

Iraqi prime minister rejects U.S. lies, says 16 people killed in new aggression

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A screengrab from a video posted by US Central Command shows a fighter jet taking off to conduct airstrikes on Iraq and Syria on Friday, Jan. 22, 2024.

Baghdad, February 3 (RHC)-- Sixteen people were killed, among them civilians, and 25 injured in overnight US airstrikes on Iraq, Prime Minister Mohammed Shia' al-Sudani's office has said. In a statement, it condemned the strikes as a "new aggression against Iraq's sovereignty" and denied that they were coordinated by the Baghdad government beforehand with Washington, calling such assertions "lies."

The presence of the U.S. troops in the region "has become a reason for threatening security and stability in Iraq and a justification for involving Iraq in regional and international conflicts", the statement added.

"These airstrikes constitute a violation of Iraqi sovereignty," Iraqi military spokesman Yahya Rasool said in a statement earlier.

He noted that the actions taken by Washington will have "disastrous consequences for the security and stability of Iraq and the region".

U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM) said its military forces struck more than 85 targets in the two countries "with numerous aircraft to include long-range bombers flown from the United States." "The air strikes employed more than 125 precision munitions," it added in a statement.

U.S. President Joe Biden said in a statement on Friday that the strikes were the first in a series of actions by Washington in response to a drone attack that killed a number of soldiers at a remote US base in Jordan. "Our response began today," Biden said. "It will continue at times and places of our choosing," he stated.

Three U.S. soldiers were killed and about 40 others injured in the assault on the military base known as Tower 22 near the Jordan-Syria border on Sunday.

The Islamic Resistance in Iraq, an umbrella group of anti-terror fighters, in a statement published on its Telegram channel claimed responsibility for the drone strike.

In retaliation for the latest flurry of U.S. aerial assaults on several locations in Iraq and Syria, the Islamic Resistance in Iraq announced that it had conducted missile strikes against the Ain al-Asad Airbase, housing US occupation forces in the western Iraqi province of al-Anbar.

The group also said it had staged missile and drone strikes against the strategic al-Tanf military base in southeastern Syria near the border with Jordan and Iraq, as well as the al-Khadra Village in Syria's northeastern province of al-Hasakah.

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