

Profile: Qasem al-Jabbarin

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Apr 1, 2021

Also available in

Updated October 10, 2024

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Brief Analysis

Part of a series: [Militia Spotlight: Profiles \(https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/series/militia-spotlight-profiles\)](https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/series/militia-spotlight-profiles)

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Qasem al-Jabbarin is a Kataib Hezbollah-directed facade group that specializes in roadside bombings against Iraqi supply trucks servicing the U.S. military in Iraq.

Name: Qasem al-Jabbarin (QJ) (Smasher of the Oppressors).

Type of movement: Facade group. Kinetic military operations. Domestic counter-U.S. operations.

History and objectives:

- A prolific facade group, QJ took credit for improvised explosive device attacks against convoys on a weekly basis for much of 2020-21.
- QJ exists to claim attacks launched by *fasail* (armed groups). All attacks claimed have occurred inside Iraq and are directed at the coalition. QJ has not claimed rocket attacks, except for the January 5, 2022, rocket strike on al-Asad Air Base.
- QJ was first referenced by *muqawama* (resistance) Telegram channels on September 17, 2020, when [Sabereen News \(https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/profile-sabereen-news\)](https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/profile-sabereen-news)

“previewed” the group and noted that it would soon announce attacks. Later that day, Sabereen posted an image of QJ’s first statement claiming two attacks on U.S. convoys.



Qasem al-Jabbarin logo

- Some time prior to 2020, Iraq's Popular Mobilization Forces (PMF) included a unit known as the "Brigade of Qasem al-Jabbarin." The unit was run by Muhammad al-Musawi and affiliated with the *muqawama*, but it is unclear if the current QJ is linked to that brigade.
- QJ's name derives from a Shia phrase relating to the Mahdi (“قاصم الجبارين [مُدين]” or “smasher of the oppressor and helper of the oppressed”). The group is sometimes styled “Saraya Qasem al-Jabbarin” (سرية قاصم الجبارين) or “Qasem al-Jabbarin Company.” Use of the singular noun instead of the plural for the military unit marker is relatively unusual. Compare “Kataib” (battalions), “Saraya” (companies), “Alwiya” (brigades), “Asaib” (leagues), and “Ashab” (companions). A singular was also used for the group “[Usbat al-Thaireen](https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/profile-usbat-al-thaireen) (<https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/profile-usbat-al-thaireen>)” (League of the Revolutionaries).
- Also unusual for a facade group, QJ does not appear to have its own official media or information operations outlet, though a number of small, copycat accounts share its name. Instead, it has relied on major militia outlets to publicize its statements, attacks, and claims (particularly the [Unit 10,000](https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/profile-unit-10000) (<https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/profile-unit-10000>) Telegram account affiliated with [Kataib Hezbollah](https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/profile-kataib-hezbollah) (<https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/profile-kataib-hezbollah>)).
- In October 2021, QJ was overtaken by Ashab al-Kahf as the [primary claimant of convoy attacks](https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/ashab-al-kahfs-takeover-convoy-strategy) (<https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/ashab-al-kahfs-takeover-convoy-strategy>).
- After an October 2023 attack on al-Asad, [Harakat Hezbollah al-Nujaba \(/node/16716\)](https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/signs-iranian-coordination-iraqi-base-attacks-and-messaging) head Akram Kaabi [used escalatory language](https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/signs-iranian-coordination-iraqi-base-attacks-and-messaging) (<https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/signs-iranian-coordination-iraqi-base-attacks-and-messaging>) in tweeting a Quranic verse: "In the name of the smasher of the oppressors [meaning QJ], O you who have believed, fight those of the disbelievers next to you, and let them find anger in you." This was the last suspected QJ kinetic attack.

Chain of command:

- Nominally under the [Iraqi Resistance Coordination Committee](https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/their-own-words-senior-leaders-admit-membership-tansiqiya) (<https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/their-own-words-senior-leaders-admit-membership-tansiqiya>) (al-Haya al-Tansiqiya lil-Muqawama al-Iraqiya, or Tansiqiya for short).
- Probably a subordinate of Kataib Hezbollah, an assessment based on the locations of QJ's claimed attacks (mostly adjacent to Jurf al-Sakr) and the close affinity that KH-affiliated media accounts appear to have with the group. KH channels almost never ignore activity claimed by QJ and often publicize it widely, while sometimes dismissing other facade groups.

Affiliate relationships:

- Direct command relationship with KH.
- Linked to Sabereen News early on. More recently tied to Unit 10,000 and other KH-affiliated media accounts.
- May be a successor to Usbat al-Thaireen, since UT's previously frequent claims stopped around the time that QJ began claiming convoy attacks. Yet QJ's claimed attacks differ from UT's, with the latter group taking credit for many rocket strikes while QJ has claimed none to date.

Subordinate elements:

- Very small number of roadside bombing cells with an operating area between Baghdad and Diwaniyah.
- Apparent access to at least one rocket launch cell capable of working in Anbar and Baghdad, as of January 5, 2022
- Probable access to other KH cells.



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