

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

President Joseph R. Biden
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20500

April 12, 2024

President Biden,

We write to express our deep concern with your invitation to host Iraqi Prime Minister Mohammed Shia al-Sudani for a meeting at the White House on April 15. It is inappropriate to host a leader-level meeting for a government that is enabling Iranian-backed terrorists to continue threatening the U.S. and its national security interests.

This problem is most acute in the case of Kataib Hezbollah (KH), a designated terrorist organization since 2009 and one that is most recently reportedly responsible for the deaths of three US military personnel in Jordan in January 2024. KH is an element of the Iraqi security forces as part of the Popular Mobilization Forces (PMF), which Prime Minister Sudani's government funds and directs. According to the website of the Office of the Director of National Intelligence, KH plays a prominent role within the PMF.

It is thus hard to deny that the U.S. government is knowingly both funding and fighting KH. For example, consider the February 7, 2024, targeted killing of Abu Baqir al-Saedi in response to the Jordan attack. Saedi held a senior leadership position in KH, but he was also a member of the PMF, meaning he was an employee of the Iraqi government security forces and direct subordinate of PM Sudani.

In addition, KH has a political wing called the Harkat Hoquq party. Hoquq holds six seats in the current Iraqi parliament and Hoquq members voted in October 2022 with the Coordination Framework to establish the current Iraqi government, which made Al-Sudani the prime minister. You may recall that on January 30, 2024 – shortly after the group's murder of three Americans – the leader of KH announced that his group would refrain from further attacks on Americans, reportedly to avoid embarrassing the Iraqi prime minister.

Troublingly, a U.S.-based doctoral student at Princeton University, Elizabeth Tsurkov, has also been held captive by KH since March 21, 2023, when she was in Baghdad conducting field work for her dissertation. In November 2023, KH produced a proof of life video of Ms. Tsurkov looking terrified while being forced to read a script written by her kidnappers. In more than a year of captivity, the Iraqi government has done nothing of substance to help free her. We have serious concerns about your holding this meeting at all, given this government's complicity with

Iranian malign influence. However, we would urge you to condition the meeting on Sudani's delivery of Ms. Tsurkov home safely and in good health to her family. If you meet with Prime Minister Sudani regardless, Kataib Hezbollah and Ms. Tsurkov's release should be at the top of your agenda.

Sincerely,



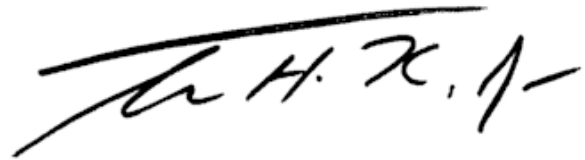
Michael Waltz
Member of Congress



Joe Wilson
Member of Congress



Keith Self
Member of Congress



Thomas H. Kean Jr.
Member of Congress



Greg Stuebe
Member of Congress