

# AAH Terrorist Planner Adnan Fayhan Takes Over as Babil Governor

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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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## A militia figure implicated in the 2007 murder-kidnapping of five Americans in Karbala is now the governor of an Iraqi province.

On February 6, the Babil provincial council selected Adnan Fayhan al-Dulaymi, the head of the Sadiqoun parliamentary bloc, as the province's new governor (Figure 1). Al-Sadiqoun is the political front for the U.S.-designated terrorist organization [Asaib Ahl al-Haq \(/node/16715\)](#) (AAH). Fittingly, the appointment was made under cover of darkness in an early-morning session that seven of the eighteen council members boycotted in protest of the selection.

This is a major step forward for AAH (i.e., its first governorship) and for Dulaymi, who was the group's first member of parliament and now leads its growing political bloc. It is also a dark moment for Iraq: according to both AAH leader Qais al-Khazali and the U.S. government, Dulaymi is an Iran-backed terrorist who led the planning of the notorious January 2007 attack on the Karbala Provincial Joint Coordination Center (PJCC), in which five Americans were killed, four of them by summary execution while tied up and blindfolded. A relative of his (Azhar al-Dulaymi) led the actual assault and was killed by U.S. forces that May.



Figure 1: Adnan Fayhan al-Dulaymi, an organizer of the January 2007 kidnapping and murder of Americans at the Karbala Provincial Joint Coordination Center, is now the governor of Babil.

### Dulaymi's Background Murdering Americans

Hailing from Hillah in Babil province, Dulaymi first turned up on the U.S. government's radar as a young Sadrist commander. According to a [U.S. Tactical Interrogation Report \(https://www.aei.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/TIR-18.pdf?x91208\)](#) declassified March 30, 2007, Khazali—a talkative detainee at the time—verified that Dulaymi "was the leader of the Sadr Trend 'Special Groups' [Washington's working name for early AAH cells] for the central Iraq area, which comprised Diwaniyah, Karbala, Hillah, and Najaf."

Khazali also [helpfully verified \(https://www.aei.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/TIR-18.pdf?x91208\)](#) that Dulaymi "came to his house in Sadr City, Baghdad, to have him approve of the attack plan on the...PJCC, and to ensure it was in accordance with sharia law and get the detainee's blessing on the attack." The Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps-Qods Force (IRGC-QF) [supported the attack \(https://www.army.mil/article/3890/iran\\_arming\\_training\\_directing\\_terror\\_groups\\_in\\_iraq\\_us\\_official\\_says\)](#) at training facilities inside Iran, where a [full-scale mock-up \(https://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2007/06/us\\_finds\\_karbala\\_pjc.php\)](#) of the Karbala PJCC was photographed by U.S. satellites. Dulaymi was later detained by U.S. authorities due to acts of anti-American terrorism in Iraq.

### Khazali's Political Experiment

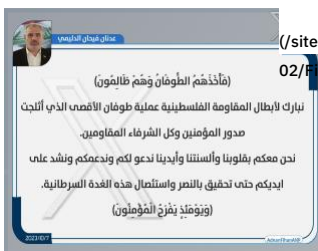


Figure 2: Dulaymi applauds Hamas' October 7 atrocities in Israel.

When Khazali and Dulaymi were released from U.S. custody in 2010 in exchange for the bodies of murdered British civilians, Dulaymi was put to work in politics. He first led AAH's political office in Lebanon, organizing anti-Western "axis of resistance" conferences [with Hezbollah and Palestinian groups \(https://www.understandingwar.org/sites/default/files/ResurgenceofAAH.pdf\)](#) in 2011. He

remains openly supportive of terrorism against Israel, noting on October 7, 2023: "We congratulate the heroes of the Palestinian resistance on the operation of [al-Aqsa Flood] that heartened us ... [We are] supporting you and firmly shaking your hands until victory is accomplished by removing this cancerous gland," referring to Israel (Figure 2).

After the U.S. departure from Iraq in 2011, he returned home and built AAH's first political party, al-Sadiqoun, scoring its first electoral victory in the 2014 parliamentary election. Immediately after the win, he joined the new Popular Mobilization Forces (PMF) and took part in their first battlefield victory: an operation to retake the Jurf al-Sakhar area, where he was prominently photographed with IRGC-QF commander Qasem Soleimani (Figure 3). Since then, Dulaymi has campaigned on a platform of



Figure 3: Dulaymi and Soleimani in Jurf al-Sakhar in 2014.

refusing any resettlement of Sunnis in that area, with the exception of individuals linked to Sunni notables who are under the Shia militia bloc's control (Figure 4).

Dulaymi also led al-Sadiqoun's very successful campaign of voter intimidation and ballot-stuffing in the 2018 parliamentary election, which led to AAH's increase from one to fifteen seats in that [very flawed vote \(https://eprints.lse.ac.uk/89698/7/MEC\\_Iraqi-elections\\_Report\\_2018.pdf\)](#). He served a second term on the parliament's defense and security committee, where he consistently opposed the U.S. military presence in Iraq even when it

was at Baghdad's invitation. He defended his seat again in 2021 and continued running al-Sadiqoun until his appointment as governor.



### [A Key Terrorist Leader Is Now a Governor](/sites/default/files/2024-)

Dulaymi is viewed as the closest political advisor to Khazali, a U.S.-designated terrorist leader. He is also AAH's most successful political experiment. For instance, shortly before his new appointment, he served as AAH's representative on the small group of Coordination Framework factions that negotiated the carve-up of over 2,000 corrupt applications intended to be fast-tracked into the elite Counter Terrorism Service (aka the Counter Terrorism Command and Iraqi Special Operations Forces). ❖



[Source: Aljazeera to return to Juri al-Sadiqun.](#)

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