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## Blair welcomes death of Saddam sons

Prime Minister Tony Blair has hailed the killing of two of Saddam Hussein's sons as "great news".

Mr Blair told reporters in Hong Kong that Uday and Qusay Hussein had been responsible for the torture and killing of thousands of Iraqis.

He spoke following confirmation by the US commander of coalition forces Lieutenant General Ricardo Sanchez that the pair were among those killed by US forces during a fierce gun battle in northern Iraq,

The general said he was certain they were among four victims of a six-hour shoot-out which followed a raid on a home in Mosul by the US 101st Airborne Division.

As news of their deaths spread, there was widespread gunfire across the Iraqi capital as people celebrated.

Mr Blair in Hong Kong said: "This is a great day for the new Iraq. These two particular people were at the head of a regime that wasn't just a security threat because of its weapons programme but was responsible for the torture and killing of thousands and thousands of innocent Iraqis.

"The celebrations that are taking place are an indication of just how evil they were.

"I think this is a very important move forward. It's great news."

Jack Straw last night said the deaths of Saddam Hussein's two sons would provide new "reassurance to the Iraqi people" and end any lingering fears that they remained a threat to the country's security .

"Uday and Qusay Hussein shared their father's responsibility for the many years of suffering by the Iraqi people," Mr Straw said.

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