

[wsj.com](https://www.wsj.com)

# Iran Claims Missile Attack on Iraq That Sent U.S. Troops Rushing for Shelter

*Dion Nissenbaum, Ghassan Adnan and Aresu Eqbali*

7-9 minutes

---

Iran's top paramilitary force claimed [responsibility for a missile attack](#) early Sunday that slammed into northern Iraq, sending U.S. troops rushing for shelter, shattering windows and creating new complications for diplomatic efforts to ease tensions with Tehran.

The Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps issued a statement through its official Sepha News site saying that it carried out a missile attack in response to [recent Israeli actions](#) in the region, which included an airstrike last week in Syria that killed two of the Iranian paramilitary group's commanders. Kurdish officials said that at least 12 ballistic missiles hit the

area, creating powerful blasts that damaged a local television station and a palatial compound identified as the home of a major Kurdish businessman.

The Iranian group said it carried out a missile attack on what it claimed were compounds used by Israeli spies operating in Iraq. Israeli officials declined to comment.

America, Iraq and other nations condemned the missile strike as a destabilizing act as the Israeli military stepped up its defenses and U.S. officials considered how to respond.

Ambassador Matthew Tueller, America's top diplomat in Iraq, condemned the strike and said Tehran should pay a price.

"Iranian regime elements have claimed responsibility for this attack and must be held accountable for this flagrant violation of Iraqi sovereignty," he said.

The attack marks the first time that Iran has directly fired missiles into Iraq since January 2020, when Tehran fired a similar number of missiles at U.S. forces in Iraq in response to an [American drone strike that killed](#) Maj. Gen. Qassem Soleimani, the

commander of Iran's paramilitary Quds Force.

Scores of U.S. troops were affected by the 2020 strike, which left dozens dealing with traumatic brain injuries.

Some leaders in Iraq urged the U.S. and other world powers to respond to Iran's strike decisively.

"Iran has been repeatedly targeting the Kurdistan region and the silence from the international community is of great concern," said the regional government. "This silence from the international community is motivating for more future attacks."

Last week, Israel stepped up its military defenses after Iran threatened to retaliate for the killing of two Iranian military officials helping Syrian President Bashar al-Assad. The two were killed in an apparent Israeli airstrike in Syria, where Israel has carried out hundreds of attacks [designed to blunt Iran's military influence](#) across the region.

Sunday's attack is likely to create more regional resistance to American efforts to strike a new nuclear containment deal with Iran. [The U.S. and Iran have paused negotiations](#), high-stakes talks aimed at reviving a 2015 agreement with Tehran that

put constraints on Iran's nuclear program in exchange for sanctions relief.

The talks have [hit a variety of hurdles](#) in recent days, damping hopes that negotiators would be able to announce a revived deal soon. That agreement, which could also lead to the release of U.S. detainees, was close to being completed until Russia raised a fresh demand that its [trade with Iran be exempted from Ukraine-related sanctions](#), Western officials say.

The French foreign ministry warned that the strike could imperil talks over the deal, known by the acronym JCPOA.

“Such actions put in danger the efforts to allow a return to the JCPOA,” the ministry said. “There is an absolute urgency to conclude the negotiations which are still open after almost a year, and to cease such irresponsible and dangerous activities.”

Nuclear Radiation's Effects on the Human Body,  
Explained

0:00



Paused

0:00 / 5:24

## Nuclear Radiation's Effects on the Human Body, Explained

Play video: Nuclear Radiation's Effects on the Human Body, Explained

Nuclear radiation exposure concerns have been mounting following Russian attacks on Ukrainian nuclear power plants. WSJ's Daniela Hernandez explores what scientists have learned about the health effects of radiation, with a look at past nuclear accidents. Photo: Anatolii Stepanov/AFP/Getty Images

The U.S. effort to resurrect the deal with Iran, which then-President Donald Trump [withdrew from in 2018](#), has drawn criticism from Israeli and Persian Gulf leaders who worry that a new deal will allow Tehran to continue to arm allies across the region and carry out its own missile strikes with impunity.

Sunday's missile strikes injured at least two people, blasted holes in nearby homes, and sent U.S. forces running for cover at the American military base in Erbil. But U.S. officials said no American personnel were injured in the attack. At least one missile hit within about a mile of a new U.S. consulate under

construction.

After assessing the aftermath, U.S. officials said they didn't think America had been the intended target, a conclusion that could lessen the chances of a quick military response from the U.S.

Kurdish officials brought local journalists to see the aftermath of one strike that hit an ornate compound identified as the house of Baz Karim, president and founder of the Iraqi-Kurdish oil company, Kar Group.

Iran claimed that it was targeting Israelis in the strike. Israel has strong relations with the Kurdish region, but Israeli officials declined to comment on reports that Sunday's strike was aimed at Israeli spies working in northern Iraq.

A close relative of the businessman said Mr. Karim wasn't at the home when Iranian missiles struck. The relative denied that the place had any ties to Israeli spies. "It's a private house," the relative said. "There was no military."

Israel has been carrying out airstrikes against Iranian-backed militias and Iranian personnel in Syria as it seeks to prevent Iran from transferring

weapons to Hezbollah, the Lebanese militia group. The campaign includes [placing mines on ships carrying oil and other goods](#) that are bound for Syria.

The Iranians, in turn, have often sought to pressure the U.S. to constrain its Israeli ally.

In October, Iran directed five drones at the al-Tanf garrison in southern Syria, which is defended by a small contingent of U.S. forces and American-trained Syrian fighters. The Iranians said in a confidential message to the U.S. at that time that the attack was in response to an Israeli airstrike that killed two Iranian officers in Syria, U.S. officials said.

In January, the massive U.S. Embassy complex in Baghdad was [struck by four rocket attacks](#) that injured at least two individuals but no U.S. personnel were hurt. That attack originated from inside Baghdad and was believed to have been carried out by an Iranian-backed militia group.

—Laurence Norman, Gordon Lubold, Michael R. Gordon and Benoit Faucon contributed to this article.

**Write to** Dion Nissenbaum at

[dion.nissenbaum@wsj.com](mailto:dion.nissenbaum@wsj.com)

Copyright ©2022 Dow Jones & Company, Inc. All

Rights Reserved.

87990cbe856818d5eddac44c7b1cdeb8