

Iraq: ISIL targeting civilians to 'avenge' loss of Tal Afar, UN envoy says

1 September 2017 – Iraq: ISIL targeting civilians to 'avenge' loss of Tal Afar, UN envoy says

Fighters from the Islamic State (ISIL) are indiscriminately targeting civilians to avenge for their loss of Tal Afar, the top United Nations political representative in Iraq today said, condemning the latest attack in Baghdad.

"Da'esh terrorists have shown absolute disregard for human life," said Ján Kubiš, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General in Iraq, using the Arabic acronym for ISIL.

"However, the patience and resilience of the Iraqi people have defeated the terrorists' aim in breaking their unity," he added.

At least 125 civilians were killed and another 188 injured in terrorist related acts in Iraq during the month of August, according to the UN Assistance Mission in Iraq (UNAMI). The casualty figures show that Baghdad was the worst affected area, and do not include casualty figures from ongoing fighting in Anbar province.

The overall casualty figures are lower than in previous months, where violence spiked above 2,000 in October 2016.

In a separate statement, Mr. Kubiš said that "hopeful days lie ahead for Iraq," noting military victories against terrorists, including in the northern Iraqi city of Tal Afar which Iraqi forces yesterday declared liberated from ISIL.

Mr. Kubiš said this Eid al-Adha, thoughts and prayers go to all the martyrs and fighters in the liberating forces, and to those who provide support and are affected including the millions of displaced Iraqis.

"On this Eid, the Feast of Sacrifice that Muslims celebrate worldwide, the Iraqi people who have sacrificed dearly deserve to live in peace, dignity and prosperity," he said.

The senior UN official added that sustainable peace in the country can only be secured through inclusive solutions, addressing grievances, needs and aspirations of the Iraqi people.