

The Badr Organization of Reconstruction and Development

AT A GLANCE

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SUMMARY

Formed: 1982

Disbanded: Group is active.

First Attack: 1983-1988: The Badr Organization fought alongside the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) during the Iran-Iraq War. They served on the front line and led attacks against Iraqi forces in southern Iraq (unknown killed, unknown wounded).¹

Last Attack: December 31, 2019: The Badr Organization and other PMF affiliates organized and participated in demonstrations and later took part in an attack on the U.S. Embassy compound in central Baghdad (0 killed, unknown wounded).²

OVERVIEW

The Badr Organization of Reconstruction and Development, formerly known as the Badr Brigade, is a Shiite militant organization that operates in Iraq and Syria. The Badr Organization advocates for the creation of a separate Shiite region in southern Iraq and is closely allied with Iran. Since its establishment, the group has received funding and support from Iran’s government and military. The Badr Organization was founded as the armed wing of the Islamic Supreme Council of Iraq (ISCI), a Shiite political party formerly known as the Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution (SCIRI). In 2012, the

Badr Organization broke away from the ISCI to maintain ties with Iran after the ISCI attempted to disassociate from the nation. The Badr Organization entered Iraqi politics in 2014, founding the Fatah Coalition within Parliament and posting several of its members to Cabinet positions.

NARRATIVE SUMMARY

The Badr Organization of Reconstruction and Development, formerly known as the Badr Brigade, was formed in 1982. The group initially served as the armed wing of the Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq (SCIRI).³ The Badr Organization is considered one of Iran's oldest and most important Iraqi proxies because of its close and lasting ties to Tehran.⁴

SCIRI was founded in Iran in 1982 by political exiles from Iraq. Iraqi President Saddam Hussein invaded Iran in 1980, kicking off the Iran-Iraq War that would last until 1988. In the first years of the war, many Iraqi Shiite political leaders fled to Iran. Iran allowed these leaders to organize anti-Ba'athist political parties within its borders. Iran encouraged the new political parties to adopt its revolutionary ideology and provided them with organizational and financial support. In this context, SCIRI was established in Iran to uproot and replace Iraq's Ba'athist regime.⁵

In 1982, the Badr Brigade was established with Iranian support to conduct intelligence and other military operations in the Iran-Iraq War. Nominally, the group served as the armed wing of SCIRI. However, in practice, the Badr Brigade was created to operate on Iran's behalf. It received significant funding, training, and strategic guidance from Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC).⁶ The group likely played a minor part in the conflict and depended heavily on Iranian support.⁷

After Iran made peace with Iraq in 1988, Badr militants were largely inactive until 1991. Following Iraq's defeat in the First Gulf War, a domestic uprising challenging the Ba'athist regime spread across the country.⁸ Viewing the revolt as an opportunity to undercut its rival, Iran sent Badr militants to Iraq to co-opt the movement and push for the creation of a new Shiite theocratic government in Iraq. This shift in goals not well received by the local population, and the potential for the revolt to take on pro-Iranian, Shiite aims alarmed both Hussein and U.S. officials monitoring the situation.⁹ Hussein targeted the rebels with military force, killing upwards of 50,000 people.¹⁰ The Iraqi military easily defeated the Badr militants, forcing them to retreat to Iran.¹¹ Until 2003, the Badr Brigade's operations were largely limited in scope and consisted of raids and other small attacks across the Iran-Iraq border.¹²

After the fall of the Ba'athist regime in 2003, the Badr Brigade returned to Iraq. In 2003 and 2004, U.S. officials called for the Badr Brigade to disband.¹³ SCIRI, however, did not accept U.S. calls to disarm. Instead, to appear less militant, SCIRI renamed the Badr Brigade to the Badr Organization of Reconstruction and Development and claimed that the group was now only engaged in "cultural activities."¹⁴ Unable to disband the Badr Organization and other Iraqi militia groups, the United States began encouraging militants to join the ranks of the Iraqi Security Forces. Badr militants served as police,

military, and intelligence forces. In these positions, they reportedly tortured, kidnapped, and killed Sunni civilians and prisoners, though the group has denied these accusations.¹⁵ During this time, the Badr Organization also continued to engage in militant activities against domestic enemies. Despite calls to disarm, group members continued to carry weapons and staged attacks against the Mahdi Army – an Iraqi militant group operated by SCIRI’s ideological rivals, the Sadrists – and British troops in southern Iraq.¹⁶

The Badr Organization soon began operating its own political party, independent of SCIRI. In 2005, the Badr Organization participated in Iraq’s parliamentary elections as part of the United Iraqi Alliance, a political coalition that also included SCIRI.¹⁷ The group also began to gain influence in Iraq’s Ministry of Interior, which is responsible for organizing and managing Iraq’s police forces, beginning in 2004.¹⁸ The Badr Organization would consolidate its hold over the Ministry of Interior over subsequent years, controlling the Minister post between 2014 and 2018 and incorporating its members into Iraq’s federal and provincial police forces.

In 2007, SCIRI renamed itself the Islamic Supreme Council of Iraq (ISCI) in an attempt to disassociate itself from Tehran. In 2010, the Badr Organization again ran in parliamentary elections alongside ISCI as part of the Iraqi National Alliance coalition.¹⁹ Badr leader Hadi al-Amiri served as Transport Minister from 2010-2014. In this position, Amiri cemented his connections with Iran and worked to channel funds to companies affiliated with the Badr Organization.²⁰

While ISCI aimed to distance itself from its Iranian history, the Badr Organization split from ISCI in 2012 to continue its own political and military activities and preserve its ties with Iran.²¹ The leader of the Badr Organization, Hadi al-Amiri, continued to function as both the political and military leader of the group after the split.²² In 2014, the Badr Organization won 22 seats in Iraq’s November 2014 parliamentary elections.²³ Badr member Mohammed Ghabban was appointed as Interior Minister, a critical national security post within Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi’s government. Through Ghabban, Badr leader Hadi al-Amiri exercised significant control over Iraq’s security forces. A Badr affiliate was also appointed to serve as Human Rights Minister.²⁴

Following the rise of the Islamic State (IS) in 2013, the Badr Organization chose to ally with both Iraqi and Iranian forces to halt IS’s advance. Amiri led the organization to fight IS alongside other Shiite militias as a part of the Popular Mobilization Forces (PMF, *Hashd as-Shaabi* in Arabic) – a powerful coalition of armed groups comprised of militias representing Iraq’s various religious and ethnic identities.²⁵ The Badr Organization, the largest group within the PMF, proved indispensable during the campaign to retake territory from IS. In particular, the group achieved a series of victories against the Islamic State in the Diyala Province.²⁶ During the battle for Tikrit in 2015, Badr leader Hadi al-Amiri reportedly led Iraqi troops alongside Iranian General Qasem Soleimani, the head of the IRGC’s Quds Force.²⁷

In 2016, the Badr Organization assisted the Iraqi Army in several major offensives against the Islamic State. However, the group often superseded the Iraqi government’s

orders to pursue its own objectives. In May 2016, the group played a pivotal but controversial role in the offensive on Fallujah.²⁸ This was the first significant event in a series of military engagements where the Badr Organization provided valuable tactical assistance to the Iraqi Army while simultaneously subverting orders from the Prime Minister's office. Under the plan put forth by the Prime Minister, PMF units – the Badr Organization included – were to assist with surrounding Fallujah. PMF units would then wait outside the city with Iraqi armed forces entered Fallujah and liberated its residents. However, once the city had been surrounded, the Badr Organization did not abide by this plan and instead sent its own members into Fallujah.²⁹ In June 2016, the Badr Organization leveraged its connections with Badr affiliates in the Iraqi Security Forces to enter the city.³⁰ At this time, the Badr Organization was accused of committing a series of human rights abuses against civilians throughout its participation in the two-week campaign to retake the city.³¹ In a 2016 interview with PBS, Badr leader Hadi al-Amiri commented on the abuses: “I don't claim that there are never violations that occur during war.”³²

The Badr Organization continued to draw on its connections with the security forces managed by Iraq's Interior Minister – a senior member of the Badr Organization – to pursue its own interests during the Mosul offensive in 2016 and 2017. In Mosul, the Badr Organization and the other PMF units were directed to take up positions to the west of the city in Tal Afar to prevent IS from breaking out of the Iraqi encirclement.³³ Like in Fallujah, they were directed to remain outside the city to ensure that Mosul's Sunni population felt secure.³⁴ However, some Badr militants donned police uniforms and blended into the Federal Police forces that entered the city.³⁵ In interviews collected by the Rise Foundation, local PMF leaders claimed that 60-70% of Federal Police officers operating in Mosul were affiliated with the Badr Organization.³⁶

While some group members fought in the anti-IS campaign, others continued to run for office. Senior Badr member Mohammed Ghabban had been serving as Interior Minister – which oversaw Iraq's internal security forces – but resigned from the post in 2016.³⁷ Another Badr member, Qasim Mohammad Jalal al-Araji, took over the position in January 2017 and served until October 2018.³⁸ In 2018, the Badr Organization created the Fatah Coalition, a political partnership comprised of the political wings of several PMF units.³⁹ As of March 2021, Hadi al-Amiri leads this coalition.⁴⁰ The Badr Organization and Fatah were successful during the 2018 parliamentary elections: of the 329 seats in Parliament, Fatah won the second most at 47 seats, finishing behind Muqtada al-Sadr's Sairoon alliance (who won 54 seats); of Fatah's 47 total seats, the Badr Organization won 22.⁴¹

As one of Iran's most visible and powerful proxies, Badr has served as a focal point for public anger against Iran's influence in Iraq. Since the beginning of mass protests across southern Iraq and Baghdad in October 2019, AAH has come under considerable scrutiny from the Iraqi public. Protesters accuse the PMF and the major constituents therein – AAH included – of participating in the state's crackdown on demonstrations. By January 2020, the death toll from Iraq's protests which began in October 2019 had risen to over 600, with thousands of injuries and an unknown number of arrests and torture cases.⁴²

Badr has been a focal point public opposition since mass protests against Iraq's fiscal and political crises began, of which Iran's proxies are viewed as both a cause and beneficiary. Protesters burned Badr's offices in Baghdad and the home of Qasem al-Araji, former Interior Minister and a Badr member.⁴³ In January 2020, protesters burned the Badr Organization's headquarters in Karbala, prompting clashes between protesters and security forces.⁴⁴ Badr has sought to suppress demonstrations and intimidate protesters as they believe the systemic change to Iraq's political system the protesters demand would diminish their influence within the country. Badr Organization leader Hadi al-Amiri blamed Israel and the United States for instigating the protests, stating they seek to cause chaos in Iraq and vowing retribution.⁴⁵

As protests grew in intensity and casualties mounted, Hadi al-Amiri reportedly played a central role in forestalling then-Prime Minister Adel Abd al-Mahdi's resignation.⁴⁶ Amiri, reportedly at IRGC Quds Force commander Qasem Soleimani's urging, insisted that Abd al-Mahdi remain as premier in order to stabilize Iraq's situation and pass reforms necessary to quiet public discontent. In backing Abd al-Mahdi, Amiri came into conflict with Muqtada al-Sadr, who had at that point sought to position himself as a "leader" for the protesters and had become one of the most prominent figures demanding Prime Minister Abd al-Mahdi's resignation.⁴⁷ Amiri and Iran's interventions ultimately did little to stabilize the situation, as Abd al-Mahdi submitted his resignation one month later.⁴⁸

The group played a role in organizing and executing the militia-led demonstrations near the U.S. embassy compound in central Baghdad. Badr Organization leader Hadi al-Amiri was photographed attending the demonstration, alongside then-KH leader Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis and AAH leader Qais al-Khazali.⁴⁹ The demonstrations escalated into an attack on the U.S. embassy by protestors.⁵⁰

Fatah and the Badr Organization played an important role during the formation of the new Iraqi government in early 2020. Fatah initially opposed Mustafa al-Kadhimi's nomination to the Iraqi premiership, given the long-standing ties to the U.S. and the U.K. Kadhimi developed as director of Iraq's intelligence apparatus. However, after receiving the bloc's choice candidate for the position of Labour & Social Affairs Minister, Fatah voted to support Kadhimi's government and cleared the way for Kadhimi's rise to the premiership.⁵¹ Badr defended Kadhimi's nomination to the premiership in the face of public opposition from other militias, particularly Kata'ib Hezbollah. Badr released a letter justifying his appointment and urging the *muqawama* ("resistance factions;" a term used to distinguish Iran-aligned militias in Iraq) to give politics time and avoid further escalation with the U.S. forces.⁵² Badr also attempted to reassure the militias that Kadhimi will prioritize holding negotiations with "the American occupier" to facilitate the withdrawal of the U.S. military from Iraq.

Hadi al-Amiri resigned from his seat in the Iraqi Parliament in June 2020, though as of May 2021, Iraqi sources continue to identify Amiri as Fatah and the Badr Organization's overall leader.⁵³ Amiri reportedly resigned his position in Parliament to replace Faleh al-Fayyadh as Chairman of the Popular Mobilization Forces (PMF) Commission, the PMF's internal command apparatus.⁵⁴ However, as of May 2021, Fayyadh remains Chairman of

the PMF Commission. Fatah subsequently released a statement saying these rumors were “baseless” and that Amiri resigned to focus on his duties as leader of Fatah.⁵⁵

In July 2020, Prime Minister Mustafa al-Kadhimi appointed Badr member Qasem al-Araji to the highly influential position of National Security Advisor as part of a security personnel reshuffle.⁵⁶ Some observers argued that the reshuffle, which replaced PMF Commission Chairman and Iran loyalist Faleh al-Fayyadh as National Security Advisor, sought to weaken the Iran loyalists’ influence within the regular armed forces’ command structure.⁵⁷ This argument, however, is weakened by Araji’s known affiliation with the highly influential and staunchly pro-Iran Badr Organization.⁵⁸

As of May 2021, many observers have argued that the Badr Organization is the most powerful member of the PMF and is likely the most powerful militia in Iraq. Militarily, Badr is the leading provider of expertise, materiel, and manpower to the PMF’s support units, such as its armor, artillery, and missiles directorates, and serves as a liaison between non-Shia armed groups and the Shiite, Iran-backed militias that form the “core” of the PMF.⁵⁹ Like most Iraqi militias of comparable size, pedigree, and influence, Badr exists in a parastatal “grey area” between official and unofficial status. Moreover, Badr remains a prominent component group within the PMF, a state institution, while several of its members have held official state positions or served as members of Parliament in Iraq. However, Badr and other militias’ command apparatuses generally remain outside of state control. Despite past attempts to rein in PMF constituent groups’ autonomy, such groups effectively retain the independence of command while receiving state salaries and access to the regular armed forces’ equipment.⁶⁰

While Kata’ib Hezbollah certainly eclipses Badr and all other militias in terms of battlefield prowess and military capabilities, Badr is understood to be far more powerful owing to its political strength: through its dominance within Parliament and at the ministerial level, Badr wields substantial influence over Iraq’s federal police, regular armed forces, and the PMF.⁶¹ Ultimately, Badr’s control over greater numbers of government ministries and seats within Parliament relative to other militias has enabled and increased its control over the size and disbursement of the PMF’s portion of the state budget and military command positions, solidifying its position as the preeminent Iran-aligned entity active in Iraq today.⁶² For these reasons, observers have described Badr as being the operational “heart” of the PMF.⁶³ While Badr’s everyday combat activities against IS in Iraq have decreased in frequency and scope since 2017, the group has been militarily active across the country in recent years. Most recently, the group has engaged against IS primarily in Anbar, Diyala, and Salah ad-Din provinces through its PMF brigades.⁶⁴ As of October 2020, PMF brigades known to be under Badr or its affiliates’ control include the 1st, 2nd, 4th, 5th, 10th, 16th, 21st, 22nd, 23rd, 24th, 27th, 52nd, 53rd, 44th, and 110th PMF brigades – forming the largest verifiable constituency within the PMF.⁶⁵

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

A. LEADERSHIP

Hadi al-Amiri (1988-Present): Hadi al-Amiri joined the Badr Organization in 1988, having been a member of SCIRI for some time beforehand, and has led the Badr Organization for the past three decades.⁶⁶ Amiri also served as the political leader of the Badr Organization since its split from the ISCI in 2012. As Badr's leader, Amiri has held several important positions within the Iraqi government. Amiri served as the Minister of Transportation from 2010-2014 under Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki.⁶⁷ At some point in 2014 or 2015, Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi gave Amiri command over Iraq's Army and police in Diyala province.⁶⁸ Amiri is believed to have relinquished overall command in Diyala province sometime after 2016 when units of the Popular Mobilization Forces (PMF) agreed to withdraw from the Khanaqin area of Diyala province following violent clashes between Badr and the Kurdish Peshmerga in the area.⁶⁹ As of February 2019, Badr maintains a substantial presence in Diyala province. A member of the Badr Organization, Mohammed Ghabban, was appointed as Interior Minister in 2014, and it was widely understood that Amiri acted through the Interior Minister to exercise significant control over Iraq's security forces.⁷⁰ Ghabban resigned from the Interior Ministry in 2016.⁷¹ Another Badr member, Qasim Mohammad Jalal al-Araji, took over the position in January 2017 and served until October 2018.⁷² Amiri resigned from his seat in the Iraqi Parliament in June 2020, though as of May 2021, Iraqi sources continue to identify Amiri as Fatah's overall leader.⁷³ Amiri reportedly resigned his position in Parliament to replace Faleh al-Fayyadh as Chairman of the Popular Mobilization Forces (PMF) Commission, the PMF's internal command apparatus.⁷⁴ However, as of May 2021, Fayyadh remains Chairman of the PMF Commission. Fatah subsequently released a statement saying these rumors were "baseless" and that Amiri resigned to focus on his duties as leader of Fatah.⁷⁵

Muen al-Kadhimi (Unknown to Unknown): As of 2015, Kadhimi served as a leader of the Badr Organization in western Baghdad.⁷⁶ As of May 2021, it is unclear which position, if any, Kadhimi holds within the group. In April 2015, Kadhimi was a senior commander of the Badr Organization in the fight against the Islamic State in Tikrit. Kadhimi explained there were no prisoners after this campaign because "everywhere we captured [Islamic State militants] we killed them because they were the enemy."⁷⁷ He was also a senior aide to Hadi al-Amiri in the campaign to drive the Islamic State out of Falluja in May 2015.⁷⁸ Little has been reported about Kadhimi's activities since 2015; however, as of May 2021, Iraqi sources continue to identify him as a "leader" within the Fatah Coalition in Parliament.⁷⁹

Mohammed Ghabban (Unknown-Present): In October 2014, Mohammed Ghabban was appointed Iraq's Interior Minister. He is a direct subordinate to Amiri in the Badr Organization, and it was widely understood that Amiri acted through the Ghabban to exercise significant control over Iraq's security forces while Ghabban was in office.⁸⁰ Ghabban resigned from the Interior Ministry in 2016.⁸¹

Qasim Mohammed Jalal Hussein al-Araji (Unknown-Present): Araji fought against Iran in the Iran-Iraq War and was captured by Iran in 1984. During his imprisonment, he joined the Badr Brigade and continued to support the group both in Iran and in Iraq. Araji returned to Iraq in 2003 and was arrested by U.S. military forces twice –

first in 2003 and then in 2007. After his release in 2010, Araji campaigned for office in the 2010 parliamentary elections as a member of the Badr Organization.⁸² Araji won a seat in Parliament both in 2010 and 2014.⁸³ After Badr member Mohammed Ghabban resigned as Interior Minister in 2016, Araji took over the position in January 2017 and served until October 2018.⁸⁴ In 2020, Araji was appointed to the position of National Security Advisor by Prime Minister Mustafa al-Kadhimi.⁸⁵

B. NAME CHANGES

- The Badr Brigade (1983-2003): The group was originally named the Badr Brigade when it was founded as an armed wing of SCIRI in 1982.⁸⁶
- The Badr Organization for Reconstruction and Development (2003-Present): In 2003, the U.S. demanded that the Badr Brigade be disbanded. In response, SCIRI changed the armed group's name to the Badr Organization of Reconstruction and Development to appear less militant.⁸⁷

C. SIZE ESTIMATES

- June 2009: 10,000 (Council on Foreign Relations).⁸⁸
- November 2014: Upwards of 10,000 militants (Foreign Policy).⁸⁹
- April 2018: 10,000 – 50,000 (The Wilson Center).⁹⁰
- August 2019: 18,000 – 22,000 (Combating Terrorism Center, U.S. Military Academy, West Point).⁹¹

D. RESOURCES

Before the Badr Organization split from ISCI in 2012, the group received financial support from ISCI.⁹² However, the main financier of the organization has always been Iran. In 2005, the Jordanian news site *al-Malaf* reported that the Badr Organization received \$3 million each month from Tehran.⁹³ In 2014, group founder and leader Hadi al-Amiri described Iranian support of the organization: “[Iran] gave us weapons, they gave us ammunition, and they gave us their military experience.”⁹⁴ As of 2021, the group continues to receive direct support from Iran.⁹⁵

As a member of the PMF, the Badr Organization has access to the Defense Ministry's budget and the allocations therein for PMF units. It is unknown exactly how much funding Badr receives from the Defense Ministry, though the 2021 Iraqi federal budget allocated roughly \$2.4 billion for the PMF – nearly 50% more than was allocated to the PMF in the previous 2019 budget.⁹⁶ As perhaps the most powerful of the Iran-aligned militias in Iraq active today, Badr wields substantial control over the PMF's budget. As Badr controls many seats within Parliament, it has exerted its political power to increase its control over the size and disbursement of the PMF's portion of the Defense Ministry's budget, reportedly privileging Iran-aligned groups with larger budget allotments.⁹⁷

Like many militias in Iraq, Badr operates illegal checkpoints within Iraq from which they extract revenue by levying illicit taxes on goods and vehicles that pass through. Badr controls the al-Tahaddi checkpoint east of Fallujah, which observers estimate yields the

group roughly \$10,000 per day, and the strategic Safra checkpoint in Diyala province, which yields the group up to \$20,000 per day.⁹⁸ Badr reportedly also gains revenue from several legitimate businesses it and its affiliates control, such as a stationery company in Ninewa, a fertilizer plant in Salah ad-Din, and several major oil refineries in Salah ad-Din province.⁹⁹

The Badr Organization has also reportedly acquired American-made weapons. In March 2016, reports surfaced of Badr Organizations fighters transporting and operating American weapons and other military vehicles, including an Abrams tank and a US AT-4 anti-tank rocket. It remains unclear from where the group obtained the weapons. Some observers have speculated that U.S.-made small arms and military vehicles are frequently stolen from Iraqi government stockpiles and sold on the black market to the militias and private buyers.¹⁰⁰

Like many militias in Iraq, the Badr Organization possesses its own media apparatus. Badr controls Al-Ghadeer TV, a satellite channel and news outlet based in Iraq.¹⁰¹ Al-Ghadeer TV operated a news website until the U.S. Justice Department seized control of the website in December 2020, shutting the website down and removing its content from view.¹⁰²

E. GEOGRAPHIC LOCATIONS

Disclaimer: This is a partial list of where the militant organization has bases and where it operates. This does not include information on where the group conducts major attacks or has external influences.

The Badr Organization has operated in Iran, Iraq, and Syria. The group was established in Iran in 1982.¹⁰³ It was primarily based in Iran until 2003, when the group moved to Iraq.¹⁰⁴ Since then, the majority of the group's military and political operations have taken place within Iraq. The Badr Organization has fought against the Islamic State in Diyala, Babil, and Ninewa provinces and the regions surrounding Baghdad.¹⁰⁵ The group has also fought against the Mahdi Army, another Shiite militia, in southern Iraq.¹⁰⁶ The Badr Organization also reportedly sent members to Syria to fight in Syria as part of the group's expeditionary unit, Quwet al-Shahid Muhammed Baqir al-Sadr.¹⁰⁷ While Badr's everyday combat activities against IS in Iraq have decreased in frequency and scope since 2017, the group has been militarily active across the country in recent years. Most recently, the group has engaged against IS primarily in Anbar, Diyala, and Salah ad-Din provinces through its PMF brigades.¹⁰⁸

As of March 2021, a member of the Badr Organization holds the position of provincial PMF commander in Iraq's Dhi-Qar, Diwaniyah, Diyala, Kirkuk, and Muthanna provinces.¹⁰⁹ The Badr Organization also wields substantial influence within Basra's provincial government. Most significantly, Badr exercises significant power over Basra's provincial police, as former Interior Minister and Badr member Mohammed Ghabban transferred Badr members into the provincial police force's rank-and-file and officer corps.¹¹⁰ Similarly, Badr maintains a substantial political and military presence in Diyala province, having struck a deal with Kurdish security forces to share command of security

operations in the province in 2014.¹¹¹ A Badr-Kurdish alliance in the provincial council brought Badr member Muthanna al-Tamimi to the position of governor of Diyala province in 2013, cementing Badr's influence over provincial administration.¹¹²

STRATEGY

A. IDEOLOGY & GOALS

The Badr Organization follows a Shiite Islamist ideology. The group aims to establish Iran's type of Islamist governance in Iraq. Known as *Wilayat al-Faqih* (guardianship of the jurists), this doctrine seeks the complete implementation of Shiite governance under the rule of an Islamic jurist (Faqih) entrusted with temporal political authority over God's people.¹¹³ For this reason, the group is understood as following a Khomeinist ideology – one in line with the doctrines promulgated by Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, who established Iran's postrevolutionary theocratic government. The group is also a strong supporter of Iran's current Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei. Badr leader Hadi al-Amiri has previously described Khamenei as “the leader not only for Iranians but the Islamic nation.”¹¹⁴ In addition to its Khomeinist aims, the Badr Organization seeks to obtain greater political influence, expand Shiite power in Iraq, and create an autonomous Shiite province in southern Iraq.

In 2018, the Badr Organization led the creation of the Fatah Coalition, a political partnership comprised of several PMF units' political wings in a bid to transform the PMF's battlefield successes against IS and subsequent popularity into political power.¹¹⁵ It appears as though Fatah is the political wing of Iran's broader effort to gain more influence in Iraq, given the inclinations of many of its leaders and constituent parties towards Tehran and its religious authorities. Hadi al-Amiri, leader of both the Badr Organization and the Fatah Coalition, stated Fatah “is the same project [as] Imam Khomeini,” confirming Fatah's ideological leanings toward Iran and its system of government.¹¹⁶

B. POLITICAL ACTIVITIES

The Badr Organization was originally founded as the armed wing of the Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution (SCIRI).¹¹⁷ SCIRI was formed in Iran with support from the Iranian government to advance the ideology of the Iranian Revolution within Iraq.¹¹⁸ Once the Badr Organization relocated to Iraq, it soon began operating its own political party, independent of SCIRI. In 2005, the Badr Organization participated in Iraq's parliamentary elections as part of the United Iraqi Alliance, a political coalition that also included SCIRI.¹¹⁹ The group also began to gain influence in Iraq's Ministry of Interior, responsible for organizing and managing Iraq's domestic security forces beginning in 2004.¹²⁰ In 2007, SCIRI renamed itself the Islamic Supreme Council of Iraq (ISCI) in an attempt to disassociate itself from Tehran. In 2010, the Badr Organization again ran in parliamentary elections alongside ISCI as part of the Iraqi National Alliance coalition.¹²¹ Badr leader Hadi al-Amiri served as Transport Minister from 2010-2014. In this position, Amiri cemented his connections with Iran and worked to channel funds to companies affiliated with the Badr Organization.¹²²

In 2014, the Badr Organization held 22 seats in Iraq's Parliament, with two of the seats held by Faleh Sari Abdashi Akkab and Qasim Mohammed Jalal Hussein al-Araji.¹²³ Badr member Mohammed Ghabban was appointed as Interior Minister, a key national security post within Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi's government. Through Ghabban, Badr leader Hadi al-Amiri exercised significant control over Iraq's security forces. A Badr affiliate was also appointed to serve as Human Rights Minister.¹²⁴ Ghabban resigned from the post of Interior Minister in 2016, and another Badr member, Qasim Mohammad Jalal al-Araji, took over the position in January 2017. Araji served as Interior Minister until October 2018, when another parliamentary election took place.¹²⁵

In 2018, the Badr Organization created the Fatah Coalition, a political partnership comprised of several PMF units' political wings to transform the PMF's battlefield successes against IS and subsequent popularity into political power.¹²⁶ It appears as though Fatah is the political wing of Iran's broader effort to gain more influence in Iraq, given the inclinations of many of its leaders and constituent parties towards Tehran and its religious authorities. Hadi al-Amiri, leader of both the Badr Organization and the Fatah Coalition, stated Fatah "is the same project [as] Imam Khomeini," referring to Grand Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, the founder of Iran's theocratic government.¹²⁷

The Fatah Coalition received the second-largest share of votes in Iraq's May 2018 parliamentary elections, winning 47 of the 329 seats in Parliament and finishing second behind Muqtada al-Sadr's Sairoon alliance (which won 54 seats). Of Fatah's 47 total seats, the Badr Organization won 22.¹²⁸ After winning the largest share of seats, Sairoon began to assemble a governing coalition shortly after the election.¹²⁹ In this context, Fatah claimed a majority of its own after striking an alliance with former Prime Minister Maliki's Dawlat al-Qanoon coalition and defecting members of Prime Minister Abadi's coalition.¹³⁰ After a period of parliamentary gridlock, Fatah eventually backed the formation of Adel Abd al-Mahdi's government with Sairoon at the head of the governing coalition in Parliament.¹³¹ Prime Minister Abd al-Mahdi's government collapsed in late 2019 under pressure from mass protests across Iraq.¹³²

Fatah and the Badr Organization played an important role during the formation of the new Iraqi government throughout early 2020. Fatah initially opposed Mustafa al-Kadhimi's nomination to the Iraqi premiership. However, after receiving the bloc's choice for the position of Social Affairs Minister, Fatah voted for Kadhimi's government.¹³³ Badr defended Kadhimi's nomination to the premiership in the face of public opposition from other militias, particularly Kata'ib Hezbollah. Badr released a letter justifying his appointment and urging the *muqawama* ("resistance factions;" a term used to distinguish Iran-aligned militias in Iraq) to give politics time and avoid further escalation with the U.S. forces.¹³⁴ Badr also attempted to reassure the militias that Kadhimi will prioritize holding negotiations with "the American occupier" to facilitate the withdrawal of the U.S. military from Iraq. Throughout 2020, Badr and Fatah played central roles in demanding the departure of U.S. troops from Iraq. In the wake of IRGC-QF commander Qasem Soleimani's death in a U.S. airstrike in January 2020, Badr and Fatah lawmakers played an instrumental role in orchestrating the passage of a parliamentary resolution calling on the government to expel U.S. troops from Iraq.¹³⁵ In

August 2020, Prime Minister Kadhimi visited Washington, D.C. for the second round of the U.S.-Iraq strategic dialogue and status of forces talks.¹³⁶ Kadhimi met with President Trump and several U.S. diplomatic and military officials. Kadhimi's meeting with then-U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo was followed by a statement from representatives of the Badr Organization, saying, "We're not obligated to accept any agreements Kadhimi signs with Washington, regardless of their benefits to Iraq, unless they include a timetable for U.S. forces exiting Iraq."¹³⁷

As of May 2021, Amiri continues to lead the Fatah Coalition, despite his resignation from Parliament in June 2020.¹³⁸ Amiri reportedly resigned his position in Parliament to replace Faleh al-Fayyadh as Chairman of the Popular Mobilization Forces (PMF) Commission, the PMF's internal command apparatus.¹³⁹ However, as of May 2021, Fayyadh remains Chairman of the PMF Commission. Fatah subsequently released a statement saying these rumors were "baseless" and that Amiri resigned to focus on his duties as leader of Fatah.¹⁴⁰ In July 2020, Prime Minister Kadhimi appointed former Interior Minister and Badr member Qasim al-Araji to the position of National Security Advisor.¹⁴¹

C. TARGETS & TACTICS

In the early 1990s, the Badr Organization transitioned from a guerilla force to a conventional military organization. The organization possessed heavy weaponry that it displayed in military parades throughout Iraq.¹⁴² Between 2013-2017 members of the Badr Organization were deployed alongside the regular Iraqi Army as part of the Popular Mobilization Forces (PMF) to combat the Islamic State (IS). In these operations, the group utilized the same tactics as those employed by Iraq's regular security forces.¹⁴³ As of October 2020, PMF brigades known to be under Badr or its affiliates' control include the 1st, 2nd, 4th, 5th, 10th, 21st, 22nd, 23rd, 24th, 27th, 52nd, 53rd, 44th, and 110th PMF brigades – forming the largest verifiable constituency within the PMF.¹⁴⁴

The Badr Organization is also suspected of kidnapping Sunnis, using torture tactics, and murdering Sunni Arabs and clerics.¹⁴⁵ During its participation in the campaign to retake Mosul from IS, the Badr Organization was accused of committing a series of human rights abuses against civilians.¹⁴⁶ In a 2016 interview, Badr leader Hadi al-Amiri commented on the abuses: "I don't claim that there are never violations that occur during war."¹⁴⁷ Badr leader Hadi al-Amiri is believed to have encouraged the use of brutal tactics, such as "using a power drill to pierce the skulls of adversaries."¹⁴⁸ However, Amiri has repeatedly denied the use of extreme violence.¹⁴⁹

MAJOR ATTACKS

Disclaimer: These are some selected major attacks in the militant organization's history. It is not a comprehensive listing but captures some of the most famous attacks or turning points during the campaign.

1983-1988: The Badr Organization coordinated with the Iranian Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) to fight against Iraq in the Iraq-Iran War (unknown killed, unknown wounded).¹⁵⁰

2004-2006: In a leaked State Department cable from December 2009, Badr Organization leader Hadi al-Amiri is speculated to have personally ordered attacks on up to 2,000 Iraqi Sunnis in a brutal sectarian war against Iraq's Sunni population (2,000 killed, unknown wounded).¹⁵¹

2006: Hundreds of Iraqis were tortured and executed by armed police working for Iraq's Interior Ministry under SCIRI's control. United Nations human rights chief John Pace stated that many of these policemen were suspected members of the Badr Organization (hundreds killed, unknown wounded).¹⁵²

August 27-28, 2007: Members of the Badr Organization serving in the Iraqi security forces clashed with Mahdi Army militants in Karbala, Iraq. The *New York Times* described the fighting as a result of "a power struggle between rival Shiite groups" over control of Shiite areas of central and southern Iraq. The violence killed fifty people, some of whom were Shiite pilgrims who had traveled to the area for a religious celebration (50 killed, 200 wounded).¹⁵³

June 2014: After the fall of Mosul, the Badr Organization was victorious in a series of battles against the Islamic State in Diyala province (unknown killed, unknown wounded).¹⁵⁴

July 2014: Human Rights Watch accused the Badr Organization of killing Sunni prisoners. It was also speculated that the organization targeted Iraqi Sunnis thought to be sympathetic to IS (unknown killed, unknown wounded).¹⁵⁵

January 2015: The Badr Organization is suspected of killing 72 Iraqi civilians in Muqadiyah, Diyala province. Badr leader Amiri denied responsibility for the killings (72 killed, unknown wounded).¹⁵⁶

March-April 2015: The Badr Organization fought alongside a U.S.-led coalition in a campaign to drive the Islamic State from Tikrit in Salah ad-Din province. It was reported that Hadi al-Amiri personally led the operation alongside the commander of the IRGC's Quds Force, Qasem Soleimani (unknown killed, unknown wounded).¹⁵⁷

May 2016: The Badr Organization and other Shiite militias affiliated with PMF participated in Iraqi security forces' campaign to recapture Fallujah from IS (unknown killed, unknown wounded).¹⁵⁸

February 2017: The Badr Organization and other Shiite militias affiliated with PMF participated in the Iraqi security forces' campaign to recapture Mosul from IS (unknown killed, unknown wounded).¹⁵⁹

August 2017: The Badr Organization and other Shiite militias affiliated with PMF participated in Iraqi security forces' campaign to recapture Tal Afar from IS (unknown killed, unknown wounded).¹⁶⁰

December 31, 2019: The Badr Organization and other PMF affiliates organized and participated in demonstrations near and later an attack on the U.S. Embassy

compound in central Baghdad. Observers reported seeing Badr leader Hadi al-Amiri among the demonstrators (0 killed, unknown wounded).¹⁶¹

INTERACTIONS

A. DESIGNATED/LISTED

- The Badr Organization is not designated as a foreign terrorist organization by the United States or United Nations. In December 2020, U.S. Representative Joe Wilson (R-S.C.) introduced the “Badr Organization Designation Act of 2020” that, if passed, would call for the imposition of sanctions on the group and its designation as a Foreign Terrorist Organization. As of May 2021, the bill has not yet come to the floor for a vote in the U.S. House of Representatives.¹⁶²
- The United Arab Emirates Terrorist Organization List: 2014-Present.¹⁶³

B. COMMUNITY RELATIONS

The Badr Organization and the PMF more broadly have a complicated relationship with the Iraqi public. Due to their instrumental role in the fight against the Islamic State (IS), many Iraqis view the militias as vital to the state’s security apparatus.¹⁶⁴ Public opinion polls conducted in the aftermath of IS’s defeat in November 2017 suggest the Iraqi public strongly views militias within the PMF structure as positive contributors to local security – with 91% of Shia respondents and 64.5% of Sunni respondents indicating a positive view of the PMF.¹⁶⁵ However, some Iraqi Shia and Sunni view the Badr Organization as an integral component of Iran’s efforts to gain political and cultural influence within Iraq – a matter anathema to some Shiite Arab sectarians and Iraqi Sunnis, the latter of whom fear losing influence to the militias.¹⁶⁶ Moreover, Sunni communities, particularly in areas controlled by the Badr Organization, tend to dislike the group and other prominent PMF units due to well-documented instances of abuse committed by the Badr Organization and other PMF units against Sunni civilians during both Iraq’s insurgency and the war against IS.¹⁶⁷ Most notably in the Sunni-majority Diyala province, where Badr exercises substantial military and political authority, Badr members reportedly engaged in a “systematic campaign” to drive out Sunni inhabitants from areas under their direct control to ensure the election of a Shiite-majority provincial council.¹⁶⁸ On the grounds of Badr’s reported hostility toward Sunni civilians, Sunni politicians at the federal level vehemently opposed Badr’s nominee for Interior Minister, Mohammed Ghabban, in 2014.¹⁶⁹ In May 2021, the U.S. Department of State released Iraq’s section of the 2020 Report on International Religious Freedom. The report alleged that Badr, alongside several other militias, has converted several Sunni mosques in Diyala province into PMF headquarters.¹⁷⁰

The Badr Organization has sought to incorporate Sunni tribal militias into the PMF to mitigate this animosity. Still, it is unclear if this has fully eased tensions between the militia and Iraq’s Sunni community. Observers note that Badr members have served as liaisons between the Sunni Tribal Mobilization Forces and the Shiite militias during the war against IS and have served alongside their Sunni counterparts in recaptured Sunni-majority areas in Ninewa, Salah ad-Din, and, most notably, Diyala, where Badr maintains a near-complete control of provincial politics.¹⁷¹ Badr has also provided weapons,

funding, and political patronage to members of these “collaborator” groups.¹⁷² Moreover, the Badr Organization has made significant inroads among Shiite Turkmen living between the cities of Kirkuk and Tuz Khurmatu due in large part to the Badr Organization’s instrumental role in liberating this area of Iraq from IS.¹⁷³

The Badr Organization has previously conflicted with the Peshmerga, the Kurdistan Region of Iraq’s (KRI) armed forces, and the Kurdistan Region’s government. At times, this conflict has played out within Iraq’s security and political “grey areas” – contested territories between the jurisdictions of the federal government in Baghdad and the Kurdish Regional government in Erbil. The PMF has established itself as the preeminent security force in these contested areas.¹⁷⁴ After Iraq’s regular security forces withdrew from these “grey areas” and moved to combat IS’s offensive into northern Iraq in 2014, Badr struck a deal with the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, one of the two major political parties that govern the KRI, to assume control of areas near Khanaqin, Diyala province – one of the more contested “grey areas” in Iraq.¹⁷⁵ Notionally intended to shore up local security, Badr’s presence in the area increased in subsequent years to encompass near-total control of local police and governing councils.¹⁷⁶ Kurdish security forces and political organizations generally came to oppose Badr and the PMF’s substantial presence in Diyala, as Badr’s control of the local police, military, and provincial government threatened the Kurds’ hard-fought influence within the province.¹⁷⁷ In 2016, units of the Badr Organization clashed violently with the Peshmerga in the Khanaqin area of Diyala province.¹⁷⁸ A ceasefire agreement struck following the clashes stipulated that Badr and other PMF units must withdraw from Khanaqin and relinquish some of their police powers; however, as of February 2019, Badr maintains a substantial political and military presence throughout Diyala province.¹⁷⁹

C. RELATIONSHIPS WITH OTHER GROUPS

The group has a history of conflict with the Mahdi Army, another Shiite militant group within Iraq loyal to Muqtada al-Sadr.¹⁸⁰ The rivalry between the groups – often referred to as “Badr vs. Sadr” – is a fixture of Shiite politics in Iraq.¹⁸¹ Their rivalry stems from several personal and political disagreements between the groups, such as the Mahdi Army’s disapproval of the Badr Organization’s close relationship with Iran.¹⁸² Politically, the Badr Organization supported former Iraqi Prime Minister Maliki, while the Mahdi Army frequently called for Maliki’s resignation.¹⁸³ The Sadrists have also challenged Badr’s control of important elements of Iraq’s bureaucracy. Iraq’s Ministry of the Interior, which oversees the country’s federal police, had effectively been under Badr’s control since the formation of Iraq’s first post-invasion elected government in 2005.¹⁸⁴ However, beginning in 2007, Sadrists joined the rank-and-file of the federal police, giving the Sadrists official cover for some of their activities and disrupting Badr’s near-total control of the police and the interior ministry.¹⁸⁵ In October 2019, as mass protests in Iraq grew in intensity and casualties mounted, Badr Organization leader Hadi al-Amiri reportedly played a central role in forestalling then-Prime Minister Adel Abd al-Mahdi’s resignation.¹⁸⁶ In doing so, Amiri came into conflict with Muqtada al-Sadr, who had at that point sought to position himself as the “leading voice” of the protesters and had become one of the most prominent figures demanding Prime Minister Abd al-Mahdi’s

resignation. As a result of their disagreement, Sadr said that he and the Sadrists would not work with Amiri or Badr again.¹⁸⁷

There have also been instances of violence between the groups. Both groups have fought for control and influence in the Shiite-dominated areas of central and southern Iraq, including the suburbs of Baghdad. In Sadr City, a neighborhood of Baghdad and Sadrist stronghold, clashes between Badr and the Sadrists killed five people and wounded an additional 20.¹⁸⁸ In August 2007, violent clashes erupted between the Badr Organization and the Mahdi Army in Karbala – a city that was dominated by Badr and ISCI-affiliated security officers. The clashes killed 50 and wounded 200 others; among the victims were an untold number of civilians.¹⁸⁹ This inter-group violence peaked in 2007; as of May 2021, it appears the two groups have not clashed violently since then.

The Badr Organization also has ties to Asa'ib Ahl al-Haq (AAH) and Kata'ib Hezbollah (KH), two Iraqi militant groups also backed by Iran. In June 2014, the Maliki government answered Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani's call to form popular militias to respond to Islamic State's (IS) offensives into northern Iraq with the creation of the Popular Mobilization Forces (PMF). The PMF is a state-sponsored umbrella group composed of approximately forty Iraqi militias.¹⁹⁰ Lacking a strong regular security force, the Iraqi government relied on these militias, some of which had existed for decades, to help liberate IS-held areas.¹⁹¹ The Badr Organization, AAH, and KH – all well-established armed groups by that point – joined the PMF to combat IS. As of October 2020, PMF brigades known to be under Badr or its affiliates' control include the 1st, 2nd, 4th, 5th, 10th, 21st, 22nd, 23rd, 24th, 27th, 52nd, 53rd, 44th, and 110th PMF brigades – forming the largest verifiable constituency within the PMF.¹⁹² Badr's membership in the PMF, coupled with the fact that the AAH and KH are also proxies of Iran, has led to speculation that the groups share a close relationship.¹⁹³ Though the groups share a common background and ideology, the groups differ in strategy. Observers note that the Badr Organization transitioned into a “parochial” group after 2003, primarily seeking to acquire power by establishing firm social and political power bases within Iraq.¹⁹⁴ However, newer militant groups such as AAH, KH, and other militias founded after 2003 have remained as “vanguard” groups that actively seek to achieve their goals through violent means and generally lack a solid social base; KH maintains this abstentionist outlook to the present day, while AAH has since become a prominent participant in Iraqi Shiite politics and society.¹⁹⁵

As of May 2021, many observers have argued that the Badr Organization is the most powerful member of the PMF and is likely the most powerful militia in Iraq. Militarily, Badr is the leading provider of expertise, materiel, and manpower to the PMF's support units, such as its armor, artillery, and missiles directorates, and serves as a liaison between non-Shia armed groups and the Shiite, Iran-backed militias that form the “core groups” of the PMF.¹⁹⁶ While Kata'ib Hezbollah certainly eclipses Badr and all other militias in terms of battlefield prowess and military capabilities, Badr is understood to be far more powerful owing to its political strength: through its dominance within Parliament and at the ministerial level, Badr wields substantial influence over Iraq's federal police, regular armed forces, and the PMF, as well as most budgetary decisions

made regarding all of these organizations.¹⁹⁷ For these reasons, observers have described Badr as being the operational “heart” of the PMF.¹⁹⁸

In addition to their military partnership, the Badr Organization has cooperated with AAH in politics. Badr Organization leaders notably appeared alongside leaders from KH and AAH in a 2016 demonstration in Baghdad to mark International Quds Day – a holiday created by Iran to express it and its affiliates’ opposition to Israel and support for the Palestinian cause.¹⁹⁹ Alongside AAH, Badr is a founding member of the Fatah Coalition, a parliamentary bloc consisting of the political wings of Iran-aligned Iraqi militias.²⁰⁰ Currently, Badr holds the largest number of Fatah’s seats in Parliament – controlling 22 of Fatah’s 47 total seats.²⁰¹ Badr Organization leader Hadi al-Amiri led Fatah within Parliament until his resignation Parliament in June 2020, though as of May 2021, Iraqi sources continue to identify Amiri as Fatah’s overall leader.²⁰² In December 2019, Badr played a role in organizing and executing the militia-led demonstrations near the U.S. embassy compound in central Baghdad. Badr leader Hadi al-Amiri was photographed attending the demonstration, alongside then-KH leader Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis and AAH leader Qais al-Khazali.²⁰³ The demonstrations escalated into an attack on the U.S. embassy by protestors.²⁰⁴

The Badr Organization also has ties with militias representing Iraq’s religious and ethnic minorities. In particular, the Badr Organization maintains close ties with the Babylon Brigade, a nominally Christian militia and member of the PMF whose leader, Rayan al-Kildani, has long been associated with the Badr Organization’s leadership.²⁰⁵

The Badr Organization is an enemy of the Islamic State and its predecessor, Al Qaeda in Iraq, largely due to IS’s efforts to target the Iraqi Shia population. The Badr Organization was an active participant in the fight against IS through its participation in the PMF alongside the regular Iraqi Army.²⁰⁶

D. STATE SPONSORS AND EXTERNAL INFLUENCES

The Badr Organization is heavily influenced and supported by Iran. To this end, the group is often referred to as Iran’s oldest and one of its most important Iraqi proxies and, after the creation of Hezbollah in Lebanon, Iran’s second most successful foreign policy intervention since 1979.²⁰⁷

The Badr Organization was founded in Iran with direct Iranian support. After the start of the Iran-Iraq War, several Iraqi Shiite political leaders fled to Iran. Iran allowed these leaders to organize anti-Ba’athist political parties within its borders. Iran encouraged the new political parties to adopt its revolutionary ideology and provided them with organizational and financial support. In this context, the Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq (SCIRI) was established in Iran in 1982 as an alternative to the Ba’athist regime.²⁰⁸

In 1983, the Badr Brigade was established with Iranian support to conduct intelligence and other military operations in the Iran-Iraq War. Assembled from defecting officers of Iraq’s Army and other Iraqi Shia, the Badr Brigade nominally served as the armed wing

of SCIRI. However, in practice, the Badr Brigade was created to operate on behalf of Iran. Effectively acting as a unit within Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC), the Badr Brigade received significant funding, training, and strategic guidance from the IRGC.²⁰⁹

After its founding, the organization operated out of Iran for two decades until it moved to Iraq in 2003. Even after the group relocated to Iraq, it continued to receive direct support from Iran. In 2005, the Jordanian news site *al-Malah* reported that the Badr Organization received \$3 million each month from Tehran.²¹⁰ In 2014, group founder and leader Hadi al-Amiri described Iranian support of the organization: “[Iran] gave us weapons, they gave us ammunition, and they gave us their military experience.”²¹¹ As of 2021, the group continues to receive direct support from Iran.²¹² In 2014, Hadi al-Amiri stated that “if it wasn’t for Iran, Baghdad would have fallen” and that he is “proud of this friendship” between the Badr Organization and Iran.²¹³

The Badr Organization aims to establish Iran's type of Islamist governance in Iraq. Known as *Wilayat al-Faqih* (guardianship of the jurists), this doctrine seeks the complete implementation of Shiite governance under the rule of an Islamic jurist entrusted with temporal political authority over God's people.²¹⁴ For this reason, the group is understood as following a Khomeinist ideology – one in line with the doctrines promulgated by Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, who established Iran's postrevolutionary theocratic government. The group is also a strong supporter of Iran's current Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei.²¹⁵

MAPS

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- Iraq

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²¹² A 2021 report published by the Atlantic Council described the Badr Organization as “mostly dependent on Iran.” See Andrew L. Peek, “How to normalize the Iraq-Iran relationship,” Atlantic Council, March 3, 2021. <https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/menasource/how-to-normalize-the-iraq-iran-relationship/>

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