

Kataib Hezbollah is Part of Iraq's PMF

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ABOUT THE AUTHORS



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Articles & Testimony

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U.S.-designated terrorist group KH is the most significant player inside the Popular Mobilization Forces, which is commanded and paid by Prime Minister Mohammed Shia al-Sudani, who visits the White House today.

When the U.S. killed [Kataib Hezbollah \(/node/16641\)](/node/16641) KH members in Iraq on both February 3 and February 7, 2024, the Pentagon was at pains to claim, incorrectly, that the U.S. was not targeting Popular Mobilization Force (PMF) members, who are an Iraqi security force commanded by Iraq's PM and paid through the Prime Minister's Commission for the PMF.

Major General Pat Ryder, Pentagon Press Secretary [claimed](#)

[\(https://www.defense.gov/News/Transcripts/Transcript/Article/3667341/pentagon-press-secretary-air-force-maj-gen-pat-ryder-holds-a-press-briefing/\)](https://www.defense.gov/News/Transcripts/Transcript/Article/3667341/pentagon-press-secretary-air-force-maj-gen-pat-ryder-holds-a-press-briefing/) on February 5, 2024 that “the folks that we're striking are not part of the PMF”, even though Iraqi Prime Minister Mohammed Shia al-Sudani visited wounded PMF troops after the February 3 strike. Then on February 8, 2024, Major General Ryder [noted](#)

[\(https://www.defense.gov/News/Transcripts/Transcript/Article/3671411/pentagon-press-secretary-air-force-maj-gen-pat-ryder-holds-a-press-briefing/\)](https://www.defense.gov/News/Transcripts/Transcript/Article/3671411/pentagon-press-secretary-air-force-maj-gen-pat-ryder-holds-a-press-briefing/) that the KH commander killed by a U.S. airstrike on February 7 was “not a member of the PMF, he's a Kataib Hezbollah commander.” Again this was easily disproved: the KH commander Abu Baqr al-Saeedi was an advisor to the commander's office of the PMF Central Security Department, which is led by a U.S.-sanctioned Kataib Hezbollah terrorist and human rights abuser, [Abu Zainab al-Lami \(/node/17990\)](/node/17990) (real name Hussein Falah Aziz al-Lami). Abu Baqr's PMF [identification card \(https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/abu-baqr-al-saeedi-kataib-hezbollah-terrorist-serving-pmf-official\)](#) was shown after his death.

While PM Mohammed Shia al-Sudani is in Washington DC, it is important to restate the facts regarding the direct

relationship between Kataib Hezbollah and the government of Iraq, including the Iraqi Prime Minister's Office.

- The Chief of Staff of the PMF, its senior operational commander and day-to-day leader, is U.S.-designated Kataib Hezbollah terrorist and human rights abuser [Abdul-Aziz al-Mohammadawi \(aka Abu Fadak\). \(/node/16434\)](#) On April 5, 2024, Abu Fadak [identified \(https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/iraqi-pmf-chief-staff-commits-fulfill-iranian-supreme-leaders-plans\)](https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/iraqi-pmf-chief-staff-commits-fulfill-iranian-supreme-leaders-plans) Iran's Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei as his commander. This means that Kataib Hezbollah is the first and primary recipient of [more than \\$2.6bn in annual Iraqi government funding \(/node/18158\)](#) to the PMF. Iraq's parliament, cabinet and Prime Minister's Office have each authorized Iraqi state payments to Kataib Hezbollah officials.
- The aforementioned head of security for the PMF is U.S.-sanctioned Kataib Hezbollah terrorist and human rights abuser, Abu Zainab al-Lami.
- KH operates the [state-funded 45th, 46th, and 47th Brigades of the PMF. \(/node/16641\)](#) Chain of command nominally runs through the Popular Mobilization Commission in the Prime Minister's Office, then up to the prime minister.
- KH also runs the PMF intelligence, missile and anti-armor departments, plus special forces Unit 313 and intelligence Unit 101 (both under Abu Fadak).

In recent history, Kataib Hezbollah is directly responsible for:

- [Killing three Americans on January 28, 2024 in Jordan. \(/node/18621\)](#)
- [Kidnapping Princeton scholar Elizabeth Tsurkov \(/node/18207\)](#) in Baghdad one year ago.
- Leading [scores of Islamic Resistance in Iraq drone, missile and rocket attacks \(/node/18428\)](#) on U.S. bases in Al-Asad, Al-Tanf, and Tower 22.
- Threatening to arm and train insurgencies in [Saudi Arabia, Bahrain \(/node/18582\)](#) and [Jordan \(https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/new-options-iraqs-axis-resistance-players-part-2-opening-jordan-front\)](#).

As Iraqi Prime Minister Mohammed Shia al-Sudani visits Washington DC, it is important for all media organs and all Congressional officials to directly ask Sudani about the Prime Minister's relationship with U.S.-designated terrorist group Kataib Hezbollah. As the commander-in-chief of the PMF, Sudani could expel KH members from the PMF and could cease paying them, merely with a pen-stroke, but he does not do so. Nor does he pursue human rights abusers, killers and kidnappers within the KH contingent in Iraq's security forces, nor has he secured the release of Elizabeth Tsurkov one year after she was seized by a group (KH) that Sudani has formal authority over. ❖

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