

# Signs of IRGC-QF Coordination in Iraqi Messaging of Anti-U.S. Attacks

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

## Iran's proxies in Iraq undertook two drone attacks on U.S. bases, with social media operations that suggest Iran's Qods Force is playing a coordinating function.



Figure 1: Sabereen announces that The Islamic Resistance in Iraq has claimed responsibility for the drone attack on al-Asad base, October 18, 2023.

On October 18, 2023, the Iraqi *muqawama* launched two twin-drone attacks against U.S. forces based in Al-Asad Air Base in western Anbar and Harir Air Base in Iraqi Kurdistan.

### Attack one: Al-Asad

In the first attack two drones were [intercepted \(https://nypost.com/2023/10/18/us-forces-in-iraq-thwart-drone-attack-at-air-base-housing-american-troops/\)](https://nypost.com/2023/10/18/us-forces-in-iraq-thwart-drone-attack-at-air-base-housing-american-troops/) by the coalition forces based at Al-Asad. The attack reportedly did not result in any damage or casualties. Based on the *muqawama* social media, [Sabereen News \(/node/16673\)](#) and other outlets released a claim by *al-Muqawama al-Islamiyya fil Iraq* (the Islamic Resistance in Iraq) of responsibility for the attack (Figure 1). (The Islamic Resistance in Iraq is not a group, per se, but rather an umbrella term used to describe all Iran-backed militias in Iraq.) This is an indication that the Iraqi militias are posturing as one front vis-a-vis the conflict in Gaza, which

tends to be a sign of external (i.e., Iranian) marshaling and corralling of the disparate *muqawama* groups. The reported attack on Al-Asad was not reported widely on *muqawama* channels for the first few hours, unlike previous attacks.

### Attack two: Harir

The Harir attack was claimed initially by [Tashkil al-Waritheen \(/node/17621\)](#), a facade group affiliated with [Harakat al-Nujaba \(/node/16716\)](#) which enjoys direct link with the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps - Qods Force (IRGC-QF). Waritheen claimed responsibility for the drone attack on Harir in a statement that read: “As part of the operations of supporting the al-Aqsa Flood, we announce that the American occupation base in northern Iraq (Harir Base) was targeted by a drone at exactly twelve o’clock in the afternoon on Wednesday, 10/18/2023. The victory comes only from God. Tashkil al-Waritheen, Operations Support Room for al-Aqsa Flood” (Figure 2). Later, *Al-Muqawama al-Islamiyya fil Iraq* (the Islamic Resistance in Iraq) also claimed (seemingly in an overlapping, not contradictory manner) the Harir attack. In contrast to al-Asad, *muqawama* platforms promptly reported and celebrated the Harir attack, which was a daytime incident when more *muqawama* members were perhaps paying attention.

### Operations Support Room for Al-Aqsa Flood



Figure 3: The Operations Support Room for al-Aqsa Flood announces its establishment, October 18, 2023.

involvement in the conflict. First the Iraqi militia leaders [warned](#) (<https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/iran-backed-militias-applaud-hamas-threaten-americans>) that if the United States intervenes in the conflict in support of Israel, the Iraqi militias will target U.S. sites in the region. Then the Iraqi *muqawama* social media, used coded [language](#) (<https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/coded-militia-language-aims-signal-escalation>) indicating of a permission to play a bigger role in the conflict. This was followed by two drone attacks on U.S. forces in Iraq. Sabreen News later mentioned in a post [previous coded threat language \(/node/18397\)](#) from October 13, when they pledged to attack as a way to say that their promise was fulfilled (Figure 4).

The *muqawama* moved to kinetic action after the explosion at the Al-Ahli hospital in Gaza.

- Nujaba head [Akram Kaabi \(/node/18077\)](#) used escalatory language a few hours before the reported attack on al-Asad, tweeting a Quranic verse: “In the name of the smasher of the oppressors (Qasem al-Jabbarin) O you who have believed, fight those of the disbelievers next to you, and let them find anger in you.” (Figure 5).



Figure 2: Tashkil al-Waritheen (/node/17621) claims responsibility for a drone attack on al-Harir base, October 18, 2023.



Figure 4: Sabereen mentions its muallemi post, October 18, 2023.



Figure 5: Akram al-Kaabi used escalatory language a few hours before the reported attack on al-Asad, October 17, 2023.

- Then [Ashab al-Kahf \(/node/16638\)](#) (AK) a facade group affiliated with HaN, followed with a Quranic verse that read: “And kill them wherever you find them, and turn them out from where they turned you out.” The statement condemned the bombing of the hospital in Gaza and held the U.S. responsible for their support of Israel. AK also asked *muqawama* supporters to gather for a big protest in Tahrir Square, Baghdad, immediately following the statement. The statement also carried out a threat to the U.S., “The invading US state will pay a double price for its crimes to Iraqis and the price of openly supporting the Zionists to kill humanity and children in Gaza very soon and from where they don’t know.” (Figure 6).



Many signs indicate that the Iraqi militias are in

fact preparing for a regional war in which they will support Hamas and Iran. The unified nature of the Iraqi *muqawama* statements and actions suggest strongly an orchestrating directive from the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps - Qods Force (IRGC-QF), which may be assigning various roles to its proxies and allies in the region. ❖

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