

24 killed in airstrikes, clashes with IS in Iraq

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Baghdad: At least 24 people were killed and 24 wounded on Saturday in Iraqi airstrikes and clashes with Islamic State (IS) militants across Iraq, security sources said.

In Anbar province, at least 12 IS militants were killed when an Iraqi aircraft carried out an airstrike on an IS position in the town of Qaim, near the Iraqi-Syrian border, a provincial security source told Xinhua on condition of anonymity.

Separately, an army helicopter gunship pounded the city of Fallujah, some 50 km west of Baghdad, leaving four people dead and seven injured, the source said.

The IS group has seized most of Anbar province and tried to advance towards Baghdad during the past few months, but several counter attacks by security forces and Shiite militias have pushed them back.

In Salahudin province, Iraqi security forces and allied militias known as Hashd Shaabi, or popular mobilisation, clashed with the IS militants in the battlefield town of Baiji, some 200 km north of Baghdad, and the nearby oil refinery, leaving at least eight IS militants dead.

The fighting in the province came as part of continuing heavy clashes between the troops and IS militants during the past few days as the troops are trying to free Baiji from IS militants who captured parts of the town and the refinery, the source added.

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