

## IMPLICATIONS OF ASYMMETRIC DRONE WARFARE IN THE INDIAN OCEAN

- On the 19th, the Iraqi militia Saraya Awlia' al-Dam released footage showing its operatives deploying a Shahed 101 unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) from a maritime platform, reportedly launched from a boat likely operating on a lake in western Iraq.
- This operation highlights an advanced and adaptive use of asymmetric warfare techniques by pro-Iranian proxy groups. The integration of UAV capabilities with maritime platforms introduces a novel tactical dimension, significantly expanding the operational range and threat spectrum.



Images of Shahed 101 launched from Saraya Awlia' al-Dam/ Source Saraya Awlia' al-Dam Telegram

## SHAHED 101 SPECIFICATIONS

- The 101 drone has a range of 600 km and is equipped with an 8 kg warhead combining a fragmentation belt with a shaped charge for penetrating hardened targets and causing fragmentation damage. It uses a single-cylinder piston engine (3.5 hp) with a push-propeller, achieving a cruising speed of 120 km/h and a flight duration of 5-10 hours.
- The drone relies on satellite navigation, eliminating the need for a sensor system or data link, making it cost-effective. Its compact and modular design, featuring detachable wings, allows for easy transport and deployment. It uses a JATO (Jet-Assisted Take-Off) system with a small rocket, enabling it to be launched from virtually any location, even in remote or rugged terrain. It employs X-shaped steering fins for enhanced stability against low-altitude wind gusts

# ANALYSIS

- Seahawk Maritime Intelligence recently highlighted an escalating partnership between the Houthis and Al-Shabaab, marked by strategic operational and logistical cooperation. The Houthis have reportedly deployed specialized contingents to Somalia tasked with training Al-Shabaab operatives in unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) operations and facilitating enhanced arms supply networks. Concurrently, Somali recruits are undergoing advanced training in Saada and Sanaa, with their deployment aimed at bolstering regional operations.
- Although the transfer of high-capability systems such as the Shahed 101 or its Houthi variant, the Khataf-2, to Al-Shabaab remains improbable, the Houthis are likely exploiting Al-Shabaab-controlled territories, such as Lower Shabelle, as forward operating bases. These locations offer a tactical advantage, minimizing the likelihood of detection due to the sparse presence of naval and aerial surveillance assets in the region.
- This evolving operational framework presents a significant escalation in the asymmetric threat landscape, enabling the extension of Houthi influence into the Horn of Africa and Indian Ocean regions. The implications are profound, potentially undermining maritime security, complicating counterterrorism strategies, and enhancing the operational depth of both groups.



Image of Saraya Awlia' al-Dam Shahed 101 / Image of Houthi Khataf-2



Source Saraya Awlia' al-Dam Telegram / Houthi Military Media Telegram

## SOURCES

SeaHawk Maritime Intelligence provides actionable, land-based intelligence on Somali piracy and other emerging threats in the region.

### **Saraya Awlia' al-Dam Telegram**

"<https://t.me/awlialdm/145>"

### **Houthi Military Media Telegram**

"<https://t.me/MilitaryMediaY>"

### **Deep Dive Defense**

"<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6HYFyuHcSuo>"

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