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**SHOOTING INCIDENT AT AL AS SHARQI**

At approximately 2145 last night, following an arrest operation in the town of ALI AL GHARBI a convoy of soldiers and vehicles from the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion the Kings Own Scottish Borderers were returning to their base at AL AMARAH. About 40 km South of the town they met a road block and diverted through the village of ALI AS SHARQI. There they met with a crowd of about 30 people. The soldiers dismounted from their vehicles to move through the area and were confronted by a second crowd very near to "Fort Jennings" (a troop house) in the town. Sandwiched between two groups, which were 100m apart, the soldiers fired two warning shots in an attempt to separate the crowd and withdraw. Members of the crowd opened fire on the soldiers with small arms and RPGs. During the small arms exchange we can confirm that one British soldier was fatally wounded and another sustained a serious injury to his hand. The injured casualty is in a stable condition and undergoing treatment.

During the incident the medical immediate response team and an Air Reaction Force were activated from AL AMARAH. The convoy was escorted back to their base at AL AMARAH with air cover provided by a RAF Chinook helicopter.