

# Iraqi Militias Show Cohesion and Restraint During Iran-Israel War

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## ABOUT THE AUTHORS



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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)

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

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**The self-styled "resistance" is probably being held in reserve in case the United States joins the war, with militias noticeably restraining themselves so far.**

In response to President Trump's recent remarks that Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei could be targeted (<https://www.ap.org/news-highlights/spotlights/2025/trump-says-the-us-knows-where-irans-khamenei-is-hiding-and-urges-irans-unconditional-surrender/>) as part of the current strikes on Iran, Akram Kaabi, leader of the Iran-backed Iraqi militia [Harakat Hezbollah al-Nujaba \(/node/16716\)](#), issued a direct threat against U.S. diplomats, citizens, and other interests. In a statement posted on June 19, he declared: "Perish in your disgrace and eat dirt, you criminal Trump! Who are you to threaten a pillar of the Islamic nation with death?! By God—and again, by God—if you lay a single finger on the leader of the *umma*, Imam Khamenei, then you and your allies and vile lackeys will be under our pursuit and fire across our entire Islamic region...and not a single one of your soldiers or diplomats will be spared. In fact, anyone carrying your nationality in our region, and all your direct and indirect interests, will become legitimate targets for us" (Figure 1).



الشيخ أكرم الكعبي  
@Akram\_alkabee

19-6-2025 م  
22 ذو الحجة 1446 هـ

خبثت وخسئت وفي فمك التراب أيها المجرم ترامب فليس لمثلك أن يتوعد مرجعاً من مراجع الأمة الإسلامية بالقتل!! فوالله ثم والله.. إن لمستم شعرة من ولي الأمة الإمام الخامنئي ستكونون أنتم وحلفاؤكم وأذنابكم الأرجاس تحت ملاحقتنا ونيراننا في كل منطقتنا الإسلامية، فلن تعود كربلاء من جديد على أيديكم الملطخة بدماء الأبرياء، ولن يسلم حينئذ منكم لا عسكري أو دبلوماسي، بل إن كل من يحمل جنسيته في منطقتنا وكل مصالحكم المباشرة وغير المباشرة ستكون أهدافاً مشروعة لنا ما بقيت فينا الحياة في هذه الدنيا الدنية، وإن حقق الله لنا ما نتمناه من الشهادة فإن هذا الثأر سيحمله أبناؤنا وأحفادنا وأحفاد أحفادنا الى يوم القيامة، فأنتم اليوم الوجه البشع للدجال والكذاب والمنافق، بل أنتم اليوم تخضعون لأعداء المسيح ومن حاربه وآذاه من المتطرفين اليهود، وتدعون كذباً وزوراً أنكم من أتباعه، فتعسأ لكم وسحقاً يا خونة المسيح وكل شرائع السماء، كفاكم كذباً ونفاقاً، فقد ساءت الأرض والسماء ازدواجيتهن ونفاقكم، فباطنكم الخبث والإجرام،

Figure 1: Akram Kaabi's statement, June 19, 2025.

albeit in somewhat more restrained language. In a statement issued in both Farsi and Arabic, he wrote: "The foolish madman Trump has erred—both in his rhetoric and in his timing. He should have understood this before speaking about the stature of Imam Khamenei."

Askari went on to reiterate a point made by KH Secretary-General Abu Hussein al-Hamidawi on June 15, emphasizing that the Islamic Republic was fully capable of confronting Israel on its own. Askari warned that any potential involvement by the Iraqi *muqawama* (resistance) would be contingent on direct U.S. participation in the war: "We reaffirm that any American entry into this war will bring upon it unprecedented destruction and calamities." He also implied that in such a scenario, KH might choose to target U.S.-aligned Gulf states: "Matters may escalate to the point that the thief Trump is deprived of the trillions he dreams of seizing from this region" (Figure 2).

أبو علي العسكري

باسمه تعالی

(أبالموت تهددني يا ابن الطلقاء؟ أما علمت أن القتل لنا عادة، كرامتنا من الله الشهادة)

این سخن را امام زین العابدین (علیه السلام) به یکی از بزرگترین طاغوت‌های زمین فرمود، او نوهی امیرالمؤمنین، قهرمان خیبر و خوارکننده‌ی یهود بود. ترامپ، این دیوانه‌ی احمق، در سخنرانی و زمان‌بندی خود دچار اشتباهی بزرگ شد. او باید پیش از آن‌که درباره‌ی مقام امام خامنه‌ای (دامت برکاته) سخن بگوید، معنای این سخنان را درک می‌کرد؛ به‌ویژه اکنون که در استانه‌ی ماه سیدالشهدا اباعبدالله الحسین (علیه السلام) قرار داریم؛ همان امامی که در سرزمین کربلا، چون کوهی استوار در برابر لشکر طغیان ایستاد تا برای نسل‌ها درسی عظیم از کرامت، عزت نفس و شرافت بدهد؛ چنان‌که فرمود:

(ألا وإن الدعي ابن الدعي قد ركز بين اثنتين، بين السلة والذلة، وهيات منا الذلة).

از این رو، به نکات زیر اشاره می‌کنیم:

اول: به همه‌ی پیروان اطمینان می‌دهیم، و دشمن بشنود که جمهوری اسلامی ایران از چنان توان پایداری برخوردار است که می‌تواند با همان شدت، برای بیش از یک سال، انواع موشک‌ها یا بردها و فناوری‌های مختلف را به‌سوی رژیم غاصب شلیک کند. موشک‌هایی با برد کوتاه‌تر، چندین برابر از نظر تعداد در اختیار دارند و توان هدف‌گیری کامل حضور و منافع آمریکا در غرب آسیا را دارند.

دوم: بار دیگر تأکید می‌کنیم که ورود دشمن آمریکایی به این جنگ، برای او ویرانی و بلایی بی‌سابقه به همراه خواهد داشت، و ممکن است کار به جایی برسد که این دزد – ترامپ – از آن تریلیون‌هایی که در منطقه در رویای آن است، محروم شود.

«فتربصوا إنا معكم متربصون»

سوم: در برابر تهدیداتی که متوجه دولت عراق و وضعیت فعلی کشور شده است، می‌گوییم: این پاوه‌گویی‌ها هرگز مجاهدان را از مسئله‌ی اصلی‌شان باز نخواهد داشت و آنان را از حمایت از جبهه‌ی حق غافل نخواهد کرد. و به کسانی که به این تهدیدات دل بسته‌اند می‌گوییم: این نوع تهدیدات را به نوجوانان پیش‌آهنگ و خواهران زینبی واگذار می‌کنیم تا به‌شایستگی با آن برخورد کنند.

والسلام علی عباد الله الصالحین.

t.me/abualaskary 29/03/1404

Curiously, Hamidawi's June 15 statement called on "the Iraqi government and...the Coordination Framework to act to prevent the expansion of the war. This includes shutting down the embassy of the Great Evil [America] and expelling the American occupation forces from the country" (Figure 3). This was a notably toned-down message in an election year—by calling on Iraqi leaders to prevent the war from reaching Iraq, Hamidawi seemed to shift from KH's usual rhetoric, which has often included threats and language suggesting Iraq could be drawn into the conflict.

Kaf - كاف



Meanwhile, Asaib Ahl al-Haq

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

إن الجمهورية الإسلامية لا تحتاج إلى أي دعم عسكري من أحد لردع الكيان الصهيوني المجرم، فهي تملك من الرجال والإمكانات ما يكفي لتمزيق أنف نتنياهو بالتراب، وكبح جماح طغيان هذا الكيان الغاصب. وفي الوقت الذي تواجه فيه إيران العدوان الصهيوني بشجاعة وصمود، فإننا نراقب عن قرب تحركات جيش العدو الأمريكي في المنطقة؛ وإذا ما أقدمت أمريكا على التدخل في الحرب، فسنعمل بشكل مباشر على مصالحتها وقواعدها المنتشرة في المنطقة دون تردد. وانطلاقاً من الوضع الراهن فإن الواجب يفرض على الحكومة العراقية، والإخوة في الإطار التنسيقي، والمخلصين من المتصددين تحمّل المسؤولية، واتخاذ موقف شجاع كي لا تتسع رقعة الحرب، وذلك بغلق سفارة الشر الأكبر، وطرد قوات الاحتلال الأمريكي من البلاد، كونها التهديد الأوضح والأخطر لأمن العراق واستقرار المنطقة.  
(سَلَامٌ قَوْلًا مِّن رَّبِّ رَجِيمٍ)

المقاومة الإسلامية

كتائب حزب الله

الأمين العام أبو حسين الحميداي

19 ذي الحجة 1446 هـ

15 حزيران 2025 م

Figure 3: Abu Hussein al-Hamidawi's statement, June 15, 2025.

(<https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/profile-asaib-ahl-al-haq-0>) leader Qais al-Khazali chose not to issue a statement himself. Instead, he delegated the task to the militia's head of security, Jawad al-Talibawi, who reiterated the group's allegiance to Khamenei and warned the United States "of the consequences of joining its Zionist ally in the aggression against Islamic Iran" (Figure 4). Yet he did not specify what those consequences would be.

### Protesting at the U.S. Embassy

Following its regular meeting with Prime Minister Mohammed Shia al-Sudani in attendance, the Shia Coordination Framework issued a [statement \(https://shafaq.com/ar/%D8%B3%DB%8C%D8%A7%D8%B3%D8%A9/%D8%A7%D9%84-%D8%B7%D8%A7%D8%B1-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AA%D9%86%D8%B3%D9%8A%D9%82%D9%8A-%D9%8A%D8%AF%D8%B9%D9%88-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B9%D8%B1%D8%A7%D9%82%D9%8A%D9%8A%D9%86-%D9%84%D8%AA%D8%B8%D8%A7%D9%87%D8%B1%D8%A7%D8%AA-%D8%AF%D8%A7%D8%B9%D9%85%D8%A9-%D9%84-%D9%8A%D8%B1%D8%A7%D9%86\)](https://shafaq.com/ar/%D8%B3%DB%8C%D8%A7%D8%B3%D8%A9/%D8%A7%D9%84-%D8%B7%D8%A7%D8%B1-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AA%D9%86%D8%B3%D9%8A%D9%82%D9%8A-%D9%8A%D8%AF%D8%B9%D9%88-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B9%D8%B1%D8%A7%D9%82%D9%8A%D9%8A%D9%86-%D9%84%D8%AA%D8%B8%D8%A7%D9%87%D8%B1%D8%A7%D8%AA-%D8%AF%D8%A7%D8%B9%D9%85%D8%A9-%D9%84-%D9%8A%D8%B1%D8%A7%D9%86) calling on Iraqi citizens "to take to the streets in demonstrations condemning the aggression and expressing support for the steadfastness and resilience of the Islamic Republic in confronting it."

This call coincided with a coordinated push by *muqawama*-affiliated social media channels to mobilize protests near the Mualaq Bridge in Baghdad demanding the closure of the nearby U.S. embassy. Sabereen News

(<https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/profile-sabereen-news>), a prominent Telegram channel with over 700,000 followers, was particularly active in promoting the demonstrations, especially among the *muqawama* support base and members of the Popular Mobilization Forces.

Demonstrating its wide reach, a single Sabereen News post on June 15 urging all *muqawama* media and influencers to cover the protest was viewed nearly 134,000 times within a day (Figure 5). Despite these efforts, only a few dozen people took part in the demonstrations—highlighting the prevailing mood of Iraqi reluctance to be drawn into the broader conflict, even among *muqawama* circles.

### What's Next for Militia-U.S. Tensions in Iraq?

After the October 7, 2023, Hamas attack on Israel, the Iraqi *muqawama* offered similarly tough talk about evicting U.S. forces and striking U.S. bases if Washington joined that war. Then, after the October 17 al-Ahli Hospital explosion in Gaza, the *muqawama* **attacked U.S. bases** (<https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/tracking-anti-us-and-anti-israel-strikes-iraq-and-syria-during-gaza-crisis>) as part of a "unity of fronts" action that had nothing to do with actual U.S. involvement. This time around, Iraqi terrorist and militia groups are being more cautious and are probably grateful to be "held in reserve" for use if the United States becomes directly involved. Apparently, the "unity of fronts" approach is being saved for the last resort.



Figure 4: Jawad al-Talibawi's post, June 15, 2025.



Figure 5: A Sabereen News post mobilizing protests near the Mualaq Bridge, June 15, 2025.

The *muqawama* are showing cohesion as well as restraint. There is no evidence yet of Iran-backed militias in Iraq striking U.S. forces or using Iraqi territory to attack Israel. Iranian drones have been intercepted in Iraq during the conflict, but they were moving through Iraqi airspace en route to Israel and reportedly passed too close to

U.S. facilities at al-Asad Air Base and Erbil airport. Smaller or more radical *muqawama* groups like **Harakat Hezbollah al-Nujaba** (<https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/profile-harakat-hezbollah-al-nujaba>) and **Kataib Sayyid al-Shuhada** (<https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/profile-kataib-sayyid-al-shuhada>) have not unilaterally attacked U.S. sites or Israel either. This level of cohesion is probably due to an early directive from Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps-Qods Force. If the United States becomes directly involved in the war, this same cohesion and apparent attention to Qods Force orders could be used to trigger *muqawama* strikes on U.S. facilities in Iraq, as well as strikes launched from Iraq against U.S. targets in Syria, Jordan, and maybe even the Gulf states.

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### Militia Spotlight (</policy-analysis/series/militia-spotlight>)

#### [How to Use Militia Spotlight](#)

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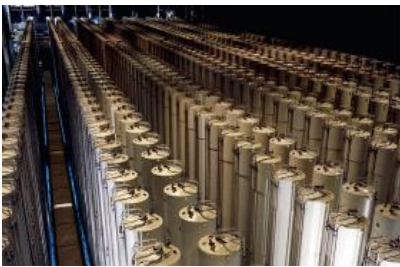


### [New Evidence of Real-World Attacks by Uli al-Bas](#)

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Jun 17, 2025

Richard Nephew

(/policy-analysis/united-states-may-destroy-fordow-enrichment-plant-it-wont-make-iranian-nuclear)



ARTICLES & TESTIMONY

### [Making Sense of Syria Sanctions: The Syria Breakdown, Part Seven](#)

Jun 18, 2025

Matthew Levitt

(/policy-analysis/making-sense-syria-sanctions-syria-breakdown-part-seven)



BRIEF ANALYSIS

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Jun 18, 2025



Hanin Ghaddar,  
Noam Raydan,  
Michael Knights,  
Ghaith al-Omari,  
Grant Rumley,  
Anna Borshchevskaya,  
Souhira Medini

(/policy-analysis/key-outside-actors-iran-israel-showdown-compilation-washington-institute)

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