

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

Public Statement

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Iraq: Amnesty International strongly condemns recent spate of civilian killings

Amnesty International strongly condemns recent attacks by armed groups which claimed the lives of dozens of civilians and injured many others.

On 22 June 2009 three university students were killed in al-Sadr city in Baghdad and 12 others were injured when a roadside bomb hit their minibus. During the same day, three civilians, including a woman and her child, were killed and 30 others injured when a bomb, allegedly targeting a police patrol, exploded near a market in al-Sha'ab district of Baghdad. Also, five people were killed and at least 20 wounded in a car bomb explosion in Karrada, Baghdad. Another seven people were killed and at least 16 injured as result of a car bomb blast which apparently targeted government offices in Abu-Ghraib, west of Baghdad.

On 20 June 2009 at least 72 people were killed and more than 200 others were injured in a truck bombing in Taza Kharmatu, a predominantly Shi'a Turkoman town near the northern city of Kirkuk. The attack is said to be the worst one in Iraq in nearly 16 months.

"Deliberate attacks on civilians can never be justified. They must cease immediately and those responsible must be brought to justice," said Amnesty International.

No armed group has claimed responsibility for any of the attacks, but the Iraqi government has attributed some of them, including the devastating bomb attack near Kirkuk, on al-Qa'ida in Iraq.

These latest attacks come ahead of the 30 June deadline for the planned pullout of US troops from Iraq's cities and towns as stipulated for by the Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA), a security agreement signed between Iraq and the US at the end of 2008 and which entered into force in January this year.

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