



Refugee Documentation Centre (Ireland)
LEGAL AID BOARD

Iraq: Researched and compiled by the Refugee Documentation Centre of Ireland on 10 June 2010

Information regarding differences between the Hourya and Aladle Districts in Baghdad.

Reports of people being forced to leave either area (between October 2007-December 2009) due to their religious affiliation.

Levels of religious violence in both districts, during 2010 to date.

Please find attached information relating to your query on Iraq.

The Times (UK) reports:

"There are, however, recent moves to piece back together the Rubik's cube of Baghdad and other Iraqi cities where Shi'ite and Sunni lived side by side.

Shatha al-Musawi, a Shi'ite member of parliament who was forced out of her house in the Baghdad district of Hay al-Adel by a Sunni militia, is leading a group of widows trying to get their homes back.

Supported by Ahmed Chalabi, the Iraqi politician assigned to help refugees return home, and by the American Major-General Jeffrey Hammond, she has enabled several families to reclaim property, although she is still living in the Shi'ite district of Hurriya herself." (The Times (UK) 16 March 2008) *Ticking bomb of Iraq's forgotten refugee children*

The New York Times reports:

"An Iraqi officer, Lt. Gen. Naseer al-Abadi, said Mr. Wood was found blindfolded, tied to a bed and covered by a blanket when an Iraqi Army unit, acting on a tip, raided a house in the predominantly Sunni Arab neighborhood of Al Adel in west Baghdad, an area known as a rebel stronghold. The general said two insurgents arrested in the midmorning raid tried to deter the Iraqi soldiers from looking beneath the blanket by saying that the man lying there was their father, and that he was sick." (New York Times (16 June 2005) *THE STRUGGLE FOR IRAQ: BAGHDAD; Iraqi Forces Stage a Raid And Rescue 2 Hostages*)

The Independent (UK) reports:

"Baghdad has broken up into hostile townships, Sunni and Shia, where strangers are treated with suspicion and shot if they cannot explain what they are doing. In the militant Sunni district of al-Amariyah in west Baghdad the Shia have been driven out and a resurgent Baath party has taken over. One slogan in red paint

on a wall reads: "Saddam Hussein will live for ever, the symbol of the Arab nation." Another says: "Death to Muqtada [Muqtada al-Sadr, the nationalist Shia cleric] and his army of fools."

Restaurants in districts of Baghdad like the embassy quarter in al-Mansur, where I once used to have lunch, are now far too dangerous to visit. Any foreigner on the streets is likely to be kidnapped or killed. In any case, most of the restaurants closed long ago.

It is difficult for Iraqis to avoid joining one side or the other in the conflict. Many districts, such as al-Hurriya in west Baghdad, have seen the minority - in this case the Sunni - driven out.

A Sunni friend called Adnan, living in the neighbouring district of al-Adel, was visited by Sunni militiamen. They said: "You must help us to protect you from the Shia in Hurriya by going on patrol with us. Otherwise, we will give your house to somebody who will help us." He patrolled with the militiamen for several nights, clutching a Kalashnikov, and then fled the area." (The Independent (UK) (25 January 2007) *Inside Baghdad: A city paralysed by fear*)

The *New York Times* reports:

"Bands of armed Shiite militiamen stormed through a neighborhood in north-central Baghdad on Saturday, driving hundreds of Sunni Arabs from their homes in what a Sunni colonel in the Iraqi Army described as one of the most flagrant episodes of sectarian warfare yet unleashed in the capital.

The officer, Lt. Col. Abdullah Ramadan al-Jabouri, said that more than 100 Sunni families, many with very young children, had left the Hurriya neighborhood aboard a convoy of trucks and cars under cover of the nightly curfew. Government officials tried to urge the families to return by promising army protection, but could not persuade them." (The New York Times (10 December 2006) *THE STRUGGLE FOR IRAQ; Shiites Rout Sunni Families In Mixed Area of Baghdad*)

The same article also states:

"The fighting began around noon, when militiamen began rampaging through the only mixed district in Hurriya, a mostly Shiite neighborhood, and killed at least three Sunni Arabs. One family was shot as they left their home, with a 20-year-old man killed and his mother and younger brother wounded, according to an account given by the man's father, who was at work as a security guard elsewhere at the time. The man said the three were hit by automatic rifle fire as they finished loading possessions into their car and prepared to drive to a safer area." (Ibid)

Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre states:

"Abasya Aziz is a Sunni who lived for 35 years with her family in the Hurriya district of Baghdad, which was controlled by Shiite militias. One year ago, she

fled her home after the murder of her son. Shiite militiamen shot at their house and they fled without most of their belongings. The militiamen used a Shiite religious center as a base and for two days they attacked her home and called for the family to leave. The men fled and the women stayed in the house alone. "We were very scared alone," she said. When the men found a house in another part of town they called for the women to come. They now rent the home for a reduced rent from another family who had fled. Abasya says she would like to return and live in safety but they cannot because she fears her other sons will also be murdered. Abasya's family received help from the Ethar Association. No other NGO or government agency had provided her family with any help, she said. She had tried to transfer the family's Public Distribution System cards so they could receive their rations, but she said the officials threw out her family's papers because they were Sunnis. Abasya also takes care of three children whose father had been murdered. They receive free medical care from Amriya's Islamic Health Center." (Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (4 March 2010) *Iraq: Little new displacement but in the region of 2.8 million Iraqis remain internally displaced*)

The *US Department of State* reports:

"On June 18, 2008, a truck bombing that killed 63 and wounded 75 in the predominantly Shi'ite Hurriya area of Baghdad was blamed on a rogue Shi'ite militia group. An April 16, 2008 bus explosion in Baqubah, the capital of Diyala Province, resulted in 40 dead and 70 injured. The attack was blamed on Sunni extremists." (US Department of State (19 September 2008) *2008 Report on International Religious Freedom – Iraq*)

IRIN News reports:

"The levels of violence and prevalence of policemen varies throughout Baghdad. Hurriya district and Sadr City, stronghold of the fearsome Shia militia the Mahdi Army, are said to be two of the worst areas with virtually no police presence.

"Some militias have taken control of many areas and are targeting any police officer who invades their space. When we enter such districts we have to have backup forces to protect us. There is always a disaster when the US and Iraqi troops want to conduct a search because the search never ends without the death of a police officer," said Mounir Omar, 34, a Baghdad police officer." (IRIN News (19 February 2007) *IRAQ: In absence of police, vigilantes take to the streets*)

Reuters Alertnet states:

"BAGHDAD - Katyusha rockets killed at least four people and wounded 16 after being fired into the northern district of Qreiat and the northwestern neighbourhood of al-Hurriya. All the information on the incidents in Baghdad came from the Interior Ministry source." (Reuters Alertnet (7 March 2010) *FACTBOX-Security developments in Iraq, March 7*)

The Telegraph (UK) reports:

"Midday at the Al Adel Shopping Centre in Baghdad should have seen middle class families wandering between clothing and bric-a-brac shops laid out over four levels. Instead a lone American sniper from a Brigade Reconnaissance Team platoon took position on the roof." (The Telegraph (UK) 6 March 2007) *Gunfight at Baghdad's deserted shopping mall*

Also the same article states:

"The Command Outpost sits on a fault line in Baghdad's maelstrom of sectarian killing. Behind it is the formerly mixed Adel neighbourhood, now almost exclusively Sunni Muslim. A few streets away a main road marks the dividing line with Huriya district, also once mixed but now Shia Muslim." (Ibid)

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This response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Refugee Documentation Centre within time constraints. This response is not and does not purport to be, conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim to refugee status or asylum. Please read in full all documents referred to.