

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

January 28, 2025

The Honorable Marco Rubio
Department of State
2201 C Street, NW
Washington, DC 20520

The Honorable Michael Waltz
Eisenhower Executive Office Building
Washington, DC 20504

Dear Secretary Rubio and National Security Adviser Waltz,

The United States taxpayer has provided nearly \$3.5 billion in humanitarian and development assistance to help Iraqis recover from the destruction of ISIS and meet their long-term development goals.¹ In addition, since 2014, taxpayers have forked over more than \$7.9 billion for counter-IS train and equip programs for Iraqis.² Despite this, Iran-backed militias armed, trained, and commanded by Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) continue to be legally part of the Iraqi state and security forces.

According to the Department of Defense Inspector General:

Iran and Iran-aligned militias continue to have strong ties to some elements of Iraq's traditional security forces, the DIA [Defense Intelligence Agency] said. In 2005, many former Badr Corps military officers affiliated with the Badr Organization were integrated primarily into the MoI [Ministry of Interior], and some into the MoD [Ministry of Defense], retaining their ranks and often experiencing rapid promotions due to their political ties. The DIA said that while the MoI's Federal Police and Emergency Response Division, and the Iraqi Army's 5th and 8th Divisions are the units thought to have the greatest Iranian influence, officers sympathetic to Iranian or militia interests are scattered throughout the security services.³

Iraq's National Security Adviser Qasim al-Araji is a senior leader of the Badr Corps, an Iranian-backed militia formed by the IRGC in 1982, which has American blood on its hands and was involved in the terrorist attack against the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad in December 2019. Araji was detained twice by the United States at Camp Bucca prison during the Iraq War and held for 23 months, accused of smuggling Iranian-made bombs that had become effective killers of American troops.⁴

The Obama administration, led by the former Special Envoy to Counter ISIS, Brett McGurk, worked with Iran-backed militias such as the Badr Corps and other members of the Popular Mobilization Forces in the fight against ISIS.⁵ A decade later, it is clear that the consequences of this decision have been disastrous to our national security, as Iran-backed militias have attacked U.S. forces at least 170 times in the past two years, leading to the injury of multiple servicemembers.⁶ Replacing ISIS with Iran-backed terrorist militias does not make sense and only fuels the onslaught of terror that the Iranian regime seeks to export. Furthermore, many Iran-backed militias in Iraq have not even been designated as Foreign Terrorist Organizations, including the Badr Corps itself.

¹ <https://www.state.gov/u-s-iraq-higher-coordinating-committee-fact-sheet-on-u-s-foreign-assistance-to-iraq/>

² <https://crsreports.congress.gov/product/pdf/IF/IF10404>

³ <https://media.defense.gov/2022/Feb/08/2002934802/-1/-1/1/LEAD%20INSPECTOR%20GENERAL%20FOR%20OPERATION%20INHERENT%20RESOLVE%20OCTOBER%201,%202021%20TO%20DECEMBER%2031,%202021..PDF>

⁴ <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/05/11/world/middleeast/iraq-iran-election-enemies.html>

⁵ <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/05/11/world/middleeast/iraq-iran-election-enemies.html> and

<https://www.bloomberg.com/view/articles/2015-02-03/exclusive-iran-s-militias-are-taking-over-iraq-s-army>

⁶ <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/iran-update-january-28-2024>

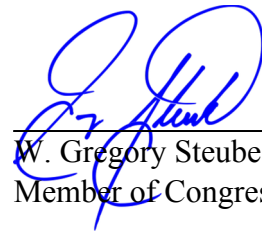
We suggest the following recommendations regarding U.S. policy towards Iraq:

- 1) Designating Abu Fadl al-Abbas Brigades, Badr Organization, Fatemiyoun Brigade, Harakat Hezbollah al-Nujaba, Kata'ib al-Imam Ali, Kata'ib Jund al-Imam, Kata'ib Sayyad al Shuhada, Sarayya al-Jihad, Sarayya Khorasani, and Zainabiyoun Brigade as Foreign Terrorist Organizations.
- 2) Imposing sanctions pursuant to Executive Order 13224 regarding terrorism upon Abu Fadl al-Abbas Brigades, Badr Organization, Kata'ib al-Imam Ali, Kata'ib Jund al-Imam, Sarayya al-Jihad, and Sarayya Khorasani.
- 3) Ending all security assistance to Iraq as long as any Iranian-backed militia or foreign terrorist organization are legally part of the Iraqi state or funded or trained by the government of Iraq.

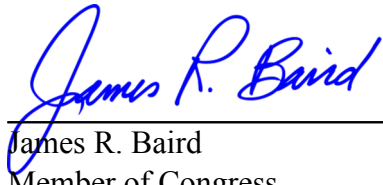
Sincerely,



Joe Wilson
Member of Congress



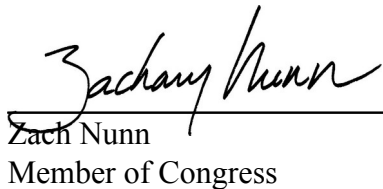
W. Gregory Steube
Member of Congress



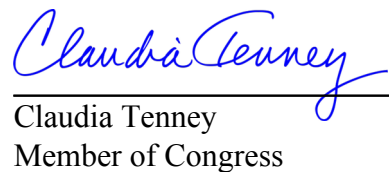
James R. Baird
Member of Congress



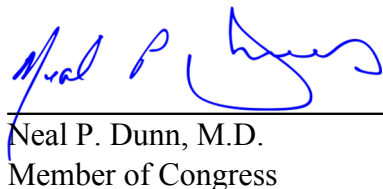
Andrew Ogles
Member of Congress



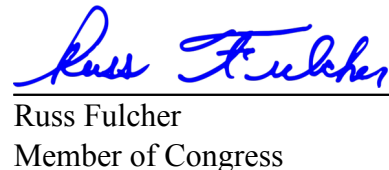
Zach Nunn
Member of Congress



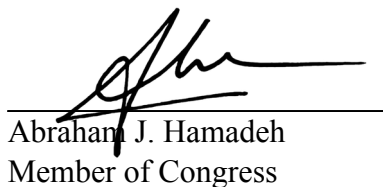
Claudia Tenney
Member of Congress



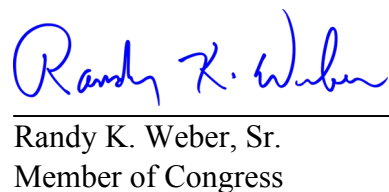
Neal P. Dunn, M.D.
Member of Congress



Russ Fulcher
Member of Congress



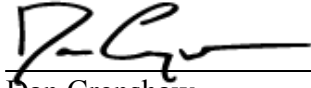
Abraham J. Hamadeh
Member of Congress



Randy K. Weber, Sr.
Member of Congress



Christopher H. Smith
Member of Congress



Dan Crenshaw
Member of Congress