

Baghdad blast kills Iraqi army general

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BAGHDAD (AFP) – A roadside bomb attack in east Baghdad killed an Iraqi army general on Wednesday while violence across the capital wounded 13 people, including a US soldier, security officials said.

Brigadier General Taha Ahmed Samir, head of training for Iraq's nascent air force, was killed when a military convoy he was in was hit by the blast in Al-Kanat street, an interior ministry official said, speaking on condition of anonymity.

Two other soldiers were wounded in the explosion.

Elsewhere in Baghdad, a blast in the Karradat Mariam neighbourhood on the edge of the heavily-fortified Green Zone, left five people wounded, the official said.

He added that another explosion in Baab al-Muadham, central Baghdad, injured four. A US military spokeswoman said an American soldier suffered "superficial wounds" from the blast.

And on Palestine street, in the capital's east, a policeman and a civilian were wounded by a bomb, said a police official who did not want to be named.

Violence has dropped dramatically across Iraq since its peak in 2006 and 2007, but attacks remain common, especially in Baghdad. A total of 197 Iraqis were killed as a result of violence nationwide last month.

Some 50,000 US soldiers remain stationed in Iraq, charged primarily with training and equipping their local counterparts, though they do still take part in joint counter-terror missions.

All American troops must withdraw from Iraq by the end of the year, however, based on the terms of a bilateral security pact.