

[Unwilling Martyrs: Down Syndrome Jihad](#)

By Annie Jacobsen in category [The Al-Qaeda Threat](#)

It's about the most morally depraved concept possible: using [mentally retarded people](#) as unwitting suicide bombers. It happened on Friday in two Baghdad pet bazaars. Ninety-nine people were killed.

I've written about how the Department of Homeland Security [trains air marshals](#) to be on the lookout for female suicide bombers trying to board airplanes in the United States. But from all the interviews I've conducted, it seems no one in the Office of Intelligence had dreamed up this nightmare scenario.



Aaron Hanscom has a [piece in Pajamas Media](#) in which he explains how this immoral and unprincipled act is seen by jihadists as Godly.

Israeli soldiers recently disarmed a retarded young man wearing an explosive vest. He had been sent to an Israeli checkpoint by Palestinian terrorists. Meanwhile, IRIN has reported that dozens of mentally handicapped children are being used to fight in Iraq. In January 2005, Iraq's interior minister said that terrorists used a disabled child (police reported that the child appeared to have Down syndrome) as one of the suicide bombers behind attacks on election day. Last year, two children with mental problems were put in the back seat of a car that was subsequently blown up in a suicide attack in Baghdad's Adhamiyah neighborhood.

A local NGO spokesperson explained how these children are "recruited":

"Some children were given by their families but many others were kidnapped by insurgents when they knew that those children had mental problems. Some of them were even taken from the doors of their houses or schools."

Abu Ahmed is a spokesman for al-Qaeda in Iraq and was quoted by IRIN. He spoke about 13-year-old Barak Muhammad, a mentally handicapped boy who was sold to the terrorist group by his father.

"We're doing a favour to Barak. We're giving him the chance to be useful and not suffer daily beatings from his father. Here, with us, he gets Islamic lessons and is soon going to be a good fighter and maybe one day even become a suicide bomber in the name of God."

[Read Hanscom's piece.](#) And wonder where these children's mothers are.

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