compelled to follow.”

The court’s January 2016 ruling extended a ban on mandatory life without parole for juvenile offenders to those already in prison for murders committed when they were under 18. The decision didn’t lay out specific procedures for states to follow in reviewing the cases of those 2,000-plus inmates nationwide. Rather it said only that a lifetime behind bars should be reserved for the “rarest” offenders whose crimes reflect “irreparable corruption.”

The court cited research showing the brains of adolescents are still developing, and found that punishing teens with the same severity as adults is cruel and unusual and fails to account for the differences of youth or the potential for rehabilitation.

The decision ushered in a wave of new sentences and the release of dozens of inmates in states from Pennsylvania to Michigan, Arkansas and beyond — but also brought confusion and inconsistent approaches in other states, an Associated Press investigation earlier this year found.

In Louisiana, a law that took effect in August makes former teen offenders with no-release life terms eligible for parole after serving 25 years — unless a prosecutor intervenes. District attorneys had until the end of October to ask a judge to deny parole eligibility.

Several district attorneys refused to discuss individual cases, and court paperwork they filed does not detail arguments against release. But prosecutors said their decisions were based on reviews of offenders’ crimes, their records in prison and talks with victims’ families.

“These are all sensitive cases to victims. They lost a loved one in this,” said Scott Stassi, first assistant district attorney for Point Coupee, West Baton Rouge and Iberville parishes. His office is seeking life without parole in all four of its cases.

Prosecutors said they want to ensure proper scrutiny of inmates, most who were 15, 16 or 17 at the time of their crimes, with the oldest now in their 70s.

Louisiana is being closely watched because the state has so many cases — only Pennsylvania and Michigan have more — and its justice system has a reputation for stiff punishment.

A new U.S. Supreme Court petition filed by Pasquarella’s group and the national Juvenile Law Center calls out Louisiana for continuing to sentence juveniles to life without parole in 62 percent of new cases since 2012, including those in which offenders were convicted of second-degree murder. The petition

	<p>seeks an outright ban on life without parole for juveniles; 20 states and the District of Columbia already prohibit the sentence for teens.</p> <p>But as resentencings continue for those already in prison, the particulars of each crime and each inmate, and the politics and emotions surrounding the cases, make decisions anything but straightforward.</p>
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HEADLINE	12/31 Houston: man arrested w/arsenal in hotel
SOURCE	https://www.click2houston.com/news/intoxicated-man-found-with-small-arsenal-on-top-floor-of-hyatt-regency-downtown-police-say
GIST	<p>HOUSTON - A man has been arrested on multiple charges after police located a small arsenal of guns on the top floor of the Hyatt Regency on Louisiana Street downtown, Houston police said.</p> <p>He has been identified as 49-year-old Russell Lawrence Ziemba.</p> <p>Police at the hotel called for backup around 1:30 a.m. Sunday after they attempted to arrest the man for being intoxicated and trespassing. When help arrived, police noticed ammunition laying around the man's hotel room, Lt. Gordon Macintosh with Houston police said.</p> <p>The man was arrested for unlawfully carrying a weapon and trespassing. When investigators looked into his room further, they located an AR-15, a shotgun, a handgun and lots of ammunition, Macintosh said.</p> <p>The Hyatt is preparing its own New Years Eve celebration at the hotel with a 50,000 balloon drop at the stroke of midnight, its website said.</p> <p>The man's white Chevrolet Silverado was located and towed to be searched and examined, Macintosh said.</p> <p>Ziemba told police he was at the hotel to celebrate New Years and admitted to drinking for a few days, Houston police said.</p> <p>Ziemba told investigators that he brought the weapons because he didn't want them to be stolen from his vehicle parked in the garage.</p> <p>Houston investigators said they don't believe there was any intent to use the weapons at all.</p>
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HEADLINE	12/30 Bothell's 'piggyback bandit' arrested
SOURCE	http://www.seattlepi.com/seattlenews/article/Bothell-s-Piggyback-Bandit-arrested-at-N-J-12464075.php
GIST	<p>Sherwin Shayegan, who has a history of unwelcome behavior around high school athletes, was arrested at Newark (N.J.) Liberty International Airport on Friday after allegedly massaging a teen boy's back and handing him a note that contained cash.</p> <p>Port Authority police say Shayegan touched the 14-year-old at a luggage carousel and gave him a note that stated, "This is money for letting me give you a massage. Thank you."</p> <p>The New York Daily News reported that Shayegan, "sporting a Seattle Seahawks cap with a neon yellow brim," gave the boy \$10 in the note.</p> <p>Authorities say the note also included "alarming content," but didn't provide further details.</p> <p>Investigators tracked the 34-year-old Bothell man to a hotel near the airport. They say he had "disturbing</p>

	<p>notes" and money in envelopes with the names of various airports in the United States written on them.</p> <p>He is facing child endangerment charges, according to The Associated Press.</p> <p>Shayegan earned the moniker "Piggyback Bandit" in 2009 for his habit of appearing at high school boys' basketball games and jumping on the backs of unsuspecting players, although this wasn't widely known until AP wrote a profile of his activities in 2012.</p> <p>His mother has said he has Asperger's syndrome, a condition on the autism spectrum that affects a person's perceptions of others and their ability to socialize, according to the Mayo Clinic.</p> <p>Shayegan was in the news in Spokane earlier this month when The Spokesman-Review reported that he had been spotted at two area high schools, including giving a boy a back rub.</p> <p>AP reported in 2012 that Shayegan had been banned from high schools in Oregon, Montana, North Dakota and Minnesota as well as Washington. He was reported to have "a lengthy criminal rap sheet in Washington, as well as nine outstanding warrants in one town in that state," according to AP.</p> <p>In February 2015, Shayegan was convicted of assault and battery after an incident at a high school hockey game in Virginia, according to the NBC affiliate in Washington, D.C. He was supposed to serve two months of a 12-month sentence, followed by a mental health evaluation.</p>
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HEADLINE	12/31 Vancouver: suspect in shootings arrested
SOURCE	https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/crime/vancouver-police-arrest-suspect-in-pair-of-local-shootings/
GIST	<p>VANCOUVER (AP) — A man suspected in two shootings in Vancouver, Washington was arrested early Sunday morning, according to police.</p> <p>Isaac Depre Frazier, 22, was identified as a passenger in a vehicle stopped by Vancouver patrol officers about 2:15 a.m., according to a story in The Columbian.</p> <p>He was arrested without incident on a felony warrant and as a suspect in shooting cases, the newspaper reported.</p> <p>In addition to the felony warrant, Frazier was booked into the Clark County Jail by the Vancouver Police Major Crimes Unit on suspicion of assault, drive-by shooting and unlawful possession of a firearm in connection with a Nov. 8 shooting outside the QuarterDeck Bar parking lot at 4300 N.E. Fourth Plain Blvd., police said. That shooting wounded one person, according to previous reports.</p> <p>Frazier was also booked by the Safe Streets Task Force on suspicion of assault, two counts of robbery, two counts of kidnapping and two counts of unlawful possession of a firearm in connection with a Dec. 3 shooting in the 4600 block of Northeast 132nd Place in Vancouver, police said. That shooting wounded one person, according to previous reports.</p> <p>Additional charges are pending, the department said.</p>
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HEADLINE	12/30 Shooting at Calif. law firm; 2 dead
SOURCE	http://www.foxnews.com/us/2017/12/30/gunman-opens-fire-at-southern-california-law-firm-at-least-2-dead.html
GIST	An attorney who reportedly had just been canned at a Southern California law firm opened fire in the

office, killing one senior partner and wounding another before killing himself, according to the Orange County Register.

The paper quoted sources as saying the partner who was killed was Major Langer, 75, and the partner who was wounded was Ronald Beck, who ran the day-to-day operations at Perona, Langer, Beck, Serbin, Mendoza and Harrison, a personal injury litigation firm in Long Beach.

“This guy was the most caring, sincere man I probably ever met,” longtime friend Jim Hall told the paper, referring to Langer. “He just had a heart of gold and really cared for everybody who works at the firm and considers them members of his family. He certainly didn’t deserve this.”

The shooter’s name was not immediately known, the paper reported.

A friend of Beck’s said his son drove him to the hospital after the shooting Friday, according to the paper.

Police received reports of a shooter at 2:25 p.m. at the law firm in the Bixby Knolls section of Long Beach – an oceanfront city south of Los Angeles, Fox 11 reported.

Dozens of police officers, including members of a SWAT team, surrounded the building. The first officers to arrive entered the office looking for the gunman, and initially encountered groups of terrified workers hiding or trying to escape, the Los Angeles Daily News reported, citing police sources.

Eventually, police confirmed the gunman and another victim were dead, with a third person was injured.

At a news conference, Sgt. Brad Johnson of the Long Beach Police Department said the suspect had shot himself but it remained unclear if he died before or after police arrived.

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HEADLINE	12/31 Russia toughens penalty in bomb threats
SOURCE	http://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/putin-toughens-penalty-bomb-threats-plaguing-russia-52069262?
GIST	<p>As telephoned bomb threats continue to inundate Russian authorities, President Vladimir Putin has signed a law doubling the penalty for false reports of impending explosions or fire to a possible 10 years in prison.</p> <p>Putin signed the law on Sunday, according to the government information website.</p> <p>Since September, authorities have received false bomb reports allegedly targeting more than 3000 structures in about 180 Russian cities. The subsequent building evacuations have sometimes caused severe traffic problems. A top Interior Ministry official said in December that most of the threats are coming from Syria, where Russian forces are fighting militants opposed to Syrian ruler Bashar al-Assad.</p> <p>On Sunday, one of Moscow's largest shopping malls with some 250 stores was evacuated after a bomb threat.</p>
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HEADLINE	12/30 Las Vegas security guards fatally shot
SOURCE	http://abcnews.go.com/US/wireStory/las-vegas-police-security-guards-killed-hotel-casino-52060470?cid=clicksource_81_2_hero_headlines_headlines_hed
GIST	Two Las Vegas security guards were fatally shot Saturday while investigating a disturbance in a room at a hotel-casino and the suspected shooter is facing critical injuries after turning the gun on himself, police said.

The gunman's motive wasn't known but investigators believe it was an isolated incident.

"I want you to know right now that this has nothing to do with terrorism," Capt. Robert Plummer told reporters outside the scene of the shooting.

The shooting happened before 7 a.m. at Arizona Charlie's Decatur, which is located west of the Las Vegas Strip. According to police, the suspect, Christopher Olague, ran from the hotel-casino after the shooting and into a nearby neighborhood where he tried to enter two homes but the residents were able to keep him out.

Police found him in a laundry room accessible through a garage of the second home after he appeared to have shot himself in the head, Lt. Dan McGrath said.

According to McGrath, Olague tried to enter the first home with the intention of stealing a car and also tried to take a vehicle on the street.

Police described Olague's condition as a "non-survivable wound."

The victims' identities were not released. Police said the uniformed security guards were a man and a woman in their 40s and that one was armed. Their identities and their causes of death will be released by Clark County Coroner's Office.

McGrath said the circumstances of what happened in the hotel room still unclear.

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HEADLINE	12/31 'Swatting' call turns into deadly shooting
SOURCE	http://abcnews.go.com/US/la-man-arrested-swatting-incident-led-police-killing/story?id=52057251&cid=clicksource_81_2_hero_headlines_headlines_hed
GIST	<p>A 25-year-old man in California has been arrested over an alleged hoax 911 call that led to police killing an unarmed man in Kansas on Thursday night, authorities said.</p> <p>Tyler Barriss from South Los Angeles was arrested on a fugitive warrant Friday afternoon for allegedly making the so-called "swatting" call, according to the Los Angeles Police Department.</p> <p>The Wichita Police Department in Kansas is working with the Los Angeles Police Department as well as the FBI on this case. Among the lines of inquiry investigators are pursuing is whether the 911 call was connected to an online-gaming dispute, police said.</p> <p>Barriss is the same man who allegedly called in a bomb threat to ABC station KABC in 2015, which led to an evacuation of the Los Angeles television station, according to the Glendale Police Department in Los Angeles County. Barriss received a two-year sentence, court records show.</p> <p>"Barriss served time after being charged by state authorities in Los Angeles for making threats and was released earlier this year," the FBI said in a statement, but did not directly link the sentence to the KABC bomb threat.</p> <p>Thursday's incident began around 6:18 p.m. Central Time when police received a 911 call about an alleged shooting with hostages at a residence in Wichita, Kansas. The caller told authorities he had shot his father in the head while his parents were arguing, police said. The caller also said he was holding his other family members at gunpoint inside the home and was thinking about setting the house on fire, police said.</p> <p>The Wichita Police Department released audio of the phone call between the individual and the 911 dispatcher.</p>

"They were arguing and I shot him in the head and he's not breathing anymore," the caller says.

"I'm just pointing the gun at them, making sure they stay in the closet, my mom and my little brother," he says. "I already poured gasoline all over the house. I might just set it on fire."

The caller repeatedly gave authorities his alleged home address, leading Wichita police officers to the house.

Upon arriving at the scene, officers surrounded the front of the house, preparing to make contact with the caller inside and for the potential situation of a suspect barricaded with hostages, police said.

A 28-year-old man opened the door of the home and was told to raise his hands and walk toward the officers -- a command he obeyed for "a very short time" until he moved his hands back down to his waist, police said.

The officers ordered him again to put his hands up but the man lowered them down again, police said. As the man turned toward officers on the east side of the home, he lowered his hands to his waistband and suddenly pulled them up to the officers, police said. That's when an officer on the north side of the home fired one round, striking the man.

"He feared the male just pulled a weapon from his waistband, retrieved a gun and was in the process of pointing it at the officers to the east," Deputy Chief Troy Livingston of the Wichita Police Department said at a press conference Friday.

Officers then entered the home and found four individuals inside alive and unharmed, police said.

The man who was shot was taken to a local hospital where he was pronounced dead Thursday night. Police didn't find any weapons on him and officers learned he did not make the 911 call, according to Livingston.

No one else was injured during the incident, police said.

Police have not yet released the identity of the man killed in the incident. But Wichita resident Lisa Finch identified him as her son, Andrew Finch, in an interview with reporters Friday morning. Lisa Finch said that her son was a father of two young children, according to The Wichita Eagle.

"I heard my son scream, I got up and then I heard a shot," Lisa Finch said in the interview with reporters.

"The police said, 'Come out with your hands up,'" she added. "[The officer] took me, my roommate and my granddaughter, who witnessed the shooting and had to step over her dying uncle's body."

Lisa Finch told reporters that she and her family were handcuffed, taken outside and placed into separate police cruisers. They were then transported downtown and interviewed by Wichita police officers.

"We want Andy's side of the story to be told," his mother said.

Livingston, the deputy police chief, said investigators believe the prank call was a case of "swatting," in which a 911 caller intends to deceive law enforcement about an alleged serious emergency. According to The Associated Press, the FBI has estimated that roughly 400 cases of swatting occur nationwide every year

"Last evening's officer-involved shooting is a tragic and senseless act," Livingston said at the press conference Friday. "The irresponsible actions of a prankster put people and lives at risk. The incident is a nightmare for everyone involved including the family and our police department."

The officer who fired the shot has been placed on administrative leave, which Livingston said is standard protocol. Livingston did not name that officer but said he's a 7-year veteran of the department.

"Due to the actions of a prankster we have an innocent victim," Livingston said. "If the false police call had not been made, we would not have been there. Our thoughts and prayers are with the family as well as with the officer."

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HEADLINE	12/31 Domestic disputes deadly calls for cops
SOURCE	http://abcnews.go.com/US/domestic-disputes-deadly-calls-cops/story?
GIST	<p>Sunday morning's deadly domestic dispute call outside of Denver may not surprise police or those who study dangers to law enforcement officers.</p> <p>One officer was killed in Douglas County, Colorado, and four other deputies plus two civilians were shot in the domestic disturbance at an apartment complex.</p> <p>Domestic violence incidents are "the most dangerous type of call" for responding law enforcement officers, according to a study by the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial Fund published in 2016.</p> <p>According to the report titled "Deadly Calls and Fatal Encounters," domestic-related incidents or "intra-family offenses" represent "the highest number of fatal types of service."</p> <p>A veteran officer interviewed by The Trace said police know the dangers.</p> <p>"When the radio goes off and you're being sent to a domestic [call], you automatically brace yourself," Michael LaRiviere, a veteran of the Salem, Massachusetts, police force, told The Trace. "You know you're going into something with so many moving parts."</p> <p>The five-year study by the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial Fund was done in conjunction with the U.S. Department of Justice and looked at deaths of law enforcement officers in the line of duty. It reviewed 684 cases with a focus on those in which officers were dispatched by a call for service.</p> <p>Of the 91 cases studied in which officers were killed responding to a dispatched call, 20 of them, or 22 percent, were for a domestic dispute. In all but one of these cases, the officer was killed with a firearm.</p> <p>The second most common type of call resulting in an officer's death, 18 percent, was for a "disturbance," which were generally nonviolent nuisance crimes or complaints such as about drinking in public, indecent exposure or disorderly conduct, the report said.</p> <p>No details are yet known about the domestic disturbance or police response in the incident Sunday morning in Douglas County, Colorado, including how many officers were dispatched or when they were shot.</p> <p>The study of officer deaths in response to dispatched calls looked at "common themes to better understand the officer response and to identify cues to increase awareness among officers about the dangers posed in handling Domestic Dispute calls," the report said. It found that in seven, or 35 percent, of the domestic call responses, only one officer was on the scene of the call at the time of the shooting.</p> <p>Of these seven cases, four were instances when only one officer was dispatched. But in the other three cases, multiple officers were sent to the scene but the first officer to arrive didn't wait for backup before contacting the subject of the call.</p> <p>"The necessity of having three or more officers at a domestic situation to adequately separate parties,</p>

	<p>monitor family members and, if necessary, physically restrain and arrest a suspect is apparent," the report said.</p> <p>It added that "the research team clearly understands the necessity in some circumstances for officers to act independently in order to immediately address a threat or to aid a person in imminent danger." But it said in none of the cases studied were officers required to act immediately in response to a threat or to help someone in danger. It also said responding officers should be made aware of any call history relating to the suspect and of any information about prior threats or weapons charges.</p> <p>The study recommended that dispatchers are aware of the dangers posed by domestic calls including seemingly routine calls such as to serve a protection order or in response to a child-custody dispute.</p> <p>LaRiviere, the police veteran in Massachusetts, told The Trace that circumstances in a domestic call can change instantaneously where the "perpetrator can go from zero to 100 miles an hour in the flick of a switch."</p> <p>"The most dangerous time, the time when we're getting killed the most often, is in the approach," LaRiviere said. "It's the ambush."</p> <p>The nature of domestic violence makes those calls more complicated, he said.</p> <p>"Domestic violence is about one person's desire to control another," LaRiviere said. "The police officer who arrives at the scene is taking away some of that control."</p>
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<p>HEADLINE</p>	<p>12/31 Denver: 1 deputy dead, 4 others shot</p>
<p>SOURCE</p>	<p>http://abcnews.go.com/US/multiple-deputies-active-situation-denver-area-residents-asked/story?id=52069187</p>
<p>GIST</p>	<p>One sheriff's deputy was killed and four others shot after police responded to a call about a domestic dispute at an apartment complex in an affluent suburban county outside of Denver, authorities said.</p> <p>Two other people were also shot in the incident, and the suspect is believed to be dead, police said, the Douglas County Sheriff's Office tweeted.</p> <p>The shootings occurred after deputies responded to a domestic disturbance at an apartment complex at about 5:15 a.m. local time.</p> <p>As the incident was still unfolding, police asked people to avoid the area and for those nearby to shelter in place.</p>
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