



Two More Churches Bombed in Iraq

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KIRKUK, Iraq (Reuters) -- Two car bombs exploded outside two churches in the volatile northern city of Kirkuk on Wednesday, police said, the latest in a wave of attacks on Christian targets in Iraq this week.

Police said three people were wounded in the attacks on the churches in central and northern Kirkuk, a multi-ethnic oil-producing city 250 km (155 miles) north of Baghdad. The buildings also suffered minor damage.

The spiritual leader of Iraq's Catholics said on Tuesday that a recent wave of bomb attacks on churches in Baghdad and the northern city of Mosul was aimed at showing Iraq was not at peace rather than singling out Christians for persecution.

Iraq's Christians make up about 3 percent of the country's 27 million, mostly Muslim, population. A number of Christian clerics have been kidnapped or killed in Iraq and Christians forced to flee their homes.

In a single hour on Sunday attackers bombed two churches, a convent and a church-run orphanage in the northern city of Mosul and three churches and a convent in Baghdad, the Chaldean patriarch of Baghdad Emmanuel III Delly, said.

Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki told the Vatican's ambassador on Tuesday that his government was doing its best to protect Iraq's Christians and that all Iraq's religious sects were equally affected by violence.

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