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U.S.-led air strikes kill IS leaders linked to Paris attacks

WASHINGTON

A U.S.-led coalition has killed 10 Islamic State leaders in the past month with targeted air strikes, including individuals linked to last month's attacks in Paris, a spokesman for the coalition said on Tuesday.

"Over the past month, we've killed 10 ISIL leadership figures with targeted air strikes, including several external attack planners, some of whom are linked to the Paris attacks," said U.S. Army Colonel Steve Warren, a spokesman for the U.S.-led military campaign against Islamic State, also known by the acronym ISIL. "Others had designs on further attacking the West."

One of those killed was Abdul Qader Hakim, who facilitated the militants' external operations and had links to the Paris attack network, Warren said. He was killed in the northern Iraqi city of Mosul on Dec. 26.

A coalition air strike on Dec. 24 in Syria killed Charaffe al Mouadan, a Syria-based Islamic State member with a direct link to Abdelhamid Abaaoud, the suspected ringleader of the coordinated bombings and shootings in Paris on Nov. 13 which killed 130 people, Warren said. Mouadan was actively planning further attacks against the West, he said.

The effect of the air strikes on Islamic State leadership can be seen in recent battlefield successes against the group, Warren said. The Iraqi army recently saw its first major victory against the ultra-hardline Sunni militants, declaring the capture this week of Ramadi, a provincial capital west of Baghdad which fell to Islamic State in May.

"Part of those successes is attributable to the fact that the organization is losing its leadership," Warren said.

He warned, however: "It's still got fangs."

(Reporting by Yeganeh Torbati and Warren Strobel; Editing by David Alexander and Alistair Bell)

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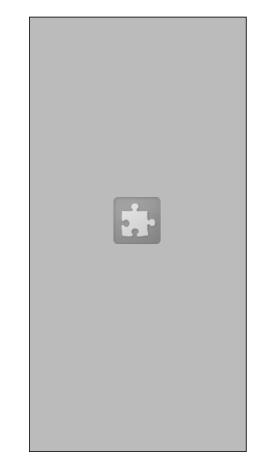




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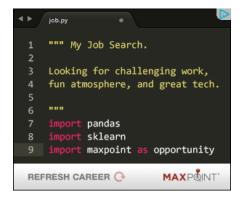
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