

Iraq facing open war from militants: Interior Ministry

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Militants have launched an open war in Iraq and they want to push the Middle Eastern country into chaos, the Interior Ministry says.

"The country is currently facing an open war from bloodthirsty sectarian forces that aim to plunge the country into chaos," the Interior Ministry said in a statement issued on Tuesday, a day after a wave of 17 bombings across Iraq killed 60 people and injured scores of others.

The Interior Ministry warned that it would deal strictly with anyone found harboring extremists, adding that the ministry was establishing a hotline for Iraqi nationals to report information that would uncover "terrorist cells".

The ministry offered big cash rewards to anyone who would come forward.

On Tuesday evening, several attacks in Iraq, mostly targeting security forces, killed at least 26 people and injured dozens more, according to security and hospital sources.

The incidents are the latest in a string of attacks across Iraq that have left more than 4,000 people dead since the start of the year. And in July alone nearly 900 people have lost their lives in violence.

In a statement issued on Tuesday, a terrorist group claimed responsibility for Monday's 17 bombings.

"The latest operations came at the height of security deployment after the blessed operations to break the chains of the lions in Abu Ghraib and Taji jails," read the statement by the al-Qaeda-linked Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant.

In an interview with Press TV on July 24, an international human rights lawyer said that foreign powers are attempting to fabricate and benefit from Shia-Sunni discord in Iraq and elsewhere, seeking to see the Muslim world weakened in the wake of such rifts.

"Who benefits is of course the key issue. It's really not the people of Iraq, it's not the Sunnis, it's not the Shia[s]. It is external powers that want to exploit and create division. Those are the parties that benefit," said Canada-based attorney Edward Corrigan.

"It's certainly not the people in the region [that benefit from sectarian conflicts]; it's not Iran; it's not Iraq; it's not the people of Syria, which are now witnessing the destruction of their state and where there has been attempts to provoke similar sectarian conflict in Lebanon," he added.