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81 Iraqis Killed As Maliki Targets Next Political Victim

By Margaret Griffis

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A coordinated series of bombings shattered the peace in Baghdad, shortly after Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki [ratcheted up](#) tensions between his government and Sunni politicians. Despite international calls for prudence, Maliki is now targeting another senior Sunni politician for harassment. At least **86 Iraqis were killed and 186 more wounded** in today's carnage.

A [series](#) of at least four car bombs, ten roadside bombs, and a rocket attack shook **Baghdad**, [killing at least 74 people and wounding over 180 more](#). According to the Interior Ministry, the attacks left at least [63 dead and over 194 injured](#). Large-scale attacks like these often spark conflicting figures. The head of the Iraqiya party, Ayad Allawi, [said](#) the Baghdad attacks were the direct result of a weak security system that has been tasked to disrupt the political system instead of chasing real terrorists.

The alternate task that Allawi is referring to is the harassment of Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki's Sunni rivals. The premier now [accuses](#) Finance Minister **Rafi al-Issawi** of supporting political assassinations in Falluja. He is the third major Sunni politician to be targeted by Maliki this week, after Vice President [Tareq al-Hashemi](#) and Deputy Prime Minister [Saleh al-Mutlaq](#). Issawi was also among Hashemi's group that was briefly [delayed](#) by security forces at Baghdad airport before Hashemi fled to Iraqi Kurdistan.

Yesterday, the premier had [warned](#) other dissenting politicians that he would reveal dossiers implicating them in terrorist acts, and he appears to be fulfilling that promise with the Issawi revelations. Those files would likely come from the Integrity Commission, the agency charged

with rooting out corruption. The commission, however, was basically **taken over** by Maliki earlier this year. The ousted head of the commission alleged that Maliki was using the commission to fabricate false dossiers against political rivals. Not coincidentally, the most significant of today's attacks targeted the offices of this commission. The building was **severely damaged**.

The political turmoil not only comes on the heels of the U.S. withdrawal of troops but also a series of requests for semi-autonomy from various provinces. It was, perhaps, last week's **declaration** by Diyala province that **triggered** the Maliki government's apparent vendetta against Sunnis. Today, the Turkmen minority in Kirkuk again **demanding** region status for their area.

Among the **Baghdad** districts bombed **were** Allawi, Karrada, Bab al-Muadham Shabb, Shula, Adhamiya, Bayaa, Amil, Amin, Doura, Abu Dsheer, Yarmouk, Harthiya and Ghazaliya. Many of the bombs **struck** Shi'ite neighborhoods, pointing the finger at Sunni insurgents. Several more bombs were **defused**.

At least 25 people were **killed** and 62 more were injured during just one attack, where a suicide bomber used an **ambulance** to clear a security checkpoint and reach the offices of the Integrity Commission in *Karrada*. Also, Baghdad Operations Command **banned** the press from taking **pictures** of the damaged building. Elsewhere, sixteen construction workers were **killed** in Allawi. Another device, this one in Waziriya, **targeted** the motorcade of a central bank official.

In **Baquba**, gunmen **killed five members** of a family in which the father and son were Sahwa militiamen. A **bodyguard was killed** in a separate shooting.

The **body of a blindfolded young man** was discovered in **Kirkuk**.

Gunmen severely **wounded a Sahwa member** in **Hilla**.

Rockets **fell** on **Mosul** airport. Gunmen **killed a policeman**. A bomb **killed two civilians and wounded three others**. **Two soldiers were gunned down** at a checkpoint