

# Akram Kaabi Shown Pretending to Assemble a Drone Fired at Israel

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

## The Harakat Hezbollah al-Nujaba leader released a corny video for Ashura in which he pretended to help with a drone attack on Israel.

On July 17, the [Islamic Resistance in Iraq \(/node/18416\)](#) War Media released a video of a drone launch that it claimed to have fired “previously” (no date provided) against a “vital target in Eilat,” Israel. What makes the video so unique is that it shows Akram Kaabi, head of the militia [Harakat Hezbollah al-Nujaba \(/node/16716\)](#), acting as if he is helping fighters assemble a Shahed-101 X-tail explosive drone (Figure 1).

In the recording, whose format is unique for an IRI claim video in many stylistic regards, Kaabi’s face is the only one that is deliberately not blurred. He is first shown “assisting” a drone crew in erecting a launch stand (folding it out from a carrying case), then in a closeup shot fiddling with the Shahed-101 propeller.

This is a strange turn of events because Kaabi has never felt the need to be personally linked to individual attacks or portrayed as a fighter. This may reflect some recent failing or setback that he wished to offset. The timing of the video release, his black attire, and the attendant soundtrack are all linked to the Shia religious festival of Ashura, but even with that in mind, now is a strange time to change his public modus operandi. In many ways, it is reminiscent of a similarly risible 2006 video in which al-Qaeda in Iraq leader Abu Musab al-Zarqawi pretended to know how to fire a captured U.S. weapon, while in actuality failing to clear a stoppage and then picking up the weapon by its hot barrel (Figure 2).



Figure 1: Akram Kaabi and a Shahed-101 drone, July 17, 2024



Interestingly, the new IRI video comes one day after Jihad Brothers Team, a Nujaba propaganda outlet, claimed a double-drone attack on al-Asad Air Base, which would be the first anti-U.S. attack in Iraq [since April 2007](#) ([41639076\\_guntrouble2\\_b203\\_ap.jpg \(/node/18428\)](#)) and one of only three attacks there since February.

Nujaba and Kaabi appear to be on a self-promotion roll, to an even greater degree than other *muqawama* (resistance) groups like [Kataib Hezbollah \(/node/16641\)](#). This episode may also underline that the IRI and *muqawama* media are content to draw attention to Kaabi and Nujaba while downplaying the current role that terrorist groups in Iraq’s parliament (e.g., KH and [Asaib Ahl al-Haq \(/node/16715\)](#)) are playing in kinetic strikes. ❖

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