

INTERNATIONAL

Thousands turn out to mourn Mandela's son

QUNU, South Africa (AP) — The grandson of Nelson Mandela heeded the former president's call for more openness about the AIDS epidemic on Saturday, revealing that his mother had died from the virus that also killed his father.

Mandla Mandela revealed the cause of his mother's death in a speech to mourners at the funeral for his father, Makgatho Mandela, who had been the last surviving son of the anti-apartheid icon.

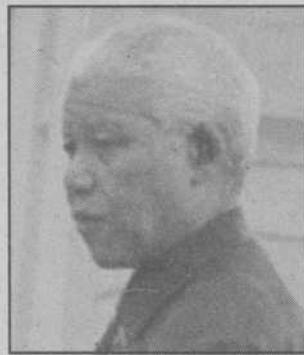
Some 4,000 people attended the funeral at the

former president's Eastern Cape home, including President Thabo Mbeki, Archbishop Desmond Tutu, business leaders, Zulu royalty and local villagers.

Tutu said a prayer at the funeral while a solemn, gaunt Mandela, supported by his third wife Graca Machel, sat quietly and gazed at the brown coffin covered in white and yellow flowers.

Makgatho Mandela's family had refused to disclose the nature of his illness when he went into intensive care at a Johannesburg hospital late

Nelson Mandela summoned the media to his home to say his son was HIV positive and had died of AIDS-related complications, and said the country should be more open in discussing the epidemic.



last year, underscoring the secrecy in South Africa still shrouding a disease that kills 600 people here every day. More than 5 million of

South Africa's 45 million people are infected with HIV, the virus that causes AIDS, more than in any other country.

But until this year, the government refused to provide life-prolonging anti-retroviral drugs through the public health system, citing concerns about their safety and cost.

It has now promised to provide free treatment to all who need it within five years.

Hours after Makgatho died last week, Nelson Mandela summoned the media to his home to say his son was HIV positive and had died of AIDS-related complications, and said the country should be more open in

discussing the epidemic.

On Saturday, Mandla Mandela revealed that his mother, Zondi, also died of AIDS-related complications a year earlier.

"In spite of this, we are not used to death," he was quoted as saying by the South African Press Association.

Mandela's aggressive campaigning is in stark contrast to Mbeki's government, which has been criticized for its sluggish response to the crisis and for courting dissident theorists who question that HIV causes AIDS.

Six million Sudanese children to receive polio vaccine

CAIRO, Egypt (AP) — Rebels opened sections of Sudan's war-ravaged Darfur region on Monday to allow health workers to vaccinate children younger than 5 years old against polio, the paralyzing illness that re-emerged in Africa's largest country last year in the midst of civil war.

The United Nations children fund, UNICEF, the World Health Organization and the Sudanese Health Ministry began a three-day campaign that aims to inoculate 6 million children against the virus throughout Sudan.

Joanna van Gerpen,

UNICEF's representative in Sudan, said 112 people have so far tested positive for the virus in 17 of the country's 26 states.

Most cases were reported in the capital, Khartoum, the Red Sea state and the three states in Darfur, the western region where government troops and Arab militias are fighting two main rebel groups.

"While the number does not seem very large, the concern is that the virus has re-emerged," van Gerpen said in a telephone interview after launching the national pro-

gram in the capital of the Red Sea state, Port Sudan.

The Sudan Liberation Army, one of the two rebel groups, opened up areas it controlled in North Darfur state to health teams, including workers from UNICEF.

"There are about 1.3 million children we want to get to in Darfur, but only 1.1 million are currently accessible because of security reasons and being too remote to reach," UNICEF communications officer Paula Claycomb said.

Another 1.9 million children living in the south that

had been under control of the Sudan People's Liberation Movement, which signed a landmark peace treaty with the government Sunday to end a 21-year civil war, will be vaccinated beginning Jan. 17.

Four more polio vaccination campaigns will be held throughout Sudan during the year, and separate efforts are underway to strengthen the national health system to un-

dertake routine vaccinations, which currently reach only 70 percent of Sudan's children.

The polio strain found in Sudan has been traced to Nigeria, where there were no vaccinations against the virus last year, van Gerpen said. Nigerians freely cross the borders into Sudan, particularly Muslims heading north through Sudan during the Islamic hajj pilgrimage.

The conflict in Darfur that began in February 2003 also contributed to the outbreak, van Gerpen said. About 70,000 people have died through disease, hunger and attacks in Darfur, while more than 2 million have been displaced by the conflict. The movement of large numbers of people and regional insecurity has strained efforts to immunize children against polio.

Thatcher pleads guilty in coup plot

CAPE TOWN, South Africa (AP) — The son of former British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher pleaded guilty Thursday to unwittingly helping bankroll a botched coup plot in oil-rich Equatorial Guinea, and in exchange he received a fine, a suspended jail sentence and the right to rejoin his family in the United States.

Within hours of agreeing to the \$506,000 fine, Sir Mark Thatcher checked in for a flight out of South Africa.

"There is no price too high for me pay to be reunited with my family, and I am sure all of you who are husbands and fathers will understand that," Thatcher told journalists outside court. Across the street, a poster reading "Save me mummy" hung from a window.

The bizarre coup plot drew mercenaries from elite British schools into an attempt to take over Africa's third-largest oil producer, which is led by a dictator with reported cannibalistic tendencies.

Mark Thatcher admitted in the Cape High Court that he paid \$275,000 in two installments last year to charter an Alouette III helicopter to be used in the takeover attempt.

But he said in court documents that he was told it would be used for commercial purposes.

Lady Thatcher expressed relief Thursday that the case against her son was concluded.

"This has been a difficult time for all of the family," she told Britain's Press Association. "Obviously I am delighted that it has been brought to an end."

Airline officials said her son would be flying to London, but his ultimate destination was believed to be the United States. Thatcher's wife, Diane, the daughter of a wealthy Texas auto dealer, flew to Dallas with their two children shortly after his August arrest.

Mark Thatcher, who has lived in South Africa since 1995, was arrested at his sub-

urban Cape Town home on Aug. 25 and charged with violating this country's anti-mercenary laws.

He also faces charges in Equatorial Guinea, where 19 other defendants are on trial in connection with an alleged plot in March 2004 to overthrow President Teodoro Obiang Nguema, who has ruled for the past 25 years.

Officials there have said they will seek Thatcher's extradition.

The South African court ordered Thatcher to answer questions submitted by Equatorial Guinea under oath in November, but that appearance was postponed until Feb. 18 to give his lawyers time to appeal.

Thatcher's friend, Simon Mann, a former British special forces commander accused of masterminding the plot, approached Thatcher in November 2003 to join what he described as a transport venture in West Africa, according to court documents.

Mann was arrested and (See Thatcher, Page 15)

"By the time I'm ready to drive, I could be sharing the road with nuclear waste."

The Department of Energy plans to start shipments of high level nuclear waste to Yucca Mountain by 2010.

Currently, the proposed repository is designed to store 77,000 metric tons of radioactive waste and will be transported across America by truck and rail.



Find out more about Yucca Mountain:

Sign up for Clark County's electronic newsletter

Send your e-mail address to: emuller@co.clark.nv.us

Call in to Clark County's Yucca Mountain

Hotline: 702-455-5820 to record comments/questions

Visit online at: www.accessclarkcounty.com

