

Profile: Lions of the Ougaidat Brigade

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Apr 15, 2024

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Articles & Testimony

Part of a series: [Militia Spotlight: Profiles \(/policy-analysis/series/militia-spotlight-profiles\)](#)

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A Syrian Arab tribal militia directly operated by Iran's IRGC and tasked with fighting the Kurdish-led SDF east of the Euphrates.

Name: Liwa Usud al-Uqaydat (Lions of the Ougaidat Brigade, or LOB).

Type of movement: Tier 3 *fasail* (armed group) engaged in kinetic military and paramilitary actions in Syria, particularly in the eastern region, including Deir al-Zour province. Primarily focused on combating the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), reinforcing Arab tribal power, and opposing U.S. and Kurdish influence.

History:

- LOB is drawn from the Ougaidat tribal confederation, the largest in Deir al-Zour province and the strongest in east Syria. According to a [2018 study \(/policy-analysis/tale-six-tribes-securing-middle-euphrates-river-valley\)](#) on local sentiments in this area, "Members of the Ougaidat tribe hold a hostile attitude toward the United States dating to the 2003 invasion of Iraq and overthrow of Saddam Hussein. This negative perception was reinforced by reports from hundreds of Iraqi Sunni officers, as well as former Baath and other government officials, who were displaced to Ougaidat areas during the war."
- According to [OpenSanctions \(/entities/opensyr-node-9932/\)](#), LOB was founded in 2021 as a local militia affiliated with Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC). It comprises roughly 200 fighters, the majority from the Shuwait clan, and operates in the city of Mayadin and its southern desert.
- In August 2023, footage [captured \(/watch?v=9XVC0nby9gM\)](#) dozens of armed members of the Ougaidat clan mobilizing through the village of al-Shahil in the Deir al-Zour countryside. The assembly was part of a larger movement to engage in combat against the SDF.
- During the Arab tribal uprising in August-September 2023, LOB commander Hashim al-Sattam ([aka Abu Bassam \(/eyeofeuphrates.com/ar/news/2023/10/30/10028\)](#)) was [photographed \(/npasyria.com/en/106897/\)](#) with other militants crossing to areas east of the Euphrates River in Deir al-Zour province near Diban, reportedly to fight the SDF. Sattam also released a [video \(/www.syriahr.com/%D8%AE%D9%84%D8%A7%D9%84-%D8%B4%D8%B1%D9%8A%D8%B7-%D9%85%D8%B5%D9%88%D8%B1-%D9%82%D8%A7%D8%A6%D8%AF-%D9%85%D9%8A%D9%84%D9%8A%D8%B4%D9%8A%D8%A7-%D8%A3%D8%B3%D9%88%D8%AF-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B9%D9%83/678135/\)](#) inviting eastern tribes to help fight the SDF.
- On September 25, 2023, Arab tribal militias—among them LOB, the [Hashemite Tribes Regiment \(/node/18597\)](#), and the [Arab Tribal Forces \(/node/18716\)](#)—initiated [significant combat \(/www.aljazeera.net/news/2023/9/25/%D8%AA%D8%AC%D8%AF%D8%AF%D8%AA-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A7%D8%B4%D8%AA%D8%A8%D8%A7%D9%83%D8%A7%D8%AA-%D8%A8%D9%8A%D9%86-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B9%D8%B4%D8%A7%D8%A6%D8%B1-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B9%D8%B1%D8%A8%D9%8A%D8%A9\)](#) against the SDF in Diban. This escalation followed an [announcement \(/www.aljazeera.net/news/2023/9/6/%d8%af%d9%8a%d9%88%d8%a7%d9%86-%d8%a7%d9%84%d8%ad%d8%b1%d8%a8-%d8%aa%d9%82%d9%84%d9%8a%d8%af-%d8%b9%d8%b1%d8%a8%d9%8a-%d8%aa%d8%ad%d9%8a%d9%8a%d9%87-%d8%b9%d8%b4%d8%a7%d8%a6%d8%b1\)](#) by Sheikh Ibrahim al-Hifl marking the end of a two-week ceasefire. Their concerted efforts resulted in the SDF's complete expulsion from Diban and al-Hawayij—a significant shift in local control.

Objective:

- LOB's primary objective is to fight SDF units in order to strengthen Arab tribal control east of the Euphrates. A secondary objective is to strengthen Iran's grip in this area and push U.S. forces out of Syria. Areas under SDF control are generally inaccessible to proxies in Iran's so-called "axis of resistance," so gaining a foothold there would

enable the IRGC to establish a northern land corridor leading to Aleppo.

Chain of command:

- **Hashim al-Sattam (Abu Bassam):** Sattam is an official in the IRGC's affiliation office in Mayadin. In this role, he **recruits** (<https://www.jesrpress.com/%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AD%D8%B1%D8%B3-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AB%D9%88%D8%B1%D9%8A-%D9%8A%D8%B4%D9%83%D9%91%D9%84-%D8%AE%D9%84%D8%A7%D9%8A%D8%A7-%D8%AA%D8%B9%D9%85%D9%84-%D9%84%D8%B5%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AD%D9%87/>) locals in Diban and al-Hawayij and **recommends** (<https://eyeofeuphrates.com/ar/news/2023/04/19/8267>) them for acceptance into IRGC-affiliated militias. He reportedly establishes “cells” (<https://eyeofeuphrates.com/ar/news/2023/05/20/8568>) for the IRGC in SDF-controlled areas east of the Euphrates, using fishing boats to transport weapons to these groups. He **reportedly supervised** (<https://eyeofeuphrates.com/ar/news/2023/10/30/10028>) the IRGC-affiliated militia members responsible for attacks on the U.S. bases at the Conoco and Omar oil fields.
- **Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps:** The Arab tribes of eastern Syria have effectively become affiliates or subordinate entities of the IRGC through various strategies: organizing tribal council meetings to encourage opposition against the United States and SDF; financially supporting the establishment and operational activities of these tribes; providing training; and facilitating the integration of new members into tribal militias. Additionally, the IRGC has played a role in strategically relocating these militias as necessitated by operational requirements.
- **Assad regime:** Sattam's brother, **Aseeb al-Hattam** (<https://www.jesrpress.com/%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AD%D8%B1%D8%B3-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AB%D9%88%D8%B1%D9%8A-%D9%8A%D8%B4%D9%83%D9%91%D9%84-%D8%AE%D9%84%D8%A7%D9%8A%D8%A7-%D8%AA%D8%B9%D9%85%D9%84-%D9%84%D8%B5%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AD%D9%87/>), is reportedly a brigadier general in the Syrian Army. The army plays a crucial role in operationally supporting tribal militias, including through transport of militia personnel across eastern Syria. Additionally, it **ensures** (<https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/ar/policy-analysis/kyf-abtlt-almlyshyat-alayranyt-dyr-alzwr>) the provision of essential resources, including ammunition, food, and military supplies. Moreover, when LOB and other tribal militias hold recruiting drives in eastern towns and villages, they do so not only to fill their own ranks, but also to source personnel for the Assad regime's military and intelligence operations.



Figure 1: Two images of Hashim al-Sattam, in the office and on the battlefield. The righthand image is a screenshot from a September 6, 2023, Facebook video of him crossing to the east bank of the Euphrates. It was the first time he had been propagandized wearing traditional Arab tribal dress; usually, he is attired in casual clothing or military uniform.

Affiliate relationships:

- **Sons of Jazira and Euphrates Movement:** On September 2, 2023, the Telegram channel for **the Sons movement** ([/node/18451](https://t.me/18451)) reported that Baggara clan chief Hajem al-Bashir had declined an invitation initiated by the SDF and the U.S.-led Global Coalition. The request was for a meeting with Arab tribal militias in Hasaka governorate. Bashir's condition for attending the meeting was the inclusion of Ougaidat chief Ibrahim al-Hifl. On September 6, 2023, the movement released **a video** (<https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=279322558186845>) showing Hashim al-Sattam in tribal clothes crossing the Euphrates to fight the SDF (Figure 1).
- **Aleppo Defenders Legion:** On August 11, 2020, the legion's Telegram channel **announced** (https://t.me/f_m_aleppo/30548) that the Ougaidat clan was giving the United States a one-month ultimatum to transfer control of all Arab territories in eastern Syria back to local forces.
- **Nawaf Ragheb al-Bashir:** During the Arab tribal uprising, Hashim al-Sattam **trained** (<https://deirezzor24.net/en/how-iran-and-assad-penetrated-the-ranks-of-so-called-tribal-fighters/>) tribal fighters at IRGC-affiliated militia camps with Bashir's permission. Bashir also oversees the recruitment of personnel from Deir al-Zour into Arab tribal militias such as LOB.
- **Liwa Abu Fadl al-Abbas and Liwa al-Baqir:** In October 2022, personnel from these two groups and LOB **carried out** (<https://eyeofeuphrates.com/ar/news/2022/10/17/6569>) a coordinated live-fire training exercise with field artillery and Iranian-pattern multiple-launch rocket systems (MLRS). This operation took place on the southern outskirts of Mayadin following the relocation of these groups. The exercise was a response to U.S. airstrikes on IRGC rocket positions within the city.
- **Lebanese Hezbollah:** In eastern Syria, particularly Deir al-Zour, Abu Kamal, al-Asharah, and Mayadin, there is a notable **convergence** (<https://www.aljazeera.net/news/2023/9/22/%D9%82%D8%A7%D8%A6%D8%AF-%D9%81%D9%8A%D9%84%D9%82-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%82%D8%AF%D8%B3-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A5%D9%8A%D8%B1%D8%A7%D9%86%D9%8A-%D8%B2%D8%A7%D8%B1-%D8%B3%D9%88%D8%B1%D9%8A%D8%A7/>) in the deployment of Lebanese Hezbollah and LOB. Hezbollah's presence in the east is primarily through its Unit 313, which is actively engaged in close collaboration with local Arab tribal militias. This partnership focuses on coordinated military engagements against SDF positions, illustrating a strategic alliance in the region.
- **Liwa Fatemiyoun:** In collaboration with this Afghan-based militia—which operates in Syria with support from the IRGC—LOB **actively recruits** (<https://www.alaraby.co.uk/politics/%D8%AA%D9%88%D8%A7%D8%B5%D9%84-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A7%D8%B3%D8%AA%D9%82%D8%B7%D8%A7%D8%A8-%D9%84%D8%AA%D8%AC%D9%86%D9%8A%D8%AF-%D8%A3%D8%A8%D9%86%D8%A7%D8%A1-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B9%D8%B4%D8%A7%D8%A6%D8%B1-%D9%88%D9%87%D8%AC%D9%85%D8%A7%D8%AA-%D9%81%D9%8A-%D8%AF%D9%8A%D8%B1-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B2%D9%88%D8%B1-%D8%B4%D8%B1%D9%82%D9%8A-%D8%B3%D9%88%D8%B1%D9%8A%D8%A9/>) Syrian nationals all across the east, particularly Deir al-Zour. The two groups

share operational territories, including numerous checkpoints, and coordinate closely on military engagements. Furthermore, their recruitment efforts extend beyond their immediate ranks, contributing personnel to both the Syrian army and the Assad regime's irregular National Defense Forces (NDF).

Subordinate relationships:

- LOB does not have any known media organs, not even social media pages.



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