

# Iraqi Muqawama Try to Obfuscate Their Role in 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)

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## The member groups of the Islamic Resistance in Iraq are using facades and unclaimed attacks to separate themselves from slowly increasing anti-U.S. attacks in Syria and Iraq.

Since the recent [Israeli strikes on Iranian targets \(https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/israeli-military-says-it-is-conducting-precise-strikes-military-targets-iran-2024-10-25/\)](https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/israeli-military-says-it-is-conducting-precise-strikes-military-targets-iran-2024-10-25/) on October 26, reports of attacks on U.S. bases in Syria have surged. This increase aligns with intensified rhetoric from Iraqi *muqawama* leaders and social media accounts who accuse the United States of allowing Israel to use Iraqi airspace for launching strikes against Iranian positions.

### Iraqi *muqawama* failed efforts to deter U.S./Israeli retaliation on Iran

The Iraqi *muqawama* acted quickly after Iran's missile salvo on Israel in order to add to Iran's deterrent posture. As the October 1 Iranian attack on Israel was occurring, Shabab al-Islam a Telegram account linked to [Kataib Sarkhat al-Quds \(https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/profile-kataib-sarkhat-al-quds-formerly-known-ashab-al-kahf\)](https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/profile-kataib-sarkhat-al-quds-formerly-known-ashab-al-kahf) (formerly known as Ashab al-Kahf), posted the short statement issued by [Iraqi Resistance Coordination Committee \(https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/their-own-words-senior-leaders-admit-membership-tansiqiya\)](https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/their-own-words-senior-leaders-admit-membership-tansiqiya) (al-Haya al-Tansiqiya lil-Muqawama al-Iraqiya, or Tansiqiya for short).



Figure 1: Shabab al-Islam reposting Tansiqiya statement, October 26, 2024.

The statement reads "The Iraqi *muqawama* Tansiqiya is not bound by any restrictions, if the American occupation forces become involved once again in targeting our people in Iraq or in exploiting its airspace to carry out attacks against the Islamic Republic of Iran, then our response will have no limits." (Figure 1).

### New Iraqi *muqawama* threats to U.S. interests since Israel's retaliation

Since the Israeli counter-strike on October 26, the Iraqi *muqawama* have likewise been active, seeming to warn against further strike on Iran and hinting at a desire to punish the U.S. for permitting or

supporting Israel's strike, which utilized Iraqi airspace. The clearest official stance so far has come from **Kataib Hezbollah** (<https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/profile-kataib-hezbollah>) (KH), which on October 27 issued a warning of escalation against the United States. Their statement declared: "The use of Iraqi airspace to carry out strikes on Iranian facilities... marks a dangerous precedent that Iran has not faced before...which could only have happened with an agreement and prior arrangement with the Americans, who dominate Iraqi airspace." It continued, "the Americans must pay the price for their disregard in using Iraqi airspace; this will come, with Allah's help, at its designated time and place." (Figure 2).

Shortly after KH's statement was released, *muqawama*-affiliated social media began reporting an attack on the al-Tanf Garrison in Syria. A newer facade group, the Islamic Resistance in Iraq – al-Thawriyun (Revolutionaries), claimed responsibility. Their communique stated: "We announce the targeting of the American occupation's al-Tanf base in Syria with several rockets and drones on the evening of Sunday, October 27, 2024... we affirm that our operations will continue and escalate until the last American soldier leaves the pure land of Iraq" (Figure 3).

### Anti-U.S. strikes claimed by Al-Thawriyun or unclaimed

Al-Thawriyun appears to be a newly established brand that surfaced after Kataib Hezbollah, operating under the rubric of **Islamic Resistance in Iraq** (<https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/profile-islamic-resistance-iraq>) (IRI), paused its attacks on U.S. targets in Syria and Iraq. KH had previously led an attack at Tower 22 in Jordan, which resulted in the deaths of three American service members. In response, KH faced U.S. retaliatory strikes, prompting them to halt operations temporarily to prevent further escalation.



Figure 2: KH statement, October 27, 2024.

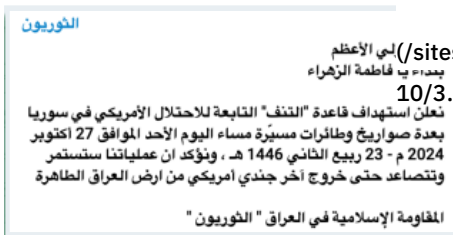


Figure 3: Al-Thawriyun claims attack on al-Tanf, October 28, 2024.

Al-Thawriyun previously **claimed five attacks**

(<https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/tracking-anti-us-and-anti-israel-strikes-iraq-and-syria-during-gaza-crisis>) (all in 2024) on U.S.

sites in Iraq and Syria, on July 25 (two), July 26, August 5, and August 9. In recent weeks, (research alert forthcoming), anti-U.S. strikes in Syria (though not Iraq) have increased in frequency and ambition, using larger rockets and combined rocket/drone attacks. With the exception of al-Thawriyun's al-Tanf strike, none of the anti-U.S. strikes in Syria were claimed by any *muqawama* platform.

### Return of facade group operations

The al-Thawriyun brand appears to have been created to offer plausible deniability for militias known to operate under the Islamic Resistance in Iraq (IRI) umbrella. In a statement from November 2023, KH Secretary General identified these groups as KH, **Harakat Hezbollah al-Nujaba** (<https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/profile-harakat-hezbollah-al-nujaba>), **Kataib Sayyid al-Shuhada** (<https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/profile-kataib-sayyid-al-shuhada>) and **Ansar Allah al-Awfiya** (<https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/profile-ansar-allah-al-awfiya-19th-pmf-brigade>).

In anticipation of potential U.S. retaliatory strikes, al-Thawriyun appears to be an attempt by these militias to create ambiguity, providing cover as they continue attacks on U.S. bases. This strategy seems to be designed to obscure the direct involvement of known groups, offering them a layer of plausible deniability.



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