Profile: Sabereen News

by Hamdi Malik, Crispin Smith, Michael Knights

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Sabereen News is the main media network for all the muqawama (resistance) factions in Iraq, but quietly it keeps a unique connection to Asaib Ahl al-Haq.

**Name:** Sabereen News

**Type of Movement:** (Media) facade for Asaib Ahl al-Haq. Non-kinetic / information operations focus. Propaganda social media channel. Non-lethal / non-violent support to kinetic military, kinetic paramilitary, and social operations aimed at weakening domestic and foreign opponents of the muqawama armed groups.

**ABOUT THE AUTHORS**

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Brief Analysis

Part of a series: Militia Spotlight: Profiles

or see Part 1: How to Use Militia Spotlight: Profiles
**History and objectives:**

- Sabereen News was created on January 11, 2020 as a small channel on the social media application Telegram. By late 2020 it had become the most influential muqawama social media channel.

- Sabereen News objectives include:
  - Promoting the muqawama cause.
  - Spreading disinformation for a variety of purposes, including to discredit the Iraqi government.
  - Incite muqawama supporters and other Iraqis against any party or individuals deemed anti-muqawama. In particular, Sabereen seeks to counter the Iraqi protest movement known as Tishreen movement.
  - Propagate anti U.S sentiment.
  - Promote and disseminate real and fake news of the facade groups’ kinetic operations.
  - Promote muqawama street vigilante groups.
  - Organize activities related to street vigilante and muqawama groups engaged in cyber activities, such as hacking websites and accounts of muqawama opponents.

**Chain of Command:**

- Preponderance of evidence indicates that Sabereen News is controlled by Asaib Ahl al-Haq (AAH). This is based on:
  - Sabereen News’ posts such as “We are AAH” or “Unleash us Qais, we are your soldiers”. Sabereen has not identified this closely with any other fasail (armed group).
  - Special coverage AAH and its leader Qais al-Khazali receive from Sabereen News, in comparison to the coverage of other muqawama militias.
  - Limited access to imagery and updates during certain KH linked operations, compared with apparent special access to information regarding AAH linked groups and attacks.

**Affiliate relationships:**

- Sabereen aggregates real and fake news from across the muqawama media space, but also publishes statements and information apparently sent from insider sources from various militias and facade groups.

- A preponderance of evidence suggests that Sabereen News has a special relationship with the facade group Ashab al-Kahf (AK), as it appears to gain unique opportunities to post some AK claims and statements on behalf of the group. *[AK is itself uniquely affiliated with Asaib Ahl al-Haq.]*

- Sabereen may have had at least one KH advisor at various points in its history. The channel will, on occasion, use phraseology and language indicating a KH nexus.

**Subordinate elements:**

- Sabereen News operates its own media channels on Telegram, Twitter and Facebook.
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