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## Police call on kids to help quell violence in Nauru



Simon Kearney

AUSTRALIAN police in Nauru were forced to depulse teenage children over the weekend to quell an outbreak of violence that resulted in the country's main police station being destroyed by fire.

The police station was set alight at last on Saturday by a 100-strong mob that had been protesting earlier in the evening at the loading of a phosphate ship in the country's port.

The police station houses the country's only jail, and six prisoners

had to be moved to the former Australian detention centre on the 214 km island, 900 km northeast of Papua New Guinea.

A spokeswoman for the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade said there was a possibility of more violence and that Australians in Nauru had been warned to stay indoors at night.

The situation was reportedly calm yesterday afternoon, but Nauru's police force, which is headed by an Australian Federal Police officer, Robert Lehman, took no chances on Saturday and swore in as many as

100 civilians, including several high-school students.

Mr Lehman would not comment on the situation and referred *The Australian* to Rod Henshaw, a Brisbane consultant who advises the Nauru Government. Mr Henshaw was in Nauru yesterday but could not be located for comment.

An Australian staying in Nauru, who did not want to be identified, said that after swearing an oath on the Bible, the police inductees were given blue hats to identify them as police officers and stationed on the streets to deter any further unrest.

He said several were local high-school students.

*The Australian* understands the mob was made up of land owners from the district of Aiwo, in dispute with the Nauru Government over some money they said they were owed. The group also claimed to be suffering adverse health from the resumption of phosphate mining on Nauru as part of Australian-sponsored rehabilitation of the small country.

Nauru's consul in Melbourne, Clarissa Jeremiah, told *The Australian* yesterday the consulate was

waiting for a report on what had happened.

The country's President, Marcus Stephen, is in Melbourne and would not comment on the unrest.

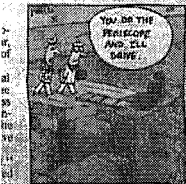
DFAT is continuing to monitor the situation.

"I can confirm reports of unrest on the evening of March 7," a DFAT spokeswoman said.

"The police station was burnt down following a local commercial dispute."

"No people were harmed or injured, all government services continue to function normally and

## Subs left stranded as crews left to fight fire



submarine, but about 50 per cent of those need to be qualified technicians — the same skill sets required by cashed-up mining companies.

Despite offering a range of incentives to recruit and retain submariners — including substantially higher pay than other military personnel — the navy has struggled to retain its crews.

One or two of the six Collins submarines are in dock for maintenance at any one time, but the navy needs at least five full crews to give it the flexibility it requires to respond to a military crisis.

Three submarines — HMAS Decolonneux, HMAS Parncombe and HMAS Sheehan — are undergoing maintenance, but even if they were ready for duty there would be no crews for them.

Defence experts have warned that the reduction in time spent at sea will mean crews get less exposure to operational experience and the basic war training they require.

Former defence minister Kim Beazley, who commissioned the Collins-class fleet in the 1980s,

## Voters turn on Malaysia's old guard



First fight: Nurul Izzah Anwar, the 27-year-old daughter of Anwar Ibrahim, after unseating a cabinet minister

Correspondents in Kuala Lumpur

AFTER five decades of political power, Malaysia's ruling coalition suffered a humiliating rout at the weekend, yielding in one of the biggest shifts in Southeast Asian politics in almost 40 years.

Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi is now facing a barrage of calls to resign — including from former leader Mahathir Mohamed — following the opposition Islamist and reformists' surge to power.

Mr Abdullah's Barisan Nasional coalition lost 116 crucial two-thirds majority in parliament and five of 13 states to the opposition and will need opposition co-operation to make constitutional changes.

It is the first time since inde-

## A result to reverberate through the region

THIS Malaysian election result is an earthquake in Southeast Asian politics.

It is the most important and revolutionary election outcome in the region for many years, destroying the basic cohesion of Malaysian politics that has held since 1969, and in some manner since independence in 1957.

The ruling Barisan Nasional coalition of Prime Minister Abdullah Badawi suffered big defections among all sections of



the population — religious rural Malays, who defected to former deputy prime minister Anwar Ibrahim's Keadilatan party, and

the nation's minority Chinese and Indians.

In a Malaysian context, this result is full of startling — and somewhat contradictory — individual triumphs.

PAS, the Islamic fundamentalist party, has won Malay heartland rural states Kelah, Perak and Kedah. In alliance with Anwar's Keadilatan party, which appeals mainly to

Continued — Page 6



Call to resign: Anwar Ibrahim in Kuala Lumpur



Continued — Page 6

had made a mistake in selecting him as prime minister. "I think he should accept responsibility for this. He should accept 100 per cent responsibility," he said. "I am sorry but I apparently made the wrong choice."

Opposition figurehead Anwar Ibrahim hailed "a new dawn for Malaysia", staging a political comeback after being sacked and jailed a decade ago.

Mr Anwar's wife, Wan Azizah Wan Ismail, extended her majority in her constituency in the island state of Penang, while his daughter Nurul Izzah Anwar wrestled a government minister in her first election fight.

Continued — Page 4  
Editorial — Page 9  
Worldwide — Page 11