



## REUTERS Daily Newsletters


Register for **free** →



 [Change Edition](#)  [Quote](#)  [Symbol Lookup](#) [Search](#) [News](#)  [Login/Registe](#)

Updated: Sun 9 Jan 2005 | 15:01 GMT

### Jump to

Channel:  **YOU ARE HERE:** [Home](#) > [News](#) > [World](#) > **Article**

US troops kill Iraqi civilians

Sun Jan 9, 2005 01:57 PM GMT

[Printer Friendly](#) | [Email Article](#) | [RSS](#) 



By Matt Spetalnick

BAGHDAD (Reuters) - U.S. troops targeted by a roadside bomb have mistakenly killed two Iraqi policemen and two bystanders hours after an American warplane bombed the wrong house, exacting a heavy civilian toll, Iraqi officials say.

The back-to-back incidents on Saturday fuelled anti-American anger over the deaths of innocents during a raging insurgency just three weeks before Iraq's first election since U.S.-led forces toppled dictator Saddam Hussein.

Residents said 14 people were killed in an air strike in the northern village of Aaytha, and showed 14 freshly dug graves. The military, making a rare admission of error in its fight against guerrillas, said its 500-pound bomb killed five people.

Shortly afterwards, a U.S. military convoy was hit by an explosion near a police checkpoint south of Baghdad in an lawless area known as the "Triangle of Death".

Troops escorting the vehicles struck back but at the wrong target, Interior Ministry spokesman Adnan Abdul-Rahman said. Two police officers and two civilians were killed. He said a fifth Iraqi suffered a heart attack and died at the scene.

The U.S. military launched an investigation into the bombing at Aaytha, near the restive city of Mosul, but said it had no immediate information on the convoy attack near Yusufiya.

Iraqis voiced resentment over what they see as heavy-handed U.S. military tactics and callousness toward mounting civilian deaths, sentiment that has dented U.S. efforts to

**REUTERS**  
Daily  
Newsletters

Register  
for **free** →



win hearts and minds and get the country behind the January 30 ballot.

"Why did these poor people have to die?" lamented Baghdad taxi driver Doraid Abdul Khaliq, 28. "Bombing, shooting and running a tank over cars have all become something normal."

U.S. officials insist American forces do their utmost to avoid civilian casualties but that Sunni-led insurgents trying to disrupt the election mount many attacks from populated areas.

## BLOODY CAMPAIGN

Pressing a bloody campaign of assassinations, gunmen shot dead the acting police chief of the northern city of Samarra.

And a suicide car bomb rammed into an Iraqi police and army checkpoint in the town of Yusufiya south of Baghdad on Sunday, killing two police and two civilians, police said.

They said at least nine people had been wounded.

Adding to the chaotic climate, seven Ukrainian troops and a Kazakh soldier assigned to multinational forces were killed trying to detonate an ammunition cache in the Wasit province, a spokesman for the Polish army said.

General staff spokesman Colonel Zdzislaw Gnatowski told Reuters a single large bomb had exploded while being transported for destruction, injuring an additional seven Ukrainians and four Kazakhs.

It was one of the deadliest blows to non-U.S. forces operating in the country.

In Seoul, the Foreign Ministry said it was checking reports that one or two South Koreans may have been kidnapped in Iraq.

Also on Sunday, a U.S. soldier was killed by a roadside bomb while on patrol in Baghdad, the military said.

## CAMPAIGN OF INTIMIDATION

Many Sunni leaders say the insurgents' campaign of intimidation, marked by suicide bombings and shootings, will make fair elections impossible, and plan to boycott the polls.

With tensions rising by the day, U.S. officials promised a thorough investigation of Saturday's bombing.

"The intended target was another location nearby," the army said, explaining it had

been hunting an insurgent leader. It expressed deep regret for the "loss of possibly innocent lives".

Investigators were expected to review air support tactics and examine whether an intelligence lapse was to blame. Military commanders complain that some information provided by fledgling Iraqi security forces has proved inaccurate.

President George W. Bush has pledged American-led troops will do everything possible to safeguard Iraq's election. But with three weeks to go, Bush acknowledged that four of 18 provinces were still not secure enough to vote.

In the past week alone, Sunni insurgents have killed nearly 100 people in attacks mostly targeting security forces they regard as collaborators with foreign occupiers.

Many leaders of Saddam's once-privileged Sunni minority have called for a delay in the vote, saying persistent violence in Sunni areas would scare away many voters and skew the results in favour of the long-marginalised Shi'ite majority.

But interim Prime Minister Iyad Allawi, a secular Shi'ite, has rejected any postponement of the vote, which is expected to cement the Shi'ites' newfound political dominance.

Shi'ite Iran said it favoured Iraqi elections going ahead on time as a step towards full sovereignty and an end to occupation, saying postponement would not stop the violence.

© Reuters 2006. All Rights Reserved.

### [More World](#)

- ▶ [Sudan ends 21-year war](#)
- ▶ [Gunfire mystery in Banda Aceh](#)
- ▶ [US troops kill Iraqi civilians](#)
- ▶ [Aid firms crank up production](#)
- ▶ [Fish off Sri Lanka's menu](#)

[MORE](#) →