

'Captive' Dubai princess says she fears for her life

AFP, London

The daughter of Dubai's ruler says she is being held captive and fears for her life after a foiled attempt to flee the emirate, according to new footage aired by the BBC on.

Sheikha Latifa has not been seen in public since an attempted escape by sea in March 2018. She is seen crouched in a corner of what she says is a bathroom, in clips that the BBC said were filmed around a year after she was captured and returned.

"I'm a hostage and this villa has been converted into a jail," she says in one cellphone video.

"There's five policemen outside and two policewomen inside the house. Every day I am worried about my safety and my life."

In another video, Latifa says her situation is "getting more desperate every day".

"I don't want to be a hostage in this jail villa. I just want to be free."



The BBC released the video excerpts ahead of their full broadcast later Tuesday in its investigative news programme "Panorama".

The Dubai authorities did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Latifa's father, Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al-Maktoum, is vice president and prime minister of the United Arab Emirates, of which Dubai is a constituent.

The undated videos were broadcast as Latifa's friends voiced concern that secret messages from her have stopped coming, the BBC said.



Myanmar protesters block the train tracks on the railway line between Yangon and the southern city of Mawlamyine in Mon state yesterday. Inset, Protesters hold up signs during a demonstration against the military coup in front of US embassy in Yangon. Myanmar's deposed leader Aung San Suu Kyi was hit with another charge yesterday, after the military imposed a second straight overnight internet shutdown in an attempt to grind down an anti-coup uprising.

PHOTO: AFP



Myanmar coup, unrest 'not what China wants to see'

AFP, Beijing

The military coup and growing unrest in Myanmar are "absolutely not what China wants to see", Beijing's ambassador to the Southeast Asian country said in remarks published yesterday.

Envoy Chen Hai's comments come as anti-coup protests escalate in Myanmar and the military steps up efforts to stifle opposition, with hundreds arrested since the seizure of power on February 1.

"We noticed Myanmar's domestic dispute regarding the election for some time, but we were not informed in advance of the political change," Chen said in comments released on the website of the Chinese embassy in Myanmar.

Traditional allies of Myanmar's armed forces, such as China and Russia, had previously pushed back against international outcry over the coup, calling it interference in the country's "internal affairs".

Chinese state media earlier described the putsch and detention of de facto leader

Aung San Suu Kyi as "a major cabinet reshuffle", rolling out euphemisms to avoid labelling the situation a coup.

But in yesterday's remarks, Chen said: "The current development in Myanmar is absolutely not what China wants to see."

Chen said the UN Security Council's recent press statement calling for reconciliation and the immediate release of all those detained "reflects the common position of the international community, including China".

The military has justified its power seizure by alleging widespread voter fraud in November elections that Suu Kyi's party won. Apart from deploying extra troops, Myanmar's junta recently choked the internet for two straight nights while cracking down on protests.

With rumours circulating on social media of China's involvement in the affair, including claims that Chinese soldiers appeared on the streets of Myanmar, or that China was helping the country build an internet firewall -- Chen hit back, calling them "nonsense and even ridiculous".

REUTERS, Canberra

Australia's Prime Minister Scott Morrison yesterday apologised to a woman who alleged that she was raped in parliament two years ago for the way her complaint was handled at that time, ordering a probe into the government's workplace culture.

The woman told an online news publication and Channel 10 on Monday that she had been raped in the office of the current Defence Minister Linda Reynolds in March 2019 by unnamed colleague who also worked for Morrison's ruling Liberal party.

She said she spoke with police in early April of that year, but decided against making a formal complaint due to concerns that it would damage her career prospects.

It is unclear whether she has now lodged a formal complaint to police.

The woman said she told senior staff in Reynolds' office of the alleged



attack. She said she was then asked to attend a meeting in the office where she alleges she had been assaulted.

Reynolds on Monday confirmed she had been told of the complaint in 2019, though she denied the woman was pressured against making a police complaint.

Morrison on Tuesday apologised to the woman and promised an investigation.

"That should not have happened, and I do apologise," Morrison told reporters in Canberra. "I want to make

sure any young woman working in this place is as safe as possible."

Reynolds echoed Morrison in apologising a few hours later.

Reynolds was the Defence Industry Minister at the time of the alleged rape, and became Defence Minister two months later.

Morrison said he has appointed Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet official Stephanie Foster to review the process in dealing with workplace complaints, while a backbench lawmaker will investigate workplace culture.

The Liberal party has been dogged by allegations of improper behaviour towards women. In 2019, female backbench lawmakers said they felt bullied to support a move to oust then prime minister Malcolm Turnbull, while a former female Liberal staff member last year made an official complaint of improper behaviour by then immigration minister Alan Tudge.

US CAPITOL ATTACK PROBE

Lawmakers to set up commission

REUTERS, Washington

US House Speaker Nancy Pelosi said on Monday lawmakers will establish an outside, independent commission to review the "facts and causes" related to the deadly Jan. 6 attack on the US Capitol by supporters of then-President Donald Trump.

Pelosi said in a letter to lawmakers that the commission would be modeled on a similar one convened after the Sept. 11, 2001 attack on New York and the Pentagon. Pelosi said the panel will also look at the "facts and causes relating to the preparedness and response of the United States Capitol Police and other federal, state, and local law enforcement."

She has tasked retired US Army Lieutenant General Russel Honoré with assessing security needs of the Capitol in the aftermath of the attack. Based on his interim findings, she said Congress must allocate additional funds "to provide for the safety of members and the security of the Capitol."

She added: "It is clear from his findings and from the impeachment trial that we must get to the truth of how this happened."

More than a month after the attack that left five dead as pro-Trump supporters stormed the US Capitol and sought to disrupt the certification of Joe Biden's victory as president, the Capitol complex remains guarded by more than 5,000 National Guard troops and ringed with eight-foot fences rimmed with razor wire. The troops are expected to remain through mid-March.

More than 200 people have been charged with federal crimes in the bloody assault on Congress, which led to Trump's impeachment trial on a charge of inciting insurrection. Trump was acquitted on Saturday on a vote of 57-43, as seven Republican senators joined Democrats in favor of conviction, though short of the required majority.

ALLEGATION OF RAPE IN AUSTRALIAN PARLIAMENT

PM apologises, promises probe

REUTERS, Canberra

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