Iraq violence killed more than 800 people in August - UN

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USPA News - More than 800 people were killed and thousands were injured in a wave of violence across Iraq in August, the latest month that saw mass killings amid fears that widespread sectarian strife will continue to escalate, the United Nations (UN) said on Sunday. At least 804 Iraqis were killed and another 2,030 were wounded in violence across the country in August, according to figures released by the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI).

The number of fatalities includes 610 civilians, 106 civilian police officers, and 88 members of the Iraqi Security Forces (ISF). "Despite the decrease in casualty figures in August, compared to July, the impact of violence on civilians remains disturbingly high, with almost 5,000 civilians killed and 12,000 injured since the beginning of 2013," said Jacqueline Badcock, the UN`s Deputy Special Representative for Iraq. Similar to previous months, Baghdad was the worst affected province last month with no less than 1,272 civilian casualties, including 517 fatalities and 955 injured. It was followed in terms of casualties by Saladin province, Ninawa province, Diyala province, and Al Anbar governorate. The casualties in August follow at least 1,057 Iraqis who were killed in violence across the country in the month of July, making it the worst monthly toll in more than five years. At least 761 people were killed in June, 1,045 people in May, 712 people in April, and at least 229 people in March. The Iraqi government has disputed some of the death toll, but UNAMI said its figures are conservative and rely on direct investigation along with credible secondary sources. "UNAMI figures are conservative and may under-report the actual number of civilians killed and injured for a variety of reasons," it said. In early June, then-UNAMI head Martin Kobler called the figures a "sad record" and urged Iraqi political leaders to act immediately to "stop this intolerable bloodshed." His comments came just days after he warned that systemic violence is "ready to explode at any moment" if the country`s leaders fail to take immediate action. Although violence in Iraq had generally declined dramatically since its peak in 2006 and 2007, political turmoil and sectarian violence has been on the rise following the pullout of the last U.S. soldiers in mid-December 2011. At least 4,608 people are known to have died in violence across Iraq so far this year.

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