

Profile: The Islamic Resistance of Iraq

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ABOUT THE AUTHORS



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Brief Analysis

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

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The Telegram brand that emerged in October 2023 is not a group per se, new or old, but rather a generic name used to denote unity among Iran-backed Iraqi armed groups during the Gaza crisis and de-emphasize individual faction identities.

Name: Al-Muqawama al-Islamiyah fil Iraq (the Islamic Resistance in Iraq). This is simply an umbrella term used to describe the operations of all Iran-backed militias in Iraq, including strikes into Syria during the October 2023 conflict between Israel and Hamas.

Type of movement: Kinetic military operations, both national and transnational. Anti-U.S. targets inside Iraq and Syria, in relation to the U.S. role in the Gaza crisis.

History: During the October 2023 conflict between Israel and Hamas, the Iraqi *muqawama* militias attacked the U.S. troops based in Iraq and Syria.

As of October 21, 2023, the Islamic Resistance in Iraq has claimed the [following attacks. \(/node/18409\)](/node/18409)

- October 17, 2023: drone attack on Al-Asad Air Base in Western Iraq.

- October 17, 2023: drone attack on Harir base in Iraqi Kurdistan. This attack was initially claimed by Al-Warithuun (Tashkil al-Waritheen, or the Inheritors) (/node/17621) before a superseding claim was issued by al-Muqawama al-Islamiyah fil Iraq and the Warithuun claim was removed in deference.
- October 19, 2023: drone attack on Al-Tanf garrison in Syria.
- October 19, 2023: rocket attack on U.S. base at Conoco gas field in Syria.
- October 19, 2023: rocket attack on Al-Asad Air Base in Western Iraq.
- October 20, 2023: drone attack on Harir base in Iraqi Kurdistan.
- October 21, 2023: drone attack on Al-Asad Air Base in Western Iraq.

Objectives:

- To allow various Iraqi *muqawama* militias to launch attacks against U.S. troops in Iraq and Syria under one umbrella term.
- The militias may see benefit in obscuring which exact groups are attacking U.S. bases.
- Using a generic, no-logo umbrella brand is perhaps the ultimate extension of the “facade strategy” that Iran and its proxies have used since 2019 to avoid accountability for attacks on Americans.
- To show unity in their participation in attacks against U.S. interests during the Israel-Hamas conflict, essentially "reporting for duty" as one force. This strongly suggests that Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps-Qods Force (IRGC-QF) is corralling its many Iraqi "resistance" proxies, which otherwise tend to argue over local leadership.

Chain of command:

- The balance of available evidence suggests that IRGC-QF plays a role in coordinating the Islamic Resistance in Iraq. The Iraqi armed groups quite jealously guard their individual identities and the credit they derive, directly or via facade groups linked to them, from attacks. Submerging individual identities and even recanting an individual group attack claim suggests a higher power coordinating them. Furthermore, co-branding with Al-Warithuun (Tashkil al-Waritheen, or the Inheritors) in the October 17 strike on Harir is a direct link to an IRGC-QF direct-operated group with close ties to Hezbollah Harakat al-Nujaba (/node/16716).
- The Iraqi Resistance Coordination Committee (al-Haya al-Tansiqiya lil-Muqawama al-Iraqiya, or Tansiqiya for short).

Affiliate relationships:

- A Telegram group called al-Elam al-Harbi (the War Media) was created on October 18, 2023, to publish statements and claims of attacks by various Iraqi militias under the rubric of the Islamic Resistance in Iraq.

Subordinate elements:

- Al-Warithuun (Tashkil al-Waritheen, or the Inheritors) is demonstrably working for and under the Islamic Resistance in Iraq. Warithuun's October 18 claim referred to the "Tashkil al-Waritheen, Operations Support Room for al-Aqsa Flood."
- As the Islamic Resistance in Iraq is an umbrella group using the nomenclature that all Iran-backed Iraqi armed groups use to self-describe (often as the prefix to their specific group names), and as other groups such as Kataib Hezbollah (/node/16641) (KH) have not made separate or competing claims for attacks in their typical areas of operations (such as al-Asad) it is highly likely that groups like KH, Asaib Ahl al-Haq (/node/16715) (AAH), and Kataib Sayyid al-Shuhada (/node/16731) (KSS) consider themselves part of the Islamic Resistance in Iraq.



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Ghaith al-Omari

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