

Beat: Politics

U.S.-led coalition targets Islamic State in 30 airstrikes

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USPA News - The United States and its coalition partners have carried out 30 airstrikes against Islamic State targets in Iraq and northern Syria since Wednesday, U.S. military officials said on Friday, but information about casualties was not available. The vast majority of airstrikes since Wednesday were carried out in northern Iraq, where the Islamic State continues to hold large patches of territory.

Six of the airstrikes struck near the northern city of Baiji, destroying three buildings, a bunker, two transport vehicles, five tactical units and a checkpoint, U.S. Central Command said. Three airstrikes near Mosul, which is the largest city under the control of the Islamic State, resulted in the destruction of a guard post, a vehicle, and two tactical units. Two airstrikes near Ramadi destroyed a vehicle, a tactical unit and damaged a building occupied by Islamic State fighters, officials said. Similar airstrikes were carried out near Sinjar, destroying two barracks, a bunker, a storage facility, a guard post, at least eight armored vehicles, a truck in a vehicle storage yard, and two tactical units. Three additional airstrikes west of Kirkuk destroyed five bunkers, two vehicles, and a tactical unit. Other airstrikes were carried out near al Asad and Tal Afar. In Syria, six airstrikes near Kobani destroyed four staging areas, two buildings, and two tactical units, while an airstrike near the Islamic State's self-proclaimed capital, Al Raqqa, damaged a barrack. "All aircraft returned to base safely. Airstrike assessments are based on initial reports," U.S. Central Command said, without providing details about casualties. "The destruction of ISIL targets in Syria and Iraq further limits the terrorist group's ability to project power and conduct operations." The Islamic State (IS), which was previously known as the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/ISIS), is an al-Qaeda splinter group which declared itself an Islamic caliphate earlier this year after seizing much of northeastern Syria and making huge gains in parts of Iraq. Their rule has been marked by brutal violence - such as beheadings and crucifixions - of anyone opposing the "caliphate." Since early August, U.S. forces have carried out hundreds of airstrikes in Iraq to protect U.S. interests and to assist Iraqi forces as they attempt to fight off ISIS. A coalition of countries - including France, the United Kingdom, and Australia - later joined that effort. The United States - along with several Arab countries - has also launched a separate air campaign against ISIS in northern Syria.

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