

A Fake KSS Recruitment Drive

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Brief Analysis

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

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

Kataib Sayyid al-Shuhada may have exaggerated its recruiting numbers, but the episode points to militias' desperation to look potent and regain leverage by threatening to destabilize Iraq in early 2022.

Between November 19 and November 25, [Kataib Sayyid al-Shuhada \(/node/16731\)](#) (KSS) claimed that 49,000 volunteers were enrolled in its new recruitment campaign to prepare for a major battle with U.S. troops in Iraq (Figure 1).

The campaign was announced by KSS secretary-general Abu Ala al-Walai in a November 19 tweet: "As the hour of determination and the big battle approaches...Kataib Sayyid al-Shuhada announces a recruitment plan for volunteers to join our ranks." He then called on "the Iraqi people and the *muqawama* [resistance] factions to raise the level of readiness in preparation for the decisive and historic confrontation with the American occupation on 12/31/2021 after 12:00 [midnight]" (Figure 2). This is when all U.S. combat troops are scheduled to leave the country based on the agreement between the Iraqi and U.S. governments, which was [achieved in July \(https://www.state.gov/joint-statement-on-the-u-s-iraq-strategic-dialogue-2/\)](#) after a few rounds of bilateral strategic dialogue.



Figure 2: Abu Ala al-Walai announces KSS recruitment drive, November 19, 2021

Hours before Walai's tweet, the Iraqi Resistance Coordination Committee (al-Haya al-Tansiqiya lil-Muqawama al-Iraqiya, or Tansiqiya for short) issued a statement emphasizing the need to attack any U.S. troops that remain after December 31, 2021. The statement makes clear that this threat is in response to Muqtada al-Sadr's previous request to dissolve the *fasail* (armed factions): "We affirm that the *muqawama's* arms—which have been talked about a lot in recent days, and some [Muqtada al-Sadr] insisted on bringing [the issue] into recent political rivalries—will be ready to dislodge the occupation as soon as the moment comes, and the deadline ends after twelve o'clock in the evening of 12/31/2021" (Figure 3).

Sadr had addressed the *muqawama* militias in a [televised speech \(https://www.youtube.com/watch?\)](#)



رباعاً: نؤكد على القوات الأمنية البيلة ان يكونوا للمظلوم عوناً وللعراق وشعبه حصناً كما عهدناكم .

الهيئة التنسيقية للمقاومة العراقية بتاريخ ١٨-١٠-٢٠٢١

7K 18:46

19 November

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

(وقَالِهِمْ حَتَّى لَا تَكُونَ فِئْتَةً وَيَكُونَ لِلَّهِ فَانٌ انْتَهَوْا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ بَصِيرٌ، وَإِنْ تَوَلَّوْا فَإِنَّمَا تَوَلَّوْا اللَّهَ مَوْلَاكُمْ يَغْمُ الْمَوْلَى وَيَغْمُ التَّصْبِيرُ)

صدق الله العلي العظيم

نراقب عن قرب مدى الالتزام بمخرجات ما يسمى بجولة الحوار الاستراتيجي الذي لم تكن مؤمنين بجدية الاحتلال والتزامه كطرف فيه، ولأننا ألبنا على أنفسنا منح المفاوضات العراقي فرصة لإخراج الاحتلال الأمريكي من أرضنا الطاهرة بالطرق الدبلوماسية، فإننا لم نرحب الآن أي مظهر من مظاهر الانسحاب على الرغم من أنه لا يفصلنا عن ٣١ / ١٢ / ٢٠٢١ سوى ٤٢ يوماً فقط، بل على العكس، فقد رصدنا قيام الاحتلال الأمريكي الوقح بزيادة أعداده ومعداته في قواعده المنتشرة في العراق، بل وصرنا نسمع تصريحات رسمية وشبه رسمية من مسؤولي ولايات الشر الأمريكية حول نيتهم عدم الانسحاب من البلاد بحجة وجود طلب من بغداد بذلك، في الوقت الذي لم نر أي رد أو نفي من الحكومة العراقية حول تلك التصريحات الخرقاء!

إننا نؤكد بأن سلاح المقاومة الشريفة الذي كثر الكلام عنه في الأيام الماضية، وعكف البعض مصراً على زجه في المناقشات السياسية الأخيرة، سيكون حاضراً لتقطيع أوصال الاحتلال ما أن تحين اللحظة وتنتهي المهلة بعد الساعة الثانية عشر من مساء يوم ٣١ / ١٢ / ٢٠٢١.

إن شرعية المقاومة -التي أسس لها السيد الشهيد محمد باقر الصدر رضوان الله عليه- والتي أذلت الاحتلال وأهانت استكباره بسلاحها الشرعي مكتسبة من أحقية الشعب العراقي بمقارعة الاحتلال المنتهك لسيادته، وإن بوصله هذا السلاح الذي أعاد الكرامة كانت ولا تزال وستبقى موجّهة نحو رؤوس المحتلين أيّاً كانوا.

إن المقاومة منهج شرعي وأخلاقي ووطني أقرته المواثيق والأعراف الدولية، فضلاً عن الشرائع السماوية، وهو ما يقتضي عدم التخلي عن سلاح الشرف والعزة ما دامت الدماء تسري في العروق، (لا يَسْتَأْذِنُكَ الَّذِينَ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ أَنْ يُجَاهِدُوا).

الهيئة التنسيقية للمقاومة العراقية بتاريخ ١٩ / ١١ / ٢٠٢١

5.4K 12:40

Figure 3: Tansiqiya statement, November 19, 2021



#اعلان
بسبب كثرة الإستفسارات والاسئلة عن آلية التقديم والنافذة للتطوع في كتائب سيد الشهداء سائب استعداداً للمنازلة الكبرى يمكنكم التقديم عن طريق الهواتف المذكورة في الصورة يومياً من الساعة ال ٩ صباحاً إلى الساعة ٨ مساءً علماً ان باب القبول مفتوح لمدة ٥ أيام فقط.

Figure 5: Mobile numbers published by KSS as part of its recruitment drive, November 21, 2021

On November 21, KSS spokesman Kadhim al-Fartusi [told the Iraqi network UTV \(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V47Fii6zPms&ab_channel=Utv\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V47Fii6zPms&ab_channel=Utv) that the militia managed to recruit 23,000 men. Yet this was only two days after the recruitment campaign was announced. Past research and data regarding call center activities indicates that even with a 100% success rate, there is no way that six phone lines operating around the clock could have processed more than 3,500 new registrants between November 19 and November 25. The claimed final figure of 49,000 new registrations would have required at least twenty-eight days of continuous operation.

Nor was KSS making a real offer of employment, with the resources to match. Observing the *muqawama* social media space indicates that many young men who tried to enroll in the group's recruitment plan failed to reach the published numbers. Many asked whether this was truly an employment opportunity, and the reply from KSS-affiliated individuals made clear that those admitted would be considered volunteers and would receive no salary.



Figure 6: KSS call center receiving calls from volunteers, November 21, 2021

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

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