

Profile: Al-Mustafa International University-Iraq

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ABOUT THE AUTHORS



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Brief Analysis

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

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

Far from a normal educational institution, al-Mustafa is the Iraqi branch of a U.S.-sanctioned Iranian entity that seeks to groom the next generation of Iraqi clerics, missionaries, pro-Iran political representatives, and pro-Iran militia members.

Name: Jameat al-Mustafa al-Alamiyah, Mumathiliyat al-Iraq (al-Mustafa International University-Iraq branch)

Type of movement:

Baghdad branch of an Iranian educational institution. Adopts an academic, research, and training approach to groom the next generation of Iraqi clerics, missionaries, pro-Iran political representatives, and pro-Iran militia members.

History and objectives:

- Al-Mustafa's parent university in Qom, Iran, was established in 1979 (https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/sites/default/files/pdf/PolicyNote122Malik_0.pdf) as an international academic, Islamic, and *hawzawi* (seminarian) institute. Since then, it has recruited students regionally and globally to be trained as advocates of the Islamic Republic in their home countries.
- Al-Mustafa offers higher education courses up to the PhD level in Islamic studies, educational studies, social sciences, political sciences, psychology, communications, law, economic sciences, banking, management studies, and language studies (e.g., Farsi, Arabic, English, French, Russian). All courses are taught with an "Islamic approach."
- The university is well known for [instructing militia members \(https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/irans-afghan-and-pakistani-proxies-syria-and-beyond\)](https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/irans-afghan-and-pakistani-proxies-syria-and-beyond) from across the region and is supervised by the office of the Iranian Supreme Leader, who [appoints \(https://kayhan.ir/fa/news/147295/%D9%85%D8%B1%D8%A7%D8%B3%D9%85-%D8%AA%DA%A9%D8%B1%DB%8C%D9%85-%D9%88-%D9%85%D8%B9%D8%A7%D8%B1%D9%81%D9%87-%D8%B1%D8%A6%DB%8C%D8%B3%E2%80%8C-%D8%AC%D8%A7%D9%85%D8%B9%D9%87%D9%92-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%B5%D8%B7%D9%81%DB%8C-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B9%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%DB%8C%D9%87-%D8%A8%D8%B1%DA%AF%D8%B2%D8%A7%D8%B1-%D8%B4%D8%AF\)](https://kayhan.ir/fa/news/147295/%D9%85%D8%B1%D8%A7%D8%B3%D9%85-%D8%AA%DA%A9%D8%B1%DB%8C%D9%85-%D9%88-%D9%85%D8%B9%D8%A7%D8%B1%D9%81%D9%87-%D8%B1%D8%A6%DB%8C%D8%B3%E2%80%8C-%D8%AC%D8%A7%D9%85%D8%B9%D9%87%D9%92-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%B5%D8%B7%D9%81%DB%8C-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B9%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%DB%8C%D9%87-%D8%A8%D8%B1%DA%AF%D8%B2%D8%A7%D8%B1-%D8%B4%D8%AF) its top official.
- Al-Mustafa has close ties to Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps-Qods Force (IRGC-QF). According to the group United Against Nuclear Iran, the university " [serves as a fertile recruiting pool \(https://www.unitedagainstnucleariran.com/ideological-expansion/al-mustafa-international-university\)](https://www.unitedagainstnucleariran.com/ideological-expansion/al-mustafa-international-university) " for the Qods Force. This relationship prompted the U.S. Treasury Department to [designate \(https://home.treasury.gov/news/press-releases/sm1205\)](https://home.treasury.gov/news/press-releases/sm1205) the institution in December 2020.
- According to Iran's Islamic Culture and Relations Organization, the university [either runs or enjoys working relations \(https://fa.icro.ir/University/%D8%AC%D8%A7%D9%85%D8%B9%D9%87-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%B5%D8%B7%D9%81%DB%8C-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B9%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%DB%8C%D9%87%D8%8C-%D9%85%D8%B1%DA%A9%D8%B2-%D8%AF%D8%A7%D9%86%D8%B4%DA%AF%D8%A7%D9%87%DB%8C-%D8%A8%DB%8C%D9%86%E2%80%8C%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D9%84%D9%84%DB%8C-%D8%A8%DB%8C%D8%B1%DB%8C-%D8%B9%D9%84%D9%88%D9%85-%D8%AF%DB%8C%D9%86%DB%8C#:~:text=%D8%AC%D8%A7%D9%85%D8%B9%D9%87%20%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%B5%D8%B7%D9%81%DB%8C%20%D8%A7%D9%85\)](https://fa.icro.ir/University/%D8%AC%D8%A7%D9%85%D8%B9%D9%87-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%B5%D8%B7%D9%81%DB%8C-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B9%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%DB%8C%D9%87%D8%8C-%D9%85%D8%B1%DA%A9%D8%B2-%D8%AF%D8%A7%D9%86%D8%B4%DA%AF%D8%A7%D9%87%DB%8C-%D8%A8%DB%8C%D9%86%E2%80%8C%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D9%84%D9%84%DB%8C-%D8%A8%DB%8C%D8%B1%DB%8C-%D8%B9%D9%84%D9%88%D9%85-%D8%AF%DB%8C%D9%86%DB%8C#:~:text=%D8%AC%D8%A7%D9%85%D8%B9%D9%87%20%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%B5%D8%B7%D9%81%DB%8C%20%D8%A7%D9%85) with affiliated organizations in sixty countries.
- Al-Mustafa is not considered a mainstream university in Iran, as it only admits foreign students, many of whom are Iraqi. In total, around 70,000 Iraqi students attend Iranian universities.
- Since 2017, Iran has operated an Iraqi branch of al-Mustafa in the Kadhimiyah district of Baghdad. It provides courses and degrees on Islamic knowledge and history, Quranic guidance, and various fields related to jurisprudence and political Islam. It also holds regular ideological workshops for members of the Popular Mobilization Forces (PMF).
- Al-Mustafa-Iraq has signed agreements and memorandums of understanding regarding cooperation with a few state and private schools, including Wasit University, the University of Warith al-Anbiyya (affiliated with Imam Hussein Shrine), Gilgamesh University (private), and AlShaab University (private).
- Cooperates closely with the Imam Hussein Shrine in Karbala to hold religious sessions.
- Al-Mustafa-Iraq also admits non-Iraqi students.

Chain of command:

- The Iranian Supreme Leader's office in Tehran.
- The Iranian Supreme Leader's office in Najaf, Iraq. The head of Al-Mustafa-Iraq also serves as deputy head of the the Najaf office (see below).
- The IRGC-QF.
- The head of al-Mustafa-Iraq is Dr. Mohammad Ali Mohsenzadeh, an Iranian national who also serves as deputy head of the Iranian Supreme Leader's office in Najaf, with responsibility for its education and research branch. Additionally, he heads the Nour al-Basaer Organization for Islamic and Human Sciences in Najaf, which "works in various cultural and religious cognitive fields...throughout Iraq and aims to increase insight in various segments of society, especially among thinkers and intellectuals. This foundation was established under the auspices of the Office of the Representative of Imam Khamenei in Iraq in...Najaf al-Ashraf." Before his deployment to Iraq, Mohsenzadeh [led the Imam Ali Islamic Center \(https://www.bou.ac.ir/portal/home/?\)](https://www.bou.ac.ir/portal/home/)



Al-Mustafa International University-Iraq Logo

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[news/297215/297650/304353/%D8%AD%D8%AC%D8%AA-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A7%D8%B3%D9%84%D8%A7%D9%85-%D9%85%D8%AD%D8%B3%D9%86%E2%80%8C%D8%B2%D8%A7%D8%AF%D9%87-%D9%85%D8%AF%DB%8C%D8%B1%D8%B3%D8%A7%D8%A8%D9%82-%DA%AF%D8%B1%D9%88%D9%87-%D8%B9%D8%B1%D8%A8%DB%8C-%D8%AF%D8%A7%D9%86%D8%B4%DA%AF%D8%A7%D9%87-%D8%A8%D8%A7%D9%82%D8%B1%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B9%D9%84%D9%88%D9%85\(%D8%B9\)-%D8%A8%D9%87%E2%80%8C%D8%B9%D9%86%D9%88%D8%A7%D9%86-%D8%B1%D8%A6%DB%8C%D8%B3-%D8%AC%D8%AF%DB%8C%D8%AF-%D9%85%D8%B1%DA%A9%D8%B2-%D8%A7%D8%B3%D9%84%D8%A7%D9%85%DB%8C-%D8%A7%D9%85%D8%A7%D9%85-%D8%B9%D9%84%DB%8C\(%D8%B9\)-%D9%88%DB%8C%D9%86-%D9%85%D9%86%D8%B5%D9%88%D8%A8-%D8%B4%D8%AF-\) in Vienna, which is run by the international relations department of the Supreme Leader's office.](https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/profile-kataib-hezbollah)

- Two of the main officials at al-Mustafa-Iraq are high-ranking members of the U.S.-designated terrorist group **Kataib Hezbollah** (<https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/profile-kataib-hezbollah>) (KH):
 - Dr. Jassim al-Jazaeri, a member of KH's political bureau.
 - Dr. Maytham al-Aboudi, head of KH's social services department.



(/sites/default/files/2024-08/404443801_322299370566395_470747700640953679_n.jpg)

Figure 1: KH's Jassim al-Jazaeri teaching at the Sayyeda Narjis *hawza*, October 30, 2023.

Affiliate elements:

- Based on the senior involvement of KH members Jazaeri and Aboudi, Militia Spotlight assesses that KH is closely affiliated with al-Mustafa-Iraq and vice versa.
- Al-Mustafa-Iraq runs a few seminaries (*hawza*) in Iraq:
 - The Sayyeda Narjis *hawza* for women in Baghdad, supervised by Jazaeri (Figure 1)
 - The Baqiyatullah *hawza* in Baghdad, also supervised by Jazaeri
 - Imam Jawad *hawza* in Baghdad
 - Imam Ali *hawza* in Baghdad
 - Imam Hassan al-Askari *hawza* in Karbala
 - Omulbanin *hawza* for women in Karbala
 - Al-Sadeqian *hawza* in Basra
 - Al-Rasoul al-Adham *hawza* in Basra
 - Al-Mustafa *hawza* in Missan
 - Sayyed al-Awsiya *hawza* in Diwaniyah
- Publication House of al-Mustafa International University-Iraq.
- Alumni Association of al-Mustafa International University-Iraq.

Subordinate elements:

- Al-Mustafa International University-Iraq website, Facebook page, and Telegram channel.



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How to Use Militia Spotlight: Profiles

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