

Chronology of Events in Iraq, November 2003*

November 1

Two mortar bombs land on school in Baqubah. (Agence France Presse / AFP)

Two mortar bombs landed and one exploded overnight in a school in Baqubah, near a US army base, the school principal said. There was only the guard at school, who was not hurt.

Judicial review committee dismisses 66 judges. (Iraqi Patriotic Union of Kurdistan newspaper *Al-Ittihad*)

Following the formation of the Judicial Review Committee, the Committee decided to dismiss 66 judges who were members of special courts during the era of the former regime. A source at the Ministry of Justice said the committee was investigating all judges in order to dismiss the bad elements who played an adverse role during the era of the ousted regime.

November 2

Iraqi Da'wah Party denies killing Sunnis; warns against sectarianism. (Iraqi Islamic Da'wah Party newspaper *Al-Da'wah*)

Abd al-Musawi, member of the organizational bureau of the Islamic Da'wah Party - Iraq branch, has made a statement reacting to the tendentious charges made against the Islamic Da'wah Party. He said criticised the parties which distributed leaflets accusing the Islamic Da'wah Party of being responsible for the assassination of some Islamic personalities following the Sunni faith. He said: "We warn our dear people with all their ethnicities and creeds against falling into the trap of sectarian strife, which the evil ones and the followers of the defunct regime are seeking, so as to weaken our people, pounce on them and take them back to the era of terror and tyranny. Therefore, we stress that aggression is not one of our traits and that committing crimes has nothing to do with our religion. The Al-Da'wah Party, which has offered thousands of martyrs to achieve happiness for our honourable Iraqi people, cannot commit any criminal act against any member of our distressed people. Our party members are innocent of all that is wrongly and unfairly attributed to them."

* *Disclaimer: Reports contained in this document are selected from publicly available resources and edited by country experts. The information provided here is not, and does not purport to be, either exhaustive with regard to conditions in the country of origin surveyed, or conclusive as to the merits of any particular claim. Further information may be obtained from BO Ankara.*

November 3

Kurdish force arrests five Ansar al-Islam suspects said planning attacks. (Egyptian news agency MENA)

The security forces of Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) arrested five persons they said belong to the Ansar al-Islam (SIK) organization while planning operations in northern Iraq cities. An official Kurdish source said the five persons detained intended to wage armed operations in areas crowded with citizens celebrating the Talabani's presidency of the interim Iraqi Governing Council (IGC).

Three killed in blast in Karbala. (AFP)

Two Iraqis were killed and four wounded when a bomb exploded near a hotel in the Shiite holy city of Karbala, a local hospital official said. The blast reportedly occurred near the Baratha hotel behind Al-Mukhayam mosque. It was not immediately clear if the bomb had been planted inside or outside an empty building near the hotel, said a spokesman for the Polish-led division of multinational forces, which patrols Karbala. Karbala was the scene of high tension between Shiite groups in mid-October, when supporters of Grand Ayatollah Ali Sistani prevented backers of cleric Moqtada Sadr taking control of the Hussein and Abbas mausoleums. At least one person was killed in armed clashes between the rival groups. Witnesses said 38 supporters of Moqtada Sadr were detained by US forces on October 20 in a raid on Al-Mukhayam mosque.

Iraqi Islamic leader: Coalition "attacking residents and stealing money". (Iraqi newspaper *Al-Zaman*)

Iraqi Governing Council Member and Secretary-General of the Iraqi Islamic party Muhsin Abd-al-Hamid has requested that the coalition forces withdraw from the cities, because he said that they were raiding homes, attacking residents and stealing money. He also said that he had the names of 9,500 "innocent" Iraqis arrested by the coalition and that the Mossad and another unnamed foreign intelligence that did not want Iraq to regain its stability were behind the recent attacks.

November 4

Iraqi judges killed in Mosul, Kirkuk, Al-Najaf. (Qatari *Al-Jazeera* satellite TV)

It was reported that unknown persons assassinated the deputy president of the Appeals Court in the city of Mosul. According to the reports, unknown persons opened a hail of fire on judge Isma'il Yusuf Sadiq as he was leaving his house, killing him. This incident comes one day after the assassination of a judge in the city of Al-Najaf, who was appointed for the trial of Ba'athists. It was also reported by the Iraqi police and medical sources that another Iraqi judge was killed and one of his relatives was wounded by the US forces' gunfire in Kirkuk.

Radio Free Europe / Radio Liberty RFE/RL *Iraq Report* on the same news: Two Iraqi judges were murdered in two days. Judge Ismail Yusif, deputy head of the Ninawah Province Appeals Court, was shot dead outside his home in Mosul. Family members said they have no idea why Yusif was targeted in the attack. "He had no enemies. He wasn't responsible for a criminal court or anything," local police officer Sa'd Hamid said. Muhan Jabir al-Shuayli, a senior judge in the city of Al-Najaf, was

kidnapped and killed on 3 November, said his deputy, Arif Aziz. Aziz said he was kidnapped together with al-Shuayli, but was released after the judge was murdered. The perpetrators reportedly told Aziz they were acting on the orders of deposed Iraqi President Saddam Hussein. Al-Shuayli was investigating a number of Al-Najaf officials who served under the former regime.

Two killed, eight injured in bomb attack in Kirkuk. (Iraqi Kurdistan Democratic Party satellite TV)

Two civilians killed, eight injured in an attack in Kirkuk. A number of districts and places in Kirkuk were bombed after the breaking of the fasting. Civilians in Kirkuk came under attack from unknown locations by mortar, RPG and a number of other types of heavy weapons. As a result two citizens were killed and eight injured. Shaykh Jikri Mosque in Kirkuk's Musala District became the target of another attack. As a result, the mosque and a number of nearby houses suffered heavy damage. The attack happened while a large number of people were still engaged in worship inside the mosque, where one of the citizens was injured.

Iraqi court sentences former Najaf governor. (RFE/RL Iraq Report)

An Iraqi court has sentenced a former U.S.-appointed regional governor to 14 years in prison for crimes including the abduction of the children of a political rival. Coalition forces removed Abu Haydar Abd al-Mun'im from office in Al-Najaf on 30 June and charged him with kidnapping and holding hostages, pressuring government employees to commit financial crimes, attacking a bank official, and stealing funds. The court reportedly heard testimony that Mun'im illegally detained three children of a political rival, shredded an official document barring him from withdrawing money from government accounts, and kept money belonging to a man who had been released from detention. Mun'im, a former Iraqi army colonel, was found guilty of illegal arrest, misuse of office, and destruction of a government document.

Iraqi refugees leave Saudi camp. (AP)

372 refugees left in 14 buses and trucks bound for Kuwait, from where they are expected to cross into southern Iraq, the camp's acting director said. "This is the eighth voluntary repatriation convoy to leave the Rafha camp," the acting director said in a statement. Because of the lack of security in Iraq, UNHCR is not encouraging Iraqi refugees to return home, but it is assisting those who want to. The camp was originally home to about 33,000 Iraqis, but about 25,000 have been resettled in America, Europe and Australia. Another 3,500 returned to Iraq before Saddam's ouster.

November 5

US administrator sets conditions for return of former Iraqi security personnel. (US newspaper *The Washinton Post* and RFE/RL Iraq Report)

Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) head L. Paul Bremer has reportedly set conditions for former Iraqi security personnel and members of political party militias seeking to join an Iraqi paramilitary force that will help counter militants in Iraq. The establishment of a force is supported by the Iraqi Governing Council, which appealed

to U.S. President George W. Bush to transfer more responsibility for security to Iraqis. The new force will reportedly include a domestic intelligence-gathering unit and will be authorized to conduct special raids and interrogations of suspects. Governing council members reportedly want the force to be staffed by former Iraqi military and police personnel, as well as the intelligence and security wings of the five opposition-turned political groups now dominating Iraq, namely the Iraqi National Accord, Iraqi National Congress (INC), the Kurdistan Democratic Party, the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, and the Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq. (The INC had a paramilitary force working alongside coalition forces after the downfall of the Hussein regime. That force, the 700-strong Free Iraqi Forces, was dismantled by the coalition in May 2003 after reports of improper conduct by its members.) Bremer's conditions relate to the vetting, training, and supervision of the personnel. The new force would reportedly be the most powerful domestic security force in Iraq.

November 6

Iraqis mutilated by the former regime get organised. (AFP)

Iraqis mutilated by the ousted regime of Saddam Hussain, notably for deserting the army, are now seeking compensation. They have formed Association of Ear and Tongue Amputees and Tattooed People.

Najaf governor resigns in protest of insecurity, lack of power. (Chinese Xinhua News Agency)

The US-backed chief of Iraq's southern governorate of Najaf resigned in protest of lack of security and power. Haider Mehdi Matar al-Mayali resigned a day after he called for a general strike in the province, during which demonstrators presented a statement blaming the US-led coalition for failing to provide security. The tension was triggered by the kidnapping and killing of a prominent judge who had been appointed to lead the probe of a number of key officials of the former regime. Jaber Shuayly, top judge in Najaf, was one of the victims of an intensified wave of assassinations on those considered as collaborators of the US occupying forces.

November 7

One Iraqi killed, one wounded by mortar in Moqdadiya. (AFP)

An Iraqi woman was killed and her husband wounded when a mortar bomb struck their house in Moqdadiya. Yunes Ibrahim Hatem said it was one of four bombs which apparently targeted an adjacent police station, where there are also US troops. The other three fell in an empty field near his home, he said.

Hundreds demonstrate in Baghdad, demand US leave Iraq. (AFP)

About 500 people demonstrated outside the Baghdad headquarters of the US-led Coalition, demanding that American troops leave Iraq and free Sunni Muslims they say have been arrested. "We want them to release personnel from our mosques and to leave our country," said Sheikh Abdul Sattar al-Janabi, who wanted to be received by a coalition official. Religious leaders wanted to present a text demanding "the release

of Sunni religious people, the arrest of those who kill Sunnis and the end of the harassment of Sunnis by occupation forces." The demonstration was called by the Superior Islamic Institute which operates from the Um al-Tubul mosque in west Baghdad and is headed by Sheikh Mahdi al-Sumaidy.

Police station comes under mortar fire in Mosul. (AFP)

A police station was damaged in a mortar attack near the city of Mosul, a police source said. Four mortar rounds were reportedly fired on the Sheikh Fathi police station, northwest of Mosul, causing minor damage.

November 8

Saudis arrest 3,000 "infiltrators" from Iraq over three months. (London-based newspaper *Al-Sharq al-Awsat*)

Informed sources in Washington disclosed that the Saudi authorities had arrested 3,000 infiltrators who crossed the border from Iraq. The sources denied any knowledge of the infiltrators' affiliations or activities. The source added that the Saudi government stepped up the monitoring of the border with Iraq, which is 840 km long, the second longest Saudi border after Yemen. He noted that the security personnel on the border were on red alert.

Elsewhere, reports coming out of Kuwait indicated that the Kuwaiti authorities issued to the border forces orders to shoot at infiltrators because of the serious situation where weapons and ammunition are smuggled by people allegedly belonging to terrorist organizations.

November 9

Revenge killings claim lives of Ba'athists in southern Iraq. (AFP)

Dozens of Saddam Hussain's followers in Basra have been assassinated as they allegedly try to regroup and attack the coalition, the city's security chief said. "There have been too many political assassinations, dozens of them," said Colonel Mohammad Kazem Ahmad al-Ali, police director of internal security in Basra. "These were liquidations of senior members of the previous regime who had committed crimes against the people," al-Ali said. He declined to identify the perpetrators, but local residents said that members of the 20-to-30 political parties active in Basra have carried out the "revenge killings," targeting ranking members of the Ba'ath party. "We provide full support to those who dissociate themselves from the (Ba'ath) party ... But not to those who are trying to revive the regime and the party. These people are hoping to rebuild the party," al-Ali said. The coalition forces are investigating the deaths and have arrested some suspects, al-Ali said. Some previously unknown political parties such as the "*Tharallah*" (God's Revenge) Party, are suspected by locals of having taken the law into their own hands because of the slow progress in arresting and trying former Ba'ath officials.

Iraq Governing Council freezes assets of ex-top officials. (AP)

Iraq's U.S.-appointed Governing Council has decided to freeze the assets of senior officials of ousted Ba'ath regime. The interim Iraqi administration agreed "to freeze all movable and immovable assets of officials of the previous regime as well as senior members of the dissolved Ba'ath Party and security apparatuses," a statement said. It said the freeze also applied to the wives, children and relatives of these officials. The council statement did not say when the orders take effect.

November 10

Gunmen injure Iraqi oil official, kill his son. (AP)

A local oil official was injured and his son killed when assailants opened fire at their car in the northern city of Mosul. Mohammed Ahmed Zibari, the Northern Oil Co.'s distribution manager in Mosul, was on his way to work when gunmen riddled his car. His driver, bodyguard and son - university student Ali Mohammed - were with him. Mohammed Zibari was wounded in the leg and was transferred to hospital, his brother said, adding he was in a stable condition. "He has been followed because he's an official," the official's family said.

November 11

Basra bomb wounds eight Iraqis, including children. (AFP)

At least eight Iraqi civilians, including children, were wounded when a bomb exploded in the centre of Basra. "Some are seriously wounded but we have no dead so far," the head of internal security forces in Basra said. "Some of the injured are school children. Boys and girls use this road early in the morning to go to school," he added, blaming loyalists of ousted president Saddam Hussain for the blast.

AFP report on the same news on November 12: Several suspects believed to be behind bomb attacks in the southern city of Basra have reportedly been arrested by Iraqi police. Two bombs exploded on November 11, one of them killing four Iraqis, including two policemen, and wounding nine others, police said.

Six wounded in an attack outside Baghdad court. (AFP)

Two policemen and four prisoners were wounded when a bomb blew up outside a Baghdad courthouse in the eastern Rassafah district, a police officer said.

Coalition, police forces arrest alleged resistant militants in Mosul and Kirkuk. (Patriotic Union of Kurdistan newspaper *Kurdistani Nuwe*)

A joint police, security and coalition force in the town of Dibs, Kirkuk, carried out a swift raid against the alleged resistance hideouts in the villages of Qaracham and Bay Hasan in the afternoon. The two villages, Arabized under the ousted regime, had allegedly been used by remnants of Ba'ath Party to carry out their activities. Six persons were arrested and two Kalashnikov machine guns, one mortar, two ammunition cases, six magazines and six oxygen cylinders were seized.

November 12

At least 26 killed in a bombing of an Italian compound in Nassiriyah. (US newspaper *The New York Times*)

A car or truck bomb exploded in the courtyard of an Italian paramilitary police headquarters in Nassiriyah, killing 17 Italians and at least 9 Iraqis and wounding more than 105 others. The bomb exploded at 10:40 a.m. local time, ripping apart the three-story building and an annex that stand beside a broad stretch of the Euphrates River in the centre of Nassiriyah. The lightly protected buildings, formerly the city's Chamber of Commerce, served as offices and accommodation for 200 members of the *Carabinieri*, the Italian military police force, and most were in the buildings at the time of the attack. In Nassiriyah, the force of the bombing of the Italian compound left a crater 50 yards from the main building that was more than 50 feet across and 10 feet deep. The front and side of the building was sheered off, with iron beds, desks and other equipment and personal belongings strewn in the wreckage. In addition to the dead, there were 20 Italians among the wounded. At the Nassiriyah hospital, doctors said 85 Iraqis had been injured, 30 seriously. They said the dead included three schoolgirls of about 10 who died in a passing minibus, as well as a 10-day-old infant whose mother survived. At least 10 of the injured Iraqis were women and children.

Syria tightens visa restrictions on Iraqis. (Israeli newspaper *Ha'aretz*)

Syria has banned any Iraqi not already holding a visa from entering the country, as airline sources confirmed. Syria quietly issued a directive banning the entry of any Iraqi who did not already hold a visa. Previously, visas could be obtained at airports or border crossings upon arrival. The new rules were first disclosed by airport officials in Cairo, Egypt, after two Iraqis were prevented from boarding a Syrian Airlines flight to Damascus because they did not have visas. Lebanon also has been enforcing similar rules since shortly before the war began March 20, security officials at the Beirut airport said.

November 13

Kurdish forces, police take over security in Zammar from coalition. (Iraqi Kurdistan Democratic Party newspaper *Khabat*)

The coalition forces based in the administrative subdistrict of Zammar decided to withdraw from the town during the last few days and hand over the responsibility of protecting peace and security to Kurdistan *peshmerga* forces and police. The administration of the city is run by the town municipality and the directorate of the administrative subdistrict, which is led by Kurds.

November 14

New Chaldean archbishop of Kirkuk ordained. (AP)

Louis Sako was ordained as the new Chaldean Catholic archbishop of Kirkuk in a ceremony that featured hymns, readings from the Bible and prayers for peace. Sako was selected by a Chaldean synod in Baghdad last year. In September, Pope John Paul

He approved his election. Sako has worked in Baghdad and Mosul, where he has been based for many years of his career. Sako is a member of Mosul's city council.

Rockets wound three Iraqi policemen in Kirkuk. (AFP)

Two Katyusha rockets reportedly hit a police post at dawn in the city of Kirkuk wounding three officers. "Three policemen were hurt, one of them seriously when two Katyushas landed, one at the entrance to the post and the other on the road leading here," said Hussein Hassan Allawi at the Al-Uruba station. The rockets had been fired from outside Kirkuk, he said.

Turkey, US, UNHCR set for talks on repatriation of Kurds from Iraq. (AFP)

Officials from Turkey, the United States and the UN refugee agency will hold talks in Ankara next week on plans for the gradual repatriation of thousands of Turkish Kurd refugees living in Iraq, UN and government sources. High-ranking US officials -- including Arthur Dewey, assistant secretary of state for population, refugees and migration -- will also participate in the meeting, according to a Turkish government source. Since the early 1990s, thousands of Kurds from Turkey's southeast have fled across the border into Iraq to escape from a bloody conflict between the Turkish army and Kurdish rebels who in 1984 launched an armed campaign for self-rule in the area. Several other families who sympathised with the PKK, also crossed the border into Iraq. The Turkish Kurdish refugees, numbering 12,700, currently constitute the third largest refugee group in Iraq, following 80,000 Palestinians and 18,700 Iranians, UNHCR spokesperson explained. He added that the meeting was expected to also focus on the Mahmour refugee camp, located to the south of the northern Iraqi city of Mosul, where more than 9,000 of the Turkish Kurd refugees have been living since 1997. Ankara has demanded that the UN-controlled camp be closed down, claiming that the camp was being controlled by PKK rebels and that families who wanted to return to Turkey were being prevented from doing so. Besides the Mahmour camp, there are several other refugee camps near the northern Iraqi cities of Dohuk and Arbil, sheltering 3,700 Turkish Kurds. Since 1997, some 2,200 refugees have returned home to Turkey with assistance from the UNHCR.

UNHCR: Iraqi asylum-seekers should not be forced home. (Reuters)

The United Nations refugee agency UNHCR urged countries not to send Iraqi asylum-seekers or refugees home against their will because it was still too dangerous. Iraqis represent the largest national group of asylum-seekers around the world, according to UNHCR, although the numbers have fallen sharply since the overthrow of former ruler Saddam Hussain. "The situation in Iraq remains volatile, with an absence of law and order in many parts of the country," spokesman Rupert Colville said. "We have advised states to continue a ban on forced returns to Iraq, including of rejected asylum-seekers," he said, adding that he was not aware of any attempt at forced repatriation. The agency estimates there are around 500,000 Iraqis, one in six of the total number living abroad, who could be vulnerable to expulsion either because they have overstayed their visas or their requests for asylum have been rejected.

November 16

Kirkuk deputy governor wounded in Iraqi assassination bid. (AFP)

The deputy governor of the city of Kirkuk in northern Iraq, Ismail Ahmed Rajab al-Hadidi, said that he and his driver were wounded in an assassination bid by unknown gunmen. Four gunmen sprayed his car with bullets in the city center at 7 pm before fleeing, Hadidi said from Kirkuk general hospital. He said he was wounded in the leg and that his driver suffered several "serious wounds". Hadidi, a 48 year-old trader, became deputy governor of the city after US-organised elections for a local city council in May 2003.

Another US-backed official in the city said that his home was struck by a mortar, causing no casualties. Ibrahim Ismail, the representative of the education ministry in Kirkuk, said loyalists of former president Saddam Hussein shelled his home because he had fired 536 school teachers affiliated with the now banned Ba'ath party.

Assassination attempt against Turkoman member of Governing Council in Kirkuk. (Turkish Anatolian News Agency)

Unidentified gunmen reportedly opened fire on a car driving Songul Chabuk, Turkoman member of the Iraqi Governing Council, and her family in the city of Kirkuk.

USA and UK agreement: Troops to stay until 2006 as power shifts to Baghdad. (UK newspaper *The Observer*)

President George Bush and Tony Blair have agreed an exit strategy for pulling out of Iraq, officially ending the occupation next year while committing troops to the region until 2006. In a series of coordinated briefings from Washington, London and Baghdad, officials said the Iraqi Governing Council set up by the US would see its sovereignty transferred to a transitional government picked by delegates to a national conference. That body would then plan for national elections and the drawing up of a constitution for Iraq. British officials said that, although the occupation of Iraq would be over next year, it was likely that troops would need to stay, possibly until 2006. 'The whole process will take two to three years, as in Afghanistan,' said a senior Number 10 official closely involved in the Iraq negotiations. "The first phase is the handing over of power to the transitional government, at which point the occupation ends. This is followed by an electoral process which includes a census and constitutional convention and finally elections to a fully sovereign Iraqi government."

November 17

One wounded in Kirkuk explosion against Islamic Movement. (AFP)

An Iraqi man was seriously wounded when a bomb went off near the headquarters of the Islamic Movement of Kurdistan (IMIK) in the city of Kirkuk, police sources said. One of the movement's members was seriously injured in the blast.

U.S. soldiers kill three Iraqis shopping in gun market. (AP)

A U.S. patrol opened fire on a group of people in Baghdad's gun market, killing three, after the soldiers apparently mistook the gunfire of customers testing weapons for an

attack, a witness and an Iraqi police officer said. Four people were also wounded in the shooting, hospital and police officials said. The dead included an 11-year-old boy. In Iraq, it is legal for a family to own one gun for self-defense. That weapon is usually an AK-47 assault rifle. The gun market, however, is illegal and has been raided repeatedly by U.S. soldiers, who have tried to close it down. The shooting took place at the Mreydi market, a three-kilometer-long market that is famous in Baghdad as a place where one can buy guns and thieves hawk stolen goods.

Hundreds of new Iraqi police officers demonstrate for wages in Baghdad. (AFP)

Hundreds of members of a new Iraqi police force held demonstrations in central Baghdad demanding several months of wages they said had not been paid. Members of a special force tasked with protecting important economic and public facilities and buildings set up road blocks on the busy Saadun street halting the flow of traffic for three hours. Others came from the Shiite Muslim holy city of Karbala, and held a two-hour rally in front of the headquarters of the interim Iraqi Governing Council to claim higher salaries. Hani Ahmed Mohsen, a 19-year-old from Baghdad, said the special police force has 1,608 members in the capital and that he had not been paid for three months. Interior Ministry officials "have said the (US-led) coalition has not disbursed money for the wages, but we all have families to feed and we should not depend on the mood of the coalition," Mohsen said. "They had promised us 120 dollars per month, now its down to 200,000 dinars (100 dollars) but we have received nothing at all," he said.

Iraqi group claims killing of council member, attacks on US. (Lebanese satellite TV station *LBC Sat TV*)

An Iraqi group called Muhammad's Army (*Jaysh al-Muhammad*) has claimed the August killing of a Governing Council member, Aqilah al-Hashimi, and the 2 November downing of a US Chinook helicopter. The claims were made by a masked man speaking on a videotape broadcast by Lebanese LBC TV.

November 18

Bomb destroys car used by Turkish media in Iraqi Kurdistan. (AFP)

A bomb ripped through a car being used by journalists of Turkey's semi-official Anatolia news agency in Iraqi Kurdistan but nobody was hurt, Kurdish security officials said. "The explosive charge weighed less than a kilogramme and was placed under the car," one security official in northern Iraq said. The vehicle was completely destroyed by the blast north of the Iraqi Kurdish city of Arbil.

Two Iraqi policemen, one translator wounded in Mosul attacks. (AFP)

Two Iraqi policemen and a translator working for the US-led coalition were wounded during two attacks in the main northern Iraqi city of Mosul, police sources said. "Two unknown assailants opened fire at a police station from their car. The policemen fired back and the attackers took off," a police officer said. "Another group in a second car threw a hand grenade and two policemen guarding the station were wounded," the officer added. The translator sustained gunshot wounds outside a Mosul hotel used by US forces, said one policeman guarding the facility. "Gunmen opened fire at the

interpreter and fled," said Jassem Kassem Mohammed, adding soldiers had evacuated the wounded man to hospital.

Oil-for-food programme ends. (RFE/RL Iraq Report)

The United Nations is scheduled to terminate the oil-for-food program in Iraq on 21 November. In a statement posted on the program's website (<http://www.un.org/depts/oip>), the program reported that 85 percent of contracts in the pipeline have been prioritized for delivery. "As stipulated by Security Council Resolution 1483 [22 May 2003], there will be no further role of the United Nations in operating the humanitarian programs funded through the [oil-for-food program]. However, a pipeline of some \$8.2 billion in humanitarian supplies and equipment continues to be delivered, and the CPA has indicated it will maintain most of the ongoing projects and operations, eventually turning them over to Iraqi authorities," the statement noted. "The Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) has indicated that it will continue the prioritization process for approved and funded contracts beyond 21 November on the basis of needs to be determined with the Iraqi authorities," the statement added. In a closed-door briefing to UN Security Council members on 19 November, Benon Sevan, the program's executive director said, "It is gratifying to state without hesitation that the United Nations has met the challenge for an orderly termination of the program by 21 November 2003 pursuant to [UN Security Council] Resolution 1483," UN News Center reported (<http://www.un.org/news>).

November 19

Shiites pick Salama al Khafaji for Iraq's Governing Council. (AFP)

The majority Shiite group on Iraq's Governing Council have picked a woman dentist to take a seat on the interim body, a senior community official said. "The Shiite group on the Council has chosen Salama al Khafaji from 13 candidates," said Adel Abdul Mahdi, of the Supreme Council of the Islamic Revolution in Iraq. Khafaji, who has no party affiliation and hails from Diwaniya south of Baghdad, will replace career diplomat Akila al Hachemi, also a Shiite who was assassinated in Baghdad on September 20.

Car bomb reported in Ramadi causing casualties. (AP)

A car bomb reportedly exploded outside the home of a pro-American tribal leader in Ramadi, killing at least one person and wounding others. The explosion took place at about 9:15 p.m. near the house of Sheikh Amer Ali Suleiman, according to his cousin Yasser Ali. Ali said Suleiman was not injured but at least one child was killed, he said. Suleiman is a leader of the Duleim tribe, one of the largest Sunni Muslim tribes in Iraq. Suleiman, a member of the city council, is close to the Americans, and insurgents have threatened and targeted Iraqis who work with the coalition.

US newspaper *The New York Times* report on the same news on November 21:

When the American general in charge of Ramadi announced earlier that he would hand over power to a group of cooperative Iraqi sheikhs, he challenged them to rein in the guerrillas without American help. A car bomb exploded on November 19 outside the home of Sheikh Majid Ali Suleiman, the powerful tribal leader the Americans were depending on to make their experiment work. Sheikh Suleiman said he would

push ahead with the agreement, which provides for American troops to leave Ramadi and allow the Iraqis to police the city on their own. The agreement was struck by local leaders with Maj. Gen. Charles H. Swannack Jr. of the 82nd Airborne Division. It is an experiment that, if successful, may be duplicated across the trouble-prone Sunni Triangle. Sheikh Suleiman is the leader of the Dulaimi tribe, the largest in the area, and his assent is central to making the plan work. So far, he and his family have shown themselves willing to try. Twice a week, he meets with General Swannack; his cousin is the chairman of the city council.

Assyrian party's representative killed in Basra. (Turkish Anatolian News Agency)

Basra representative of the Assyrian Democratic Movement (ADM), Sargon Mrado [Sargoun Nanou Murado], was killed by unidentified perpetrators at night. He was kidnapped by unidentified perpetrators while driving in a taxi at November 18-19 night. The taxi driver was reportedly released after being beaten up, and the body of Mrado was found later in a suburb of Basra.

Ba'athist ban remains despite Sunni recruitment. (UK newspaper *Financial Times*)

Officials at Iraq's Coalition Provisional Authority made clear that a new initiative to draw the country's Sunni Arabs into the political process did not mean they would be relaxing "de-Ba'athification" rules designed to keep members of the former regime out of government. The push to integrate Sunnis into Iraqi political life comes amid a growing rebellion in Sunni regions across central Iraq and a tough US military crackdown designed to capture or kill guerrillas. One of the goals for the provisional government is to widen political representation beyond the 24-member Governing Council to take in groups that have been left out.

US forces arrest Saddam Hussain's brother-in-law. (AFP)

US forces have arrested Arshad Yassin, a brother-in-law of Saddam Hussain who was also his personal helicopter pilot and a senior figure in his close protection force until the early 1990s, a high ranking Iraqi police officer said. Yassin, who held the rank of airforce lieutenant general, and another officer of the protection force of the former president, Major Radman Ali Al-Huraimus were arrested in a village located 40 kilometers south of the city of Kirkuk, the officer said. He said a US force was airlifted to the village and stormed the house where the two were hiding, disguised as peasants. He said US troops acted on a tip-off because they went straight to the house. The US army did not confirm the arrests. Yassin, in his fifties, is married to Samira Hussein, one of Saddam's two sisters. He was considered from the 1980s as the seniormost figure of the protection service around the now toppled president.

UN starts repatriation of Iraqi refugees from Iran. (AFP)

UN's refugee agency carried out a pilot repatriation of Iraqi refugees from Iran. Although the crossing here was of a mere 69 volunteers among the tens of thousands Iraqi refugees estimated to be in Iran, the UNHCR hopes that if all goes smoothly thousands of others impatient to head home can do so legally and in relative safety. All of the first group of returnees were volunteers from Ashrafi, the largest Iraqi refugee camp inside Iran situated near the southwestern city of Ahvaz -- just across

the border from the Iraqi city of Basra. Many have been there since fleeing Saddam Hussein's waves of crackdowns on Shiite Muslims in the south of the country that followed an uprising after the 1991 Gulf War, and notably his draining of an area inhabited by the so-called Marsh Arabs. In the absence of any formal repatriation process, many refugees have chosen to go it alone and cross the porous border illegally -- despite the high danger of landmines or the risk of being arrested by coalition forces. Officials believe many of the 202,000 Iraqi refugees who were in Iran prior to the toppling of Saddam Hussein have since gone home by crossing the border but without any form of humanitarian assistance. But at least 50,000 are still waiting to go home, despite the risks. But the UN agency's task has also been complicated by the evacuation of its foreign staff from Iraq following a string of deadly bombings and attacks on the United Nations and other aid groups. The returnees -- a third of them children -- were each given 20 dollars, a kit containing travelling essentials and mine awareness training.

November 20

Kurdish party offices in Kirkuk bombed (AP)

An explosion Thursday in front of the offices of a Kurdish political party in the city of Kirkuk, killed four people, an official of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan said. "An explosion took place at 10:30 this morning," said Jalal Johar, the party's representative in the city said. Four people were killed and several wounded, he said. Insurgents have warned they will target anyone who collaborates with the occupation authorities.

AFP report of the same news: A suicide bomber blew up a pickup truck packed with explosives, killing four and wounding 37, most of them pupils. The bomber struck just 200 metres from a compound containing both primary and secondary schools, and a schoolmistress and two pupils leaving class were among the dead. Doctors at the city's main hospital said many of the wounded were also youngsters. Five members of the faction were among the wounded.

London-based *Movement for Islamic Reform in Arabia* web site report on the same news on November 22: In a statement, "the Military Committee of *Ansar al-Sunnah* Army" said: "On 25 Ramadan 1424, corresponding to 20 November 2003, the fraternal martyrdom-seeker *mujahid* "Abu-Salih" carried out a martyrdom-seeking operation on the Centre 2 building of the US-proxy the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan [PUK], which is led by the collaborator Jalal Talabani, head of the current Governing Council, in the city of Kirkuk, north of Baghdad."

Two children killed, two wounded in classroom explosion in Karbala. (AFP)

It was reported that two Iraqi children were killed and two wounded when an explosion ripped through a classroom at the Al-Abed school near the Shiite Muslim pilgrimage city of Karbala. "One of the wounded suffered serious injuries. The children were 11 or 12," the director of Karbala's Al-Hussein Hospital said. It was not immediately clear whether the explosion was the result of a deliberate attack or one of the children had brought unexploded ordnance into the school as a toy.

November 21

Rocket attacks in Baghdad target hotels and Oil Ministry. (US newspaper *The Washington Post*).

Rockets were fired at two hotels in central Baghdad and the Oil Ministry. The attack on the ministry, which was hit by as many as five rockets, according to witnesses, came minutes after at least three rockets struck the Palestine and Sheraton hotels, where many foreign workers and journalists stay. The rockets shattered windows and damaged walls in the hotels and at least two people were reported injured.

Explosion damages offices of British mine-clearing agency in northern Iraq. (AP).

A gasoline tanker exploded outside the offices of a British land mine clearing agency in the northern Iraqi city of Arbil, causing minor damage but no casualties, officials said. Adnan al-Mufti, an official of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, said the blast occurred about 9:30 p.m. outside the office of the Mine Action Group, damaging windows but causing no substantial damage. Police and Kurdish militiamen sealed off the area.

Liquor shops bombed in Baghdad. (Turkish Anatolian News Agency).

It was reported that a grenade attack on alcoholic liquor shops in southern Baghdad left four persons dead. Hospital sources said that twenty persons were wounded in the attack.

November 22

Attack on the mosque where al-Hakim led Friday sermon. (Iranian Students News Agency / ISNA).

Sayyid Abd al-Aziz al-Hakim was the victim of an attack. However, neither he nor his entourage were harmed. The chairman of the Supreme Council for Islamic Revolution in Iraq, Sayyid Muhsin al-Hakim, performed evening prayers at the Sayyid Idris Mosque in central Baghdad. While he was in the mosque, a Russian-made missile, with a range of five kilometres, was fired at the mosque from the gardens nearby. However, the missile was diverted from its path and it did not explode. As a result, only one vehicle was hit and destroyed.

Twin suicide attacks against Iraqi police in Diyala kill at least 18. (AFP).

At least 18 Iraqis were killed and 30 wounded as almost simultaneous suicide bombings against two police stations north of the capital left a trail of carnage, overwhelming local hospitals. A four year-old girl was among six police officers and three civilians killed in Khan Bani Saad town of Diyala when a bomber rammed a vehicle packed with explosives into the police station, according to an initial toll from the US military. Minutes later another suicide assailant blew himself up outside the police station in the provincial capital of Baquba further north, killing seven Iraqi police and two civilians. A further five Iraqi police were still missing from that attack. A further 10 people were wounded in the 7:30 am attack in Khan Bani Saad which

tore a massive hole through the wall of the police station. In the Baquba bombing, another 20 people were wounded, according to the US toll.

Iraqi police colonel assassinated in Mosul. (AP).

A police colonel in charge of protecting oil installations was assassinated in Mosul, Iraq in what appeared to be a campaign by the insurgents against U.S.-backed security forces. Police Col. Abdul-Salam Qanbar, who was in charge of a police force protecting oil installations, was fatally shot in the evening while heading to a mosque, a police official said.

Seven hit by rocket attack in Kirkuk. (Al-Jazeera satellite TV).

At least seven were hit, including four Americans, in a rocket attack targeting a building belonging to the Northern Oil Company in Kirkuk city. Iraqi police sources said that two rockets hit the company's club, which is frequented by Americans and employees from a branch of the US Halberton Company.

November 24

Iraqi civil defence officer attacked in Fallujah. (AFP).

A member of the Iraqi civil defence force was wounded when two unknown assailants called him a "traitor" before stabbing him in Fallujah, the victim said. "I was going to work when two men came by in a horse-drawn cart and stopped near me," Mohammed Shihad said. "They asked me if I was from the civil defence. I said yes and then they told me: 'You are traitors and I will slit your throats one after the other,'" Shihad said. His colleagues rushed to his cries and to stop the assailants, who managed to flee.

Iraqi police raid TV offices for broadcasting Saddam tape. (AP).

Iraq's U.S.-appointed government raided the Baghdad offices of television news channel *Al-Arabiya* and its parent network Middle East Broadcasting Corp., and said it would sue the news station for broadcasting an audiotape purported to carry the voice of Saddam Hussain. About 20 Iraqi police officers raided the office of the Dubai-based, Saudi-owned company in Baghdad's Mansour neighborhood, making lists of equipment to be seized if *Al-Arabiya* doesn't comply with the order.

November 25

Iran reportedly ready to offer amnesty for low ranking PMOI members. (AFP).

The Iranian government is ready to offer an amnesty for low ranking members of the rebel Mujahedeen-e Khalq Organization (PMOI), the current head of Iraq's interim Governing Council said. Jalal Talabani said the leadership of the Mujahedeen, whom Saddam Hussein had allowed to have bases in Iraq from which to launch attacks against Iran, had committed a "deadly mistake by tying their fate" to the toppled Iraqi president. "But the masses of the organization deserve sympathy on humanitarian grounds; I have asked the Iranian brothers to offer a general amnesty and they said they are ready to grant one for those who return" to Iran, Talabani said. The group has been disarmed and confined to camp in its bases close to the Iranian border in the

northeastern province of Diyala. U.S. press reports have spoken of anger at the U.S. State Department that attacks by the group, listed by Washington as a "terrorist organization", have continued despite the measures, but U.S. commanders have vigorously denied that its fighters are in any position to launch any more attacks against Iran from Iraqi territory. Iran has several times expressed its willingness to pardon members of the People's Mujahadeen who repent, but the group has dismissed the offer as a trick.

November 26

Wife and daughter of General Izzat Ibrahim al-Douri in US custody. (NBC News).

US forces have arrested the wife and daughter of Saddam Hussein's number two man, General Izzat Ibrahim al-Douri. Al-Douri is included in the US most-wanted deck.

Shia organisation reportedly threatening the Media Network. (RFE/RL *Iraq Report*).

The Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq (SCIRI) has reportedly threatened to mobilize Iraqis against the U.S.-sponsored Iraqi Media Network television (IMN) on grounds that the station is airing programs that the Shi'ite group views as indecent and immoral. "If you do not change your programs and submit to our will, we will mobilize the Iraqi street against you. We will resort to another method. We will mobilize the Iraqi street to defend Islam," SCIRI representative Sadr al-Din al-Qabanji said. It was also reported that SCIRI representatives said they would issue fatwas against IMN if the station's programming is not changed.

November 28

Hundreds rally against terror in central Baghdad. (AFP).

Hundreds of demonstrators marched through Baghdad city centre to protest against violence amid persistent fears of attack by resistance insurgents or Islamic militants, as Iraqi police and US forces closed the main commercial thoroughfare.

November 29

Iraq's Sunni and Shiite Muslims tangle in public slanging match. (AFP).

The interim authority's religious director for Sunni Muslims in Iraq walked out of a tourism conference after a doctrinal row with his Shiite counterpart. The meeting in a Baghdad hotel had been intended to help boost religious tourism and heard interim Culture Minister Mufid al-Jezairi, government spokesman Hamid al-Kifai and others insist there were no religious problems in Iraq. However trouble erupted when Hussein al-Shami, who heads the Shiite Muslim section of the religious affairs department, stated that the tombs of imams were "not just stones but also a source of knowledge and inspiration." Al-Shami also hit out against the puritanical Wahabbi sect of the Sunni branch of Islam which, he claimed, "think tombs are nothing". Adnan al-Dhoulaymi, director for Sunnis, walked out in protest and failed to address

the more than 100 people who had gathered to consider reorganising religious tourism. Abdallah Hurmas, director for other religions in Iraq, then took charge of the meeting.

Two Japanese diplomats killed. (Japanese news agency Kyodo).

Two Japanese diplomats - Katsuhiko Oku, 45, and Masamori Inoue, 30 – were killed on a highway in Salahaddin province. According to U.S. military forces in Iraq, Oku and Inoue were ambushed by assailants with automatic rifles who were driving three or four vehicles. The two Japanese diplomats who were killed together with the driver, Jerjees Sulaiman Zura, 54, were on their way to a reconstruction conference in Tikrit, and covered up their identities to a local fruit shop owner out of safety concerns.

Kyodo News report on the same news on December 8: The murder of two Japanese diplomats in Iraq was carefully planned, with one group in charge of collecting information and another in charge of shooting, the governor of Salahaddin province, where the killing took place, said. Gov. Hussein al-Juboort also said Iraqi police have detained suspects over the killing of two South Korean technicians who were shot Nov. 30 on the same highway as the Japanese diplomats. Governing Council member Zebari said the killings were the crimes by the *Muharabat*, the intelligence organization of deposed Ba'ath government, strongly implying that anti-American forces are targeting Japanese. Other foreigners who are taking part in Iraq's U.S.-led reconstruction efforts have been targeted on the key highway, which runs north from Baghdad to Tikrit and Mosul.

Saddam's backers to be denied contracts. (UK newspaper *Financial Times*).

Businessmen seeking to win contracts in Iraq will be vetted for ties to the former regime, Ahmad Chalabi, a prominent member of the US-appointed interim Governing Council said. Chalabi chairs the Governing Council's Higher Committee for de-Ba'athification. Formed in September 2003, this has expanded its work from rooting out senior functionaries of the former regime to implementing what he calls "a programme of economic de-Ba'athification". The committee says its economic role will be to "collect information about businessmen and merchants to prevent them dealing with Iraq in the future". Chalabi said it would also aim to recover the wealth from "between 10 and 15 per cent" of the Iraqis who he said benefited from the Ba'ath regime. Critics of de-Ba'athification have attacked the programme as revenge-driven. Iyad Allawi, a fellow member of the Governing Council who has also returned from western exile, has called the plan "dangerous", and declared that he was boycotting Chalabi's committee. Chalabi said the de-Ba'athification committee would also examine the restitution of an estimated 500,000 properties he said had been confiscated under the Ba'athist regime. Under the de-Ba'athification programme an estimated 20,000 suspected senior Ba'athists, many of them technocrats, have been sacked from the government machinery. Chalabi argued that the policy's impact had been "very light" and said a second wave of de-Ba'athification now being finalised by his committee would be "deliberately harsh", although not a witch hunt.

November 30

Iraqi town under "siege" as US aims to secure Syrian border. (Lebanese *LBC Sat TV*).

US forces have searched worshippers before allowing them into mosques in the Iraqi city of Al-Qa'im, which is close to the Syrian border. The city has been under siege for 10 days and is under curfew.

Three people killed in attack to convoy in Samarra. (AFP).

Three people died in an attack on a convoy in northern Iraq, a US military spokesman said refusing to confirm reports that the dead included Korean contractors. "A convoy traveling through 4th Infantry Division and Task Force Ironhorse area of operations was attacked and three people were killed on the afternoon of November 30 west of Samarra," said a US officer.

***Al-Jazeera* satellite TV report on the same news on December 1:** The US forces announced that they have killed 46 Iraqis and wounded 18 others in Samarra. According to the US official story, the attackers are Saddam's Fedayeen. They say that the evidence for this was that some of the dead were wearing Saddam's Fedayeen black uniforms. Residents say that the ensuing battle was huge, which started with a limited clash broke out when a car carrying cash was attacked. The car was escorted by US protection vehicles. The men at the car fired back, and a huge battle broke out in three neighbourhoods of the city; Al-Hadi neighbourhood, Al-Mu'tasim neighbourhood and Al-Bubaz neighbourhood. In Al-Bubaz neighbourhood, several people who work in a pharmaceutical plant are said to have been killed.

"Al-Faruq Brigades" claim responsibility for Spanish lives in Iraq; issue threat. (Movement for Islamic Reform web site).

A high-ranking official in the Al-Faruq Brigades in Iraq has said that Commander Abd-al-Aziz al-Maghribi's group carried out the attack on November 29 that led to the killing of eight Spanish soldiers and to the capture of three others, including a high-ranking officer named Jose Marian Dimilla. The website said "The local commander of the mujahidin in Baghdad said that the hunt for the crusaders will soon take a new and violent dimension, and that the field command of the mujahidin is capable of carrying out large deployments to expel the enemy from Iraq and from the land of Islam as a whole." The website also said they would "publish a comprehensive interview with field commander Ahmad al-Shishani, who leads a group of the Mujahidin Lions of Islam [*Usud al-Islam al-Mujahidin*] in upper Iraq [*Mintaqat al-Iraq al-Ala*] (al-Fallujah and al-Ramadi)".

Arab politician kidnapped by "Kurdish-speaking" gunmen in Kirkuk. (Iraqi Shi'i group's Iran-based radio station *Voice of the Mujahidin*).

Unidentified men kidnapped Isma'il Abd-al-Husayn al-Abbudi, secretary-general of the Arab Grouping in Kirkuk. Khalid Jassim, the party's deputy chairman and his personal secretary, said three Kurdish-speaking people wearing US military uniforms forced Al-Abbudi into their car and led him to an unknown destination. Jassim said that he was walking to the governorate's headquarters at noon, along with Al-Abbudi, who is the director of the employment bureau at the local administration, when they were stopped by the gunmen who asked him to go. Muhammad Hasan Muhsin,

deputy secretary-general of the Arab Grouping, said that he had informed the US forces in Kirkuk of the incident, and said that they had not been able to obtain any information on the identity of the kidnappers or the reasons for the abduction.

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