

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

Public Statement

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Iraq: Amnesty International strongly condemns the latest suicide bomb attack

Amnesty International condemns in the strongest possible terms the deliberate killing of at least 114 civilians, including women and children, in Iraq today. A suicide bomber drew scores of people to his van with promises of work and then detonated a bomb in al-'Uruba Square in al-Kadhimiya, a predominantly Shi'a district of Baghdad. In addition to the heavy death toll, at least 156 people were wounded.

"This and other attacks on civilians are part of an escalating, systematic pattern of gross abuses targetting the civilian population of Iraq and they constitute nothing less than crimes against humanity," said Amnesty International.

"These attacks must be stopped immediately and those responsible must be brought to justice."

During the past two years thousands of Iraqi civilians have been killed and thousands more injured in suicide and other attacks by armed groups opposed to the presence of foreign troops and to the Iraqi interim government. In recent months, armed groups have been deliberately targeting civilians in predominantly Shi'a districts of Baghdad and elsewhere, fuelling revenge killings of Sunni Arabs by Shi'a militia groups and fears of increasingly sectarian conflict.

Amnesty International has on numerous occasions called on armed and other groups to desist from targeting civilians, as required by international humanitarian law. In July 2005 Amnesty International issued a report detailing human rights abuses by armed groups in Iraq (see *Iraq: In cold blood -- Abuses by armed groups*, AI Index: MDE 14/009/2005) <http://web.amnesty.org/library/Index/ENGMDE140092005?open&of=ENG-IRQ>