

Blackwater guards not offered immunity

by UPI

WASHINGTON -- Deals of immunity weren't offered to Blackwater guards for statements on the deadly shootout in Iraq in September, a U.S. State Department official said. The statement the senior official gave CNN Tuesday contradicts comments made Monday by a U.S. government official who said the guards were promised their statements would not be used against them in any prosecution as a result of the Sept. 16 shootings in Baghdad in which 17 Iraqi civilians died. Blackwater contractors guarding a U.S. State Department convoy contend the motorcade came under fire and guards responded in self-defense. Officials familiar with the matter said Monday State Department investigators had promised Blackwater guards limited immunity. Democrats were angered at the suggestion that contractors were offered immunity. Iraq's parliament is considering legislation that would require security companies operating in the country to obey Iraqi laws with no immunity, Iraqi government spokesman Ali al-Dabbagh said Tuesday. "All security companies operating in Iraq, those affiliated with them and non-Iraqi parties they have a contract with, are subject to Iraqi civil and penal laws," al-Dabbagh said of the bill's provisions. "There will be no immunity."

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