

Akram al-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)

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Harakat al-Nujaba leader Akram al-Kaabi released a corny video for Ashura in which he pretends to play a role in a drone attack on Israel

On July 17, 2024, the [Islamic Resistance in Iraq \(/node/18416\)](/node/18416) War Media released a video of a drone launch that it claimed was fired “previously” (no date of the attack provided) against a “vital target in Eilat”, Israel. What makes the video so unique is that it shows [Harakat al-Nujaba \(/node/16716\)](/node/16716) (HaN) head Akram al-Kaabi pretending to help with the assembly of 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, Akram al-Kaabi’s face alone is deliberately not blurred. He is shown pretending to aid a drone crew in the erection of a launch stand (folding out from a carrying case) and is then shown in close-up, fiddling with the Shahed 101 propeller.

This is a strange turn of events. Akram al-Kaabi has never before felt the need to be personally linked to individual attacks, or be portrayed as a fighter. This may reflect some recent failing or setback that he wishes to offset. Clearly the video, his black attire and the attendant soundtrack is Ashura-linked but even so, this is strange time to change his public modus operandi. In many ways, it is reminiscent of Al-Qaeda in Iraq leader Abu Musab al-Zarqawi’s similarly risible 2006 video where he was shown pretending to know how to fire a captured U.S. weapon, while actually failing to clear a stoppage and then picking up the weapon by its hot barrel. (Figure 2)



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



Interestingly, the new IRI video comes one day after Jihad Brothers, a Nujaba propaganda outlet, claimed a double-drone attack on Al-Asad airbase, which would be [the first anti-U.S. attack in Iraq since April and one of only three attacks there since February. \(/node/18428\)](/node/18428)

Nujaba and Akram al-Kaabi appear to be on a self-promotion roll, to a greater degree even than other muqawama groups like [Kataib Hezbollah \(/node/16641\)](/node/16641) (KH). This episode may also underline that the IRI and the *muqawama* media is content to draw attention to Akram and Nujaba, while downplaying the current role of the terrorist groups in parliament such as KH and [Asaib Ahl al-Haq \(/node/16715\)](/node/16715) (AAH) in kinetic strikes. ❖

to use it.

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