

ASSISTED LIVING ISN'T JUST FOR PEOPLE. A ZOO IN SPAIN HELPS ELDERLY ELEPHANTS AGE GRACEFULLY

BARCELONA, Spain (AP) At the Barcelona Zoo, a 40-year-old African elephant places her foot through the metal barrier where a zookeeper gently scrubs its sole — the beloved pachyderm gets her “pedicure,” along with apple slices every day.

The treatment is part of the zoo’s specialized geriatric care for aging animals that cannot be reintroduced into the wild as zoos world over increasingly emphasize lifelong care.

“Sending them back into nature would be an error,” said Pilar Padilla, head of the zoo’s mam-mal care. “It is very likely they wouldn’t survive.”

Zoos have undergone a rethink in recent decades with the emphasis on the conservation of species and education, moving away from the past paradigm that often displayed exotic animals as a spectacle.

The new approach includes knowing how to adapt to the needs of aging animals, which has led zoos to create bigger, more nature-like enclosures, such as the Sahel-Savannah area at the zoo in the Spanish city of Barce-lona.

Along with breeding programs to reintroduce fit animals into nature, zoos today want to ensure that animals living longer due to advancements in veterinary care can age gracefully, said Martin Zordan, the CEO of the World As-sociation of Zoos and Aquariums, or WAZA.

“Specialized geriatric care is becoming increasingly essential,” Zordan told The Associated Press at the organization’s Barcelona offices.

Zordan said that just like older people, elderly animals require more care: regular health checks, arthritis treatment, softer foods



Two old African elephants Bully, left, and Susi, stand inside the Barcelona Zoo in Spain, on March 27.

or nutritional supplements, adapted living spaces and moni-toring of mental and behavioral health.

Along with caring for a pair of aging elephants, the Barcelona Zoo is also the home for a 15-year-old wolf, a leopard and a tiger who are both 17, as well as some older birds — including a flock of senior flamencos.

It’s not alone — several zoos in the United States, for example, highlight their treatment of older animals, such as the zoos in Balti-more and Baton Rouge.

A study of grief

Zookeepers at the Barcelona Zoo, not far from the city’s Med-iterranean coastline, are closely monitoring its two aging female pachyderms, Susi and Bully (pro-nounced BUH'-yi), as they cope with the recent death of Yoyo, their former pen-mate and long-time companion.

Yoyo died in December at age 54.

Susi, at 52, is now among the oldest known African elephants in captivity, even though WAZA said the age of animals born in the wild is approximate. Bully, who is 40, is also considered old for an African elephant. All three were captured in the wild and spent time in circuses an other zoos before coming to Barcelona.

The zoo is now working with the University of Barcelona to study the impact of Yoyo’s death on Susi and Bully. It’s the first study of its kind, focused on elephants not from the same family after the death of a long-time companion, Padilla told The Associated Press during a recent visit to the zoo’s elephant en-closure.

At first, Susi and Bully showed their shock by not eating, but are now adapting well and turning to one another, including even shar-ing food, Padilla said, adding that Susi has taken on the dominant role that Yoyo had.

Israel intensifies strikes across Gaza on Palm Sunday and hits a hospital in the north

DEIR AL-BALAH, Gaza (AP) A wave of Israeli strikes across Gaza on Sunday hit a hospital and other sites, killing at least 21 people, including chil-dren, as Israel vowed to expand its security pres-ence in the small coastal strip.

The predawn strike on Al-Ahli Hospital in Gaza City was the latest of several attacks on northern Gaza’s last major hospital providing critical health care.

Hospital director Dr. Fadel Naim said the emergency room, phar-macy and surrounding buildings were severely damaged, affecting over 100 patients and dozens of staff.

One patient, a girl,

died during the evacua-tion following an Israeli warning because staff were unable to provide urgent care, Gaza’s Health Ministry said. Israel said it struck a Hamas command and control center at the hospital, without pro-viding evidence. Hamas denied the allegations.

Al-Ahli Hospital is run by the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem, which condemned the attack, saying in a statement it happened on “Palm Sun-day, the start of the Holy Week, the most sacred week of the Christian year.”

Palm Sunday com-memorates Jesus’ entry into Jerusalem, and worshipers in Ga-

za City marked it in a church whose gilded trim and intact walls were a contrast to the widespread debris else-where.

Associated Press video showed the hospital’s caved-in roof surround-ed by rubble. The health ministry’s director general, Dr. Munir al-Boursh, said patients had been carried outside in beds and slept in the streets.

“Nothing was left safe inside the hospital, or all over Gaza,” said Mo-hammad Abu Nasser, an injured man who sat on his bed outdoors and looked at the destruc-tion.

The health ministry said the hospital was temporarily out of ser-vice and patients were transferred to other hospitals in Gaza City. The aid group Medical Aid for Palestinians called it the fifth attack on Al-Ahli since the war began.

Hospitals have spe-cial protection under international law. Israel has besieged and raid-ed them, some several times, and struck multi-ple ones while accusing Hamas of using them as cover for its fighters.

Last month Israel struck Nasser Hospital

in Khan Younis, the largest in southern Ga-za, killing two people and causing a large fire, the health ministry said. The facility had been overwhelmed when Is-rael ended a two-month ceasefire last month with a surprise wave of airstrikes.

Charity workers killed

Hours later Sunday, a strike on a car in Deir al-Balah in central Ga-za killed at least seven people including six brothers, according to staff at Al-Aqsa Martyrs Hospital, which received the bodies. The youngest brother was 10.

Their father, Ibra-him Abu Mahadi, said his sons worked for a charity that distributes food to Palestinians. “For what sin were they killed?” he said.

AP reporters saw the mangled, bloodied car as relatives wept over the bodies. Israel’s military asserted that it killed the deputy head of a Hamas sniper cell.

An airstrike Sunday afternoon hit a house in the urban Jabaliya re-fugee camp in northern Gaza, killing at least sev-en people including two women, according to the Indonesian hospital.

U.S. still won’t say whether it will return mistakenly deported man

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

The Trump administration is doubling down on its decision not to tell a federal court whether it has any plans to repatriate a Maryland man who was mistakenly deported last month and remain confined in a notorious prison in El Salvador, de-spite a Supreme Court ruling and lower court or-der that the man should be returned to the United States. The U.S. district court judge handling the case of Kilmar Abrego Garcia now is weighing whether to grant a request from the man’s legal team to compel the government to explain why it should not be held in contempt. Any move toward a contempt finding would represent an extraor-dinary turn in the Trump administration’s asser-tion of presidential authority, both generally and specifically over immigration policy.

The government’s latest daily status update, filed Sunday as required by Judge Paula Xinis, states essentially that the Trump administration has nothing to add beyond its Saturday statement that, for the first time, confirmed that Abrego Garcia, 29, was alive and remained in an El Sal-vador prison under the control of that country’s government. That means for the second consec-utive day, the administration has not addressed Xinis’ demands that the administration detail what steps it was taking to return Abrego Garcia to the United States.

The U.S. Supreme Court ruled last Thursday that the Trump administration must bring him back. Xinis followed that with an order Friday requiring the administration to disclose Abrego Garcia’s “current physical location and custodial status” and “what steps, if any, Defendants have taken (and) will take, and when, to facilitate” his return.

The Trump administration has asserted that Abrego Garcia, who lived in the U.S. for about 14 years before being deported, is a member of the MS-13 gang. Abrego Garcia has disputed that claim, and he has never been charged with any crime related to such activity. The Trump admin-istration has called his deportation a mistake but also has argued, essentially, that its conclusion about Abrego Garcia’s affiliation makes him ineli-gible for protection from the courts.

Abrego Garcia’s location was first confirmed to the court by Michael G. Kozak, who identified himself in the Saturday filing as a “Senior Bu-reau Official” in the State Department’s Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs. Sunday’s status update was signed by Evan C. Katz, who was identified in the filing as assistant director of Enforcement and Removal Operations for the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement agency within the Department of Homeland Security.

Separately, Abrego Garcia’s lawyers have asked Xinis to issue an order compelling the govern-ment to explain to the court why it should not be held in contempt for failing to comply fully with previous orders. As of early Sunday evening, Xinis had not filed such an order.

Abrego Garcia’s lawyers also have asked Xinis to order the government, among other things, to produce documents and contracts that detail the U.S. agreement with El Salvador to house people deported from the U.S. or, in absence of such re-cords, to require that government officials testify in court about the arrangement.

Xinis expressed frustration Friday during a hearing in her Maryland courtroom when a U.S. government attorney struggled to provide any in-formation about Abrego Garcia’s whereabouts.

“Where is he and under whose authority?” the judge asked during the hearing. “I’m not asking for state secrets. All I know is that he’s not here. The government was prohibited from sending him to El Salvador, and now I’m asking a very simple question: Where is he?”

The judge repeatedly asked a government attor-ney about what has been done to return Abrego Garcia, asking pointedly: “Have they done any-thing?”

Drew Ensign, a deputy assistant attorney general, told Xinis that he had no personal knowledge about any actions or plans to return Abrego Garcia. But he told the judge the gov-ernment was “actively considering what could be done” and said that Abrego Garcia’s case involved three Cabinet agencies and significant coordination.

Kozak’s statement a day later stated: “It is my understanding based on official reporting from our Embassy in San Salvador that Abrego Garcia is currently being held in the Terrorism Confinement Center in El Salvador. He is alive and secure in that facility. He is detained pursuant to the sov-ereign, domestic authority of El Salvador.”



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