

# Statement by Pentagon Spokesman Capt. Jeff Davis on Airstrikes Against al-Qaida near Idlib, Syria

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On Feb. 3, one U.S. strike killed 10 terrorists in a building being used as an al-Qaida meeting place.

On Feb. 4, a second strike killed Abu Hani al-Masri, a legacy al-Qaida terrorist with ties to the group's senior leaders, including Ayman al-Zawahiri and Usama bin-Laden. Al-Masri oversaw the creation and operation of many al-Qaida training camps in Afghanistan in the 1980s and '90s, where he recruited, indoctrinated, trained and equipped thousands of terrorists who subsequently spread throughout the region and the world.

He was also one of the founders of Egyptian Islamic Jihad, the first Sunni group to use suicide bombers in their terror attacks. EIJ is responsible for multiple attacks against U.S. and allied facilities and personnel, including a 1998 attempt to blow up the American embassy in Albania.

These strikes disrupt al-Qaida's ability to plot and direct external attacks targeting the U.S. and our interests worldwide. These extremists are increasingly questioning the loyalty of their members as paranoia spreads throughout their network about the many strikes conducted against them. U.S. forces have struck multiple meeting locations, an established basic training camp, and four leaders since the beginning of the year.

We will continue to take action to deny these terrorists safe haven in Syria to ensure they cannot focus on plotting terror against the region and world.

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