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Iraq: Deadly wave of bombings ahead of Islamic New Year

A series of bomb attacks across Iraq on Wednesday have reportedly killed at least 14 people on the eve of the Islamic New Year.

The deadliest attack took place in the northern city of Kirkuk, where, according to media reports, four bombs planted in parked cars went off simultaneously, killing at least nine people and wounding scores more.

Meanwhile in the mainly Shi'a southern city of Hilla, a car bomb reportedly exploded near a school and a crowded market, leaving at least four people dead, among them schoolchildren.

Explosions were also reported in the capital, Baghdad, and in the town of Balad Ruz, in the province of Diyala. The attacks appear to have targeted both Iraqi civilians and members of the security forces.

“Deliberate attacks on civilians can never be justified. Such attacks show utter contempt for humanity and must be roundly condemned,” said Philip Luther, Amnesty International’s director for the Middle East and North Africa.

“We urge the Iraqi authorities to conduct a prompt, thorough and impartial investigation. Those suspected of being behind the attacks must be brought to justice in proceedings that meet international standards of fairness, and without the imposition of the death penalty.”

No one has so far claimed responsibility for today’s attacks.