

'Hit Men Kill 240 Iraqi Officials'

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Iraqi Interior Ministry's Under-Secretary for Security Major General Hussein Kamal says nearly 240 security men and intelligence officials have recently been killed by hit men.

Nearly 360 Iraqis, including 240 high-level security officials, have been killed by so-called 'hit men,' a recent phenomenon that has taken root in Iraq, General Kamal added on Tuesday, the Iraqi daily Al-Zaman, a newspaper published simultaneously in London and Baghdad, reported.

The tactic involves utilizing silencers on pistols and rifles to enable an attacker to silently kill their victim and then flee without being noticed, the Iraqi official added.

Such weapons were produced during the Baath regime; however, there is a possibility that they are smuggled into the country from the porous northern, eastern and southern borders, General Kamal explained.

The deputy Iraqi interior minister further added that Iraqi counter-terrorism forces were taking measures to track down the attackers supposedly belonging to al-Qaeda and the Baath Party of executed Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein.

The Iraqi Council of Ministers has agreed to recruit 200,000 policemen and interior ministry staff for better protecting Baghdad, Kamal said earlier.

The force will approximately double the number of the current policemen in the Iraqi capital.

Militant threats and a lack of hotel space for delegations pose stiff challenges to Iraq's plans to host for the first time in 20 years the annual Arab League meeting on March 23.

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