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Iraq: 84 killed, 157 wounded in attacks

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January 5, 2012

Despite serious attempts to [prevent](#) attacks against Shi'ite pilgrims traveling in Iraq, bombers were still able to reach them. The worst violence took place south of Baghdad, but the capital also saw great loss of life. Overall, at least **84 people were killed and 157 more were wounded** in the attacks. Although most, if not all, were Iraqis, some of the casualties could have been foreign visitors.

With Arba'een next week, millions of pilgrims from around the world are traveling to Karbala for observances. The holy day marks the end of the 40-day mourning period for Imam Hussein. He was a grandson of the Prophet Muhammad and was killed during the Battle of Karbala in 680 A.D. Many of the pilgrims plan to walk part of the way, but others are packed in to buses for the journey, making many of them easy targets.

Because Shi'ites, pilgrims and otherwise, were today's targets, the fear of a new sectarian war is palpable among Iraqis. It is the [second dramatic series of attacks](#) against Shi'ites since Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki has been on a [campaign](#) to shut Sunnis out of political offices. Earlier in December, Shi'ite were also targets during [Ashuraa observances](#). That date marked the beginning of the current mourning period.

At least [48 people were killed and more than 80 were wounded](#) at an [army checkpoint](#) just outside **Nasariya** in Batha'a, where busloads of pilgrims were stopped.. The death toll is expected to rise.

In **Baghdad**, two car bombs struck the Shi'ite neighborhood of *Kadhimiya* where there is a shrine that is popular with pilgrims; at least **16 were killed and 36 more were wounded**, mostly pilgrims. One of the bombs was apparently **targeting** the Shi'ite Endowment Center.

A triple bombing in **Sadr City** **killed 13 people and wounded at least 32 more**. The first blast, from a motorcycle bomb, targeted day laborers. The next two explosions occurred nearby and were probably targeting first responders. Two more bombs were **defused**. Although no pilgrims were involved, Sadr City is a large Shi'ite slum attached to Baghdad. It is the home to many followers of Cleric Moqtada al-Sadr.

In **Mosul**, a bomb **killed a child and wounded five women**. Gunmen **killed a civilian and wounded his brother**.

One person was killed and three more were wounded in a roadside bombing in **Falluja**.

Security forces in **Rabeaa** **killed a Saudi al-Qaeda leader and two of his guards**. The nationalities of his guards were not released.

Gunmen **killed a civilian** in **Jurf al-Sakhar**.