

Iraqi premier gives militants a week to surrender

Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki has given Shia militants in the southern Maysan province a week to surrender, an Iraqi defence official said Wednesday.

The deadline for armed groups to surrender starts from Wednesday, Iraq's defence ministry spokesman Mohamed al-Askari told the Voices of Iraq news agency.

Iraqi troops launched a crackdown nearly a week ago in Amarah, the capital of Maysan, targeting Shia militants loyal to radical cleric Moqtada al-Sadr.

The operation is the fourth of its kind this year in which al-Maliki sent troops to provinces to clear them of Shia or Sunni insurgents.

Basra, the predominantly Shia neighbourhood of Sadr City in Baghdad and Mosul have been the sites of major sectarian violence and security offensives.

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