

Chronology of Events in Iraq, February 2004*

February 1

At least 56 dead in suicide blasts in Arbil. (Agence France Presse / AFP)

Suicide bombers killed or injured more than 100 people in Arbil in attacks on two rival Kurdish political offices packed with people celebrating a Muslim holiday. There was chaos in the normally peaceful city of Arbil after the near simultaneous blasts struck the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) and the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) buildings during festivities to mark the start of the *Eid al-Adha* feast. Among the dead were Arbil governor Akram Menten, the KDP party's number three Sami Abdul Rahman, and senior member Saad Abdullah, a KDP official said. Senior PUK official Shahwan Abbas was also believed killed. The two bombs went off within five minutes of each other, at the two offices in the centre of Arbil, 10 kilometres apart. Saywan Barzani of the KDP said as many as 33 KDP people died and another 29 from the PUK, while 140 were wounded.

February 3

Ansar al-Sunnah claims Mosul police station bombing of January 31. (London-based newspaper *Al-Sharq al-Awsat*)

"Military Committee of the Ansar al-Sunnah Army" in Iraq in which it claimed responsibility for the suicide bombing with a booby-trapped vehicle inside the Al-Thaqafah Police Station in the Al-Thaqafah complex in Mosul on January 31.

February 5

Senior Ansar al-Islam member arrested in northern Iraq (Iraqi Patriotic Union of Kurdistan newspaper *Kurdistani Nuwe*)

It was reported a Suleimaniya Security team, in cooperation with Penjwin Security Department, arrested Warzir Ali Wali Mamoyi, reportedly a member of Ansar al-Islam Fatwa Body.

* *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.*

February 6

Two civilians killed in Samarra (Lebanese *LBC Sat TV*)

It was reported that the US forces have killed two civilians and wounded seven others in the industrial neighbourhood of the city of Samarra. The incident took place after a convoy of US vehicles was attacked with two RPGs that missed the target.

Four Iraqi police wounded in blast outside Al-Fallujah station (Lebanese *LBC Sat TV*)

In the city of Al-Fallujah, a violent explosion in front of the city's police headquarters wounded four members of the Iraqi police.

February 7

Three killed by bomb outside office of Iraqi deputy police chief in Sawaryah. (AFP)

Three people have been killed and eight wounded in a bomb attack in the offices of the Iraqi deputy police chief in Sawaryah, the US military said. A homemade bomb, believed to have been planted by a night-shift security guard, blew up at 9:20 am.

February 8

Five trying to blow up Kurdish party offices arrested in Kirkuk. (AFP)

Five Iraqis were arrested in city of Kirkuk as they were about to plant bombs targeting the country's two main Kurdish parties, the head of police said. Lieutenant General Shirko Shaker, who commands police in the Kirkuk province, said the five were from the southern city of Imara. He said they belonged to Iraq's Shiite Muslim majority community, but their political affiliation and their motives were not determined. The suspects were arrested as they were about to plant homemade bombs at the entrance of a street housing the offices of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan and the Kurdistan Democratic Party, he said.

February 9

Iraqi refugee camp in Iran closed (UN OCHA Integrated Regional Information Networks / IRIN)

One of the largest camps to host Iraqi refugees in Iran closed over the weekend, the office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) confirmed. The remaining 205 refugees in the Ashrafi camp, located 150 km north of Ahvaz, the capital of the southwestern Kuzestan province, were transported back to their homeland via the Shalamshea border crossing. The camp was home to some 12,000 Iraqis, many of whom had lived there for more than a decade following the first Gulf war in 1991.

Former Iraqi war prisoners protest outside coalition headquarters. (AFP)

Some 250 former Iraqi prisoners of war demonstrated outside the headquarters of the US-led coalition in Baghdad, demanding back pay and the restitution of their rights as ex-soldiers. The protestors - who fought in the Iraq-Iran war in the 1980s or in the Gulf War in 1991 - said the US-appointed interim Iraqi Governing Council had refused to grant them the rights accorded to ex-soldiers upon their release.

Eviction order sparks protest from returning refugees in Basra. (AFP)

More than 300 homeless people, many refugees returning from exile during Saddam Hussain's regime, protested in Basra after authorities ordered them to quit government property. In a peaceful four-hour demonstration outside city hall in Basra, protestors expressed anger that the new city council's first official proclamation had been an eviction notice. Under a January 26, 2004 order by Basra governor Wael Abdul Latif, the homeless people were told to leave former army buildings and premises of Saddam's Baath party by the middle of February.

February 10

Suicide bomber blows himself up near tribal leaders house in Ramadi. (*Al-Bawaba News*)

A suicide bomber blew himself up outside the house of two tribal leaders in Ramadi. The bomber reportedly walked up to the house of brothers Majid and Amer Ali Suleiman in Ramadi and detonated explosives strapped around his body, according to witnesses. Three guards were seriously injured but the brothers - who are among the city's most prominent tribal leaders working with occupation forces - escaped unhurt.

At least 45 killed, 150 wounded in suicide car bomb blast in Iskandariya. (AFP)

At least 45 people were killed and 150 wounded, mostly civilians, when a suicide bomber detonated a pick-up truck packed with explosives outside a police station in Iskandariya, Iraqi police and US military officers said. Iraqi police officers said at least 45 people were killed and 150 wounded in the blast that went off at 9:30 am. Lieutenant Hussein Sami said the explosion occurred as hundreds of civilians had flocked to the station to fill in applications to join the police force.

February 11

Car bomb kills at 25 least in Baghdad. (US newspaper *The Washington Post*)

A car bomb ripped through an army recruiting center in Baghdad morning, killing 25 Iraqis applying for jobs as soldiers. The bombing in Baghdad took place about 7:40 a.m., less than a mile from the Green Zone, the high-security neighbourhood where the U.S.-led coalition has its headquarters.

Brother of former Ansar al-Islam leader kidnapped in Iraq. (Radio Free Europe / Radio Liberty RFE/RL Iraq Report)

The brother of the former leader of Ansar Al-Islam was kidnapped in Iraqi Kurdistan. Sayf al-Din Faraj Ahmad, brother to Ansar leader Mullah Krekar, who remains jailed in Oslo, was kidnapped in broad daylight in his hometown of Suleimaniya. Ahmad's family members have accused the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) for playing a role in the abduction. "We have received clear indications that the PUK is behind the kidnapping. We have spoken to several people in the organization and they all say that we should just take it easy and wait -- then our brother will come back," Khalid Faraj Ahmad said.

February 12

Trade Ministry aide reportedly assassinated in Baghdad. (London-based newspaper Al-Zaman)

Unknown assailants assassinated Husayn Abd-al-Fattah Shintaf, a financial and managerial affairs aide in the Ministry of Trade. It was reported that a number of people attacked Shintaf's car and fired bullets killing him instantly.

Former Ba'ath party officials in coalition custody. (RFE/RL Iraq Report)

U.S. forces reportedly detained Muhsin Khadir al-Khafaji, a former Ba'ath Party chairman and commander of the party's militia in the Al-Qadisiyah Governorate. Al-Khafaji was 48th on the coalition's list of the 55 most-wanted Iraqis from the deposed Hussain regime. Al-Khafaji was reportedly arrested in Baghdad on February 7, according to U.S. Central Command.

U.S. and Iraqi forces reportedly captured more than 100 anticoalition militants in Iraq during raids on February 4 and 5. Among those captured in the raids were former Iraqi Brigadier General Abu Aymad al-Tikriti, who headed military intelligence in northern Iraq for the Hussain regime, and Majid Ali Abbas al-Dazi, who is suspected of coordinating a suicide truck bombing in Samarra on January 24 that killed four Iraqi civilians and wounded some 40 others.

February 13

Two Iraqi police killed, civilian wounded in attack in Ramadi. (Iranian-based Shi'a radio station Voice of the Mujahidin)

Two policemen have been killed and one civilian wounded in an attack by unidentified gunmen near a checkpoint in Al-Ramadi. The occupation troops surrounded the scene of the incident and imposed a curfew in the area.

Former bodyguard of Ali Hassan Al-Majid reportedly killed. (Iraqi newspaper Al-Furat and RFE/RL Iraq Report)

Former Iraqi Brigadier General Marwan al-Samarra'i, who served as the bodyguard of Ali Hassan al-Majid was reportedly gunned down in Baghdad. Al-Samarra'i had reportedly been in hiding at a relative's house in the 9 Nisan district of Baghdad since fleeing his own home in Baghdad. According to the report, unidentified gunmen

arrived at the house in a new Land Cruiser bearing no license plates, and opened fire on al-Samarra'i with Kalashnikov assault rifles.

February 14

Militants launch attack on police in Al-Fallujah. (RFE/RL Iraq Report)

Militants attacked the main police station in the Iraqi city of Al-Fallujah, killing as many as 25 police officers and wounding forty. International media reported that between 20 and 80 prisoners were released by the 30-50 militants, who launched their attack at around 8:00 am. A simultaneous attack occurred at the nearby Iraqi Civil Defense Corps (ICDC) station in the city, in an apparent attempt to stave off ICDC units from aiding the police in fighting the insurgents.

Former Iraqi Parliamentari Speaker released by the Coalition. (RFE/RL Iraq Report)

Sa'dun Hammadi, the former speaker of the Iraqi National Assembly, was released after nine months in coalition custody. Hammadi's son Ghassan confirmed that his father was released. He added that his father is in good health.

February 15

Iraqi police arrested former Ba'ath official. (Coalition Provisional Authority / CPA website)

Iraqi police captured No. 41 on the list of the 55 most-wanted Iraqis from the deposed Hussain regime. Muhammad Zimam Abd al-Razzaq al-Sa'dun served as a Ba'ath Party chairman and commander of the Ba'ath Party Militia in the Al-Ta'mim and Ninawa governorates. Al-Sa'dun was hiding from police in an upstairs room of a residence in Baghdad.

February 16

Women's rights centre opens in Karbala. (CPA website)

Zainab Al-Hawra'a Center for Women's Rights was opened in Karbala. The centre provides assistance to widowed, impoverished, and vulnerable women. The center will offer a variety of educational classes on subjects including literacy and computer skills, health care, democracy and advocacy, as well as English-language training.

Iraqi Civil Defence Corps deploys 800 men to secure northern borders. (RFE/RL Iraq Report)

The Iraqi Civil Defense Corps (ICDC) deployed 800 soldiers to secure a 100-kilometer stretch of highway linking the northern Iraqi cities of Kirkuk and Suleimaniya to prevent foreign groups from infiltrating the rest of the country from northern Iraq.

February 17

Iraqi killed in Kirkuk attack on police patrol. (AFP)

Iraqi police in Kirkuk killed a gunman and wounded another overnight when they returned fire against the two men attacking their patrol, the local police chief said. Yusef Mohammad Amin, 32, was killed and his brother Mahmud was wounded in the exchange of fire which lasted some 20 minutes in a northern Kirkuk neighbourhood.

Nuclear scientist reportedly assassinated in Baghdad. (Iraqi newspaper *Al-Shira*)

Dr Majid Husayn Ali, an Iraqi nuclear scientist and a professor at the College of Science in Baghdad University, was assassinated in Baghdad. It was reported that the police found the corpse of the murdered scientist in the Raghbihah Khatun district in the centre of Baghdad. A source stated that the medical examination carried out on the corpse proved that the deceased person was shot with two bullets in the back on the heart side. The source said that the family of the deceased stated during the investigation that he had not come home for seven days. This assassination incident is the ninth within four months to target distinguished Iraqi scientists, the last of which was the assassination of Iraqi aeronautical scientist Dr Muhyi Husayn.

Afghans leave Saudi camp for Iraq. (Deutsche Presse Agentur)

More than 100 Afghans who spent 13 years in a refugee camp in Saudi Arabia have left for Basra, a Saudi official said. General Khaled al-Woseifer said the 110 Afghans had asked to return to Iraq where they had lived before being forced to flee, following the 1991 Gulf war when the former regime of Saddam Hussain cracked down on defiant Shiites in the south. The Rafha camp in northern Saudi Arabia was set up to host some 33,000 Iraqi refugees who fled their country. More than 25,000 refugees were resettled by the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) in Europe, North America and Australia, leaving close to 5,000 in the camp. Following the fall of the Iraqi regime, Saudi authorities began arranging for the refugees to return to Iraq. Al-Woseifer said a total of 530 refugees remain in the camp, adding that "the rest will leave in groups over the next few days."

February 18

At least 11 Iraqis killed in failed suicide truck bombing against international forces. (Associated Press / AP)

At least 11 Iraqi civilians were killed when a pair of suicide bombers tried to attack a coalition base where international troops are based, a coalition spokeswoman said. The attack outside Camp Charlie in Hillah left 58 coalition troops, including Hungarians, Poles and an American wounded, and injured another 44 Iraqis.

Former Baath official killed in Karbala. (AFP)

A member of the former ruling Baath party was shot dead in the Shiite holy city of Karbala, the police said. It was reported that unknown assailants struck down Hashem Rajeh Aqaw, a former member of the Baath leadership in Karbala, at 8:30 pm in the city centre. Aqaw was walking on the street when the gunmen shot him.

Head of Fallujah City Council arrested. (Iraqi Kurdistan Democratic Party newspaper *Khabat*)

The deputy head of the Fallujah City Council, Isa Ada, had said that the US forces arrested the head of their council, Ra'id Husayn, on the same day when he announced his resignation as head of the city council, following death threats he had received. The arrest of the head of the city council follows the arrest by the US forces of the head of the administrative district of this town. These arrests come a few days after the failed assassination attempt against the commander of the US forces Central Command in Fallujah, Gen John Abizaid.

Iraqi women take to the streets to demand new political voice. (AFP)

Small groups of women took to the streets around Iraq to demand at least a 40 percent share of the country's new political power as females make up more than half of the population. They also opposed an attempt by Iraq's Governing Council to turn the clock back on women's existing rights by repealing long-standing secular family laws. Iraqi El Amal Association coordinated the simultaneous rallies in separate provinces nationwide.

Iraqi child killed in blast in Tikrit. (Qatari *Al-Jazeera* satellite TV)

It was reported that an Iraqi child was killed in an explosion of a bomb, which was planted in one of Tikrit's streets. The bomb targeted a checkpoint manned by the US forces there.

Coalition forces repel attack on Abu Ghraib prison. (RFE/RL *Iraq Report*)

Militants launched 33 mortar rounds and five rockets at the Abu Ghraib Prison in western Baghdad before being repelled by coalition forces. U.S. forces killed one militant and arrested 55 others at the scene.

February 19

Iraqi women stage sit-in in Najaf to protest candidate limit. (AFP)

About 300 Iraqi women staged a sit-in in the holy Shiite city of Najaf to protest a limit on the number of women allowed to contest local elections. Elections for the local councils in Najaf started on February 17. Five to 15 men can run for any of the 23 councils, but women are only allowed a total of eight candidates.

Ex-Republican Guard general shot dead in Kirkuk. (AFP)

Unknown assailants shot dead a former general in ousted Iraqi leader Saddam Hussain's Republican Guard near Kirkuk, local police said. Chaker Ibrahim Khalass was reportedly gunned down inside the store he opened after Saddam was toppled by a US-led invasion in April 2003.

February 20

Al-Sistani's aide threatens "armed revolution" over Karbala council. (Qatari Al-Jazeera satellite TV)

Shaykh Abd-al-Mahdi al-Karbala'i, a representative of Grand Ayatollah Sayyid Ali al-Sistani in the city of Karbala, has threatened that he will ignite an armed popular revolution in the city unless the city's council, which was appointed by the US Civil Administration, is abolished. Al-Karbala'i criticised the representative of the US civil administrator in Iraq, for appointing a new council instead of the old one, saying that the new council is void and illegitimate. He called on its members to resign.

February 21

Iraqi Muslim Ulema Council leader's brother assassinated in Baghdad. (Qatari Al-Jazeera satellite TV)

Unidentified armed men have assassinated Shaykh Dhamir Sulayman al-Dari, brother of Shaykh Harith al-Dari, secretary-general of the Iraqi Muslim Ulema Council (IMUC), in front of his house in Al-Khadra neighbourhood in Baghdad. Shaykh Damir died of his wounds after he was taken to Al-Yarmuk Hospital in Baghdad.

February 22

Three Iraqi policemen wounded in Baghdad blast. (AFP)

Three Iraqi policemen were wounded in a bomb blast in west Baghdad after being called to investigate the home made device, police said. "The police received a call from local inhabitants telling them that suspects had placed a device between a mosque and a sports centre," an officer said.

Two Iraqis killed, three wounded in Mosul attacks. (AFP)

Two Iraqis were killed and three wounded in separate attacks in Mosul, including one against the home of the provincial police chief, the police said. It was reported that two armed Iraqis attacked the home of the police chief for Nineveh province, General Mohammad Kahyri al-Berhawi. One attacker was killed and another seriously wounded in ensuing gunbattles with the police chief's guards. Berhawi was wounded in a previous attack against him a few months ago.

In a separate attack, two bodyguards for a member of the provincial council, General Abdelrazzaq al-Juburi, were wounded when unidentified gunmen opened fire.

Politicians, intellectuals gather for rights conference in Baghdad. (London-based newspaper *Al-Hayat*)

Hundreds of participants met for two days at the Sheraton Hotel in Baghdad. The Democratic Forces Coordination Committee organised the event with a large participation from various progressive groupings.

February 23

Seven Iraqi police dead, 35 wounded in Kirkuk bomb blast. (AFP)

Suicide bombers killed seven Iraqi policemen and wounded 35 when they blew up a car at a police station in a Kurdish neighborhood of Kirkuk, a hospital official said.

Brother of local Iraqi civil defence chief shot dead in Samarra. (AFP)

The brother of a high-ranking Iraqi security official in the town of Samarra was shot dead, medical sources said. It was reported that unknown attackers opened fire on Othman Aziz Mohammed, hitting him in the head as he was on duty in the town's truck station. The 30-year-old victim was a member of the US-trained Iraqi Civil Defence Corps, which is headed in Samarra by his brother, Colonel Ahsan Aziz Mohammed.

Kurdish party office in Mosul attacked, three killed. (AFP)

Attackers targeted a Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) office in Mosul, while separately three members of the party were murdered, officials and the police said. It was reported that assailants in a car attacked the KDP office in the centre of Mosul. KDP *peshmergas* (Kurdish fighters) fought back and the attackers fled on foot. Elsewhere, two KDP militants were found murdered a few hours after they had been kidnapped, the police said.

February 24

Kurdish party member found dead in Mosul. (AFP)

A member of the KDP was found shot dead in his car in Mosul, the police said.

Iraqi official says Sunni-Shi'i agreement reached to prevent sectarian war (London-based newspaper *Al-Hayat*)

Islamic Accord Movement official, Abbas al-Asadi, said that political and Sunni and Shi'i religious parties have agreed to take tangible and practical steps to unify their positions. He added that the steps would include holding a conference which would include all political and Sunni and Shi'i authorities in the country. In addition, mosque and *Husayniyat* [Shi'i shrines] sermons will be aimed at promoting the idea of "one Islam in Iraq".

Gunmen kill Baath Party official in Mosul. (AP)

Gunmen killed a senior military official from Saddam Hussein's Baath Party, Gen. Abd al-Allah Hussein Al-Annaz, in Mosul. Al-Annaz's son was also wounded when the attackers opened fire on his car, Mosul police chief Gen. Mohammed Khairy said.

Gunmen reportedly kill Baghdad university professor. (Quds Press web news agency)

It was reported that unidentified gunmen have assassinated Iraqi technical expert Muhammad Abbas al-Dulaymi, a lecturer at the University of Technology in Baghdad, while he was walking in the area of Zayyunah in the capital. Eyewitnesses have reported that the Iraqi academic was driving his car, a Land Cruiser, when unidentified gunmen attacked and shot at him, noting that he died on the spot. Two

others, who were with him in the car and were found to be affiliated with the university, were wounded.

February 25

Gunmen kill Iraqi deputy police head in Mosul. (AP)

Gunmen assassinated the deputy police chief in Mosul. Gunmen in a car opened fire on Mosul's deputy police chief Brigadier Hikmat Mohammed as he was headed to his office, killing him, the police said.

Turkomans demonstrated in Baghdad. (AP)

About 4,000 people demonstrated in Baghdad to demand guarantees of Turkoman rights in the future Iraq as politicians struggle to work out an interim constitution that will address federalism and Kurdish demands. "We think the new constitution should recognize the Turkomen as the third largest ethnicity in Iraq," said one of the organizers, Kanaan Shakir. He said:" "We are here also to say that we are against any ethnic federalism. Iraq has been always a united country with one people."

Kurdish organisation collect signatures for referendum. (AP)

A Kurdish group, the Reform Movement of Kurdistan, announced it had gathered 1.7 million signatures on a petition demanding a referendum in the Kurdish areas on whether they should remain part of Iraq or gain independence. One of the organizers, Halkaut Abdullah, said signatures were gathered in major cities including Kirkuk, Mosul and Khanaqin, which have large Kurdish populations but are located outside the Kurdish-controlled region.

Assassination attempted on oil minister. (UK-based Quds Press web news agency)

An assassination attempt against Iraqi Oil Minister Muhammad Bahr al-Ulum took place last night when unidentified armed persons opened fire at his car. One of his personal body guards was wounded in the attack.

February 26

Bomb planted in police car kills Iraqi police officer in Baqouba. (AP)

A bomb planted in a police vehicle that was parked outside a restaurant killed an Iraqi police officer and wounded eight other people north of Baghdad. A group of policemen were having lunch in the restaurant in the city of Baqouba, 50 kilometers north of Baghdad when the explosive was apparently slipped into the vehicle.

Ethnic Turkmen launch rights hungerstrike in Baghdad. (AFP)

Around 100 ethnic Turkmen began a hungerstrike in Baghdad aimed at drawing attention to their political rights as Iraqi leaders worked to finish a temporary constitution. The hungerstrikers, who included intellectuals, writers, students and a number of women, were gathered in and around about half a dozen large tents erected outside the main US military headquarters in Baghdad.

February 27

Hundreds in Al-Fallujah protest against raids on mosques, preachers arrest. (Qatari Al-Jazeera satellite TV)

Hundreds of citizens in the city of Al-Fallujah denounced the storming of mosques and the arrest of preachers and men of religion by the US forces. This took place during a demonstration that was staged following Friday prayers at the Sa'd Bin-Abi-Waqqas Mosque. The demonstrators called on the US forces to put an end to what they called terrorist practices. They said that they will not stand idle should the storming operations continue. The demonstrators demanded the release of the detained scholars and women.

February 28

US forces disperse Turkoman demonstration in Baghdad. (Al-Jazeera)

The US forces in Baghdad have dispersed a sit-in staged by a group of Turkomans to protest what they describe as marginalization of their role in Iraq. Around 180 Turkomans staged a sit-in in front of the Coalition Provisional Authority headquarters in Baghdad. They demanded that the temporary constitution of the country include recognition of the existence of Turkomans as a nationality in Iraq.

February 29

Police officer killed in new shooting in Kirkuk. (AFP)

An Iraqi police officer was shot dead in an attack on a patrol in the city of Kirkuk, local authorities said. It was reported that unknown assailants opened fire on a patrol at around 7:00 am in the Al-Qadissiyah district, killing 29-year-old officer Harun Hayden," the head of the local police emergency unit said.

Kurds reportedly broke into Turkoman Front headquarters in Kirkuk. (RFE/RL Iraq Report)

Kurds reportedly broke into and vandalized the headquarters of the Iraqi Turkoman Front in Kirkuk. The attackers apparently destroyed computers, furniture, and 20 vehicles parked on the grounds. The vehicles belonged to supporters of the Turkoman Front.

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