

How to Use Militia Spotlight: Profiles

by [Michael Knights \(/experts/michael-knights\)](#)

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ABOUT THE AUTHORS



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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

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)

The profiles are a repository of institutional memory on the various armed groups, facade groups, and social organizations associated with Iraqi militias, to be used as concise reminders of how these entities are connected.

This sub-series of [Militia Spotlight \(https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/series/militia-spotlight\)](https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/series/militia-spotlight) offers short, quickly digestible profiles that provide background on militia-related organizations. Each profile includes the name of the entity, its English-language meaning, its logo, and a description of its nature and activities, with the aim of answering three key questions:

- Broadly, is the entity a known **fasail** (armed group), a **facade** group intended to conceal the role of an armed group, or a **social or media organization** associated with an armed group? Or is it an **Iraqi government organization** controlled by members of an armed group?
- Does the group focus on **kinetic military operations** (bombings and rocket attacks), **kinetic paramilitary operations** (arson and assault), or nonkinetic **information operations** (media activities and propaganda) or **social or legal operations**?
- Who does the group target and where? For instance, **domestic counter-U.S. operations**, **domestic counter-political/social moderate operations**, or **foreign counter-Saudi operations**? Does the group target the **human rights and / or freedom of expression of Iraqis**?

Next, the profiles review **historic milestones** in the group's existence.

The entity's **chain of command** is then assessed based on open-source evidence, answering a basic question: who tells the group what to do and, by extension, who is politically and legally responsible for its conduct? The entity's

known relationships with other militia-related actors are listed in the **affiliate sections**. The **subordinate section** shows which units answer to the entity. Finally, the date of the most recent update is shown at the end of each summary.

These profiles will become powerful, enduring tools for those seeking to hold militias accountable for their crimes. Dive in, and do let us know if we are missing anything. You can reach us at

militiaspotlight@washingtoninstitute.org ([mailto: militiaspotlight@washingtoninstitute.org](mailto:militiaspotlight@washingtoninstitute.org)) ❖

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[How to Use Militia Spotlight: Profiles](/policy-analysis/how-use-militia-spotlight-profiles)

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[Profile: Kataib Babiliyoun \(50th PMF Brigade\)](/policy-analysis/profile-kataib-babiliyoun-50th-pmf-brigade)

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