

 IRAQ OIL REPORT

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Insider's View Bulletin: Southern security updates

June 7, 2016

Southern Oil Police foil pipeline robbery
"Intelligence reports" indicate IS may target southern provinces
Dhi Qar special operations police forces return from Diyala
Tribal clashes in Qurna

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Southern oil police foil pipeline robbery: A security source said that Southern Oil Police prevented two men from tapping a gasoline pipeline in the al-Luhaiss area of north west of Basra. The suspects were reportedly discovered by policemen in the act of "installing a valve on the pipe." Police and the two men exchanged fire – one man was wounded and caught, while the other fled the scene on a bicycle. The source said that the captive suspect confessed to the crime.

Analysis: *Protecting pipelines from criminals attempting to siphon off oil products remains a challenge for security services.*

"Intelligence reports" indicate IS may target southern provinces: Gen. Ibrahim al-Dahbon, commander of Rafidain Operations Command, told reporters that the start of Fallujah operations had instigated the formation of a new security plan, as IS is expected to react "to the big victories achieved by the security and [Popular Mobilization] forces in Fallujah." He also said "intelligence reports" indicated that IS may attack southern provinces. Missan's police chief, Brig.-Gen. Nazar Mohi al-Saadi reported that security forces in the province were "tightening the security measures" at the entrances into the province, deploying sniffer dogs and bomb squads.

Analysis: *The language used by the official gives no indication of hard intelligence about a specific threat, but instead, appears to be more general in nature. IOCs should expect an uptick in security procedures at checkpoints in Missan and elsewhere in southern Iraq, which could slow transportation of goods and equipment.*

Dhi Qar special operations police forces return from Diyala: The Interior Ministry has recalled Dhi Qar police force's 3rd emergency battalion (special operations) from Diyala, where it had been tasked with supporting the enforcement of security since May. According to Dhi Qar police department, the special operations battalion has participated in battles in Ramadi and Samarra. In the latter its duties included protecting the holy Imam Askari shrine.

Analysis: *The redeployment could reflect an improving security picture in southern Diyala, although this seems somewhat unlikely given that security organization in Diyala is still tied up with political struggles within its provincial council. More plausibly, the transfer may be a standard force rotation, or potentially, a response to concerns of an asymmetric IS threat to southern Iraq.*

Tribal clashes in Qurna: No-one was reported killed or wounded as the result of fire exchanged between members of the Baet Saeed and al-Saad tribes in Qurna district, north of Basra. But a local source said that the "heavy battle" had "caused panic among the residents of the district. The feud between the two tribes began two weeks ago. Majnoon and Nahran Omar oil fields are located in Qurna.

Analysis: *IOCs should be aware that, despite some efforts by security forces, sporadic tribal conflict continues to affect areas close to oil fields in the southern governorates.*

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