

Human Rights Abusers Set up PMF Department of Human Rights

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Brief Analysis

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

or see Part 1: [How to Use Militia Spotlight \(/policy-analysis/how-use-militia-spotlight\)](#)

Human rights abuser Falah Al-Fayyadh has established the PMF Department of Human Rights under the stewardship of human rights abuser Abu Muntadher al-Husseini.

On June 26, 2023, the Popular Mobilization Forces (PMF) Department of Human Rights was established by PMF chairman and U.S.-designated human rights abuser Falah al-Fayyadh. As [Amnesty International \(https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2019/10/iraq-gruesome-string-of-fatalities-as-new-tear-gas-grenades-pierce-protesters-skulls/\)](#) and [Human Rights Watch \(https://www.hrw.org/report/2022/11/29/sleep-law/violence-against-protesters-and-unaccountable-perpetrators-iraq\)](#) documented, over 500 protestors were killed, thousands wounded, and hundreds illegally detained and abused. [Fayyadh supported the policy \(https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/leveraging-us-sanctions-falah-al-fayyadh\)](#) that led to militia snipers using live ammunition on civilians, and to the firing of tear gas canisters directly into the heads of protestors, which created the most iconic and gruesome imagery of the 2019 demonstrations.



Figure 1: Falah al-Fayyadh pins new rank on Abu Muntadher al-Husseini after their involvement in attacking unarmed protestors in 2019.

The PMF Department of Human Rights will be part of the office of PMF Secretary General Abu Muntadher al-Husseini (birth name Tahseen Abid Mutar al-Abboudi), a former PMF chief of operations who [aided Fayyadh in the murder, torture and abduction of Iraqi protestors in 2019 \(https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/exposing-and-sanctioning-human-rights-violations-iraqi-militias\)](#) (Figure 1). The PMF Department of Human Rights will be led by Hussein Chalob Hardan (Figure 2), the head of PMF's al-Huda Foundation for Strategic Studies and an advisor to Falah al-Fayyadh.



Figure 2: Hussein Chalob Hardan, head of the Human Rights at the PMF.

On April 25, 2024, Abu Muntadher al-Husseini held a workshop with the UNICEF. The PMF posted on their X account, "The workshop, held at the headquarters of the Popular Mobilization Forces in Baghdad, titled "Children's Rights According to International Principles," [Hussein Chalob Hardan, head of the PMF's al-Huda Foundation for Strategic Studies, focused on the role of the Popular Mobilization Forces in safeguarding general human rights, children's rights, and the principles it has adopted in promoting these humanitarian concepts.](#)" The PMF Media Directorate's account on X tagged UNICEF in its Arabic account, but UNICEF didn't react to or repost news about the seminar.

From May 20-22, 2024, the Human Rights Department held a workshop with the UN Development Program (UNDP) and Iraqi High Commission for Human Rights at the Central Security Directorate of the PMF, an organization [closely connected to protestor killings as well as terrorist operations through its founder, the U.S.-designated terrorist and human rights abuser Abu Zainab al-Lami \(https://home.treasury.gov/news/press-releases/sm847\)](#) (birth name Hussein Falah al-Lami).



Figure 3: UNAMI meeting with Soleimani and Muhandis pictures overhead, September 2024.

On September 2-5, 2024, the United National Assistance Mission in Iraq (UNAMI) held another human rights workshop at the PMF headquarters, attended by Abu Muntadher al-Husseini, Hussein Chalob, and Mahdi Hassan Mohammed (Head of Training at the Iraqi High Commission for Human Rights). The session was undertaken under the pictures of U.S.-designated terrorists [Qassem Soleimani and Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis \(https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/exposing-and-sanctioning-human-rights-violations-iraqi-militias\)](#). UNAMI posted about this activity.

While the goal of international human rights training is to guide errant security forces towards better behaviour, it is unusual to allow widely-recognized human rights abusers to lead the sessions and to benefit from the cleansing effect on their public image. Though it is positive that the PMF is recognizing that it has a gruesome track record of human rights abuses, no one has been held accountable for the deaths or disappearances of over 500 persons in 2019. These investigative and punitive steps should be undertaken *first*, before international organizations stumble into traps laid by human rights abusers to whitewash their crimes. ❖

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