

Beat: News

1,000 killed in May: Iraq hit by worst wave of violence in 5 years

-, 02.06.2013, 19:09 Time

USPA News - More than 1,000 people were killed in a wave of violence across Iraq in May, making it the country's deadliest month in more than five years amid fears that widespread sectarian strife will continue to escalate, the United Nations (UN) said on Saturday. At least 1,045 Iraqis were killed and another 2,397 were wounded in violence across the country in May, according to figures released by the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI).

The number of fatalities includes 782 civilians, 181 civilian police officers, and 82 members of the Iraqi Security Forces (ISF). The monthly figures are the worst in more than five years and includes May 27 when a wave of bombings killed 75 people and injured 200 hundreds at markets and Shi'ite neighborhoods in the Iraqi capital of Baghdad. The Iraqi government put last month's death toll at nearly 700, but UNAMI said its figures are conservative and rely on direct investigation along with credible secondary sources. "That is a sad record. Iraqi political leaders must act immediately to stop this intolerable bloodshed," said Martin Kobler, the UN Secretary-General's Special Representative and head of UNAMI. It comes just days after he warned that systemic violence is "ready to explode at any moment" if the country's leaders fail to take immediate action. UNAMI said it recorded 560 security incidents across Iraq in May, including 176 incidents involving improvised explosive devices (IEDs), 82 car bombings, and 243 incidents involving small arms fire. Baghdad was the worst affected province last month with 1,817 civilian casualties, including 532 fatalities and 1,285 injured. Although violence in Iraq had generally declined dramatically since its peak in 2006 and 2007, political turmoil and sectarian violence has been on the rise following the pullout of the last U.S. soldiers in mid-December 2011. UNAMI said a total of 712 people were killed and 1,633 were wounded in violence across Iraq in April, following 229 fatalities in March.

Article online:

<https://www.uspa24.com/bericht-1055/1000-killed-in-may-iraq-hit-by-worst-wave-of-violence-in-5-years.html>

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Official Federal Reg. No. 7442619