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The Global Terrorism Trends and Analysis Center (GTTAC) was created by Development Services Group, Inc., and our partner TraCCC of George Mason University to support our work for the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Counterterrorism (No. GS10F-0166K, 19AQMM18F2561). The GTTAC Record of Incidents Database (GRID) collects and classifies opensource data on terrorism incidents globally and is used to support the development of the Annex of Statistical Information for the Country Reports on Terrorism. Data used in this report are from the GRID. Views expressed in this report are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the position of the United States government.

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Iran-Backed Militias Challenging U.S. Troops in the Middle East

On October 7, 2023, Hamas militants launched a coordinated terrorist attack on Israel, resulting in about 1,200 confirmed Israeli dead and more than 200 hostages taken back to Gaza. Israel has responded with massive airstrikes and now a ground offensive on Gaza.

The United States has deployed two aircraft carrier strike groups to the eastern Mediterranean to support Israel, and to send a signal to Iran and its supporting regional actors such as Hizballah not to intervene in the ongoing conflict.

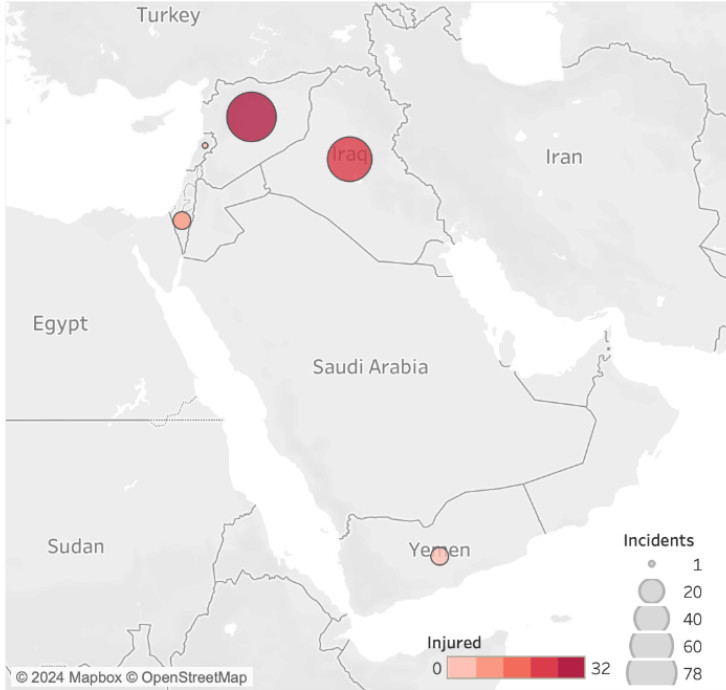
Consequently, U.S. forces in Iraq and Syria are facing increased attacks in the midst of the Israel–Hamas war.

Although Hizballah has not yet become heavily involved in the conflict, the group has been launching rockets on Israel that have caused several casualties and displaced many people. The Islamic Resistance in Iraq, an umbrella group of Tehran-backed militias, has conducted dozens of attacks against U.S. troops and their military bases in Iraq and Syria.

Between October 17 and December 31, 2023, more than 160 attacks have occurred in Iraq and Syria, resulting in at least 65 U.S. personnel and service members being wounded, one of which in critical condition. The Islamic Resistance in Iraq has claimed responsibility for most of the attacks against U.S. bases and troops. An Iran-backed militia launched drones and rockets targeting American and coalition military facilities such as al-Asad Airbase in Iraq's western Anbar province and al-Tanf Military Base in Homs governorate of Syria. The militants targeted al-Omar Oil Field, Conoco Gas Field, and the pipelines in the northern countryside of Deir Ezzor in Syria. The militia has vowed to target U.S. bases in the region as part of its support for the people of Gaza. Further, Houthi rebels have launched anti-ship cruise missiles and bomb-laden drones targeting commercial ships transiting the Red Sea. In late December, the Houthis attempted to attack a commercial ship and fired on the American helicopters, but U.S. Navy responded and sank three Houthi boats, killing several fighters in the process.

Figure 1 Iran-backed militia attacks from October 17, 2023, through December 31, 2023

Attacks against U.S. Troops and Affiliated Targets following the October 7th Hamas Attack



Perpetrator..	Country	Weapons Used	Incid..	Fatality	Injured
Islamic Resistance	IRAQ	UAVs	45	0	12
		Rockets	13	0	5
		Rockets/missiles	2	0	8
		UAV/Rockets	1	0	0
		Mortar shells	1	0	0
		IED	1	0	0
ISRAEL	ISRAEL	Missiles	3	0	0
		UAVs	1	0	6
		Rockets	1	0	0
SYRIA	SYRIA	UAVs	44	0	27
		Rockets	27	0	5
		Missiles	2	0	0
		Attacks on Pipelines	2	0	0
		Unknown	1	0	0
Houthis	ISRAEL	Missiles & UAVs	1	0	0
		Missiles	1	0	0
YEMEN	YEMEN	Missiles	5	0	0
		Missiles & UAVs	3	0	0
		UAVs	1	0	0
		Helicopter, small ar..	1	0	0
Hezbollah	ISRAEL	Rockets	2	0	0
		Missiles	1	0	2
LEBANON	LEBANON	UAVs	1	0	0
No claim	SYRIA	UAVs	2	0	0
Grand Total			162	0	65

Incidents by Date

