

At least 68 killed in Iraq day after curfew lifted

Residents worry country is on edge of civil war

By STEVEN R. HURST
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

BAGHDAD, Iraq Sunnis and Shiites traded bombings and mortar fire against mainly religious targets in Baghdad, Iraq, well into the night Tuesday, killing at least 68 people a day after authorities lifted a curfew that had briefly calmed a series of sectarian reprisal attacks.

At least six of Tuesday's attacks hit clearly religious targets, concluding with a car bombing after sundown at the Shiite Abdel Hadi Chalabi mosque in the Hurriyah neighborhood that killed 23 and wounded 55. A separate suicide bombing killed 23 people at an east Baghdad gas station, where people had lined up to buy kerosene.

In addition to those known to have been killed Tuesday, police found nine more bullet-riddled bodies, including a Sunni Muslim tribal sheik, off a road southeast of Baghdad. It was unclear when they died.



AP PHOTO

Iraqi army soldiers guard the site of a car bomb explosion in Baghdad, Iraq, on Tuesday. Four explosions rocked the capital Tuesday morning, killing at least 36 people and injuring scores more, police said.

The surge of violence deepened the trauma of residents already shaken by fears the country was teetering on the brink of sectarian civil war, threatened talks among Iraqi politicians struggling to form a government and raised questions about U.S. plans to begin drawing down troop strength this summer.

Iraq began to tilt seriously toward outright civil war after the Feb. 22 bombing of the important Shiite Askariya shrine

in the mainly Sunni city of Samarra, 60 miles north of Baghdad.

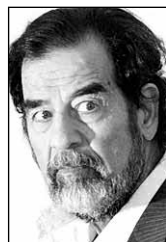
President Bush decried the latest surge in sectarian violence Tuesday and said that for Iraqis the choice is chaos or unity.

In congressional testimony, National Intelligence Director John Negroponte said a civil war in Iraq could lead to a broader conflict in the Middle East, pitting the region's Sunni and Shiite powers against one another.

Documents link Saddam, executions

By BASEEM MROUE
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

BAGHDAD, Iraq Prosecutors presented documents Tuesday they said show Saddam Hussein approved executions of more than 140 Shiites in the 1980s, the most direct evidence yet against the former Iraqi leader in his four-month trial. Among those sentenced to hang was an 11-year-old boy.



HUSSEIN

The most significant document featured a signature said to be Saddam's on a court list of peo-

ple to be executed, though it was not clear he was aware of their ages. The list on that particular document only had names.

About 50 of those sentenced died during interrogation before they could go to the gallows. One man, his brother and two sons were executed by mistake, and Saddam reportedly ordered them declared martyrs to cover up the error.

When it was discovered the 11-year-old and nine other juveniles were not executed but were still in prison years later, they were ordered killed and their bodies buried in secret. It was approved with a signature the prosecution said was of the intelligence agency chief at the time, Barzan Ibrahim, who is Saddam's half brother and a co-defendant in the trial.

Saddam, Ibrahim and six other members of the former regime are on trial for torture, imprisonment and the killings of about 148 Shiites in a crackdown launched after a 1982 attempt to assassinate the former Iraqi leader in the town of Dujail. They face death by hanging if convicted.

Tuesday's session was one of the most orderly since the trial began in October. The defense team gave up on a boycott of the tribunal it began last month and attended the session, though chief judge Raouf Abdel-Rahman rejected their demand that he and chief prosecutor Jaafar al-Moussawi step down.

After the two-hour session, Abdel-Rahman adjourned until today.

BRIEFS

NATION/WORLD

WASHINGTON

Bush says he is still supportive of ports deal

President Bush said Tuesday he remains supportive of a United Arab Emirates-based company's takeover of some U.S. port operations, even though a new, more intensive investigation of the deal's potential security risks has yet to begin.



BUSH

Bush is the final arbiter of that second review. Yet, he said after an Oval Office meeting with Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi that "my position hasn't changed" on support for transferring control of management of some major U.S. port facilities from a British company to Dubai-owned DP World.

Hoping to quell bipartisan rebellion and prevent a potentially embarrassing clash over legislation, the Bush administration agreed Sunday to DP World's request for a 45-day investigation of the deal's potential security risks.

The investigation will result in a report submitted to the president, who will have 15 days to decide whether to approve it.

RIYADH, Saudi Arabia

Saudis: Al-Qaida leader, two others slain in raids

The leader of al-Qaida in Saudi Arabia and two men who helped attack the world's largest oil-processing complex on Friday were among five militants killed during

police raids in the capital, authorities said Tuesday.

Fahd Faraaj al-Juwair, the kingdom's most-wanted terror suspect, and two militants who attacked the Abqaiq facility, died in a Monday shootout, the Interior Ministry said in a statement. Two other militants also were killed.

Saudi authorities said al-Juwair and slain militants Ibrahim Abdullah Ibrahim al-Mutair and Abdullah Muhia Shlash al-Sulaiti al-Shamari were on the kingdom's list of most-wanted terrorists issued in June.

The fourth slain militant was identified as Saudi Jaffal Rafea al-Shamari, whose identity has not previously been made public.

KABUL, Afghanistan

Inmate killed as fighting resumes at Afghan prison

A spasm of violence broke a fragile truce at Kabul's main prison Tuesday as rioting inmates tried to push down a gate and police fired on them, killing one and wounding three, officials said.

At least five inmates have been killed and 41 wounded since the uprising began late Saturday. Police blame some 350 Taliban and al-Qaida detainees for inciting the riot.

The two sides agreed to a truce late Monday, but the deal collapsed 24 hours later over a demand by the authorities that the inmates move to another wing of the lockup, said Abdul Halik, a police commander in the prison.

The inmates refused, saying conditions in the new block were no better than the current one. They then tried to break down a gate leading into a courtyard where hundreds of police and soldiers have taken up positions, he said.



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