

Tripling of Iraqi Militia Claimed Attacks on Israel in October

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Brief Analysis

Part of a series: [Militia Spotlight \(https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/series/militia-spotlight\)](https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/series/militia-spotlight)

or see [Part 1: How to Use Militia Spotlight \(/policy-analysis/how-use-militia-spotlight\)](#)

The self-styled Islamic Resistance in Iraq has greatly increased the number of claimed attacks on Israel since late September, and is starting to cause fatalities in Israel, inviting an Israeli response.

The Islamic Resistance in Iraq (IRI) umbrella group had an exceptionally busy month in September, claiming 35 attacks against Israel. If October stays on-trend with the 47 attacks claimed in the first half of the month, a sustained rate of claims would see nearly a tripling of September claimed attacks. This frenetic pace is very different from the number of anti-Israel strike claims being made by IRI in the summer, which numbered 13 in July and just six in August (probably because the IRI was, at the time, in a brief shooting war with the U.S.).

The large number of targets being claimed in northern Israel (see below chart) probably reflects the effort of the self-styled Iraqi *muqawama* to show they are somehow aiding Hezbollah in Lebanon. While early summer IRI claims were largely aimed at Israeli ports, slotting Iraqi groups into the Houthi-led "blockade" campaign, the new focus is Israeli military sites on the Golan Heights. On October 2, 2024, an IRI attack claim appeared to coincide with a successful drone strike that killed two Israeli soldiers on the Golan and injured up to 24, including two seriously.

Locations in Israel Claimed as Attacked by Islamic Resistance in Iraq

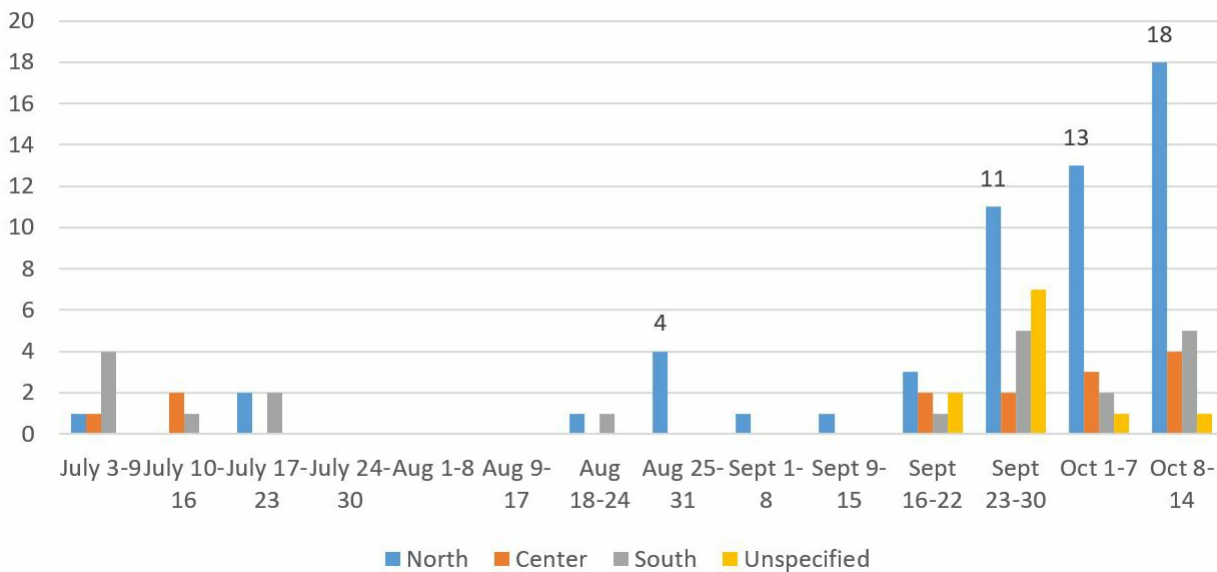
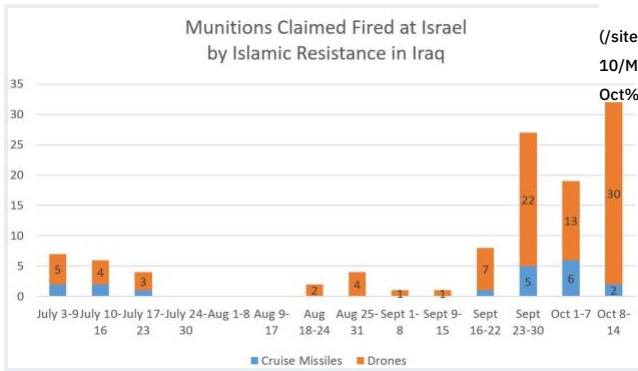


Figure 1: Israel attack locations claimed by the IRI in July-Oct 2024.

The munitions being claimed in IRI statements (which are typically accompanied by new launch videos with a minimum of recycling of imagery) also include a bigger share of cruise missiles than ever before, rising from 18% of claimed launches in the last week of September to 31% of the munitions claimed to have been fired at Israel in the first week of October. (This dipped down again in the second week of October, to just 6%.)

Even so, this means that nearly two-thirds of the Al-Arqab (Quds-series) cruise missiles fired at Israel from Iraq (i.e., 11 of 17, or 64%) since July were fired in a rapid burst of attacks at the end of September and start of October. By far the most predominant drone type used remains the Shahed-101 X-tail, but some KAS-04 and Shahed-136 drones have also been used, the latter types largely versus Eilat.



(/sites/default/files/2024-10/Munitions%20claimed%20fired%20at%20Israel%20by%20IRI%2C%20July-Oct%202024.JPG)

Figure 2: Munitions claimed fired at Israel by IRI, July-Oct 2024.

An advanced drone?

On October 3, IRI put out a statement claiming responsibility for an attack on a "vital target in the South of Israel with a drone with advanced capabilities used for the first time. Sabereen News (/node/16673) claimed the drone was "designed for maneuvering to evade air defenses". On October 4, Al-Mayadeen TV (Lebanese Hezbollah's affiliated channel) interviewed their reporter and head of office in Baghdad, Abdullah Badran, who claimed the new drone had better maneuverability and speed, and that the *muqawama* started a new phase with this type of drone. Badran focused on *Kataib Hezbollah* (/node/16753) and credited them as the most important element and the "cornerstone of the Iraqi resistance". The reporter said that the *muqawama* used these type of drones to hit targets coming from unexpected borders to surprise the enemy. (Figure 3)



Figure 3: Abdullah Badran speaking to Mayadeen TV about the muqawama's new drone, Oct 4 2024.

(/sites/default/files/2024-10/AbdullahBadranStatement.JPG)



Additionally, Abu Alaa al-Walai of *Kataib Sayyid al-Shuhada* (/node/16731) (KSS) put out a statement on X on October 7 on the anniversary of Hamas's attack on Israel, stating "... we congratulate the resistance axis in general and especially the Islamic resistance in Iraq, their victorious operations that humiliated the Entity's ego and warmed the hearts of the faithful people ... Just as Hezbollah continues to be the first line of defence for Gaza, Iraq has become the first support front for both Lebanon and Gaza." (Figure 4)

(/sites/default/files/2024-10/Walai%20Statement.JPG)

Analysis

Iraq's *muqawama* are certainly ramping up their claims and might even have caused casualties in Israel. Though Iraqi claims are very difficult to link to real-world strikes in Israel, the provision of fresh drone launch imagery does seem to suggest real-world launches, some of which may be reaching Israel, one or two of which might cause casualties. The ramp-up of such attacks will be a trend that Israel seeks to deter, suggesting one or more Iraqi *muqawama* figures will be eliminated, or bases (in Syria or Iraq) will be damaged in the coming weeks.

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