

# Kataib Hezbollah Secretary-General Tries to Forestall U.S. Strikes

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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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## Abu Hussein has unveiled a dramatic gambit to sidestep Washington's threatened response to the killing of three U.S. soldiers.

On January 30, Ahmad Mohsen Faraj al-Hamidawi (aka Abu Hussein), secretary-general of the Iran-backed Iraqi militia [Kataib Hezbollah \(/node/16641\)](#) (KH), made a dramatic announcement via the Telegram account Kaf. The announcement is reproduced in full below:

*In the name of God, the most Gracious, the most Merciful:*

*(Fighting is ordained for you, even though you hate it. But it may be that you hate something while it is good for you, and it may be that you love something while it is bad for you. Allah knows, and you do not know.)*

*The thorny path is difficult, and its taxes are great, and the free people who walk it realize that the price, no matter how great, is insignificant in the face of achieving God's satisfaction and supporting the oppressed. The Islamic Resistance, Kataib Hezbollah, has made its decision to support our oppressed people in defiant Gaza by its own free will and without any interference from others. Indeed, our brothers In the Axis [of Resistance]—especially in the Islamic Republic—do not know how we undertake jihad, and they often object to the pressure and escalation against the American occupation forces in Iraq and Syria, and out of our commitment to fulfilling our humanitarian and ideological mandate, we have worked with wisdom, deliberation, and careful consideration of religious and moral balances in the most difficult circumstances and the cruelest.*

*Hereby we announce the suspension of military and security operations against the occupation forces in order to prevent*



Figure 1: Abu Hussein calls for a suspension of military operations against U.S. and coalition forces in Iraq, January 30, 2024.

embarrassment to the Iraqi government. We will continue to defend our people in Gaza in other ways, and we recommend to the brave Mujahedin of the Free Kataib Hezbollah to [be engaged in] passive defense (temporarily), if any hostile American action occurs toward them. (So that Allah might accomplish a matter already destined. And to Allah are matters returned.) The Secretary-General of the Hezbollah Brigades—Abu Hussein al-Hamidawi (Figure 1).

The U.S.-designated terrorist group has been **very prominent (/node/18472)** in speaking for the *muqawama* (resistance) militias and their **Islamic Resistance in Iraq (/node/18416)** umbrella brand during the Gaza war. KH's Abu Hussein wing has been unwilling to let Akram Kaabi, the leader of **Harakat Hezbollah al-Nujaba (/node/16716)**, be the **foremost public figure (https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/node/17179)** for the *muqawama*. It has also **publicly mocked (https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/node/18509)** the militia **Asaib Ahl al-Haq (/node/16715)** for not being aggressive enough against the United States.

In Militia Spotlight's assessment, Abu Hussein's dramatic turnaround is intended to forestall an imminent U.S. military operation that the Iranian and Iraqi governments wish to avoid. In particular, Abu Hussein's remarks were quick to disassociate Iran from liability in **recent militia attacks (/node/18428)**, particularly the **January 28 drone strike in Jordan (/node/18599)** that killed three Americans and wounded many more. The attack occurred at Rukban, inside KH's area of responsibility for anti-U.S. operations.

KH is also clearly engaging in disinformation when it states that Iran has no foreknowledge of the group's attacks, or that Tehran lacks the ability to impose its will on KH and alter its internal decisions. For starters, one of the officials sitting on KH's own Shura Council is a "Jihad Assistant" from Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC). Moreover, the militia has repeatedly proven to be highly responsive to Iranian tactical direction in the past, most recently when it strictly observed the **temporary ceasefire (/node/18501)** in Gaza late last year. ❖

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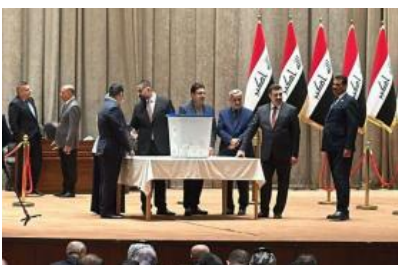
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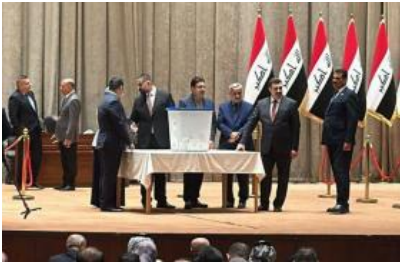
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