

# Militias Issue Post-Election Threats Against UNAMI and the UAE

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

Oct 19, 2021

Also available in

[العربية \(/ar/policy-analysis/thdydat-almqawmt-bd-alantkhabat-dd-btht-alamm-almthdt-lmsadt-alraq-wdwl-t-alarat\)](/ar/policy-analysis/thdydat-almqawmt-bd-alantkhabat-dd-btht-alamm-almthdt-lmsadt-alraq-wdwl-t-alarat)

## ABOUT THE AUTHORS



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

Hamdi Malik is an Associate Fellow with the Washington Institute, specializing in Shia militias. He earned his doctorate at the school of social, political and global studies, Keele University. 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. He is the coauthor of the Institute's 2020 study "Honored, Not Contained: The Future of Iraq's Popular Mobilization Forces."



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

## After their humiliating defeat in the parliamentary election, Iran-backed groups launched a bizarre campaign against UN and Emirati officials.

**P**redictably, Iraqi *muqawama* (resistance) groups have been attributing their poor performance in this month's general election to a foreign-led conspiracy. They are pointing their fingers at two parties in particular: the UN Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) and its head, Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert, and the United Arab Emirates.

Even before the election, UN agencies were being targeted by such rhetoric from the facade group [Saraya Awliya al-Dam \(/node/16626\)](#) and the influential *muqawama* channel [Sabereen News \(/node/16673\)](#). In a series of posts issued by Sabereen on September 19-21, an official in the Baghdad office of the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) was accused of [being a Mossad agent \(https://t.me/sabreenS1/30404\)](#) because she had once allegedly represented Israel in international organizations (a claim echoed by *muqawama* social media channels).

This rhetoric escalated after the preliminary election results were



د. فراس الياسر  
@OnT8GfQDJiYnXCI



1:02 PM · Oct 14, 2021 · Twitter for Android

Figure 1: A member of Harakat Hezbollah al- (/node/16716) Nujaba tweets about the "opaque role" of UNAMI, October 14, 2021.

removed.

On October 17, a new vigilante group called al-Osud al-Munfrada (Lone Lions) posted a statement on its Telegram channel addressing "those employees of IHEC [the Independent High Electoral Commission] who work for the United Nations," emphasizing that the group "will be the cutting sword on their necks" (Figure 4). It is not clear whether this threat was against UN employees working with IHEC or IHEC

announced. Once it became clear that (/sites/default/files/2021-10/IMG1.2.jpeg) the main *muqawama* lists were among the biggest losers, various groups accused UNAMI of conspiring to ensure this outcome and issued threats against the organization and Hennis-Plasschaert in particular.

Firas al-Yasser, a member of the political office of Harakat Hezbollah al-Nujaba (/node/16716), warned of "the role of UNAMI in Iraq and especially of Plasschaert and her opaque role in Iraq" (Figure 1). Other *muqawama* characterizations of her have been far more incendiary. For instance, groups created the hashtag "Ajouz al-Shaitan" (Satan Crone) to describe her and posted numerous cartoons depicting her as a sinister-looking demonic figure (Figure 2).

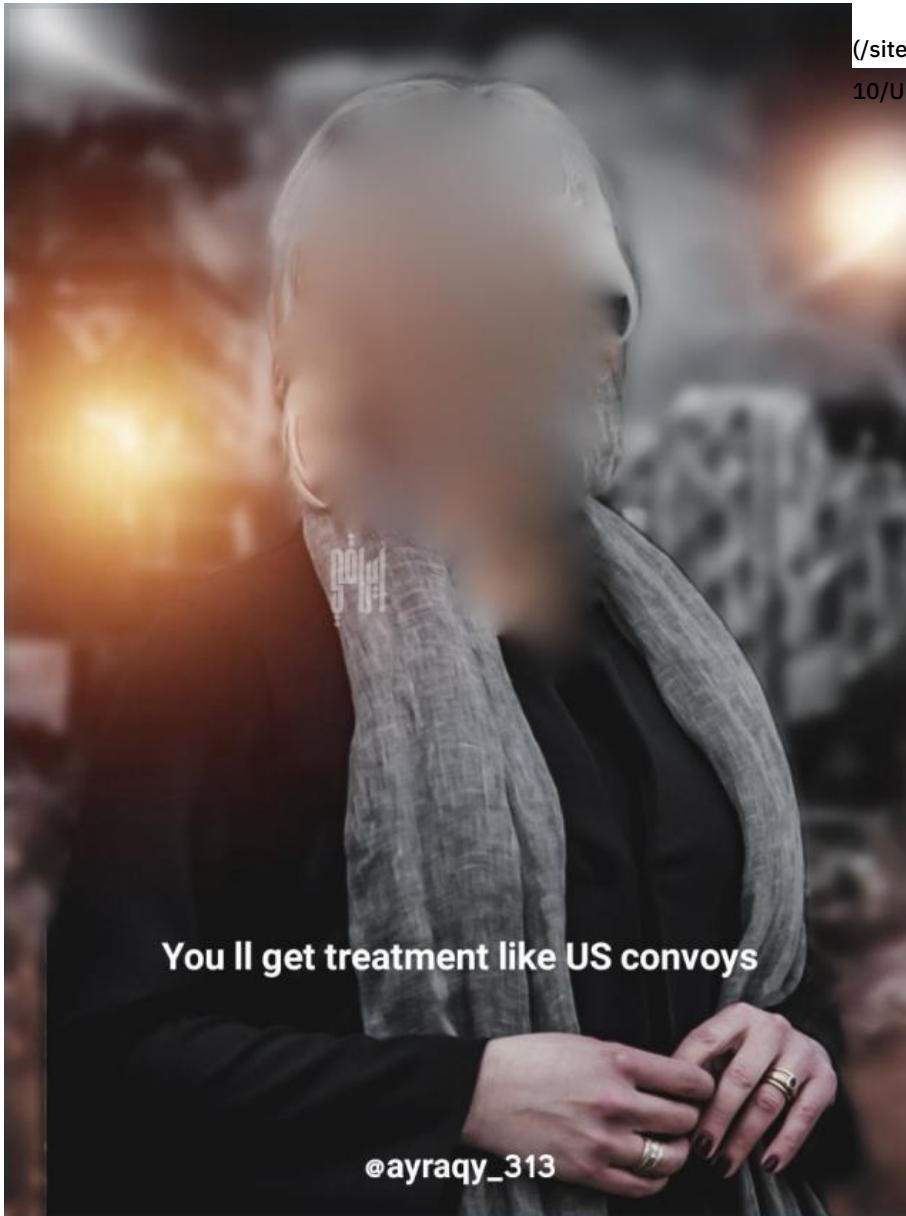
Some of these posts have carried threats of violence as well. On October 13, a *muqawama* graphic designer known as "Ayraaq" posted a picture of Hennis-Plasschaert in his Telegram account depicting flames and a tank coming out of her face. The depiction was captioned in English: "You ll [sic] get treatment like US convoys" (Figure 3). This is a reference to the longstanding *muqawama* campaign of attacking U.S. logistical convoys (/node/16614) with explosives. The picture was reposted by Sabereen News (/node/16673) but later



Figure 2: Graphic posted on a few *muqawama* social media channels calling the head of UNAMI "Ajouz al-Shaitan," October 17, 2021.

(/sites/defa  
10/IMG2.2.

employees working with UN teams.



The UAE has likewise been targeted (/sites/default/files/2021-10/UNAMI.jpeg) with numerous *muqawama* accusations and threats post-election. The main thrust of this rhetoric is that servers used by IHEC to process the election results are located in the UAE, so Abu Dhabi must therefore have tampered with the numbers to undermine the *muqawama*.

The gravest threat against the UAE was made by radical pro-*muqawama* commentator Ahmad Abdussada during a live appearance ([https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-lIXTS-DGPM&ab\\_channel=Utv](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-lIXTS-DGPM&ab_channel=Utv)) on the Iraqi station UTV: “I have accurate information that in the coming days, the UAE might be targeted militarily from Iraqi soil...Drones, precision missiles, and ballistic missiles will be launched from Iraqi soil toward the UAE to send a deterrence message to the leaders of the conspiracy.”

Similar threats were made by *muqawama* social media outlets. On October 17, the channel La Makan, La Watan ([I Have] No Place, No Homeland) posted the following: “The leader said: The response to the UAE's interference in rigging the Iraqi election will be a military one, [using] drones and missiles and the rest of it” (Figure 5).



Figure 5: La Makan, La Watan threatens the UAE, October 17, 2021.



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

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



### [Kataib Hezbollah Behind "Grassroots" Iraqi Fundraising for Yemen](/policy-analysis/kataib-hezbollah-behind-grassroots-iraqi-fundraising-yemen)

[\(/policy-analysis/kataib-hezbollah-behind-grassroots-iraqi-fundraising-yemen\)](/policy-analysis/kataib-hezbollah-behind-grassroots-iraqi-fundraising-yemen)



### [Militia Lionization of Esmail Qaani: Consolidation or Covering Embarrassment?](/policy-analysis/militia-lionization-esmail-qaani-consolidation-or-covering-embarrassment?)

[\(/policy-analysis/militia-lionization-esmail-qaani-consolidation-or-covering-embarrassment\)](/policy-analysis/militia-lionization-esmail-qaani-consolidation-or-covering-embarrassment?)

## RECOMMENDED



BRIEF ANALYSIS

### [Iran Takes Next Steps on Rocket Technology](/policy-analysis/iran-takes-next-steps-rocket-technology)

Feb 11, 2022

◆  
Farzin Nadimi

[\(/policy-analysis/iran-takes-next-steps-rocket-technology\)](/policy-analysis/iran-takes-next-steps-rocket-technology)



BRIEF ANALYSIS

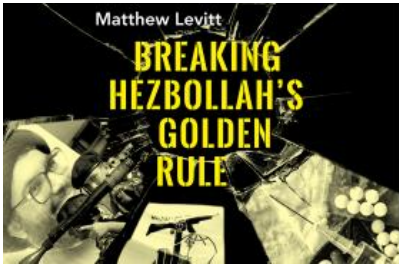
## [Saudi Arabia Adjusts Its History, Diminishing the Role of Wahhabism](#)

Feb 11, 2022



Simon Henderson

[\(/policy-analysis/saudi-arabia-adjusts-its-history-diminishing-role-wahhabism\)](#)



ARTICLES & TESTIMONY

## [Podcast: Breaking Hezbollah's Golden Rule](#)

Feb 9, 2022



Matthew Levitt

[\(/policy-analysis/podcast-breaking-hezbollahs-golden-rule\)](#)

### TOPICS

[Democracy & Reform \(/policy-analysis/democracy-reform\)](#)

[Military & Security \(/policy-analysis/military-security\)](#)

### REGIONS & COUNTRIES

[Iraq \(/policy-analysis/iraq\)](#)