

Kataib Hezbollah in the Caucasus: One to Watch

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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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Unconfirmed but detailed reporting of a potential Kataib Hezbollah terrorist cells in Uzbekistan and Kazakstan should be a wake-up call to monitor for eastward expansion of the group's external operations.

On August 7, 2024, Terror Alarm (a news aggregator account on the platform X that claims to scrape social media using AI) reported that [Kataib Hezbollah \(/node/16641\)](#) (KH)-affiliated groups and figures are responsible for carrying out terrorist attacks in the Central Asian countries of Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan. The Terror Alarm [message \(https://x.com/terror_alarm/status/1821087441794597349?s=46&t=9gXAAYYr10PFhQgZzv-MCQ\)](https://x.com/terror_alarm/status/1821087441794597349?s=46&t=9gXAAYYr10PFhQgZzv-MCQ) read:

The organization responsible for terror activity in Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan is the Iraqi militia Kata'ib Hezbollah. Our data shows that the individual responsible for pursuing the terror attacks is Tajik operative Muhammad Ali Burhanov, also known by his alias, Sayed Hamid al-Tajiki. Burhanov studied at Al-Mustafa University in Iran, a known spotting pool used by terror groups looking to recruit operatives. Burhanov and his operatives receive special support from Quds Force's Department 400, with the personal involvement of Housein Rahmani and senior Department 400 official Hossein Rahban, who recruit young militiamen. He collaborates also with Jihadists, ISIS, and the Taliban. The operations spearheaded by Burhanov for Kata'ib Hezbollah have included the failed attempt to mount a gunfire attack on the Jewish Agency offices in Almaty, an attempt to set fire to the Ohr Avner Jewish Center in Almaty using a Molotov cocktail, and arson attacks on a farm belonging to Saxovat Brolyer Co. in Tashkent and a warehouse belonging to Neostream Co. in Almaty.

Subsequently, on August 26, the London-based Iran International TV [amplified \(https://www.iranintl.com/en/202408259419\)](https://www.iranintl.com/en/202408259419) the information initially revealed by Terror Alarm.

Evidence of Pro-KH networks in the Caucasus

While Militia Spotlight cannot verify these reports, it is worth noting that in recent years KH has been working on expanding its reach and influence beyond



Figure 1: "The Islamic Resistance in Tajikistan" statement, May 1, 2022.

Iraq and Syria. The evidence of these activities are scarce, but the re-election of Ahmad Monsef Faraj al-Hamidawi (aka Abu Hussein) as the Secretary General of KH in 2022, offered a glimpse into the militant groups' who are in KH's orbit.

On May 1, 2022, "the Islamic Resistance in Tajikistan" issued a statement congratulating "the faithful Ummah of Iraq on the re-election of the Mujahid Haj Abu Hussein al-Humaidawi as the Secretary-General of KH" (Figure 1).

Similarly, "the Kashmiri Mujahideen" stated in a short statement that "your Kashmiri brothers, consider the re-election of Haj Abu Hussein al-Humaidawi as the Secretary-General of this sacred organization as a sign of trust and security for this Ummah and as a significant blow to the enemy" (Figure 2).

The Caucasus and Prior KH Statements

On January 9, 2024, al-Mayadeen TV interviewed the military spokesman of Kataib Hezbollah



Figure 2: "The Kashmiri Mujahideen" statement, May 1, 2022.

(<https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/node/16641>) (KH), Jafar al-Husseini, who was sanctioned (<https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/node/18488>) by the U.S. government on November 17 for "coordinating with KH fighters planning attacks against U.S. military commanders in Iraq." In the interview, Jafar al-Husseini noted: (<https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/kataib-hezbollah-reveals-plans-expanded-regional-attacks>) "What we see is that in the coming years or a decade, the geography of this Axis will expand to reach East Asia and Caucasian countries."

Jafar al-Husseini's comments and recent indications of possible KH involvement in the Caucasus suggest that, akin to KH's training of Bahraini terrorists (<https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/kataib-hezbollah-behind-saraya-al-ashtars-claimed-attack-israel>), the organization may be worth watching in relation to external operations farther afield. While KH drone and missile strikes on Israel are easily blocked, KH could pose a more effective threat to Israeli and Jewish persons living in or visiting the Caucasus.



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