

Baghdad Violence Kills At Least 67

BAGHDAD (AP) — A series of coordinated evening blasts in Baghdad and other violence killed at least 67 people in Iraq on Tuesday, officials said, the latest in a months-long surge of bloodshed that Iraqi security forces are struggling to contain.

Many of those killed were caught up in a string of car bombings that tore through the Iraqi capital early in the evening as residents were out shopping or heading to dinner. Those blasts struck 11 different neighborhoods and claimed more than 50 lives in a span of less than two hours.

The killing comes amid a spike in deadly violence in recent months as insurgents try to capitalize on rising sectarian and ethnic tensions. The scale of the bloodshed has risen to levels not seen since 2008, a time when Iraq was pulling back from the brink of civil war.

The evening's deadliest attack happened when two car bombs exploded near restaurants and shops Baghdad's northeastern suburb of Husseinayah, a Shiite area, killing nine people and wounding 32.

A row of restaurants was also hit in the largely Shiite eastern neighborhood of Talibiyah, killing seven and wounding 28. Another car bomb hit the nearby Shiite neighborhood of Sadr City, killing three and wounding eight, according to police.

Egypt's Sinai A New Front For Militants

CAIRO (AP) — An Egyptian doctor once close to Osama bin Laden is bringing together multiple al-Qaida-inspired militant groups in Egypt's Sinai to fight the country's military, as the lawless peninsula emerges as a new theater for jihad, according to Egyptian intelligence and security officials.

There have been other signs of a dangerous shift in the longtime turmoil in the peninsula bordering Israel and the Gaza Strip since the military's July 3 ouster of Islamist President Mohammed Morsi, the officials say. With the shifts, Sinai's instability is becoming more regionalized and threatens to turn into an outright insurgency.

Sinai has seen an influx of foreign fighters over the past two months, including several hundred Yemenis. Several militant groups that long operated in the area to establish an Islamic Caliphate and attack their traditional enemy Israel have joined others in declaring formally that their objective now is to battle Egypt's military.

Also, Sinai has become the focus of attention among major regional jihadi groups. A leader of al-Qaida's Iraqi branch, Abu Mohammed al-Adnani, last weekend called on Egyptians to fight the military, as did al-Qaida's top leader, Ayman al-Zawahri. The militant considered the most dangerous man in the Sahara — one-eyed terror leader Moktar Belmoktar, a former member of al-Qaida's North Africa branch — joined forces with a Mali-based jihadi group last month and vowed attacks in Egypt.

Topping the most wanted list in Sinai is Ramzi Mawafi, a doctor who joined al-Qaida in Afghanistan in the 1990s. Mawafi, 61, escaped from an Egyptian prison in 2011 in a massive jailbreak that also sprung free Morsi and more than a dozen Muslim Brotherhood members during the chaos of the uprising against autocrat Hosni Mubarak.

Christie: Rival Comment A Dig At Weight

NEWARK, N.J. (AP) — New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie accused his Democratic opponent Tuesday of making a mocking reference to his weight when she suggested that the image of him "frolicking on the beach" was not a boost to tourism.

State Sen. Barbara Buono denied taking aim at Christie's size. Her campaign said she was questioning the effectiveness of tourism-promotion commercials featuring the governor and his family that ran all summer in an effort to bring visitors back to the Jersey Shore, parts of which were devastated by last fall's Superstorm Sandy.

In a clip from a campaign event posted on YouTube last week, Buono says: "I don't know about you, but seeing Chris Christie frolicking on the beach is not going to drive me to go to the shore."

Christie, the 50-year-old Republican governor and potential 2016 presidential contender, has long struggled with his weight — and joked about it, too. During an appearance on "The Late Show with David Letterman," he pulled a doughnut out of his suit pocket and took a few bites.

"I'm very disappointed that she decided to go down that road, for me and for other folks across New Jersey, many folks, who are challenged by their weight," said Christie, who is noticeably slimmer since undergoing gastric band surgery in February. "The fact that someone running for governor would make derisive comments about someone's physical appearance is really beneath the office she's seeking."

Texas Guard Won't Process Benefits

AUSTIN, Texas (AP) — The Texas National Guard refused to process requests from same-sex couples for benefits on Tuesday despite a Pentagon directive to do so, while Mississippi won't issue applications from state-owned offices. Both states cited their respective bans on gay marriage.

Tuesday was the first working day that gays in the military could apply for benefits after the Pentagon announced it would recognize same-sex marriages. The Department of Defense had announced that it would recognize same-sex marriages performed in states where they are legal following the U.S. Supreme Court decision that threw out parts of the Defense of Marriage Act.

Texas and Mississippi appeared to be the only two states limiting how and where same-sex spouses of National Guard members could register for identification cards and benefits, according to an Associated Press tally. Officials in 13 other states that also ban gay marriage — including Arizona, Oklahoma, Florida, Michigan and Georgia — said Tuesday that they will follow federal law and process all couples applying for benefits the same.

Maj. Gen. John Nichols, the commanding general of Texas Military Forces, wrote to service members in a letter obtained by the AP that because the Texas Constitution defines marriage as between a man and a woman, his state agency couldn't process applications from gay and lesbian couples. But he said the Texas National Guard, Texas Air Guard and Texas State Guard would not deny anyone benefits.

Nichols wrote that his agency, which oversees Texas' National Guard units, "remains committed to ensuring its military personnel and their families receive the benefits to which they are entitled. As such, we encourage anyone affected by this issue to enroll for benefits at a federal installation." He then listed 22 bases operated by the Department of Defense in Texas where service members could enroll their families.

A spokesman for Texas Gov. Rick Perry said the Texas Military Forces, as a state agency, must obey state law.

Mississippi National Guard spokesman Tim Powell said the main factor in determining where same-sex spouses could apply for benefits came down to the property owner. Powell said only National Guard offices on federal property would accept the applications in Mississippi, which also constitutionally bans gay marriage.

"It is our intent to provide benefits and services to our men and women in uniform and at the same time abide by federal and state statutes," Powell said.

Pentagon officials said Texas appeared to be the only state with a total ban on processing applications from gay and lesbian couples. Spokesman Lt. Cmdr. Nate Christensen said federal officials will process all applications from same-sex couples with a marriage certificate from a state where it is legal.

Syria Said To Be Hiding Weapons

BY RYAN LUCAS
Associated Press

BEIRUT — As the Obama administration tries to prod Congress into backing armed action against Syria, the regime in Damascus is hiding military hardware and shifting troops out of bases into civilian areas.

Politically, President Bashar Assad has gone on the offensive, warning in a rare interview with Western media that any military action against Syria could spark a regional war.

If the U.S. undertakes missile strikes, Assad's reaction could have a major effect on the trajectory of Syria's civil war. Neighboring countries could get dragged into a wider conflict, or it could be back to business as usual for a crisis that has claimed the lives of more than 100,000 people over 2 1/2 years.

The main Western-backed opposition group says that during the buildup last week to what seemed like an imminent U.S. attack, the army moved troops as well as rocket launchers, artillery and other heavy weapons into residential neighborhoods in cities nationwide. Three Damascus residents, speaking on condition of anonymity for fear of reprisals, confirmed such movements.

One man said two members of the elite Republican Guards broke into an empty house he owns and showed him an official document stating they were authorized to do so because Syria is at war. A woman in another area said soldiers moved into a school next to her house.

A U.S. official confirmed there are indications that the Syrian regime is taking steps to move some of its military equipment and bolster protection for defense facilities.

The official, who was not authorized to discuss intelligence matters and spoke on condition of anonymity, said that at this point, the U.S. has the information it needs to maintain a good handle on what the regime is doing to prepare.

The trend inside Syria is likely to continue in the coming days now that the regime has won a reprieve with President Barack Obama's decision to seek congressional approval for military action.

"The Syrian regime knows there are 30-40 potential targets for U.S. airstrikes, and they have had ample time to prepare," said Hisham Jaber, a retired Lebanese army general and director of the Middle East Center for Studies and Political Research in Beirut. "Half of them, if not more, have been evacuated, moved or camouflaged. This is the natural thing to do."



DENNIS BRACK/BLACK STAR/ABACA PRESS/MCT
President Barack Obama meets with members of Congress in the cabinet room of the White House in Washington, D.C., on Tuesday to discuss a military response to Syria. From left, Ambassador Susan Rice, Speaker John Boehner, Obama, House Democratic leader Nancy Pelosi.

Syria Uncertainty Hangs Over Obama's Overseas Trip

BY JULIE PACE AND JOSH LEDERMAN
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Deep uncertainty surrounding military action against Syria hangs over President Barack Obama's three-day overseas trip to Sweden and Russia, which takes him away from Washington just as he's seeking support on Capitol Hill for a strike.

Before his scheduled departure Tuesday night, Obama urged lawmakers meeting with him at the White House to support his plan to punish Syria for allegedly using chemical weapons to attack its own people. The president won the backing of House Speaker John Boehner, R-Ohio, and Democratic Leader Nancy Pelosi of California, though that hardly guarantees support in the fractured House of Representatives.

The president also will seek to bolster international support for a strike during talks with world leaders this week at the Group of 20 summit. Those efforts will pit him against Russian president and summit host Vladimir Putin, who has perhaps done the most

to stymie international efforts to oust Syria's Bashar Assad.

Obama and Putin's clashing views on Syria have worsened a relationship already rife with tension from differences on human rights, missile defense, and the Russia's decision to grant asylum to National Security Agency leaker Edward Snowden.

"It's been like watching a slow-moving train wreck for nearly two years," Andrew Kuchins, a Russia expert at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, said of the Obama-Putin relationship. "Mr. Putin and Mr. Obama don't like each other at all. I think there's a deep degree of disrespect."

While Syria isn't officially on the agenda at the economy-focused G-20 summit, the potential for imminent military action is expected to dominate conversations on the sidelines of the summit. World leaders will be seeking guidance from the U.S. president about whether he plans to proceed with a strike if Congress rejects his proposed resolution — a question Obama's aides have refused to answer.

Votes in the House and the Senate are expected next week, just after Obama wraps up his trip.

Using Nokia Deal, Microsoft Tries To Catch Up

BY MICHAEL LIETKE
AND MATTI HUHTANEN
Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO — Microsoft's acquisition of Nokia's troubled smartphone business represents a daring \$7.2 billion attempt by the software giant and a once-influential cellphone maker to catch up with the mobile computing revolution that threatens to leave them in the technological dust.

The deal announced late Monday offers both companies a chance to make up for lost time with a strategy to meld their software and hardware into a cohesive package, like rival Apple has done. But there are plenty of reasons to question whether the copycat approach will pay off.

Unlike Apple, Microsoft Corp. makes most of its money from software for personal computers — a still-profitable franchise that has gradually been crumbling as smartphones and tablets supplant laptop and desktop machines. By some estimates, more than two-thirds of the computing devices being sold now are either smartphones or tablets, and there are few signs that trend will change during the next decade.

To complicate Microsoft's transition, the Redmond, Wash., company is being led by a lame duck. Microsoft CEO Steve Ballmer, who negotiated the Nokia deal, recently announced plans to retire within the next year in a tacit admission that the company needs a different leader to blaze new trails.

The managerial limbo raises even more doubts about whether Microsoft will be able to turn Nokia's phones into more effective weapons in a mobile-computing battle against devices powered by Google Inc.'s Android software and Apple Inc.'s iPhone and iPad.

"It's a three-horse race, and Microsoft knows it needs to come up with a more well-defined plan for mobile devices to catch up," said Darren Hayes, a computer science professor at Pace University in New York. "This was an essential acquisition for them."

The Nokia deal didn't go over well with investors who

"It's a three-horse race, and Microsoft knows it needs to come up with a more well-defined plan for mobile devices to catch up."

DARREN HAYES

have already become weary of Microsoft's largely fruitless efforts to evolve into something more than a PC-dependent company.

Microsoft's stock shed \$1.52, or 4.6 percent, to close Tuesday at \$31.88. Nokia Corp.'s shares surged \$1.22, or 31 percent, to finish at \$5.12.

Nokia, a Finnish company,

has seen its cellphone business unravel since Apple revolutionized the way people use handsets with the 2007 introduction of the iPhone. Nokia's problems grew worse in 2009 after Google began giving away its Android software to smartphone makers, spawning an array of sleek, low-cost alternatives.

In an attempt to bounce

back, Nokia lured Stephen Elop away from Microsoft to become CEO nearly three years ago. That move has not worked out well for Nokia's shareholders. Even with Tuesday's rally, Nokia's stock remains about 40 percent below where it stood when Elop became CEO.

Despite those losses, Elop has emerged as a candidate to replace Ballmer as Microsoft's CEO. Elop is stepping down as Nokia's CEO to re-join Microsoft, where he will oversee the company's devices division. Nokia board Chairman Risto Siilasmaa will serve as the company's interim CEO.

Announcing... **Yankton Citywide Rummage**

SEPT. 12th - 15th

\$28.30 prepaid
(20¢ per word over 30 words)

Stop By The Press & Dakotan To Place Your Ad
OR email classifieds@yankton.net

Includes:

- Your ad (30 words, 1 address per ad) placed in the special Citywide Rummage Sale section published on Wednesday, September 11th & Saturday, September 14th
- Your ad will also appear on-line at www.yankton.net
- Garage Sale Kit: 2 Yard Signs with Balloons

DEADLINE: NOON, SEPT. 6TH

sponsored by the: **PRESS&DAKOTAN**