

The Badr Organization



Logo: Gear and book with leaf over silhouette of Iraq

Flag Text: Top line: “Sovereignty – Justice – Construction”; second line: “And say, ‘Do [as you will], for God will see your deeds, and [so will] His Messenger and the believers’” (Quran 9:105); bottom line: “Badr Organization”

FOUNDING

- 1982-1983

SIZE

- Estimated at 20,000

KEY LEADERS

- Secretary General Hadi al-Amiri
- Interior Minister Qasim al-Araji

IDEOLOGICAL ALLEGIANCE

- Ayatollah Muhammad Baqir al-Sadr (d. 1980)
- Iranian Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei

POLITICAL WING

- Formed the Fatah al-Mubin (Manifest Victory) electoral coalition with other Iranian-backed groups

WEAPONS

- Has publicized its use of U.S. equipment, such as M1 Abrams tanks and MRAP armored vehicles; has access to Iranian and Soviet-era weapons and vehicles

ATROCITIES

- Implicated in the torture and murder of thousands of Iraqi Sunnis, often by members serving as Iraqi police

LEGAL STATUS IN IRAQ

- 15 brigades of the Popular Mobilization Forces (PMF) consist of Badr units; fighters also numerous within Ministry of Interior combat units

AREAS OF OPERATION

- Has operated across Iraq and maintains political offices in several Iraqi cities
- Has publicized operations in Syria, including Aleppo and Damascus

CONNECTIONS TO OTHER MILITIAS

- Has supported other pro-Iranian groups in Iraq; has provided support to the growth of pro-Iranian militia in Syria

CURRENT DESIGNATIONS

- None

SOCIAL MEDIA

- badr.iq/, Facebook, and Telegram



BACKGROUND AND ANALYSIS

During the Iran-Iraq War (1980-1988), the IRGC funded, trained, and equipped the Badr Brigade, which was composed of Iraqi Shiite defectors and prisoners of war.¹

After the fall of Saddam Hussein in 2003, the organization’s leadership and numerous fighters returned from exile in Iran.² Numerous Badr personnel joined the Iraqi Ministry of the Interior, especially the federal police, enabling its fighters to carry out atrocities against Sunni civilians under the cover of official authority. According to a leaked U.S. embassy cable, Badr commander Hadi al-Amiri’s preferred methods of killing “allegedly involved using a power drill to pierce the skulls of his adversaries.”³

Until 2012, Badr served as the military wing of the Islamic Supreme Council of Iraq (ISCI), a leading Shiite party. It then severed ties with ISCI and became a party in its own right. In the 2014 elections, Badr claimed 22 seats in parliament, which facilitated

the appointment of a Badr official, Mohammed Ghabban, as minister of the interior.⁴ Qasim al-Araji, the current interior minister, is also part of Badr.

The Badr Organization is deeply committed to Iran’s Shiite revolutionary doctrine. In 2015, Hadi al-Amiri said that Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei “is the leader not only for Iranians but for the Islamic nation.” Al-Amiri also described Quds Force leader Qassem Soleimani as his “dearest friend.”⁵ Badr claims it has contributed 1,500 fighters to the Iranian-led forces in Syria. From 2014-2018, Badr has played a pivotal role in retaking Iraqi cities from the Islamic State, while continuing to commit atrocities.⁶ As leader of the Fatah al-Mubin (Manifest Victory) electoral coalition, Badr is poised to exert a major influence on Iraq’s emerging post-Islamic State political order.⁷

1. Lionel Beehner, “Shiite Militias and Iraq’s Security Forces,” *Council on Foreign Relations*, November 30, 2005. (<https://www.cfr.org/background-er/shiite-militias-and-iraqs-security-forces>)

2. “Shiite Politics in Iraq: The Role of the Supreme Council,” *International Crisis Group*, November 15, 2007. (<https://www.crisisgroup.org/middle-east-north-africa/gulf-and-arabian-peninsula/iraq/shiite-politics-iraq-role-supreme-council>)

3. Loveday Morris, “Appointment of Iraq’s new interior minister opens door to militia and Iranian influence,” *The Washington Post*, October 18, 2014. (https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/appointment-of-iraqs-new-interior-minister-opens-door-to-militia-and-iranian-influence/2014/10/18/f6f2a347-d38c-4743-902a-254a169ca274_story.html)

4. Ibid.

5. Caleb Weiss, “Badr Organization fighters pose with US M1 Abrams tank,” *FDD’s Long War Journal*, July 12, 2015. (<https://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2015/07/badr-organization-fighters-pose-with-us-m1-abrams-tank.php>)

6. “Iraq: Ban Abusive Militias from Mosul Operation,” *Human Rights Watch*, July 31, 2016. (<https://www.hrw.org/news/2016/07/31/iraq-ban-abusive-militias-mosul-operation>)

7. Amir Toumaj and Romany Shaker, “Iranian-backed Iraqi militias form coalition ahead of parliamentary elections,” *FDD’s Long War Journal*, January 25, 2018. (<https://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2018/01/iranian-backed-iraqi-militias-form-coalition-ahead-of-parliamentary-elections.php>)