

Four anti-Al Qaeda tribal leaders killed in Iraq

Four anti-Al Qaeda tribal leaders have been killed in a suicide attack inside a house in the volatile province of Diyala in Iraq, a provincial police and the US military said Saturday.

The attack occurred Friday evening in the house of Sheikh Fayez Elewi Mizri, one of the Obeid tribe's Sheikhs, in the al-Doujama village in the al-Khalis town, some 60 km northeast of Baghdad, the police source said seeking anonymity.

The dead tribal leaders were members of the Diyala Awakening Council, which fights against Al Qaeda group in the province, the source said.

The attack also wounded a number of attendants of the gathering, including the deputy chief of the province's Awakening Council, the source added.

A brief US military statement, however, said that three people, including the Sheikh, have been killed and another civilian was injured.

Rifts emerged among Sunni tribes, the backbone of insurgency against the US troops, because of the Al Qaeda's adherence to a hardline form of Islam and indiscriminate killings.

The divergence prompted some tribesmen in several Sunni-dominated provinces, including Diyala, to form alliances called Awakening councils, backed by the US military and the Iraqi government, to fight against Al Qaeda.

Diyala in northeast of Baghdad has long been a hotbed of insurgency led-by Al Qaeda in Iraq network and sectarian violence between the Sunni and Shia communities.

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