

## **At least 55 killed, 126 wounded in spate of attacks in Iraq**

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BAGHDAD, June 13 (Xinhua) -- At least 55 people were killed and 126 wounded in a series of bomb and gunfire attacks in several Iraqi cities on Wednesday, the police said.

The first explosions occurred in downtown Hilla, some 100 km south of Baghdad when two car bombs were detonated near a restaurant in central the city, killing at least 20 people and wounding 38 others, a police source told Xinhua, asking not to be named because he is not authorized to speak to the media.

In Baghdad, another car bomb went off near the commercial compound of mission in southern Baghdad, killing nine people and wounding 21 others, the source said.

In a separate attack, a booby-trapped car bomb ripped through the holy Shiite neighborhood of Kadhmiah in northern Baghdad, killing seven people and wounding 20 others, the source added.

Separately, a car bomb detonated near Uqba Bin-Nafie Square in Baghdad central district of Karrada killed seven people and wounded 11 others, he said.

Also in Baghdad, three policemen were gunned down by armed men in two attacks in Saidiyah district, he said.

Another car bomb went off at the town of al-Madain, some 30 km south of Baghdad, killing three people and wounding 11 others, the source said.

Meanwhile, two people were killed and seven wounded in a car bomb explosion at Nahrawan area in south of Baghdad, the source added.

Also on Wednesday morning, two car bombs went off separately in the central and at the entrance of the city of Balad, some 80 km north of Baghdad, killing four people and wounding 18 others, a local police source anonymously told Xinhua.

The death toll could rise as rescue work continued, sources said. The apparently coordinated bombings came ahead of a Shiite religious festival on Friday as tens of thousands of pilgrims march to Baghdad to commemorate the death of Imam Kadhum at his shrine.

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