
IRAQ IS CONFLICT: CAR BOMBING TARGETS BAGHDAD SHOPPERS

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A car bomb attack claimed by so-called Islamic State (IS) has killed at least nine people in the centre of the Iraqi capital, Baghdad, officials say.

Twenty people were also injured by the blast, which set several shops on fire.

The blast was not far from the site of a lorry bombing in July that left more than 300 people dead.

An IS statement said the Sunni jihadist group had targeted a gathering of Shia civilians on Monday and boasted how it had managed to carry out the attack despite heightened security in the area.

Shop in Baghdad's Karrada district damaged in car bomb attack claimed by Islamic State (6

Several shops were damaged when the bomb struck the busy commercial area

The streets of Karrada are lined with shops and restaurants, and they are usually packed ahead of the Islamic festival of Eid al-Adha, which starts next week.

The area bombed in July, which was targeted as Muslims prepared for the other major festival of Eid al-Fitr, had only recently been reopened by the Iraqi authorities.

Map showing control of Iraq and Syria

In a separate development on Tuesday, the World Food Programme said it had delivered food to more than 30,000 residents of Qayyarah for the first time in two years, after Iraqi government forces ousted IS militants from the northern town.

"The town is in a dire state. Black smoke rises from oil fields surrounding the town set ablaze during fighting in recent weeks. Safe drinking water, electricity and medical services remain nearly impossible to access," the UN agency warned.

IS militants set fire to oil wells outside Qayyarah last month before Iraqi forces retook the town

Iraqi officials said on Tuesday that they had now managed to extinguish fires at 10 oil wells set alight by retreating militants, but that three were still burning.

The Qayyarah operation was part of a wider offensive by government forces aiming to retake the second city of Mosul, 60km (35 miles) away, which IS militants overran in June 2014.

The UN Refugee Agency warned last month that 1.2 million people could be displaced by the

assault on Mosul. More than 3 million Iraqis have been displaced by conflict in the past two years.

Kaynak/Source: