

---

## ISIS RESORTS TO STOKING SECTARIANISM IN IRAQ

- 25.02.2019

---

Asharq Al-Awsat (24 February 2019)

Baghdad- Hamza Mustafa

While terror group ISIS released five citizens of the town of Haditha in the province of Anbar, the second batch of a group of civilians kidnapped in that area, a hospital in Fallujah received the bodies of victims ISIS executed in Najaf and Karbala.

The hospital has received five bodies belonging to Najaf and Karbala citizens, a medic at the hospital confirmed in a statement.

These fishermen have been executed by ISIS near the Tharthar Lake north of Anbar, they said.

Tharthar Lake stretches over a vast area between the provinces of Anbar and the neighboring Salahuddin. Many people from neighboring provinces used to fish in the Lake, which is fed by Tigris River through Samarra dam.

The lake and surrounding areas were once under control of the ISIS group when the extremist militants seized large swathes of Iraqi territories in June 2014. The security situation in Iraq has been dramatically improved after Iraqi security forces declared they had fully defeated the extremist IS militants across the country late in 2017.

However, the extremist militants have since regrouped in urban, desert and rugged areas, carrying out guerilla attacks against security forces and civilians despite recurrent operations to hunt them down.

One of Anbars top clerics, Sheikh Hamid Al Qartani, noted that with ISIS killing abductees from predominantly Shiite areas whilst freeing those from Sunni western provinces is a move by the group to widen the sectarian rift in Iraq.

With its self-proclaimed Caliphate being extinguished, remnant ISIS militants are seeking to find a community which accepts its presence amongst them, Qartani said on the recent release of Sunni captive as opposed to the killing of the Shiites.

The Anbar cleric, however, stressed that ISIS ploy will not prevail in that sense and all Iraqis are well aware of the groups violent and extremist tendencies.

Karim Nuri, former Popular Mobilization Forces leader, told Asharq Al-Awsat that al-Qaeda had similarly relied on sectarian spite before ISIS emerge, but these tactics are no longer viable and are very much exposed.

Nuri added that Sunni and Shiite Iraqis have fought and shed blood together in liberation battles against ISIS.

ISIS has no more options left but to resort to cheap and weak gameplay, Nuri said on ISIS being cornered.

<https://aawsat.com/english/home/article/1605841/isis-resorts-stoking-sectarianism-iraq>

---

Kaynak/Source: