

# Bomb Attacks Leave Scores Dead in, Around Iraqi Capital

BAGHDAD (Dispatches) – Police and medical officials say at least 40 people have been killed and dozens others injured when bomb explosions struck areas in and around Iraq’s capital, Baghdad.

The deadliest of Tuesday’s attacks took place in Baghdad’s southeastern neighborhood of Jisr Diyala, in which at least 25 people were killed and 50 others wounded when two bombs went off minutes apart from each other.

Police and hospital officials said several students, who had just come out of a nearby school after class, were among those injured.

Moreover, security officials speaking on condition of anonymity, said three civilians lost their lives and eight others sustained injuries when a bomb exploded near a restaurant in Baghdad’s northwestern district of Shula on Tuesday.

In Baghdad’s northern Shaab neighborhood, a bomb blast killed one civilian and wounded five, the sources said.

A similar bomb attack on a commercial street in the town of Youssifiyah, located 20 kilometers (12 miles) south of the Iraqi



An Iraqi woman walks past a pool of blood following a bomb attack in the district of Kadhimiyah, north Baghdad.

capital, also killed three civilians and wounded nine others.

Meanwhile, a police officer and a civilian were killed and five others wounded when an explosion targeted a police patrol in the city of Madain, located 32 kilometers (20 miles) southeast of Baghdad.

Two more civilians were killed and seven others wounded after a bomb blast struck an outdoor market in the city of Latifiyah, situated about 30 kilometers (20 miles) south of Baghdad.

In a separate incident, an explosive-laden car detonated in the

town of Mishada, located 30 kilometers (20 miles) north of Baghdad, killing at least four civilians and wounding 12 others.

No group has claimed responsibility for the acts of violence, but such incidents are often attributed to ISIL Takfiri terrorists.

## Two Turkish Air Force Jets Crash Killing 4

ANKARA (AFP) – Two Turkish Air Force jets have crashed in the Eastern Anatolia region due to unknown reasons, killing four people, the Interior Ministry says.

“Unfortunately, four were martyred. We have reached the wreckage of the two planes,” AFP quoted Interior Minister Ekan Ala as saying on Tuesday.

Each of the RF-4E jets was carrying a pilot and a co-pilot as they crashed late Tuesday evening near the city of Malatya, in the province of the same name.

According to a statement released by Turkey’s Chief of General Staff Necdet Özel, both jets took off from Malatya Erhaç 7th Air Base at 6:07 p.m. local time (1607 GMT) and disappeared from radar screens on 7:05 p.m. (1705 GMT).

“The debris of our two planes was found at 8:45 p.m. (1845 GMT) and our four hero pilots were martyred,” the statement said.

The Turkish army said the planes crashed due to an accident but refrained from giving further information over the cause of the incident or how the two jets apparently crashed simultaneously.

## UK Police: Missing Girls Entered Syria

LONDON (Press TV) – UK police say three missing London schoolgirls who left Britain to join the ISIL terrorists have crossed into Syria through Turkish border.

The Metropolitan Police said the officers have “reason to believe” the three teenagers from Bethnal Green Academy in east London, have joined the Takfiri terrorists in Syria.

Shamima Begum, 15, Kadiza Sultana, 16, and Amira Abase, 15, boarded a flight from London Gatwick airport to Turkey last Tuesday.

UK police have been under fire

for delay in informing the Turkish authorities about the teenagers travel.

Some reports suggest that Scotland Yard waited three days before telling the Turkish authorities that the teenagers had flown to Istanbul.

Turkey’s Deputy Prime Minister Bulent Arinc said that the British authorities notified Ankara about the missing schoolgirls on Friday.

Turkish officials would have taken “necessary measures” had they known earlier, said Arinc, arguing that the UK would be partly responsible for the girls’ fate.

## Second Trial Held for Bahrain’s Sheikh Salman

MANAMA (Press TV) – Bahrain’s senior Shia opposition leader Sheikh Ali Salman, has gone on trial for a second time on charges of allegedly plotting against the Bahraini regime.

The trial session of the opposition leader was held on Wednesday and was adjourned to March. Salman will remain in custody till then.

Salman, who is the leader of the al-Wafaq National Islamic Society in Bahrain, was arrested on December 28 after the government in Manama accused him of seeking regime change and collaborating with foreign powers, charges that Salman and his party have vehemently denied.

Salman is also accused of inciting hatred and disobedience in his public statements.

Salman’s arrest has triggered massive condemnation inside and outside Bahrain, with leaders, governments and international organizations across the world calling for his immediate release. The move has also sparked almost daily protests in the Persian Gulf kingdom, with many people warning the government about the dire consequences of Salman’s prolonged detention.

Human Rights Watch (HRW) urged Western governments on

January 18 to break their silence on Bahrain’s continued detention of opposition figures.

Joe Stork, who serves as the HRW’s deputy director for the Middle East and North Africa, described the Al Khalifa regime a “serial offender” in prosecuting the “peaceful critics,” noting that Salman’s arrest was a “calculated move” to give the signal to the world that the regime is fundamentally opposed to political reconciliation and people’s rights for freedom and democracy.

Bahrain has arrested tens of activists and opposition figures over the past months.

Stork called on Manama to immediately release Salman as the government has “failed” to provide evidence that he has collaborated with foreign elements in an attempt to change the regime.

Bahrain, a close ally of the United States in the region, has been witnessing almost daily protests against the Al Khalifa dynasty since early 2011. Bahraini forces have killed nearly 90 activists over the past three years while hundreds of protesters as well as notable opposition figures continue to remain under arrest in the regime’s notorious prisons.

## IRGC...

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The IRGC is responsible for naval forces in the Persian Gulf, mainly composed of hundreds of speedboats equipped with various types of short- and medium-range missiles as well as small submarines.

Iran says its military doctrine is based entirely on deterrence.

The exercises began two days after French aircraft carrier Charles de Gaulle launched operations in the Persian Gulf. The ship will be stationed off Saudi Arabia for about eight weeks, working alongside the American aircraft carrier USS Carl Vinson.

The U.S. Fifth Fleet is stationed in Bahrain, and Qatar hosts the U.S. military command for the Middle East and Central Asia.

A nuclear-powered attack submarine, a French anti-aircraft frigate and a British anti-submarine frigate are also in the area.

Near the venue of the drills, a banner put on a platform read, “If the Americans are ready to be buried at the bottom of the waters of the Persian Gulf, let’s get started,” a quote from Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei.

Some 30% of all seaborne traded oil flows through Hormuz, according to the U.S. Energy Information Administration, and U.S. officials have expressed concern in the past that Iran could disrupt the oil flow or even attack American warships patrolling the waters of the Persian Gulf.

Iran, whose entire southern border runs along the Persian Gulf and the adjacent Gulf of Oman, has often said it could block Hormuz, which connects the two waters, if Tehran came under military attack over its nuclear program.

## Kerry’s...

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But Iran and the United States have been at odds over how many years the agreement should last. And the United States, its negotiating partners and Iran have been considering an approach that would ease the restrictions on Iran’s nuclear program during the later years of the accord.

In a briefing for reporters on Monday, a senior Obama administration official said that the United States would insist that Iran be constrained from having the ability to quickly break out of an accord for “at least a double-digit number of years”. The official, who could not be identified under the Obama administration’s protocol for briefing reporters, declined to be more specific.

In his testimony to the Foreign Relations Committee, Kerry insisted that reports that the United States would settle for an agreement that maintained the provision constraining breakout time for only 10 years were not accurate. But, he added, “I’m not going to go into the details of where we are and what we’re doing.”

“We’re looking for a deal that will prove over the long term that each pathway to a bomb is closed off,” Kerry said.

## Suspected Zionist Settlers Torch Palestinian Mosque



Zionist Settlers Attack a Palestinian Mosque in the West Bank

WEST BANK (Dispatches) – Suspected Zionist settlers have set fire to a Palestinian mosque in a village in the occupied West Bank and left Hebrew graffiti on its walls.

The mosque, in the village of

Jabaa near the city of Bethlehem, was torched early on Wednesday and its walls and carpeted floor suffered damage, said Jibreen al-Bakri, Bethlehem’s governor.

Residents detected the fire and

were able to distinguish it before its spread to the rest of the mosque, the Palestinian news agency Wafa reported.

The Hebrew graffiti on the walls, shown by an Israeli TV network,

read, “We want the redemption of Zion” and “revenge” alongside a Jewish Star of David.

The settlers, mostly armed, regularly attack Palestinian villages and farms and set fire to their mosques, olive groves and other properties in the West Bank under the so-called “price tag” policy. However, Tel Aviv rarely detains the assailants.

Price tag attacks are acts of vandalism and violence against Palestinians and their property as well as Islamic holy sites by Zionist settlers.

In mid-October last year, Israeli settlers set ablaze a part of the Abu Baker al-Saddiq Mosque, which is located in the village of Aqraba in the West Bank, in an arson attack.

In a similar move in January 2014, Zionist settlers attacked a Palestinian mosque in the north of the occupied West Bank, torching a part of it. The main gate and some carpets of the mosque, which is in Deir Istiya village, were damaged in the incident.