

String of Bomb Attacks Continues in Iraq

By [Canadians for Justice and Peace in the Middle East](#)

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Montreal, January 20, 2011 – On Jan. 17, 18 19, and again today, a series of bomb attacks in different parts of Iraq have killed hundreds and wounded hundreds more. The bloodiest of the attacks took place on Tuesday Jan. 18 in Tikrit, north of Baghdad. In that incident, a suicide bomber mingled among hundreds of young men lined up in the town square to apply for police jobs and detonated his explosive-packed vest. An estimated 49 to 65 people were killed on the spot, and another 130 to 150 injured, many of whom are not expected to survive. The bombing was the most lethal attack to take place in Iraq in six months. Today's bombing in Karbala killed at least 50, and injured at least 150.

On Jan. 19 in Baquba – the capital of Diyala province, alleged to be an al-Qaeda stronghold as recently as 2008—a car bomb killed at least 12 people and wounded an estimated 64 to 135 people. The attack took place at the headquarters of the Facilities Protection Service, a special force responsible for guarding public buildings and smaller state offices. In a separate incident near Baquba, three people were killed and a Shiite politician and 26 others wounded by a suicide car bomb. These incidents were preceded by the Jan. 17 bombing attack on the convoy of the Sunni governor of Anbar province; the governor survived. Attacks have targeted both Shia and Sunni communities.

Canadians for Justice and Peace in the Middle East (CJPME) unequivocally condemns these attacks. “Violence is a cowardly and destructive way of addressing political differences. CJPME condemns these attacks, and mourns the tragic loss of civilian lives,” says CJPME President Thomas Woodley. CJPME notes that such attacks – especially those for whom nobody takes responsibility – are intended to divide peoples. “The best response to such attacks is to collectively condemn them,” continued Woodley, “and to refuse to allow the perpetrators of such acts to divide their societies through this violence.”

Police recruiting centres and security buildings are often the targets of such attacks, as are religious festivals. According to The Guardian, no group has claimed responsibility for the Jan. 18 attack on the recruiting centre, but it was in the style of al-Qaida-linked groups that want to discourage Sunni Iraqis from joining the security forces. A statement posted on a militant website by the Islamic State of Iraq, an al-Qaida front group, praised the bombing as a “suicide martyrdom” operation. In response, Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki – who recently took office after a nine-month stalemate following the 2010 elections – has vowed to strengthen the security forces.

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