

Iraqi Prime Minister Mustafa al-Kadhimi survives assassination attempt

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Baghdad, November 7 (RHC)-- Iraq's military says Prime Minister Mustafa al-Kadhimi survived an assassination attempt after a drone laden with explosives targeted his residence in the capital, Baghdad.

Kadhimi escaped unhurt, but security sources told Reuters news agency that at least six members of the prime minister's personal protection force were wounded in Sunday's attack. "I'm doing fine, praise be to

God, and I call for calm and restraint on the part of everyone for the good of Iraq," he said.

He later appeared on Iraqi television, seated behind a desk in a white shirt, looking calm and composed. "Cowardly rocket and drone attacks don't build homelands and don't build a future," he said.

The early morning attack came after deadly protests in the Iraqi capital over the result of a general election on October 10.

The groups leading protests are heavily-armed Iran-backed militias that lost much of their parliamentary power in the election. They have alleged voting and vote-counting irregularities.

No group immediately claimed responsibility for Sunday's attack on Kadhimi's residence in Baghdad's fortified Green Zone, which houses government buildings and foreign embassies. A statement from the Iraqi military said the failed assassination attempt was with "an explosives-laden drone" and that the prime minister was in "good health."

"The security forces are taking the necessary measures in connection with this failed attempt," it said. Two government officials said Kadhimi's residence had been hit by at least one explosion and confirmed to Reuters that the prime minister was safe.

Al Jazeera's Mahmoud Abdelwahed, reporting from Baghdad, said residents of the city heard explosions and gunfire from the Green Zone and that security has been tightened in and around the central district.

He also said a spokesman for the pro-Iranian militias, known as the Hashd al-Shaabi, has also stated that he was "very sceptical of the assassination attempt, saying that this is just made up by the government in a bid to put blame on the protesters".

The attack comes after protests by supporters of parties who dispute the results of the vote turned violent on Friday with demonstrators pelted police with stones near the Green Zone. The police responded with tear gas and live gunfire, killing at least one demonstrator.

Some of the leaders of the most powerful militia factions openly blamed Kadhimi for Friday's clashes and the protestor's death. "The blood of martyrs is to hold you accountable," said Qais al-Khazali, leader of the Asaib Ahl al-Haq militia, addressing Kadhimi at a funeral held for the protestor.

"The protesters only had one demand against fraud in elections. Responding like this (with live fire) means you are the first responsible for this fraud," he said.

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