
IRAQI FORCES KILL 4 IS MILITANTS IN CENTRAL IRAQ

- 29.07.2018

Xinhuanet (29 July 2018)

Iraqi security forces on Sunday killed four Islamic state (IS) militants and captured a fifth during an operation in Iraq's central province of Salahudin, the Iraqi military said.

Acting on intelligence reports, the troops carried out a preemptive operation against an IS hideout in a desert area in west of the city of Samarra, some 120 km north of the Iraqi capital Baghdad, Yahya Rasoul, spokesperson for the Iraqi Joint Operations Command, said in a statement.

The troops opened fire on four IS militants and killed them all, three of them blown up after their explosive belts were detonated by the bullets, while another IS militant surrendered to the troops, the statement said.

The key cities of Salahudin province, including the provincial capital Tikrit, some 170 km north of the Iraqi capital Baghdad, were captured by IS militants in June 2014, but the Iraqi security forces have freed the province during major anti-IS offensives.

On Dec. 9, 2017, Iraqi Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi officially declared full liberation of Iraq from IS militants after Iraqi forces recaptured all the areas once seized by the extremist group.

However, small IS groups and individuals regrouped in desert and rugged areas and are carrying out attacks against security forces and civilians despite operations from time to time to hunt them down.

http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2018-07/29/c_137355831.htm

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