

Profile: The Hoquq Movement

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Brief Analysis

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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A parliamentary bloc controlled by the U.S.-designated terrorist organization Kataib Hezbollah, with a track record of agitating for violence against American interests and Iraqi moderates.

Name: Harakat Hoquq (Rights Movement)

Type of movement: Political and social group under the control of U.S.-designated terrorist organization Kataib Hezbollah

(<https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/profile-kataib-hezbollah>)

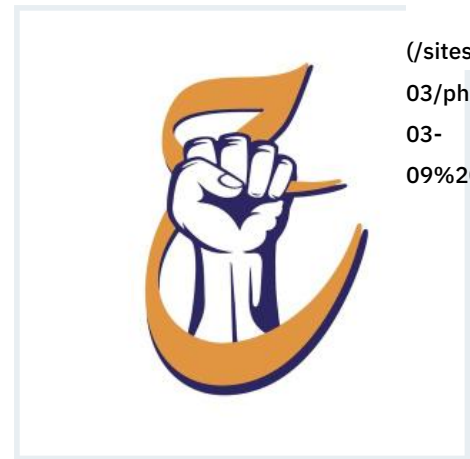
(KH). Information operations (media activities and propaganda) against U.S. and Iraqi government, plus social operations. Domestic counter-moderate and counter-protester information operations.

History and objectives:

- In late July 2021, KH member Hossein Moanes Jabbar al-Hijami (who ran the online persona "Abu Ali al-Askari" for a period) made his first television appearance as head of Harakat Hoquq. He presented himself and his movement

as an alternative to other *muqawama* (resistance) factions, telling iNEWS TV (run by the group [Kataib Sayyid al-Shuhada](#) (<https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/node/16731>), or KSS), “There is a big political vacuum and disappointment toward our people...I established this movement to address part of this frustration.”

- Hoquq [ran thirty-two candidates](#) (<https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/hoquq-candidates-kataib-hezbollahs-aspiring-parliamentarians>) (including seven women) in eleven provinces, mostly academics with degrees in political science, business management law, or media studies. The cluster of KH candidates in constituencies surrounding the group's Jurf al-Sakhar base underlines the manner in which it seeks to dominate Baghdad's southern rural arc, northern Karbala, and road corridors to Anbar.
- On August 4, 2021, Hoquq officially launched its electoral campaign. At the time, a [Washington Institute PolicyWatch](#) (<https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/elections-without-democracy-iraq>) noted the following: "In a brazen breach of Article 9 of the constitution, which prohibits armed personnel from running for office, the U.S.-designated terrorist group Kataib Hezbollah is fielding candidates under the Harakat Hoquq...list."
- After suffering poor electoral results (only one win out of thirty-two candidates), Hoquq took part in the *muqawama* effort to overthrow the results. A November 6 sit-in was attended by Moanes and a who's who of terrorist and militia leaders (see "Affiliate relationships" below).
- Hoquq initially refused the single seat it had won, but the resignation of seventy-three Sadrist parliamentarians resulted in a seat reallocation, with six Hoquq members elected after all. Afterward, Hoquq took up its seats to help the "Coordination Framework" super-majority ratify Mohammed Shia al-Sudani as prime minister in October 2022. (Notably, Sudani had [met with](#) (<https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/who-mohammed-shia-al-sudani>) Moanes prior to the election.)
- On January 13, 2023, Hoquq secretary-general Said al-Saray told the Iraqi website Shafaq News, "The failure of Prime Minister Mohammed Shia al-Sudani to implement the decision to expel the American forces...will push us to take political positions. Therefore, this decision must be implemented in accordance with the legal and diplomatic frameworks." Saray was referring to parliament's January 2020 [resolution](#) (<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/1/5/iraqi-parliament-calls-for-expulsion-of-foreign-troops>) calling on the government to expel foreign troops. Hoquq MPs then sought to argue on [al-Nujaba TV](#) (<https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/profile-al-nujaba-satellite-television>) that U.S. withdrawal might be [an eventual goal](#) (<https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/militia-spokesmen-reflect-sudani-inviting-us-forces-remain>) rather than an immediate priority.
- On February 17, 2023, [Moanes](#) (<https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/node/17022>) tweeted the following: "Terrorism incubators in some areas around Baghdad will threaten the security and safety of our people every now and then if they're not extracted from ground similar to Jurf al-Sakhar...The success of the [Popular Mobilization Forces, or PMF] in holding ground must be taken advantage of, and this is the responsibility of the commander-in-chief of the armed forces." Moanes was essentially saying that the 2014 depopulation of Sunnis from Jurf al-Sakhar and its conversion into a KH principality might be replicated in Tarmiyah.
- On July 14, 2023, Hoquq parliamentary bloc leader Saud al-Saedi [took part in protests](#) (<https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/ashab-al-kahfs-iraqi-basij-and-threat-against-us-embassy-baghdad>) outside the U.S. embassy in Baghdad that called for a repetition of the violent 1979 takeover of the U.S. embassy in Iran. That same day, the [Harakat Hezbollah al-Nujaba](#) ([/node/16716](#)) affiliate [Iraqi Basij](#) ([/node/18229](#)), which had blockaded the Baghdad embassy, thanked Saedi for his support.
- In August 2023, Saedi grilled Iraq's minister of communications with four "parliamentary questions" about the suspension of [Sabereen News](#) ([/node/16673](#)). One of the questions read, “What are the reasons behind shutting down the Telegram application, despite the great role that this platform plays in the field of media and the dissemination of targeted content?” Sabereen had



Harakat Hoquq logo

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previously called for the [beheading \(/node/17051\)](#) of Iraqi citizens.

- Hoquq did not run in the December 2023 provincial elections. As Moanes [told al-Sharqiya TV \(https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/coordination-frameworks-four-way-split-provincial-elections-part-1-overarching\)](#), his movement boycotted the vote because it believes the provincial councils need to be cancelled.
- From May to September 2023, Saedi brought a court case that convinced the Federal Supreme Court to [nullify the 2013 Iraq-Kuwait agreement \(https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/making-sense-iraqs-politicized-supreme-court-rulings\)](#) on the Khor Abdullah waterway.
- On October 3, 2023, Saedi told AAH's [al-Ahd TV \(https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/node/17268\)](#) that parliamentarians had submitted a request to then-speaker Mohammed al-Halbousi to include [criminalization of homosexuality \(https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/militias-welcome-killing-lgbtq-celebrity-coordination-framework-pushes-make\)](#) in the penal code (Figure 1).



Figure 1: Hoquq and Kataib Hezbollah personality Saud al-Saedi says parliamentarians have submitted a request to amend the penal code to include criminalization of homosexuality.

- On October 23, 2023, Moanes [called for the removal \(https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/kataib-hezbollah-and-gaza-crisis-part-1-special-ops-lead\)](#) of U.S. forces from Iraq: "We ask the government...not to repeat the mistakes of previous governments, which were negligent in correcting the status of the foreign military presence, [and instead] to end this presence in all Iraqi bases in accordance with the parliamentary decision of January 5, 2020, and to limit [countries] to a military attache inside their embassy headquarters."

Chain of command:

- **Kataib Hezbollah:** The Hoquq bloc is part of the KH terrorist organization, influenced by the [Abu Hussein \(Ahmad Mohsen Faraj al-Hamidawi\) \(https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/exposing-kataib-hezbollahs-royal-family-insights-recent-leaks\)](#) wing and the Bassem Mohammed Hasab al-Majidi wing, backed by Abu Fadak.
- **Internal leadership:** Since its emergence in July 2021, Hoquq has been led by Hossein Moanes. Many experts have concluded that he is Abu Ali al-Askari, the notorious KH security spokesman. He has always denied this connection, but perhaps only to separate his military identity from his political brand—an understandable approach given the radical statements that have been attributed to Askari (e.g., in December 2020, he threatened to cut Prime Minister Mustafa al-Kadhimi's ears "the same way the ears of goats are cut"; see Figure 2). Other top Hoquq officials are Secretary-General Said al-Saray and parliamentary bloc leader Saud al-Saedi.

Affiliate relationships:

- **Other muqawama factions:** A November 6, 2023, sit-in attended by Moanes was also attended by many top terrorist and militia figures, including [Asaib Ahl al-Haq \(/node/16715\)](#) leader Qais al-Khazali, KH secretary-general Abu Hussein al-Hamidawi, KH spokesman Muhammad Mohi, KSS secretary-general Abu Ala al-Walai, [Badr Organization \(/node/17003\)](#) chief Hadi al-Ameri, PMF



operational head Abu Fadak, and [Kataib al-Imam Ali \(/node/18650\)](#) leader Shibl al-Zaydi. Policymakers in Washington and other capitals can glean much from the fact that Moanes and Hoquq are accepted within such high-level meetings of designated terrorists and Iran-backed armed groups.

Figure 2: Abu Ali al-Askari threatens to cut off PM Mustafa Kadhim's ears in 2020.

- **Russia:** Hoquq is strongly supportive of Vladimir Putin and his invasion of Ukraine. In April 2023, after Iraq voted in favor of the UN's February resolution against that invasion, Moanes [complained \(https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/militia-russia-love-affair-april-2023-update\)](https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/militia-russia-love-affair-april-2023-update), "What is the benefit that Iraq will gain in voting against Russia in the United Nations?"
- **Sabereen News:** Although Sabereen supported a wide range of candidates from all *muqawama* lists in the October 2021 elections, it treated the Hoquq list the most favorably.

Subordinate elements:

- Hoquq runs a website and a Telegram channel.
- Moanes has accounts with Facebook, X/Twitter, and Telegram.



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