

Four U.S.-Designated Terrorist Groups Rush to Support Judge Faeq Zaidan

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Brief Analysis

Part of a series: [Militia Spotlight \(https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/series/militia-spotlight\)](#)

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Iran-backed militias were quick to defend the judge after he was accused of being a tool for Iranian influence.

On June 27, U.S. congressman Michael Waltz (R-FL) [posted on Twitter/X \(https://x.com/michaelgwaltz/status/1806357127809683467\)](#) that the president of Iraq's Supreme Judicial Council is at the center of Iran's plot to turn its neighbor into a client state. He added, "The first step in dismantling the Ayatollah's network of control is to clearly name who is doing his bidding." His comments followed the House's passage of the [State Department's annual foreign aid budget \(https://www.congress.gov/bill/118th-congress/house-bill/3771\)](#), which Waltz amended to define "the Supreme Judicial Council of Iraq under its leadership by Judge Faeq Zaidan" as "tools of Iranian influence." The tweet attracted angry responses in support of Zaidan—especially from Iraqi officials and groups designated by the United States for terrorism and human rights abuses.

Kataib Sayyid al-Shuhada Lauds Zaidan

The US-designated terrorist Abu Ala al-Walai

[\(https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/ofac-designates-iraqi-militiamen-part-2-kss-and-abu-ala-al-walai\)](#), leader of the U.S.-designated

terrorist group [Kataib Sayyid al-Shuhada \(/node/16731\)](#) (KSS), put out the following statement: "The Iraqi judiciary is one of the pillars of the state...[T]he purest bloods and holiest sacrifices have been offered for the establishment of the state. We do not allow any insult to it, interference in its work, or attempts to undermine or weaken it in any way. We affirm that any attempt to demean the Supreme Judicial Council President, Dr. Faeq Zaidan, is rejected...We consider this as a blatant transgression on Iraqi sovereignty" (Figure 1).

Kataib Hezbollah Defends Zaidan

U.S.-designated terrorist group [Kataib Hezbollah \(https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/profile-kataib-hezbollah\)](#) (KH), the Iran-backed militia that killed three American soldiers on January 28, was also quick to defend Zaidan. Hossein Moanes, the leader of the group's political front, Hoquq, put out the following statement: "We strongly condemn the statements made by a member of the U.S. Congress toward the Iraqi judiciary, specifically targeting the President of the Supreme Judicial Council, Dr. Faeq Zaidan. This confirms that such paid-for statements have no value in our country, which rejects Washington's aggressive policies" (Figure 2).



Figure 1: Abu Ala statement in defense of Zaidan, June 30, 2024.



Figure 2. Hossein Moanes statement in defense of Zaidan, June 29, 2024.



Figure 3. Ali al-Asadi statement in defense of Zaidan, June 29, 2024.

Nujaba Rallies to Zaidan's Side

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Asadi%20%28Har%29%20statement.jpeg)

Ali al-Asadi, head of the political council for the U.S.-designated terrorist group

Harakat Hezbollah al-Nujaba ([/node/16716](#)), tweeted: "Today, it is imperative to

ask the Iraqi politicians who consider the American occupation as a political partner: How can you be loyal to and promote a partner who insults and humiliates the [Iraqi] state and its pillars every day?! This is contempt and belittlement of Iraqi affairs on all fronts. The latest is the proposal by the American representative [Waltz] to Congress calling for the designation of Mr. Faeq Zaidan and the Supreme Judicial Council as Iranian tools" (Figure 3).

Asaib Ahl al-Haq: Criticizing Zaidan Is a "Red Line"

Habib al-Helawi, head of the Sadiqoun parliamentary bloc, the political front of U.S.-designated terrorist group [Asaib Ahl al-Haq \(/node/16715\)](#) (AAH), put out a statement saying: "The remarks of the American Representative Mike Waltz toward

the head of the Supreme Judicial Council...are ineffective and meaningless and are considered a breach of international diplomatic norms and an interference in Iraq's internal affairs. We, in the legislative authority, reject these provocative interventions. The Iraqi judiciary is a red line, and we will not allow transgressions against Judge Faeq Zaidan. The Iraqi Ministry of Foreign Affairs must issue a statement condemning and protecting the judicial authority in Iraq" (Figure 4).



Figure 4. Habib al-Helawi statement in defense of Zaidan, June 29, 2024.

Militia Allegations of Sunni and Kurdish Lobbying

In addition to a clean sweep of the four largest Shia terrorist groups in Iraq, Zaidan also garnered praise from Shibl al-Zaydi, another figure sanctioned by the United States for human rights abuses and close ties with the Lebanese terrorist organization Hezbollah. The

founder of the militia [Kataib al-Imam Ali \(https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/profile-kataib-al-imam-ali\)](https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/profile-kataib-al-imam-ali) (KIA), Shibl drew attention to a picture showing Congressman Waltz and the Iraqi Sunni official Aiham al-Sammarae, who formerly served as minister of electricity. Other social media accounts linked to the militias openly accused Kurdish parties of paying lobbying firms in Washington to attack the Iraqi government and judiciary. [Al-Ahd TV, \(/node/17268\)](#) which belongs to AAH, showed a poster alleging that the money Baghdad sends to the Kurdistan Regional Government is being used for such lobbying.

Taken together, these statements reveal much about the mentality of Iran-backed *muqawama* (resistance) militias in Iraq. First, they tended to accuse Waltz of being paid for taking the stance he took toward Zaidan, probably because groups like AAH and KH themselves make extensive use of Iraqi legislators to undertake paid-for attacks. Second, they presume that the critique of Zaidan must be political and on behalf of a third party—in this case, the Kurds—because, again, such practices are common in today's Iraq. The notion that an American legislator might adopt a policy stance based on evidence and a principled position would simply not occur to the *muqawama* because it is so alien to their experience of democracy. ❖

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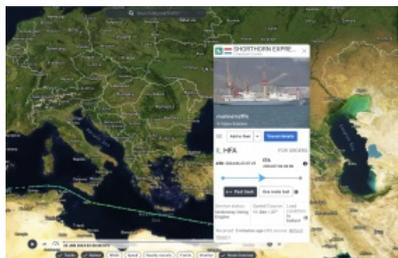
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