

Profile: Sabereen News

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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)

or see Part 1: [How to Use Militia Spotlight: Profiles \(/policy-analysis/how-use-militia-spotlight-profiles\)](#)

Sabereen News is the main social media conglomerate supporting all "resistance" actions and factions in Iraq.

Name: Sabereen News

Type of movement: Media facade for *fasail* (armed groups), initially with special links to [Asaib Ahl al-Haq \(/node/16715\)](#) (AAH), but later morphing into a broader cross-*muqawama* (resistance) outlet with possible direct ties to Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps-Qods Force (IRGC-QF). Social media propaganda channel with nonkinetic, information operations focus. Nonviolent support to kinetic military, kinetic paramilitary, and social operations aimed at weakening domestic and foreign opponents of armed *muqawama* groups.

History and objectives:

- Sabereen News appeared 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. Whereas most *muqawama* Telegram channels have 10,000-20,000 subscribers, Sabereen has just over 573,000 as of October 2024.
- Sabereen's role, management, and staff have evolved throughout its history. It went through a period of severe flux in late 2020 and early 2021, closely mirroring internecine strife between *muqawama* militias.
- The channel's objectives include:
 - Promoting the *muqawama* cause.



Sabereen News logo

- Spreading disinformation for a variety of purposes, including to discredit the Mustafa al-Kadhimi's government.
- Inciting *muqawama* supporters and other Iraqis against any parties or individuals deemed anti-*muqawama*. In particular, Sabereen seeks to counter the Iraqi protest movement known as Tishrin.
- Propagating anti-U.S sentiment.
- Promoting and disseminating real and fake news about kinetic operations carried out by facade groups.
- Promoting *muqawama* street vigilante groups.
- Organizing activities related to vigilante and *muqawama* groups engaged in cyber operations, such as hacking websites and accounts of *muqawama* opponents.
- Sabereen News seemed to lean towards (<https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/tuna-and-noodles-saga-findings-war-words-between-militias>) Asaib Ahl al-Haq positions in 2021, giving extraordinarily favorable coverage () to AAH leader Qais al-Khazali as late as June (<https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/qais-al-khazali-show-independence>) and November (<https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/sabereen-news-criticizes-iran-lack-support>) 2021.
- On September 27, 2021, Sabereen called for the beheading of Iraqis (<https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/sabereen-news-calls-beheading-iraqi-citizens>) who supported normalization with Israel.
- In March 2022, Sabereen adopted a very active profile (<https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/russia-love-sabereens-ukraine-coverage>) in support of Russia's invasion on Ukraine.
- In April 2022, Sabereen briefly went inactive and seemed to experience a change of management (<https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/sabereens-suspension-part-1-signs-dissent-and-noncompliance>). Following this period, Sabereen seemed to lose some access to advance-notice of kinetic attacks and became more focused on supporting Coordination Framework political maneuvers.
- In July 2022, Sabereen became the clearinghouse (<https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/claiming-without-claiming-iraqi-militia-responses-turkish-attacks>) for coverage of "resistance" strikes on Turkish targets, nodding to specific facade groups and hinting at future attacks inside Turkey.

Chain of command:

- The preponderance of evidence indicates that Sabereen initially enjoyed special ties with AAH. This is based on:
 - Sabereen posts containing slogans such as "We are AAH" or "Unleash us, Qais, we are your soldiers," referring to AAH leader Qais al-Khazali (Sabereen has not identified so closely with any other *fasail*).
 - The special coverage that AAH and Khazali have received from Sabereen compared to other *muqawama* militias.
 - Sabereen's limited access to imagery and updates during certain operations linked to Kataib Hezbollah (/node/16641) (KH), compared with its apparent special access to information regarding AAH-linked groups and attacks.
- At various points, other *muqawama* groups have seemingly attempted to take over Sabereen: an apparently unsuccessful attempt was launched in the last quarter of 2020 by Unit 10,000 (/node/16707), which sought to absorb or acquire the network; and Sabereen's senior management was potentially changed between May and November 2021.
- Beginning in summer 2021, Sabereen appears to have regained a "first among equals" status within the constellation of *muqawama* media channels, being given preference in launching new information operations within a tighter cooperative framework.
- Currently, Sabereen serves as a cross-*muqawama* social media outlet, with strong indicators that it has direct links to the IRGC-QF.

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 representing various militias and facade groups.
- The preponderance of evidence suggests that Sabereen has a long-running special relationship with the facade group Ashab al-Kahf (/https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/profile-ashab-al-kahf) (AK) and has been given seemingly unique opportunities to post some claims and statements on the group's behalf.
- Sabereen may have used administrators and staff drawn from KH and other *fasail* at various points in its history. Sabereen supported a wide range of candidates from all *muqawama* lists in the October 2021 elections, but treated KH's Harakat Hoquq

(<https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/hosseini-moanes-sparks-angry-words-between-kataib-hezbollah-and-asaib-ahl-al-haq>) list more favorably, even though the group contested many constituencies against AAH candidates. The channel occasionally uses language indicating a nexus with KH and, more recently, [Kataib Sayyid al-Shuhada \(/node/16731\)](#).

- Sabereen may draw upon the assets (vehicles, sites, personnel) of the Popular Mobilization Forces Central Security Directorate (Amn al-Hashd) and media directorate.
- The preponderance of evidence suggests that the [Islamic Radio and Television Union \(https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/understanding-irans-vast-media-network-arab-countries\)](#), the [Iraqi Radio and Television Union \(https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/profile-iraqi-radio-and-television-union\)](#), Lebanese Hezbollah, and related entities provide technical support and funding to Sabereen.

Subordinate elements:

- Sabereen News operates its own media channels on Telegram, Twitter, and Facebook.
- Sabereen launched a Farsi account on Telegram in May 2021. It also launched Turkish and Azeri channels on Telegram, but both are now inactive.
- Sabereen runs a "research" channel on Telegram called "Sabereen's Security Analysis and Research." The preponderance of evidence suggests that it evolved out of the [Ababeel \(https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/militia-technical-disinformation-and-nov-7-drone-attack\)](#) Telegram channel (not to be confused with the facade group [Saraya Ababeel \(https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/saraya-ababeel-claims-baghdad-drone-and-rocket-attacks\)](#)).



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