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INDONESIA: RADICAL CLERIC TO ESCAPE BALI CHARGES

The police dropped plans to charge Abu Bakar Bashir, the radical cleric Washington accuses of being a terror mastermind in Southeast Asia, in the 2002 Bali bombings, but he will remain in jail. He will be charged with other crimes, including leading the militant Islamic organization Jemaah Islamiyah, and he is the prime suspect in the 2002 car bomb attack at the Marriott Hotel in Jakarta, said the chief of detectives, Suyitno Landung. The announcement followed a ruling last week by the Constitutional Court, which barred the retroactive use of an antiterror law rushed through Parliament after the Bali bombings. The explosions killed 202 people, mostly foreign tourists. Mr. Bashir, 65, was arrested under the antiterror law. He denies any involvement in terrorism, and prosecutors have failed to make terror and treason charges stick. He was sentenced to three years in prison last September for immigration violations, and that sentence was later cut in half on appeal.(AP)

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