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Top News

Civilian deaths in Iraq on the rise

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BAGHDAD, March 15 (UPI) -- Civilian deaths across Iraq are back on the rise this year after dropping dramatically in late 2007, it was reported Saturday.

The Washington Times reported 674 Iraqi civilians and security officials were killed in February alone.

The rise in civilian deaths has been due in part to several suicide bombings in Baghdad in the last month.

An official at the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad says the impact of those attacks has yet to be determined. Ambassador Charles Ries, who serves as the embassy's minister for economic affairs, instead focused on the overall decrease in violence in Iraq in 2008.

"Things have turned around," he said. "The trick will be to sustain that."

Ries was referring to improved security reported in Iraq since the United States' troop surge in 2007.

Yet Women for Women International official Zainab Salbi said the increase in civilian deaths has had a significant impact on civilian morale.

"It takes a toll on the people. These things immediately take you backward. There is no hope now" among many people, she told the Times.

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