Al-Qaida Group Claims Responsibility for Baghdad Bombings

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CAIRO (RPRN) 10/27/09 — By Edward Yeranian

An Iraqi branch of al Qaida, which goes by the name of the Islamic State of Iraq, is claiming responsibility for Sunday's back-to-back suicide bombings in Baghdad that killed more than 150 people. Iraqi officials, meanwhile, are accusing groups outside the country of instigating the explosions.

Two days after bloody twin-suicide bombings killed more than 150 people in the center of Baghdad, an Iraqi group with ties to al Qaida is claiming responsibility for the attacks.

The group, which calls itself the Islamic State of Iraq, posted a message on a Web site Monday claiming its "martyrs" attacked what it called the "refuge of infidels," in an allusion to the sprawling government headquarters near Baghdad's Green Zone.

Two key Iraqi government buildings, the Justice Ministry and Baghdad's provincial government command center, were gutted by the blasts.

Al Qaida's Internet statement refers to the Iraqi government as the "pillars of the Safawi and rejectionist state in the land of the caliphate," accusing the predominantly Shi'ite Iraqi government of working for Iran inside the Sunni heartland.

The same group took responsibility for similar twin suicide blasts in August

that left 95 dead. Neither claim has been verified, and Iraqi officials have repeatedly accused "groups inside neighboring countries."

Iraqi Foreign Minister Houshiar Zebari went so far as to accuse Syria of playing a role in the August bombings that targeted his ministry, but he stopped short of accusing Damascus directly in the aftermath of Sunday's blasts.

Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki called for an international tribunal to "try those responsible" for August's bombings, whom he called "Ba'athists with ties to Saddam Hussein," who are now living in Syria.

Iraqi Defense Minister Abdal Qader Mohammed Jassem does not specifically name Syria in accusations of outside responsibility over the weekend bombings:

He says that indications point to training and support for the bombers from outside Iraq. He adds that this sort of act needs material support from abroad, and Iraqi authorities have precise intelligence information that is updated daily. He says the Iraqi government is investigating which groups outside the country paid for the explosions.

Syria strenuously denied responsibility for the bloody August 19 suicide bombings in Baghdad that brought both countries to the verge of breaking off diplomatic relations. Turkish diplomatic mediation ultimately reduced tensions by a notch.

Iraqi Interior Minister Jawad al-Boulani strongly condemns the perpetrators of Sunday's explosions.

He calls for all necessary security measures to be implemented to prevent further such attacks and to reassure the Iraqi public. He also demands the perpetrators of these crimes by executed on the spot where they committed them.

The vehicles used by Sunday's suicide bombers where driven from a nearby location, according to images taken by U.S. helicopters. Al Arabiya TV also reported one of the trucks belonged to the government "Water Works," in the mostly Sunni town of Fallujah.

About the author:

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