

1 Apr 29-30: Prime Minister-designate Mustafa al-Kadhimi Sends List of Goals to the Speaker of the Council of Representatives. Prime Minister-designate Mustafa al-Kadhimi released his government plan outlining objectives for his term in office if he receives a vote of confidence from the Council of Representatives (CoR), the Iraqi Parliament. The Prime Minister's Information Office released a video via Twitter of Prime Minister-designate Kadhimi signing the plan and sending it to Mohammed al-Halbousi, the speaker of the CoR and leader of the Sunni Alliance of Iraqi Forces bloc. Kadhimi said his top priorities include conducting early elections, improving the governmental response to the COVID-19 outbreak, and restricting the existence of armed groups outside of state control. Anonymous sources told Iraqi media outlets the next day that unspecified Shi'a blocs threatened to reject Kadhimi's candidacy if he did not set a specific date for early elections and promise to expel US forces from Iraq as part of his government plan.

2 Apr 29: Kata'ib Hezbollah Reiterates Allegations of Prime Minister-designate Kadhimi's Involvement in US Strike that Killed Soleimani. Abu Ali al-Askari, a security official and de facto spokesperson for the US-designated terrorist group Kata'ib Hezbollah (KH), issued a warning via Twitter to supporters of Prime Minister-designate Kadhimi. Askari called on those who support Kadhimi to "correct this matter before it is too late." Askari claimed that Kadhimi has not been proven innocent in his involvement in the January 3 US strike on Iranian Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC) Quds Force Commander Qassim Soleimani and Popular Mobilization Commission Deputy Chairman and KH founder Abu Mehdi al-Muhandis. KH originally accused Kadhimi on March 2 of giving the US intelligence that led to the strike.

3 Apr 29: US Secretary of State Urges Iraq to Bring All Armed Groups Under State Control. US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo urged the government of Iraq to "heed the call from many elements of Iraqi society to bring all armed groups under state control" in a press conference. He added that the United States welcomes Iraqi actions taken "in the past days in that direction," likely referring to Caretaker Prime Minister Adel Abdul Mehdi's April 22 order to split the Hawza militias from the broader Popular Mobilization Forces (PMF), thereby weakening the PMF's Iran-aligned factions.

4 Apr 29: Influential US-sanctioned Sunni Politician Reportedly Close to Finalizing Sunni "Liberated Cities" Coalition. An unnamed source told Iraqi news outlet Shafaq that US-sanctioned Sunni politician Khamis al-Khanjar is close to announcing the formation of his "Liberated Cities" coalition, which will reportedly be comprised of 22 seats in the CoR and will represent Sunni cities liberated from ISIS. The United States sanctioned Khanjar in December 2019 for engaging in corruption at the expense of the Iraqi people. Khanjar is close to Iran's political proxy bloc, Conquest Alliance. The unnamed source stated that Khanjar hosted a meeting with Decision Alliance representative Talal al-Zobaie, former Minister of Electricity Qasim al-Fahdawi, and former Defense Minister Khalid al-Obaidi to finalize the formation of the group. Sunni parliamentarians claimed on April 17 that Khanjar reached an agreement to form the bloc.

5 Apr 30 - May 01: Political Blocs Reportedly Agree to Vote for Prime Minister-designate Kadhimi's Government, Leaving Three Important Seats Unfilled. Azad Hamid Shafi, a Kurdish member of Parliament for Moqtada al-Sadr's Toward Reform, told Iraqi news outlet Shafaq that unspecified political blocs agreed to vote on 19 of the 22 ministerial seats in Prime Minister-designate Kadhimi's cabinet. The blocs reportedly agreed that the Ministry of Finance will be allocated to Kurdish blocs, Ministry of Oil to Ammar al-Hakim's Wisdom Trend, and Ministry of Interior to Hadi al-Ameri's Conquest Alliance, but that these three ministries will be excluded from Kadhimi's parliamentary confidence vote. This agreement likely stemmed from an April 30 meeting at Ameri's residence. Ameri is an Iranian proxy and the leader of the Conquest Alliance bloc. As is usual in Iraqi government formation, cabinet appointments are likely to change until approved by the CoR.

6 Apr 30: Caretaker Prime Minister Mehdi Briefs Prime Minister-designate Kadhimi on US Presence ahead of Decisive US-Iraq Strategic Dialogue. Caretaker Prime Minister Adel Abdul Mehdi briefed Prime Minister-designate Mustafa al-Kadhimi in order to ensure that Kadhimi is "fully aware of all the topics that will be discussed with the United States" ahead of the June US-Iraq strategic dialogue, according to Mehdi's spokesperson. The briefing indicates that Mehdi expects Kadhimi's government to be approved by Parliament and in power when the strategic dialogue happens in June.

7 Apr 30: Anonymous Iraqi Intelligence Official Leaks that New "Shadow Militia" Shi'a Groups are Funded, Trained, and Commanded by the IRGC. An anonymous Iraqi intelligence official claimed to have details about the origins of the new Shi'a militia groups Usbat al-Thairen (UaT), Qabadat al-Hada (QaH), and Ashab al-Kahf (AK). The source reported to the US-funded outlet al-Hurra that UaT has 250-500 soldiers. The groups emerged from three US-designated terrorist organizations and Iranian proxy militias: UaT from Kata'ib Hezbollah, QaH from Asa'ib Ahl al-Haq, and AK from Kata'ib Sayyid al-Shuhada. The source alleged the new groups separated from their original militias and are now directly funded, trained, and commanded by Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC).

8 May 03: Maliki and Allawi's Blocs Issue Statements Rejecting Kadhimi's Government. Nouri al-Maliki, former prime minister and leader of the State of Law Coalition, issued a statement announcing that his bloc will refuse to vote for Prime Minister-designate Mustafa al-Kadhimi. Prominent secularist Ayyad Allawi also announced his refusal to vote for Kadhimi. Allawi condemned the "vague and unknown" mechanism for Kadhimi's choosing of ministers, arguing that major political parties dictated the terms of the cabinet rather than Kadhimi. State of Law holds 25 seats in Parliament; Allawi's National Alliance holds approximately 21 seats but splintered due to party infighting.

9 May 04: US Ambassador to Iraq Urges Confirmation of the Next Government in a Letter to Parliament. Matthew Tueller, the US ambassador to Iraq, wrote a letter to Iraq's Council of Representatives in which he urged members of the CoR to confirm Prime Minister-designate Mustafa al-Kadhimi's government. His letter stressed the need for politicians to abandon disagreements over ministerial choices to solve the country's economic, health, and security problems. Nouri al-Maliki, the former prime minister and current leader of the State of Law Coalition in Parliament, condemned the letter. Maliki told Iraqi outlets that the Iraqi people reject interference in their internal affairs.

10 May 04-05: Council of Representatives Schedules Special Government Confirmation Session for May 6; CoR Speaker Declares that Kadhimi's Government "Must Pass." The CoR confirmed on May 4 that it will hold a special vote of confidence session for Prime Minister-designate Kadhimi and his cabinet on May 6 at 9:00 pm local time. The session will be held in person with precautions taken to avoid COVID-19 transmission. On May 5, CoR Speaker Mohammed Halbousi said in a televised interview that the CoR "must pass" Kadhimi's government. He stressed that Iraq "cannot tolerate further obstruction" and that Kadhimi has "many tools for success, his international relations are good, and he can help us in the economic crisis the country is facing."

11 May 05: Iraqi Security and Defense Committee Chairman Claims Iraq Will Purchase Russian Missile Defense System. Parliamentary Security and Defense Committee Chairman and Toward Reform MP Muhammad Reza al-Haider told the Iraqi News Agency that Iraq intends to purchase Russian missile defense systems if the United States does not secure Iraqi airspace. He stated that Iraq is considering buying the S-300 and S-400 systems from Russia to "secure its airspace from any external aggression." Iraqi officials have made regular statements about purchasing Russian systems since 2017 but remain unlikely to do so.



Major Cities	Iraqi Security Forces	ISIS	Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG)
Demonstration	Anti-ISIS Coalition	Iran	Iraqi Council of Representatives
Iranian Proxy Militias	Religious Figures	Iraqi Prime Minister and Cabinet	

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Key Takeaway: Prime Minister-designate Mustafa al-Kadhimi's government formation process further splintered Iraq's already fractious political scene. Disagreements over cabinet appointments created new fractures within political blocs, calling into question whether individual members of parliament will vote along their usual party lines. Despite worsening political acrimony, Kadhimi maintains broad Sunni and Kurdish support in Parliament and will likely be able to satisfy enough Shi'a blocs to ascend to the office of prime minister with a partial cabinet. Because of their shared interest in Kadhimi's success, Iran and the US confined their competition to other lines of effort ahead of the June US-Iraq strategic dialogue, thereby creating enough space for Iraq's political elites to negotiate government formation. One day after US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo urged Iraq to bring armed groups under state control, the US-funded outlet al-Hurra published a story indicating that recently formed militias in Iraq are under the direct control of Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps.

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