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Revealed: How mass al-Qaeda members escaped Iraqi prisons



At least 500 prisoners in Iraq, including senior members of al-Qaeda, escaped following an assault by unknown gunmen on two prisons, an Iraqi member of parliament said Monday.

Hakem al-Zamili, a member of parliament's security and defense committee, said about 500 inmates had escaped from Abu Ghraib prison, while a second said that between 500 and 1,000 escaped between it and Taji prison.

Attackers used "car bombs, explosive belts and devices to raid the Abu Ghraib and Taji prisons," Zamili revealed.

Iraq's Ministry of Justice announced earlier that about nine suicide bombers raided the two prisons on Sunday possessing three car bombs and 100 mortar shells.

An Iraqi security official said that the escape sparked clashes between assailants and security forces, which killed 21 prisoners and injured 25 others trying to escape amid the chaos.

Zamili blamed the attack on the Iraqi intelligence services, saying that their "weakness" allowed for "prisoners affiliated with Al-Qaeda to escape."

The MP claimed that the escape would not have been possible without an alleged collusion between the assailants and some Iraqi security officials.

"Smuggling prisoners is a dangerous phenomenon. Security forces charged with protecting the prisons are held responsible," Zamili added.