

The Siege of Fallujah

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Theme: [Crimes against Humanity](#), [US NATO War Agenda](#)

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The Siege Begins, Outrage in Baghdad

Yesterday the full siege of Falluja began after getting the green light from the so-called interim Prime Minister Ayad Allawi. Using the same rhetoric as his master, Mr. Bush, he spoke of bringing justice to Falluja, killing the terrorists, etc., etc., ad nauseum.

Yesterday martial law was enacted across Iraq (excluding the Kurdish controlled north), but today Allawi laid out six steps for implementing his "security law," which entails a 6pm curfew imposed on Falluja, all highways closed except for emergencies and government vehicles, General Institutions to be closed, a ban of all weapons in Falluja, the Iraqi borders with Syria and Jordan to be closed except for food trucks and vehicles carrying other necessary goods, and the closing of Baghdad International Airport for 48 hours. This is what freedom and democracy look like in liberated Iraq today.

Reaction in Baghdad?

"I am used to laws and I know how they function," said Abu Mohammed, a lawyer here speaking at a mosque, "The first priority is that who makes the law should be legally authorized. Here in Baghdad, the martial law is genocide against the resistance in Iraq who are against the invasion. The theme of the law is to kill the resistance and to stop people even from thinking. Do you think they can limit how Iraqis think? Insh'alla (God willing) they cannot. We have to defend our religion and the resistance is legal, insh'allah the resistance will do their job and rid us of the invaders."

Another man who asked to be referred to as "Sabah," speaking at the Al-Ambia'a mosque said, "The Americans came thousands of kilometers to invade Iraq and kill people, and they should now be punished. Who gave them the right to kill us? We have an illegal interim government, so we have to have our revenge by our hands."

There have been ongoing gun battles around the city, and several powerful explosions. I am staying at a hotel not too far from the so-called Green Zone, and just prior to the press conference for Allawi there was a huge gun battle over near that area.

This on top of the usual sporadic gunfire that is commonplace around the capital each day.

When my friend Aziz stopped by this afternoon, I asked him how he and his family are doing... "If we are not talking about the situation, we are good," he said despondently, "I think we will have civil war, sooner or later."

He shook his head while talking about Falluja. It is estimated that between 30-100,000 civilians remain in the city, people who have been referred to in mainstream media as “refusing to leave.”

“So many people in Falluja are poor and cannot leave. Land and houses in Baghdad are both very expensive, and so many people in Falluja are too poor to leave,” Aziz said with resignation, “The Americans are doing what they did last time-taking control of the main hospital and not letting the hospitals and clinics and ambulances function. They are killing civilians, just like before.”

At this point my door slammed with a gust of wind and I jumped...causing Salam (who I’d just returned home with) and Aziz to bend over with laughter. I told them to screw off, embarrassed.

“How would you guys react if you were the white guy here,” I asked them in a feeble attempt to save face.

Aziz replied, “I wouldn’t be crazy enough to come here to this horrible situation man!” Again, he and Salam bend over laughing, so I succumbed and joined them, laughing at the ridiculousness of my situation.

We sat and listened to yet another gun fight of heavy automatic weapons in the distance. Much of this, of course, is not being reported, as all eyes are on Falluja. Nor most of the constant bombs that go off around Baghdad.

A little later I’m talking with someone on the street who told me that earlier today someone offered him \$3,000 for his car. I looked at his car, and it would maybe earn \$500 on a good day. He said, “They told me they wanted to use it as a bomb.”

Later in the night I’m on the roof of my hotel. I finished an interview with Nora on Flashpoints and we were talking briefly when two huge bombs exploded far off in the distance. The call dropped as soon as I heard the thumps and felt the concussion and told Nora I’d just seen two huge bombs explode far away. Perfect timing.

A little later I return to the roof and watch in the direction of Falluja as the jets continue to roar overhead towards that city.

The military is dropping 2,000 pound bombs on Falluja and fighter jets have been flying over Baghdad en route for the last few days. I presume that those are the flashes and concussions I could see from here. The bombing is continuous.

I shudder to think of what is happening there to the civilians. As per April policy, the US military raided Falluja General Hospital and cut it off from the city. As per April they’ve impeded the medical services, committing yet another war crime.

There are reports from one of the doctors at said hospital that one of their ambulances was shot while attempting to leave the hospital, just like in April when I was in Falluja; all of the ambulances were targeted then as well. The photos are on my site.

But this time, rather than 800-1200 killed in Falluja, it is expected to be more. And instead of 130 US soldiers, it is expected to be more. Not that this will happen in the next few days,

because I expect it to be a slow bleed after the initial onslaught.

Already there is talk on the street that most of the fighters have left Falluja and placed themselves in other cities. Baghdad, Ramadi, Samarra, Haditha, Khaldiya, you name it. Just like in April, we expect things to kick off all over Iraq before long.

It is late. I will sleep with earplugs, as gunfire in the streets and the roaring of fighter jets overhead is incessant tonight.

November 9, 2004 05:11 AM

The Fire is Spreading...

The blasts of mortars exploding in the so-called "Green Zone" are thumping out my window as I type tonight. The blades of military helicopters chop the air as they circle above the area looking for, well, looking for something.

"I know what they are doing to us-they are putting us in a big jail. First they close the borders with Syria and now Jordan, so we are trapped in Iraq," says Salam. "Now they put a curfew on Baghdad. This is the first. The second is that the highway bridge connecting us to the west of Baghdad is bombed. Another bridge that leads to the south (Kerbala, Hilla, Najaf) was bombed. And now the other highway south to Amara, Nasiriya and Basra is blocked."

"So all they have left to close is the highway to Diala...when that last one is closed, we are locked in to Baghdad," explains Salam, his face stoic but concerned, "We are in. This is our life here man."

Iraqi Secretary of Defense, Hassim al-Sha'alan, today announced to al-Arabia television that the resistance is organized and they have already prepared to fight in other places. So the fighting in Falluja will not end when the Americans take the city. The fighting will begin in other places like Baghdad, Baquba, Latifiya, Ramadi, Samarra, Khaldiya, Kirkuk and elsewhere.

Thus, the word on the street that the resistance was mostly out of Falluja prior to this battle is verified by the Iraqi Minister of Defense himself. The fire had begun to spread long before the current onslaught of Falluja.

Salam has a friend who just came from Baquba and said that the resistance came to the police station and told them to leave because they would be bombing the station. This policeman who left said he watched the resistance bomb the station. At least 25 policemen have been killed there, between two stations that were bombed.

In Kirkuk, the retaliatory strikes by the resistance for what is happening in Falluja have commenced as well. A suicide bomber detonated his car at a base for Iraqi National Guard, killing at least 1 national guard member and 2 civilians.

Of course the random gun battles and retaliation is ongoing in Baghdad. The so-called "Green Zone" continues to take mortars. This has been going on sporadically throughout the day, but is consistent now...the whumping explosions are incessant, even with choppers circling about overhead.

Also today, two churches in Al-Dora were destroyed by car bombs which detonated 5 minutes apart. When the injured and dead were taken from the scenes to Yarmouk Hospital, the hospital was car bombed. At least 8 people died it the hospital car bombing.

“We are looking at this just as numbers,” says Salam with a deep breath, “But this is 8 families. This is 8 families that are suffering now.”

5 policemen were killed in Al-Dora as well-not by car bomb, but by fighting with the resistance.

The growing fire of resistance has spread into the political realm in Iraq as well. The Association of Muslim Scholars (AMS) has called upon people not to vote in the upcoming election.

Dr. Harith al-Dhari, the secretary-general of the AMS, openly supports the Iraqi resistance to the occupation and has from the beginning. “We have said we support the resistance since the occupation of this country began,” he said today, “This is our right as Iraqis. Therefore, we don’t need a fatwa on this issue as this matter is clear.”

Also today, a major Sunni political party, the Iraqi Islamic Party, has withdrawn from the Iraqi Interim Government. “We are protesting the attack on Falluja and the injustice that is inflicted on the innocent people of the city,” said Abd al-Hamid, “We cannot be part of this attack.”

Abu Talat called and told me of the curfew now in Baghdad. We have to be off the streets by 9:30 pm or we will be shot on sight.

“You know Dahr, I used to stay out until 3am. Now this is our life,” says Abu Talat. He is enraged. “This is some kind of freedom. Thank you, George Bush. This is our life.”

Everyone is nervous on the streets in Baghdad tonight. Every car left unattended is suspected as a car bomb.

Another man I met with today, Haythem, expressed his feelings about the occupation, Falluja, and the martial law.

“Iraq is pregnant with an American fetus,” he pauses for emphasis and says, “And we need birth control pills.” He sits for a moment, and after making a toast with a soft drink adds, “Long life to Falluja.”

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