



# ISIS: DEPLOYING UNMANNED AERIAL VEHICLES (UAVs)

## Timeline of ISIS UAV Development

**October 24, 2014**

ISIS demonstrates UAV capability.



**November 28, 2014**

ISIS features UAV image in its English-language magazine, *Dabiq*, depicting an aerial view of the battle in Kobani, Syria.



**October 2, 2016**

ISIS kills two Kurdish soldiers and wounds two French soldiers with a booby-trapped UAV.



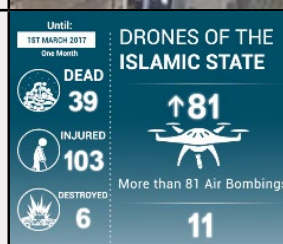
**January 24, 2017**

ISIS releases propaganda video, "Knights of the Dawawin," depicting a weaponized UAV dropping bombs on US-led coalition forces.



**March 1, 2017**

ISIS distributes infographic via the social media platform Telegram highlighting its UAV weaponization efforts.



## UAVs Used in Iraq and Syria

**Make:** DJI  
**Platform:** Phantom 3  
**Endurance:** 36 min.  
**Payload Capacity:** 2.5 lbs  
**Price:** \$1,199



**Make:** Guilin Feiyu Electronic  
**Platform:** X-8  
**Endurance:** 1.2 hrs  
**Payload Capacity:** 6 lbs  
**Price:** \$111



## ISIS: Weaponizing UAVs

*ISIS will likely continue refining its UAV capabilities and touting successes as proofs of concept for future operations.* Since February, ISIS claims it has conducted approximately 80 UAV attacks in Iraq and Syria, killing approximately 40 and injuring 100. The UAVs are primarily quadcopters, which can be easily purchased online and customized to drop small explosive munitions.

- ISIS has conducted surveillance with commercial drones since 2014, according to West Point's Combating Terrorism Center, and the group has advanced its UAV program by experimenting with weaponization in 2015-16 and industrializing the drone production this year.
- On January 24, ISIS released the video "Knights of the Dawawin," showing militants using a Chinese Skywalker X8 drone and dropping explosives on US-led coalition forces and armored vehicles.



ISIS members receiving drone training in the group's self-proclaimed "Academy for Media Training & Development"

Pro-ISIS propaganda depicting UAV weaponization

*Recent ISIS English-language propaganda provides operational "how-to" guides intended to inspire homegrown violent extremists (HVEs) in the United States — an avenue the group will likely expand to weaponized drones.* In November 2016, ISIS released a guide outlining effective methods for carrying out vehicular assaults, which resulted in HVE Mohammed Naji plotting to use a truck to target the Macy's Thanksgiving Parade in New York City.

- On February 1, ISIS released an image called the "Islamic State Nightmare," featuring fighters preparing to launch a UAV over an image of the Statue of Liberty.

*An NJOHSP review of terrorist attacks and plots in the United States since 2015 reveals HVEs have primarily used simple weapons such as firearms, vehicles, and knives, although we cannot rule out the possibility HVEs will learn how to construct and weaponize UAVs based on future ISIS propaganda.*

- In July 2011, Rezwan Ferdaus attempted to use remote-controlled planes carrying improvised explosive devices (IEDs) to attack the Pentagon and the Capitol building. Ferdaus is the only documented case in the United States of an HVE attempting to use a device similar to a weaponized UAV in the last 10 years.
- ISIS's weaponization of UAVs in Iraq and Syria involves the use of modified military ordnance, which is difficult to acquire in the United States. Building similar explosives requires specific bomb-making and engineering skills.



Weaponized UAV with customized IED

## To Report Suspicious Activity:

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