

Policy Analysis /

# When the Tansiqiya Speaks in AAH's Absence

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### Brief Analysis

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**The May 20 Gaza protest in Baghdad saw the Tansiqiya speak in the notable absence of any Asaib Ahl al-Haq members, and the event was conspicuously ignored by AAH channels.**

**M**ilitia Spotlight has previously covered the internal dynamics within the Iraqi Resistance Coordination Committee (al-Haya al-Tansiqiya lil-Muqawama al-Iraqiya, or Tansiqiya for short). In February, we [noted](#) Harakat al-Nujaba's (HaN) admission that it is a member of the committee, and the committee's [role](#) in attacks against coalition forces. Now, evidence suggests Asaib Ahl al-Haq (AAH) has been (at least temporarily) excluded from some Tansiqiya activities, perhaps symptomatic of broader divisions between militia leaders and their objectives.

The Tansiqiya has always appeared to be—at best—a very loose confederation of three major Iraqi militias, Kataib

Hezbollah (KH), AAH, and HaN. The grouping emerged on October 10, 2020, when the (then anonymous) committee issued a statement to announce a conditional truce and to give “the foreign forces a conditional opportunity...to prepare a limited and specific timetable” for withdrawing their troops from Iraq. Since then, parent militias have begun to claim membership in the Tansiqiya, implicating themselves in the coordination body and demonstrating their control over rocket and bombing cells. Leaders like AAH's Qais al-Khazali have sought to demonstrate their prominence within (or leadership of) the committee. As a result, it is difficult to understand AAH's exclusion from a major Tansiqiya event last week as anything other than a deliberate snub by rival groups.

## Protest Buildup

On May 18, various *muqawama* platforms including KH's official media wing Kaf (Figure 1), posted an invitation for a protest in support of Palestinian factions fighting in Gaza. The protest was to occur on May 20 in Baghdad. The invitation read: "Under the slogan of al-Aqsa, the symbol of our resistance, the Islamic resistance of Kataib Hezbollah and Harakat al-Nujaba invite you to protest in solidarity with blessed al-Aqsa, Noble Jerusalem, and the Palestinian people resisting and defending the holy places. This [will be] a message of support from the Iraqi people in rejection of all forms of occupation and all normalization." The message was signed by the "Joint Preparatory Committee."

Another version of the invitation (which made no mention of KH or HaN) also circulated on militia propaganda channels (Figure 2). It read: “Under the slogan of al-Aqsa, the symbol of our resistance, the Islamic Resistance in Iraq is holding a protest in solidarity with the great Palestinian people on Thursday 20/5/2021 at 5pm...the Islamic resistance invites you all to [participate].”



Figure 2: A different version of the invitation for the protest posted on HaN-affiliated Brothers of Electronic Jihad

mention of AAH involvement was made at any point.

## Day of the Protest

The protest went ahead as planned at 17:00 hours Baghdad time on May 20. At the event, a statement was read by Nasr al-Shammari (HaN's spokesperson) while Muhammad Mohi (KH's spokesperson) stood behind him. The reading was introduced as

Propaganda accounts associated with KH primarily shared the first invitation (which marked the protest as led by KH and HaN), while accounts more generally aligned with HaN appeared to prefer the version which referred to the “Islamic Resistance.” (As noted in previous Militia Spotlight posts, it is possible HaN prefers to avoid the media attention.)

Unusually, AAH-affiliated accounts largely ignored the advertising for the event, and no



Figure 3: HaN's al-Nujaba TV called the event a "protest of the Tansiqiya," May 20, 2021

“the statement of al-Haya al-Tansiqiya lil-Muqawama al-Iraqiya,” and Shammari concluded it with the same sign-off. Covering the protest, HaN’s [al-Nujaba TV](#) called the [event](#) “protest of the Resistance Coordination Committee [Tansiqiya] in Iraq in solidarity with the Palestinian people in Baghdad” (Figure 3).



Figure 4: KH’s al-Etejah TV referred to the statement read at the event as belonging to the Tansiqiya, May 20, 2021

KH’s [al-Etejah TV](#) also referred to the statement as belonging to the Tansiqiya (Fig. 4). In short, the event appears to have been wholly run by KH and HaN but was referred to throughout as “Tansiqiya.”

As with the buildup to the event, AAH propagandists and media accounts paid little attention on the day, despite this being an event that would usually garner significant *muqawama* media commentary.

### Sabereen

[News](#) (previously noted as linked to AAH) did provide some coverage of the event. In its first [message](#) about the protest at 16:50, it posted a picture of the event with the caption “Baghdad now!” (Figure 5).

At 17:13, the channel replied to its initial post [describing](#) the protest as a KH and HaN event (Figure 6).

Sabereen made no mention of the Tansiqiya. Then, at 18:07, the account posted another photo of the crowds with the caption “in the presence of a large crowd, the Iraqi masses spoke frankly today from [Baghdad’s] Palestine Street in Iraq [in support of] Palestine and Gaza.” Again, no mention of the Tansiqiya was made, despite the committee being overtly mentioned by KH and HaN accounts and attendant leaders. Perhaps due to its size and prominence as a militia media outlet, Sabereen covered the event (albeit in a limited manner), but other AAH channels appear to have completely ignored it.

## Analysis

**A** AH will certainly have been aware of a major protest concerning the conflict in Gaza (an important topic for the Iraqi militias), prominently held in Baghdad with significant media coverage. AAH’s lack of involvement in the event and lack of interest in covering it were likely purposeful and significant. Qais al-Khazali has previously sought to demonstrate his leadership of the Iraqi *muqawama*. In this case, he may have made his leadership claim felt by staying away rather than sharing the spotlight. Or he may have been excluded from the event. The question remains: who snubbed whom? ❖



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Figure 5: Sabereen’s first post about the protest, May 20, 2021



Figure 6: Sabereen describing the protest as a KH and HaN

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