
BOMBING AT A FUNERAL IN NORTHERN IRAQ KILLS AT LEAST 35

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New York Times, January 23, 2013 A crowded tent full of Turkmen mourners in northern Iraq was transformed into a mass killing ground on Wednesday by a suicide bombing that left at least 35 people dead and 117 wounded, regional officials and tribal leaders said, calling it a genocidal attack meant to further stoke the already-inflamed sectarian tensions in the country. Both the dead and wounded victims included a number of high-ranking regional dignitaries, military officers, professors and religious men among the Turkmen population of the Tuz Khurmato district in Salahuddin Province, an area in the Kurdish north also claimed by Arabs and Turkmen. It came a day after an extended outbreak of sectarian shootings and bombings in the country that killed at least 24 Iraqis. Mourners at the Imam Ali mosque had been paying their respects to a Turkmen employee of the Ministry of Health who had been killed in the mayhem the day before, the brother-in-law of a deputy in the Iraqi Turkmen Front, a political party. They had packed into a funeral tent for the ceremony when the suicide bomber, apparently masquerading as one of the aggrieved, blew himself up. Turkmen leaders were outraged. **[[[** demand to have international forces to secure us, for the Turkmen and our areas, A said Faid Alla, the head of a Turkmen tribe. **[[[** are being targeted, and our existence in Iraq is very dangerous, and we are under genocide. The central government is doing nothing for us. A Tuz Khurmato, south of Kirkuk in an oil-rich area, was the site two months ago of a sectarian-tinged confrontation over disputed territory between forces loyal to the Iraqi government in Baghdad and the Kurdish regional government, which has its own armed forces. Iraq has been increasingly consumed by sectarian attacks and political turmoil since December, when the home of the countrys Sunni finance minister was raided by security forces loyal to Prime Minister Nuri Kamal al-Maliki, a Shiite. Mr. Malikis political bloc has been accused by Sunnis and others of seeking to monopolize power before provincial elections this spring. Mr. Maliki, who took power during the American-led military occupation of Iraq, has denied the accusations and rejected demands by rivals that he resign. The instability has been a growing source of concern for the United States, which withdrew its military forces from Iraq about a year ago.

Kaynak/Source: