

Iraqi Militia Propagandist Promotes Qalibaf for Iranian President

by [Hamdi Malik \(/experts/hamdi-malik\)](#), [Michael Knights \(/experts/michael-knights\)](#)

Jun 18, 2024

Also available in

[العربية \(/ar/policy-analysis/dayt-lmylyshya-raqyt-yrwwj-lqalybaf-lmnsb-alryys-alayrany\)](#)

ABOUT THE AUTHORS



[Hamdi Malik \(/experts/hamdi-malik\)](#)

Hamdi Malik is an associate fellow with The Washington Institute and cofounder of its Militia Spotlight platform.



[Michael Knights \(/experts/michael-knights\)](#)

Michael Knights is the Jill and Jay Bernstein Senior Fellow at The Washington Institute and cofounder of the Militia Spotlight platform, which offers in-depth analysis of developments related to Iran-backed militias.



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)

or see Part 1: [How to Use Militia Spotlight \(/policy-analysis/how-use-militia-spotlight\)](#)

Iraqi media official and Kataib Hezbollah member Hamid al-Husseini underlined his growing importance in the Iran threat network by issuing the endorsement—possibly as a surrogate for the IRGC-Qods Force.

Since June 14, a clip of the head of the [Iraqi Radio and Television Union \(/node/17002\)](#) has been circulating in pro-Iranian regime social media circles. In the video, Hamid al-Husseini appears to be supporting the Iranian presidential bid of parliamentary speaker Muhammad Baqer Qalibaf, one of the five hardliner candidates competing to replace the late Ebrahim Raisi (Figure 1).

What Husseini Said About Qalibaf

A dual Iraqi-Iranian citizen, Husseini was speaking in Farsi at the Arbain Seminar in Iran and said the following: “Hajj Qasem [Soleimani, the slain commander of Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps-Qods Force, or IRGC-QF] had two wishes. One of his wishes was for Mr. Abdollahian to become the foreign minister.” Hossein Amir-Abdollahian, the former Iranian foreign minister who died in a May helicopter crash beside Raisi, was known as “[Soleimani's representative \(https://x.com/HamdiAMalik/status/1430573560721022977/photo/1\)](#)” in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs” by Iraqi militias.

Husseini added: “[Soleimani’s] second wish was for Mr. Qalibaf to become president. He tried hard [to fulfill this wish]. Once I asked him: Why do you want Mr. Qalibaf to become president? He replied...When I say 'do A,' [Qalibaf] will go



Figure 1: Screenshot of Hamid al-Husseini's speech circulating in Iranian regime social media circles since June 14, 2024.

to the end [i.e., fulfill my request]. He knows all the methods [to support the IRGC-QF] and is interested in big projects; he doesn't go after small things." The IRGC-affiliated Mashreq News posted another clip from a different angle showing the second part of these remarks promoting Qalibaf (Figure 2).

What Husseini's Words Reveal

Husseini appears to be acting as a surrogate for Qalibaf in an open manner that is difficult for the IRGC-QF to do directly within the confines of Iran's domestic intra-hardliner politics. Although Husseini is an Iranian citizen, he is seen mainly as an Iraqi *muqawama* (resistance) character. He uses the method of quoting a deceased person—Soleimani, who is seen as a hero by the Iranian regime—to promote a current presidential candidate. The fact that Husseini's closeness

to Soleimani is well known makes his remarks very effective.

These comments and their promotion within IRGC-adjacent platforms tell us several notable things:

- Husseini has close ties to the IRGC and IRGC-QF and is trusted to speak in their name about what presidential candidate they support.
- Important segments of the IRGC and IRGC-QF probably support a Qalibaf presidency.
- Given that Husseini is also a high-ranking member of the Iraqi militia **Kataib Hezbollah** (<https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/profile-kataib-hezbollah>), it seems that an important part of the Iraqi *muqawama* also supports a Qalibaf presidency.

Husseini's Growing Importance in the Iran Threat Network

It is hard to believe that Husseini made such sensitive remarks without consulting with some influential figures in the Iranian regime, especially given that the remarks were then published by IRGC-linked outlets. Husseini, who was recently seen sitting in a VIP area

(<https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/where-iraqis-landed-supreme-leaders-seating-plan>) during the Supreme Leader's commemoration ceremony for Raisi, appears to be an increasingly influential member of the "soft war" arm of the Iraqi *muqawama* than many observers recognize.

On the balance of evidence, Militia Spotlight assesses that Husseini is becoming an important nexus linking the Iraqi militias with the IRGC-QF and the Supreme Leader's office. He is performing a unique task for the so-called "axis of resistance," combining roles such as sustaining and expanding the Islamic Republic's vast propaganda machine in Iraq, taking part in Kataib Hezbollah's decisionmaking process, and serving as a fixer between various Iraqi militias and the Iranian regime. This is in addition to his increasing role as a facilitator of Iran's expanding economic activities in Iraq. ❖

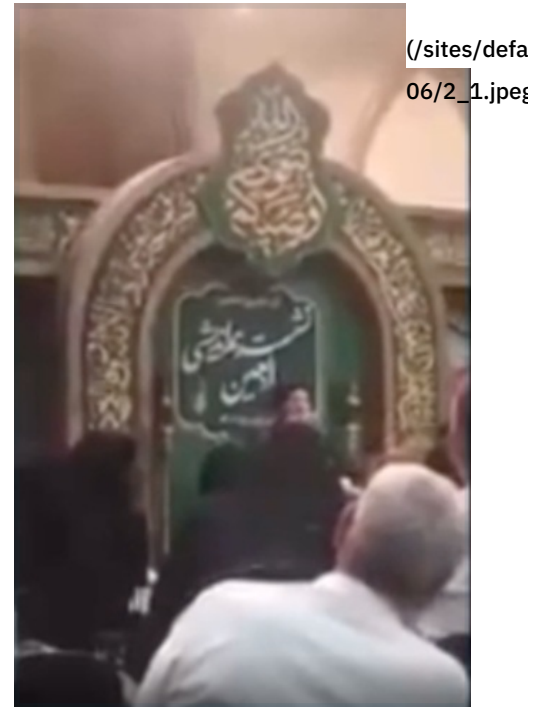


Figure 2: IRGC-affiliated Mashreq News posting clip of Hamid al-Husseini on its various platforms, June 14, 2024.

PART OF A SERIES

[Militia Spotlight \(/policy-analysis/series/militia-spotlight\)](/policy-analysis/series/militia-spotlight)

[How to Use Militia Spotlight](/policy-analysis/how-use-militia-spotlight)

(/policy-analysis/how-use-militia-spotlight)

[Iraqi Militia Propagandist Promotes Qalibaf for Iranian President](/policy-analysis/iraqi-militia-propagandist-promotes-qalibaf-iranian-president)

(/policy-analysis/iraqi-militia-propagandist-promotes-qalibaf-iranian-president)



[Iraqi Groups and Yemen's Houthis Claim More Joint Attacks on Israel](/policy-analysis/iraqi-groups-and-yemens-houthis-claim-more-joint-attacks-israel)

(/policy-analysis/iraqi-groups-and-yemens-houthis-claim-more-joint-attacks-israel)

RECOMMENDED



BRIEF ANALYSIS

[Hezbollah Threatens Cyprus: Capabilities, Intentions, and Potential Consequences](/policy-analysis/hezbollah-threatens-cyprus-capabilities-intentions-and-potential-consequences)

Jun 21, 2024

◆
Hanin Ghaddar,
Farzin Nadimi,
David Schenker

(/policy-analysis/hezbollah-threatens-cyprus-capabilities-intentions-and-potential-consequences)



BRIEF ANALYSIS

[Khamenei's Presidential Choice: Weak Reformer or Strong Hardliner](/policy-analysis/khameneis-presidential-choice-weak-reformer-or-strong-hardliner)

Jun 20, 2024

◆
Patrick Clawson

(/policy-analysis/khameneis-presidential-choice-weak-reformer-or-strong-hardliner)



BRIEF ANALYSIS

Hamas and Iran Are Trying to Ignite Israel's Eastern Fronts

Jun 20, 2024



Ehud Yaari

(/policy-analysis/hamas-and-iran-are-trying-ignite-israels-eastern-fronts)

TOPICS

Military & Security (/policy-analysis/military-security)

REGIONS & COUNTRIES

Iran (/policy-analysis/iran)

Iraq (/policy-analysis/iraq)