

Violence Leaves 15 killed in Iraq



Baghdad, March 31 (RHC-Al Jazeera) -- 15 people were killed and 26 others wounded in separate attacks across Iraq on Monday, police and medical sources said.

In Anbar province, artillery and mortar shelling on several neighborhoods in the besieged city of Fallujah, some 50 km west of the Iraqi capital of Baghdad, left 8 people dead and 16 others wounded, Al Jazeera reported.

Separately, gunmen shot dead two people and wounded three others in the city of Haditha, some 200 km west of Baghdad, while gunmen shot dead a counter-terrorism officer in the city of Heet.

Anbar province has been the scene of fierce clashes that flared up after Iraqi police dismantled an anti-government protest site outside Ramadi in late December last year.

In northern Iraq, an army officer, a soldier and a shop owner were reportedly gunned down when armed men using silenced weapons opened fire on them inside a shop in the northern part of the city of Mosul.

In addition, a car bomb went off near an army checkpoint in eastern Mosul, leaving a soldier dead and seven people injured, press reports said.

Iraq is witnessing its worst violence in recent years. According to the UN Assistance Mission for Iraq, a total of 8,868 Iraqis, including 7,818 civilians and civilian police personnel, were killed in 2013, the highest annual death toll in years.

Iran's Supreme Leader Pardons 920 Convicts

Tehran, March 31 (RHC-Agencies) -- Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei pardoned or commuted prison terms of 920 convicts on Monday, local media reported.

The pardon was granted at the request of Iran's judiciary chief Ayatollah Sadeq Amoli-Larijani on the occasion of the Islamic Republic Day, which will be celebrated on Tuesday, according to Tasnim news agency.

On April 1st, 1980, Iranians voted for the establishment of the Islamic Republic following a revolution which overthrew the West-backed Shah.

The amnesty did not apply to those who were sentenced for their role in armed struggle against the country's security, armed or organized drug trafficking, rape, armed robbery, arms smuggling, abduction, bribery and embezzlement, according to Tasnim.

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