

ELECTIONS

Far-right group to stand for Police Commissioner

By KEVIN RAWLINSON

The English Defence League is to put forward its first candidate for public office.

Joint leader Kevin Carroll will stand for election as the Police Commissioner for Bedfordshire – one of the anti-Islamic organisation's strongholds. Mr Carroll said the group intended to put up more candidates in Police Commissioner and council elections as part of its alliance with the nationalist British Freedom Party.

The move marks a shift in tactics

by the EDL, which until now has been clear that it is not a political group but a street movement. Dr Matthew Goodwin, an expert on the far-right at Nottingham University, said it reflects a growing interest and activity in areas outside its usual rallies and demonstrations.

He added: "It is significant in that it is in Bedfordshire, where the EDL emerged and has some local support." He added that elections to positions such as Mayor or Police Commissioner is normally characterised by low turnouts, which benefit smaller parties.

CRIME

28-year murder riddle solved

The murder of a young boy 28 years ago has finally been solved, police said yesterday.

Detectives suspected Melvyn Reed of killing his 9-year-old nephew Christopher Laverack for more than a decade. The child was found in a stream close to his home in Hull in 1984 after suffering an horrific attack.

Humberside Police said an independent assessment of the strength of the case from leading QC Paul Watson had now found the weight of evidence against Reed to be "conclusive".

Reed died from cancer in prison in 2008 while serving a seven-and-a-half-year sentence for sexually assaulting four young boys.



WATER SPORT

Jet bike gets adrenaline pumping

Adrenaline junkies are making a splash at the beach this summer with this flying water bike that whizzes along at 25mph, up to 30ft above the water. Thrill-seekers sit on the vehicle and control its height, speed and direction using hand-controls to direct jets of water. JET/VAIOR.COM/SOLENTNEWS

POLITICS

Blair adviser Derek Scott dies aged 65

Tony Blair's former economic adviser, who became one of earliest chroniclers of the then Prime Minister's bitter battles with Gordon Brown, has died aged 65.

Derek Scott, who witnessed the feuds between Mr Blair and Mr Brown and revealed that the Chancellor kept his Budgets secret from the Prime Minister, was an important figure in New Labour, returning to the party following a spell in the SDP in the 1980s.

Despite his closeness to Mr Blair, he failed to be selected for a seat at the 1997 election and was instead appointed economic adviser – a post he held until 2003.

Increasingly Eurosceptic, after leaving Downing Street Mr Scott became one of the leading Labour protagonists against Britain's involvement in further EU integration.

He often worked in collaboration with the Labour MP and former minister Gisela Stuart, whom he later married.

He was also a prominent critic of Gordon Brown's suitability to become Prime Minister, predicting before the financial crash some of the future economic problems.

World

'What will happen to us?': Loyalists fear rebel attacks

In Aleppo, Kim Sengupta finds members of pro-Assad tribes hiding behind closed doors in fear of revenge raids

Sitting in a room in his flat darkened by drawn curtains, Abdul Fawaz al-Jais flinched every time he heard shots. He almost jumped when there was loud and prolonged shouting outside. At the sound of a helicopter, however, he raised his head with a look of almost relief.

The reaction was hardly the normal one in "Free Aleppo", where residents have been subjected to attacks from the air from the Syrian regime while at the same time facing regular salvos of tank and artillery fire on the ground.

But Mr al-Jais, unlike his neighbours, was not looking forward to the triumph of the revolution; 20 hours earlier his brother, Ahmed, and cousin, Jassem, had been dragged away and executed by the revolutionaries.

The family are part of the Al-Barre tribe whose militia had entered the fray pledging their loyalty to President Bashar al-Assad. Their first act was an attack on opposition positions near the airport in which 15 revolutionaries were killed, some, it is claimed, shot with their hands tied behind their backs.

The reaction was an assault in the Sher Osman neighbourhood where part of the clan are based, with about a dozen killed and 20 arrested. These arrested men were accused of being members of the Shabiha, the loyalist militia accused of serial human rights abuse, and, according to video footage released, put against a wall and sprayed with Kalashnikov fire.

"They were screaming that Ahmed and Jassem were Shabiha, that is not true, not true", Mr al-Jais, a 47-year-old businessman, insisted, furiously shaking his head.

"They only started defending our area when it came under attack. We had nothing to do with what happened at the airport. This was in the war between the government – now they are blaming us all. I am sure they have killed Ahmed and Jassem. What will happen to their families? The children? What will happen to the rest of us? Some people were saying we are Alawites, we are not, we are Sunnis."

The Independent had been with the rebel fighters as they fought running battles with armed Al-Barre men late on Tuesday afternoon. The attack was halted due to lack of ammunition and missile strikes from a Mig-23. But later, replenished, the revolutionaries had apparently gone back and extracted their revenge.

Abu Suleiman was one of the rebel commanders in charge of the attack.



Fighters in the rebel Free Syrian Army capture policemen on Tuesday who the FSA claim are Shabiha, or pro-government militiamen, as the rebels overran a police station in Aleppo. AFP/GETTYIMAGES

"Some of the Shabiha were killed, some were arrested. We lost some martyrs as well. What happened to the arrested men I do not know. I think they are in prison and they will be tried. How do we know this video is real? No one has to fear just because they are

Al-Barre. You have seen what the regime is doing, firing heavy weapons, killing civilians. The Shabiha kill children with the knife."

These attacks continued on Tuesday night and, sporadically, through yesterday. The most intense barrages were

at Salaheddine, a south-eastern district which stands between regime forces and the 45 per cent of the city the revolutionaries claim to hold. Tanks which had been lined up shielding a regime-held district, Hamdaniyeh, came forward launching a number of rounds

ASSAD RALLIES ARMED FORCES WITH PERSONAL MESSAGE

The Syrian President, Bashar al-Assad, urged his fighters yesterday to step up their "heroic" battle that he said will determine the destiny of the country.

In a message published on the 67th anniversary of the founding of the Syrian armed forces, President Assad described the military as "the backbone of the motherland".

Straying somewhat from the regime line that the uprising is the work of foreign terrorists, President Assad described the conflict as "multi-faceted", with foreign

fighters supported by "internal agents".

"Today you are invited to increase your readiness and willingness for the armed forces to be the shield, wall and fortress of our nation," he said in the message published in the army magazine.

"Our battle is against a multi-faceted enemy with clear goals. This battle will determine the destiny of our people and the nation's past, present and future."

With the speech not televised, it was not clear if the President

delivered it directly to his troops, who have suffered heavy losses during the conflict, particularly in recent weeks.

President Assad is yet to make a public address following the devastating opposition strike on his inner circle on 18 July, which killed four of his top security officials. Following the bombing, there were rumours he had fled to the Alawite stronghold of Latakia, though some Western diplomats say they believe he remains in Damascus.

LOVEDAY MORRIS

FLORIDA'S ILLEGAL PURGE OF FOREIGN VOTERS P27



REMEMBERING GORE VIDAL, THE KING OF VITRIOL P28-29

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