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Attacks on Pilgrims, Security Forces Leave 51 Killed, 154 Wounded in Iraq

By Margaret Griffis

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As anticipated, insurgents took advantage of the Shi'ite holiday to strike. Across Iraq, at least 51 people were killed and 154 more were wounded. Casualty figures given by various sources following such large-scale attacks usually conflict, and today is no exception.

Observances end today for Shi'ite pilgrims honoring Imam Moussa ibn Jaafar al-Kadhim who died on this day in 799 C.E. For several days the pilgrims, who walked for miles to reach a shrine in Baghdad where the Imam is believed buried, have been targeted for assault. On Wednesday those attacks left over 100 dead. The Islamic State of Iraq took credit for the bloodshed.

In Baghdad, hospital officials say that 25 people were killed and 105 more were wounded in Kadhimiya — near where the Imam Kadhim shrine is found — by a suicide bomber targeting pilgrims on a minibus. An earlier bomb, hidden in a taxi queue, killed 18 people and wounded 36 more in the Shula neighborhood.

In Mosul, an I.E.D. killed a military officer. Gunmen killed a member of the tribal alliance board.

An I.E.D. killed five people and wounded at least four more, including police, at a garage that serves as a transportation hub in Baquba. A separate blast wounded seven policemen at a vegetable market.

An Asayesh agent survived a double roadside bombing in Kirkuk unhurt, but two companions were wounded.