
IRAQ DIGS ANTI-IS TRENCH AROUND CITY OF RAMADI

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HABBANIYAH, Iraq: Security forces in Iraq's western region of Anbar began digging a trench around the provincial capital Ramadi Sunday (Feb 19) to protect it against infiltrations by the Islamic State group, officials said.

The trench and berm defensive structure will be 45 kilometres (28 miles) long, protecting mostly the city's southern and western side from the vast desert of Anbar where IS has remote hideouts. "The purpose is to stop car bombs and other security breaches from desert regions," he said.

"The desert in Anbar is vast, it faces Saudi Arabia, Jordan and Syria and it is not fully secured. There are many canyons in which Daesh members can hide," he said, using an Arabic acronym for IS.

Iraqi forces retook Ramadi, which lies about 160 kilometres (100 miles) west of Baghdad, a year ago but IS fighters have continued to harass the security forces there.

The city, large parts of which were completely levelled in the fighting, needs to be secure if reconstruction efforts are to be stepped up.

"The main reason for this project is to prevent infiltrations by terrorists and suicide attackers and their car bombs, as well as movements by traffickers," Mahmud al-Falahi, who heads the Anbar Operations Command, said.

He said the trench and the berms would be around five-feet (1.5 metres) deep and high respectively.

Kaynak/Source: