

Chronology of Events in Iraq, November 2003*

December 1

Iraqi "Special Assault Team" raids hideout. (Iraqi newspaper *Al-Zaman*)

The *Firqat al-Iqtiham al-Khassah* [Special Assault Team] of the Interior Ministry launched a surprise attack on one of the hideouts of the suspected perpetrators of armed attacks in Baghdad. Lt-Gen Ahmad Kazim Ibrahim, the most senior undersecretary in the Ministry of the Interior, said that caches of weapons were seized during the attack. Ibrahim said that the group used the skeleton of a house under construction in the area of Ur neighbourhood as their hideout to launch armed attacks. He said that in the armed clash that ensued, during which light arms were used, one police car was hit by gunfire but none of the members of the assault team was injured.

December 2

Iraqi Republican Guard officers arrested in Mosul. (Lebanese *LBC Sat TV*)

Iraqi police announced that two ranking officers from the former Iraqi Republican Guard have been arrested while they were sitting in one of the cafes in Mosul. The officer who helped in their arrest said one of the officers arrested had 40,000 dollars, adding that the arrest was carried out by the US Army with the participation of the Iraqi Police. The police noted that the two officers are suspected of working with [former Revolution Command Council Vice Chairman] Izzat Ibrahim al-Duri, the second man in the former Iraqi regime.

December 3

Iraqi Governing Council annuls Law 666 on stripping Kurds of citizenship. (Iraqi Patriotic Union of Kurdistan satellite TV)

At a meeting held under the chairmanship of the current chairman, Hojjat ol-Islam Abd-al-Aziz al-Hakim, the interim Iraqi Governing Council decided to abrogate Decree 666 issued by the deposed Ba'athist regime in 1980 stripping hundreds of thousands of Iraqi Kurdish citizens; resident in Baghdad, Diyala, Kut, Khanaqin, Mandali and other areas in Iraq; of their citizenship, and deporting them to Iran and seizing their possessions and property under the pretext of affiliation to Iran. It was also decided to set up a subcommittee to lay down a new nationality law that would safeguard all the citizens' rights. The council also decided to dissolve all the workers

* *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.*

and farmers unions. The Governing Council also decided to set up a section at each ministry to take responsibility for combating bribery and administrative corruption.

Bishops elect Chaldean Catholics leader. (Associated Press / AP)

A Baghdad-based bishop was elected Patriarch of Babylon, spiritual leader of the world's estimated 1 million Chaldean Catholics, the Vatican said. Bishop Emmanuel-Karim Delly, 76, was elected at a synod of 22 bishops called to Rome by Pope John Paul II to break a deadlock in the choice of a successor to Patriarch Raphael I Bidawid, who died in July 2003 after a long illness. The new patriarch took the name Karim III. The Chaldean Church, like other Eastern-Rite churches, is loyal to the Pope but does not follow the Roman church's Latin Rite.

US army arrest deputy to Shi'a cleric. (Agence France Presse / AFP)

A deputy of an Iraqi Shi'a leader has been arrested in Baghdad in connection with the killing of two US soldiers in October, a US general said. "Coalition forces in Baghdad conducted a joint raid with the Iraqi Civil Defence Corps and detained Amar al-Yasseri, operations director of Moqtada Sadr in Sadr City, also believed to have been behind the ambush of coalition troops on October 9," General said. Yasseri was captured in the Shi'a quarter of the Iraqi capital without incident.

AFP report on the same news on December 4: A man arrested by US forces as a "deputy" to controversial cleric Moqtada Sadr has nothing to do with the Iraqi Shi'a leader, his spokesman said. "We have no relation with this person mentioned by the US army," said the cleric's official spokesman Sheikh Abbas al-Rubayah. "He does not work in any of Moqtada Sadr's offices and has no legal status in our organisation," he insisted. "Claims that Amar is one of Moqtada Sadr's deputies are totally false. We do not have titles such as deputy. "We have nothing to do with the deaths of the coalition soldiers and we have never confronted the coalition forces militarily," the spokesman said in the movement's information bureau in Baghdad's Karada district.

December 4

Iraqi Hezbollah wants quick elections. (AFP)

In the new Iraq, the disarmed Hezbollah movement, which claims no affiliation to its better-known Lebanese namesake, has joined Shiite calls for early elections. "We want elections for a democratic and united government," says Mohammed Al-Alewy, spokesman for the group. "It was unfair not to give us a place," in the interim Governing Council set up by the coalition in July, adds Essar Jafar, deputy secretary-general. Jafar says his movement was formed in 1981 and boasts 150,000 militants and 176 offices all over Iraq, particularly in the Shiite south and in Baghdad. Seven hundred Hezbollah militants were killed by the regime of Saddam Hussein, he says. The deputy secretary-general wants Hezbollah activists to be allowed to join the new police and army, and criticises the United States for blocking it. The Hezbollah has a party headquarters, but ironically it is in the former prison where its members were once tortured and it is still largely a ruin. Jawad Kazem al-Khirsan, a journalist with the Hezbollah weekly newspaper *Al-Baina* (Evidence), shows cell number 17 where he spent six months between November 2001 and April 2002. Inside, there are none of the portraits of Iran's revered late leader Ayatollah Khomeini nor globe and gun

signs associated with the Lebanese Hezbollah. "We have a strategy that is completely different and our movement was set up before" the Lebanese variety, notes Jafar, who wears western dress.

Iraqi guerrillas shell police station in Ramadi, six injured. (AP)

Guerrillas attacked a police station in central Iraq, a day after U.S. and Iraqi officials revealed they were considering creating a specialized Iraqi paramilitary battalion to help fight insurgents. The Ramadi Police Directorate was struck by two rockets as officers gathered inside to receive their monthly salaries. Two policemen and four civilians were reportedly wounded.

December 5

Iraqis protest attacks on troops, civilians. (Qatari *Al-Jazeera* satellite TV)

Hundreds of Iraqis have staged a demonstration near the premises of the interim Governing Council in Baghdad to condemn the military operations targeted against US troops and Iraqi civilians. They also called for achieving peace in the country to facilitate the reconstruction endeavours and the efforts to build a normal social and economic life.

Bomb kills at least 3 Iraqis. (US newspaper *The Washington Post*)

At least three Iraqis and a U.S. soldier were killed when a remote-controlled bomb exploded beside a U.S. military patrol as it drove along a popular shopping boulevard in eastern Baghdad, Iraqi police and hospital officials said. The blast, which occurred shortly after 9 a.m. as shop owners were opening for the morning, also rocked a packed minibus travelling in the opposite direction, shattering its windows and badly hurting many of the passengers, witnesses said. Police said at least 12 Iraqis were wounded in the incident.

December 6

Saddam-era secret police general shot dead at his Baghdad home. (AFP)

Gunmen reportedly shot dead a former secret police general who had been in charge of western Baghdad under the Ba'ath regime. General Khalaf Alussi died at his home under a hail of bullets fired by four men, said a witness in his home at al-Yarmuk area. The general, who died on the spot, headed the secret police in the al-Kharkh district on the west bank of the Tigris River.

Iraqi Justice Ministry committee sacks 22 judges, public prosecutors. (SCIRI's Iran-based radio station *Voice of the Mujahidin*)

The Judicial Monitoring Committee, a Justice Ministry-affiliate body, has decided to ban 22 judges and public prosecutors from exercising their duties at the courts of Baghdad and other governorates. The decision provided reasons for the sacking of the judges, ranging from their connection with the former Ba'ath regime, working for courts affiliated with the services of the former regime, accepting bribes and tolerating administrative corruption.

Iraqi police officer stabbed to death in Kirkuk. (AFP)

An Iraqi police officer was stabbed to death in the city of Kirkuk, the local chief of police said. Lieutenant Ahmed Walid, 22, was stabbed in the neck at 6:30 pm in the city's busy Quriya neighbourhood by an unknown assailant who then fled, said police chief Turhan Yussef. He said the officer worked at a police station in a predominantly Turkmen area and that the killing took place near the heavily-guarded offices of the Kurdistan Democratic Party and the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan parties.

Iraqi officer slain by violent mourners in Samarra. (AP and US newspaper *Los Angeles Times*)

Iraqis mourning two men killed in a firefight with U.S. troops clashed with civil defence forces in Samarra, killing one Iraqi officer and setting his pickup truck ablaze. "Long live Saddam!" they chanted. The mourners in Samarra were burying two men killed last week in battles with U.S. forces. After the Americans returned the men's bodies, about 1,000 people marched to the cemetery to bury them. As is customary in Iraq, they fired weapons in the air. A group of Iraqi officers from the U.S.-led Civil Defense Corps told them to put away their guns, witnesses said, and the mourners opened fire, shooting one officer in the head and chasing away the others. At the cemetery, the mourners marked the graves with Iraqi flags, strewing red and yellow roses around the site.

Gunmen killed an Iraqi policeman in Mosul. (AP and US newspaper *Los Angeles Times*)

In Mosul, three gunmen killed an Iraqi policeman on his way to work, police said. The victim was a 24-year-old recent graduate of a police academy that has received support and guidance from coalition forces.

Bomb attack on the home of Baghdad's bomb disposal chief. (AFP)

The home of Baghdad's bomb disposal chief, Colonel Badir Taha Abbas, was severely damaged and his daughter-in-law injured by a bomb placed outside his flat door. The bomb went off in the apartment block in the Saydiya district of south Baghdad at exactly 7:30 am, said Abbas's cousin. "Two or three guys wearing black coats and black boots were seen by neighbours planting the bomb just outside the door before making off," he said. "The force of the blast blew out the doors of all 12 flats in the block. Fadaam said his cousin believed he had been targeted because of his work defusing insurgent rockets and bombs, including two makeshift rocket launchers found on donkey carts near the Italian embassy on November 21, the same day as identical attacks on the oil ministry complex and two city centre media hotels.

December 7

Iraqi child killed by bomb south of Baghdad. (AFP)

A 12-year-old Iraqi was reportedly killed by a bomb that had been disguised as a heap of rubbish southeast of Baghdad. The improvised explosive device (IED) of the sort favoured by anti-coalition fighters had been positioned outside the suburb of Iskandariyah and "camouflaged with vegetables and a soda can," Coalition ground

forces said. "An explosive ordnance disposal team was dispatched to the area and found the child had been killed from the blast," the statement said.

Former Iraqi army officer found dead on roadside in Al-Ramadi. (United Arab Emirates *Abu Dhabi TV*)

It was reported that Major-General Abd-Humud Muhawish, an officer in the former Iraqi Army, has been found dead on a roadside in Al-Ramadi. According to eyewitnesses, traces of torture were found on the body of the officer. Muhawish had surrendered to the US troops several months ago, before he was found dead in the morning.

Catastrophic housing shortage threatens Iraq. (AFP)

Iraq is verging on a catastrophic shortage of housing for its people, a senior Housing Ministry official said. "The need for housing has developed from a shortage, to a problem, to a crisis, and probably now it is a catastrophe," Saad Al-Zubaidi, a counsellor to the Interim Minister of Construction and Housing, said. "A lot of landlords have asked to sharply increase the rent, and if the tenants can't afford it they just kick them out," he said. The evictees then move into empty government buildings. "They are in the thousands, and it's becoming a humanitarian issue of not being able to kick them out, and not being able to keep them in," said official.

Zubaidi said close to half of Iraq's population of about 26 million are considered to be living below the poverty line and cannot afford decent housing. "It is the responsibility of the state to find accommodation for them if they are citizens of this country," he said. Zubaidi's ministry has begun site preparation for three major housing complexes and has plans to build one million houses by 2010.

December 8

Explosion kills Iraqi sapper, Baghdad bomb chief targeted. (AFP)

An Iraqi police explosives expert was killed as he attempted to defuse a roadside bomb in the restive town of Baqubah, a colleague said. The improvised explosive device (IED), of the sort favoured by anti-US insurgents, was found near the city's stadium at around 10 am, said Captain Hamid Abdullah. "Our bomb disposal chief, Captain Fallah Khadduri, told everyone else including his assistant to stand back and went to tackle the device himself," said Abdullah. "As he tried to defuse it, it blew up," the policeman said, adding that he believed it had been detonated remotely by the bomber.

December 9

Attack on Baghdad Sunni mosque, three killed. (Qatari *Al-Jazeera* satellite TV)

It was reported that three were killed and others were injured in an explosion that rocked a mosque west of Baghdad. The blast occurred shortly after dawn at the Ahab al-Mustafa Mosque near an electric generator. The mosque's imam said that he did not know if the blast was due to a technical fault or an attack. The Iraqi Islamic Ulema Council has denounced this operation. In a statement, the council considered this

operation a link in a series of repeated attacks aimed against the Sunni mosques in various areas of the country.

The Christian Science Monitor report on the same news on December 11: The Sunnis blame the explosion on militant Shiites belonging to the Al Dawa party and the Badr Brigades, the military wing of the Iran-backed Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq (SCIRI). The Shiites accuse Sunnis from the extremist Wahhabi sect of stirring up tensions between the two communities. As the three victims were buried on December 10, armed Sunni and Shiite gunmen took to the streets vowing revenge, while clerics pleaded for calm. The Shiites say that there have always been some Wahhabis living in the area, but they have grown more assertive since Saddam Hussein's downfall in April 2003. The Iraqi police are investigating the causes of the explosion. As the residents prepared to bury the victims of the blast, dozens of Sunni gunmen entered the neighborhood, clutching AK-47 rifles, their heads swathed in red-and-white scarves and wearing identity badges proclaiming them to belong to the Khaled ibn Walid Forces.

Petroleum firm director shot, wounded in Iraqi oil centre. (AFP)

A director of the petroleum company in Kirkuk was shot and wounded by unknown gunmen, police said. Mohammed Yunes, of the Northern Oil Co., was hit by two bullets, said Ammar Khoder Abed of the Iraqi police. Doctor Jassem al-Rubaie, who operated on the victim, said he was in stable condition.

Governor of Babylon ousted in anti-Ba'athist drive. (UK newspaper *Financial Times*)

Iraq's Governing Council dismissed the governor of one of Iraq's 18 provinces, accusing him of being a high-ranking official in the outlawed Ba'ath party. Iskandar Jawad Watoot, the governor of Babylon Province, is the highest ranking official yet to be purged by the High Committee on de-Ba'athification, led by Ahmad Chalabi, who also leads the Iraqi National Congress party. Entifadh Qanbar, a spokesman for the INC, denied that the firing of Watoot was politically motivated, but asserted that the Governing Council had been given broad powers to root out Ba'athists in the Iraqi state. Watoot is a former lieutenant colonel in the Iraqi air force, who lost three brothers to purges by the ousted president.

Adil Abdel Mahdi, a spokesman for Abdul Aziz al-Hakim, the current Governing Council president, said that changes would be sought in many local councils over the next few months: "We will revise and modify and re-elect those municipalities that we feel there are some bad people," he said. Membership of the committees that will indirectly choose the assembly will be evenly split three ways, between the Governing Council, local and provincial councils. The formula has been designed to give local leaders a stronger voice in the political process, which until now has been dominated by formerly exiled groups like Chalabi's INC.

US newspaper *Washington Post* report on the same news on December 12: The demonstrators converged on the provincial governor's office in Hilla with banners, sleeping mats, cooking pots and a simple demand: Iskander Jawad Witwit should quit. After three days and nights of continuous protests, Witwit did just that. But the demonstrators have refused to budge. As soon as Witwit resigned, the local representative of the U.S. occupation authority appointed a former Iraqi air force

officer as acting governor. To the protesters, that was unacceptable. The new governor, they insisted, should be chosen not by an American but by Iraqis through an election. The protesters have pledged to continue their sit-in outside the governor's office - they have erected tents and dug latrines - until their demand is met. Leaders of Hilla's largest labor unions have vowed to hold a general strike starting on December 13 in support of elections. "It's been peaceful in Hilla until now, but if the coalition forces keep refusing what the people want, it will become a big problem that they will not be able to control," said Mohammed Kiflawi Abboud, chairman of the council that governs Hilla province. Protest leaders said they have been energized by recent statements from Grand Ayatollah Ali Sistani, calling for the provisional government to be elected. Sistani has rejected the Bush administration's plan to select a national assembly through caucuses in each of the country's 18 provinces, saying it does not give Iraqis enough of a role in the transition. The 22-member provincial council, comprising representatives from professional associations and community organizations, is only an advisory body. Power over the police and other government institutions rests with the governor, who rules at the behest of the occupation authority.

A day before Witwit resigned, a commission purging Baath Party members from government ordered his dismissal. Council members said they discovered documents linking him to Hussein's intelligence service. He also had been criticized for appointing two of his brothers and several other relatives to top posts in the provincial government. His replacement, Emad Lefteh, insisted there would be no way to hold elections right away. Sitting behind the governor's desk with aides at his side, he said the occupation authority "should not bend to a few people protesting outside."

IGC decides to expel members of the Iranian opposition Mujahidin-e Khalq Organization. (Qatari *Al-Jazeera* satellite TV)

Muwaffaq al-Rubay'i, member of the Iraqi interim Governing Council (IGC), defended the IGC's decision to expel members of the Iranian opposition Mujahidin-e Khalq Organization (PMOI) from Iraq, denying that the decision was part of a deal between Baghdad and Tehran. He stressed that the Iraqi authorities will not turn over any of the organization's members to Iran. He maintained that there are contacts with some European countries to secure residency of those members there. Al-Rubay'i said they "will not turn over any of the organization's members to Iran against their will or desire."

Mohammad Shari'ati, adviser to the Iranian president, said "The Islamic Republic of Iran had announced an amnesty for the ordinary members of the PMOI. The officials of this organization must be tried for their crimes and the terrorist operations they perpetrated in Iran and elsewhere and which they admitted."

Qatari *Al-Jazeera* satellite TV report on the same news on December 10: Sana Barq Zahidi, spokesman for the Iranian opposition Mujahidin-e Khalq Organization (PMOI) in London says that the PMOI presence in Iraq is subject to international laws, and that this presence is under the supervision of the International Committee of the Red Cross and the Geneva Conventions.

Iraqi newspaper "Al-Zaman"'s report on the same news on December 11: The Governing Council gave members of the PMOI until the end of this year to leave Iraq

and close the organization's offices. The council also banned the organization from carrying out any activity. Based on this decision, the organization's assets and weapons would be confiscated and its assets deposited in the fund for the victims of the former regime. Observers noted that the council made this decision following visits by members of the council to Iran, including visits by Jalal Talabani during his rotational presidency of the council and by council member Ahmad al-Chalabi. Many members of the organization, who later left Iraq via Jordan, were detained at a refugee camp built near the border. Bloody clashes took place between fighters of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan and members of the Mojahedin-e Khalq during the previous regime.

December 10

Iraqi rights court is approved by Governing Council. (US newspaper *Washington Post*)

Iraq's U.S.-appointed Governing Council approved the creation of a special court run by Iraqis to try members of former president Saddam Hussain's government on charges of genocide and crimes against humanity. The tribunal will have broad powers of arrest and the right to prosecute everyone - from Hussein to prison hangmen - accused of involvement in the mass killings, forced expulsions and widespread torture that occurred during the 35 years Ba'ath Party ruled the country. Unlike the special courts established to prosecute war crimes committed in the former Yugoslavia and in Rwanda, which operate under the aegis of the United Nations and involve international jurists specializing in human rights law, this tribunal will be staffed with Iraqi prosecutors, judges and defence attorneys.

In a last-minute concession to the rights groups, council officials said, the U.S. occupation authority asked council members to include a provision giving the council the right to appoint international judges if needed. The council's legal committee agreed to the amendment shortly before the full 25-member council voted on the law, the officials said. The tribunal will be the first attempt to bring to justice scores of members of the Ba'ath government, military and intelligence services for crimes committed between July 17, 1968, when the Ba'ath Party came to power, and May 1, 2003, when President Bush declared an end to major combat in Iraq. Council members said they would ask U.S. forces to hand over hundreds of former officials in American custody - including 38 captured senior officials from the Pentagon's list of 55 wanted Iraqis - as soon as the tribunal sets up a detention centre. Iraqi officials also said scores of former government officials who are now free could be charged. "There will be many arrests," said Salim Chalabi, who has been a key architect of the tribunal. Defendants could face the death penalty if convicted.

Judges for the tribunal will be nominated by an independent judicial council and approved by the Governing Council, council members said. Prosecutors, investigators and public defenders will be appointed by the Governing Council, the members said. International legal experts will be asked to serve as advisers to the judges, lawyers and investigators, the members said. "They will have a monitoring role to ensure that the Iraqi judges comply with international standards of due process," Chalabi said. There will be 10 trial chambers, each with a five-judge panel. A nine-judge appellate court will handle appeals.

A team of U.N. specialists concluded in August that Iraq had "a degraded justice system" that "is not capable of rendering fair and effective justice for violations of international humanitarian law and other serious criminal offences involving the prior regime."

Kurdish PUK guard killed in an attack in Mosul. (Iraqi Patriotic Union of Kurdistan newspaper *Kurdistani Nuwe*)

Unidentified gunmen fired at the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan Ninawa headquarters. Consequently, one of the Peshmergas named Talib Abdallah Fayzullah was killed and two American soldiers were wounded.

Shia mosque raided after deadly blast at Sunni shrine in Baghdad. (AFP)

Armed men raided a makeshift Shi'a mosque in Baghdad in an apparent revenge attack a day after a bomb killed four men at a Sunni mosque, witnesses said. "About 20 men carrying sub-machine guns, anti-tank rockets and grenades emerged from a funeral procession which moved from the Sunni mosque taking the four dead to the cemetery," said a witness. Both mosques are just a few hundred metres apart. The building was once used by the ousted Ba'ath party and one floor has been converted into a Shi'a mosque named *al-Tawhid* in the al-Dabash mixed area of northwest Baghdad. "They came to me for the key because the sheikh was not there. But as I didn't have it, they broke down the door, fired shots in the ceiling, tore up the posters of Imam Hussein and other martyrs and burnt our religious books," said Abed. It was reported that the gunmen were dressed in black like Saddam's fedayeen, a militia, and wore yellow badges bearing the inscription "Khaled bin Walid", one of the Prophet Mohammad's companions. The day before a booby-trapped bomb exploded in the courtyard of the Akhbar al Mustapha mosque, police said.

December 11

Iraq repeats request for extradition of ex-regime figures for war crimes. (AFP)

Iraq repeated a demand that Gulf countries extradite any former regime members living there who are found guilty by its new tribunal of committing war crimes during the Ba'ath Party rule. "We have told Gulf countries that if the tribunal decides that these officials must be pursued ... we would then ask for their extradition," interim Foreign Minister Hoshyar Zebari said. Zebari said that the officials he was referring to were "ex ministers, high officials of the former regime and members of the Ba'ath party". Iraq's wartime Information Minister Mohammed Said as-Sahhaf and his family surfaced in Abu Dhabi in early July 2003, where he granted the local television station a series of exclusive interviews on the last days of the Saddam regime.

Two major Iraqi Kurdish parties meet to discuss unification. (Patriotic Union of Kurdistan newspaper *Kurdistani Nuwe*)

The joint KDP-PUK peace committee met in the city of Suleimaniya, and took decisions regarding several issues, such as submitting the details of the unification of the two administrations of Arbil and Suleimaniya to the joint leadership for final decision. It was also decided that PUK Centres and KDP Branches hold weekly meetings. The success of the process of students' elections was stressed in the meeting.

Rival former exile groups clash over security in Iraq. (UK newspaper *Financial Times*)

Tensions have emerged between two influential formerly exiled political parties in Baghdad over control of Iraq's rapidly proliferating security organisations. The growing number of Iraqi-financed private military companies had already sparked concern that secular leaders may be developing militias to match the paramilitary forces under the command of religious and Kurdish political groups. Now Ayad Allawi's Iraqi National Accord has accused the Iraqi National Congress, led by Ahmad Chalabi, of undermining central authority by backing the creation of a private military company to secure the oil sector. Allawi is head of the security committee on the interim Governing Council and his deputy, Nouri Badran, runs the interior ministry which controls more than 50,000 police.

The latest dispute between the two men, both members of the Iraqi Governing Council's rotating presidency, erupted after close associates of Chalabi teamed up with Erinys International, a Johannesburg-based security risk consultancy, to train and deploy a 6,500-strong Iraqi force at oil installations. The joint venture, Erinys Iraq, won an \$80m, two-year contract to protect oil sites across Iraq from sabotage. "If such security companies are not under central government control there will be anarchy," said Allawi. He said the interior ministry should regulate the oil security force. Erinys Iraq says its security responsibilities will revert to state control at the end of its two-year contract. "The INC played no part in securing the contract," says Faisal Daghistani, a founding partner and director of the company. He says the contract was won fairly in an open tender. Coalition officials, too, deny the INC influenced the decision. Mr Daghistani, son of the INC's humanitarian co-ordinator, however, acknowledges Erinys is recruiting US-trained Iraqi Free Forces, who entered Iraq with Chalabi.

Mr Chalabi has responded by accusing Mr Allawi of encouraging foreign interference in Iraq's security. The Jordanian government has won a contract to train 32,000 Iraqi police - money Chalabi says would be better spent in Iraq. While the contract was awarded by the ministry, on advice from the CPA, the interior ministry - under INA leadership - is seen as the beneficiary. Ibrahim al-Jannabi, Allawi's deputy on the security committee, counters that the deal is worth \$180m and is financed by the US, not Iraq. Orders to disband Iraqi militias have been only loosely enforced.

December 12

Iraqi policeman killed by blast apparently targeting Americans. (AFP)

An Iraqi policeman was killed and another injured when a bomb apparently targeting a US convoy went off south of Baghdad and also wounded two civilians, an officer said. Haswa is on the road linking Baghdad to the Shi'a holy city of Najaf further south.

Iraqi demonstration demands release of detainees. (Qatari *Al-Jazeera* satellite TV)

Several Iraqis have demanded the release of their sons who have been detained by the US troops for months. This came in a demonstration in front of the US troops'

headquarters in Baghdad. The demonstrators called for improving the treatment of the detainees. They also appealed to the US troops to stop the indiscriminate storming operations of citizens' houses.

Iraqi police catch oil smugglers at secret port. (AFP)

Smugglers have been caught at a secret port near Basra about to load diesel oil from 30 trucks onto ships, the Basra police chief said.

December 14

Car bomb kills 18, wounds 29 in Khaldiyah. (AFP)

An explosion at a police station in western Iraq killed 16 policemen and two civilians, including a seven-year-old girl, and wounded 29 more people, the police said. Witnesses said the explosion was caused by a car bomb, but there was no immediate official confirmation. Sixteen policemen and a civilian reportedly died along with the girl.

Republican Guard general shot dead in Mosul. (AFP)

A general in Saddam Hussein's former elite Republican Guard, Walid Saleh Kassar, was shot dead as he returned home in Mosul, the police said.

December 15

Saddam Hussain arrested near Tikrit. (RFE/RL *Iraq Report*)

Deposed Iraqi President Saddam Hussain was captured on 13 December in a massive operation in Al-Dawr, located some 15 kilometers south of Tikrit. Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) head L. Paul Bremer made the announcement at a 14 December press conference in Baghdad. Soldiers were acting on an "actionable intelligence" that came earlier in the day, US military said. Hussain was found hiding in a "spider hole," nearly 2 meters below ground, just outside a mud hut that is located inside a walled compound. The hole had its own ventilation system. U.S. forces captured two individuals along with Hussain, identified by Iraqi Governing Council members as bodyguards, along with \$750,000, two assault rifles, one handgun, and a taxi. US military said that tribes and family members of Hussain had provided coalition forces with information on the possible location of the deposed leader over several weeks. Iraqi Governing Council members Adnan Pachachi, Ahmad Chalabi, Muwaffaq al-Rubay'i, and Adil Abd al-Mahdi also gave a press conference to reporters in Baghdad on 14 December, saying that they had seen and spoken to Hussain. Chalabi also confirmed to reporters that the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan played a role in locating Hussain. "Kosrat Rasul [head of the PUK's Political Bureau] had a role in uncovering the hideout of Saddam," Chalabi said.

Nine killed in booby-trapped car blast in Baghdad. (Qatari *Al-Jazeera* satellite TV)

In Baghdad several Iraqis were injured when a car bomb exploded near a police station in the Al-Amiriyah district. A second car bomb in the same area was defused by Iraqi police. The Iraqi police say that at least nine were killed and others injured in

an explosion in Al-Husayniyah village north of Baghdad. The police gave no other details.

'Saddam supporters' launch attacks on Baghdad police stations. (AFP)

Some 100 supporters of deposed Iraqi leader Saddam Hussain attacked two police stations in northern Baghdad with automatic weapons and rocket-propelled grenades (RPGs), the police said. The Saddam loyalists struck at the police stations in the Adhamiyeh district a day after US forces announced the capture of the deposed Iraqi leader. "About 100 assailants attacked two neighbourhood police stations with automatic weapons and RPGs from rooftops and the street," the police said, without reporting any casualties. Witnesses said the clashes broke out during a pro-Saddam demonstration. Police opened fire to disperse the demonstrators who were firing in the air.

Pro-Saddam demonstrators sack regional government in Fallujah. (AFP)

Pro-Saddam Hussain demonstrators sacked the regional government offices in the town of Fallujah, putting police guards to flight. The demonstrators stormed into the building, broke up the furniture, computers and air conditioning and then proceeded to destroy collections of documents. Two large pictures of Saddam and Iraqi flags were hung from the top of the building. The building is home to a committee responsible for reconstruction, overseen by American civilians. Hundreds of local residents took to the streets, chanting pro-Saddam slogans and letting off celebratory gunfire into the air. Several hundred armed demonstrators pledged their allegiance to their deposed leader.

US troops shot dead two in Fallujah after Saddam Hussain loyalists sacked the regional government offices, police said. The pair gunned down in Fallujah were shot inside a car, said Iraqi police. Military aircraft dropped flares and US soldiers used loudhailers to call on residents to give up their arms. They threatened to "shoot anyone seen with a gun in his hand."

Celebrations in Kirkuk leave four dead. (RFE/RL Iraq Report)

Celebrations marking the capture of Saddam Hussein in the city of Kirkuk left four civilians dead and more than 60 wounded. The casualties were the result of individuals firing guns into the air in celebration, a common Arab ritual.

December 16

A pro-Saddam Hussein demonstrations in Mosul and Ramadi ended in violence. (The Canadian Press news agency)

A pro-Saddam Hussein demonstration in the city of Mosul has ended in violence. Iraqi police say one officer was killed and another injured. A statement from the U-S military says soldiers in the town of Ramadi west of Baghdad killed three protesters and injured two others in another violent pro-Saddam rally. Such demonstrations have been held in several Iraqi towns.

Lebanese authorities released 300 Iraqis. (Turkish Anatolian News Agency)

Lebanese authorities released 300 Iraqi prisoners, including women and children. It was reported that most of the prisoners were Iraqis who were arrested in recent months while entering Lebanon through the Syrian border or those arrested while attempting at exiting Lebanon illegally. They have been deported back to Iraq through Syria after their release.

December 17

SCIRI official killed in Baghdad. (Qatari *Al-Jazeera* satellite TV)

The Supreme Council of the Islamic Revolution in Iraq (SCIRI) said that Muhannad al-Hakim, the SCIRI official in the Al-Amiriyah neighbourhood in Baghdad, was assassinated. The sources added that Muhannad al-Hakim received death threats a week ago from the Ba'ath loyalists.

December 19

At least one dead, several hurt in attack on Shiite school. (AFP)

At least one person was killed and some 10 wounded in an explosion at a religious school attached to an office of the Shiite Supreme Council of the Islamic Revolution in Iraq (SCIRI), witnesses said. "We are in the process of counting the victims," said Mohsen al-Hakim.

Iraqi guard wounded in shooting at empty UN refugee office. (AFP)

An Iraqi guard posted outside the empty office of the UN Refugee Agency in Baghdad was shot and wounded by gunmen. Three armed men got out of a car and opened fire at the UNHCR building with automatic weapons, wounding a guard, said another guard. He said the attackers fled. No UNHCR workers were inside at the time of the attack.

Main Kurdish parties members said to hinder opening of offices. (Iraqi Kurdish newspaper *Hawlati*)

In implementation of the decision with the reopening of centre and branch offices in the Governorates and administrative districts of Arbil, Duhok, and Suleimaniya, some Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) gunmen have attacked a Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) cadre in the Hawraman area and some KDP gunmen have fired on the PUK committee office in Arbil's Benislawa District. A KDP source said that two KDP officials had gone to Tawilah [in Suleimaniya Governorate, near the border with Iran] with a view to opening the party office in the township, and that they were stopped by some PUK gunmen and assaulted a KDP member in the area, Ali Haji Abdallah. The PUK-led regional government representative in Sharazur said: "Those who have assaulted the KDP member have been detained at the orders of the PUK and the regional government, because their action was not in line with the PUK and the regional government's directives, and no one or side should be hindered. A joint PUK-KDP committee has been set up to investigate the incident."

December 20

Three Ba'athists killed in attacks in Najaf. (AFP)

Three people, including an official of the former ruling Ba'ath party, have been shot dead and a fourth seriously wounded in separate attacks in the Shiite holy city of Najaf, police said.

Gunmen on a motorcycle reportedly opened fire on former Ba'ath official Lamia Abbas al-Chill as he walked his son to school. The son died instantly and Chill was wounded in the head and chest. Chill was said to have been a close aide to Ali Abdullah al-Dhalimi, the former regional chief of the deposed Ba'ath party who was beaten and shot dead by an angry crowd near Najaf on December 17. Dhalimi was suspected of helping to repress a Shiite insurrection in 1991.

Another former Baath party official was killed on December 19 evening in a separate attack in Najaf, the police said. Gunmen killed Ali Qassem al-Tamimi, a former local official under the Baathist regime, and Mohammad Mokhtar Khdayr inside an electric supply store in Najaf.

Thousands of protestors demand Kirkuk for the Kurds. (AFP)

Thousands of Iraqi Kurds gathered in Kirkuk to demand that Iraq's northern oil centre be included in a future autonomous Kurdish region. Protestors waved the red white and green Kurdish flag, which bears a yellow sun in the middle, but no Iraqi flags were on show. Organisers estimated the number of protesters at 10,000, making it the biggest demonstration in the city since the US-led coalition toppled Saddam's Ba'ath regime in April 2003. Armed Kurdish "peshmerga" fighters and Iraqi police provided security at the demonstration. The city's native Arabs and Turks are also wary of living in a province under Kurdish control. The demonstration was split along party lines between the two main former rebel factions - the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan led by Jalal Talabani and Massoud Barzani's Kurdistan Democratic Party. The demonstration coincided with a push by Barzani, Talabani and three other Kurdish members of the interim Governing Council for the establishment of a federal Iraq, with Kurdish autonomy in the north, ahead of a constitutional convention promised for 2005. The Kurdish leaders have submitted a bill to the council calling for the expansion of Kurdish autonomy from the three northern provinces, which rebel factions ruled, to include Tamim, home to Kirkuk, and parts of the ethnically mixed provinces of Nineveh and Diyala.

December 22

US forces detain former Iraqi general in Ba'qubah raid. (Qatari Al-Jazeera satellite TV)

US forces have detained a person described as a key officer in the former Iraqi regime's intelligence, who allegedly worked on recruiting agents to carry out attacks against US forces. He was arrested following a raid in Ba'qubah.

Bomb defused outside office of Iraqi Shiite leader. (AFP)

A small bomb was defused in the city of Najaf near the office of Abdel Aziz al-Hakim, current president of Iraq's US-installed interim Governing Council. The bomb

was found in an empty lot littered with garbage, about 200 metres from Hakim's office, a spokesman said.

Ex-member of Saddam's security service shot dead in Kirkuk. (AFP)

Unknown gunmen killed a former member of Saddam Hussein's security service in Kirkuk, police said. Five bullets hit Saddam Ismail Mohammad, 38, as he stood in front of his home, said the police. Mohammad worked in the interrogation service at the general security headquarters in Kirkuk. Residents say many people were tortured there.

December 23

Kurdish, Arab students clash in Kirkuk. (AFP)

Kurdish and Arab students clashed in city of Kirkuk. An Iraqi policeman was wounded during clashes between Kurdish and Arab students in Kirkuk, where ethnic tensions are on the rise. The policeman was trying to separate the fighting students and three Kurdish students and one Turkman were arrested following the tussle at Kirkuk's Technical College, according to Police Captain Athir Ghazi. The fight erupted after Kurdish students refused to allow the Iraqi flag to be raised. The college's dean then asked students to lower all Kurdish, Turkmen and Iraqi flags, but the Kurdish students refused and students came to blows.

US forces arrest Islamic Group members. (AFP)

US forces raided the headquarters of the Kurdish Islamist group Jamaa Islamiya (Koma-e Islami), arresting 20 people suspected of having links to Ansar al-Islam, said police sources and a human rights activist in Kirkuk, Muayad Ibrahim Ahmed.

Turkman judge murdered in Mosul. (AFP)

A Turkman judge was shot dead in the centre of Mosul, the police said. Gunmen fired several shots from a car at Yusef Khorshid at night in the city's Muthanna district, said the police.

Four Sunnis killed by unknown assailants in front of Baghdad mosque. (AFP)

Four Iraqis were killed by unknown assailants in front of a Sunni mosque in Baghdad, a religious official said, blaming "foreign parties" for stirring trouble between Iraq's Sunni and Shi'a Muslims. The victims were reportedly shot at dawn by armed men in a car, who opened fire in the direction of worshippers leaving the mosque. The incident occurred in Washash, a Shiite quarter in the centre of Baghdad.

December 24

Bomb attack misses aide to Iraq Technology Minister. (AFP)

An advisor to Iraq's Technology Minister narrowly escaped death when a bomb exploded as he drove off from his house in the morning, police said. Khudr Abdul Abbas Hamza had left his home in the western Baghdad district of Dawdi when his armoured Ford vehicle was hit by a bomb hidden in an empty oil drum, said a bodyguard for Hamza. One passerby was wounded when Hamza's bodyguards opened

fire after the explosion at 8 am on suspicion that the assailants who had detonated the roadside bomb were lurking nearby.

Suicide blast kills bomber, three others in Arbil. (AFP)

A suicide bombing killed four people, including the bomber, and wounded 15 when a pick-up truck blew up in front of Interior Ministry offices in the city of Arbil, an Interior Ministry source said. Two policemen and a civilian died when the pick-up exploded at 11:50 am, the source said. Ministry employees were among the wounded.

Baghdad Christians hold Christmas eve mass early amid security concerns. (AFP)

Christians in Baghdad celebrated Christmas eve mass eight hours early amid fears for the security of the traditional midnight observance. "There will be no midnight mass at all churches in Baghdad without exception," the Reverend Joseph Attisha of St. Joseph's Cathedral in the southern Karrada district said. "People have no confidence to leave their homes because of the security situation." He said leaders of Baghdad's Christian community got together and decided to hold the traditional service at between 4:00 and 5:00 pm, due to fears of violence in a city rocked daily by fighting between US forces and insurgents.

300 Baghdadis who worship at the Protestant Seventh Day Adventist Church off Andalus Square in the southeast of Baghdad will celebrate the Christmas in the morning of December 27 because of the security situation, said Oweida Wahaba, the church's Egyptian pastor.

Kurdistan Freedom Congress merges with the PUK. (Iraqi Patriotic Union of Kurdistan satellite TV)

The head of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, PUK, Political Bureau, Kosrat Rasul, met a number of the Kurdistan Freedom Congress, KFC, political cadres at the KDP offices in Suleimaniya. The meeting was attended by the PUK political bureau members Umar Sayyid Ali and Dr Arsalan Bayiz. In the meeting, the Kurdistan Freedom Congress decided to merge with the PUK. The KFC cadres would have the same rights and responsibilities accorded to the PUK cadres. In line with the PUK principles, the KFC cadres would serve in the ranks of the PUK.

One Iraqi killed, three wounded in Baghdad blast. (AFP)

One Iraqi was killed and three others wounded when the minibus they were traveling in hit a roadside bomb, an Iraqi policeman said. The bomb went off at 12:00 pm at the entrance to a bridge in the Daudi neighbourhood, west of Baghdad, said the police, adding that two of the injured were in serious condition. Witnesses said the roadside bomb had targeted two police cars and a four-wheel drive vehicle that drove by before the blast.

Policeman killed in firefight, Iraqi dies running checkpoint in Mosul. (AFP)

An Iraqi policeman was killed by insurgents and an Iraqi was shot dead trying to run a checkpoint during US raids around the city of Mosul, the US military said. During the search of a suspect's home, a firefight erupted, reportedly leaving two Iraqi policemen wounded and another dead. An Iraqi was shot by US soldiers as he tried to flee the scene of another raid on the home of a suspected former regime member. "During the

searches, a vehicle attempted to run a traffic control point outside a target house. Soldiers engaged the vehicle killing the driver," the US military said.

December 25

Three policemen wounded in bomb blast in central Baghdad. (AFP)

A roadside bomb exploded on a busy Baghdad street, blowing off the hand of a policeman and seriously wounding two other officers, the police said. Some civilians were also hurt in the blast, one of around a half-dozen attacks in Baghdad on Christmas morning, officers said, but they had no concrete information on the number of wounded. The policeman who lost his hand had approached the bomb, hidden in a black bag, on Palestine Street, a busy commercial boulevard in the city's centre. It blew up just as he stepped forward, said the police.

Kurdistan satellite TV office in Baghdad hit by rocket. (Chinese news agency Xinhua)

The Kurdistan satellite television office in Baghdad was attacked by a rocket in the morning. Sirwan Tawfiq, a correspondent of the TV station, said that the rocket hit the headquarters in Mansur district in western Baghdad at 06:00 without causing casualties among the staff. The Sheraton Hotel and the Iranian embassy in central Baghdad were among the most prominent targets, with Iraqi civilian residence also compromised in the Christmas attacks.

Iraqi Sunnis form council. (AFP)

Around 130 Sunni Muslim notables formed a unified council to represent the interests of Iraq's Arab, Kurdish and Turkomen Sunni communities, a spokesman for the group said. Representatives of the Iraqi Islamist Party, linked to the Muslim Brotherhood, the Islamic Party of Kurdistan, Salafists, Sufis and charitable organizations, as well as notable individuals took the decision at a meeting in a Baghdad mosque, said Mohammed Ahmad al-Rashed. The *Shura* (Consultative) Council of the Sunnis will aim to confront the "marginalization of this community" following the fall of former Ba'ath Party regime, said Sheikh Ahmed al-Dabbash, from Iraqi Islamist Party. The council is to elect a committee of 70 members, whose job it will be to unify the community's position in the run-up to elections for a new, transitional national assembly, one of the participants said.

December 26

Organisation of Women's Freedom in Iraq office faces closure threat in Suleimania. (Organisation of Women's Freedom in Iraq website)

It was reported that Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) security officials visited the Organisation of Women's Freedom in Iraq (OWFI) office in Suleimaniya twice during December 2003, questioning the political affiliation of the OWFI and asserting that the organisation lacked any legal status to run a branch in the areas controlled by the PUK. (Organization of Women's Freedom in Iraq was founded in Baghdad in June 2003.) Yanar Mohammed, the OWFI chairwoman, in her protest letter to Jalal

Talabani, described her organisation as “the most radical voice that defends women against honour killings and inequalities imposed by male-chauvinism”.

December 27

Gunmen kill tribal leader in Mosul. (Iraqi Shi'i group's Iran-based radio station *Voice of the Mujahidin*)

The Iraqi police said that armed men killed Talal al-Khalidi, a tribal leader who is a member of the city's local council, and his son in Mosul. The police said that a hand grenade was hurled at them when they began an investigation into the incident, wounding one policeman.

Iraqi lawyer assisting US forces gunned down in Mosul. (AFP)

A lawyer assisting US forces with legal matters in the city of Mosul was gunned down outside his home in the morning, police and medics said. Adel al-Hadidi was sprayed with gunfire by unidentified assailants in a blue car as they pulled up in front of his home, killing him and injuring his brother, the police said. The slain lawyer helped US forces with legal matters and was tipped to head the provincial bar association after US forces arrested its previous chairman, Ballawi Yasin, on charges of being a partisan of ousted leader Saddam Hussain, authorities said.

Karbala blast kills 18. (AFP)

18 persons died in suicide bomb attacks in Karbala, a health department official said. An Iraqi hospital official put the number of Iraqis wounded in the attack at 160, on top of 24 coalition soldiers wounded, bringing the overall number of wounded to more than 180. "Five people, including a woman, later died from their injuries, raising the toll to 12 Iraqis," said the city's health officials. Six coalition soldiers - four Bulgarians and two Thais - were also killed in the multiple attacks around Karbala. "Two children were blinded" by the blasts, the officials added.

December 28

Kurdish deputy security chief wounded, three killed in ambush in Arbil. (AFP)

The deputy security chief of the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) was wounded and his three bodyguards killed in an ambush outside his home in Arbil, police said. The KDP number two security official Jawamir Attiyah Kaki was rushed to hospital, said Arbil's police chief Nariman Abdel Hamid.

December 29

Two Iraqis killed, British engineer wounded in attack south of Baghdad. (Qatari *Al-Jazeera* satellite TV)

On the road near the city of Al-Mahmudiyah, unidentified gunmen targeted a car and its passengers, who were foreign contractors working for the Ministry of Electricity. The gunmen killed two Iraqi guards and wounded a British engineer, before escaping after the attack.

December 30

Roadside bomb targeting U.S. convoy kills one Iraqi. (AP)

Rebels detonated a roadside bomb as a U.S. convoy drove by a densely populated residential area in central Baghdad in the morning, killing one Iraqi and wounding another, police said. A U.S. military Humvee was parked in the middle of the road shortly after the blast in the Karrada neighborhood, beside a shattered concrete median where the bomb appeared to have been planted.

Unidentified armed men kill former official's secretary and his son in Baghdad. (Voice of the Mujahidin)

Unidentified armed men shot dead Bashir al-Qaysi, Abd Humud's secretary Abd Humud was formerly secretary to leader Saddam Hussain, and his son Uday in Al-Sha'b neighbourhood in Baghdad. The US occupation forces had raided Bashir al-Qaysi's house in November 2003, and arrested his son and brother. However, Bashir al-Qaysi had managed to escape. It was also reported that Abd Humud was arrested a few months ago.

December 31

Bomb explodes in Baghdad neighbourhood, three Iraqis injured. (AP)

A roadside bomb exploded in central Baghdad as a U.S. military convoy passed by night, injuring three American soldiers and three Iraqi civilians. The bomb was concealed in shrubs in front of a restaurant, the police said. U.S. soldiers cordoned off the site of the nighttime blast in Harithiyah neighborhood.

Arabs and Turkomans reported dead in Kirkuk protest. (AFP)

Three people were killed and dozens more wounded when Kurdish gunmen opened fire on a demonstration by Arabs and Turkmen in Kirkuk, police and hospital officials said. About 2,000 Turkmen and Sunni Arabs were protesting against a push by the city's Kurdish majority to incorporate Kirkuk into an autonomous Kurdish province when violent clashes erupted. Police said Kurdish fighters known as peshmergas opened fire on the demonstrators, who appeared to have come from outlying towns around Kirkuk to join the rally near a police academy on the southern edge of the city. Two people died on arrival at Kirkuk General Hospital, while a third died later of his wounds. A total of 31 people were wounded, five of them seriously, Mohammed said, adding doctors were operating on the most serious casualties who were wounded in the head, abdomen and heart. One of the wounded, Ali Hussein Mohammed, 19, said from his hospital bed that Kurdish fighters or peshmergas began to fire on demonstrators after they shouted: "There is no God but Allah. Kurdistan is the enemy of Allah."

Kurdish leaders Jalal Talabani and Massoud Barzani are pushing Iraq's US-installed Governing Council to recognise their vision of a federalist state well before the approval on March 1 next year of a Basic Law to govern Iraq during the transition period through 2005. Draft legislation they have submitted would grant Kurds near autonomy in the three formerly rebel-held provinces of Arbil, Dohuk and

Sulaymaniyah, as well as Tamim province and Kurdish areas of Nineveh and Diyala provinces.

Car bomb explodes during Baghdad restaurant New Year's party, killing five Iraqis. (AP)

A car bomb ripped through a crowded restaurant holding a New Year's Eve party in an upscale Baghdad neighborhood, killing five Iraqis and wounding 35 others, including at least one American and two Britons. Several cars outside the restaurant were wrecked and in flames. Gunfire was heard after the explosion, which left a large crater on a side street near the building. Five Iraqis were killed, according to Lt. Gen. Ahmed Kadhem, deputy Iraqi interior minister and Baghdad chief of police. The wounded included 32 Iraqis, one American and two Britons, police and hospital officials said. The area of the blast is frequented by rich Iraqis who shop and visit restaurants, and is lined with chic shops selling items such as cosmetics, curtains and upholstery.

Iraqi policeman killed, three wounded in Kirkuk attack. (AFP)

An Iraqi policeman was killed and three wounded, one seriously, when their patrol came under fire in Kirkuk, police said. Unknown assailants opened fire with machine guns on the patrol in an eastern district of the city, killing a policeman and wounding three, including officer Mohammad Nasrat, the city's police chief Turhan Yussef said.

Former Iraqi intelligence officer dies in US custody. (AFP)

The chief suspect in an attack on a DHL aircraft over Baghdad in November 2003 died in US custody after soldiers wounded him in a firefight, the US military said. "Ziad Sahid, a former director of military intelligence... suspected of responsibility for attacks on coalition forces to include the downing of the DHL jetliner, died in a coalition medical facility of wounds received during a targeted raid on his complex," US military said.

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