

Kata'ib Imam Ali (KIA)



OVERVIEW

AS OF FEBRUARY 2026

Kata'ib Imam Ali (KIA), a.k.a. the Imam Ali Brigades, is an Iran-backed Iraqi Shia militia and US-designated foreign terrorist organization that has ties to other Iraqi Shia militias that have attacked US interests in Iraq and Syria. It identifies itself as a member of the Islamic Resistance in Iraq, a coalition of Iran-backed militias that formed to attack US forces and Israel after the onset of the Israel-HAMAS conflict.

KIA formed in 2014 to fight ISIS. Its militants were later absorbed into the 40th Brigade of the Iraqi Popular Mobilization Committee (PMC), a component of Iraq's security forces. In 2019, KIA fighters participated in a violent crackdown on Iraqi protesters and injured and imprisoned civilians.

Operating Areas

Iraq; operated in Syria from 2015 to at least 2022

Members

6,000 to 8,000

Tactics And Targets

KIA has longstanding relationships with and has received training and equipment from the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps and Lebanese Hizballah. It is well-equipped with small arms and probably has access to armored vehicles through its membership in the PMC.

Terrorist Group Designation

The US State Department designated KIA a foreign terrorist organization in September 2025 and a Specially Designated Global Terrorist (SDGT) entity in June 2025. The US Treasury Department designated KIA's leader, Shibl al-Zaydi, an SDGT in 2018.

KEY LEADERS



Shibl Mohsen Obaid al-Zaydi

Leader

