

The Coordination Framework's Four-Way Split in Provincial Elections (Part 1): Overarching Trends

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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)

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Badr, Asaib Ahl al-Haq, and Nouri al-Maliki are testing each other's strength in the south but mostly hanging together in the north.

Provincial elections in Iraq tend to create strange bedfellows, temporarily splitting partnerships formed in the preceding national elections and government formation process. Ahead of this December's provincial vote, the Coordination Framework (CF)—Iraq's top political coalition for Iran-backed militias—is experiencing this same process, with each constituent group considering how best to serve its own interests and profitably test its strength against other CF rivals.

The CF's Four-Way Split

The current campaign season has divided the CF along four lines:

1. Former prime minister Nouri al-Maliki decided not to forge an alliance with the militias and is instead leading his Dawlat al-Qanun (State of Law) coalition, which includes the forces of his previous alliance in addition to Fadhila (The Virtue Party).
2. Tahalof Nabni (We Build Coalition), which is led by the [Badr Organization \(/node/17003\)](#) but has a semiautonomous sub-list led by [Asaib Ahl al-Haq \(AAH\) \(/node/16715\)](#), called Tahalof al-Safwa al-Watani (National Elites Coalition).
3. The Islamic Supreme Council of Iraq (ISCI), running as the Nosahheh (We Correct) list.
4. Tahalof Quwa al-Dawla (State Forces Coalition), consisting of Ammar al-Hakim's Hikma movement and former prime minister Haidar al-Abadi's group Itelaf al-Nasr (Victory Alliance).

The way the lists run in each province is subject to change before election day and has no bearing on post-electoral alliance politics at the provincial council level, where governors are ratified. Yet the patterns shown in the table below are revealing.

Coalition Framework Factions	Baghdad and the South	Kirkuk and Salah al-Din	Diyala	Nineveh
State of Law (including Fadhila) under Maliki	Maliki runs separately	Everyone in the Coordination Framework will run together under the list name <i>Tahalof al-Itar al-Watani</i> (the National Framework Coalition)	Maliki and Badr/Falah al-Fayyadh will run under the list name <i>Tahalof Diyalatona</i> (Our Diyala Coalition)	Everyone in the Coordination Framework will run together under the list name <i>Tahalof Hadba al-Watani</i> (the National Hadba Coalition), except: • No Falah al-Fayyadh • No Abadi
<i>Tahalof Nabni</i> (We Build Coalition) • Badr, including Falah al-Fayyadh's Ataa • A sub-list called <i>Tahalof al-Safwa al-Watani</i> (the National Elites Coalition) led by Asaib Ahl al-Haq, and Kataib Sayyid al-Shuhada	<i>Tahalof Nabni</i> run as one list		AAH plus <i>Tahalof Khadamat</i> (the Services Coalition) of Kataib Al-Imam Ali founder Shibl al-Zaydi will run under one list	
Islamic Supreme Council of Iraq runs as <i>Nosahheh</i> (We Correct)	Runs separately as <i>Nosahheh</i>		No indication that <i>Nosahheh</i> is running there	
Ammar al-Hakim and Haider al-Abadi	Runs as joint Hakim/Abadi list		Hakim runs separately	

Table 1: Split of Coordination Framework partners by province in the December 2023 local elections (click to enlarge).

Trends Visible So Far

A number of general trends and intra-CF rivalries electoral jump out, though these alignments could certainly shift in the coming weeks through defections, withdrawals, or other mechanisms:

- In areas where the predominantly Shia CF stands to gain and lose the most seats (Baghdad and the south), a fierce contest has emerged between Maliki and the joint forces of Badr/AAH.
- The CF has chosen to remain largely united in Kirkuk, Salah al-Din, and Nineveh, all of which are pacified militia "colonies" where a lack of cohesiveness could result in strong opposition from Sunnis, Kurds, and even Sadristes (in Salah al-Din), thereby seriously reducing the overall number of CF provincial council seats. The need to maintain or gain influence in these provinces has overcome internal rivalries.
- In Diyala (the focus of [Part 2 of this analysis \(/node/18312\)](#)), Badr and AAH have decided to test each other's strength, with AAH leader Qais al-Khazali challenging Hadi al-Ameri and Faleh al-Fayyad in their home province.

Kataib Hezbollah Supports AAH?

The position of [Harakat Hoquq \(/node/17048\)](#) (The Rights Movement), run by the militia [Kataib Hezbollah \(KH\) \(/node/16641\)](#), is still unclear. Al-Rabaa TV, an outlet close to the *muqawama* (resistance), reported that Hoquq is part of *Tahalof al-Safwa al-Watani* when it announced the the following: "The Independent High Electoral Commission formally approved *Tahalof al-Safwa al-Watani*. The Coalition includes al-Sadiqoun [AAH's political wing] and Hoquq" (Figure 1).



Figure 1: Al-Rabaa TV reports that Hoquq is part of *Tahalof al-Safwa al-Watani*, August 10, 2023.



Figure 2: Qais al-Khazali talks to al-Iraqiya TV, August 22, 2023.

Yet Khazali claimed in an interview with al-Iraqiya TV that

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KH will not take part in the provincial vote: "Kataib Hezbollah made a clear decision not to participate in the elections, neither by overt figures nor under the title of independent figures. We respect this decision. They will support the Safwa Coalition with everything they can to make the electoral process a success" (Figure 2).

KH's social media channels, which are usually reluctant to report Khazali's remarks, were keen to post his claim about KH's electoral decision. This could reflect disappointment that KH supporters had no clear candidates to vote for, but also relief at receiving some guidance. At the very least, it is a new indicator of relative tranquility between the online supporters of each group at this time.

For his part, Hoquq leader Hossein Moanes told al-Sharqiya TV that his movement will not take part in the elections because it believes the provincial councils need to be cancelled. He stated that Hoquq members will participate as voters but did not say they will support the Safwa Coalition (Figure 3).

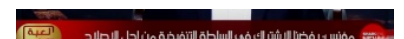
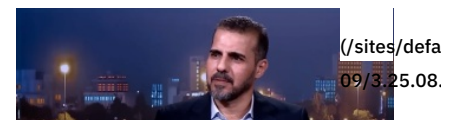


Figure 3: Hossein Moanes on al-Sharqiya TV, August 25, 2023.

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