Profile: Raba Allah

by Hamdi Malik (/experts/hamdi-malik), Crispin Smith (/experts/crispin-smith), Michael Knights (/experts/michael-knights)

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ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Hamdi Malik (/experts/hamdi-malik)
Hamdi Malik is an Associate Fellow with the Washington Institute, specializing in Shia militias. He earned his doctorate at the school of social, political and global studies, Keele University. He is a 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 (/experts/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. He is a co-founder of the Militia Spotlight platform, which offers in-depth analysis of developments related to the Iranian-backed militias in Iraq and Syria.

Michael Knights (/experts/michael-knights)
Michael Knights is the Jill and Jay Bernstein Fellow of The Washington Institute, specializing in the military and security affairs of Iraq, Iran, and the Persian Gulf states. He is a co-founder of the Militia Spotlight platform, which offers in-depth analysis of developments related to the Iranian-backed militias in Iraq and Syria.

Brief Analysis

or see Part 1: How to Use Militia Spotlight: Profiles (/policy-analysis/how-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).
Chain of command:

- Clear and convincing evidence shows RA is a branch of Kataib Hezbollah (https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/profile-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.

Affiliate relationships:

- RA was initially a joint project with other muqawama groups such as Asaib Ahl al-Haq (https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/profile-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.
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