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**September 13, 2009**

Deadly Blasts Rock Shiite Mosque in Baghdad

By [STEVEN LEE MYERS](#)

BAGHDAD — Two bombs exploded near a Shiite mosque in Baghdad on Saturday, while the government said that the police found and defused another explosive hidden inside a Koran at one of the holiest Shiite shrines in the city.

Saturday's bombings, like many recently, appeared intended to kill Shiite civilians and inflame sectarian tensions that continue to simmer despite a general reduction in violence in recent years.

[Iraq's](#) Interior Ministry said in a statement that a man left the Koran containing a pound of explosives outside the shrine of Musa al-Khadim and his grandson, 2 of the 12 imams of Shiite Islam, in an attempt to reignite the carnage that engulfed Iraq in 2006 and 2007.

"This terrorist is trying to start a sectarian war," the statement, read on state television, said. The man who left the bomb slipped away.

The two bombs that did explode killed at least three people and wounded more than a dozen others at another holy Shiite site not far away on the opposite side of the Tigris. The first detonated near the mosque, which includes the tomb of a revered ninth-century sheik, Mohammed bin Othman al-Omari, and was followed moments later by an explosion of a car bomb in a nearby parking lot.

American and Iraqi officials here have emphasized that the steady series of bombings across the country has not yet provoked a sectarian reaction or retaliatory attacks, but the relentlessness of the bombings has caused despair.

"We are all going to die," Haydar Jasim, 23, a college student, said near the twin bombings. "They will kill us all — if not today, they will tomorrow."

The latest violence — including smaller explosions elsewhere around Baghdad — came after a particularly bloody month that included two large suicide bombings that badly damaged the Finance and Foreign Affairs ministries on Aug. 19.

The death toll in those attacks ultimately reached 132, according to the Interior Ministry, and deeply rattled the government. After the withdrawal of most American combat forces from Iraq's cities on June 30, violence has remained a constant, with attackers able to plant and detonate bombs across the city seemingly with impunity.

The site of Saturday's twin bombings was near the Ministry of Health and a military base, an area heavily

fortified by concrete blast walls and police checkpoints, like most of the city.

“The area here is not secured,” said Ali Sabah, a shop owner nearby. “You can come easily and bomb any place you want here.”

Duraïd Adnan and Abeer Mohammed contributed reporting.

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