

Sadrists call for civil protest in Iraq

by UPI

BASRA, Iraq - Leaders of the political party loyal to the Shiite cleric Moqtada Sadr called for a civil disobedience campaign Tuesday in protest of raids targeting the group. Nassar al-Rubaie with the Sadrist Movement said the party called for nationwide civil disobedience because its demands to the Iraqi government were not met, CNN said. The Sadrist Movement says Iraqi national security forces are targeting its militias unduly and issued demands for a halt on the raids, the release of detainees and a formal apology Sunday. "We call all citizens to join the civil disobedience," al-Rubaie said. Analysts predicted an outbreak of violence among many Shiite factions in Iraq following a decision by the Presidential Council that paved the way for provincial elections Oct. 1. Al-Rubaie said the violence against forces loyal to Sadr is used "for political reasons." Meanwhile, in the southern oil-rich city of Basra, clashes broke out between Sadr's Mehdi Army and Iraqi national security forces, leaving at least 12 dead and 32 wounded. Media reports said Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki visited Basra Monday to oversee security operations there. The escalating conflict with the Mehdi Army threatens a cease-fire called by Sadr though he has said his forces may respond to attacks by U.S. and Iraqi forces.

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