

Deciphering Iraqi Militia Threats of an Energy War

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

Nujaba and Kataib Hezbollah have threatened energy facilities in the Gulf and elsewhere. How serious are these threats?

Since Iran's missile attack against Israel (<https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/israeli-military-has-begun-limited-raids-against-hezbollah-targets-border-area-2024-09-30/>) on October 1, the Iraqi *muqawama* ('resistance') have repeatedly threatened to strike energy infrastructure in the region if Iran's energy sector is targeted by Israel. To justify potential attacks on the energy infrastructure of neighboring countries, the *muqawama* has continued to launch a smear campaign against certain Arab nations, particularly the UAE and Saudi Arabia. This rhetoric aims to frame these countries as complicit in supporting Israel, thereby laying the groundwork for justifying possible future strikes on their critical energy assets.



Figure 1: KSQ video clip, October 13, 2024.

Nujaba and Kataib Sarkhat al-Quds

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10/10.jpeg)

On October 13, [Harakat al-Nujaba \(https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-](https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/profile-harakat-hezbollah-al-nujaba)

[analysis/profile-harakat-hezbollah-al-nujaba](https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/profile-harakat-hezbollah-al-nujaba)) (HaN)-affiliated [Kataib Sarkhat](https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/profile-kataib-sarkhat-al-quds)

[al-Quds \(https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/profile-kataib-](https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/profile-kataib-sarkhat-al-quds)

[sarkhat-al-quds-formerly-known-ashab-al-kahf](https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/profile-kataib-sarkhat-al-quds)) (KSQ), formerly known as

Ashab al-Kahf, released a video threatening to attack critical and energy

infrastructure in several Arab countries. In the video, KSQ referred to these

locations as "the Arab economic resources which support the bastard Zionist

entity." The introduction states, "We will have our share in stopping this support

and cutting the export (of energy)." (Figure 1). The video displayed a map showing the following targets:

- Port of Jebel Ali (Dubai);
- "Port of Manama 'Isa'" [likely referring to Salman Port in Bahrain];
- Jordan River Crossing;

- Gas facility in Saudi Arabia [unspecified location];
- Gas facility in Saudi Arabia [unspecified location]; and
- Aramco gas facility.

One day before this video was published, Nadhim al-Saeedi, the head of HaN's Executive Council, made similar threats on TV. Al-Saeedi said, "Iraqi resistance will strike energy centers if Iranian oil facilities are bombed" (Figure 2).



Figure 2: Nadhim al-Saeedi's interview, October 12, 2024.

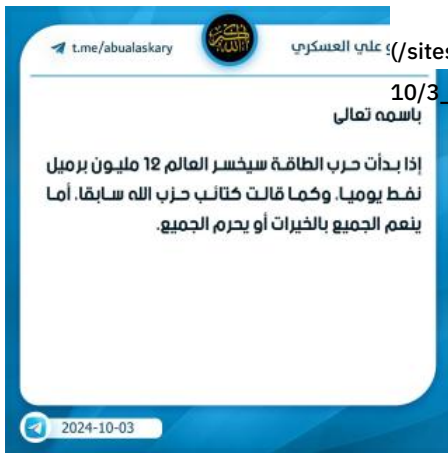


Figure 3: Abu Ali al-Askari's short post about the energy war, October 3, 2024.

Kataib Hezbollah

The first Iraqi militia to escalate the rhetoric of the 'energy war' was **Kataib Hezbollah** (<https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/profile-kataib-hezbollah>) (KH). On October 3, Abu Ali al-Askari, the head of KH security, posted a short message on his Telegram channel, stating: "If the energy war starts, the world will lose 12 million barrels of oil per day. As Kataib Hezbollah previously stated, either everyone will be blessed with prosperity, or everyone will be deprived" (Figure 3).

This threat was followed by a statement from KH's Secretary-General, Abu Hussein al-Hamidawi, in which he used highly-charged language against some Arab states. He stated: "All kinds of evil, barbarism and criminality have been embodied on the enemy front, exceeding all limits of human imagination, with the direct and effective participation of evil America and its affiliated Western countries, and with the support of the Sisi regime, the malicious Jordanian regime, the Saudi entity

with its Wahhabi institutions, and the Emirati regime. The actions of these people will be engraved in the memory of the nation, which will produce a volcano of anger and revenge that they cannot stop" (Figure 4).

Subsequently, Abu Ali al-Askari issued another statement, reiterating his threats to initiate an energy war and attacked the Arab states. He said: "In principle, we will not start an energy war, but if it does start, the world will lose 12 million barrels of oil per day, and this is what we will take care of, with God's help. As for what the Yemeni brothers will do in Bab al-Mandab, and the Iranian brothers in the Strait of Hormuz, God knows best." Abu Ali al-Askari added: "This war distinguished the evil from the good, and clearly revealed who are the soldiers of Satan and who are the soldiers of the Most Merciful (God). We have named the evil regimes as defined by the Secretary-General in his last statement: the Sisi regime, the Jordanian regime, the Saudi entity with its Wahhabi institutions, and the Emirati regime" (Figure 5).



Analysis

KH has mounted strikes on the Gulf before, using its **Awliyat al-Waad al-Haq**

(<https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/profile-alwiyat-al-waad-al-haq>) group, which threatened attacks on U.S. bases in the Gulf

<https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/kataib-hezbollahs-facade-group-threatens-gulf-states-once-again>) as recently as October 24, 2023.

Attacks have been launched against Gulf energy infrastructure from and through Iraq before, for instance against Saudi targets in **May**

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/u-s-saudi-pipeline-attacks-originated-from-iraq-11561741133>) and **September 2019**

<https://www.reuters.com/article/world/exclusive-us-probe-of-saudi-oil-attack-shows-it-came-from-north-report-idUSKBN1YN29E/>). Nujaba and KH

are likely to be making today's threats against Iraq on behalf of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps - Quds Force (IRGC-QF): using Iraqi militias is a manner of showing the U.S. and other powers that an Israeli strike on Iran's oil infrastructure could have destabilizing effects, albeit without Iran itself needing to show bad faith to the 2023 Chinese-brokered Iran-Saudi non-aggression deal. In reality, the use of drones and cruise missiles fired out of Iraq could cause serious damage to one or two oil sites, though far less than a determined attack from Iran itself and at the risk of embarrassing the already weak-looking Iraqi government. ❖

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