



DOSSIER PART 8:

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 - *Iraq's deadly brain drain, 11 May 2008*
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- Iraqi Professors Shaken by Threats (Associated Press, June 30, 2003)

BORZOU DARAGAH

Just weeks after the murder of three professors, an anonymous note calling on professors to stay home "or else" has shaken Mustansiriyah University's staff and some of its students.

"Of course we're scared," said Abdul Samee al-Janabi, dean of the college of sciences, where an anonymous note threatening four professors - all members of Saddam Hussein's Baath Party - to stay away from campus recently appeared on the wall.

"We have freedom now, maybe too much freedom," al-Janabi said. "But everything is up in the air. And no one feels safe."

In Saddam's day, universities like this one in central Baghdad were a Baath Party tool, used to teach ideology and submission to authority.

Students say Baathists pressured them to join the party, sometimes making them pay dues even if they refused to sign on. Students were recruited as spies, and if one student's report of subversive activities did not match another's, each could be arrested, university officials said.

The post-war transformation has been dramatic.

Instead of adorning the university's entrance, Saddam's portrait has been spray painted on the cobblestone walkway, welcoming students to step on his likeness.

Campuses are awash in a chaotic bloom of new ideas, new quandaries and new faces. One of them, al-Janabi, promoted to dean after Saddam's fall, faces a torrent of dilemmas.

In one case, scientists previously denied faculty positions because they were not Baathists, barged into his office and demanded their applications be resurrected.

Physics lecturers demanded the removal of the department head, who, they say, was a Baathist.

A professor complains about the questionnaire U.S. occupiers handed out last week. Questions include: "Are you a Baath Party member?" "Why did you join?" "Did you ever renounce the Baath Party?"



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"It's humiliating to have to answer these questions," said Salah Mohsen Oleywi, deputy dean of the science college.

New freedoms have also transformed the relationship between student and teacher, said Salah Hadi al-Qoreishi, assistant dean of Mustansiriyah's College of Arts . Faculty twice found notes on the walls threatening professors tied to the Baath Party.

"The students have become more aggressive," al-Qoreishi said. "They're making demands. They've even begun to tell us how to do our jobs. It's become uncontrollable."

Bulletin boards that used to bear Baathist tracts are now filled with poetry, Islamic leaflets and criticism of the U.S.-led occupation. "The occupier wants to spread liberal education, push aside Islam and open nightclubs," states one flyer.

"It was like a prison here," said Ali Abbas, a 21-year-old literature student. "The Baath Party people always told us what to do. Now we have real freedom. We don't have to do what other people tell us."

The campus has become unsafe, too. Since the murder of Fallah Ali Hussein, a mid-ranking Baath Party official and former deputy dean of the college of sciences, men with Kalashnikovs guard campus gates.

A gunman shot Hussein in the arm, chest and head before jumping into a car and screeching away, said Nameh Musa, a chemistry professor accompanying Hussein.

No one knows who shot Hussein or why. The murder was reported to the American occupation force, but no suspects have turned up.

Saad al-Jawad, a political science professor at Baghdad University , said two other Mustansiriyah professors have also been killed since the end of the war.

- **U.S. Forces Detain Dozens Of Iraqi Scientists** (IOL 16 Aug 2003)

By Aus Al-Sharqi, IOL Baghdad Correspondent

BAGHDAD, August 16 (IslamOnline.net & News Agencies) – Baghdad University rector Dr. Samy Ahmed Al-Mozaffer declared that the U.S. Occupation forces detained tens of Iraqi scientists, including a number of senior university professors from Baghdad, Mustansiriyah and the Technological universities.

“There is something fishy behind such detentions, as interviews are held with university professors in secret and we don’t know what is happening during them,” Al-Mozaffer said in statements he made to reporters Friday, August 15.

“We drew the professors’ attention to the necessity of avoiding any dialogue with foreign bodies that have intentions and targets to the detriment of the interests of the country,” he added.

Al-Mozaffer pointed out that the U.S. occupation forces detained Dr. Alice Krikour, professor of Bacteriology, then released her in 10 days. They have also detained Dr. Hazem Mohamed Ali of the faculty of medicine, without releasing him so far.

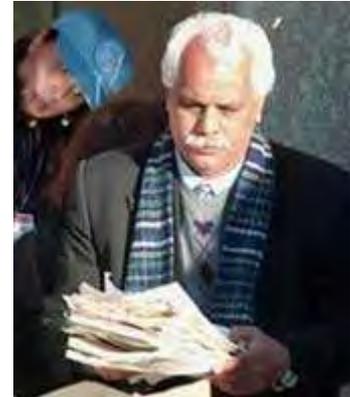
“We asked them [the scientists who have been detained then released] about the investigations but got no accurate information. Some said: The questions were about the past armament program,” Mozaffer said.

Replying a question posed by IslamOnline.net about the measures taken by the university president in this regard, Dr. Mozaffer said, “I’ve talked with all parties concerned, I sent a list of the names of those detained professors to the head of the civil administration. Yet, the problem persists.”

Immigration To The States

Commenting on this news, Mohammed Majid, a holder of an MD in life sciences, said, “I think the Americans try to persuade those scientists to immigrate to the U.S.. They aim to allure those scientists to travel to the states in return for some privileges. They also try to rob Iraq out of its scientific minds to make it a consumer country only.”

Majid pointed out that the U.S. “has tried through investigation committees to persuade several scientists to work abroad following the previous deposed regime.”



Faleh Hassan, an Iraqi scientist, was interrogated by the U.S. forces

On his part, Hamid Hashim Al-Amery, a lecturer in the Technological University, said, "Education sector suffered a lot during the pre-war era and was exposed to huge pressures under the deposed President's regime. This has led to the immigration of Iraqi scientists."

"My father is a scientist who is specialized in the chemical field. He was summoned by the investigation committees before the war. Four days ago, a friend of his called and suggested to immigrate to the states to live a better life and obtain the U.S. nationality but my father categorically refused," Soad Abdel Karim, an Iraqi citizen, said.

- Iraqis Against 'Americanizing' Universities (28 Aug 2003)

By Sobhy Haddad, IOL Correspondent

BAGHDAD, August 28 (IslamOnline.net) - Iraqi university students and professors, including the deputy president of the Baghdad-based Al-Nahrien University, firmly oppose any attempt to "Americanize" universities and would only support "cooperation" with American educational institutions.

Dr. Faek Gawwad al-Ezzawi told IslamOnline.net that the U.S. administration in Iraq, which is working on "twining" Iraqi universities with American peers, keeps special plans for his time-honored university which once carried the name of ousted president Saddam Hussein.



"Our universities should hold on to their independence," said Ezzawi

"It (plan) dates back to almost two months when U.S. officials visited the university in the posh Gadoria area and were surprised at its quasi-American education system," he recalled.

The Iraqi official said the Americans were thinking to turn the university into an American similar to those in Egypt and Lebanon.

Ezzawi also indicated that some Iraqi professors held meetings with Iraqi "pointmen" to communicate with the American official in charge of the Iraqi education file to conclude twining agreements between Iraqi and American universities.

He, however, stopped short of naming the American universities or fixing a date to put such agreements into fruition.



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'Americanization'

Though Ezawwi rebuffed the "Americanization" of the Iraqi universities he welcomed "cooperation" protocols regarding "curricula, researches, future plans and mutual visits."

"Our universities should hold on to their independence," stressed the university deputy chief.

Anmar, a student at the faculty of science, saw eye to eye with Ezawwi, approving only curricula development on par with American universities.

"Baghdad University will remain independent and under the authority of the ministry of high education and scientific research," he said.

"Iraq abounds with brilliant and competent professors, who can keep pace with the latest development in the West and the United States," Anmar remarked.

Khaled Khalil, another student, echoed the mainstream.

"Iraq is a free and independent country and our university will never be in American hands," he said.

Privatization

Ezzawi further said that education in Iraq has been always free-of-charge, noting that the idea of privatizing Iraqi universities "has not been debated yet."

"Some parties are encouraging Iraqi universities to get foreign aid but none has been granted any financial assistance thus far," he said, criticizing insufficient allotments from the occupation authorities in Iraq.

But Ezzawi did not spare the deposed Iraqi regime the blame, saying pre-war chaos in the education system dragged on.

"We used to buy books and photocopy it and then distribute the copies among the students, and now it is the same as ever, given the insufficient funding," he asserted.

Some universities, in light of the anarchy that mired the country in the aftermath of Baghdad downfall, have doubled and even tripled their admission fees, such as the Baghdad-based Al-Rafdeen University.

"The university displayed a notification of admission fees, which sky-rocketed from 250,000 Iraqi dinars to 650,000 (1800 dinars equals one dollar)," said Mohammad Hani, a marketing student.

New Curricula

On the nature of university curricula now that Saddam Hussein is out of picture, Ezzawi said Al-Nahrien University, for instance, has wiped out a book on the deposed president which was obligatory.

He noted that the university also penciled out some parts from other textbooks, which trumpeted the ideas of the disbanded Baath party.

As for the curricula of the faculty of political sciences in the university, Ezzawi asserted that they were devoid of anything related to the former regime.

"All Saddam photos and Baath slogans have been rubbed out from all textbooks," he put it in a nutshell.

Following the Baathist revolution in July 1968, the education sector in Iraq took a new turn, as Baathists made education charge-free and paid due attention to cadres.

After the first Gulf War between Iraq and Iran, curricula gradually turned to "glorify" any thing made by Saddam.

On July 7, the occupation authorities erased any mention of Saddam and his party in school curricula and annulled and the scholarships granted to those favored by the ousted leader.

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- **Iraqi scientists under pressure to help find WMDs** (AFP, Mar 10, 2004)

BAGHDAD

A year after US forces invaded Iraq on the pretext that the country was developing weapons of mass destruction, Washington has kept pressure on Iraqi scientists to help find the ever-elusive WMD programme.

"We have repeatedly told them that the WMDs were destroyed, but they are just not listening," said a physics researcher at Baghdad University.

And scientists here aren't the only ones in a dialogue of the deaf.

The expert tasked by US President George W. Bush with finding them, David Kay, repeated this month: "I was convinced and still am convinced that there were no stockpiles of weapons of mass destruction at the time of the war."



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In the face of subsequent criticism, the United States, Britain and Australia have all launched inquiries into how intelligence about biological, chemical and nuclear weapons was used in making the case for war.

But in Iraq there has been no let-up, and Washington has alternately used the carrot and the stick on scientists and researchers, and some have even fled into exile.

In December, the United States announced a 22-million-dollar programme to rehabilitate scientists, researchers and technicians who worked on arms development under former dictator Saddam Hussein.

Under the programme, an office charged with identifying those who qualify was due to be set up in Baghdad in February, though no scientist, university chair or Iraqi professor questioned by AFP recently was aware of any date.

"No one here seems to be knowledgeable about the programme," said an official from the US-led Coalition Provision Authority, who added that it was an issue for the US State Department.

Yet these funds would be welcomed with open arms by those who worked in Iraq's prolific military industry, a sector that collapsed with the fall of Saddam last April.

"The state was militarised and the whole country worked on armaments," said the Baghdad University physicist on condition that he not be named.

"We were not happy just to teach, we were conducting research. The military industrial departments had the best equipment, so we worked there for the experience," he said.

After the war, scientists who were important members of the ruling Baath party were removed, while others returned to their old jobs at universities, said Wael Nurreddin al-Rifai, chairman at Baghdad University of Technology.

But as US forces struggled to find evidence on the arms, the researchers lived in constant fear of being arrested.

There have been arrests and scientists held without charge because they "pose an imperative threat to security, either because of what they've done or what they know," US Major Michael Pierson said.

"Some scientists who were in the former regime's military are being held as prisoners of war," he said, without providing details or numbers.



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The families of these experts claim their loved ones are being persecuted.

"If the Americans have something to accuse them of, they should set up courts and judge them in public," said the wife of Ali Abdelrahman al-Zaak, a 49-year-old genetics expert at Baghdad University, who has been held twice.

Before he was arrested a second time in January, Zaak released a statement denouncing "harassment and rights violations against some Iraqi scientists and professors by American forces investigating WMDs."

He said any "specialisation in the domains of biology, chemistry and physics is now dangerous for scientists under the occupation" by US-led troops. Zaak is qualified as a "high value detainee" on the American prisoner list.

The wife of Sobhi Said al-Rawi, 59-year-old head of the women's information technology department at Baghdad University, tells a similar story.

"Under Saddam Hussein, my husband refused to be a member of the Baath party and he was never promoted because he took that stand. Now he has been held for months by the Americans," she said.

Some scientists who took part in weapons development and have so far escaped arrest have joined the new industry, and science and technology ministries.

But others have fled into hiding abroad. The physics department and science faculty have lost three professors in this manner -- two have taken refuge in Yemen, the third in Libya.

"In all, the scientists have paid the price and the country is going through a troubling brain drain," Rifai said.

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- **A face and A Name** (HRW 02 Oct 2005)

X. Attacks on Intellectuals and Professionals

Since late 2003, various armed groups have targeted Iraq's intellectual and professional class, including professors, doctors and lawyers. The goals are diverse. In some cases, abductions are criminally motivated, because professionals are believed to have more money to pay in ransom. But some killings appear politically motivated, either because the victim had expressed support for the



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U.S.-led invasion or criticism of the insurgency, or because the attackers believed the person held such views.

Some Iraqi academics see the attacks as a way to destroy Iraq's intellectual elite. "The victims cover a wide spectrum of research interests, different politics and different religious convictions. The only common denominator is their excellence," said Sa`adun `Issa, vice-chancellor of al-Nahrain University in Baghdad. "I think there's a plan to strip Iraq of its scientific backbone." [\[278\]](#)

"We think it's politically motivated," a senior Education Ministry official said. The attacks are a devastating blow-"not only because of the number killed, but because of their quality." [\[279\]](#)

The intimidation and killing of intellectuals and professionals impedes governance, complicates work for security forces and weakens the economy, according to Anthony H. Cordesman, an insurgency expert at the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington D.C. The pattern of attacks on professionals, he says, "exacerbates the feeling of insecurity to the point where people lose faith in the Iraqi government, Coalition, and political process." [\[280\]](#)

Precise figures are difficult to obtain, but studies suggest that doctors and academics are particularly at risk. According to a study by the Iraqi Ministry of Health concluded in April 2005, armed groups have abducted between 160 and 300 Iraqi doctors since April 2003, and killed more than twenty-five, although the study did not distinguish between criminal and politically motivated attacks. Nearly 1,000 doctors have fled the country, the study said, with an average of thirty more following each month. [\[281\]](#) To stem the outflow, the ministry broadcast a public service announcement on television in spring 2005, with a message that said: "Dear Citizens, please do not kill doctors-you may need them one day." [\[282\]](#) In May 2005, the Interior Ministry gave doctors the right to carry a weapon for self-defense. [\[283\]](#)

Professors at Iraq's once prestigious universities and technical colleges are also under attack. According to an April 2005 United Nations University report, assassins have killed forty-eight academics since 2003, and many more teachers and professors brave daily threats. [\[284\]](#) According to the Iraqi Minister of Higher Education, as of June 2005, attackers had killed more than sixty professors since the beginning of the war, although he did not specify how they died. The highest percentage of those had scientific backgrounds, he said. [\[285\]](#)

One of the first victims was Falah Hussein, deputy dean of the college of sciences at al-Mustansiriya University in Baghdad, who unknown gunmen killed in May 2003. Next was the assassination by unknown gunmen of Dr. Muhammad al-Rawi, president of Baghdad University, that July. [\[286\]](#)



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One of the more prominent cases was the killing of `Abd al-Latif al-Mayah, a human rights advocate and political science professor at al-Mustansiriya University. On January 19, 2004, eight masked gunmen stopped him as he drove to work. They pulled him to the street, the Iraqi police said, and shot him dead in front of his bodyguard and another university lecturer. [\[287\]](#)

On June 19, 2005, unknown gunmen shot and killed engineer Sattar Sabbar al-Khazraji, a professor at the Technology University in Baghdad. According to the Iraqi newspaper *al-Sharqiyah*, two men on a motorcycle shot al-Khazraji in front of his house in the western Baghdad area of al-Hurriyah al-Thaniyah. [\[288\]](#)

Most recently, in the last week of August, three more Baghdad academics died. According to *Azzaman*, an Iraqi daily newspaper, unknown gunmen killed Zaki al-Ani from al-Mustansiriyya University's College of Arts, and Hashim `Abd al-Amir from the College of Education on August 27 near the university's main entrance. A third professor, Samir Yalda of the College of Economics and Administration had been kidnapped two days earlier, and his body was found the same day. [\[289\]](#)

The violence has hit other cities as well. In November 2003, unknown men reportedly assassinated Asa `ad al-Sharida, dean of the engineering college in Basra. Two months later, assailants stabbed to death Muhammad Qasim, a teacher in Basra's technical college. [\[290\]](#)

In Mosul on June 22, 2004, unknown assailants killed the dean of Mosul University's Law School, Laila `Abdullah Sa `ad, together with her husband Munir al-Khairu. According to the Iraqi police, the attackers slit both their throats. [\[291\]](#)

Hundreds of academics and professionals have been threatened with death and told to leave Iraq. According to the Association of University Teachers, 2,000 professors have left Iraq since 2003, joining the 10,000 professors the association says left the country in the twelve years after the Gulf War. [\[292\]](#)

"I was given one week," the director of the Institute of Radiotherapy and Nuclear Medicine in Baghdad told one journalist. "But I can't quit. If I step down, nobody would come and take my place." [\[293\]](#) Others have taken the threats to heart and fled the country, usually for Damascus or Amman.

"We are losing the brain power of our most brilliant doctors," said Dr. Sami Salman, director of the Special Care Hospital at Baghdad's Medical City complex. "You just can't replace them overnight." [\[294\]](#)

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^[278] Ed Blanche, "Exodus From Terror," *The Middle East*, April 1, 2005.

^[279] Ibid.



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[280] Anthony H. Cordesman, "Iraq's Evolving Insurgency," Center for Strategic and International Studies, Updated as of May 19, 2005.

[281] Ali Rifat and Hala Jaber, "Kidnap Gangs Force Doctors to Flee Iraq," *The Times*, June 5, 2005.

[282] Deborah Amos, "Iraqi Seeks to Protect Medical Workers," aired on *National Public Radio*, June 13, 2005.

[283] Scott Peterson, "Iraq's Ministries Struggle to Serve," *Christian Science Monitor*, May 13, 2005. For another article about attacks on doctors, see Robin Shulman, "Violence Targets Iraqi Doctors Seen as Rich, Connected," *Washington Post*, September 12, 2004.

[284] United Nations University press release, "5/6ths of Iraq's Higher Learning Institutions Burnt, Looted, Wrecked; 48 Profs Slain; UNU Calls for World Help to Repair System," April 27, 2005.

[285] *Al-Mashriq*, June 18, 2005.

[286] Annia Ciezadlo, "Death to Those Who Dare to Speak Out," *Christian Science Monitor*, April 30, 2004.

[287] Jeffrey Gettleman, "Assassinations Tear into Iraq's Educated Class," *New York Times*, February 6, 2004.

[288] *Al-Sharqiyah*, June 19, 2005.

[289] Katherine Zoepf, "3 More Professors Are Killed in Iraq, as Flight of Academics Intensifies," *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, August 31, 2005.

[290] Jeffrey Gettleman, "Assassinations Tear into Iraq's Educated Class," *New York Times*, February 6, 2004.

[291] "Head of Mosul Law Faculty and Her Husband Killed in Northern Iraq: Police," *Agence France-Presse*, June 22, 2004, and Peter Y. Hong and Barbara Demick, "South Korean Held in Iraq is Beheaded," *Los Angeles Times*, June 23, 2004.

[292] Howard LaFranchi, "Iraq Losing its Best and Brightest," *Christian Science Monitor*, September 21, 2004.

[293] Jeffrey Gettleman, "Assassinations Tear into Iraq's Educated Class," *New York Times*, February 6, 2004.

[294] Ahmed Mukhtar, "Where is This Going?" *Al-Ahram Weekly*, June 10-16, 2004, available at <http://weekly.ahram.org.eg/2004/694/re7.htm>, as of July 16, 2005



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- **'I will always hate you people'** (The Guardian, Monday 24 May 2004)

Family's fury at mystery death

- Luke Harding in Baghdad

The first Mohammed Munim al-Izmerly's family knew of his death was when his battered corpse turned up at Baghdad's morgue. Attached to the zipped-up black US body bag was a laconic note. The US military claimed in the note that Dr Izmerly, a distinguished chemistry professor arrested after US tanks encircled his villa, had died of "brainstem compression".

Dr Izmerly's sudden death after 10 months in American custody left his family stunned, not least because three weeks earlier they had visited him in the US prison at Baghdad airport. His 23-year-old daughter, Rana, recalled that he had seemed in "good health".

The family commissioned an independent Iraqi autopsy. Its conclusion was unambiguous: Dr Izmerly had died because of a "sudden hit to the back of his head", Faik Amin Baker, the director of Baghdad hospital's forensic department, certified.

The cause of death was blunt trauma. It was uncertain exactly how he died, but someone had hit him from behind, possibly with a bar or a pistol, Dr Baker confirmed yesterday.

"He died from a massive blow to the head. We don't disagree with the coalition's report, but it doesn't explain how he got his injuries in the first place," he told the Guardian.

The apparent murder of a "high-value" detainee, held as part of the search for weapons of mass destruction, is another blow for the Bush administration, still reeling from the Abu Ghraib jail abuse scandal.

Dr Izmerly was on the coalition's original "200 list" of suspects from Saddam Hussein's regime, and his death happened just two weeks after the US military began its own secret inquiry into the prison west of Baghdad. Last Friday the Pentagon admitted it was now investigating eight more suspected murders.

Several prisoners have been found to have died before or during interrogation. They include Major General Abed Hamed Mowhoush, a former commander of Iraq's air defences, who died last November during interrogation at Qaim.

The original US autopsy said he had died of a heart attack. It now appears he was suffocated during interrogation when a CIA officer put him in a sleeping bag and sat on him.



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Last night the family of Dr Izmerly were in little doubt he had been murdered in US custody. The reasons for his death were covered up, they believe.

"This was not natural," Rana told the Guardian yesterday, in the first interview given by the family since his death. "The evidence is clear. It suggests the Americans killed him and then tried to hide what they had done. I will hate Americans and British people for the rest of my life. You are democrats. You said you were coming to bring democracy, and yet you kill my father. By accepting your governments, you accept what they do here in Iraq.

"You offer no proof that he did something wrong, you refuse him a lawyer and then you kill him. Why?"

Dr Izmerly does not appear to be among the cases under the review announced by the US defence department last week.

The death certificate provided by the coalition, which is almost entirely blank, fails to explain how he got a fracture in his skull, or the small cut above his left eye. The scientist is merely a number, 1909.

Asked to explain how he had died, a coalition spokesman said last night: "There are several investigations currently under way into the issue of detainee abuse. It is inappropriate for us to comment on ongoing investigations."

The professor's 60-year-old widow, Sahera Abdullah, said she had received no satisfactory explanation of why he had been arrested in the first place. His study at his villa in the Baghdad suburb of al-Khadra had burned down during a shootout between US soldiers and Saddam's paramilitaries, the Fedayeen, during last year's war, she said.

Soon afterwards, on April 25, US tanks encircled the house. Marines kicked in the front door and then ransacked the home, carting off books, papers, computers and family photographs. Mrs Izmerly said: "They stayed for a day. I offered them tea and coffee. They seemed surprised."

The next day Dr Izmerly gave himself up. The family admits that he had met Saddam the previous year, but says he was part of a group of academics summoned to meet the president. The family admits that the price of his going to international scientific conferences was to pass information to the mukhabarat, the secret police.

The first Red Cross letter arrived last May, but the family was still no wiser as to where the US was holding him. After six months, they were allowed to drop off some winter clothes at al-Taji, a US military base north of Baghdad. There were three telephone calls. But their attempts to visit him got nowhere.



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Finally, Rana and her elder sister, Nuha, 27, and brother, Ashraf, 21, discovered that their father was being kept at the US base at Baghdad international airport. On January 11, they managed to see him.

A US officer, known as Mr Jakey, drove them blindfolded on a zigzagging route through the camp. They were taken to an empty tourist villa. Her father emerged from a side door. They gave him some sweets. "When I saw him his health was good. He was normal. He was dressed in the clothes we sent him earlier," Rana said. "But he refused to talk about what had happened to him in custody. I asked the Americans why they had arrested him. They told me simply, 'He is a witness'."

The Red Cross visited him on January 19. On February 17, the organisation informed the family that he was dead. "I went to the morgue in the hospital and found him in a black US body bag," Ashraf said yesterday. "There was a cut on his head behind his right ear. It was hard to miss."

It was discovered that US doctors had made a 20cm incision in his skull, apparently in an attempt to save his life after the initial blow.

The family presented its autopsy findings to an Iraqi judge. "He told us, 'You can't do anything to the coalition. What happened is history,'" Ashraf said.

Yesterday, as darkness fell around the scientist's home, the family showed some of their father's belongings returned from the jail - a few Red Cross letters, a bag of clothes and a framed photo.

But there also was the legacy of emotion - of a kind now common across Iraq, and swelling into a storm. "I won't allow myself to rest until I have got revenge for him," Rana said.

- **Brief Overview of the Higher Education System in Iraq** (March 2005)

Iraq's higher education system comprises 20 universities¹ and 47 technical institutes,² under the general management of the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research (MHESR) There are also about 10 private colleges, offering studies in computer science, business administration, economics and management.³ The MHESR is organized as follows:⁴

(Names in parenthesis indicate that the person is present at the round table)

¹ Universities are usually 4 year programmes equivalent to a Bachelors degree.

² Technical institutes are normally a programme of study of 2-3 years.

³ Source: Iraq: *Education in Transition, Needs and Challenges*, UNESCO, Division of Educational Policies and Strategies, 2004

⁴ Source: *Strategies of the Iraqi Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research*, MHESR, 2005

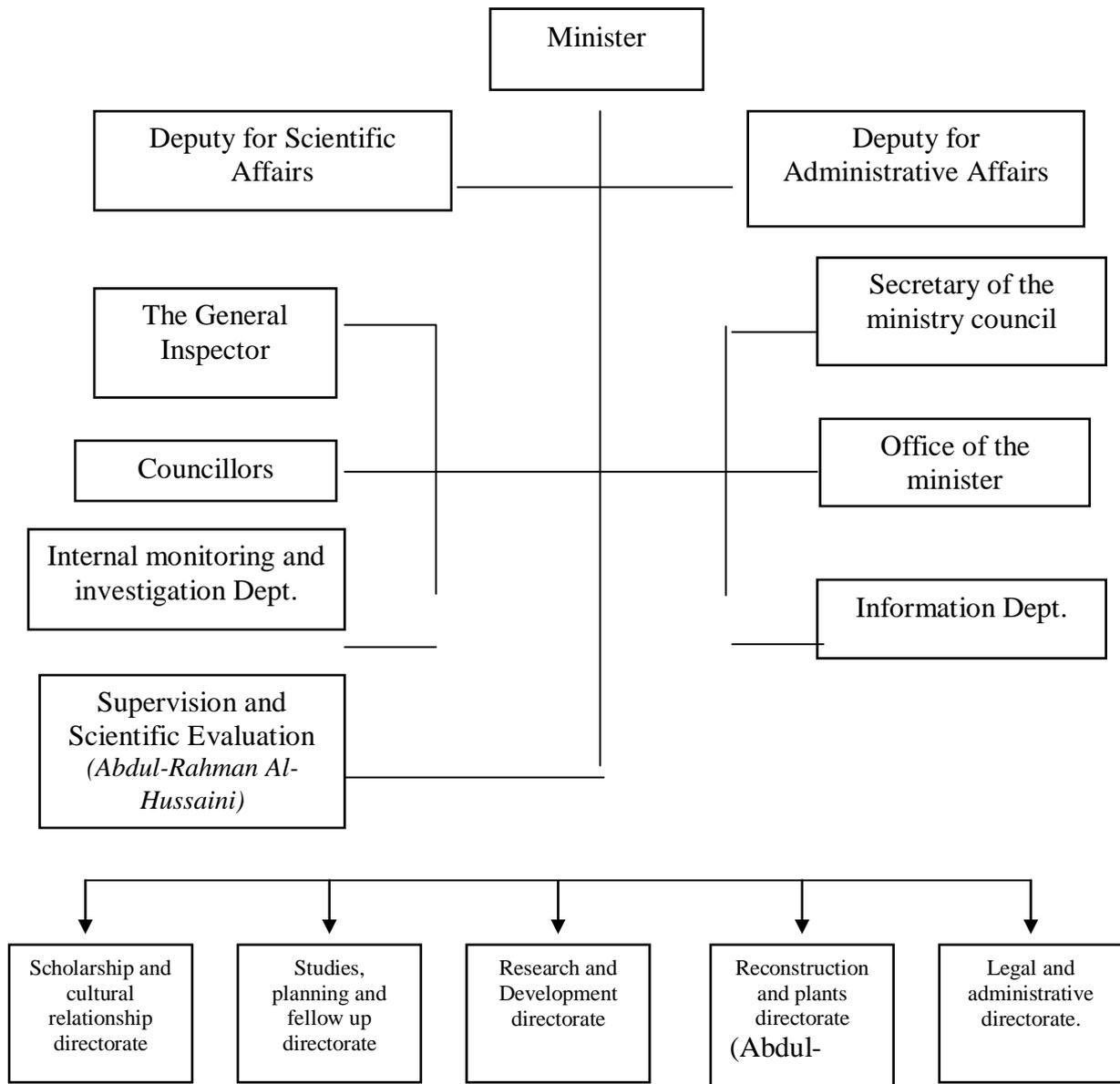


Table 1 Iraqi Universities, Location, Year of Foundation, Number of Colleges and Institutes/Centers per Governorate⁵

Governorate/ City of Location	Name of University	Year of Foundation	Number of Colleges	Number of Institutes/ Research Centers
Anbar/Ramadi	Anbar	1987	11	-
Babylon/Hilla	Babylon	1988	11	2
Baghdad/Baghdad	Al-Nahrain	1988	6	1
Baghdad/Baghdad	Baghdad	1960	24	5
Baghdad/Baghdad	Commission for Computers and Informatics	1972	1	1
Baghdad/Baghdad	Islamic Studies	1989	3	-
Baghdad/Baghdad	Mustansiriya	1963	10	5
Baghdad/Baghdad	Technology	1960	13	1
Basrah/Garmat Ali	Basrah	1967	14	6
Dahuk/Dahuk	Dahuk	1992	9	-
Diyala / Ba'qubah	Diyala	1995	6	-
Erbil/Erbil	Salah al-Din	1981	15	-
Kerbala / Kerbala	Kerbala	1987	4	-
Missan	-	-	-	-
Muthanna	-	-	-	-
Najaf/Najaf	Kufa	1987	7	-
Ninewa/Mosul	Mosul	1963	18	7
Qadissiya/Diwaniyah	Diwaniyah	1987	9	-
Salah al-Din /Tikrit	Tikrit	1988	11	-
Sulaymaniyah/Sulaymaniya h	Sulaymaniyah	1968	18	-
Taameem/Kirkuk	Kirkuk	2002	4	-
Thi-Qar/Nasiriyah	Thi-Qar	2002	4	-
Wassit/Al-Kut	Wassit	2003	3	-
Total			201	28

⁵ Source: Iraq: *Education in Transition, Needs and Challenges*, UNESCO, Division of Educational Policies and Strategies, 2004

Table 2: University and Technical Institute Enrolment: Academic Year 2003-2004⁶

Total Number of students	460 000
Males	290 000 (63%)
Females	170 000 (37%)

Only 10 percent of the population between the ages of 18-23 are enrolled in a university. According to the MHESR this is mainly due to :

1. Income decline due to the unstable situation of the country.
2. High unemployment and few prospects for employment after graduating.
3. Deteriorating infrastructure.
4. Decline in quality of educational personnel and curriculum.

Table 3: Estimate number of students in Iraqi universities (2003)⁷

(Universities designated in bold have a representative present at the round table)

Governorate	Name of University	Number of Students (UNESCO survey)
Anbar	University of Anbar	7 000
Basrah	University of Basrah	18 000
Qadissiya	University of Diwaniyah	9 000
Sulaymaniyah	University of Sulaymaniyah	8 000
Babylon	University of Babel	14 000
Baghdad	Baghdad University	67 000
		35 000
	Mustansiriya University	13 000
		2 000

⁶ Source: *Strategies of the Iraqi Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research*, MHESR, 2005

⁷ Source: Iraq: *Education in Transition, Needs and Challenges*, UNESCO, Division of Educational Policies and Strategies, 2004

	University of Technology University for Islamic Studies Al-Nahrain University Commission for Computer and Informatics	2 000 400
Dahuk	University of Dahuk	3 000
Thi-Qar	University of Thi-Qar	2 000
Diyala	University of Diyala	6 000
Erbil	Salah Ad-Din University	13 000
Kerbala	University of Kerbala	4 000
Tameem	University of Kirkuk	2 000
Ninewa	University of Mosul	23 000
Al-Kut	University of Wassit	4 000
Najaf	University of Kufa	8 000
Salah Al-Din	University of Tikrit	6 000

Note: The MHESR latest figures estimate that there are approximately 386 000 students enrolled in Iraqi universities.

Technical Institutes

According to the MHESR the number of students enrolled in Technical institutes is approximately 74 000 or 16 percent of total enrolment in Higher Education.

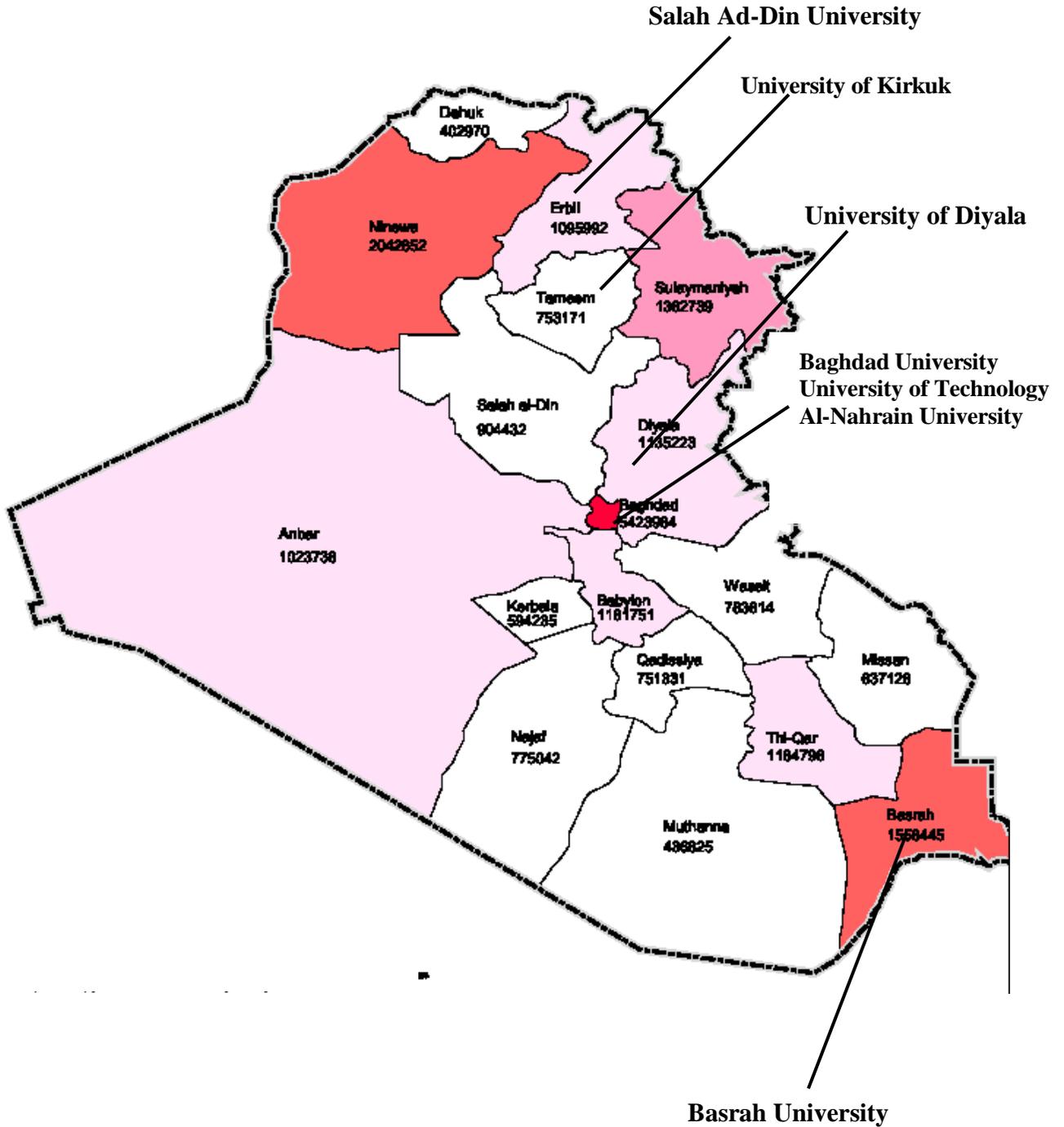
Governorate	Name Of Technical College/Institute	Year Of Foundation	City Of Location	No. Of Departments
Anbar	TI Anbar	1977	Fallujah	10
Basrah	TI Basrah	1971	Basrah	17
	TC Basrah	1994	Basrah	5
Muthanna	TI Samawah	1989	Samawah	6
Qadissiya	TI Qadissiya	1988	Diwanayah	5
Sulaymaniyah	TI Sulaymaniyah	1974	Sulaymaniyah	15
	TI Koya	1996	Koya	6
	TI Kalar	1994	Kalar	5
	TI Chamchamal	2000	Chamchamal	3
Babel	TI Babel	1976	Hillah	11
	TI Musayab	1979	Musayab	9
	TC Musayab	1998	Musayab	5

Baghdad	Applied Arts Institute	1969	Baghdad-Zafaraniya	5
	TI Zafaraniya	1969	Baghdad-Zafaraniya	8
	TI for Medical Technology	1966	Baghdad-Bab Al-	10
	TI Administration	1976	Mu'adham	6
	TI Administration	1969	Baghdad-Zafaraniya	6
	TI Mansour	1988	Baghdad- Rasafa	7
	TI Technician Training	n.a.	Baghdad ,Al-Karkh	4
	TC for Management	n.a.	Baghdad-Zafaraniya	3
	TC for Electricity and Electronics	1999	Baghdad- Al-Mu'adham	3
	TC Baghdad	1993	Baghdad-Dora	7
	TC for Medicine &Health	1994	Baghdad	8
Dahuk	TI Dahuk	1988	Dahuk	10
	TI Akre	2000	Akre	3
	TI Zakho	n.a.	Zakho	2
Thi-Qar/	TI Nasriyah	1979	Nasiriyah	9
	TI Shatra	1979	Shatra	10
Diyala	TI Ba'qubah	1988	Ba'qubah	9
Erbil	TI Erbil	1987	Erbil	15
	TI Soran	2001	Soran	4
	TI Shaqlawa	1999	Shaqlawa	6
Kerbala	TI Kerbela	1988	Hindiya	6
Tameem	TI Kirkuk	1976	Kirkuk	14
	TI Huweja	1979	Huweja	7
	TC Kirkuk	1998	Kirkuk	6
Missan	TI Amara	1979	Amara	10
Ninewa	TI Mosul	1976	Mosul	21
	TC Mosul	1993	Mosul	4
	TI Ninewa	1993	Mosul	6
Wassit	Ti Al -Kut	1980	Al-Kut	9
	TI Suweirah		Suweirah	4
Najaf	Ti Najaf	1978	Najaf	10
	TC Najaf	n.a.	Najaf	2
	TI Kufa	1980	Kufa	9
Salah Al-Din	TI Al-Door	n.a.	Al-Door	5

Table 4: Technical Institutes in Iraq⁸

⁸ Source: Iraq: *Education in Transition, Needs and Challenges*, UNESCO, Division of Educational Policies and Strategies, 2004

Figure 1: Map of Iraq and Location of Main Universities





Stop the Assassination of Iraqi Academics ! A campaign of The BRussells Tribunal and Campaña Estatal contra la Ocupación y por la Soberanía de Iraq

- **Iraq's tensions spill onto campus** – CS Monitor, May 27, 2005

Up to 50 professors have been killed, UN reports. But rebuilding includes 4,000 new staff at 20 universities.

By Neil MacDonald | Contributor to The Christian Science Monitor

BAGHDAD - When Iraq's new government officially took power earlier this month, Shiite students at Baghdad University celebrated. But after the jubilation ended, the main organizer of the festivities, Dawa party activist Masar Sarhan, was killed.

Mr. Sarhan, a pharmacy student, was shot on his way home and is apparently one of the latest casualties of tensions between Sunni and Shiite students at Iraq's 20 universities and 47 technical colleges.

According to a recent United Nations report, nearly 50 academics have been assassinated in Iraq over the past two years. A US official says the number is closer to 100, but added that the pattern of the killings is not clear, with "terrorism, general thuggery, pay back, and de-Baathification" all playing a role.

Thursday, professor Moussa Salum, a deputy dean at Baghdad's Mustansiriya University, was killed along with three of his bodyguards, Reuters reported.

But while the steady violence on campuses has been a constant worry for students and faculty alike, there are signs that Iraqis are making strides to reclaim the country's "long, proud tradition of distinguished universities," according to Jairam Reddy, the author of the UN report, who lives in Amman, Jordan.

According to the UN report, the total enrollment at Iraqi universities is more than 250,000, 42 percent of whom are female students. Forty percent of the country's learning institutions are now under construction - many suffered looting in the wake of the US-led invasion.

The Ministry of Finance has upped its allocation for higher education from \$40 million in 2003 to nearly \$70 million this year, according to the report. Backed by UN agencies and the World Bank, Iraqi universities have hired more than 4,000 new staff.

Although salaries are low by international standards, many professors who left under the old regime have returned to Iraq's universities, in some cases bringing much needed foreign expertise.



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With help from foreign donors, universities are gradually rebuilding their labs and libraries, which were neglected for years. Groups of students, meanwhile, are gaining exposure to the outside world through American-funded study trips to the United States and other countries.

But while welcoming academic freedoms, some professors say that too many student groups are taking advantage of the country's new "free expression" as an excuse for politicized provocations.

With professors already feeling threatened, a new sense of Shiite ascendancy after the Jan. 30 elections raised the temperature between Shiite students and their Sunni counterparts, some of whom still express affection for Saddam Hussein and his former Baath regime.

"The university as a whole should be kept out of political struggles," says Baghdad University professor Nabil Mohammed. "It's not a place to put pictures calling for this party or that."

Professor Mohammed says he was never fond of Baathist apparatchiks either, but the campus was always safe under the old regime. "I can't remember dangerous incidents at that time," he says. "There were strong rules, and no demonstrations."

According to some professors and students, Sarhan's overtly sectarian style of activism was a slap in the face to all Sunnis at the university, Baathist or otherwise. In the new Iraq, one man's religious devotion can be another man's insult.

Pharmacy dean Mustafa Hitti, who is blamed by the Shiite students who rioted after Sarhan's death, fled from the campus during the rioting, with Shiite students alleging they had seen Hitti's bodyguards in an argument with Sarhan just before his murder. The dean, a Sunni, had asked the students not to hold a political gathering on campus, but Sarhan insisted on their "right to free expression," students say.

When the campus reopened several days later, some staff members still stayed away, complaining about the lack of adequate security. Several department heads "still refused to be on campus because they are afraid of some of students," Mohammed says.

An ideological shift is visible in the university's curriculum. While science courses are practically unchanged, humanities colleges have deleted "some subjects dealing with the former regime," Professor Mussawi says. Baathist studies seminars have given way to "new courses dealing with human rights, democracy, and globalization," he says.



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Even science textbooks used to sometimes include sentences praising Saddam and the Baath Party. Students say their professors now tell them to tear these pages out.

Ali al-Adib, a member of parliament from the Shiite-led majority bloc, says new textbooks are on the way. He blamed the former regime for "creating ethnic divisions" and said that most of today's university administrators are "still infused with "Baathist culture."

Mr. Adib, who sits on a newly formed parliamentary committee for higher education, says he is confident that Iraqi education can once again be the best in the region. First, however, university curricula must be revised to reflect a "federal, democratic vision of Iraq," he says.

Over the next few months, as Iraq's politicians come to grips with drafting a permanent constitution, the definition of federalism is sure to be hotly debated. For some Shiite parties in the new government, "democratic federalism" is an old slogan that also means following Islamic law.

A Western adviser to the Ministry of Higher Education says that the most important step is to overcome the terrorist threat, which drains almost every kind of "productive investment" in Iraq. "If the country regained a sense of peace and normalcy, the fact that it would be a democracy would help it to regain stature in higher education," he says. "If there was no terrorism, the sky would be the limit."

-
- **U.S. occupation responsible for killings, torture in Iraq** (John Catalinotto, 06 April 2006)

In just the first four days of April, 16 U.S. occupation troops in Iraq, mostly Marines and including two helicopter pilots, have been reported dead or missing.

U.S. officials and journalists had noted as March ended that there was an "upside" to the massacre of over 1,000 Iraqi civilians that month following the Feb. 23 bombing of the Golden Dome mosque in Samarra. During March, only 32 U.S. troops died, the lowest monthly body count since early 2004. But the April numbers indicate that the March figures may have been just a blip in a long campaign.

Iraqis, both police and army members but also civilians, are still being killed in firefights, bombings and executions, some of them targeted by U.S. troops. Mean while, Secretary of State Condo leeza Rice and



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British Foreign Secretary Jack Straw have been pressuring the Iraqi occupation government to get rid of its designated Prime Minister, Ibrahim al-Jafari, and form a new government.

Under this pressure, the alliance set to govern Iraq, composed of seven parties of which three are the most powerful Shiite-based parties—SCIRI, Dawa and the Mehdi Army—has pulled back in its support for al-Jafari. Four of these parties have said they would no longer back him. Al-Jafari has said he has no plans to withdraw. (Washington Post, April 3)

After Rice and Straw left, Mehdi Army leader Muqtada al-Sadr criticized their “meddling in Iraqi affairs” as undermining Iraqi sovereignty. While some people blame the Mehdi Army for the sectarian killing of Sunni Iraqis, others in the active Iraqi resistance still look to Muqtada’s Mehdi Army as the most likely of the Shiite forces to join the struggle to kick out the U.S. occupation.

Iraqi academics killed

According to a report from Abu Tamam published on Uruknet, on March 30 U.S. occupation soldiers shot and killed a 72-year-old professor, Qais Husameldeen Juma’a, as he left the Agriculture College of the University of Baghdad and passed their check point. The professor had returned from Australia to supervise a few Ph.D. students at the college.

If this news is confirmed, Juma’a would be only the latest of hundreds of Iraqi intellectuals assassinated since the beginning of the U.S.-led occupation. For all these killings, whether or not the occupying troops pulled the triggers, they have legal responsibility according to international rules of occupation.

To investigate this problem further and to publicize these atrocities, anti-occupation organizations in Spain, Belgium and the United States have organized a seminar for April 22 in Madrid. The meeting is called “A War Launched to Erase both the Culture and Future of the Iraqi People—International Seminar on the Assassination of Iraqi Academics and Health Professionals.”

The Spanish Campaign against the Occupation and for the Sovereignty of Iraq (CEOSI), The BRussells Tribunal and the International Action Center are calling for the international seminar. These groups’ news release states that the following day, April 23, “there will be an international meeting of both European and U.S. organizations with the purpose of encouraging international solidarity with Iraq.”

“Four relevant Iraqi guests-activists, academics and medical doctors-will participate in the public session. They are currently documenting the dirty war in Iraq: Eman A. Khamas, Dr. Ali Abdulah, Dr Sami Wasfi



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(there was an assassination attempt on his life) and Dr Ghazwan Al-Mukhtar.” Experts and activists from the Spanish state, Belgium and the U.S., among others, will address the seminar.

The Association of Iraqi Academics estimates that more than 180 academics and an additional 311 primary and secondary teachers of both sexes have been killed in Iraq during the last four months alone. Also, workers attached to the National Iraqi Medicare System are being targeted for a mass campaign of extortion, threats and murders, and “Iraqi hospitals and clinics are being attacked and systematically raided by U.S. occupation forces.”

One, two, many proofs of torture

In mid-March the web magazine Salon raised questions as to whether the Iraqi known as Haj Ali was really the man shown in the infamous photograph of a prisoner, wearing a hood, standing on boxes in Abu Ghraib prison with electrodes attached to his limbs. In subsequent newspaper articles Haj Ali said he might not be the one in that particular picture but that he was tortured and photographed like that. Most of these articles gave the false impression that the discrepancy somehow invalidated his story.

To set the record straight, Haj Ali spoke to two reporters in Amman, Jordan on March 21, the article published on the web site of the Anti-Imperialist Camp. Haj Ali told the reporters: “The truth to this is that I was not the only one who was tortured in this barbaric fashion. Almost all prisoners in the part of the prison that I was familiar with were tortured in this way.

“That doesn’t change the fact that I was one of those who had to stand on that cardboard box, with a black hood placed over my head and electrical wires attached to my hands. As an Iraqi person who has gone through Abu Ghraib, I represent all those tormented people.

“First they denied ever having tortured people in this way. Then they claimed those were just isolated cases. Now they admit that they have tortured many, many people in that way. They do so to discredit us, but on the other hand, it also means that this form of torture was not an isolated case. It has been made public. That is a result of our campaign work.

“Since my release and the founding of our Association of Victims of American Occupation Prisons, we have had 1,300 activities to protest the occupation and especially the private torture companies whose services are employed by the U.S. military. Nobody could imagine that our small association would have been able to do all that, without any official financial assistance. By dogged perseverance, donations and help from friends and some media, we have achieved something, even in the United States. We raised our voices and the Pentagon doesn’t like that.”



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Told that the New York Times reports that the man on the photograph is in fact Abdou Hussain Saad Faleh, Haj Ali said, “I know that man. There are also photos of Said Saleh Shain from Mosul. They gave him the nickname “Joker,” and he was tortured in the same way. There was also someone called Saddam Rawi. They attached the electrical wires to his ears. Still today, he has neurological problems, and he has brought suit at the United Nations.”

Haj Ali described some legal action his group is taking: “The lawsuit we filed is definitely one reason for the current smear campaign. We are an independent NGO. Many have tried to buy us, without success. The suit was brought a year and a half ago in the U.S. Two hundred cases were filed as a class-action lawsuit.

“Now we have brought 50 more former prisoners, among them several women, from Iraq to Jordan. And we have published a comprehensive documentation about the abducted and tortured, the victims of American policies.

“Our campaign is directed especially against Titan Group [Titan Corp., San Diego]. They are a private company conducting interrogations in the prisons. ... We are well aware that the United States is run with the mentality of a corporation. Important motives for the war against Iraq were the interests of those corporations: first of all Halliburton, which is directly owned by Dick Cheney, and all the companies associated with the Bush family.

“The United States cannot accept that their companies are targeted. It is a capitalist regime based on corporate profits, and complete disregard for the needs of human beings.”

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- **Eight killed in Baghdad car bomb attacks** (24 April 2006)

Monday, 24 April 2006 16:34

A wave of car bombs hit Baghdad on Monday, killing at least eight people and wounding nearly 80 as the trial of Saddam Hussein heard his signature was on documents linking him to the killings of 148 people.

The bloodshed comes while Prime Minister-designate Jawad al-Maliki works on choosing a cabinet, which will share power among Shi'ites, Sunni Arabs and Kurds in a bid to end the sectarian violence that threatens to drag Iraq into a civil war.

Two car bombs near Baghdad's Mustansiriya University, killed at least five people and wounded 25 others.

Another bomb near the health ministry in the city centre killed three and wounded 25, police said. Four more bombs across the city wounded at least another 27 people.

Maliki has four weeks to choose a new cabinet and form a government of national unity, widely seen as the only way to halt sectarian violence.

The cabinet and Maliki's own appointment, made by President Jalal Talabani on Saturday, must be ratified by parliament.

Trial of Saddam Hussein

Also today, the trial of Saddam Hussein heard his signature was on documents linking him to the killings of 148 people.

The court heard that signatures on documents linking them to the killing of 148 Shi'ites in the 1980s were genuine.

"The signatures and margins stipulated in the documents match the signature of Saddam Hussein on presidential decrees," said the report read out by a judge.

The prosecution had demanded the court commission a team of criminal experts to authenticate signatures and handwriting of the defendants facing charges of crimes against humanity.

Saddam and his half brother Barzan al-Tikriti have refused to give samples of their writing but both have said there was no crime in prosecuting the 148 from the village of Dujail because they were accused of trying to kill the former leader.



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The defendants could face death by hanging if found guilty.

Story from RTÉ News:

<http://www.rte.ie/news/2006/0424/iraq.html>

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- **Sectarian lines divide Iraq's university system, too** (25 April 2006)

Leila Fadel | Knight Ridder Newspapers

last updated: May 25, 2007 12:32:23 AM

BAGHDAD, Iraq --]

BAGHDAD, Iraq—Zina Hassan, 22, drops her voice to a whisper when she talks about student politics at Baghdad University. "We are surrounded by spies," said Hassan, who's a Sunni Muslim.

Dr. Kadhém al-Muqdadí, a Shiite Muslim, scans the campus before getting into his car. A colleague was killed when a student alerted a waiting assassin with a phone call.

Mohammed Jassim, a Sunni, resigned his job as a lecturer at Mustansariyah University in northeast Baghdad. Members of the Mahdi Army, the militia of militant Shiite cleric Muqtada al-Sadr, threatened twice to kill him if he stayed.

With Iraq teetering on the brink of civil war, university campuses have joined the rest of the country along the fault line that's growing between Sunnis and Shiites.

"All the powers that be in Iraq are trying to find a presence on the campuses," said Basil al-Khateeb, a spokesman for the Ministry of Higher Education, which oversees a university system that caters to about 737,000 students. "There are clashes between students in many of the universities."

How many students and professors have died in the clashes is unknown. Ministry officials said that at least 100 professors had been murdered. There's no count of students who've fallen victim to the violence.

For the past year, the Ministry of Higher Education has warned students and professors to avoid discussing politics unnecessarily, not to squelch free expression but because it's dangerous. Still, student



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governments, backed by powerful political parties, intimidate professors and fellow students on many campuses.

Since the Feb. 22 bombing of a Shiite shrine in Samarra, which touched off the current wave of killing between the sects, more than 2,300 students have petitioned the ministry for transfers: Sunnis from campuses in Shiite areas, Shiites from campuses in Sunni areas. Typically the ministry receives about 200 such requests in the fall.

"We pay the cost of the political chaos at the university," said al-Muqdad, the Shiite professor who fears that one day he, too, will be killed by someone alerted to his presence by a student with a cell phone.

Historically, Iraqi Sunnis and Shiites have been intertwined. Mixed marriages were common, many neighborhoods housed members of both sects and universities were largely secular institutions in which religion rarely played a major role.

But since the American-led invasion in 2003, Iraq has been dividing slowly along sectarian lines between a Sunni-backed insurgency and a Shiite-led government. That division has accelerated in the weeks since explosives destroyed the golden dome of the Askariya shrine in Samarra, a holy site for Shiites, with both sects fleeing once-mixed neighborhoods.

Tales of campus friction come from all over the country.

In the northern city of Mosul, students say Sunni Arab Islamists and Kurdish political parties control Mosul University, known as one of the top universities in Iraq. After the Samarra bombing, six students were killed in one day. Last month a fight that began over a Sunni girl who rejected a Shiite student's advances quickly turned into a confrontation between Shiite and Sunni students, al-Khateeb said. It stopped only after the mayor intervened, police said.

In Basra, followers of maverick cleric al-Sadr and other Shiite parties hold sway at the university, with students saying they don't dare criticize the parties for fear of retribution.

Al-Sadr sympathizers also run the student governments at Mustansariyah University and Baghdad University in the capital. At Mustansariyah, near the huge Shiite neighborhood of Sadr City, pictures of the late Mohammed Sadiq al-Sadr, Muqtada al-Sadr's father, cover the walls and al-Sadr newsletters are piled on benches and tables across campus. Students stand in line to enter the campus, waiting for guards to search them for weapons and check their ID cards.



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It's the only campus in the capital that's known to celebrate the student-fueled 1979 Islamic revolution in Iran.

Last Sunday, about 30 students marched outside the Ministry of Higher Education to protest the assassinations of five professors and eight students from Diyala University in Diyala province, northeast of the capital. They demanded transfers to safer universities and investigations into the murders.

On Monday, students at Mosul University, a mostly Sunni campus, crowded the dean's office after a Shiite student from the south, Hassanein Kadhem, was murdered. He was kidnapped from a bus that was traveling to a graduation party at another campus. The students demanded transfers to other campuses.

Professors have lost much of their control to threatening students backed by one political faction or another. Civil engineering students at Baghdad University said they hadn't had an exam since September because students had threatened their professors.

Dr. Mouayid al-Khafaf, a Sunni journalism professor at Baghdad University, went into hiding after five men interrupted his class three months ago. They took him to his office, locked the door behind them, then beat him. It was a warning for criticizing the Mahdi Army, they said. The men, students from another campus, left behind a list with three other professors' names on it. A month later, a Shiite professor whose name was on the list was beaten and killed on his way home from campus. He died only a few hundred feet from the university.

Jassim, the Sunni former lecturer at Mustansariyah, where he earned his degree, doesn't want to share that fate. Jassim, who asked that his full name not be used for his own safety, already had watched his classes shrink. One week a Shiite student was killed. The next week, a Sunni was killed in revenge.

Jassim got his first death threat in early March, shortly after the bombing in Samarra. The letter called him a Wahhabi, a follower of a fundamentalist form of Sunni Islam. It gave him 48 hours to get out.

He fled to Jordan, but returned after two weeks, hoping the rage had receded. On his first day back, a colleague connected to the Mahdi Army warned Jassim to leave. He hasn't been back.

He's trying to get a post at another university, and a friend with connections to the Mahdi Army is attempting to get him a letter from the militia to protect him. Without it he may have to flee, he said. He said he knew of colleagues who'd been chased down and killed even after they left the university.



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"Sadrists can move from Sadr City to the university in five minutes," he said. "By one phone call students can do anything."

For students who aren't affiliated with the warring sides, campus life is filled with fear.

"How do you expect the campus to be?" whispered Khalid Mohammed, 22, who attends Mosul University. "It's like a dictatorship wearing a democratic uniform."

(Fadel reports for the Fort Worth Star-Telegram. Knight Ridder Newspapers special correspondents Zaineb Obeid and Huda Ahmed in Baghdad and Dana Asaad in Mosul contributed to this report. A special correspondent who couldn't be named for security reasons contributed from Basra.)

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- **Universities in Iraq taking a hard hit** (17 Jan 2007)

Even before bombings at a university Tuesday killed at least 65 people, Iraq's higher-education system was on the verge of collapse, officials...

By **JAMES PALMER**, Newhouse News Service

KARIM KADIM / AP

Students walk among textbooks strewn on the ground after two minivans exploded Tuesday near Mustansiriya University.

BAGHDAD, Iraq — Even before bombings at a university Tuesday killed at least 65 people, Iraq's higher-education system was on the verge of collapse, officials said.

Faced with the lingering war and unrelenting sectarian violence, students by the thousands have been leaving campuses to return home or enroll at universities in other countries. In the past year alone, university enrollments have fallen by more than half at some schools, officials said.

Meanwhile, Iraqi professors continue to be targeted for assassination and intimidation. According to Iraq's higher-education ministry, insurgent and militia groups have murdered at least 280 academics since 2003, and an additional 3,250 have fled the country.



Tuesday night, Mustansiriyah University officials said they would close the campus for at least two days. The decision follows a similar one last month by Baghdad University's main campus, which was forced to close twice for five days after threats, according to students and professors.

Iraq's modern higher-education system, once considered the most advanced in the Middle East, dates to 1957, but today only 11 percent of Iraqis ages 15 and older have studied beyond secondary school, according to a 2004 study.

Those still pursuing degrees are taking measures to guarantee their safety, notably transferring to schools near home. Last month, determined students seeking transfers crowded the ministry.

The administrative-affairs office at Baghdad University earlier this month said enrollment at the school's main campus in the southern Jadiriya section of the capital was down as much as 40 percent. At the Adhamiya campus, enrollment has dropped more than half.

College tuition at private schools in Iraq runs between 150,000 and 400,000 Iraqi dinars — the equivalent of about \$114 to \$305 — per year. Tuition is free at the 20 government-run public universities, including Baghdad University, and 47 technical institutes.



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College instructors here make the equivalent of \$1,000 to \$1,500 per year and those still teaching — like the students — are taking extreme measures.

Nihad Al-Rawi, 54, an assistant dean and professor of electrical engineering at Baghdad University, has stashed a firearm in his office.

"I don't want to use it, but what am I supposed to do if someone breaks into my office and tries to kidnap me? It's a fact of life here nobody can deny," Al-Rawi said.

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- **The Death of Iraq's Middle Class** (22 Jan 2007)

By Keith David Watenpaugh

*Mr. Watenpaugh is a historian and Associate Professor of Modern Islam, Human Rights and Peace. He is author, most recently of *Being Modern in the Middle East: Revolution, Nationalism, Colonialism, and the Middle Class in the Arab Eastern Mediterranean (1908-1946)* Princeton: 2006. He is one of the only American academics to have conducted research in Iraq both before and after the 2003 US-led invasion and occupation.*

On a blistering June afternoon in 2003 I sat in the Baghdad office of the president of al-Mustansiriyya University, the historian Taher al-Bakaa.

I was there as part of group of Middle East historians to assess the condition of Baghdad's universities and libraries in the wake of the war. Outside, students were celebrating graduation. Inside, huddled around a fan, we talked about past dictators and tyrants, and how he would now revitalize his campus, which had been looted and burned just after the fall of the city two months before.

There was an infectious confidence in him and others whom I met that Iraq's universities would play a positive role in the rebuilding of the country and reestablishing links with the West.

Today, Al-Bakaa lives in Boston as one of more than 1.5 million refugees who have fled the civil war in Iraq. Back in Baghdad this week his campus was bombed and at least 60 students waiting for minibuses to take them home were killed.



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The New Refugees

This new refugee crisis dwarfs earlier Middle-Eastern crises including that of the Armenians in 1915 and the Palestinians in 1948 and 1967. Beyond the basic numbers, what makes this crisis such a fundamental challenge is that a large portion of the refugees are drawn from Iraq's commercial and professional middle class.

And just as those earlier crises sent shock waves throughout the Arab world - and continue to do so in the case of the Palestinians - this refugee crisis will have an impact on the stability and viability of Iraq and the surrounding countries for decades to come.

Our normal image of the refugee - malnourished, languishing in dusty camps - doesn't apply here. Iraq's middle-class refugees are its teachers, doctors, college professors, scientists, bureaucrats, technicians and entrepreneurs, the very people upon whom the future of that country depends.

They are leaving for multiple reasons, but chiefly because of the violence, which the UN estimates claimed more than 34,000 lives last year, and the rational fear that the new Iraq will be run by religious demagogues intent on turning back the clock on issues of religious equality, their daughters' access to education and professional lives, and freedom of thought and expression.

In the old Iraq mixed middle-class marriages of Sunnis and Shia were common; now these are deadly. The sectarian designation of one's coworkers at the office or of fellow students on campus was rarely a topic of polite conversation or had much relevance, and now has become the touchstone for most forms of social interaction.

Iraq's middle class is fleeing at such rapid rate that over 40 percent has left since 2003. Add this to torrent a slow trickle of Iraq's educated classes from the 1970s forward and we've reached a point where virtually everyone who could leave has left or fled to Kurdistan. For all intents and purposes, Iraq's middle class is near death and what is left is just a pale shadow of its former self. It has ceased to be a relevant feature of Iraqi society.

In Iraq, the loss of this class means the loss of the basis of civil society and the disappearance of those Iraqis who would be committed to a non-sectarian form of politics.



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Welcomed ... for Now

In the greater Middle East, at least for the moment, these new middle-class refugees have been welcomed. A good example is the recently established Syrian International University for Sciences and Technology, which has filled its teaching staff with Iraqi scientists and professors. These refugees have also pumped the equivalent of billions of dollars into the stagnant even moribund economies of their neighbors as they buy homes and businesses or invest. But every course taught in Syria by an Iraqi professor means little to an Iraqi student sitting in an empty classroom; every dinar spent in one of Amman's upscale shopping malls is one less to pay for goods or services in Baghdad.

On the other side of the equation, these refugees constitute a volatile addition to already unstable societies. Iraqi refugees are treated either as tourists or illegal aliens in their neighboring host countries. It is assumed that their residence is temporary. Past refugee crises suggest that most refugees, especially those from the middle class, never go home. Disenfranchised and stateless they will be increasingly resented by their hosts as competitors for resources, jobs and political power. Iraq's middle class refugees will then become the raw material for a new generation of extremists, angry and intent on violence directed not just against enemies in Iraq and the Middle East, but also against those of us in the West whose actions made them refugees in the first place.

US Responsibility?

The US government has an obvious moral and legal responsibility for Iraq's refugees. This is already recognized in special programs established to aid those Iraqis, primarily interpreters and others whose service to the US (what others would call collaboration) would endanger their lives, come to America.

However, only a tiny fraction of those needing refugee status have been admitted to the US under this plan. While publicly officials cite concerns about national security, another explanation for this resistance is that expanding this program would be interpreted as an admission of failure in Iraq.

Nevertheless, key to any solution is creating conditions that will allow Iraqis safety, but not preclude options to return. In the near term, the US should offer unlimited extensions of temporary visas to Iraqis. In the long term, the US should be prepared to absorb a large portion of this refugee population.

The central irony of the middle class refugee applies here as well. They make their homelands poorer by leaving, but make our societies richer in coming.



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- **A Stroll Down Haifa Street In Baghdad** (Layla Anwar 27 Jan 2007)

Haifa Street in Baghdad was of course named after a Palestinian town now under Israeli occupation. It used to be a street, actually a neighborhood, where all denominations cohabited. It also had specially designed buildings overlooking the Tigris river, reserved for academics only.

Iraqi academic, from all backgrounds, "ethnic" affiliations, "sects" and "religion" and from different fields of specialization lived in those buildings on Haifa Street, rent free, courtesy of the Iraqi government. This was part of Saddam Hussein's government campaign to promote education and to encourage individuals to strive for a career in academic knowledge and teaching thereafter.

A letter was sent to me via e.mail, a letter of despair and tragedy written by an Iraqi professor who lived on Haifa Street. I am going to translate the whole thing for you.

"My name is Ahmed Kamal Nabil . I am a university professor since 1975. I live on Haifa street. On the 7th of January, I went out to buy some food since we had been without anything to eat since the day of the Eid (30th December). My wife, two daughters and one small grandchild stayed at home.

Since there was no transportation and in view of the military presence surrounding Haifa street, I was unable to regain my apartment fast enough. Moreover, an unusual movement in our neighborhood made me very suspicious . I saw some elements of the Iraqi militias shooting on the door of our building. I immediately informed my family by phone so they may leave promptly. They tried to but the militias refused them exit.

What followed was even more brutal. The upper floors of the building where we lived were totally destroyed and my wife was informing me (on the phone) that she and my daughters were few minutes away from an imminent Death. What could I do?

I begged a neighbor to help us. At first he refused, then he agreed to courageously face the American and Iraqi forces and come to the rescue of my family, thus helping them seek refuge in another building close by which was not targeted.

The following day, at dawn, my family discovered a dead street, in ruins. My wife and my kids left Haifa street with the only luggage they had, the clothes on their bodies. The militias raped our home . They ransacked and looted all of our belongings.



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In the space of a few minutes, we lost everything we worked for and owned. My books, my souvenirs, my diplomas, my notes, my research papers and my personal diary. In sum, all of my memory carefully constructed over a span of half a century has gone out. Gone to sleep for ever. Now we are back to zero.

My family is scattered, lodged by different relatives and strangers. Throughout my career , I have never committed one act of hostility vis a vis the Iraqi authorities or the American occupation forces. I filed a complaint but the policeman at the station was unimpressed. He told me that my only crime is that I was living in a street of "terrorists."

If I had chosen to return to Iraq, my country, after studies in Europe, it was with the aim of bringing to my people the knowledge I acquired in the West. I have conducted and supervised dozens of Phd theses and I have taught thousands of students.

What happened to me on the 7th of January is tragic. Is that the destiny of Iraqi intellectuals and researchers? Is that the reward for those who opted for neutrality, independence of thought, spirit and honor? What crime have I committed by not wanting to give in to violence and terror and by insisting on continuing my work - that of teaching in Iraq ? "

Yes Haifa street, the street of academics and the brain drain of the New Iraq. Over 500 university professors have been assassinated since the "liberation." 500 individuals who have spent years studying, researching, teaching, forming, training, disseminating knowledge...

Last week, over 100 students were massacred at the gates of al Mustansiriyah University. It is beyond the shadow of doubt that universities, academics and students are the favored targets in Iraq.

Why is that so, did you ever ask yourself? I think the answer is simple. Universities , academics , students are the last bastion of the spirit of critical thinking. The last line in the Resistance against political manipulation and terror of the new Iraq.

Universities refuse the presence of militias within their walls. Academics are the few who raise their voices denouncing the political madness that is surrounding them. Students are still young free thinkers difficult to ideologically control.

Moreover, academics refuse to be dragged in or sucked in the role of representative or mouth piece for the occupation or for its puppets.



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Academics are targeted because people respect and listen to them when they dare speak out. And academics are targeted because the New Iraq has become one big looting field run by mercenaries, thugs, politically corrupt opportunists, sectarian agitators, fanatical dark minds, and barbarians.

And they want it to remain that way. They want to make sure that Iraq will never raise its head again . Hence the "beheading", the brain drain of all intellectuals. In the new Iraq, there is no place for knowledge. Knowledge is their antithesis.

Hundreds of academics escape to other countries or simply change careers. Some have become grocers or taxi drivers as these occupations are less dangerous than being a university professor. Those who have refused either, have been killed or have ended up like our professor above. Destitute, homeless and stripped of everything. This hemorrhage of intellectuals is programmed, it is part of the American reconstruction plan.

In contradiction to what the Americans claim, the reconstruction of Iraq does not take place in big projects but starts with the "grey matter", that stuff between our ears and called our brains. Can anyone conceive of a country without doctors, engineers, scientists.....?

Well Iraq has become such a country. The reconstruction of Iraq american style does not need this grey matter. It can dispose of it, hence it encourages the hemorrhage to continue. To the point that Unesco is thinking of offering 400 bullet proof vests to professors who insist on staying on and teaching plus a direct telephone line for those who feel they are under threat of being killed. Unesco is also envisaging to offer financial help to widows of academics thus encouraging others to not abandon their jobs as lecturers. Something they do, from fear of leaving a family behind in need- should they be targeted and assassinated.

Today, over 50 people have been killed in Haifa street. People are under siege in their apartments, with no food, no water, no electricity and unable to venture out. The occupation forces, the Iraqi "army " and the militias have forbidden the evacuation of the injured or the dead. They are left to die slowly in agony or to rot away on Haifa street. Just like the academics who inhabited its buildings.

Yes this is what has become of Haifa Street, a drained, desolate, burning, bleeding Street...of the New Iraq.

<http://arabwomanblues.blogspot.com>

- **Iraq Losing More Brains** (IslamOnLine 01 Feb 2007)

BAGHDAD — Almost four years after the US invasion, Iraq continues to lose more of its distinguished brains to a raging violence in a country where, many believe, the "law of the jungle" holds sway.

"I can't live in Baghdad any more," Asam Rifaat, a criminal lawyer living in the upscale Mansour district, told Reuters on Thursday, February 1.

"Every time I leave my home, I take a long look at (my children) Nora and Mahmoud because I always have the feeling that I'm not coming back, I'll be killed or abducted," he said.

"It's turned into a city for dead people and I'm not ready to have my children grow up as orphans."

His wife, a 35-year-old teacher who quit to stay home with the kids, is living in hell.

"Every time Asam leaves for work I keep praying for his safety. And when I see urgent news on television about bombs, I start crying until he comes home."



Many professionals are fleeing the unabated violence gripping Iraq. (Reuters)

The International Medical Corps (IMC) warned on Tuesday, January 30, that up to one million Iraqis would flee their homes in the capital within the next six months if the bloody sectarian violence went on unabated.

Iraq has been gripped by a bloody cycle of violence since the US invaded the oil-rich country in 2003.

Since then, nearly two million Iraqis have fled the chaos-mired country and some 1.7 million been internally displaced, comprising a worrying 12 percent of the total population, according to the UN estimates.

Jungle Law

The 38-year-old lawyer believe Iraq is no more a country of the law

"I mean it, we are living according to the rules of the jungle," said a disgruntled Rifaat.



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"I can't work for justice in a country run by militias which act above the law," he said.

Militias, many are working in collusion with the police, are mainly to blame for raging sectarian violence.

UN and Iraq medical sources had recently estimated that more than 100 people die every day in sectarian violence across the country.

The Pentagon accuses the Madi Army militia of Shiite leader Moqtada Sadr of responsibility for sectarian violence and death squads.

Salim al-Taie, a former army officer, is also taking his four-member family to Egypt.

"Every time I convince my wife that we mustn't give up hope, the ever-increasing blasts and sectarian killing prove I'm wrong," said Taie, who stopped sending his children to school.

"They broke my heart and their tears encouraged me to pack up and leave Iraq forever.

"I want no more tears in my children's eyes, even if the price is never to return to Iraq," he said.

"In the last four years many things have changed in Baghdad and definitely for the worse," asserted the former army officer.

"No one respects the law any more, which is a disaster," he lamented.

"Life in Baghdad is like living in a city run by the mafia where anybody can be killed in cold blood."

Almost 34,000 civilians died last year as the raging sectarian violence reached new heights, above all in Baghdad, according to the latest death count published by the Iraqi government.

Collapse

The unabated violence and attacks targeting academics are threatening the education system.

"Maybe only three students will graduate this year. The other 27 never showed up," said Abu Mina, a university professor and a ceramic artist.

"I wouldn't even recognize their faces," he added, asserting he himself was considering to leave the war-torn country.



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Abu Mina's son is studying medicine but classes are only held about once every two weeks, and many professors have moved to the safety of Damascus to teach at a private university.

A double bombing at a Baghdad university this month killed at least 70 people, mostly students.

At least 185 university teachers have been killed since the 2003 US invasion, according to the Iraqi Higher Education Ministry.

Some 52 university teachers have also been kidnapped and 41 others wounded.

A new UN report said there was a worrying increase in attacks on professionals such as teachers, doctors, artists, lawyers, ex-military officers and journalists.

"These attacks are typically perpetrated by extremists practicing conformist ideology and by militant/terror groups intent on spreading fear and intimidation."

- **Universities in Iraq** - Ahmad al-Saadawi Apr 7, 2007

Heritage of the Past and Chaos of the Present

The change in the Iraqi political system has resulted in increased self-confidence among students. They insist that leading positions at the universities may be filled only by those who have a clean record. And, in practice, no one can effectively run a university, a technical college or a faculty without the approval of the students.

But in some cases the self-confidence of the students has turned into a readiness to use violence against teachers and the educational system. Old symbols of totalitarian power have disappeared from the universities and been replaced with a wide variety of political symbols. Posters for the new political parties cover the walls. It seems as if we are once more experiencing the pluralism, which used to apply at Iraqi universities before the Ba'ath party came to power.

On the other hand this new pluralism is defined along religious lines, since university administrations are so run-down that they are no longer in a position to offer any alternative to the country's generally miserable political situation. They cannot guarantee the conditions, which make an institution into a university. The presence of political influence and parties in the universities has a bad influence on them,



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and many writers and academics would like to see them insist on political neutrality.

The prime minister, Nouri al-Maliki, issued a decree requiring the removal of all political and religious symbols from government buildings and universities. But the decree has only been carried out to a very limited extent. In Iraq, university teachers always have to take account of the authority of the ideological community to which a student belongs. They do not risk confrontations, which they might lose – especially since the laws that would protect them are scarcely taken seriously. Many teachers – not only former Ba’athists – hide behind a mask of religiosity. They remove their ties, perhaps grow a beard.

They start using religious idioms when they speak, wear a seal ring and carry a rosary. It’s clear that a new age has begun. They have to adapt if they are to hold on to their jobs and their standard of living. No one can fail to notice the increasing influence of Islamism, which is having an ever greater effect on various areas of life in society. The universities have already come firmly under Islamist influence. One example of this is that student unions in many places have already issued rules as to how female students should dress and behave.

The teaching staff react with indifference or fear. The confessional polarization evident in political life is being carried over to the universities. One can see how the universities little by little are moving towards being either Sunni or Shiite institutions. Religious affiliation becomes the decisive factor for students or teachers considering their choice of university. At the level of the national discourse, this tendency is never referred to, still less approved of; in fact, no-one mentions the fact that universities have already been split on confessional lines. But if nothing is done to change the situation, Iraqi universities will find themselves in an increasingly serious situation.

This politico-religious polarization in the universities and the continuing bloody conflict have made students into targets. There has recently been a series of suicide bombings at the Mustansiriya University in Baghdad. The most recent, involving two vehicles loaded with explosives and a suicide bomber wearing an explosive belt, led to many fatalities, among both students and teachers. I will not be able to forget the deeply distressing scene as the injured were being carried away: a surrealistic choir of mobile telephone ring-tones went on and on, as worried family members tried to ring their relatives, and no-one could answer. Suffering under insecurity The universities are at the centre of the country’s tensions.

The various factions win points at the expense of the student body, which has been ripped apart. Student life is slowing down. New problems have been added to the old. For example, some students only attend once a week or less. They know that the university can do nothing to stop them. Another example: students from the Baghdad Institute for Oil Studies chose to do their practical placement in a state hospital. They should have gone to the big oil refinery in the Baghdad suburb of Daura, but, as Shiites,



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they were frightened of attacks by armed Sunnis.

The universities in Baghdad also have to deal with shortages of staff. Many lecturers in natural sciences have fled abroad. They fear for their lives after receiving threats or after having seen how their colleagues have been killed. Free intellectual discourse under pressure But it's the students who most suffer under the insecurity. The kidnapping of some female students has put the rest in a state of permanent fear. Many of them also suffer from increased control by men. Some particularly radical young men even operate as a kind of vice squad, and call in women for wearing the wrong clothes or make-up.

Measures will no doubt be taken to deal with the most serious issues. But part of the problem stems directly from the general political and social conditions, which are not designed either to create the right climate for teaching or to enable free intellectual discourse. Both are needed if the situation is to improve. But the current insecure transitional period in which the country finds itself does not lead one to expect a positive future for Iraqi universities and other institutions that are committed to the development of civil society in Iraq.



If Iraqi universities were to open themselves once more to an exchange with universities abroad, and were it to be possible to recreate the liberal atmosphere which characterized Iraq as it entered the modern age, then that would create a fruitful ethical basis for academic education in the future. We need a new educational elite made up of academics from all disciplines who have qualifications from internationally renowned institutions, just as was the case in Iraq fifty years ago. The first step must be to resolve the political and security problems of the country.

Political conflicts have to be kept out of the universities. The authority and the academic discourse of the academic leadership must be constitutionally and legally protected. This would strengthen the self-confidence which the universities need if they are to make their potentially major contribution to the reformation of the country.

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- **Web claim: 20 Iraq security forces executed** (CNN 17 April 2007)



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- Insurgents kill 20 members of security forces, according to unverified claim
- U.S. military retracts statement that failed vehicle bomb involved nitric acid
- Gunmen shoot dead Baghdad University professor

BAGHDAD, Iraq (CNN) -- Insurgents executed 20 members of Iraq's security forces who were seized last week, according to a claim posted on the Internet on Tuesday.

The Islamic State of Iraq -- an umbrella group of Sunni extremists that includes al Qaeda in Iraq -- claims it carried out the executions.

The authenticity of the claim has not been verified.

The Islamic State of Iraq has claimed responsibility for the bombing of the parliament building last week in Baghdad's Green Zone in which a legislator was killed.

A claim was found on the Web on Saturday that militants seized 20 security forces northeast of Baghdad. It is thought that the people were in Diyala province, but the name of the region was not mentioned.

The people, whose pictures were posted on the Web, were said to be from the interior and defense ministries and had various ranks. The site shows rows of blindfolded men, most of them in either blue or brown uniforms, in front of the group's black banner. Their hands appeared to be bound behind their backs.

The Islamic State of Iraq indicated that it would kill the officers in 48 hours if Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki's government did not comply with certain demands.

They include the release of Sunni women held in Iraqi prisons, the handing over of Interior Ministry members accused in the involvement of a rape, and the handing over of officers who "killed and displaced our people in Tal Afar" and were "involved in raping other Sunni women."

The Interior Ministry is looking into the report. There is no way for CNN to verify the authenticity of the claim, and when the people were apparently abducted.

The latest Islamic State of Iraq's statement said "after the deadline the ISI gave the infidel government of Maliki has passed," they decided to kill the captives.

The claim also says that they will provide a video soon.



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The voice believed to be from the head of the Islamic State of Iraq, Abu Omar al-Baghdad -- showed up on the Web on Tuesday.

The speaker made a number of points, particularly highlight the contention that Sunni fighters are prevailing over the U.S.-led forces after four years of war in Iraq.

Academics targeted

Gunmen on Tuesday shot and killed a Baghdad University professor in the capital's southwestern neighborhood of Saydiya, police told CNN.

The professor had been headed to his workplace when he was killed, police said.

The shooting comes as U.S. and Iraqi troops attempt to enforce a crackdown in the capital. Several academics have been targeted by insurgents during the Iraq war.

There were other reported incidents across Iraq.

The U.S. military also said that eight people were detained Tuesday in raids near Baghdad and Falluja.

Two people in Baghdad are "suspected of providing and transporting" car bomb material. Six people in Karma, near Falluja, were held "for suspected ties to the al Qaeda terrorist network."

The U.S. military said Tuesday that a Marine assigned to Multi National Force-West died on Monday "while conducting combat operations" in Iraq's Anbar province. The incident has been classified as non-hostile incident. This brings the number of U.S. military deaths to 3,311.

The military also corrected its earlier release that said nitric acid was used in an attempted vehicle bombing in Mushada on Monday.

Initial fears that a truck that overturned while attempting to deliver its payload of explosives was carrying acid were unfounded, the military said. In fact it was carrying gasoline. Explosives were also found, the military said.

The driver told soldiers he had been paid \$30,000 to launch the attack, the military said.

CNN's Octavia Nasr and Mohammed Tawfeeq contributed to this report.



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- **Scores killed and wounded in market blast as Iraqi army making plans for US withdrawal** (22 May 2007)

A parked car bomb ripped through a packed outdoor market in southwestern Baghdad on Tuesday morning, killing 25 people and wounding 60 others. The deadly attack occurred about 10 a.m. in the Shiite-dominated neighborhood of Amil, damaging a nearby medical center, turning buildings into charred husks and setting a line of cars on fire, police said, according to the AP.

Earlier two roadside bombings rocked eastern and western Baghdad respectively, killing a civilian and wounding eight others.

Also Tuesday, two mortar shells slammed into a teacher's college affiliated with Baghdad University, killing three students and injuring seven others, police said.

At least 58 Iraqis were killed on Monday by attacks or found dead across Iraq, including seven people ambushed on a bus northeast of Baghdad, police said. The dead included 24 men whose bullet-riddled bodies were found across Baghdad, apparent victims of sectarian death squads.

British troops clashed with Shiite Muslim gunmen in the southern city of Basra. Britain's military said one British soldier and a civilian driver were killed when a supply convoy was attacked in the center of the city, the AP reported.

Elsewhere, American forces raided safe houses south of Baghdad but failed to find three soldiers missing since a May 12 ambush that left four other Americans and an Iraqi dead. "We've (identified) some safe houses and we targeted a couple of those today and they were able to slip away from us. But we're going to come at things from a different angle," a U.S. spokesman, Maj. Webster Wright.

On the political front, Iraqi Defense Minister Abdul-Qader al-Obeidi on Monday told reporters Iraq's military was drawing up plans in case U.S.-led forces left the country quickly. "The army plans on the basis of a worst case scenario so as not to allow any security vacuum," al-Obeidi said. "There are meetings with political leaders on how we can deal with a sudden pullout."

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- **Academia in the crosshairs** (Boston Globe September 30, 2007)

By Joel E. Cohen and Leslie C. Berlowitz |

POLITICAL AND sectarian violence has not only paralyzed Iraq's economy and destabilized its government, it has brought the nation's once thriving educational system to the brink of collapse. Iraqi academics and teachers face daily threats to their lives.

Since the fall of Saddam Hussein's regime in 2003, between 250 and 1,000 Iraqi professors have been killed, according to the London-based Council for Assisting Refugee Academics. Human rights groups and media reports estimate that hundreds more have been detained, tortured or intimidated.

In January, two car bombs and a suicide bomber exploded at the main gate of Mustansiriyah University in Baghdad, killing at least 70 people. Last October the head of the University Professors' Union, Dr. Essam al-Rawi, was assassinated outside his Baghdad home as he left for work. In November, gunmen dressed in Iraqi police uniforms abducted scores of educational workers from the Ministry of Higher Education. Other schoolteachers have been kidnapped, terrorized, and killed, sometimes in front of their students. Academics, scientists, and members of the intelligentsia have been singled out for attack, and roughly 30 percent of all professors, doctors, pharmacists, and engineers in Iraq have fled since the war began, according to Iraqi government officials.

Unfortunately, this systematic targeting of scholars and scientists, and the accompanying repression of intellectual freedom, is not a new phenomenon. In the 20th century, intellectuals and academics faced extermination, imprisonment, and isolation under numerous regimes, including Nazi Germany, the Soviet Union, Argentina, Cambodia, Uganda, and the People's Republic of China. In the 21st century, scholars in Iran, Burma, Zimbabwe, and many other nations are arrested, fired, and otherwise silenced when they dare question government policies or express ideas at odds with those in authority.

The United States has a long tradition of freedom of intellectual inquiry.

The Supreme Court has ruled repeatedly that the First Amendment protects the freedom of scholars and students to challenge orthodoxies and explore new, uncharted areas of intellectual inquiry. In return for this protection, our educational system - the largest in the world - strengthens our democracy: it informs citizens about critical issues, illuminates the world and our experience of it, stimulates debate, and helps solve emerging problems.

Yet we cannot take the independence of our academic institutions for granted.



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While teachers and professors face scrutiny from politicians beholden to specific agendas, high school science teachers in some states are forced to add scientifically untested (and sometimes untestable) theories to their curriculum. Literature teachers protest the removal from their reading lists of some of America's most acclaimed novels, including Toni Morrison's "Beloved," John Steinbeck's "Of Mice and Men," and Kurt Vonnegut's "Slaughterhouse Five."

Library records are subject to government surveillance under provisions of the USA Patriot Act.

These examples of curtailment of American academic freedom pale in comparison with the systematic extermination of Iraqi intellectuals, but the common elements of both degrees of pressure on academic freedom are unsettling.

Education of quality, by its nature, questions what some people think they know, and governments in power seldom embrace critics of their authority.

Yet academic inquiry is an essential source of reason and wisdom, especially in troubling times. Iraq needs its scientists, teachers, educated professionals, creative artists, and other intellectuals if it is to rebuild a functioning society.

Those Iraqi academics who have chosen to stay, or cannot leave, need our vocal and ardent support, as do intellectuals everywhere. Intellectual freedom is a cornerstone of modern democratic life. We must defend it.

Joel E. Cohen is a professor populations at Rockefeller University and Columbia University. **Leslie C. Berlowitz** is chief executive of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences.■

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Back to School, Back to Horror (Ali Al-Fadhily 15 Oct 2007)

by Ali al-Fadhily

October 15th, 2007 | [Inter Press Service](#)

BAGHDAD — As another school year begins in Iraq, parents approach it with dread, fearing for the safety of their children.

With the security situation grimmer than ever all over the country, just stepping out of one's house means a serious threat to life.

“God knows how we could send our kids to school this year,” Um Mohammed, a mother of five in Baghdad told IPS. “Our financial situation is the worst ever and the prices are way too expensive for the majority of Iraqis to afford. I might have to keep some of them at home and send only two.”

The 40-year-old woman shed tears when she started to talk about the family's financial now compared to what it was before the U.S. occupation of Iraq.

“My God, don't those Americans have any conscience? We were not rich before, but life was easy and we used to celebrate the school season, watching our kids trying their uniform on and looking at the colourful pictures of their new books,” she said.

Iraqis blame their government's failure to provide them with basic necessities on the U.S.-led occupation that has brought such an incompetent regime to power.

The Iraqi Ministry of Education promised Iraqis a better educational year in 2007, a promise that has been made every year for the past four years.

“The educational system in Iraq is destroyed and we are suffering all kinds of difficulties,” said Hassan, a school headmaster in Baghdad who spoke on condition that his last name and the name of his school would not be used. “There will be a shortage of desks, blackboards, water, electricity and all educational supplies – as well as a critical shortage in the number of teachers this year.”

Teachers, like other Iraqis, have fled the country because of threats from sectarian death squads. Some were evicted from their areas and moved to others inside Iraq for sectarian reasons.



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According to Iraq's Ministry of Higher Education, as of February 2006, nearly 180 professors were killed and at least 3,250 have fled Iraq to the neighbouring countries. The situation has deteriorated severely since then.

“The number of teachers leaving the country this year (2006) is huge and almost double those who left in 2005,” Professor Salah Aliwi, director-general of studies planning in the Ministry of Higher Education told reporters during an Aug. 24, 2006 interview in Baghdad. “Every day, we are losing more experienced people, which is causing a serious problem in the education system.”

While teachers are at risk, Iraqi families are concerned for the safety of their children as well.

“I am not sending my two boys to school this year,” Tariq Ahmed from Baghdad told IPS. “I am sure hundreds, if not thousands, of students will be abducted and killed by militias. I am not gambling with my boys' life just to support Bush's lies that the country is safe and sound.”

Last month, the Iraqi Ministry of Education warned of possible low attendance of pupils at schools this year, saying it expects at least a 15 percent decrease in attendance compared to previous years.

Leila Abdallah, a senior official at the Ministry of Education, told reporters on Aug. 28 there has been a 54 percent increase in exam failure rates compared to previous years.

She added that many students had not completed their last exams as they had been forced by violence to flee their homes to safer areas.

The Iraqi NGO Keeping Children Alive (KCA), recently said education standards in Iraq had dropped and many schools were relying on teachers teaching at least 100 students per class.

“Owing to lack of teachers, a class now has dozens of students, a situation that is preventing teachers from giving sufficient attention to individual pupils,” Moussa Dureid, a spokesperson for the KCA, said.

According to an Oxfam International report released in July, “92 percent of children had learning impediments that are largely attributable to the current climate of fear.”

The report added, “Schools are regularly closed as teachers and pupils are too fearful to attend. Over 800,000 children may now be out of school, according to a recent estimate by Save the Children UK — up from 600,000 in 2004.”



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Iraqis do not feel secure despite the reassurances of U.S. and Iraqi authorities that the security situation has improved.

“Universities are death squad headquarters,” Qutayba Assaad, a professor at Al-Mustansiriya University in Baghdad told IPS. “They are practicing all kinds of torture inside the university and they abducted many of my colleagues because of their sect or their objections to what the clerics are doing inside universities.”

“What education are you talking about,” Kussay Kathum, a student at Baghdad University told IPS. “This country is dead and its body is being torn apart. They should stop schools and colleges attendance until they solve the core of the problem.”

His colleague, Sumaya agreed with him.

“Indeed they should change the whole system in Iraq before sending us to school. It is suicide to go to colleges where the government’s militias kill people. It seems that our American colleagues do not care for what is happening to us.”

(*Ali, our correspondent in Baghdad, works in close collaboration with Dahr Jamail, our U.S.-based specialist writer on Iraq who travels extensively in the region)

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- **Iraq teacher slain in latest attack against educators** (Doug Smith, LATimes, 08 Nov 2007)

BAGHDAD — Gunmen killed a schoolteacher Wednesday on her way to class in a well-to-do Baghdad neighborhood, the third attack on Iraqi educators this week.

Police said Hana Lafta Mohsen, 35, a mathematics teacher at the Mansour neighborhood's Intifada Intermediate School, was shot in the head by unknown assailants. She died at a local hospital.

On Sunday, gunmen stormed into a primary school in the Sadiya neighborhood of south Baghdad and killed headmistress Bushra Abdul Hurr in front of her students.

In the northern city of Kirkuk, armed men abducted a school principal Monday.



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The men stopped a car transporting the principal and several teachers. The gunmen released all but the principal, Imad Mohammed, said one of the teachers, who asked not to be named.

A Baghdad police official said he was unaware of a connection between the two shootings in the capital but said the resumption of school after the three-month summer break could have been a factor.

Iraqi schools previously have been beset by violence. Schools shut down in parts of Baghdad last year at the height of the country's civil war, with some teachers targeted by extremist groups. University professors also have been regularly targeted by militants and criminal gangs since the 2003 U.S.-led invasion.

Meanwhile, an Iraqi army spokesman in Baghdad said that improving security conditions had prompted more than 46,000 Iraqis to return from abroad in October. They were among more than 2 million Iraqis who have taken refuge primarily in neighboring Jordan and Syria.

Qassim Ata, a spokesman for Iraqi forces aiding the U.S. troop buildup, also cited the start of the school year as a possible reason for the Iraqis' return. Ata spoke at a news conference on state-run Al Iraqiya television. However, both Syria and Jordan have recently tightened immigration restrictions, forcing Iraqis to leave when their three-month visas expire, unless they qualify for refugee status.

Ata did not indicate how many, if any, Iraqis had left the country in the same month.

Meanwhile, six unidentified homicide victims were found in the capital Wednesday, and a sniper killed Muhannand Mizhir Sheikhly, the son of a leading member of the Iraqi Islamic Party, the country's main Sunni Arab political group.

A party spokesman in Basra said two members were killed this week in what he called a campaign targeting the Sunni group.

Ghazi Mohammed, deputy president of the local council in the Jamiya neighborhood in west Basra, and Salman Dleishi, who was in charge of aid for the poor at the Abu Khasib Mosque south of Basra, were both killed Monday, he said.

Basra's police chief Wednesday survived the second attempt on his life in three days and the sixth since his appointment in June. A roadside bomb struck the convoy of the chief, Abduljaleel Khalaf, on a main road in west Basra, said police spokesman Col. Kareem Sattar Zaidi. Four of his guards were injured. Khalaf was attacked at his brother's house Monday and previously was the target of two sniper attacks and two bombings. He was appointed by Prime Minister Nouri Maliki over the objections of the local council.



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Times staff writers Wail Alhafith and Saif Hameed and special correspondents in Baghdad and Basra contributed to this report

- **Students Fail, Like So Much Else Ali al-Fadhily and Dahr Jamail** (08 Aug 2008)

BAGHDAD, Aug 8 (IPS) - Living from one crisis to another, without electricity or freedom to move under a collapse of security, massive numbers of Iraqi students are failing their exams.

"It is a natural result of what is going on in Iraq under this U.S. occupation that so many Iraqi students failed the high school exams," Mahmood Jassim, a teacher in Baghdad told IPS.

"How can a student pass such difficult exams feeling terrified, exhausted in the heat, in darkness without electricity, having to work in the absence of a dead or detained father, and all the problems of the world over his head."

Jassim says about 75 percent of his students are failing their exams.

"I am ashamed of the results my school achieved this year," a school headmaster in Baghdad, speaking on condition of anonymity, told IPS. "I cannot tell you what percentage we achieved because that will reveal me and my school. You do not really believe we are living in a democratic country, do you?"

Two headmasters, who also spoke on condition of anonymity given the prevailing atmosphere of fear, said school results showed sectarian divisions – and not for the best of reasons. Shia schools, they alleged, ran a loose invigilation system that allowed students to cheat.

Some teachers believe most students who passed their exams did so by cheating. "Those who cheated have passed while the honest failed," Ghanim Jamil, a teacher in Baghdad told IPS. "If a student is the son of a senior government official or of a member of an armed group, how can we stop them from cheating? We would be killed."



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But some officials at the ministry of education suggested that the poor results are an encouraging sign.

"The low number of students who passed the exams shows credibility and discipline," Waleed Hussein, media and public relations official at the ministry told journalists earlier this week.

Hussein refused to say how many students failed their exams.

"I live in an old two-room house with my family after we were evicted from Sha'b Quarter of Amiriya in Baghdad," Manhal Ali, a high school student who failed five exams out of seven told IPS. "There are five of us plus our parents in the small place that lacks most living necessities such as electricity, not to mention the noisy atmosphere of the crowded space. I passed Arabic and English because I am good at them, but failed the other exams that needed me to study hard."

Most students IPS spoke to from families that have become refugees appear to have failed the exams this year.

"My father was detained by U.S. forces in 2005," Omar Khattab, a high school student from Baghdad told IPS. "His fashion shop was looted by the so-called Iraqi army who came with the Americans to take him away, and so now I have to work as a labourer to support my family."

And Iraq was once considered the best country for education in the Middle East.

Following the invasion of Kuwait led by former dictator Saddam Hussein, UN sanctions imposed on Iraq in 1990 severely affected the education system. Since the 2003 U.S.-led occupation, the education system has deteriorated faster.

According to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), Iraq had until 1989 allocated 5 percent of its budget to education. The average in developing countries is 3.8 percent.

Tens of thousands of new schools were built between 1960 and 1990. But in the 1990s, more than 83 percent of schools were in need of repair in central and southern Iraq. This number has risen since the invasion in 2003.

U.S. promises to rebuild the educational infrastructure led to nothing.



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"I decided to stop fooling myself by dreaming of going to college and becoming a lawyer," Sufian Kathum, another high school student who failed his exams told IPS in Baghdad. "One has to face reality; that Iraq is finished as a country.

"The Americans and their collaborators need us as dirty policemen and garbage collectors who locate roadside bombs for them," Kathum said. "We must realise that college has become a luxury that we cannot afford."

(*Ali, our correspondent in Baghdad, works in close collaboration with Dahr Jamail, our U.S.-based specialist writer on Iraq who travels extensively in the region.) (END/2008)

- **Professor assassinated, Iraqi soldier injured in Baghdad** (25 Aug 2008)

Baghdad - Unknown gunmen killed a university professor in Iraq in west Baghdad early Monday, while a bomb targeting an army patrol injured an Iraqi soldier in the area, police and witnesses said. Police found the body of Professor Khaldoun Sabry in in the capital's Yarmouk district. He was handcuffed and had gunshot wounds and bruises all over his body, police officials told Deutsche Presse-Agentur dpa.

Killings and abductions of university professors and students have escalated in the last couple of months.

Meanwhile, an Iraqi soldier was injured when an explosion hit an army patrol in west Baghdad's Mansour district on Monday, witnesses told dpa.

Several shops were damaged in the explosion, according to the witnesses.

A 13-year-old would-be suicide bomber still wearing an explosives vest turned herself over to police on Sunday, the same day that 25 people were killed in a further suicide bombing, the US military said Monday.

The military said the girl let herself be escorted away by police in the city of Baquba, north-east of the capital Baghdad, and that she then led the officers to another explosive vest.

The US military had initially reported that police had detained two suicide bombers, but later said that only the 13-year-old girl was arrested.



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Baquba is capital of the restive Diyala province, where the US Army has set up a separate female anti-terrorism unit in the battle to try to thwart suicide bomb attacks by women.

Meanwhile the death toll in Sunday's suicide bombing west of Baghdad had risen to 25, Arab media reports said Monday. Initial reports had put the figure at 21 dead.

In addition, 30 people were wounded when the attacker detonated his explosives vest during a banquet thrown by a family celebrating a relative's release from prison, a police source who spoke on condition of anonymity told Voices of Iraq (VOI) news agency.

The attack took place in the Abu Ghraib district, 30 kilometres west of Baghdad.

- **Education in Iraq ...lack of planning and skillful teachers** (28 Aug 2008)

The minister of education was on one of the local T.V channels last week. He said during his interview that his ministry is the most honest one among other ministries having 20,000 new jobs for those who deserve to be teachers of the new Iraq to have the progress and prosperity and some other jobs inside the ministry of education. Anyone when he hears that speech will get the impression that the minister is honest and he is working hard while he is not.

I have many examples to say that this minister is not efficient to be in an important ministry like Education and his ministry is the worst among the other ministries.

First, I will start from the new employees in the ministry he was talking about. Last week, my cousin, who is an officer in the ministry of interior, saw his friend paying 500 dollars to have the son a teacher in the ministry of education. This new teacher doesn't have the qualification to be a teacher and didn't graduate from any institute related to education. They said he will be appointed as a teacher of sport or art in any primary school. It is so simple. The school headmasters and headmistresses don't care about those subjects in their school.

The minister said on T.V no one can talk about corruption in his ministry and about those who are involved in appointing the new teachers as those who are in charge are honest and they follow the district procedures we give !And if you have objections or anything wrong you can tell to have your right done !!

How could I trust a minister who made a chaos in one of the examinations centres in the first day of the final examination of high school when he visited it. His guards opened fire on students injuring some of them as the students were expressing their refusal to what happened in that centre. If the minister whose

responsibility to take care of students, his guards used their guns towards students, what benefit we would get from him.

The other thing is the infrastructure, how many schools have been built ? And the most important thing is the teacher. Are all teachers qualified to teach in schools? How many teachers had got training and when was that?

I also had been in touch with a teacher who supposed to be sponsored by the American embassy in Baghdad to go with a group of Iraqi teachers to have the new method of teaching English in the US, but it was rejected by the minister having no idea why?

Most of the Iraqi schools suffer from teaching staff whether by lacking them or their efficiency.

Finally, I see that the ministry of education, as well as some other ministries, needs a minister who knows what is going in schools and the educational directorates.

If we want to have the future for Iraq and Iraqis we have to have a secure environment for students including the school building, the curricula, teachers and the administration.

- **Education under pressure in Iraq** (UNICEF 15 Sept 2008)



© UNICEF Iraq/2008/Arar

A girl walks through the rubble of her destroyed classroom at the Baghdad Primary School in Sadr City.

NEW YORK, USA, 15 September 2008 – The ongoing conflict in Iraq continues to have a devastating impact on children and schools there. Insecurity and violence have forced teachers to flee, kept students at home and, in some cases, closed schools completely. An education system that was once one of the best in the region is now struggling to provide basic services and keep students safe. Many young people have watched fellow classmates either leave the country or simply stop coming to school.

“We were 35 students and now we are seven – two girls and five boys,” says Zuhail Sultan, who studies music in Baghdad. “And we don't have enough teachers to cover every subject.”



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UNICEF’s Chief of Education at the support center for Iraq in Jordan, Mette Norstrand, agrees that finding teachers is challenging but says that more support systems are being put in place to encourage them back to the classroom.

“Now the Ministry of Education is taking this quite seriously,” she notes, “and we are holding training courses for master trainers and teachers so they can be better equipped to deal with problems inside the classroom.”

‘A huge achievement’

Teachers and students inside Iraq, who are managing to keep some semblance of a normal school life, often face overwhelming and life-threatening obstacles.

“Daily life is so difficult, so constrained by fear of assassination, kidnapping, bombing, that to continue to do something as simple as go to school and study music is heroic,” says journalist George Packer. “It’s a huge achievement.”

With continued insecurity and a lack of teachers, how are Iraqi youths continuing their studies? How is the international community helping to support and transform the education system? What are the particular obstacles that female students face?

[Click here](#) to listen to a UNICEF Radio podcast discussion on education in Iraq, featuring these guests:

George Packer, staff writer for The New Yorker and author of ‘The Assassins’ Gate: America in Iraq’; **Zuhal Sultan**, a 17-year-old student at the Music and Ballet School of Baghdad, and pianist with the Iraqi National Symphony Orchestra; and **Mette Norstrand**, Chief of Education, UNICEF Support Center for Iraq.

- **Iraq struggles to stem ongoing brain drain** (LATimes 10 Oct 2008)

By Tina Susman, Los Angeles Times-Washington Post News Service

Los Angeles Times-Washington Post



Baghdad: Naqi Shakir sits on a sagging mattress pushed against a wall. His wife and two daughters perch on tattered sofas and chairs crowded into the one room of the house with signs of family life: personal photographs tacked to the wall, a TV, books, and knickknacks on dusty shelves.

Except for a folding table and chairs in the kitchen, nearly everything has been sold so the family can bolt as soon as someone rents the two-storey home in a relatively safe Baghdad neighbourhood.

At a time when the Iraqi government is encouraging its citizens to return and the US military is highlighting security gains across Iraq, the Shakirs nevertheless want out. They see no future here for Iraqis such as themselves: well educated, affluent, secular or non-Muslim.

Their imminent departure is a major concern facing Iraq, which has suffered a traumatic brain drain in the last five years and is struggling to lure back or hang on to educated professionals.

In June, the government raised civil servant salaries 50 per cent to 75 per cent to bring back state employees such as teachers and doctors, many of whom were fired after the 2003 US-led invasion that toppled Saddam Hussain. Iraq's Ministry of Displacement and Migration says tens of thousands of people have returned to Iraq since last fall.

But with more than 2.5 million Iraqis having fled the country, political and business leaders believe it will be many years before the loss of professionals can be reversed.

The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees said it monitored numbers at the main border crossing linking Iraq to Syria from January to July 2008 and found that 7,200 more Iraqis left than entered. And some say a new US policy opening the door to more Iraqi refugees each year is exacerbating the situation.

"It's counterproductive," said Raad Ommar, president of the Iraqi American Chamber of Commerce and Industry in Baghdad. In the years since the fall of Saddam, the chamber would receive 200 to 300 applications when it placed a newspaper ad seeking a staff attorney, public relations executive, engineer or



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administrative worker. Now, Ommar is lucky to attract 20, usually from people sorely lacking in experience and with checkered resumes resulting from wartime upheavals. Ommar used to say it would take Iraq a couple of years to recover economically.

"Now, if I say five years, I'm not confident," he said. "I think, in general, people don't really have much confidence in the future."

More than 7,000 physicians have left Iraq since 2003, including virtually all who had 20 years' or more experience, said Mustafa Hiti, a member of parliament who sits on its health committee. About 600 have returned, he said, but none are top-flight specialists.

Most specialists were Sunni Arabs who, to achieve their professional status, were members of Saddam's Baath Party. Even if they did not adhere to its ideology, they were ostracised and forced from their jobs after Saddam was ousted. Now, they do not feel comfortable in a country run by Shiite Muslims, said Hiti.

At the Ministry of Higher Education, spokeswoman Siham Shujairi said 6,700 professors have left Iraq since 2003 and only about 150 have returned. About 300 have been killed.

Hiti, the parliament member, has some hope. He is lobbying the health minister to establish a specially protected zone for doctors and their families to live in, in central Baghdad. That could encourage their return, he said. Recently, the government said doctors would be allowed to carry guns for self-protection.

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- **University Life in Baghdad: An Improvement in Safety but Political and Religious Influences Remain** (09 Nov 2008)

By Naseer Al-Ily

Baghdad, Asharq Al-Awsat- Professor Ali is thinking about the day that he will no longer teach at Munstansariya University in Baghdad following the resolution issued by the Iraqi government that has imposed a mandatory retirement age of 63 year old for university professors. This resolution, according to the university professor who asked to be referred to as Professor Ali, is a concern for him and his counterparts and will push university education towards an abyss.



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The professor explained to Asharq Al-Awsat that there are many complaints within academia about the government resolution and he warned that, “It will have a negative impact on education in Iraq and there are Arab and foreign states that are beginning to work to attract these potentials from now because, unfortunately, they have been shelved in their native country.”

The Iraqi government’s official spokesperson Ali al Dabbagh explained that there are age limits to regulate the quality and activity of the individuals who work for it. He told Asharq Al-Awsat that people have certain potentials that “increase for example at a specific period and begin to decrease when they reach a certain age even though there are people who get to 70 years of age but continue to contribute. However, they cannot carry on working until the day they pass away. Therefore, we found that making someone retire at this age is appropriate so that he can rest and be given a chance to take part in other particular activities benefiting from his retirement fund...moreover we must give new blood and young talents a chance as young people have striven, studied and worked to obtain a higher-education degree and deserve to take on their natural role as professors.”

Zayed Mohammed, a student in higher education, explained that he believed in gaining experience and said, “The longer a researcher remains in his field of expertise, the more he will be like an encyclopedia of information and it would be possible to benefit from his experience not only through teaching but through many other ways such as research, publications, books, consultations etc. It is natural to continue contributing in spite of one’s age so retirement is not an obstacle to academic contribution. So I believe that the law is fair to everyone; to us as youngsters and to teachers as well who have contributed significantly and will continue to do so God willing.”

Another problem from which university professors are suffering is the instability and irregularity of university life in Iraq that varies depending on the nature and location of the university.

Professor Ali from Mustansariya University said, “With the provincial elections coming up, you can feel the partisan and religious influences within all Iraqi universities especially Mustansariya where leaflets are still being distributed. There are still religious and political influences but it is unlike that of previous years.”

He stated, “A week ago, some students brought a megaphone into the university and started shouting certain slogans against the political issue of the Security Pact. But as professors, we always say that universities are for education and that education must be respected.”



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“There is still apprehension between teacher and pupil but much less in comparison to the past few academic years during which the students had the upper hand because they represented certain religious and political parties,” added Professor Ali.

As for the role of the Ministry of Education and of university deans and professors in raising awareness amongst students of the dangers of partisanship and sectarianism, the professor said, “it is non-existent; not one seminar has been organized in this regard nor has it been studied in certain classes.”

“A university is dominated by a certain party...for example the University of Baghdad is affiliated to one party and another university is affiliated to another and it’s influence is obvious as soon as you walk through the university’s gates. This puts you off asking the students and professors questions. Their signs and slogans are enough,” said Professor Ali finally.

Taqi Asaad, an Iraqi student at university said, “My studies this year have been better than the past few years...Even professors feared their students because of their affiliations to political and religious parties but the situation is better now and universities are safer.”

However she complained about the costs of education saying, “It is very expensive because of transportation, clothing, food and the cost of books.” She added, “There are some students who are very poor and we feel sorry for them but unfortunately there is no one who can help them.”

As for the security at university, she said that the situation has improved: “Female students can wear whatever they want. Nobody forces them to wear the Hijab or any kind of Islamic attire.”

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- **IRAQ: Killing academics is a war crime** (Brendan O'Malley, 09 Nov 2008)



The international community should explicitly recognise crimes against educators as crimes against humanity or war crimes, a conference of 150 Iraqi ministers, MPs, university presidents and international experts was told last week. Hosted in Paris by Unesco, in collaboration with the Qatari Foundation, the conference heard that more than 250 academics had been killed in a "campaign of terror" since the fall of Saddam Hussein, in targeted attacks.

Hasni Abidi, of the International Committee for the Protection of Iraqi Academics, said: "We condemn forcefully the gross human rights violations aimed at the education system in Iraq and we call upon the international community to spare no effort to protect the education system and establish mechanisms to



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prevent such attacks."

HRH Sheikha Mozah Bint Nasser All-Missned called for a system of monitoring to "document all the violations against education systems, academics and students".

Although the general security situation has improved in recent months, with attacks on civilians in Baghdad down 90% on 2006 levels, academics and education officials are still being murdered, though no longer at a rate that is threatening a collapse of the university system.

The conference was told that an academic was killed at Mosul University in late October. The day before the conference began, a bomb in Baghdad struck a bus carrying education ministry employees, killing two of them, according to AFP.

Iraqi Ministry of Education figures, published by the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq, indicated there had been 31,600 attacks against education institutions between the fall of Saddam Hussein and September 2007. This included the assassination of 259 academics, the abduction of a further 72 and detention of another 174. More than 100 students had been killed - mostly by car bombs and mortar rounds targeting schools and universities.

"The impact of this campaign of terror and blatant disregard of learning institutions is a massive brain drain from the country, the suspension of classes for weeks at a time, replacement of lecturers by recent graduates, a decline in quality of education, absence, and a traumatised student and staff body," the UN Assistance Mission reported.

Conflicting figures from Iraq's Ministry of Human Rights, published by Iraqupdates.com, say that 340 academics were killed in 2005-7. At the conference a working group on the protection of academics recommended, after heated discussions, that:

- * An independent international investigation of such crimes in Iraq should be set up;
- * Mechanisms should be put in place to ensure the safety and security of educators and students and establish the neutrality of educational institutions and curricula;
- * The Iraqi government should prosecute all perpetrators and compensate the families of the killed academics.

Working group participants said an international independent investigation was needed because the government had failed to take action so far. Experts pointed out that attacks on education institutions



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were already a war crime under the Rome statute of the International Criminal Court.

Last year, a Unesco report titled *Education Under Attack* and written by this reporter, found there appeared to have been a dramatic rise in the number of attacks worldwide on education targets in conflicts since 2004. The report recommended international action to "embed protection of teachers and academics within human rights law" and ensure perpetrators of attacks on schools, colleges, universities and the education process were prosecuted.

* See our Feature section to read extracts from *Education Under Attack*.

* *Brendan O'Malley is the author of Education Under Attack: a global study on targeted political and military violence against education staff, students, teachers, union and government officials, and institutions. www.unesco.org*

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- **Baghdad's defiant students** (Al Jazeera, 06 Dec 2008)



In the final part of the series on education in conflict Al Jazeera visits the Iraqi capital Baghdad and finds students defiant in the face of attack.



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Al Mustansiriya in the suburb of Sadr City in Baghdad is one of the oldest universities in the world, dating back to 1234.

These days however it has an appearance very much synonymous with the Iraqi capital – encased by thick concrete blast walls.

Like many esteemed cultural institutions in Iraq, Al Mustansiriya was a victim of the chaos and anarchy created by the US-led invasion of Iraq in 2003.

"When we took over the University it was pillars of smoke and piles of rubble. There was nothing to indicate that we could rebuild it or teach here again," Sr Takei Al Musawi, the university's president, says.

"We had very limited budget, actually no budget at all. But the people of Al-Mustansiriya, Iraqis in general and some religious people supported the university financially, helping it to get going again - and we thank them for that."

By 2007 the university was fully functioning again, albeit understaffed and under resourced, but still filled with people keen to revive its great educational tradition.

Then in January of that year two car bombs and a suicide bomber struck the university in a coordinated operation. More than 70 people were killed and a further 400 injured.

Sabah Hassan Gomar, a member of the student union, still lives with the terrifying images he witnessed.

Student defiance

"Whenever I get to the university, I feel pain seeing this place. I will never forget that incident, bits of people flying all over, the students burnt almost to nothing. I will remember the remains all over the garden - and the fires at every corner," he says.

"We saw such badly deformed students, some of them totally burnt away. I saw naked survivors running everywhere. Their clothes had been blown off in the explosion.

"One thing I shall never forget is that some students were taking off their own clothes to cover naked bodies. "



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The day after Al-Mustansiriya University, in Baghdad, was bombed students and teachers defiantly turned up for study. Many of the security guards who were there that day still work at the university.

“We are challenging terrorism, and we believe in God,” Saleh Mahdi, one security guard says. “We will not be frightened of those scum non-believers. If it is written to die, we will die. “

This attitude of acceptance of fate mixed with deep resolve is shared by even the youngest students.

“What I can do is to live hour by hour, or even the moment, do my duty, and when it is my time to die, I will die,” Zaman, who is in her first-year at the college of arts, says..

“Everyone takes his share of life. I have to study, and learn, and leave death to destiny.”

Who exactly was responsible for the attacks is still unclear as is why the university was chosen as a target.

One suggested theory is that Al Mustansiriya was under the control of Shia militias in Sadr City and that this provoked sectarian hostility from a Sunni Muslim faction.

'Small Iraq'

However others believe that the principal reason for the bombing outrages is that the university actually offers a challenge to the very idea of sectarian hatred.

"The Iraqi universities are actually the essential Iraq," Sabah says. "You find Shia, Sunni, Kurd and Christian. The intention behind the attacks on our universities, especially Al-Mustansiriya, is to burn down that small Iraq."

In Iraq years of sanctions and violence have taken their toll on an education system which regularly seems to be on the verge of collapse. In the last year alone student attendance has dropped from 75 per cent to 30 per cent.

Dr Falah Hassan graduated from Al Mustansiriya in the year 2000. Having returned as a professor of Arabic, he says the campus today is a changed world.

First person



**Sabah, fourth year
physics student**

"There is no comparison between then and now; we are living through a period where education is at its lowest level in most of Iraq's universities," he says.

"At Al-Mustansiriya, we suffer from overcrowded conditions, the University cannot take more than 10,000 students, but this number keeps doubling."

Hisham Abd Al Hussein is one second year student in the faculty of arts struggling to get through this year's final exams.

The stress of exams is compounded by the pressures of surviving the chaos and danger of daily life in Baghdad and supporting his parents.

"We take a week off before [the exams], so I go to the shop in the morning, then study from two to six then work from six to nine, then study again until 12, and start all over the next day," he says.

"We suffer there is no electricity and it's difficult if you want to open a book or read."



The university is now enclosed by concrete

Brain drain

Dr Hassan says there are many security risks that prevent students from attending classes and that such absences affect the educational levels of not only the students but also of the teaching staff.

As professors and teachers are often the victims of targeted attacks, even more have fled to neighbouring countries to seek a better life.

"Lots of the professors left the profession for both security and financial reasons, that's a well known fact," Hassan says. "And we cannot change this reality unless we change the reasons behind it."

"Professors need to be supported financially and their security guaranteed so that the talented ones return."

Normality is hard to come by in war zones such as Baghdad but behind the concrete barricades of Al



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Mustansiriya Hisham and his friends often still manage to steal a few moments of it.

"University is about education but at the same time you get to hang out with your friends and relax," he says.

"In Iraq there are no fun places to go so we can only do so at school."

- **Four students killed in Iraqi violence ahead of polls** (AFP, 21 Jan 2009)

BAGHDAD (AFP) — A car bomb attack targeting a Sunni politician who heads a Baghdad Islamic university killed four students on Wednesday, underscoring a recent surge of violence here, officials said.

At least 10 people were wounded in the attack that hit the convoy of Ziyad al-Ani, chairman of the university in Adhamiyahm, a Sunni Muslim enclave of the predominantly Shiite northeast of the Iraqi capital.

Al-Ani, a senior official of the Iraqi Islamic Party which will contest Iraq's provincial elections on January 31, escaped unharmed but two of his bodyguards were among the wounded.

An interior ministry official told AFP the four victims were students, while a hospital official confirmed four people had been killed.

In a separate incident Wednesday, a makeshift explosive device targeting a police patrol in Kirkuk, 250 kilometres (160 miles) north of Baghdad, killed one civilian and injured another, General Adel Zaine el-Abedine said.

The latest violence followed the deaths of seven people in a string of attacks across Iraq on Tuesday that also saw at least 22 people wounded, as new US President Barack Obama pledged to "leave Iraq to its people."

Attacks have fallen sharply across Iraq in recent months, according to US commanders, although they admit insurgents are still able to strike and that this is likely to increase before this month's polls.



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In his inauguration speech in Washington, Obama vowed to seek a "new way forward" with the Muslim world.

Obama said new threats "demand even greater effort -- even greater cooperation and understanding between nations."

"We will begin to responsibly leave Iraq to its people, and forge a hard-earned peace in Afghanistan," he said.

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- **University dean survives Baghdad bomb; 4 dead** (CNN 21 Jan 2009)

Story Highlights

Bomb went off just after midday in Adamiya, northeastern Baghdad, officials said

Blast happened as the dean, Ziyad al-Ani, was leaving campus in a convoy

Incident followed earlier attack on senior official in Iraq's Higher Education ministry

BAGHDAD, Iraq (CNN) -- The dean of Baghdad's Islamic University escaped unharmed from a car bombing that killed four other people Wednesday afternoon, Iraqi authorities said.

An Interior Ministry official told CNN that the bomb went off about 12:15 p.m. (9:15 a.m. GMT) in Adamiya, in northeastern Baghdad.

The blast happened as the dean, Ziyad al-Ani, was leaving campus in a convoy with his bodyguards.

Though al-Ani was unharmed, four others were killed and 10 wounded, the Interior Ministry official said.

Wednesday's bombing followed a Tuesday attack that targeted a high-ranking official in Iraq's Higher Education ministry.

Ammar Aziz Mohammed Ali, the ministry's undersecretary for scientific research, also escaped unharmed from that bombing. But an Iraqi woman and child were killed by the blast and three people in his convoy were wounded.



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-- CNN's Mohammed Tawfeeq contributed to this report.

Find this article at:

<http://edition.cnn.com/2009/WORLD/meast/01/21/iraq.bomb.university.dean>

- **A Top Sunni Survives an Attack in Iraq** (NYT 29 Jan 2009)

By SAM DAGHER

BAGHDAD — A senior leader in one of the main Sunni Arab parties participating in the coming provincial elections survived an assassination attempt on Wednesday in Baghdad that left four people dead and 10 others wounded, according to his party and a security official.

The Sunni leader, Ziad al-Ani, dean of the Islamic University and assistant secretary general of the Iraqi Islamic Party, was leaving his campus in Baghdad's northern Adhamiya district in a well-guarded six-car convoy when a sport utility vehicle loaded with explosives and parked on the street near the gate was detonated, said witnesses and an Interior Ministry official.

Mr. Ani escaped unscathed, but the attack killed four bystanders and wounded several of his bodyguards. Ahmed Hashim, the chief of security at the university, said that this was the third attempt on Mr. Ani's life. Omar Abdul Sattar, a member of Parliament from the Islamic Party, said that Mr. Ani was not running for office but was very involved in coordinating the party's campaign for the provincial elections that will be held at the end of the month.

Unlike in 2005, when most Sunnis boycotted the elections, the Islamic Party, which is led by Vice President Tariq al-Hashemi, is running an aggressive campaign this time in seven provinces, including Baghdad. Three of the provinces are predominantly Sunni Arab.

"It is a serious sign that the security situation remains below the expectations of the Iraqi citizen," the party said in a statement condemning the attack.

Both Iraqi and American officials have warned of increased violence in the period before the elections. On Sunday, Hassan Zaidan al-Luhaibi, a Sunni tribal leader and the leader of an electoral coalition in Nineveh



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and Salahuddin Provinces, was killed by a suicide bomber. On Friday, a Shiite candidate in Babil Province running on a slate fielded by Prime Minister Nuri Kamal al-Maliki was assassinated.

Mr. Maliki, a Shiite, has put his political weight behind the State of the Law coalition, which is competing hardest in the predominantly Shiite central and southern provinces.

On Wednesday, he campaigned for candidates on his slate by appearing at a rally at a soccer stadium in Najaf, a province currently under the firm control of the Islamic Supreme Council of Iraq, another main Shiite party that is running separately in the elections.

Mr. Maliki's Dawa Party and the Supreme Council are partners in the national government, but their relationship has become acrimonious and confrontational. Mr. Maliki's partners in government, both Shiites and Kurds, accuse him of adopting an increasingly autocratic style.

"We have halted the sectarian onslaught that wanted to tear the country apart," Mr. Maliki told the crowd, taking credit for the security improvements over the past two years. "History will etch the successes that we have achieved in gold."

He urged people not to be swayed by bribes when casting their ballots because it would be contrary to Islamic edicts.

Separately, a teacher in the town of Haswa, south of Baghdad, was killed Wednesday when a bomb placed in his car exploded, the police said. In the northern city of Kirkuk, a roadside bomb intended for a police patrol near a mosque killed a civilian and wounded another, the police said.

Abeer Mohammed contributed reporting from Baghdad, and Iraqi employees of The New York Times from Baghdad, Hilla, Kirkuk and Najaf.

Abeer Mohammed contributed reporting from Baghdad, and Iraqi employees of The New York Times from Baghdad, Hilla, Kirkuk and Najaf.

- Rebuilding science in Iraq (Brendan O'Malley, 27 Jan 2009)

Iraq is rebuilding its science base, but fear of attack means refugee academics are slow to return.



Situation improving: An Iraqi policeman inspects the remains of a car bomb in the Jadriya district of Baghdad in December 2008. It was detonated to target a convoy of Iraq's Ministry of Science and Technology, injuring two people. But officials insist violence has dropped 80 per cent since 2007 and are using financial incentives to tempt academics back to the country.

Credit: AFP

Two years ago many of Iraq's scientists would have feared the consequences of a U.S. presidential election won on a platform of the withdrawal of U.S. troops.

A campaign of assassinations had seen 340 academics murdered between 2005 and 2007. The concerted attempt to liquidate the country's intellectual elite, particularly its leading scientists and medical experts, drove thousands of researchers and practitioners abroad.

Bombings at universities pushed student attendance down to 30 per cent in many departments. In one incident at Baghdad's Mustansiriya University in January 2007, 70 students were killed and 170 injured.



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A UNESCO study warned that targeted violence had brought the university system to the brink of collapse.

How times have changed. Violence has dropped 80 per cent since early 2007, according to U.S. estimates. Confident that the situation is stabilising, the U.S. has agreed to pull out combat troops by May 2010; the British will pull out by July 2009.

And Iraq's scientists are being urged to lead the country's redevelopment.

Raising scientific capacity

"The situation is much better now. Most of the country is safe," says Salam Khoshnaw, deputy minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research. "Of course we can't predict what will happen tomorrow or the day after. But many scientists have returned and, compared with two or three years ago, at each university I have found thousands of lecturers working without any problem."

The race is now on to pull Iraq out of the scientific backwater it has become through two decades of war, U.N. sanctions and dictatorship. In the 1970s and 1980s its higher education system was the envy of the Arab world. But since then it has been starved of resources and isolated from the rest of the world.

Khoshnaw says most academics in Iraq today have never visited foreign institutions. Now the government is trying to send as many scientists abroad as possible, in the hope of improving research capacity.

"This is our mission," says Khoshnaw. "Under Saddam Hussein's regime nobody could go anywhere to do research, but now we are opening the gates."

For a country that has lost so many experts to exile it might seem a high-risk strategy: last year the government sent 1,500 lecturers and students abroad at a cost of US\$10 million.

Now there are plans to send 10,000 lecturers and students abroad over the next four years for research or to obtain masters or PhD degrees. Next year research scholarships will be given out in medicine, engineering and other scientific disciplines.

"We will support anyone — lecturers or students — who would like to conduct research abroad," Khoshnaw says. "But even any students or lecturers who would like to conduct research inside Iraq at Iraqi universities, we will support them, all the expenses and everything."

The danger of exacerbating the brain drain might be offset by another bold policy: raising academic salaries in Iraq.



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Education on the agenda

The battle to upgrade the status of lecturers and teachers was led in the Iraqi parliament by the lively president of the Parliamentary Education Committee, Alaa Makki, a former haematologist at Baghdad Medical College.

He began by demanding better protection for "Iraqi scientists, Iraqi brains and Iraqi teachers," and won backing for a law to double university teachers' salaries and triple those of teachers with PhDs. This makes rates competitive with those of Jordan and Syria. A lecturer in Iraq during Saddam's regime used to take home just US\$50 monthly.

"Now the salary is more than US\$2,000 a month," says Khoshnaw. There are also proposals to offer returning academics land or accommodation that they can buy over 10 to 15 years.

But Makki is under no illusion that pay alone will help science and technology research spearhead Iraq's development.

His committee is pressing for action on four objectives: raising standards in education and research; matching research to social and economic needs; enhancing the sense of belonging to Iraq among students and academics; and updating the curriculum, teaching methods and laboratories nationwide.

Barriers to progress

This is a tall order in a country starved of resources for more than two decades, where researchers have had to travel to neighbouring countries to conduct experiments.

Obay Al-Dewachi, president of the University of Mosul, says: "From 1990 up to the recent war, we got no equipment, nothing. Then when the American troops entered the city many of the departments in the college of science were destroyed [by looters]: the departments of biology, physics, geology; also the colleges of medicine, agriculture and pharmacy".

Re-equipping has been a long, slow process and is hindered when supplies come from abroad by the reluctance of drivers to enter the region.

At Al-Dewachi's university, which has 8,000 lecturers and 126 science departments, electricity is available for only four hours a day.

"The problem is absence of materials and equipment," he says. "For example, if you need to do a chemical experiment, the absence of equipment will force you to travel to other Iraqi universities or to Jordan or Syria."



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Makki, who served two years in Abu Ghraib prison and was sentenced to death under Saddam Hussein's regime, has also been battling to double the education budget.

Even if a higher budget is secured, Khoshnaw concedes that there is "hesitation" to entrust funds to universities to buy resources. "Corruption is still a problem, we would like to take it very slowly," he says.

Nor is everyone convinced that the occupying powers will follow up their military intervention with adequate capacity-building.

There have been some positive developments, however. Al-Dewachi says this month American publishers sent more than 14,000 free scientific books to his university, in addition to a previous gift of some 15,000.

But he is bitter about Britain's level of support for research scholarships given its historic ties — it controlled Iraq for four decades before the 1958 revolution under a League of Nations mandate.

"Do you know how many scholarships they offer us from across all the British universities? Twenty. We feel disappointment. We used to pay £200 a year to attend British universities, now it costs £17,000 — and students sometimes have to spend two months in Jordan or Syria just to get a visa to go there."

In fact, according to the U.K.'s Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills, the number of known U.K. scholarships for Iraq has been cut from 20 in 2007–8 to 14 in 2008–9.

Consequently, students are sent to cheaper destinations such as Armenia, Malaysia, Turkey and Ukraine, whose degrees are not held in the same regard.

One test of whether the new policies on scholarships and salaries are working would be the return en masse of refugee academics, scientists and doctors. But the signs are not encouraging.

Fear of attack

Although Khoshnaw denies there are trustworthy figures, a spokeswoman from his own ministry told the *Los Angeles Times* newspaper in October 2008 that 6,700 professors have fled Iraq since 2003, while only 150 have returned.

The most likely reason is fears over safety. Although security has significantly improved, with attacks on civilians in Baghdad down 90 per cent from 2006 levels, academics and education officials are still occasionally being murdered.

For instance, in February 2008 there was an assassination attempt on the deputy dean of Baghdad University's School of Medicine. In March, Khalid Nasir al-Miyahi, the only neurosurgeon in Basra and a



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professor at the city's university, was kidnapped and murdered, his body left on the streets. In December the dean of the University of Mosul's School of Medicine was wounded by gunmen. And on 15 January the minister of higher education escaped injury when a roadside bomb exploded near his convoy in Baghdad.

At a conference hosted in Paris by UNESCO and the Sheikha of Qatar in November, 200 Iraqi ministers, MPs, university presidents and academics demanded urgent action to provide protection against, and an end to impunity, for such targeted attacks. They called on the government to enforce international human rights law by ensuring such crimes are investigated and urged the UN to monitor such efforts.

"The situation is not 100 per cent settled," Makki concedes. "There are still assassinations of academics and people are anxious about being killed or kidnapped. And that makes our friends who live abroad uncomfortable about returning to Iraq."

Nevertheless, it is a measure of progress that protection of academics was only part of the focus at the Paris conference. As much attention was devoted to two other pressing concerns: how to ensure that Iraqi refugees and internally displaced Iraqis have access to education, and how to rebuild the country's universities.

Brendan O'Malley is author of *Education Under Attack: A global study on targeted political and military violence against education staff, students, teachers, union and government officials and institutions*. This article was first published on SciDev.net.

- **Iraq: University students protest arrest of colleagues in campus** - Azzaman 13 Mar 2009

Hadeel al-Jawari
Azzaman

Thousands of Mustansiriya University students have stopped attending classes in protest at the arrest of colleagues by the security forces. Security forces cordoned off and then stormed the university campus and arrested several students on Thursday.



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"The university is in a crisis," declared interim Chancellor Abeddhiyab al-Ujaili.

He said he was in contact with army and security command to get the arrested students released immediately. He criticized the authorities for allowing security forces barge into the campus without permission.

"No security force should be allowed to violate the integrity of a university campus without logical reasons," he said.

The student union at the university says at least six students have been arrested and that the students would not resume class until they were freed.

Previous violations of university campuses were denounced by Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki who promised that no such violations would occur without the approval of the university authorities.

But the union said it was not aware that the troops had obtained permission before storming the campus

- **University student killed in Ninewa** (March 17, 2009)

NINEWA / Aswat al-Iraq: A university student was killed on Tuesday by unknown gunmen in western Mosul, while an Iraqi soldier was found dead in west of the city, a police source said.

"Unidentified gunmen opened fire at a student of the management and economy in al-Mosul al-Jadieda region in western Mosul, killing him instantly," the source told Aswat al-Iraq news agency.

"A body of an Iraqi army soldier was found in a village in al-Qayara district in south of Mosul," he added. "the body bore signs of gunshot wounds to the head and the chest," he also said.

He gave no more details.

Mosul, the capital of Ninewa, is 405 km north of Baghdad.



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- **Three things the government should do to save Iraq** (Azzaman, March 19, 2009)

By Fatih Abdulsalam

There are three questions which no senior official in the current government has an answer for. These questions relate to the worries Iraqis have been carrying with them and if not solved they will keep unnerving the coming generations.

The first relates to the scores of commissions the government has set up to investigate massive human rights abuses. Apart from a few things with a bearing on al-Qaeda and Iraqi groups resisting the occupation, we still have nothing about the findings of these commissions.

Second, why has the government remained silent on the thousands of killings and murders perpetrated by special armed patrols setting up road blocks at crossroads and roundabouts in the heart of Baghdad.

This point has also a bearing on the storming of residential areas and the assassination of former army officers, army pilots as well as university professors, medical doctors and experts in the former military industries.

The third question which Iraqis ask is how come that the current rulers are not held accountable for their deeds before the same tribunal which has been trying senior officials from the former regime.

If the government does not have the answers, Iraqis do.

The answer to the first question is that making the findings of the commissions known will embarrass the ruling political factions, their alliances, and their secret deals. Therefore, those findings will remain under wraps and we expect no serious action.

Iraqis do know the answer to the second question. They quite know that the squads of death did not come from the sky. They are aware that these squads were an integral part of security and intelligence setups.

In fact it is these squads which are still ruling the country and their thousands and thousands of victims lost their lives as part of a sophisticated campaign of ethnic cleansing paving the way for the realization of special agendas.

For the third question there are several answers. Some answers are with the American occupation troops and their organs which have been running the country since invading it in 2003 to the time when the security agreement went into effect.



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The other answers to the same question are with the Iraqi people who, after being invaded, occupied, exiled, made homeless and torn to pieces, will soon come together and find a way on how to reinstate the rule of law and pave the way for their future.

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- **Cool welcome for Iraq's returning academics** (Reuters, 25 March 2009)



By Aseel Kami

BAGHDAD (Reuters) - Iraqi academics who fled abroad from violence and oppression are trickling back home in response to pleas from their government -- but they are finding jobs few and the welcome far from warm.

Many waited years for Saddam Hussein to fall, and longer for sectarian violence, triggered by the 2003 U.S.-led invasion, to end.

With violence now falling dramatically, about 700 Iraqi academics -- a fraction of the exodus -- have made a tentative return, but they have found themselves tangled in red tape and facing erratic salary levels as Iraq slashes its education budget.

"I am enormously shocked. I had assumed things are better and I would find work easily in my own country," said Taif Hassan, who has a PhD in computer science.

He had been working in Syria when Iraqi officials had encouraged him to return, only to find himself unemployed due to delays in allocating him a pay grade.

He was too embarrassed to tell friends in Syria he still didn't have a job. "How is it I can find a job in Syria but in my own country I can't?" he asked.



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Iraqi academics and professionals were targeted by insurgents in the years after the U.S. invasion, prompting many to flee and leaving Iraqi universities and hospitals hopelessly understaffed. Some had left earlier to escape Saddam.

The price of oil, from which Iraq derives the bulk of its revenues, has tumbled about two-thirds from a peak of \$147 a barrel last summer, crippling Iraqi spending plans and halving its 2009 education budget to \$200 million compared to last year.

Orthodontist Khalil al-Jenabi said he left Iraq 39 years ago to escape the Baath party, later to be headed by Saddam, but on his return to Iraq discovered he is too old at 68 for a permanent teaching job. The retirement age in Iraq is 63.

In need of expertise, Iraqi institutions had employed older academics using short-term contracts, but funds have dried up.

"I'm disappointed because I want to serve Iraq," he said.

BACK TO NEW ZEALAND

For decades Iraq boasted one of the best educated societies in the Middle East, and the oil-rich country spent vast sums on training its brightest, even sending them abroad to study at prestigious universities.

Iraqi Minister for Higher Education Abd Thiab al-Ajili said he sympathized with returning academics, but could do nothing.

"The financial crisis has affected the ministry's financial situation, we feel our hands are tied ... even the (short-term) contracts have been stopped," he said.

For those with a job offer an arduous cycle of bureaucracy awaits. Foreign degrees must be reconciled with Iraqi standards, pay grades determined, and for those away from Iraq for a long time, various citizenship papers need to be obtained.

Suffocating bureaucracy is not restricted to academia, and across Iraq the sight of people clutching sheaves of paper and standing in long queues at chaotic government offices is common.

Sadeq Qanber, a professor in environmental organic chemistry who returned to Iraq after 18 years in New Zealand, said he had almost had enough. He has a job offer, but is tired of waiting for Iraqi officials to formally accept his foreign PhD.



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"I'm stuck in a cycle. My wife has even returned to New Zealand," he said, adding that he wanted to warn Iraqis abroad.

"I'm actually thinking of going back to New Zealand too."

(Editing by Mohammed Abbas and Richard Balmforth)

- **One third of Falluja youth illiterate, says study** (*Azzaman, March 27, 2009*)

By Omer al-Mansouri

More than one third the young people in the city of Falluja cannot read and write, a new study has revealed.

The study by the Cultural House, an independent Iraqi group measuring education and illiteracy in Iraq, also shows a significant increase in the number of dropouts in Falluja schools.

"Our survey focuses on ages 14-20 and its results are very worrying," said the group's leader Moayyad Sulaiman.

"More than 35% of the age group we have studied cannot read and write," he said.

Nafai Raheem, a top Iraqi education expert, who took part in the study, said 2008 exam results were the worst in Falluja's history.

"Only 20% of pupils enrolled in Falluja schools passed their exams in 2008," he said.

Raheem attributed the worsening educational standards in the city to U.S. occupation and the rising levels of violence in the country.

U.S. troops invaded Falluja several times and in one occasion had reduced several of its residential quarters to rubble.

In the years following the 2003-U.S. invasion, Falluja had emerged as the major stronghold of resistance.



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- **Iraq: EI seeks clarification on alleged harassment of teacher union by government**
(06 April 2009)

No government should interfere in the internal democratic affairs of any teacher union, says EI in a letter addressed to the minister of civil society Dr Al-Zubaidi on 30 March.

Various sources indicated to EI that the Iraqi government has appointed an official body and granted it the authority to take over the Iraqi Teachers' Union (ITU). This governmental body demanded that the leadership of the union hand over the keys to its headquarters along with membership and other records. It is also claimed that the government wants the union to hold national elections soon and the current leadership is not allowed to stand for it.

"The harassment of the ITU leaders is a violation of international law on human rights, including Convention 87 of the International Labour Organisation on the Freedom of Association," wrote EI General Secretary Fred van Leeuwen in the letter. "The rights of the members of an organisation can only be exercised in a climate that is free from violence, pressure or threats of any kind against the leaders and members of this organisation, and it is for governments to ensure that this principle is respected."

EI seeks a dialogue with the Iraqi authorities to obtain more information on the matter.

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- **Iraq, once a country of fervent readers, now starves for books** (April 13, 2009)

Corinne Reilly | McClatchy Newspapers

BAGHDAD — When Maysoon Kadhim began working on her master's thesis at Baghdad University two years ago, she braced for the challenge. After all, her paper's subject is Shakespeare, whose prose can perplex even native English speakers.

Kadhim, of course, grew up with Arabic.

As she proofread her final draft days before it was due, however, she said her biggest frustrations have had nothing to do with language.

Instead, they've come from trying to get her hands on the right books.



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"You would expect that my studies and the analysis would be the hardest things," Kadhim lamented. "Getting the books should be simple."

But in Iraq, a country where so much has been leveled by decades of dictatorship, international embargoes and war, few things are easy. Here, students often can't find the books they need. Libraries and schools are understocked, and many bookstores are closed. At those that are open, academic selections are usually limited.

College-level texts, books on specialized subjects and recent editions are the hardest to come by. Most elementary and high school students use decades-old materials.

"You could say we are starving for textbooks," said May Youssef Saour, a microbiology professor at Baghdad University's al Kindy College of Medicine. "It is a little better lately, but still it's hard to find books on many subjects. The shops and the libraries just don't have them."

Kadhim, who's 34 and has a bright smile, spent more than a year gathering the dozen or so books she used for her thesis. The lengths to which she went are impressive.

She identified what she needed by searching for books online, but credit cards and mail delivery hardly exist in Iraq. So Kadhim asked a friend in Britain to buy the books for her, then electronically scan their pages and e-mail them to her.

To get her hands on an especially important Shakespeare analysis, Kadhim asked her British friend to mail the book to another friend in Syria who was planning a visit to Iraq. The Syrian friend then hand-delivered the text Kadhim needed.

"It is terrible that this is what we must do to learn and earn our degrees, but this is the situation in Iraq," Kadhim said. "Everything is a struggle."

Other college students said that borrowing textbooks from teachers and photocopying relevant chapters is common.

"If I could find my own, I would just buy the books," said Raghad Jameel, a first-year Arabic student. "But most of the time I have to make copies. It is expensive and takes so much time."

Iraq once was widely regarded as country of fervent readers, as reflected by an adage on books well known in the Arab world: Cairo writes, Beirut publishes, Iraq reads.



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That began to change after Saddam Hussein took power. Education was free to all Iraqis under Saddam, and early on, his regime kept schools well stocked with current materials. However, he also banned certain titles. The sanctions that followed his 1990 invasion of Kuwait kept new books from entering Iraq.

As the country slipped deeper into poverty in the 1990s, families and book collectors alike sold off their libraries to pay for basic necessities. Government funding for education dropped, leaving schools and universities with fewer books.

The censorship and the sanctions disappeared after the 2003 U.S.-led invasion, but new impediments replaced them.

The widespread looting that followed the invasion destroyed library collections across Iraq. Booksellers and publishing housing closed as violence spread, and the priorities of many Iraqis shifted from reading and learning to staying alive and finding ways out of the country.

In 2007, a series of explosions ripped through Baghdad's Mutanabi Street, shutting down the book market known for decades as Iraq's most popular gathering place for intellectuals and bibliophiles. Many of its shops and cafes have only recently reopened.

Today, with violence down, Iraq is struggling to rebuild its cultural and educational institutions. Art, music and theater are only beginning to rebound. Schools are open and roads are safe enough for students to reach them, but classrooms and teachers are in short supply.

Like so much else here, access to textbooks is improving. Progress is slow, however, in a country with almost daily bombings, rampant government corruption and scarce electricity and clean water.

"Some say books are a small matter compared to many of Iraq's issues, but I say this is not true," said Alaa Makki, a Sunni Muslim lawmaker who heads the Iraqi parliament's education committee. "Without knowledge and educated people, who will solve these things? I believe education is the path to solve all (Iraq's) problems, even the political problems and the security issues."

A few grassroots book drives by teachers and students in the U.S. and other countries have helped put textbooks in a few more hands, but their contributions have amounted to a drop in the bucket relative to the wider problem.



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So far, Makki acknowledged, efforts by Iraq's own fledgling government haven't gone much further. He said his committee has asked for more funding for education from domestic coffers and foreign aid organizations.

Real progress, however, probably won't come until booksellers, publishers and distributors — here and abroad — are convinced that Iraq is safe enough for business.

"Some of the shops and companies have come back," Makki said. "But not enough."

In the meantime, the government has begun sponsoring book fairs. So far there have been two, one at Baghdad University that ended last week and another in northern Iraq. Makki hopes for more.

So many people turned out for the Baghdad fair that its organizers extended the event from nine days to 15.

With 60,000 titles spread across dozens of folding tables in the university's gymnasium, the fair's selection included books in Arabic and English, on subjects ranging from medicine and engineering to acting and safe driving.

About 40 publishers participated, almost all of them foreign.

"It is so unexpected to see so many books on so many subjects in one place," said Lava Hawizi, a college student who perused dentistry and literature books. "I'm taken completely by surprise."

Ahmed Basim, a local bookshop owner who organized the fair, said it was the first of its kind in Iraq in years. "For so long an event like this was impossible here," he said.

Basim's shop, Al Thakera Books, bills itself as the largest academic and scientific bookseller in Iraq, though it has just two locations, one in Baghdad and one in Erbil in Iraq's Kurdish region in the north.

"It's true it may be hard to find academic books in Iraq, but the Iraqi reader is still an educated reader," Basim said. "So they appreciate this fair. They long for these books."

(Reilly reports for the Merced Sun-Star. McClatchy special correspondent Sahar Issa contributed to this article.)

- **Another Iraqi professor killed (21 Apr 2009)**



US soldiers patrol Mosul.

A female university professor has become the latest victim in a string of murders of intellectuals in the northern Iraqi city of Mosul.

The professor of law was assassinated in front of her home in the al-Intissar district of western Mosul by unknown gunmen on Tuesday, the local police said. They declined to give her name.

The US-led invasion of Iraq in 2003 unleashed a vicious cycle of violence, and in the first three years of Iraq's occupation, more than 200 academics were killed and hundreds went missing or were driven into exile, a United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) report said.

Last month, Ahmed Murad Shehab, a professor of Mosul University's Faculty of Administration and Economics, was fatally shot in the predominantly Sunni neighborhood of al-Nur, on Mosul's left bank.

Many others have stopped teaching and researching in order to protect themselves and their families since the US occupation forces have proven unable or unwilling to protect them.

However, as violence dropped sharply across the war-torn country, the number of scholars assassinated decreased as well.

Meanwhile, five US troops were killed on Friday in the deadliest attack on US forces in Iraq for more than a year when a suicide truck bomber struck a police compound in Mosul.

FTP/AAM/HGL



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- **Fortune and misfortune of the Iraqi scientific community** (Mohammed Aref, 30 April 2009)

Why should one with knowledge keep it for himself? This is a Sumerian saying 5000 years old. Shouldn't we say « it would be better not to disclose to others what is distressing » suggests another Sumerian saying.

What is to be done when something is distressing and pleasing at the same time? The echoes of the Iraqi scientific community's decision make our hearts splitting into two parts and for everyone his own part: "wisdom or madness" as Louis Aragon once said.

Early this month, an event happened, both fortunate and unfortunate. An Iraqi official statement was made in Baghdad, announcing a meeting of the ministers of higher education, scientific research, oil, science and technology, to discuss the integration of the "Iraqi academy for science", similar to the organization being built in London in 2003, as a substitute of the genuine National Iraqi Academy for Science established in Baghdad in 1947. The statement specifies that prime minister was advised to include this puppet construction into the framework of the National Iraqi Academy for Science.

I wonder if this suggestion means that some Iraqi scientists get back their senses, which they have lost under the occupation, by creating a construction designed to replace the Iraqi National Academy for Science?

At that moment I have written stating that this initiative makes me laugh twice, as the funny anecdote about a deaf person laughing "the first time he laughs with others and the second time when the anecdote is exposed". In our case, firstly when the people decided to create this puppet organization in London, the capital of the country which flouted the international law in occupying Iraq, and secondly, when the initiators of this hoax imagine the dismantling of the first Academy of Science in the Middle East, established in 1947. The day I did write this, the president of the London Academy, the actual Iraqi minister of oil, protested loudly. Today it is up to the National Iraqi Academy of Science to have the last laugh, as Victor Hugo said very well, when "the suffering having passed the limits of the bearable" men "wouldn't have been penetrated by indifference and transformed into true shadows of themselves".

And why the scientific community should care about this decision when the number of its dead members exceeds last week four hundred and eighteen and seventy five members kidnapped and disappeared. The last victim is a female professor of law at the university of Mossul, and the media, as usual, did not try to retain her name.



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A recent communiqué has announced the disappearance of Smail Khalil Takriti , atomic scientist, who resided in Libya and returned to Iraq, when the government offered him a post as the President of the university of Tikrit.

The **BRussells** Tribunal, an European organization located in Brussels and cooperating with the Alliance of Iraqi Academics in Baghdad, in coherent efforts to present the situation of the dead and disappeared within the Iraqi scientific community posted a communiqué , pointed out that “Takriti left his home in Jadria, near Baghdad, the area under the authority Badr militia of Abdel Aziz Al Hakim, and since four month there is no trace of him”.

In such conditions , how can we not felicitate the organizers of the ceremony, which took place in Washington and not in Baghdad and chose to honor a number of Iraqi scientists , organized with the support of the cultural office of the Iraqi Embassy and with the collaboration of the organization of the “Female Academics of American National Sciences”.

The participation of “scientific founders” , the name given to the academics against the US occupation of Iraq, has been noticed , as Zeineb Al Bahrani, with tenure of the chair of History, Archeology and Higher education at the Columbia University and who started at the time a media campaign against the destruction of the Iraqi archeological sites by the occupation forces.

There was also her colleague Kaïs Al Awkati, with tenure of the chair of Physics at the same university, well known for his works about the stem cells used for the regeneration of organs and human tissue. Al Awkati accomplished his studies at the University of Baghdad and published many books about the harmful effects on the health of the Iraqi population, as a consequence of the harsh boycott against Iraq.

The larger part of the scientific community honored at this ceremony are senior physics from the faculty of Baghdad, as Salah Al Askari who withholds the world record of the number of operations of kidney implantation. He Implanted a kidney in an old woman body in 1967 and she is still in good physical condition after 41 years, and is a multiple mother and grandmother. This is one of the rare long lasting implantation.

Al Askari got a great number of academic positions in the USA. In 1997 he was chosen as chairman of the scientific counsel of the University of New York. At the same place he was the chairman of the commission for development within 30 years. Actually he is 82 years old and uses the language of the footballers to



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advise his Iraqi colleagues: “ *working hard, aiming at the highest point with the belief to be one of the best*”.

I will take the advantage of this occasion to transmit the advice of the forty scientists and their compatriots to the new Iraqi generations. I appreciate the advice, more or less egoistic, of Mia Aref Kaftane who celebrated last year her 80th anniversary and said substantially :” *the best reward of research is the personal source of joy and the satisfaction of works well accomplished*” and setting against it the words tinted with patriotism of Samir Kasir: “ *be loyal to yourself and to Iraq and work hard for your country and only for it. Come back to it in peace with your dreams*”. Kasir, the agronomist, specialist of cattle breeding is 84 years old. He was one of the founders of the faculty of veterinary science in Baghdad.

Many of the honored scientists of this ceremony spent most of their lives serving their country, before the occupation forced them to immigrate. Among them, we mention Hichem Mounir, one of the greatest Iraqi architects who founded the architecture department at the University of Baghdad and has built numerous important buildings like the university of Baghdad in Jadria and the Medical Town. His advice is a true professional and ethical road map for young architects and urbanologists of the country:

“be proud of the rich patrimony of your country . Your duty is its conservation and safeguarding intended for the gush of inspiration, innovation and continuity.”

I

“To be honored is like a perfume which should be inhaled and not absorbed”, an American saying! For Salah Al Wakil, the Iraqi scholar, the most expected laureate for the Nobel Prize: “*there is no perfume which is as fine as the perfume of the town of Hilla*”, his town. In the reception speech for his nomination to the national American academy of science, his findings in the field of enzymatic reactions, to enable the durability of life, has been mentioned and has provoked a real medical revolution.

I have been deeply impressed by the huge sympathy for Iraq, expressed by many great scientists. This passion is nearly mystical. I felt it during an Arabic scientific conference in Abu Dhabi. In the car, back to the hotel, and in the company of Salah Al Wakil and Fawzia Al Bahrani, his wife, who suddenly started singing an old Iraqi song: “where are you going then, where? And what about your commitment? My eyes are shedding bitter tears”! This song was immediately repeated by her husband.

This woman, living since half a century in the American high society of medical scientists, was singing with the voice of a young Iraqi girl. I did not look back in order not to bother Al Wakil, whose passion illuminated the darkness in the car: “where are you going , then, where? What about your commitment?

Mohamed Aref (Science writer - Iraq / UK)

<http://www.alittihad.ae/wajhatdetails.php?id=44911>

traduction de l'arabe par Ahmed Manai

traduction du français par Frigga Karl

- **Mekki: Corruption in Education Ministry** (Heyetnet, 12 May 2009)



The Commission of Education and Higher Education in the House of Representatives in the current Maliki Government accused the existence of corruption cases in the implementation of projects.

The Deputy Chairman of the Committee from the Accordance Front, Alaa Makki said: "Many complaints have been received from citizens, and there are general observations on the performance of the deputies of the Ministry of Education because they are not ambitious, as well as there are cases of corruption in the implementation of projects.

Mekki refused the charges against the Committe of for defending the Ministry of Education, explaining that the Commission hosted the Minister of Education and a number of officials.

According to the Committee on Education and Higher Education, the most complaints, which reached to the Commission, are about the payment of sums of money to staff in the ministry in return for ensuring the recruitment in the schools of education directorates.

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- **Round-up of Daily Violence in Iraq - Monday 18 May 2009**

(...)

Babil

A university teacher driving his car in northern Babil was hit by the U.S. Military, said Iraqi Police. No further details were released and no comment was available from the U.S. Military at time of publication.

(...)

- **Key Sunni leader killed in Iraq as pullout nears** (WP 13 June 2009)

By Zaid Sabah and Nada Bakri

Washington Post

BAGHDAD - The head of Iraq's biggest Sunni Muslim bloc in parliament was shot dead at a mosque after delivering a sermon yesterday, underlining fears that violence might mount before a deadline in two weeks for U.S. forces to withdraw from Iraqi cities.

Politicians said the assassination, in a neighborhood once one of Baghdad's most dangerous, was an attempt to reignite sectarian tension that has diminished but persists in Baghdad and other parts of Iraq.

The killing comes as politicians have begun sometimes tense deliberations over new coalitions ahead of parliamentary elections in January.

Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki warned Thursday at a gathering of hundreds of top military commanders from across the country that "terrorist operations" could increase ahead of the U.S. withdrawal from cities and the elections.

The slain man, Hareth al-Obaidi, 45, who headed the human rights committee in parliament, was an outspoken critic of human-rights abuse by security forces inside Iraqi jails. He became head of the Sunni bloc in parliament in May after his predecessor was chosen speaker.



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"This shows that the security situation is still fragile and dangerous," said Saleem al-Jubouri, a spokesman for the Sunni coalition known as the Iraqi Accordance Front, which Obaidi headed. "The government must provide more security."

Obaidi is the third lawmaker - and the first Sunni lawmaker - to be assassinated since parliament was elected in 2005, when many Sunnis boycotted the vote.

Shortly after noon, a gunman in civilian clothes, who witnesses and police estimated was 14 or 15 years old, shot Obaidi twice in the back of the head, killing him instantly.

Obaidi had just finished delivering a sermon, as he does every Friday at Al-Shawaf mosque in the neighborhood of Yarmouk, in western Baghdad.

In the sermon, he called on authorities to investigate widespread allegations of torture in Iraqi prisons.

And in a session for his committee Thursday in parliament, the lawmaker had announced plans to summon security officials and ministers before the legislature to answer questions in connection with human-rights abuses.

After firing his weapon, the gunman threw a hand grenade at the crowd, killing three other people and injuring 11. Witnesses said he then tried to escape through a back door of the mosque but was chased down and killed by guards.

Witnesses said they saw worshipers running out of the mosque shortly after they heard gunshots.

Some were crying; others were in panic.

Merchants shuttered their stores.

Police cordoned off the area, preventing anyone from approaching the mosque, where witnesses said Obaidi's body remained for a few hours after the killing.

Many in the neighborhood questioned how the assailant could evade tough security measures - from checkpoints in nearby streets to searches at the mosque's entrance - and smuggle a gun and grenade into the hall packed with worshipers.

The slain lawmaker's brother, Mohammad al-Obaidi, said he believed the guards had helped the gunman enter the mosque. "It was an organized crime," he said, sobbing.



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Obaidi was also a university professor with a doctorate in Islamic studies. He had two wives and seven children.

- **Five Students Arrested inside University** (16 June 2009)



Joint forces of the American occupation and puppet government army stormed the compound of al Mustansiriya University arresting five of the students. A government source said that during the operation at five o'clock in the morning five of the students inside the campus were arrested without the reasons.

There has been no comment so far on the part of Mustansiriya University or the Departments of Interior on the subject. This university has witnessed large presence of terrorist Mahdi Army militias and other sectarian forces who performed many kidnappings and tortures inside the campus.

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