

Harry expresses 'great sadness' at royal split

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London

Britain's Prince Harry expressed "great sadness" on Sunday at he and his wife Meghan being stripped of their royal titles as part of a historic separation settlement with the Queen.

But he said he saw no other way out but to give up his royal role in search of "a more peaceful life" with his American former actress wife and baby son Archie.

"It brings me great sadness that it has come to this," Harry told supporters of his Africa-based charity in London. His emotional first remarks since the separation were aimed at calming a crisis that has shaken the very foundations of Britain's ancient monarchy.

Harry also confessed to some trepidation at taking the momentous step of resigning from daily duties and charting a new life abroad.

He said he had a few ways



been ready lose the public money that supported his lavish lifestyle but admitted it pained him to have to give up the military titles and patronages he was awarded after serving two tours in Afghanistan with the British Army.

He read from prepared remarks and appeared tense as he sought understanding from a nation that has had a soft spot for him since his childhood -- and which now now appeared confused by his decision to leave his royal life behind.

"We are taking a leap of faith -- thank you for giving me the courage to take this next step," he said.

The "Megxit" crisis began on January 8 when the couple's plans to seek a "progressive new role" in North America were announced without Queen Elizabeth II's royal assent.

"I know I haven't always gotten it right, but as far as this goes, there really was no other option," Harry said.

'Absolutely unprecedented'

The couple lost their right to be called "his and her royal highness" (HRH) -- much as Harry's late mother Princess Diana did when she divorced Prince Charles in another family drama that upset the Queen in 1996.

They further agreed to repay \$3.1 million of taxpayer's money spent on renovating their Frogmore Cottage home near Windsor Castle.

"No royal has ever paid back money," former royal press secretary Dickie Arbiter wrote in The Sun on Sunday.

"It is absolutely unprecedented."

But Arbiter said it was the loss of the HRH "royal highness" abbreviation that really made Palace history.

"Even when Edward VIII abdicated (in 1936) he dropped from being His Majesty The King to HRH the Duke of Windsor," he said.

'Lost souls'

Few know what Meghan -- a global star with a huge social media following and A-list celebrity friends such as Oprah Winfrey and the Obamas -- thinks of the British brouhaha about ancient acronyms.

The 38-year-old frankly ad-



mitted on UK television in October that she "really tried to adopt this British sensibility of a stiff upper lip."

But she admitted sadly: "That's not the point of life."

Harry has also talked about still being haunted by his mother's death in a 1997 car crash involving a chasing pack of paparazzi.

He and Meghan filed a series of lawsuits against UK media outlets in October -- a step that outraged the tabloids and renewed debates about the royals' role in public life.

One of these involved a UK paper that published fragments of a private letter Meghan had sent her estranged father Thomas Markle after her Windsor wedding to Harry in May 2018.

Thomas told Britain's Channel 5 over the weekend that he

found Meghan's decision to quit the royals "embarrassing".

"I think both of them are turning into lost souls," her father said.

'The Queen isn't sure'

The expensive lawsuits and the possibility that they might have to start paying for their top-notch security detail raise the immediate question of how they will make ends meet.

The Daily Telegraph reported on Monday that Prince Charles would probably continue paying his son some money from his private income for the next year.

Harry has undisclosed millions of pounds in savings and Meghan has enjoyed a lucrative acting career. She is now also thinking of starting her own line of health and "wellness" products.

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The Sunday Times asked a royal aide if Harry and Meghan will be able to cash in on the "Sussex Royal" brand they trademarked in December.

"That is still one of the areas being worked through," the royal aide told the paper.

"That translates as: 'The Queen isn't at all sure,'" The Sunday Times wrote.

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The British royal line of succession

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products.

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PRINCE HARRY



Malta minister quits over husband's links to murder 'mastermind'

Valletta

Maltese minister Justyne Caruana resigned Monday after her husband, a former investigator into the murder of a prominent journalist, was revealed to have holidayed with the alleged mastermind behind the killing.

Caruana -- who was appointed to the government's brand-new cabinet just last week -- said in her resignation letter that she was quitting despite being "totally extraneous" to the affair, the prime minister's office said in a statement.

Her exit came after the Times of Malta said Sunday her husband, Silvio Valletta, travelled to a football match in Britain with



Maltese tycoon Yorgen Fenech (C) has been charged as an accomplice in the murder

tycoon Yorgen Fenech, who has been charged with complicity in the murder of Daphne Caruana Galizia.

Caruana had sworn in on

Wednesday as minister for the island of Gozo under Malta's new leader Robert Abela.

She had held the same post under his predecessor, Joseph

Muscat, who resigned over allegations he hampered the murder probe.

Valletta was deputy police commissioner at the time of blogger Caruana Galizia's 2017 car bomb murder. She had exposed high level corruption in the island state.

He suspended himself from the case in June 2018 after a court upheld a claim by the slain reporter's family that there was a conflict of interest, because of the investigator's ties to a minister in a government Caruana Galizia had frequented targeted.

That ruling was appealed by the attorney general, but upheld by the country's highest court in October 2018.



Three men are on trial for allegedly detonating the bomb that killed the 53-year-old mother of three

Valletta travelled to watch a football match at Chelsea FC's Stamford Bridge Stadium in September 2018, after suspending himself from the case but before the constitutional court's

decision.

A video showing him in Fenech's Rolls Royce was found on the businessman's phone.

Fenech was charged as an accomplice in the murder after being detained trying to leave the country on his yacht.

His arrest in November sparked the resignation of Muscat's chief of staff and the tourism minister, before claiming Muscat's scalp as well.

Three men are on trial for allegedly detonating the bomb that killed the 53-year-old mother of three.

Valletta on Sunday admitted the holiday with Fenech, but said it only came once he had stepped aside from the case.