

## World and Nation

# Ten killed in Argentinian food riots

From Associated Press reports

BUENOS AIRES, Argentina - The looting of groceries and rioting that have wracked Argentine cities for a week, claiming at least 11 lives, are putting pressure on lame-duck President Raul Alfonsin to step down early.

Six more people were killed Tuesday and 70 wounded as troops sought to halt the looting, much of it by women driven desperate by the economic crisis.

The country's largest labor coalition and most influential business group on Tuesday asked President-elect Carlos Menem to take office before Alfonsin's six-year term expires on Dec. 10.

The crisis stems from Alfonsin's failure to combat the \$59 billion foreign debt, a national budget deficit worsened by the many inefficient state companies and months of chronic inflation that could top 70 percent for May.

The inflation has sparked layoffs, food and supply shortages and declining real wages that has left retirees living on the equivalent of \$25 a month.

"The country is dying of hunger. Factories are closing. People are unemployed," Adolfo Perez Esquivel, head of the human rights group Peace and Justice Service and the 1980 Nobel Peace Prize winner, said in an interview.

Alfonsin on Monday declared a state of siege, suspending civil liberties, but the looting of groceries continued in this country that is among the world's largest grain and beef exporters.

"Unfortunately, this government has lost its credibility," Saul Ubaldini, head of the 4-million-member General Labor Confederation, said Tuesday. A key confederation committee called early transition "the only possible solution." "Our opinion is that it is necessary to bring about a shortening of the period of transition," said Gilberto Montagna, president of the Argentine Industrial Union business group.

After the governing Radical Civic Union was defeated in national elections on May 14, Alfonsin offered to resign but could not agree with Menem and the opposition labor-based Peronist Party on terms of the transition. The two leaders were scheduled to meet again this morning.

Asked Tuesday whether he favored an early transition, Menem said, "That would not be opportune in these grave moments the country is going through."

Alfonsin's 1983 election ended nearly eight years of military dictatorship.

The latest deaths occurred in the Buenos Aires suburbs of San Miguel and Quilmes. Looters loading food onto trucks threw stones at police, who retaliated by firing rubber bullets, killing four, local news agencies

said.

The incident occurred during a riot in which looters broke windows and emptied shelves in furniture stores, bars, sports and shoe stores. A bus driver who tried to prevent the theft of his bus was shot and killed.

In a separate incident, a sixth person was killed in suburban Moreno under confusing circumstances, the independent news agency Diarios y Noticias reported.

Rosario, a meat-packing city of 1 million, has been worst hit. On Tuesday, armed bands reportedly drove through its deserted streets after dark, shot at police stations and looted private homes and stores.

"They left practically nothing standing," Mayor Santos Mauro of the suburban town of Villa Gobernador Galvez said. "They overwhelmed

everything — supermarkets, shops, shoe stores."

In Rosario, 186 miles north of the capital, four people were shot and killed on Monday and an elderly woman died of a heart attack during looting. Schools remained suspended Tuesday and most businesses did not open.

Looting also occurred in the western city of Mendoza, the provincial capitals of La Plata and Tucuman and about a dozen working class suburbs of Buenos Aires.

In all, several hundred stores and shops in more than a dozen cities, including the four largest, have been sacked the past week.

More than 1,500 people have been arrested, two-thirds in Rosario.

On Tuesday, officials in the provinces scrambled to set up free food

programs and the national minimum wage was more than doubled to 8,700 australs a month, about \$57 at the official exchange rate.

In Congress, legislators argued about how to deal with the crisis as Peronists withheld their votes pending Radical support for increased financial aid to the provinces.

In Santa Fe, the province that includes Rosario, the legislature unanimously approved a disaster law that allows private property and merchandise to be confiscated so food and medicine can be given to the needy.

The government has blamed ultra-leftist groups for the riots, though little proof was offered. Vice President Victor Martinez blamed "groups that do not want to see the current government end its term and another constitutional government begin."

# Beijing power struggle continues

From Associated Press reports

BEIJING - China's leaders delayed a meeting set up to purge moderates from the government because top officials still are locked in a power struggle caused by the unrelenting student-led protests, sources said Tuesday.

A military source said the 200,000 troops surrounding Beijing have been told to "prepare for winter," meaning hardliners are anticipating a long battle with moderates.

Also on Tuesday, workers and students chanted "Down with police thuggery!" outside police headquarters to protest the arrest of labor leaders sympathetic to their movement for greater freedom and an end to official corruption.

The Beijing Daily said that 11 members of motorcycle clubs that participated in the demonstrations also were jailed.

Students continued their occupation of Tiananmen Square, triumphantly unveiling a 33-foot-high

sculpture inspired by the Statue of Liberty in the center of the vast plaza.

Thousands cheered as the "Goddess of Democracy" — a woman holding a torch high above her head — was christened. The statue faced the portrait of communist China's founder, Mao Tse-tung.

A core of about 10,000 students have maintained a round-the-clock protest in the square, but the numbers swelled into the tens of thousands for the statue's unveiling.

The official Xinhua News Agency called the statue "an insult to the national dignity and image" and said it should be taken down by Thursday.

Indications appeared that the power struggle between hardliners who oppose political reform and moderates who back some democratic change had reached an impasse.

Diplomatic and Chinese sources said a meeting of the Central Committee of the ruling Communist Party, scheduled to begin in about 10 days, has been postponed because the leadership is too divided.

The meeting was called to ratify a purge of Communist Party chief Zhao Ziyang, who last week reportedly was stripped of power. The Central Committee must approve leadership changes.

They said the conservative faction, represented by conservative Premier Li Peng, had yet to gain the necessary support in the Central Committee to oust Zhao and others sympathetic to the students.

Sources said they believed that opposition to the purge was temporary and that senior leader Deng Xiaoping, who is masterminding the struggle, would make Zhao step down.

In another indication Zhao is in danger, the news did not include his name when mentioning a series of important speeches being studied by high-ranking party members.

The other five Politburo members named were mentioned, except for Hu Qili, a Zhao ally and who also is reported under house arrest.

The hardline faction gained another supporter when the Communist Party committee of the National People's Congress, China's legislature, issued a statement backing martial law in Beijing.

Li declared martial law May 20, but troops have been unable, unwilling or ordered not to move against the protesters who on occasion have numbered 1 million.

At the Beijing police headquarters, about 1,000 students and workers staged a six-hour sit-in demand-

ers staged a six-hour sit-in demanding information about the three-day.

The Beijing Independent Workers' Union was formed May 19 in defiance of a government ban on all but the official All China Federation of Trade Unions. The union, with a claimed membership of about 3,000, has been active in getting Beijing citizens to participate in the movement.

Union head Zhao Pinglu, said one of its leaders, Shen Yinhan, a 27-year-old official with the national airlines, was grabbed by police Monday in front of the Beijing Hotel.

Two other union leaders, both employees of the Ministry of Railways, also were arrested, he said.

The official media continued its shrill campaign against the students participating in the 18-day occupation of the square.

The People's Daily published a letter from seven intellectuals recalling the tragic leftist purges of the 1966-76 Cultural Revolution. "Warn your sons and loved ones not to allow a repeat of this tragedy of history," it said.

Military sources said all military personnel have been threatened with court martial if they joined or expressed sympathy with the movement.



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