



Press Release

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For immediate use

Zarqawi must not become a martyr – he was not an Iraqi and did not represent ordinary Iraqis; killing also welcomed in Jordan

STEPHEN TWIGG, Director of the Foreign Policy Centre said:

“Iraqis should shed no tears for someone who killed, maimed and tortured many innocent people in Iraq. In addition he drove a bloody wedge between the Shi’a and Sunni communities.

“However, Zarqawi must not become a martyr after his death. He was not an Iraqi and did not represent the interest of ordinary Iraqis. While the initial response may be violent and chaotic, there is hope for the long term. With a new government in place, that represents the people, this is a real opportunity to draw a line under this tragic era in Iraq’s history.”

RAWAN MAAYEH, Civility Programme for Middle East Reform Manager at the Foreign Policy Centre and a Jordanian national today said:

“The killing of Abu Musab al Zarqawi will be welcomed not only among Iraqi communities, but also in neighbouring Jordan where Zarqawi took responsibility for four simultaneous suicide bombing operations last November.

“Having spearheaded Al Qaeda’s operation against the United States in Iraq and thus gaining the support of some within the Iraqi insurgency, Zarqawi’s change of tactics to include the killing of innocents, many of whom were Shiites, incurred the anger of members of the jihadi community as well as ordinary Iraqis.

“In a televised interview on Al Jazeera last year, former fellow prison inmate and mentor, Abu Muhamed Al Maqdisi expressed unease at Zarqawi’s operations in Iraq noting the disproportionate killing of Iraqi civilians compared to American soldiers. In addition, the Sunni Muslim Association Scholars noted that Zarqawi’s movement has been a principal actor in perpetuating the sectarian divide in Iraq and that if “Zarqawi wanted war he should be fighting the occupation and not killing civilians” - therefore identifying a boundary between Iraqi resistance to occupation forces and the terrorism that kills innocent civilian Iraqis.

“It is too early to predict the consequences of Zarqawi’s death on the level of violence in Iraq. Jihadis have proven themselves an amorphous and dynamic group and the leadership of Iraq’s Al Qaeda movement could pass to another.”

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For more information, or to arrange an interview with a Foreign Policy Centre commentator, please call Alex Bigham on 020 7388 6662 or 07830 195 812

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