

# *At Least 22 Iraqi Soldiers Killed in Anbar Airstrike*

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Baghdad, March 13 (RHC)-- Iraqi military sources say 22 soldiers from an army unit in the western province of Anbar have been killed in an airstrike. According to an Iraqi military officer and a police source, 22 soldiers were killed when an airstrike believed to be launched by a U.S.-led coalition aircraft hit the headquarters of an army company on the edge of Ramadi city, Anbar's provincial capital on Thursday. The sources did not identify the nationality of the plane causing the damage.

Meanwhile, Lieutenant Colonel Thomas Gilleran, a spokesman for the coalition forces denied its airstrikes on Thursday has caused any friendly casualties. Other Iraqi officials have provided alternative explanations, with Sabah Karhout, head of the Anbar provincial council, saying that the bombing was caused by explosives stored underneath the army headquarters in Ramadi.

The death toll may be higher as conflicting reports are emerging from the incident which comes against a backdrop of Iraqi armed forces' continued clashes with ISIL Takfiri terrorists in various parts of the Arab country.

Iraqi forces, backed by volunteer fighters keep advancing in the northern city of Tikrit, a major stronghold for ISIL militants who control swathes of land in Iraq. The operation includes a combined force of more than 30,000 fighters both from the Iraqi armed forces and volunteers, known as Popular Mobilization Units. It is the largest operation launched by the government to date and many see it as a prelude to recapturing the northern city of Mosul.



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