

Reporters Without Borders

<http://www.rsf.org/iraq-baghdad-newspaper-bombed-after-11-02-2014,45851.html>

Middle East/North Africa - Iraq

Bomb attack

Baghdad newspaper bombed after cartoon of Iran's Supreme Leader

11 February 2014

Reporters Without Borders condemns yesterday morning's bomb attack on the downtown Baghdad headquarters of the [Al-Sabah Al-Jadid](#) newspaper, five days after it published a much criticized cartoon of Iran's supreme leader, Ayatollah Khamenei. The explosion caused a great deal of damage but no injuries.

The offending cartoon illustrated an article in the newspaper's 6 February issue, which was about the demonstrations being organized this week to mark the 34th anniversary of Iran's Islamic Revolution and which criticized Mohammed Hidari, an Iraqi mullah who supports the Iranian regime.

Much of the population and many politicians regarded [the cartoon](#) as an [insult](#) to the Iranian revolution and Iraq's Shiite population, and demonstrators gathered outside the newspaper to demand an apology.

The newspaper published an [apology](#) on 9 February but it failed to defuse the hostility.

"Targeting a newspaper in this manner is unacceptable," Reporters Without Borders said. "After being alerted by the newspaper's management the day before the bombing, the authorities should have taken the necessary measures to protect its premises and staff, and to make it clear to the demonstrators that there was nothing illegal about the cartoon.

"The authorities must now investigate this criminal attack so that the perpetrators and the instigators can be arrested and brought to justice. It is crucial that all necessary measures are taken to ensure that journalists are safe.

"In the current climate of worsening relations between Shiites and Sunnis, the media must act responsibly and must not exacerbate tension unnecessarily. Nonetheless, this cartoon did not in any way constitute an offence to the Shiite community. Tolerance of different viewpoints is the basis of a democratic system."

Iraqi media and journalists have been the [targets](#) of systematic [violence](#) for months. In one of the most recent cases, eight gunmen stormed the news agency *Sama's* office in central Baghdad on 8 February. The employees did not go back to work because they feared more violence and, in fact, the office was ransacked again the next day.
