



**1st Battalion The King's Regiment
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NEWS RELEASE

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BRITISH SOLDIERS AVERT BASRAH CONFRONTATION

British troops this week stepped in to prevent a possible confrontation between two tribes in southern Iraq.

Soldiers from the 1st Battalion, The King's Regiment, based in Basrah, acted with firmness and diplomacy to separate militiamen from the Awlad Amer tribe and dissident members of the Garamsha tribe.

The catalyst for difficulty was the kidnap of Qnsay Abdul Khalik from the Awlad Amer tribe and a demand by the Garamsha tribe for a ransom to be paid for his release.

In response, the Awlad Amer tribe amassed armed men in the desert to the south of the main Garamsha town of Al Hawtah.

To avoid the danger of possible bloodshed, D Company from 1 King's deployed to the area to form a buffer zone between the two tribes in an effort to reassure the Awlad Amer tribesmen and prevent the start of any hostilities.

This allowed the soldiers to confiscate a number of machine guns from the tribe, while Major Andy Hughes acted as a mediator, conducting a series of separate negotiations with Sheikh Amir Lalfaez of the Awlad Amer, and Sheikh Kadim Abdali of the Garamsha tribe.

After several tense hours the stand-off between the two tribes was called off and the hostage was released.

After the successful operation Major Hughes, the Officer Commanding D Company, said:

“Obviously the potential for hostilities and bloodshed here was very high. The swift and timely response by the soldiers of D Coy averted a potentially large-scale tribal conflict. By gentle persuasion our arguments for a peaceful conclusion to the stand off proved decisive and won the day.”

He said his soldiers had deployed to the desert with the 30-tonne Warrior Armoured Fighting Vehicles and Land Rovers in support.

“In total there were only 50 soldiers involved in the operation. They showed great diplomacy and tact throughout. Obviously nerves were jangling a little, but they maintained their order extremely well. It was a highly professional and well-executed operation,” added Major Hughes.

On the departure of the Awlad Amer tribe, Sheikh Amir Lalfaez paid his own tribute to the troops and expressed his gratitude for helping to release one of their tribesmen.

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NOTE TO NEWS EDITORS

Confrontations between tribes in Iraq have been commonplace for centuries and were regular occurrences under the former regime as they vied for power and influence but this was the first major incident of its type since the 1st Battalion, The King's Regiment deployed to Basrah at the beginning of July.