SAUDI ARABIAN billionaire Prince Alwaleed bin Talal, one of the kingdom’s top international businessmen, was released from detention Saturday, more than two months after he was taken into custody in a sweeping crackdown on corruption.

His release came after he said in an interview at Riyadh’s Ritz-Carlton hotel that he expected to be cleared of any wrongdoing and be freed within days.

The senior Saudi official said Prince Alwaleed was freed after he reached a financial settlement with the attorney general.

“The attorney general has approved this morning the settlement that was reached with Prince Alwaleed bin Talal, and the prince returned home at 11 a.m.,” the official said, without giving details of the terms.

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SAUDI ARABIA’s prince, who is in his early 60s, described his confinement as a “misunderstanding” and said he supported reform efforts by Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman.

“There are no charges. There are just some discussions between me and the government,” he said.

Prince Alwaleed had been confined at the Ritz-Carlton since November, along with dozens of other senior officials and businessmen, part of the crown prince’s plan to reform oil superpower Saudi Arabia and consolidate his position.

When asked if the attorney general was convinced of Prince Alwaleed’s innocence, the senior Saudi official said:

“I will not negate or confirm what he says. Generally this falls within the scope of the lawyer’s duty and the investigation is continuing.”

He said there was a lot of debris and no sign of any other survivors.

The shooting broke out at 1:30 a.m. when a group of armed men in three vehicles arrived at the night club in Fortaleza’s Cajuacais neighborhood.

It is a brutal scene, a massacre. Something you never see in Ceara,” a police officer, who asked to remain anonymous, told news website O Povo.

Local media reported that the shootout was a clash between members of two rival drug trafficking groups.

Officials however remained tight lipped. “The investigation is being carried out by Costa said.

On Jan. 7, a war between drug gangs already claimed four lives in the suburbs of Fortaleza.

Last year there was a record 5,114 murders in the state of Ceara, a 50 percent rise from 2016. (SD-Agencies)

Police raid Russian opposition leader’s HQ

RUSSIA police have raided the Moscow offices of opposition leader Alexei Navalny as demonstrations calling for a boycott of Russia’s presidential election take place across the country.

A video stream yesterday morning from Navalny’s offices showed police entering the premises.

One broadcaster on the stream said police apparatus were using a grinder to try to get access to the broadcast studio.

Navalny, who has been barred from Russia’s March 18 presidential election, called for nationwide protests yesterday.

Sizeable gatherings have been reported yesterday in the Far East and Siberia, including Yakutsk, where thousands were for Moscow and St. Petersburg in the afternoon. (SD-Agencies)

US-Iraqi joint force kills 8 by mistake

EIGHT people were killed mistakenly and 10 wounded Saturday after a joint US-Iraqi force clashed with local police and paramilitary tribal fighters in a raid in southwest Anbar, a provincial security source said.

The incident took place after a joint force and a U.S. and Iraqi joint force raided the house of a terrorist suspect in the town of Habbaniya in northwest of the Iraqi capital Baghdad, Captain Mohammed al-Dulaimi from the provincial police told Xinhua.

The local police and paramilitary tribal fighters were surprised by the raid and came to the site to identify the troops, but a clash erupted between the two sides and U.S. helicopter gunships pounded the local police and the tribal fighters, Dulaimi said.

A U.S. helicopter also bombard a convoy of Colonel Salam al-Obedi, head of the town’s police, while his convoy approached the battlefield. Some police officers including himself, were killed in the clash, Dulaimi added.

The incident came after the Iraqi security forces and allied Hashd Shabi units fought fierce battles with Islamic State (IS) militants during the past years and reclaimed key cities and towns from the extremist group.