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Global Jihad Monitor

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The Big Picture

- Terrorists in Iraq launched a new wave of attacks in a further attempt to ignite sectarian violence following the bombing of the Golden Mosque. [\[Full Story\]](#)
- Authorities believe that al-Qaeda and Taliban forces are behind a prison riot that erupted in Afghanistan. [\[Full Story\]](#)
- A Bangladeshi court sentenced 21 Islamic militants to death for their roles in a series of bomb attacks that took place across the country last summer. [\[Full Story\]](#)

Regional Briefs

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North America

Moussaoui Defense Says Jurors Connected to Sept. 11 ([AP](#)) - Al-Qaeda conspirator Zaracias Moussaoui's defense complained bitterly Thursday (2/23) that the pool of potential jurors for his sentencing was being stacked with people connected to Sept. 11 victims. Three would-be jurors were subsequently rejected over government protests. U.S. District Judge Leonie Brinkema managed to qualify seven more potential jurors Wednesday morning, bringing the total to 74. She is seeking a pool of 85 which will be reduced March 6 to 12 jurors and six alternates who will decide whether Moussaoui is executed or imprisoned for life.

FBI Puts Zarqawi High on Its List ([CNN](#)) - The leader of al-Qaeda in Iraq has been placed on an FBI list of top terrorism suspects who haven't been charged with crimes in the United States but are wanted for questioning. Abu Musab al-Zarqawi was placed on the list Thursday (2/23), and the U.S. State Department is offering a reward of up to \$25 million for information leading directly to the Jordanian native's arrest or conviction.

Middle East

Saudis Thwart Oil Refinery Attack ([CNN](#)) - Saudi security forces thwarted an attempted suicide attack at an oil processing facility in eastern Saudi Arabia on Friday (2/24), Saudi security sources said. Two cars carrying an unknown number of would-be bombers tried to enter the side gate to the Abqaiq plant near Dammam, but the attackers detonated their explosives after security guards fired on them, according to statements from Saudi's interior and oil ministries. Two guards were critically injured in the blast, according to the interior minister's spokesman.

Saudi Forces Kill Suspected Militants After Siege ([Reuters](#)) - Saudi forces on Monday (2/27) killed about five suspected militants believed to be linked to an al-Qaeda attack on a major oil facility, security sources said. One source said the men were traced partly through Internet surveillance. An Internet statement was issued at the weekend claiming that al-Qaeda was behind an attack on the world's largest oil processing plant in Abqaiq on Friday.

Saudis Join Egypt in Support for Hamas ([CNN](#)) - Saudi Arabia will continue supporting the Palestinian Authority despite the election of a government led by the Islamic militant group Hamas -- because it does not want to punish ordinary Palestinians, the kingdom's foreign minister said Wednesday (2/22). He made the announcement after meeting U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, who is on a tour of the Middle East. She is trying to persuade Arab nations to increase pressure on Hamas, which refuses to recognize Israel's right to exist.

Iran's Leader Offers to Fund Hamas Government ([AP](#)) - Iran on Wednesday (2/22) offered to help finance a Palestinian Authority run by the Hamas militant group, state radio reported. The secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council, Ali Larijani, announced the offer after a meeting with Khaled Mashaal, the political leader of Hamas, the report said.

Yemen Tries 17 al-Qaeda Suspects for Planning Attacks ([Reuters](#)) - Yemen on Wednesday (2/22) put on trial 17 men, including five Saudis, charged with planning attacks against U.S. interests in the country on the orders of the leader of al-Qaeda in Iraq Abu Musab al-Zarqawi. The prosecutor said the defendants had planned to carry out "criminal attacks" to avenge the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency's killing of a top al-Qaeda operative in 2002. He said they had traveled to Iraq and then returned to Yemen in 2004 to "carry out their mission on the directives of Abu Musab al Zarqawi".

Yemen Says 3 al-Qaeda Inmates Surrender After Jailbreak ([Reuters](#)) - Three al-Qaeda inmates who were part of a group that tunneled out of a Yemeni jail have given themselves up to the authorities, President Ali Abdullah Saleh said in remarks published on Sunday (2/26). Saleh told *al-Hayat* Arabic-language newspaper that security forces were also in contact with other fugitives among the group of 23 militants that escaped from as-Sanaa jail in February.

Soccer Balls, Broomsticks Aid Yemen Jailbreak ([CNN](#)) - Soccer balls, broomsticks and pieces of a broken fan were used to dig the tunnel through which 23 Yemeni fugitives, including members of al-Qaeda, escaped prison this month, according to a report by the Yemeni government Tuesday (2/28). The report said the prisoners might have gotten the idea for the tunnel from a similar escape tunnel discovered last year at Camp Bucca, Iraq, where Iraqi detainees are being held by the U.S. military.

Thousands Protest Israeli Strikes ([CNN](#)) - Hamas told its followers to take to the streets of Gaza City on Thursday (2/23) after the Israeli military reportedly killed six

people during military strikes in the West Bank. Thousands of Palestinians peacefully heeded the call. In three separate strikes, the military targeted "terrorist infrastructures" in and around Nablus, the Israel Defense Forces said.

Iraq

Gunmen Strike 27 Baghdad Mosques, Kill Imams ([CNN](#)) - Gunmen targeted 27 Baghdad mosques and killed three Sunni imams Wednesday (2/22) in the wake of a bomb attack at one of the holiest Shiite sites. The wave of attacks followed an early morning bombing at the Al-Askariya "Golden Mosque" in Samarra.

Sectarian Violence Rips Through Iraq ([MSNBC](#)) - A day after a suspected al-Qaeda bomb destroyed a major Shiite shrine, Iraq cancelled all leave for the police and army and minority Sunni political leaders pulled out of U.S.-backed talks on forming a national unity government, accusing the ruling Shiites of fomenting dozens of attacks on Sunni mosques.

Gunmen Kill 47 Iraqi Factory Workers ([AP](#)) - Gunmen pulled factory workers off buses northeast of Baghdad and killed 47 of them, a provincial council member said Thursday (2/23). The motive for the killing was not immediately clear.

Al-Qaeda in Iraq's Baghdad Chief Killed ([AP](#)) - Al-Qaeda in Iraq's leader in northern Baghdad was killed in a raid Friday (2/24), the U.S. military said. The military identified Abu Asma, also known as Abu Anas and Akram Mahmud al-Mushhadani, as an explosives expert with close ties to important car bomb manufacturers in Baghdad. He died in a northern Baghdad raid conducted by coalition forces with the help of Iraqi police, a military statement said.

Renewed Violence Rocks Iraq Amid Calls for Calm ([CNN](#)) - At least 25 people were killed and scores wounded Sunday (2/26) in a string of violent attacks that rocked Iraq despite calls from Iraqi and U.S. leaders to end sectarian bloodshed. The dead included three U.S. soldiers who were killed in two incidents in Iraq's capital. Sunday's deadliest attack came in the Baghdad neighborhood of Dora, where 15 people were killed and 45 others wounded when six mortar rounds landed in a residential area.

Khalilzad: Iraqis Say Carroll Alive ([CNN](#)) - Iraqi officials believe kidnapped American journalist Jill Carroll is alive and they are working toward her release, the U.S. ambassador to Iraq said Monday (2/27).

Bombs Kill at Least 30, Suddenly Ending a Calm Spell in Baghdad ([New York Times](#)) - At least 75 Iraqis were killed in a maelstrom of violence today as insurgents carried out one of their deadliest offensives in weeks. The vast majority of the victims died in five powerful bombings in Baghdad that threatened to heighten tensions as Iraqis were still struggling to recover from the worst sectarian bloodletting of the war.

Afghanistan and Pakistan

Suicide Attacker Killed in Failed Assault ([AP](#)) - A suicide attacker drove a car loaded with explosives into a convoy of U.S.-led coalition forces in southern Afghanistan Thursday (2/23), but the bomb failed to detonate, an Afghan official said. No coalition troops were hurt. A purported Taliban spokesman telephoned *The Associated Press* and claimed it launched the attack and that eight U.S. soldiers were killed.

Taliban, al-Qaeda Blamed for Afghan Prison Riot ([Australian Broadcast Company](#)) - Afghan officials have accused Taliban and al-Qaeda prisoners of leading a riot which has put more than 1000 inmates in control of part of Kabul's main prison. About 350 of the prison's 2,000 inmates are described as being members of the Taliban or al-Qaeda.

Al-Qaeda Escapee Says Will Take Fight to U.S. Soil ([Reuters](#)) - A Web site often used by militants posted a video tape on Monday (2/27) in which a purported al-Qaeda escapee from a U.S. airbase in Afghanistan vowed to fight Americans in Iraq and the United States. The man, identified as Faruq al-Iraqi, said he was one of four al-Qaeda members who escaped from the base in July.

Fighting Resumes at Afghan Prison ([AP](#)) - Police fired at inmates trying to push down a gate at Kabul's main jail, as about 2,000 prisoners resumed rioting Tuesday (2/28) after a 24-hour pause in violence. One inmate was killed and three injured, police said. The death brings to five the number of people killed since the uprising started late Saturday. Some 41 have been hurt.

Europe

British Troops Sent to Stop al-Qaeda's Drug Funds ([Observer \(U.K.\)](#)) - Opium from the region of southern Afghanistan where thousands of British soldiers are being deployed is helping to finance al-Qaeda operations, senior army officers believe. The commander of the British Army in Afghanistan, Colonel Stephen Padgett, said the deployment would help protect Britain from terrorists: 'There is an international terrorism issue. Al-Qaeda benefits from the narcotics trade that goes on. By targeting the high-level narcotics trade it will have an impact on terrorism; by making it difficult for them to make money it will benefit Britain.'

Danes Hope to Calm Cartoon Row ([AP](#)) - Denmark will host a conference to promote religious dialogue following the uproar over the Prophet Mohammed cartoons, the Foreign Ministry announced Thursday (2/23). The government will also give "a significant financial contribution" to a U.N. program aimed at overcoming prejudice between Islam and the West, and support an Islamic festival in Copenhagen, Foreign Minister Per Stig Moeller said in a statement. The conference on religious and cultural dialogue will take place in the Danish capital on March 10.

Asia

Death for 21 Bomb Militants ([CNN](#)) - A Bangladeshi court has sentenced 21 Islamic militants to death for their roles in a series of bomb attacks across the country six months ago, according to a government official. The men, who are between the ages of 19 and 24, are members of the banned Islamic militant group Jamaatul Mujahedin Bangladesh (JMB), which is dedicated to establishing Islamic rule in Bangladesh..

Official Ties al-Qaeda to Indonesia Terror ([AP](#)) - The al-Qaeda terror network helped fund suicide bombings in Indonesia over the past four years through a courier system set up by the reputed mastermind behind the Sept. 11th attacks, a senior police official said Tuesday (2/28). Former al-Qaeda No. 3 Khalid Shaikh Mohammed, who was captured in 2003, was personally involved in setting up the courier system, in which money was carried from Thailand to Malaysia and finally to Indonesia's Sumatra Island, said Col. Petrus Reinhard Golose of Indonesia's counterterrorism task force.

Africa

Ivory Coast Arrest in French 'Anti-Semitic' Death ([Reuters](#)) - Police in Ivory Coast have arrested Youssef Fofana, the suspected leader of a gang accused of torturing and murdering a Jewish man in France, a prosecutor in the West African country said on Thursday (2/23). The French Interior Minister Nicolas Sarkozy denounced Ilan Halimi's killing as an anti-Semitic crime and said police investigating it had linked some suspects to documents supporting Palestinian and arch-conservative Islamic causes.

Religious Mobs Rampage Again in Nigerian Cities ([Reuters](#)) - Muslim and Christian mobs took to the streets of three Nigerian cities on Friday (2/24) and killed at least four people, extending a week of tit-for-tat religious riots that have claimed at least 150 lives. The religious violence first broke out last Saturday in the northeastern city of Maiduguri, when a Muslim protest against Danish cartoons of the Prophet Mohammed went out of control and 28 people, most Christian, were killed.

Australia

Australian Man Guilty of Receiving al-Qaeda Funds ([Reuters](#)) - A jury has found an Australian man guilty of receiving \$3,500 and a plane ticket from al-Qaeda, the first Australian to be convicted under the country's new tough anti-terrorism laws, local media reported on Sunday (2/26). Former taxi driver Joseph Terrence Thomas, 32, a father of three, faces up to 25 years in jail for receiving funds from al-Qaeda.

Australian Appeals Terror Charges ([AP](#)) - An Australian man found guilty of receiving funds from al-Qaeda will appeal his conviction, claiming his interrogation by U.S. and Pakistani officials "contaminated" the prosecution case against him, his lawyer said Monday. One of Joseph Terrence Thomas' lawyers said prosecutors based their case on an interview Thomas gave with Australian federal police agents when he was arrested in Pakistan in 2003 -- a process he says was tainted because Thomas had been threatened in earlier interrogations by U.S. and Pakistani authorities.

This report was compiled by Jonathan L. Snow, Manager of Research at the Foundation for the Defense of Democracies.