

Algerian Gas Plant in Terror Siege Resumes Work

KARIM KABIR, Associated Press

ALGIERS, Algeria (AP) — A gas installation in Algeria that was the site of a terrorist attack last month that left 37 hostages dead partially resumed production Sunday, as the head of the state-owned energy company said he would request armed personnel for energy plants to help prevent future assaults on sites that can be hundreds of miles from the nearest city.

Prime Minister Abdelmalek Sellal started up one of three gas streams at the Ain Amenas site, bringing it up to about 35 percent capacity, according to state radio.

On Jan. 16, a band of al-Qaida affiliated militants attacked the Ain Amenas complex and took dozens of foreign workers hostage. After a four-day standoff, the Algerian army moved in and killed 29 attackers and captured three others. At least 37 hostages, including one Algerian worker, died in the battle.

The Ain Amenas facility is jointly run by BP, Algeria's Sonatrach and Norway's Statoil. Sunday marked the anniversary of Algeria's 1971 nationalization of its oil industry.

Andelhamid Zerguine, head of Sonatrach, said the attack highlighted security weaknesses that the state-owned company hoped to address, particularly the absence of armed personnel to protect installations.

"We carried out a review to try to determine where we could be stronger," he said.

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