

Many dead in serial blasts in Iraq
Al Jazeera
15 April 2013

A wave of bombings across Iraq have killed at least 33 people and wounded more than 160 others, officials said, just days before the country's first elections since US troops withdrew.

Most of the deadly attacks on Monday morning reported by police officials were bombings, which killed several people in Baghdad, in the western city of Fallujah, the contested northern city of Kirkuk and towns south of the capital.



A total of 14 car bombs and three roadside bombs struck seven cities including Baghdad, security and medical officials said on Monday, updating an earlier toll.

Hospital officials confirmed the casualty tolls.

Al Jazeera's correspondent in Baghdad, Waleed Ibrahim, said both Shia and Sunni neighbourhoods were targeted in the spate of attacks to hit the city.

Ibrahim said the attacks on a checkpoint close to the airport in the capital was significant because it had never happened before.

"This place has not been targeted before and today there was a car bomb at this check point, according to a police source".

Officials said that vehicles packed with explosives were detonated in the northern disputed cities of Kirkuk and Tuz Khurmatu, the central city of Samarra, and the cities of Hilla and Nassriyah south of Baghdad.

The attacks come less than a week before Iraqis in much of the country are scheduled to vote in the country's first elections since the 2011 US troop withdrawal. The vote will be a key test of security forces' ability to keep voters safe.

Election credibility

In Tuz, which lies 175km from Baghdad, the three car bombs struck in the centre and east of the town at about 8:00am local time, according to a provincial council member and a doctor.

And in Nasiriyah, 305km south of the capital, one of the car bombs detonated in a market and the other went off in an area filled with vehicle repair shops, police and a medical source said.

The credibility of the April 20 vote has been drawn into question as 14 election hopefuls have been murdered and just 12 of the country's 18 provinces will be taking part.

Soldiers and policemen cast their ballots for the provincial elections on Saturday, a week before the main vote, the country's first since March 2010 parliamentary polls.

More than 8,000 candidates are standing in the elections, with 378 seats on provincial councils up for grabs.

An estimated 16.2 million Iraqis are eligible to vote, among them about 650,000 members of the security forces.

Although security has markedly improved since the height of Iraq's confessional conflict in 2006-2007, 271 people were killed in March, making it the deadliest month since August, according to AFP figures.

Source: Al Jazeera And Agencies

© Al Jazeera , 2013