

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL PUBLIC STATEMENT

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Iraq: Amnesty International condemns latest killings of civilians

Amnesty International strongly condemns today's killings of at least 55 civilians in suicide bomb and other attacks which also left scores injured.

Four coordinated bomb attacks in several of Baghdad's pre-dominantly Shi'a districts in the morning of 5 January left at least 25 people dead and more than 69 wounded. In the first attack, in Sadr City, a bomb planted on a parked motorbike and another roadside bomb killed at least 10 people and left at least 37 injured. Two car bombs were detonated in al-Kadhimiya neighbourhood, in northwest Baghdad, killing at least 15 people and wounding more than 32 others.

In another attack, a suicide bomber targeting Shi'a pilgrims killed at least 30 people and injured more than 70 at a police checkpoint in west of al-Nassirya, southern Iraq. The pilgrims were walking to the Shi'a Holy city of Karbala.

No one has claimed responsibility for any of the attacks. Such attacks have increased in the last few weeks. On 22 December several coordinated bomb attacks, in mostly Shi'a districts of Baghdad, left at least 72 people dead and scores injured.

Deliberate attacks on civilians show a complete disregard for the right to life and are absolutely prohibited under international law. Such attacks can never be justified. Amnesty International calls for a prompt, thorough and impartial investigation into the attacks. Those found responsible must be brought to justice in proceedings that meet international standards of fairness, and without the imposition of the death penalty.

Violence has increased considerably since the last US soldiers left Iraq on 20 December 2011. The departure of US troops from Iraq was stipulated for by the security agreement signed by the two countries in November 2008.

These attacks were carried out against the backdrop of a political crisis in the country. The Shi'a-dominated government of Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki issued on 19 December 2011 an arrest warrant for the Iraqi Sunni Vice-President Tariq al-Hashemi on terrorism-related charges. The Prime Minister also asked the Iraqi parliament to have Saleh al-Mutlaq, his Sunni deputy, removed from his post. These two measures have sparked a political crisis as members of the Sunni-dominated al-'Iraqiya bloc have boycotted Iraq's cabinet and parliament sessions in recent days.

Public Document

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