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Niger coup oust president Friday, February 19, 2010

The president of Niger, [Mamadou Tandja](#), has been captured and imprisoned by a group of Nigerian soldiers under the name of "Supreme Council for the Restoration of Democracy" after an attack on the presidential palace late Thursday.

The Nigerian embassy in [London](#) has issued a statement saying that both the president and ministers in his company were "safe and well," although officials said that the company was most likely imprisoned in military barracks outside of Niamey.

According to an announcement by the representative of the group responsible for the coup, a Nigerian Army colonel, the country's constitution has been suspended and all government institutions have been dissolved. It is not clear who the leader of the coup is, although several military sources said that Major Adamou Harouna of the [Nigerian Army](#) was responsible.

The coup apparently took place during a cabinet meeting in the capitol building, and was preceded by a several-hour long gun battle in the capital, [Niamey](#). The battle began at about 13:00 local time (12:00 UTC), ending about four hours later, with both foot soldiers and tanks involved, although no significant deployment of the military was reported.

The battle led to at least three deaths of military personnel, and civilian injuries have been reported as well. Additionally, a curfew has been imposed, and the military has closed Niger's borders. Despite the crisis, the government has yet to release an official statement as to its status.

The coup came after an extended political crisis in which President Tandja has dissolved both the [National Assembly](#) and Niger's [High Court](#), as well as extending his presidential term by three years, and removing all further limits on his term. These actions have led to increasing pressure against him and the government, culminating with a thousands-strong demonstration against the government last week.

Former US Vice President Dick Cheney: 'Barack Obama is a one-term President'

Former [Vice President of the United States](#), [Dick Cheney](#), said that "I think 2010 will be a phenomenal year for the conservative cause and I think Barack Obama is a one-term president," at the 2010 [Conservative Political Action Conference](#) (CPAC). Other speakers at the conference included the newly elected Senator [Scott Brown](#), the former Attorney General [John Ashcroft](#), and former

presidential candidate [Mitt Romney](#).

Mr. Cheney's daughter [Liz](#) introduced her father to the gathering. Then the crowd began cheering 'Run, Cheney, Run' and when someone in the crowd said 'Cheney 2012' he replied 'knock it off' jokingly. "A welcome like that is almost enough to make me want to run for office again," he said, "But I'm not a-gonna do it."

Mr. Cheney has consistently denied that he will seek the presidency in 2012, although there has been a large movement within the [Tea Party](#) to write in his name on the Republican Primary.

He concluded his speech with "There comes a time when those of us in our generation need to move on, I want to encourage that younger generation...it's a remarkable time to be an American, a remarkable time to be a conservative."

Tree car crash kills two in Oxfordshire, England

Two people have been killed as the result of a collision involving a vehicle crashing into a tree in [Oxfordshire, England](#). The two occupants of the [Subaru Impreza](#) were four-year-old Bradley Eldridge and his father, 36-year-old Tony Eldridge, who was driving the vehicle. Both were thought to be from the village of Bicester.

The vehicle was travelling between the Oxfordshire villages of [Bicester](#) and [Bucknell](#) at around 2015 GMT on Wednesday when it departed from the road and crashed into a tree. Both occupants of the car were declared dead at the scene of the collision.

A rapid response ambulance had

been directed to the crash site, however, a spokesperson for the South Central Ambulance Service stated that "[s]adly, there (con't) was nothing that the crews could do." The spokesperson also commented that "[a]n adult male and a four-year-old child were declared dead at the scene and our crew was stood down."

A spokesperson for the [Thames Valley Police](#) was quoted as saying: "A police officer came across the vehicle while out on patrol. It was a significant impact and he immediately raised the alarm before going to the aid of the occupants. It is unclear at this stage when the accident happened but it is not believed to have been long before it was found."

Facebook takes down groups supporting Austin crash pilot

On the popular social networking website [Facebook](#), various groups commemorating disgruntled pilot Joseph Andrew Stack were formed on Thursday evening. Earlier that day, in what has been described as an act of "domestic terrorism," Stack intentionally crashed his small passenger plane into an [Internal Revenue Service \(IRS\)](#) office building in [Austin, Texas](#). So far, he is the only reported fatality.

On the information page of the first group named "The Joe 'Take My Pound Of Flesh' Stack Anti-IRS Fan Page," one administrator wrote, "[This page is] dedicated to a man, frustrated as so many of us are with our corrupt, inept government, sacrificed his life to make a statement. Will history see him as a patriot or terrorist? Depends on who is doing the writing." This particular group had approximately 250 members.

Another group called "The Philosophy of Joe Stack" apparently came out against the attack, yet sympathized with its reasons: "This page is NOT to glorify his actions,

but simply to say that after reading his note, we can agree with...Joe Stacks' thoughts." However, one member went as far to suggest that the [United States](#) "need[ed] a revolution" and "voting for a Democrat or a Republican is not revolutionary, it is big business as usual."

A third group titled "Joseph Andrew Stack, we salute thee" was supposedly against violence towards others. One administrator did write, "We hope that everyone is okay and accounted for. It is our belief that his intention was not to hurt anyone, but just to prove a point."

On the wall of a fourth group, known simply as "Joseph Andrew Stack," creator Emily Walters of [Louisville, Kentucky](#), wrote: "Finally an American man took a stand against our tyrannical government that no longer follows the constitution and is turned its back on its founding fathers and the beliefs this country was founded on."

"That so many have already contributed to Facebook page[s] as 'fans' of this terrorist attack on public servants is a truly appalling expression of extremism, which Americans will overwhelmingly reject," Congressman [Lloyd Doggett](#) (D-TX) told [The Politico](#) regarding the creation and subsequent growth of said pages.

Facebook's Statement of Rights and Responsibilities says that its users are prohibited from "post[ing] content that is hateful, threatening, pornographic, or that contains nudity or graphic or gratuitous violence."

In accordance with said policy, Facebook has since taken down and deleted all four of these group pages.

2010 BRIT Awards highlights

The [2010 BRIT Awards](#), presented by the [British Phonographic Industry](#), is an annual award ceremony for music artists. This year, the competition

took place in the [Earls Court Exhibition Centre](#) in [London, England](#). The event started taking place in 1980, with this year's event being the 30th [BRIT Awards](#). This year, the programme was broadcast live - although with a short delay to allow censorship of strong language - on [ITV1](#) from 2000-2200 [GMT](#) on Tuesday. 5.8 million viewers watched it, which was an audience share of 21.9%.

The main presenter of the programme was British comedian [Peter Kay](#), although various other celebrities also presented awards, including actor [Andy Serkis](#), musician [Melanie Brown](#), singer [Shirley Bassey](#), television and radio presenter [Jonathan Ross](#), actor [Idris Elba](#), singer [Geri Halliwell](#), television presenter [Cat Deeley](#), comedian [Alan Carr](#), singer [Mika](#), fashion designer and film director [Tom Ford](#), former glamour model [Samantha Fox](#), musician [Noddy Holder](#) and musician and actress [Courtney Love](#). [Fearne Cotton](#) was also a backstage presenter during the event. There was also an after show highlights programme broadcast on [ITV2](#), immediately after the programme on ITV1 had finished, from 2200-2300 GMT. Presenting on the programme was [Rufus Hound](#) and [Caroline Flack](#). [BBC Radio 1](#) also had continuous official coverage on the station throughout the day of the awards, with [disc jockeys Scott Mills](#) and [Greg James](#) hosting a programme on the station at around the time of the award ceremony.

Various artists, all of which were BRIT Award nominees, performed during the ITV1 programme. Lily Allen, JLS and Kasabian were amongst the performers. American musician [Lady Gaga](#) said that "[t]his is for [Alexander McQueen](#)", who died on February 11 2010, before performing two of her tracks - [Telephone](#) and [Dance in the Dark](#). [Dizzee Rascal](#) and [Florence and the Machine](#) performed a duet entitled

You've Got the Dirtee Love, which was a merger of two songs - [You've Got the Love](#), which was originally recorded by [The Source](#) and (con't) [Candi Staton](#) - and later covered by Florence and the Machine - and [Dirtee Cash](#), which was originally performed by Dizzee Rascal.

After [Jay-Z](#) and [Alicia Keys](#) performed their song [Empire State of Mind](#), Cheryl Cole performed her track, [Fight For This Love](#), although the performance featured excerpts from [Show Me Love](#), a track that was originally recorded by [Robin S](#).

Lady Gaga won all three awards that she was nominated for, including "International female solo artist", "International breakthrough act" and "International album", the latter being for [The Fame](#). In one of her acceptance speeches, she said: "Thank you, thank you so so much. I love my fans. Thank you. My fans in the UK, thank you."

When accepting the award for "British male solo artist", rapper Dizzee Rascal stated: "It's about time as well." Music group [JLS](#) were nominated for three awards and won two of them - "British breakthrough act" and "British single". Group member [Oritse Williams](#) stated in the acceptance speech: "We never ever thought this would happen, you've made our dreams come true." [Kasabian](#) was given the award for "British group". [Lily Allen](#), who was wearing an orange wig during the award ceremony, received the award for "British female solo artist". In her acceptance speech, she declared: "Oh my god. I only wore this orange wig 'cause I thought it'd make it harder for them to find me, the cameramen, and catch my disappointed face."

British group [Florence and the Machine](#) won the "Mastercard British album" award for the album [Lungs](#). [Florence Welch](#) of the group accepted the award, stating: "Thanks so much for having me back. Cheers! [...] There are so many people that help me make this

album and so many people who supported it, people like you." The award for "BRITs performance of 30 years" went to former group the [Spice Girls](#) for their performance of [Wannabe/Who Do You Think You Are](#). The award for "International male solo artist" went to rapper Jay-Z.

Former British group [Oasis](#) were awarded with the honour of "BRITs album of 30 years", for their album [\(What's the Story\) Morning Glory?](#). Former group comrade [Liam Gallagher](#) came onto the stage to accept the award and told the viewers: "Listen kids. I wanna thank [Bonehead](#), Quiggs, [Alan White](#)... the best fucking fans in the world. Live forever." He then threw his microphone and the trophy into the crowd and walked off the stage. Presenter Peter Kay then came on and said about Gallagher: "What a knobhead."

At one point during the programme, a pre-recorded video with [Prince Harry of Wales](#) in it was shown. In the video, Prince Harry said: "You'll be pleased to know that I'm not gonna sing, but only because I don't want to show up the next act. The BRITs is a celebration of all that is totally outstanding and unique about British music. But what's less well known about the BRITs is the fantastic work it does raising millions of [pounds](#) for the BRIT trust which has benefited thousands of young people to develop their talents and generally enrich our society. Well done on all you've achieved. I hope you have a fantastic evening."

The "Critic's choice" award was given to British music artist [Ellie Goulding](#). The "Outstanding contribution award" was won by British musician [Robbie Williams](#), who performed a medley of thirteen of his songs at the end of the programme - [Let Me Entertain You](#), [Supreme](#), [Millennium](#), [Feel](#), [Everything Changes](#) (originally performed by [Take That](#), the group that Williams was formerly a member of), [Angels](#), [No Regrets](#),

[Bodies](#), [Come Undone](#), [Morning Sun](#), [Rock DJ](#) and [Rudebox](#).

Below is a complete list of the recipients of the awards on Tuesday night. Please note that the awards list is not in order of when they were given out.

- [British male solo artist](#) - **[Dizzee Rascal](#)**
- [British female solo artist](#) - **[Lily Allen](#)**
- [British breakthrough act](#) - **[JLS](#)**
- [British group](#) - **[Kasabian](#)**
- [Mastercard British album](#) - **[Florence and the Machine](#) - [Lungs](#)**
- [British single](#) - **[JLS](#) - [Beat Again](#)**
- [BRITs performance of 30 years](#) - **[Spice Girls](#) - [Who Do You Think You Are](#)**
- [International male solo artist](#) - **[Jay-Z](#)**
- [International female solo artist](#) - **[Lady Gaga](#)**
- [International breakthrough act](#) - **[Lady Gaga](#)**
- [International album](#) - **[Lady Gaga](#) - [The Fame](#)**
- [BRITs album of 30 years](#) - **[Oasis](#) - [\(What's the Story\) Morning Glory?](#)**
- [Critic's choice](#) - **[Ellie Goulding](#)**
- [Outstanding contribution award](#) - **[Robbie Williams](#)**

Court ruling upholds expulsion of New York Senator convicted of assault

A [U.S. federal judge](#) upheld the expulsion of former [New York State Senator](#) [Hiram Monserrate](#) from the [New York State Senate](#) in a ruling on Friday. Monserrate had been found guilty in October of [misdemeanor assault](#), in the criminal trial involving an alleged attack on his girlfriend Karla Giraldo.

Monserrate was expelled from the New York State Senate last week by a majority vote of from his fellow senators. The result of the vote was 53 to 8 in favor of expulsion.

Federal judge [William H. Pauley III](#) denied a request to temporarily block the expulsion. A lawsuit had been filed by Monserrate, which had asked for a reversal of the former Senator's expulsion and in addition sought a block on a March 16 special election for a replacement.

The [New York Civil Liberties Union](#) supported Monserrate in the case. The former Senator argued that the act of being expelled from the Senate was not appropriate, as he claimed it violated [due process](#).

Judge Pauley ruled, "the question of who should represent the 13th Senatorial District is one for the voters, not for this court." The judge explained that the voting rights of the citizen's of the district formerly represented by Monserrate would not be significantly negatively impacted, due to the proximity of the upcoming special election. Monserrate has stated that he will run in the special election, and he is not prohibited from doing so.

The court's ruling determined that the expulsion by the New York State Senate was not inappropriate, stating, "the power of a body to determine the fitness of its members is embedded in American democracy." Judge Pauley noted, "Similar processes to discipline have long existed in deliberative bodies at all levels of government."

[New York State Attorney General Andrew Cuomo](#) issued a statement in support of the judge's ruling. "We are gratified that the Court has confirmed our position that the Senate had the authority to expel Mr. Monserrate," said the Attorney General. According to [The New York Times](#), Monserrate was expected to appeal the ruling of the court.

Monserrate's misdemeanor assault conviction pertained to an incident where he dragged his girlfriend through the lobby while exiting his apartment building. He was acquitted by a judge of charges of felony assault. Felony conviction

would have resulted in an immediate expulsion from the New York State Senate.

Monserrate is the first politician to be expelled from the New York State Senate in almost a century. He is a former [New York City police officer](#). Prior to becoming a member of the New York State Senate, he was a city councilman. He became a member of the New York State Senate weeks after the alleged conflict with Giraldo, and was made chair of the committee overseeing consumer affairs. Along with Democrat [Pedro Espada Jr.](#), Monserrate started a shift in control of the Senate by aligning with the [Republican Party](#).

Golfer Tiger Woods delivers apology speech

[American golfer Tiger Woods](#) delivered a speech on Friday where he apologized for his recently publicized marital infidelities. Before an audience of the press, family, and friends, Mr. Woods admitted that he did indeed have a [sex addiction](#). He said that he would one day return to golf, although he did not specify when.

In his speech, he said that he had not been assaulted by his wife, [Elin Nordegren](#), on November 27, 2009, as was speculated in the media, and the injuries he sustained were due to a car accident. He said that his wife "deserves praise, not blame."

He scolded the media for the attention they were bringing to his family and friends saying "please leave my wife and kids alone." He was very angry at [paparazzo](#) who followed his daughter to school, then releasing the schools name and address.

After his speech, the stock price of companies which sponsored Woods rose on average 3% compared to the [S&P 500](#) which only rose about 0.35%. These companies include [Nike](#), [Electronic Arts](#), and [AT&T](#) among others. Also [CBS Sports](#)

expects to lose over [US\\$200 million](#) in ad revenue, due to the drop in viewers.

Commons Picture of the Day



[Apollo 11](#) Lunar Module Pilot [Buzz Aldrin](#)'s bootprint. Aldrin photographed this bootprint about an hour into their lunar extra-vehicular activity on July (con't) 20, 1969, as part of investigations into the soil mechanics of the lunar surface. This photo would later become synonymous with humankind's venture into space.

Quote of the Day

Our world is in profound danger. Mankind *must* establish a set of positive values with which to secure its own survival. This quest for enlightenment must begin *now*.

It is essential that all men and women become aware of what they are, why they are here on Earth and what they must do to preserve civilization before it is too late.

~ [Richard Matheson](#) ~

Word of the Day **sliver** *n.*

A long piece cut or rent off; a sharp, slender fragment.

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