

Hisham al-Hashemi's Killer Escapes Justice

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

Kataib Hezbollah's hit-man Ahmed Hamidawi al-Kinani was acquitted of all charges despite convincing evidence that he murdered the famous Iraqi commentator and civil society activist.

On March 21, al-Hadath TV reported what many social media observers had earlier leaked: that the militia-hired killer of Hisham al-Hashemi had been exonerated of all charges by Iraq's militia-influenced judiciary. Hisham was shot dead in front of his house in Zayouna, Baghdad, on July 6, 2020. He was killed after [publicly criticizing \(https://www.chathamhouse.org/publications/the-world-today/2020-08/life-and-death-iraqs-hisham-al-hashimi\)](https://www.chathamhouse.org/publications/the-world-today/2020-08/life-and-death-iraqs-hisham-al-hashimi) Kataib Hezbollah (</node/16641>) (KH) on television and [identifying \(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W_RUpHMYuoQ&ab_channel=%D9%82%D9%86%D8%A7%D8%A9%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B1%D8%A7%D8%A8%D8%B9%D8%A9-AIRabiaaTV\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W_RUpHMYuoQ&ab_channel=%D9%82%D9%86%D8%A7%D8%A9%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B1%D8%A7%D8%A8%D8%B9%D8%A9-AIRabiaaTV) Hossein Moanes, KH's high-ranking commander as Abu Ali al-Askari, KH's head of security. Hashimi also [published detailed research \(https://english.alarabiya.net/features/2020/07/22/Slain-Iraqi-al-Hashemi-s-papers-expose-PMU-criminal-activities-in-Basra-Salahuddin\)](https://english.alarabiya.net/features/2020/07/22/Slain-Iraqi-al-Hashemi-s-papers-expose-PMU-criminal-activities-in-Basra-Salahuddin) in early July on KH and [Asaib Ahl al-Haq \(/node/16715\)](/node/16715) (AAH) monetization of illegal checkpoints around Baghdad.



(/sites/default/files/2024-03/Televised%20admission.jpg)

Figure 1: Ahmed Hamidawi al-Kinani admits on Iraq's Al-Sharqiyah television to killing Hisham al-Hashemi, providing detailed narration of the CCTV footage of the killing.

The shooter, a Ministry of Interior police lieutenant Ahmed Hamidawi al-Kinani, was detained by Iraqi government forces and confessed to having been hired by a militia to shoot Hisham al-Hashemi dead. “I pulled my police pistol and shot four bullets into him,” Kinani said in a [televised segment \(https://www.trtworld.com/middle-east/iraqi-tv-shows-suspect-confessing-to-killing-prominent-adviser-hashemi-48447\)](https://www.trtworld.com/middle-east/iraqi-tv-shows-suspect-confessing-to-killing-prominent-adviser-hashemi-48447) where he narrated the CCTV footage of the slaying. In February 2021, a PBS Frontline investigation separately found that Kataib Hezbollah had [commissioned the hit \(https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/frontline/article/shia-militia-kataib-hezbollah-behind-hisham-al-hashimi-murder-iraqi-counterterrorism-expert/\)](https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/frontline/article/shia-militia-kataib-hezbollah-behind-hisham-al-hashimi-murder-iraqi-counterterrorism-expert/).

After the change of government in Iraq in October 2022, when the Mohammed Shia al-Sudani cabinet was ratified by the Coordination Framework coalition that included KH and AAH, the confessed killer Ahmed Hamidawi al-Kinani disappeared and was not present when Baghdad’s Rusafa Criminal Court sentenced him to death in absentia on May 7, 2023.

Under pressure from KH, the Iraqi government did not seek to find the unlawfully released Ahmed Hamidawi al-Kinani nor execute the sentence. Then on January 2, 2024, the Federal Court of Cassation, run by the [militia-supported Judge Faiq Zaidan \(https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/iraqs-two-coups-and-how-us-should-respond\)](https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/iraqs-two-coups-and-how-us-should-respond), quashed the death sentence and referred the case back to lower investigative courts to be re-tried.

The new development that al-Hadath has reported is that the lower court found there was no case to be answered by Ahmed Hamidawi al-Kinani, who recanted his confession, and that there was no legitimacy in the original arrest warrant.

In 2020, one close friend of Hisham’s, Dr Toby Dodge of the London School of Economics, [asked \(https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/mec/2020/07/07/a-tribute-to-a-friend-and-scholar-dr-hisham-al-hashimi/\)](https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/mec/2020/07/07/a-tribute-to-a-friend-and-scholar-dr-hisham-al-hashimi/) in his obituary of Hisham:

Is it to be the institutionalized forces of law and order, the Iraqi police and armed forces or the militias who shape the country’s future? Only the reaction of the Iraqi government to the brutal murder of one of its own will decide what the answer will be.

The answer is very clear: Iran-backed militias are shaping Iraq’s future under the Sudani government.

Kataib Hezbollah, a U.S.-designated terrorist movement that killed three Americans as recently as January 28, 2024, has emerged victorious in the case of Hisham al-Hashemi. Kataib Hezbollah is a coalition partner of Prime Minister Mohammed Shia al-Sudani through their [Hoquq bloc \(/node/18667\)](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/07/05/world/middleeast/iraq-iran-elizabeth-tsurkov.html) in parliament. Kataib Hezbollah is also part of the Sudani-commanded govt-funded Popular Mobilization Forces (PMF), the key beneficiaries of over \$2.3bn of Iraqi govt money per year that is controlled by KH senior leaders sanctioned as terrorists by the U.S. Kataib Hezbollah is also [holding \(https://www.nytimes.com/2023/07/05/world/middleeast/iraq-iran-elizabeth-tsurkov.html\)](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/07/05/world/middleeast/iraq-iran-elizabeth-tsurkov.html) the Princeton University post-doctoral researcher Elizabeth Tsurkov, who was [kidnapped in Baghdad on March 21, 2023 and has been unlawfully detained by KH ever since. \(https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/militia-propagandists-comment-tsurkov-kidnapping\)](https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/militia-propagandists-comment-tsurkov-kidnapping) ❖



Figure 2: Al-Hadath TV reveals the March 21, 2024 exoneration by the Iraqi judiciary of Hisham al-Hashemi’s confessed killer.

(/sites/defa
03/h3.jpg)

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