



Prepared by the Office of Security & Hazardous Material Safety (ASH)

## Iraq: Rocket Attack Hits Baghdad International Airport

On 22 April 2021, at least three rockets impacted within the perimeter of Baghdad International Airport (ICAO: ORBI) in Iraq, according to international press reports. The rockets impacted near the military area of ORBI, which houses U.S. and partner military forces. At least one rocket landed within the Iraqi forces' residential area, wounding an Iraqi soldier, according to press reports. No group has yet claimed responsibility for the attack. Iraqi security forces subsequently swept areas near the airport and found an unspecified quantity of unfired rockets at a launch site on top of an empty house. This incident follows other recent attacks against U.S. interests in Iraq.

On 18 April, five rockets impacted Balad Air Base (ICAO: ORBD), which houses U.S. contractors and Iraqi forces. Two rockets impacted a dormitory and a canteen operated by a U.S. contractor. Two foreign contractors and three Iraqi soldiers were wounded in the attack. An earlier rocket attack targeting Balad Air Base occurred on 04 April, during which at least two rockets missed the base and landed in the sparsely populated surrounding area.

On 14 April, a weaponized unmanned aircraft system (UAS) attacked U.S. interests at Erbil Air Base, which is collocated with Erbil International Airport (ICAO: ORER) in northern Iraq. This was the first reported use of a weaponized UAS against Erbil Air Base, according to press reports and Iraqi officials.

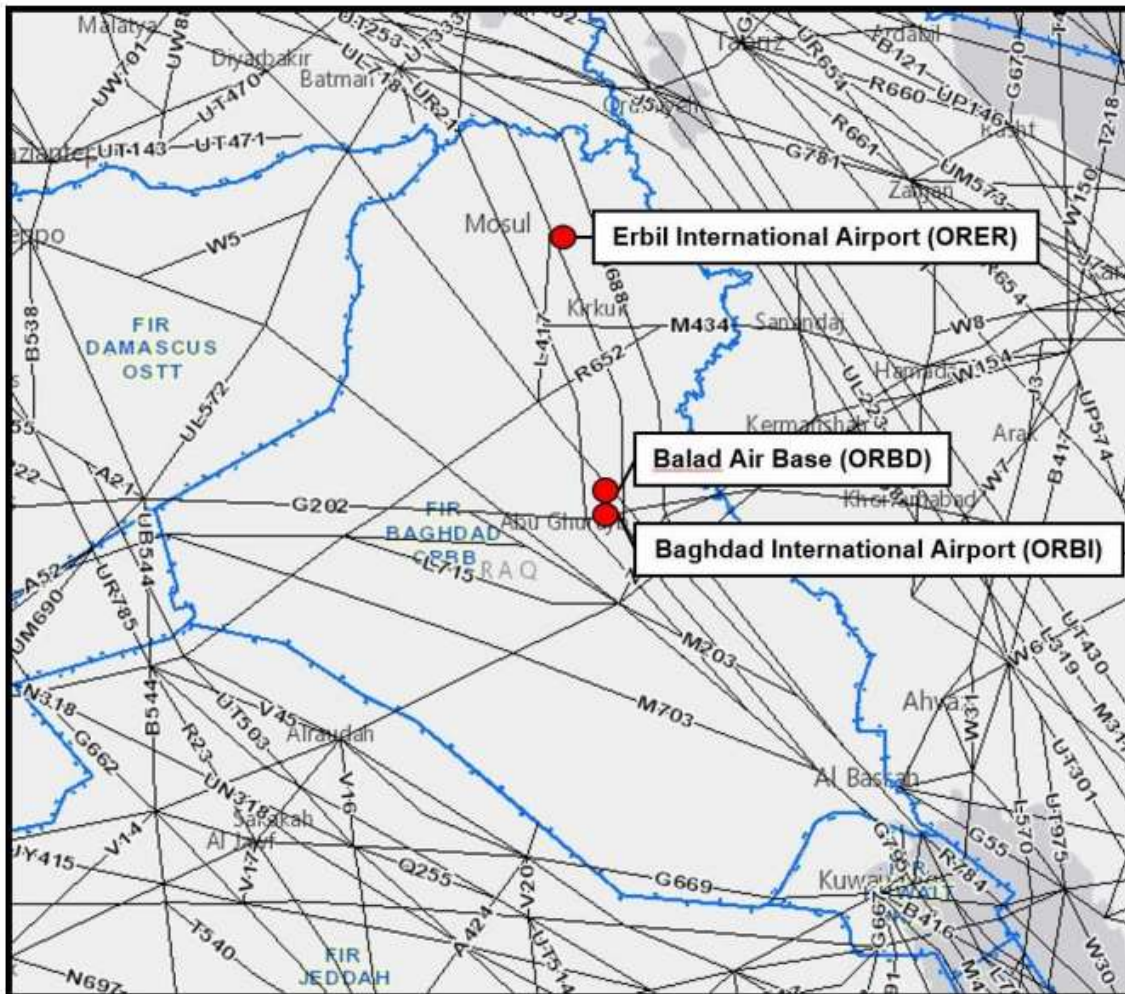
### **Outlook:**

An Iranian-aligned militia group (IAMG) likely conducted the aforementioned operations, based on previous attacks linked to IAMGs in Iraq. IAMGs will likely conduct additional attacks against U.S. interests in Iraq in an effort to pressure U.S. and Coalition governments to withdraw forces from Iraq. Such attacks may target U.S. interests that are collocated with civil airports and could include the newly demonstrated weaponized UAS capability and/or indirect fire (IDF) using rockets. These attacks targeting U.S. interests could occur with little or no warning. While IDF and UAS attacks are typically altitude-limited, they could escalate tensions in the region, increasing the inadvertent risk to U.S. civil aviation operations in the Baghdad (ORBB) Flight Information Region (FIR). After IDF attacks, IAMGs may activate anti-aircraft weapons to defend against anticipated counterstrikes. IAMGs' use of anti-aircraft weapons systems would pose an inadvertent risk to U.S. civil aviation due to the increased potential for miscalculation and/or misidentification resulting from inadequate training.

The FAA maintains an all-altitude flight prohibition Notice to Airmen (NOTAM), KICZ A0036/20, for the entire Baghdad (ORBB) FIR. This NOTAM is in addition to Special Federal Aviation Regulation (SFAR) 77, which prohibits U.S. civil aviation operations at altitudes below flight level (FL) 320 in the entire Baghdad FIR (ORBB). Copies of all FAA-issued flight prohibition SFARs, flight prohibition NOTAMs, and advisory NOTAMs are available on FAA's Prohibitions, Restrictions, and Notices website at: [http://www.faa.gov/air\\_traffic/publications/us\\_restrictions/](http://www.faa.gov/air_traffic/publications/us_restrictions/).

If there are any questions, please contact the FAA Threat Analysis Division (AXE-200) at 202-267-3203 or [FAA-Watch@faa.gov](mailto:FAA-Watch@faa.gov).

**This information is provided for situational awareness only.**



*Iraq's Baghdad (ORBB) FIR with high-level air routes.*

*This graphic is for situational awareness only and is not to be used for navigational purposes.*