

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

November 17, 2022

The Honorable Lloyd J. Austin III
Secretary
Department of Defense
1000 Defense Pentagon
Washington, D.C. 20301

The Honorable Antony Blinken
Secretary
Department of State
2201 C Street NW
Washington, D.C. 20520

Dear Secretary Austin and Secretary Blinken:

We write regarding the Iranian regime's recent ballistic missile and armed drone attacks against U.S. interests in Iraq. These violations of Iraq's sovereignty target innocent civilians, jeopardize U.S. forces operating lawfully in the region, and sadly, resulted in the death of an American citizen. Combined with the Iranian regime's efforts to fund and direct violent extremist organizations, transfer lethal weapons to Russia, and develop nuclear capabilities, we strongly urge the Administration to act swiftly in order to deter future attacks and protect U.S. personnel operating in the region.

On March 13, 2022, the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) launched approximately a dozen ballistic missiles into the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI). According to reports, the missiles launched from internal Iran landed near a U.S. consulate building in Erbil, hit Iraqi structures, and injured innocent civilians. As you know, KRI, specifically Erbil Air Base, stations U.S. and partner forces that support critical efforts to destroy radical terrorists and prevent a reemergence of the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria.

We are aware that earlier this year, Special Envoy for Iran Robert Malley led an interagency team to the Middle East, where he held consultations with Allies and partners regarding Iran's destabilizing activities in the region.

However, despite Special Envoy Malley's efforts, these attacks persist. On September 28, 2022, the IRGC launched at least 70 ballistic missiles into KRI from internal Iran. This increase in hostilities also included the use of armed drones, one of which was shot down heading toward Erbil by U.S. forces. According to the Department of State, an American was among the over dozen killed and many injured in the missile attack, which originated from internal Iran. Additionally, this aggression coincided with artillery bombardments on September 24, 2022, and October 4, 2022, targeting villages and border towns in KRI.

Sadly, again on November 14, 2022, the IRGC launched armed drones and missiles into KRI, killing and injuring nearly a dozen Iraqis. These ongoing coordinated attacks are an effort to deflect blame amid the growing peaceful protests against the Iranian regime for their brutal murder of an Iranian Kurdish woman, Mahsa Amini.

This a clear signal from the Iranian regime that they have the capabilities to target U.S. and partner interests in Iraq without consequences from the Biden Administration.

As Iran continues to sow chaos and destruction in the Middle East, these continued attacks have assaulted Iraq's sovereignty, threatened U.S. forces and ongoing counterterrorism efforts, and killed innocent American and Iraqi civilians. It is deeply concerning that these attacks have not been met with a strong U.S. response, and we believe this will only increase the IRGC's ongoing terror campaign across the region.

To that end, we urge the Administration to respond against these Iranian threats to deter future attacks and protect our regional interests. Without responding to these provocations, we risk additional threats to our warfighters, diplomats, and civilians in the region.

Very respectfully,



Guy Reschenthaler
Member of Congress



Michael Waltz
Member of Congress