

New York Times

March 2, 2005

## Suicide Bombers Kill 13 Iraqi Army Soldiers

By [ROBERT F. WORTH](#)  
and [EDWARD WONG](#)

BAGHDAD, Iraq, March 2 - Suicide bombers killed 13 Iraqi Army soldiers in two separate attacks here this morning, the latest incidents in a recent surge of violence aimed at Iraq's beleaguered security forces.

In the first bombing, a Toyota sedan packed with explosives sped into a crowd gathered outside an army compound in the former Muthanna airport in central Baghdad at about 7 a.m., killing six soldiers, Iraqi officials said. The compound has been attacked by insurgents several times over the past year.

The blast, which could be heard miles away, wounded 28 others, including 10 new recruits and three civilian women standing outside the compound selling cigarettes, officials at Iraq's Interior Ministry said.

The second bomber struck an hour later, driving into an Army convoy as it traveled near the highway leading south out of the city in the al-Doura neighborhood. That explosion killed seven soldiers and wounded two, officials said.

Later today, an Islamist Web site posted a statement by the network of the Jordanian Abu Musab al-Zarqawi claiming responsibility for the second attack in Baghdad. The statement, like many issued in the past by Mr. Zarqawi's group, could not be verified, but did contain an accurate description of the attack's location, along with an ominous suggestion of more attacks to come.

"Today is a day of combat and our brothers will hear a very happy piece of news, and the rain always starts with one drop," the statement said.

Mr. Zarqawi's group also claimed credit for Monday's suicide attack on a crowd of army recruits in Hilla, 60 miles south of Baghdad, which left at least 122 people dead in the worst single bombing of the war.

Today's attacks came a day after the assassination of Judge Parwiz Muhammad Mahmoud al-Merani and his son, Aryan Mahmoud al-Merani, both members of the special tribunal that will try Saddam Hussein and former members of his government. They were the first members of the tribunal known to have been killed.

Speaking at a funeral for the men at a central Baghdad mosque, Judge Mahmoud's two remaining children said they believed he had been killed because of his role on the tribunal, dismissing

reports of a personal motive for the killing. Judge Mahmoud, 59, was also a high-ranking member of the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, one of the two major Kurdish political parties, and had been imprisoned and tortured as a young man by Saddam Hussein's government.

"He knew it was a dangerous job, he knew he might get killed," said Mariwan Mahmoud al-Merani, the judge's remaining son.

The judge and his son were killed outside their Baghdad home by gunmen who drove up in a dark green Opel sedan and fired automatic weapons before speeding away. Members of the tribunal are provided with security guards, but it was not clear whether any guards were present at the time. A spokesman for the tribunal declined to comment on the killing today, saying a statement would be issued later.

Scattered episodes of violence continued in central and northern Iraq today. An Iraqi police officer was shot and killed by insurgents in the northern city of Mosul, witnesses said, and a beheaded body dressed in a police uniform was found elsewhere in the city. In Baghdad, police officials announced that a police lieutenant and his son were kidnapped by men wearing police uniforms and carrying the same type of pistols used by the Iraqi police.