

Policy Analysis /

Profile: Raba Allah

by [Hamdi Malik](#), [Crispin Smith](#), [Michael Knights](#)

Apr 9, 2021

Also available in
[Arabic](#)

ABOUT THE AUTHORS



[Hamdi Malik](#)

Dr. Hamdi Malik is an Associate Fellow with the Washington Institute, specializing in Shia militias. He is the co-founder of the Militia Spotlight platform, which offers in-depth analysis of developments related to the Iranian-backed militias in Iraq and Syria. He is the coauthor of the Institute's 2020 study "Honored, Not Contained: The Future of Iraq's Popular Mobilization Forces."



[Crispin Smith](#)

Crispin Smith is an associate at a Washington-based national security law group. His research focuses on Iraqi security, human rights, and law of armed conflict issues.



[Michael Knights](#)

Michael Knights is the Boston-based Jill and Jay Bernstein Fellow of The Washington Institute, specializing in the military and security affairs of Iraq, Iran, and the Persian Gulf states.



Brief Analysis

Part of a series: [Militia Spotlight: Profiles](#)

or see Part 1: [How to Use Militia Spotlight: Profiles](#)

Raba Allah is the "mothership" for vigilante and counter-protestor groups developed by the Kataib Hezbollah network.

Name: Raba Allah (RA) (God's Fellows).

Type of movement: Facade group. Kinetic (vigilante) and nonkinetic cultural/social operations. Domestic counter-political/social moderate operations.

History and objectives:

- On September 4, 2020, RA posted its first message on its Telegram channel demanding that the Iraqi media outlet UTV apologize for “insulting the *marjaiya* and other religious scholars,” then threatened that the network's offices would be burnt down otherwise.
- On September 6, 2020, RA claimed responsibility for its first vigilante action: an August 31 arson attack against the office of Dijlah TV.
- RA appears to have existed prior to the attack on Dijlah. In one video posted on November 27, 2020, the group indicated that its members had taken part in protests outside the U.S. embassy on December 31, 2019.
- RA members have participated in the following actions:
 - In October 2020, burning the offices of television channels and the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP).
 - In November 2020, smashing massage parlors, liquor stores, and other businesses deemed to be "un-Islamic" and assaulting their workers and customers.
 - Mounting smear campaigns against political and media characters and threatening them with violence.
 - Organizing protests in front of foreign missions, including the Baghdad embassies of France (September 2020) and Turkey (February 2021).



Raba Allah logo

Chain of command:

- Clear and convincing evidence shows RA is a branch of [Kataib Hezbollah](#) (KH). On March 25, 2021, KH marched its armed forces in Baghdad as a show of force, threatening the prime minister and high-ranking security officials. The parade was announced as an RA action on *muqawama* social media channels, and RA members were seen carrying weapons during the event, including RPG-7s.



RA members assaulting workers at a massage parlor in Baghdad after damaging their place of business, November 26, 2020.

Affiliate relationships:

- RA was initially a joint project with other *muqawama* groups



RA members taking part in an unsanctioned militia parade in Baghdad alongside KH soldiers, March 25, 2021.

[Asaib Ahl al-Haq](#)

(AAH). Various groups used to call themselves RA, but due to differences regarding choice of targets, non-KH members withdrew from RA in November 2020 and created other, less influential vigilante groups. One ex-RA group

is now called al-Lijan al-Shabiya (the Popular Committees).

Subordinate elements:

- RA has a Telegram channel that posts original content, primarily statements or calls to protest.
- The preponderance of the evidence suggests that Ahl al-Marouf (People of Virtue) is a junior spinoff of RA developed specifically for vigilante attacks.
- The preponderance of the evidence suggests that Jabhat Abu Jiddaha (People of Lighter Front) is another junior spinoff of RA, developed specifically to mobilize protestors and counter-protestors.



[View/Print Page as PDF](#)

SHARE



EMAIL ALERTS



[Sign Up](#)



TO TOP

PART OF A SERIES

Militia Spotlight: Profiles



How to Use Militia Spotlight: Profiles



Profile: Saraya Awliya al-Dam

Profile: Qasem al-Jabbarin

RECOMMENDED



BRIEF ANALYSIS

Iranian Membership in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization: Motivations and Implications

Sep 15, 2021

Nicole Grajewski



BRIEF ANALYSIS

Women and Politics in Algeria: One Step Forward, Two Steps Back

Sep 15, 2021

Ahmed Marwane

BRIEF ANALYSIS

Hossein Moanes Sparks Angry Words Between Kataib Hezbollah and Asaib Ahl al-Haq

Sep 14, 2021

Hamdi Malik

TOPICS

Arab and Islamic Politics

Democracy and Reform

Military and Security

REGIONS & COUNTRIES

Iran

Iraq

STAY UP TO DATE



SIGN UP FOR EMAIL ALERTS



THE
WASHINGTON INSTITUTE
for Near East Policy

1111 19th Street NW - Suite 500
Washington D.C. 20036
Tel: 202-452-0650
Fax: 202-223-5364

[Contact](#)

[Press Room](#)

[Subscribe](#)

The Washington Institute seeks to advance a balanced and realistic understanding of American interests in the Middle East and to promote the policies that secure them.

The Institute is a 501(c)3 organization; all donations are tax-deductible.

[About TWI](#) /

[Support the Institute](#)



© 2021 All rights reserved.

[Employment](#) /

[Privacy Policy](#) /

[Rights & Permissions](#)