

## Profile: Shaajab News

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### ABOUT THE AUTHORS

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May Riad writes for the Washington Institute and other publications on politics and security issues in the Middle East and North Africa region.

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

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## Shajaab News used a moment of disruption at Sabereen News to establish itself as a Sabereen-wannabe and amplifier of that channel's content and style.

**N**ame: Shaajab News

**Type of movement:** Media facade for one or more *fasail* (armed groups). Second-tier *muqawama* (resistance) media channel that gained prominence during the [enforced hiatus \(/node/17381\)](/node/17381) of the Iraqi militia Telegram channel [Sabereen News \(/node/16673\)](/node/16673) between March 28 and April 8, 2022. Focuses on nonkinetic information operations and social media propaganda. Provides nonviolent support to kinetic military, kinetic paramilitary, and social operations aimed at weakening domestic and foreign opponents of the armed *muqawama* groups. Analysis of Shaajab posts indicates occasional access to militia insider information, but the channel is unlikely to have the same access as more prominent propaganda accounts.

### History and objectives:

- Shaajab News channel was created on September 19, 2020, around the time that Israel, Bahrain, and the United Arab Emirates signed the Abraham Accords. It first focused on pushing anti-Western propaganda, then moved to promoting a small number of *fasail* media accounts, videos, and statements.
- Its number of subscribers increased gradually after its creation, though the most significant boost occurred after Sabereen News was taken offline in March 2022, with around 2,000 subscribers added on April 3-5 alone. It currently has more than 28,500 subscribers, a total that is still dwarfed by Sabereen's (209,719 as of May 2022).
- Shaajab is considered to be a second-tier media channel, based on its apparently inferior access to militia insider information and the derivative nature of its content. Many of the channel's posts are identical to content shared by Sabereen and are posted later in time, amplifying the reach of these posts but not adding new information. Updates are often less detailed, especially when reporting on kinetic operations.
- While less likely to break militia news than Sabereen, Shaajab has occasionally led on reporting rocket attacks, including on January 13, 2022, and various occasions in March and April.
- Shaajab recently added more capabilities, creating numerous video clips aiming at disseminating *muqawama* propaganda and



disinformation. The channel appears to have an interest in expanding its reach and access as a tool of militia propaganda.

- On October 2, 2023, Shaajab [praised the murder \(https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/militias-welcome-killing-lgbtq-celebrity-coordination-framework-pushes-make\)](https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/militias-welcome-killing-lgbtq-celebrity-coordination-framework-pushes-make) of popular Iraqi TikToker and LGBTQ+ advocate Mohammed Noor al-Saffar, known as Noor BM, who was [shot dead \(https://edition.cnn.com/2023/09/27/middleeast/iraq-lgbtq-shot-intl/index.html\)](https://edition.cnn.com/2023/09/27/middleeast/iraq-lgbtq-shot-intl/index.html) in broad daylight in Baghdad's al-Mansour neighborhood.

#### Chain of command:

Shaajab's messaging is cross- *muqawama* and not overwhelmingly affiliated with any given faction. This is dissimilar to the behavior of social media accounts affiliated with [Kataib Hezbollah \(/node/16641\)](#) (KH) or even [Asaib Ahl al-Haq \(/node/16715\)](#) (AAH), based on these channels' content, posting style, and messages indicating support or affinity for specific groups or leaders.

Shaajab has extensively covered kinetic operations claimed by or attributed to the [Ashab al-Kahf \(/node/16638\)](#) facade group, which is itself affiliated with AAH and [Harakat Hezbollah al-Nujaba \(/node/16716\)](#). Yet this is weak evidence of a link or affinity between these *fasail* and the account owners of Shaajab News.

#### Affiliate relationships:

Shaajab works closely with Sabereen to amplify the latter's messaging. The two channels post similar (sometimes identical) content and have thanked one another for their efforts. As noted above, Shaajab is likely to have less access to militia insider information, indicating a lower level of access to *muqawama* networks.

#### Subordinate elements:

- Shaajab has two other channels with the same name; one is a backup, the other is a bot channel. The backup channel was created on July 14, 2021, but did not issue its first post until February 27, 2022. Most of the backup channel's activity happened in March 2022; as of May 2022, it had fallen into disuse again.
- Aside from their Telegram channel, the Shaajab account owners also run a [Twitter account \(https://mobile.twitter.com/shaajab1\)](https://mobile.twitter.com/shaajab1).



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