

IRAQ: Maliki Government Issues 'Terrorism' Arrest Warrant Against Sunni Vice President

Facing Coalition Collapse, Officials Seek to Arrest Top Rival

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Tensions are soaring inside Iraq tonight, as Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki, whose government is on the brink of collapse, has ordered his Vice President, Tareq al-Hashemi, arrested on terrorism charges.

["An arrest warrant was issued for Vice President Tareq al-Hashemi according to Article 4 of the terrorism law and is signed by five judges,"](#) confirmed an Interior Ministry spokesman. Of course Iraq has no permanent Interior Minister, as this along with the Defense Ministry have been kept under Maliki's de facto control.

Maliki [ordered Hashemi detained at an airport only yesterday](#), claiming they thought his bodyguards were responsible for assassinations. Since then the state-run media has been broadcasting confessions of bodyguards linking Hashemi to the scheme.

Hashemi has been vice president since 2006, and one of the nation's most influential Sunni politicians. This makes the potential of his arrest even more controversial for the Shi'ite-dominated government, as it is liable to fuel more sectarian anger.

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