

UN confirms ISIS using civilians as human shields in fighting against Iraqi troops

22/10/2016 22:17 by admin

Geneva: United Nations today confirmed that Islamic State militants in Iraq are using civilians as human shields to fight against the US-led Iraqi forces.

Smoke rises from ISIS positions after an airstrike by US-led coalition in Iraq

According to the information released by the UN Human Rights Office, the terror group has forced some 200 families out of Samalia village to walk to Mosul on October 17 and on the same day, 350 families fled Najafia village in Nimroud sub-district, towards Mosul, highlighting its policy of preventing civilians from escaping to areas controlled by the Iraqi security forces.

The office said it is also examining reports that at least 40 civilians were shot dead by IS in one of the villages outside Mosul.

UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein said in a written statement that his office had verified information regarding several incidents since October 17 where IS has forced people to leave their homes in outlying villages to head to Mosul.

He added that they also had reports that IS fighters have shot dead civilians who have tried to rise up against them or who they suspect are disloyal.

Calling for the protection of civilians to be at the forefront of military planning as the Iraqi government and associated forces attempt to re-take Mosul, the UN official highlighted that he was gravely worried by reports that IS is using civilians in and around Mosul as human shields as the Iraqi forces advance.

He voiced particular concern regarding the women, children and men held captive by IS, especially those from ethnic or religious communities who are at extreme risk.

"There is a grave danger that IS fighters will not only use such vulnerable people as human shields but may opt to kill them rather than see them liberated," he said.

- With IANS Inputs