

Iraq declares curfew after scores killed in violent protests



Baghdad, October 29 (RHC)-- The Iraqi government has declared a curfew in the capital Baghdad “until further notice,” as a fresh wave of anti-government demonstrations grips the city.

The curfew, in effect from midnight to 6 a.m., was announced on Monday, according to Iraqi state television. As the announcement was made, hundreds of protesters gathered in Baghdad’s Tahrir Square, in the fourth day of anti-government demonstrations.

The demonstrations saw more than 60 Iraqis killed over these four days, and counterterrorism troops deployed on Sunday. Reuters’ sources said that the troops have been authorized to “use all necessary measures” to quell the unrest. Buildings have been torched across the country, in a nationwide show of rage against Prime Minister Adel Abdul Mahdi’s government.

The latest bout of protests is a continuation of unrest that began at the start of the month. Angered by a lack of basic services and growing corruption, thousands of Iraqis have taken part in demonstrations in Baghdad and several provinces around the country.

Between 100 and 200 people were killed in the first wave of demonstrations, as protesters set fire to government buildings, blocked streets with burning barricades, and engaged in running gun battles with police.

Two decades of war -- the U.S. invasion, years of sectarian violence and the emergence of Islamic State (IS, formerly ISIS) -- have taken a heavy toll on the economy and infrastructure of Iraq, leaving many people lacking the most basic services, such as access to water.

General political instability, the emergence of various militias formed to supposedly fight the terrorists, as well as rumored high-profile corruption, have also become pretexts for the protests.

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