

Protests mark Saddam's fall six years ago

by UPI

BAGHDAD -- Followers of radical Shiite cleric Moqtada Sadr demonstrated in Baghdad to mark the sixth anniversary of the fall of Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein.

Thousands of protesters carried Iraqi flags, religious banners and placards proclaiming support for Sadr while chanting religious songs at the rally in Firdous Square, where Saddam's statue was pulled down April 9, 2003, shortly after the U.S invasion of Iraq, CNN reported.

Hazem al-Araji, a senior aide to Sadr, urged the Iraqi government to release all Sadrists detainees in U.S. and Iraqi prisons.

"Everyone shout out loud and let all those who live inside the Black Zone and (former U.S. President George W.) Bush, the damned, hear our voices and release the Sadrists detainees immediately," Araji said.

He also called on U.S. President Barack Obama to support Iraqis and pull U.S. troops from Iraq. Obama recently outlined a time table for U.S. military personnel to withdraw from the country by the end of 2011.

One protester called for the "occupation" to end in Iraq as the crowd chanted "down, down America," CNN reported.

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