Usbat al-Thaireen (UT) is the earliest known facade group employed by Kataib Hezbollah to thinly veil its culpability in anti-coalition kinetic operations. The groups went inactive in November 2020, probably transforming into the Qasim al-Jabbarin facade, potentially providing an important case study of a facade group's complete life-cycle.
**Name:** Usbat al-Thaireen (UT), (Revolutionary League).

**Type of Movement:** Facade group. Kinetic military operations. Domestic counter-U.S. operations.

**History and objectives:**

- One of the earliest facade groups to appear after the killing of Qasem Soleimani and Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis. The group first came to prominence in March 2020. Following the killings, Kataib Hezbollah (KH) set a March 15 deadline for U.S. withdrawal, after which coalition forces were to be treated as foreign occupiers. As the deadline passed UT issued video messages threatening U.S. forces and demanding immediate withdrawal.

- A preponderance of evidence suggests UT was an amalgamation of combat elements of KH and a number of other Iran-backed militias. UT existed to carry out the muqawama’s asymmetric campaign against the U.S. while providing deniability and distance between the kinetic action and more legitimate elements affiliated with the Popular Mobilization Forces (PMF).

- While muqawama groups have recently adopted a strategy involving information operations and some fake attacks, UT’s attacks initially appear to have been consistently real. UT claimed a number of rocket attacks on coalition locations, including the major attack on the coalition base at Taji on March 11, 2020 which killed two U.S. and one British servicepersons.

- The group’s last claimed attack occurred on August 11, 2020, when UT fired three rockets at the US embassy in Baghdad.

- UT operated its own Telegram channel for disseminating statements. On August 26, 2020, the group put out a statement warning about forged statements in its name, and stressing its only media account was the Telegram channel. UT posted one more time after the August statement, in November (an image with the English language words “Be Careful!!! Winter is Coming...”). Since that time no attack or statement has been made in UT’s name. It is likely the facade group name was retired, and a new brand (such as Qasem al-Jabbarin, which appeared around the same time) was developed for claiming attacks. Alternately, KH may have retired to the brand to coincide with a change in strategy towards the US (KH announced a “ceasefire” in August 2020, which led to a reduction in frequency of rocket attacks).

**Chain of Command:**

- Clear and convincing evidence that UT is a facade for KH and was controlled and operated by KH. UT appeared on the day of the expiry of a KH-imposed public deadline for coalition forces to leave Iraq.

**Affiliate relationships:**

- **Ashab al-Kahf.** During the spring and summer of 2020, AK and UT appeared to have a close and complimentary relationship as the two primary facade groups claiming responsibility for attacks on the coalition while disseminating muqawama propaganda. (There is clear and convincing evidence that AK is controlled and operated by Asaib Ahl al-Haq, AAH).

**Subordinate elements:**

- UT operated a small number of rocket and roadside bombing cells active from Taji to Babil.
UT operated a Telegram channel that went inactive in November 2020.
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