

# Sabereen News Calls for Beheading of Iraqi Citizens

by [Hamdi Malik \(/experts/hamdi-malik\)](#)

Oct 3, 2021

Also available in

[العربية \(/ar/policy-analysis/sabryn-nywz-tdw-aly-qt-rwws-almwatnyn-alraqyyn\)](#)

## ABOUT THE AUTHORS



[Hamdi Malik \(/experts/hamdi-malik\)](#)

Hamdi Malik is an associate fellow with The Washington Institute and cofounder of its Militia Spotlight platform.



Brief Analysis

Part of a series: [Militia Spotlight \(https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/series/militia-spotlight\)](https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/series/militia-spotlight)

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

**After the Erbil conference, which called for normalizing ties between Iraq and Israel, the largest resistance social media organ called for beheadings and then tried to cover its tracks.**

On September 24, a conference held in Erbil called for the normalization of relations with Israel. The event triggered a huge reaction from various *muqawama* (resistance) groups, some of which threatened to kill conference participants or anyone working toward normalizing ties with Israel.

The most extreme threat was posted by [Sabereen News \(/node/16673\)](#) on September 27. It read: “[The facade group] [Saraya Awliya al-Dam \(/node/16626\)](#) (SAD) reconfirms its oath to...[Qasem] Soleimani and [Abu Mahdi] al-Muhandis to behead anyone who calls for normalization [with Israel] in the land of Ali and Hussein [Iraq]” (Figure 1). The oath in question invoked the names of two senior figures killed by a U.S. military strike in January 2020: the head of Iran's Qods Force and the top militia commander in Iraq.



Figure 1: Sabereen threatens to behead Iraqi citizens, September 27, 2021

The message was deleted in a few minutes, probably because the act of beheading would remind Iraqis of the crimes of the Islamic State (IS). Sabereen and SAD still sought to terrorize those in favor of Iraq normalizing with Israel, but tried to avoid reinforcing the [narrative](#)

<https://bit.ly/3A1RS73>) propagated by some commentators/activists that likens the Iranian regime and its *muqawama* proxies to IS. The deleted message was quickly replaced by another that included a video featuring a SAD flag and an implicit threat to the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) in northern Iraq: “[We] swear by Soleimani and Muhandis, the next blows to the proponents [of normalization with Israel] will mark a milestone in the history of Iraq to the point that people will pass from there and say there used to be people here who wanted normalization” (Figure 2). In other words, it was a threat to wipe out the KDP, a party seen by the *muqawama* as one of the main advocates for such normalization.

Other threats issued by the militia Kataib Hezbollah (/node/16641) (KH) were even more direct and explicit. Group spokesman Muhammad Mohi appeared on KH's al-Etejah TV (/node/16939) on September 26 and threatened the entire Kurdistan Region of Iraq (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d7LDnhwk6kE>): “The KRI has become a hotbed and safe haven for all enemies of Iraq and all enemies of the *muqawama*...If you think these are safe havens, you're delusional...We monitor you very carefully, [we know] who enters and who exists, even the buildings used by the Israeli Mossad and the American intelligence.”

In a further attempt to instill fear among advocates of Israeli-Iraqi relations, the *muqawama* created a new facade group with one stated mission: to quell pro-normalization voices. Dubbed Saraya Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis, the new group issued a statement on September 29 warning, “We will be sharp swords against those who think about normalization with the usurper entity” (Figure 3).

In reality, Iraqis suspected of having any kind of ties with Israel or desire for normalization have faced danger



قسما بسليمانى والمهندس  
فان الضربات القادمة للمطبعين  
ستكون علامة فارقة بتاريخ العراق  
حتى يمر من هناك ويقال كان هناك قوم اردوا التطبيع  
#سرايا\_اولياء\_الدم  
#عشاق\_مواجهة\_اسرائيل

Figure 2: Sabereen posts SAD's implicit threat to the KDP, September 27, 2021

from *muqawama* elements for years. In February 2020, the writer Mazen Latif was kidnapped (<https://bit.ly/2WakYwG>) in the center of Baghdad in broad daylight. That October, a *muqawama* quasi-intelligence and propaganda group called Sebyan al-Safara (Lads of the Embassy) produced an eight-minute clip linking Latif to Israel and accusing him of “offering his services to the Mossad” (Figure 4). Latif's fate is unknown.

سرايا ابو هيك المهندك

لمكافحة التطبيع وصد المطبعين

بسم الله ناصر المستضعفين  
بسم الله قاصم الجبارين و المتآمرين

(/sites/de  
10/Fig4.jp



Figure 4: Sebyan al-Safara's clip, posted October 22, 2020

## PART OF A SERIES

### [Militia Spotlight](#)

[\(/policy-analysis/series/militia-spotlight\)](#)

#### [How to Use Militia Spotlight](#)

[\(/policy-analysis/how-use-militia-spotlight\)](#)



### [Iran-Backed Militias Applaud Hamas, Threaten Americans](#)

[\(/policy-analysis/iran-backed-militias-applaud-hamas-threaten-americans\)](#)



### [Militias Welcome Killing of LGBTQ Celebrity: Coordination Framework Pushes to Make Homosexuality Illegal](#)

[\(/policy-analysis/militias-welcome-killing-lgbtq-celebrity-coordination-framework-pushes-make\)](#)

## RECOMMENDED



BRIEF ANALYSIS

**Deterring Escalation and Expansion of the Gaza War by Iran’s “Axis of Resistance”**

Oct 13, 2023

♦  
Michael Eisenstadt,  
Michael Knights  
(/policy-analysis/deterring-escalation-and-expansion-gaza-war-irans-axis-resistance)



BRIEF ANALYSIS

**Iran-Backed Militias Applaud Hamas, Threaten Americans**

Oct 13, 2023

♦  
Amir al-Kaabi,  
Michael Knights  
(/policy-analysis/iran-backed-militias-applaud-hamas-threaten-americans)



ARTICLES & TESTIMONY

**Hamas Has Fractured the Arab World**

Oct 13, 2023

♦  
Ghaith al-Omari  
(/policy-analysis/hamas-has-fractured-arab-world)

TOPICS

Arab-Israeli Relations (/policy-analysis/arab-israeli-relations)

Peace Process (/policy-analysis/peace-process)

Military & Security (/policy-analysis/military-security)

REGIONS & COUNTRIES

Iraq (/policy-analysis/iraq)

Israel (/policy-analysis/israel)