

FIGHTING

FROM PAGE A1

actually finished the questioning," he said.

Kimmit said he did not have any information about the suspects' identities.

Some of the bloodiest fighting in al-Sadr's six-week revolt has occurred in the past 2½ weeks in downtown Karbala. Entire city blocks have been ruined.

More than 120 Iraqis have been killed in all. Insurgents, including a skilled sniper, have killed four U.S. soldiers and wounded at least 52 others.

Beyond Karbala, al-Sadr's militia, many from the sprawling slum of Sadr City in northeastern Baghdad, also have taken Najaf and are attacking other cities across the south.

At Friday Prayers in nearby Kufa, the Associated Press reported that al-Sadr told 1,500 worshippers, "Don't let my killing or arrest be an excuse to end what you're doing — supporting the truth and standing up to the wrong."

But other clerics spoke yesterday in Karbala at the blue-tiled Shrines of Hussein and Abbas, dedicated to two of Shiite Islam's most revered martyrs. One of the clerics, Ahmed al-Safi, represented Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Husseini al-Sistani, the most influential religious leader in Iraq.

The ayatollah demanded this week that all armed forces withdraw from Karbala and Najaf and asked for people to demonstrate against the violence.

"We don't want anybody to manipulate these two cities, whatever his identity might be," al-Safi said in his sermon.

After Friday Prayers ended at the Shrine of Hussein, many of the worshippers marched along a wide plaza to the Shrine of Abbas, calling for peace. The plaza is usually thronged with pilgrims, many from Iran, but the number of visitors has dropped off considerably since



Yesterday in Iraq

1. Karbala: U.S.-Iraqi clashes leave dozens of insurgents dead. Worshippers rally for an end to the fighting after the Americans leave the city.

2. Najaf and Kufa: At least six people are killed and 56 injured in fighting.

3. Baghdad: The U.S. military releases 454 Iraqis from the Abu Ghraib prison.

In other news

► Four people are detained and two later released in the decapitation of Nicholas Berg.

U.S. war dead

Includes combat and noncombat deaths

► 790 U.S. troops have died since the beginning of military operations in Iraq.

► 652 have died since May 1, 2003, the date President Bush declared that major combat operations had ended.

Sources: Defense Department, Associated Press

THE COLUMBUS DISPATCH

the fighting began.

The U.S. military canceled a major operation at the last minute Thursday night and decided to pull its forces back early yesterday from the Mukhaiyam Mosque, which it had occupied on May 12 after a pitched battle.

The mosque, once a stronghold for the insurgents, was being used by the Americans as a forward base to run patrols into the old city. It had turned into a

lightning rod for attacks, drawing mortar and sniper fire from the insurgents. Three U.S. soldiers were killed while defending the mosque or patrolling the immediate area.

As a company of tanks began rolling past the shrine area early yesterday on their way back to Camp Lima, a military base on the city's outskirts, insurgents fired rocket-propelled grenades at them.

Some insurgents were holed up in a school northeast of the shrine area. Intelligence indicated that many of those fighters might have come from outside Karbala, military officials said.

An AC-130 Spectre gunship opened fire on the school and a building immediately south of the Shrine of Hussein that was thought to be the headquarters of Hamza al-Tai, the local leader of the Mahdi army.

The U.S. military has come under increasing scrutiny for its activities since the Abu Ghraib prison-abuse scandal and an air strike near the Syrian border that killed 41 people on Wednesday.

The U.S. presence in the holiest cities of Shiite Islam has also provoked demonstrations beyond Iraq. In Bahrain yesterday, 30 people were wounded in clashes with police as thousands protested the U.S. military operations.

Al-Jazeera, the popular Arab satellite TV network based in Dubai, said one of its drivers was killed by gunfire while he was standing with a television crew on the roof of a hotel in Karbala's downtown.

In a statement, the network said that Rashid Hamid Wali was "martyred" while helping to report on the clashes between U.S. forces and al-Sadr's militia.

After U.S. troops completed their withdrawal from the Mukhaiyam Mosque, Iraqi policemen entered the downtown, trying to take control for the first time since April, when al-Sadr's forces seized the area, Col. Mansoor said.

REFUGEE

FROM PAGE A1

result in death or long-term problems, such as chronic urinary tract infections, kidney damage, infertility and psychological distress.

Dan Kane, spokesman for the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, declined to comment on the case or its effect.

Abay and Berhan arrived in the United States in 1993 on a visitor's visa and applied for asylum four years later when Berhan was 9, the same age Abay was when she was circumcised.

An immigration judge refused them asylum in September 1997. The Justice Department's Board of Immigration Appeals ruled against Abay in June 2002, saying Berhan faced "no imminent fear but rather a general ambiguous fear" of female genital mutilation.

The two, facing deportation, appealed.

In its decision issued Wednesday, the federal appeals court decided that, "Abay's fear of taking her daughter into the lion's den of female genital mutilation in Ethiopia and being forced to witness the pain and suffering of her daughter is well-founded. Accordingly, we find that Abay is also a refugee within the meaning of the act."

The court ordered the immigration appeals board to rehear the case.

Female circumcision may involve several types of genital mutilation, such as removing the clitoris and labia minora or stitching the vagina so only a small opening remains. An estimated 135 million women and girls worldwide, particularly those in Africa and Asia, have undergone the mutilation, according to Amnesty International.

Congress in 1996 criminalized the practice in the United States.

The State Department's Human Rights Report on Ethiopia



JAMES D. DeCAMP | DISPATCH

Berhan, left, and her mother, Yayesh Abay, fled Ethiopia and are seeking asylum so Berhan won't face circumcision.

stated 90 percent of women undergo some form of female genital mutilation.

"The court recognizes the threat of female genital mutilation posed by Berhan's future husband or relatives," said Laura Katzive, legal adviser for global projects with the Center for Reproductive Rights in New York City. "In doing so, it recognizes the link between women's very low status in their marriages and families and the risk of undergoing female genital mutilation."

Uncircumcised women face social castigation and are seen as unclean, promiscuous and unworthy of marriage.

Abay and her husband prevented Berhan and their other three daughters from undergoing the procedure. But Abay fears future husbands and in-laws of the young women could impose it.

Abay and Berhan came to Columbus to be near friends of Abay's husband. He had fled to Uganda because of ethnic persecution; the couple stays in contact and hopes to reunite some day.

Abay's mother criticized her because she did not have her daughters circumcised.

Rejecting the painful purity

practice meant going against her family, culture and even the immigration service.

Abay, a nurse's aide at the Mohun Healthcare Center, has spent sleepless nights hoping, crying and praying for permission to stay.

"Now, everything changes," Abay said smiling. "Now, this is God's time."

Dennis Muchnicki, Abay's attorney, said the ruling is a step toward ending a mother's anguish.

Abay said her three other daughters are in India attending college. They were past the typical age of circumcision, before puberty, when she left them in the care of their maternal grandmother. Abay does not know whether they have been circumcised because it's a taboo subject.

Abay said she has talked with Berhan, a ninth-grader at Northland High School, so she understands the steps her mother has taken to safeguard her from the procedure.

"She would ask me, 'Why do they do this?'" Abay said. "I tell her this is culture and this is what is done. I tell her 'You don't have to experience it. You are almost an American now.'" sherri.williams@dispatch.com

CHIEF

FROM PAGE A1

In it, Jackson urged the city to schedule a police-recruit test this year. The next test is scheduled for February.

The memo also reiterated a recommendation Jackson has made before to eliminate or reduce the units that patrol without cruisers — on foot, bicycle and horseback — as well as those assigned to Columbus high schools.

That recommendation was criticized yesterday by City Councilman Michael C. Mentel, chairman of the council's safety committee.

"It is regrettable that the chief is playing politics with the Division of Police," Mentel said. "I would suggest that he sit down with his street officers, the FOP and the community and they will tell him that good, effective public safety includes community policing, which means things like horse patrols and foot patrols."

Mentel and Brown said they are willing to explore the possibility of scheduling a police-recruit test this year to bring in more officers sooner.

A class of 48 recruits will graduate from the academy in two weeks, but Jackson said the division loses an average of 64 officers a year through retire-

ment, resignations and terminations.

A test could be scheduled for September at a cost of about \$50,000, said Barbara McGrath, executive director of the Columbus Civil Service Commission.

"All of this centers around money," Brown said. "Let's not kid ourselves. The city has been through an extremely difficult budget for the past three years, but it has not had a negative impact on our safety forces. We have not had any police layoffs or fire layoffs."

That is little consolation to Jackson, who said in his memo that Columbus is well behind the national average — and the average of the nation's 15 largest cities — in the number of police officers per 1,000 citizens.

Jackson's memo refers to a study issued in 2001 by Public Administration Service, which determined the city needed to add 121 officers and 83 civilian employees.

The study was based on 1999 staffing levels.

Documents attached to Jackson's memo show the city had 1,800 officers as of May 12, seven more than at the end of 1999. A document dated May 7 showed the division with 340 civilian employees, 57 fewer than at the end of 1999.

The city paid \$189,000 for the study, which Mayor Michael B. Coleman said would guide him in determining how large the police force should grow.

"We have the study they paid for and they haven't done anything with it," Jackson told *The Dispatch*.

Coleman this week said he had not read the chief's memo and referred questions to his safety director.

Brown said the administration crafts the city budget "with public safety as our No. 1 priority."

Asked where money for additional officers should come from, Jackson said: "That's not my problem. That's what elected officials are supposed to handle. If they need to increase the coffers, they need to go about doing that and not worry so much about getting re-elected."

He said the city will need to hire three classes of 40 officers every year beginning in 2005 to offset retirements and make progress toward the recommendations in the staffing study.

But the 70-year-old chief was coy when asked about the possibility of his own retirement.

"Maybe I'll retire if they hire 300 or 400 more officers," he said.

"I don't want the next chief to have to worry so much about the safety of the public and the officers."

jfutty@dispatch.com

SPRING SALE

Savings throughout the store!



British Gentry Dining Room Table \$2399 SALE, Side Chair \$519 SALE, Arm Chair \$619 SALE

No Payments & No Interest for 12 Months!*

Thomasville

Thomasville Store at TUTTLE CROSSING 5929 Britton Parkway (614) 760-2550
Thomasville Gallery Inside Kittle's at EASTON MARKET 3740 Easton Market (614) 418-9855
Open Daily 10 a.m. - 9 p.m. Sunday Noon - 6 p.m.

*12 Months No Payments and No Interest if Paid Within 12 Months. Offer is subject to credit approval by GE Capital Consumer Card Co. Applies to any purchase of Thomasville products made between April 29 and June 7, 2004 on a Thomasville consumer credit card account. No finance charges will be assessed and no monthly payments will be required on the promotional purchase amount (excluding optional insurance charges) if you pay this amount in full by the payment due date as shown on your twelfth billing statement. If you do not, finance charge will be assessed on the promotional purchase amount from the date of purchase, and minimum monthly payments will be required on the balance of the amount. If minimum monthly payments on any other balance on your account (including optional insurance charges) are not paid when due, all special promotional terms may be terminated. Standard account terms apply to non-promotional purchases and, after promotion ends, to your promotional purchases. Variable APR is 21.98% as of 1/16/04 (In PR, fixed APR is 24.75%) Except in PR, fixed APR of 24.75% applies if the minimum payment is not made within one month of the payment due date. Minimum finance charge is \$1 (\$0 in PR). Retailer may require a cash down payment or deposit on any order. See retailer for details.

BAUME & MERCIER WATCHES · DENIG JEWELERS · Worthington · 885-6164

DENIG
JEWELERS