
WOMEN PROTESTERS IN IRAQ DEFY RADICAL CLERIC, TAKE TO STREET

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Hundreds of Iraqi women took to the streets of central Baghdad and southern Iraq on Thursday in defiance of a radical cleric's calls for gender segregation at anti-government protest sites.

An anti-government protest movement began Oct. 1 to decry rampant corruption, poor services and unemployment in Baghdad and Iraq's predominantly Shiite south. Over 500 have died since then under fire from security forces using live bullets and tear gas to disperse crowds. The protests have been unique because they have drawn both men and women who have camped out alongside each other in protest squares, a rare occurrence in Iraq, a conservative majority Muslim country.

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