

# Tripling of Iraqi Militia Claimed Attacks on Israel in October

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## ABOUT THE AUTHORS



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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)

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## The self-styled Islamic Resistance in Iraq has greatly increased its attack claims and is starting to cause fatalities in Israel, inviting a military response.

The Islamic Resistance in Iraq (IRI) umbrella group had an exceptionally busy month in September, claiming 35 attacks against Israel. But if October stays on trend (with 47 attacks claimed so far), it would nearly triple September's claims by month's end. This frenetic pace is very different from the anti-Israel strike claims being made by the IRI over the summer, which numbered 13 in July and just 6 in August (probably because the IRI was, at the time, in a brief shooting war with U.S. forces).

By claiming such a large number of targets in northern Israel (see chart below), the self-styled Iraqi *muqawama* (resistance) are probably trying to show that they are aiding Hezbollah in Lebanon. Most of the IRI's early summer claims were Israeli ports, slotting Iraqi groups into the "blockade" campaign led by the Houthis in Yemen; the new focus is Israeli military sites in the Golan Heights. On October 2, an IRI attack claim appeared to coincide with a successful drone strike that killed two Israeli soldiers in the Golan and injured up to twenty-four, including two seriously.

### Locations in Israel Claimed as Attacked by Islamic Resistance in Iraq

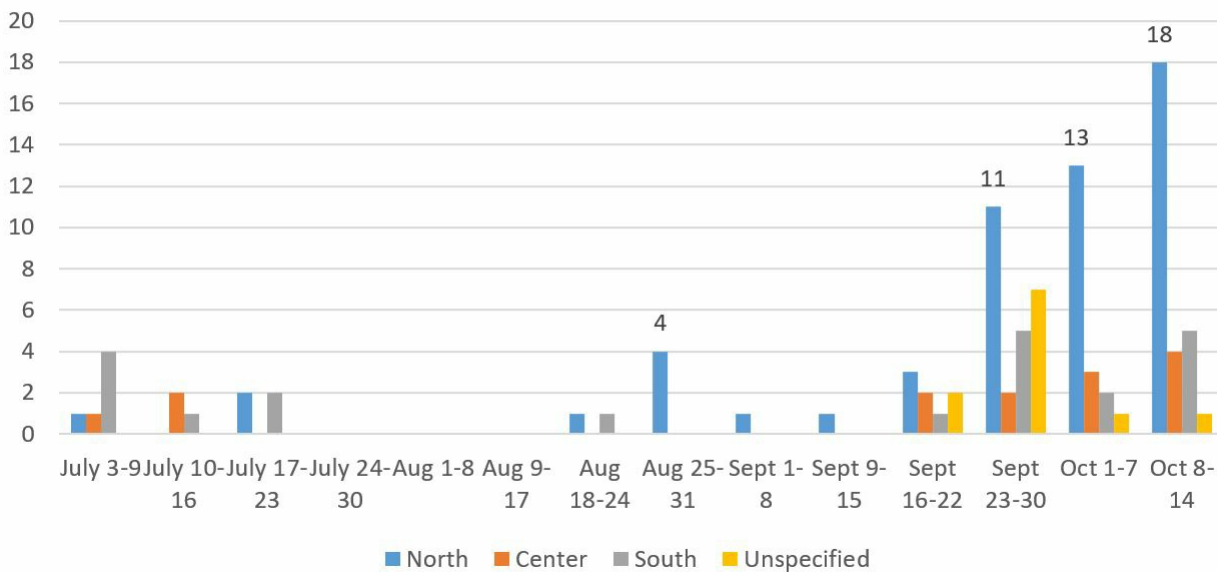


Figure 1: Israel attack locations claimed by the IRI in July-October 2024.

In addition, the munitions being claimed in IRI statements (which are typically accompanied by new launch videos with minimal recycling of imagery) include a bigger share of cruise missiles fired at Israel than ever before, rising from 18% of claimed launches in the last week of September to 31% in the first week of October (and dipping down again in the second week of October, to just 6%). This means that nearly two-thirds of the Arqab (Quds-series) cruise missiles fired at Israel from Iraq since July (i.e., 11 of 17, or 64%) were launched in a rapid burst of attacks at the end of September and start of October.

The IRI has claimed drone strikes as well. 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, largely against Eilat.

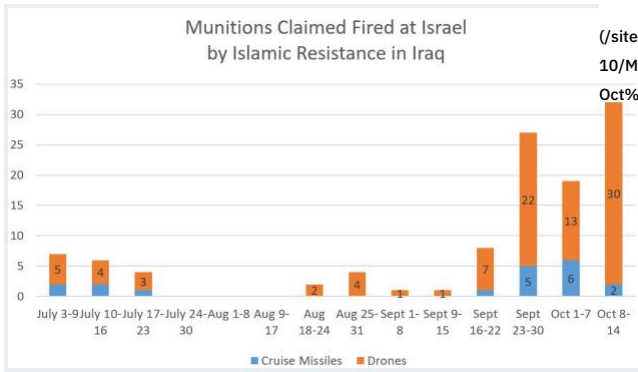


Figure 2: Munitions claimed fired at Israel by the IRI, July-October 2024.

### An Advanced Drone?

On October 3, the IRI put out a statement claiming responsibility for an attack on a “vital target in the South of Israel,” using a more advanced drone for the first time. Specifically, [Sabereen News \(/node/16673\)](#) claimed the drone was “designed for maneuvering to evade air defenses.” On October 4, Abdullah Badran—the Baghdad bureau chief for al-Mayadeen TV, a channel affiliated with Lebanese Hezbollah—claimed the new drone had better maneuverability and speed, and that the *muqawama* had begun a new phase with this type of drone. According to him, fighters were using these drones to strike targets from unexpected borders to surprise the enemy. During the interview, Badran focused on the *muqawama* group [Kataib Hezbollah \(/node/16753\)](#), crediting it as the most important element and the “cornerstone of the Iraqi resistance” (Figure 3).



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



Additionally, Abu Alaa al-Walai of the militia [Kataib Sayyid al-Shuhada \(/node/16731\)](#) put out a statement on Twitter/X on October 7, the anniversary of Hamas’s 2023 attack on Israel. “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 defense for Gaza, Iraq has become the first support front for both Lebanon and Gaza” (Figure 4).

### Analysis

Iraq’s *muqawama* are certainly ramping up their attack claims against Israel and might even have caused casualties there. Iraqi claims are difficult to link to actual strikes in Israel for geographical and other reasons, but the provision of fresh drone launch imagery does suggest real-world launches—some of which may be reaching Israel, and one or two of which might have caused casualties. Israel will no doubt seek to deter any increase in such attacks, suggesting that it will eliminate one or more Iraqi *muqawama* figures in the coming weeks, and/or damage their bases in Syria or Iraq.

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