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Separate Baghdad Bomb Attacks Kill 19

Iraq's Interior Ministry spokesman, Major-General Abdul Karim Khalaf, was quoted by Reuters news service, regarding the incident: "The security forces have strengthened procedures due to the explosions targeting several districts in Baghdad."

Less than an hour later, five people were killed and 12 others were wounded when a female bomber wearing an explosives vest blew herself up outside Baghdad's Green Zone, a district containing Iraq's parliament, several government offices, and some foreign embassies. The victims had been lined up waiting to pass through a corridor of security checkpoints. A Reuters reporter observed police hosing down blood remaining on the streets after the bombing, and reported that "pieces of flesh spattered the concrete blast walls protecting the compound."

BBC correspondent Andrew North, based in Baghdad, reported that incidents involving female suicide bombers have become more common and the attackers are often the relatives of insurgents who have been killed by U.S. or Iraqi forces.

An official from the Iraqi intelligence services told AFP news service that the blast targeted the entrance to a corridor of checkpoints leading to their headquarters. "Two women employees of the intelligence services were killed and six guards were wounded in the attack this morning. This attack targeted our checkpoint," said the official, adding that one of the women was pregnant.

A third attack in east Baghdad killed one person and wounded five others, as a roadside bomb exploded. Three of the wounded were police officers, the apparent targets of the attack.

The attacks came only three days after thousands of people gathered in Baghdad's Firdous Square to protest against a pact letting U.S. forces stay in Iraq until 2011. Iraq's parliament is currently debating passage of the agreement.

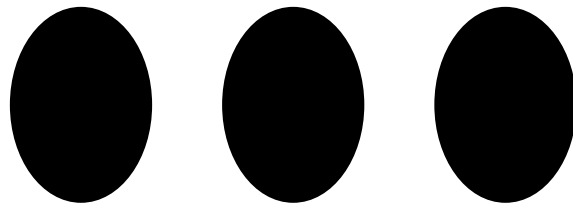


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