Policy Forum

The Future of Iraq's Popular Mobilization Forces

Michael Knights, Hamdi Malik, and Aymenn Jawad Al-Tamimi

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Join us for a live webcast as experts on Iraqi politics from around the world examine one of the most sensitive problems facing Iraq's new prime minister: the future of the Shia militias mobilized to fight the Islamic State in the previous decade.



In recent years, the Popular Mobilization Forces have emerged as the fastest-growing and most politically influential security entity in Iraq, with a reputation burnished by the role they played in defeating the Islamic State. More recently, however, the picture has changed: some PMF units were tarnished by their role in domestic repression, operational chief Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis was killed this January by a U.S. drone strike, and April saw Shia "shrine units" moved out of the PMF. The force's future is one of the most sensitive matters facing Iraq's new prime minister, Mustafa al-Kadhimi.

To discuss these issues, The Washington Institute hosted a virtual Policy Forum with Michael Knights, Hamdi Malik, and Aymenn Jawad Al-Tamimi. Together, the three experts coauthored the definitive study on the topic, the new Institute report <u>Honored</u>, <u>Not Contained</u>: <u>The Future of Irag's Popular Mobilization Forces</u>.

Michael Knights, a senior fellow with The Washington Institute, has traveled to Iraq each year since 2003, working on the ground alongside security forces and militias. He received his PhD from King's College London for research on Saddam Hussein's Iraq.

Hamdi Malik is a London-based Middle East analyst at IITV whose writing on Shia militias has been published by Al-Monitor, the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, and other outlets.

Aymenn Jawad Al-Tamimi, an independent analyst and a doctoral candidate at Swansea University, is frequently consulted by the *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, Agence France-Presse, and Associated Press.

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