

## Iranian-Made Quds-2 Cruise Missile Photographed in Iraq

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Brief Analysis

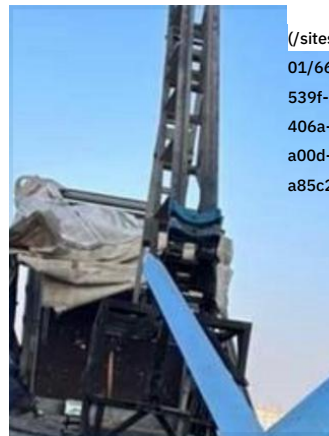
Part of a series: [Militia Spotlight \(https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/series/militia-spotlight\)](https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/series/militia-spotlight)

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

**Recently used in Houthi attacks from Yemen, this missile family could give Iraqi militias the capacity to target sites in Israel if they choose to escalate their campaign of solidarity with Hamas.**

On January 3, [Iraqi media outlets reported \(https://ninanews.com/Website/News/Details?key=1099063\)](https://ninanews.com/Website/News/Details?key=1099063) an explosion in Babil just south of Baghdad that was later clarified to be a controlled detonation. The item destroyed was a Quds-2 cruise missile (Figure 1) that appeared to have fallen off a transport or launch vehicle.

The incident occurred on or near the Hillah-Diwaniyah highway (i.e., Expressway 1, Iraq's main north-south highway) inside Babil province. The Babil Police Command handled the controlled detonation. The specific area of the detonation was reportedly "the western Hamza district, south of Hillah."



(/sites/default/files/2024-01/661790c7-539f-406a-a00d-a85c2a439db3.JPG)

Figure 2: The launch rail on the Quds launch vehicle.

The Quds family of missiles are downscaled copies of Iran's Soumar cruise missile, which is itself a version of the Soviet-era Kh-55. The missile shown in Babil looks to be laying alongside a tractor trailer with a launch or carrying cradle. The solid motor launch booster with its distinctive four wings is not attached, perhaps due to the device being in transit or prior to being assembled for launch. Alternately, the photo could show the aftermath of a failed launch in which the rocket motor detached during operation or was removed to be extinguished.

The implications of the image are serious: an Iranian cruise missile was either being moved inside Iraq or possibly fired from inside the country. In Militia Spotlight's assessment, Babil is not a likely launch location for a strike on Israel using a missile with a range of 700-800 kilometers; locations further westward in Iraq would be better for that purpose. Yet Babil could be a launch point for a longer-ranged Quds variant to reach Israel. The rapid controlled detonation may have been an effort to destroy any evidence of, or attempts to recover, the missile.





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