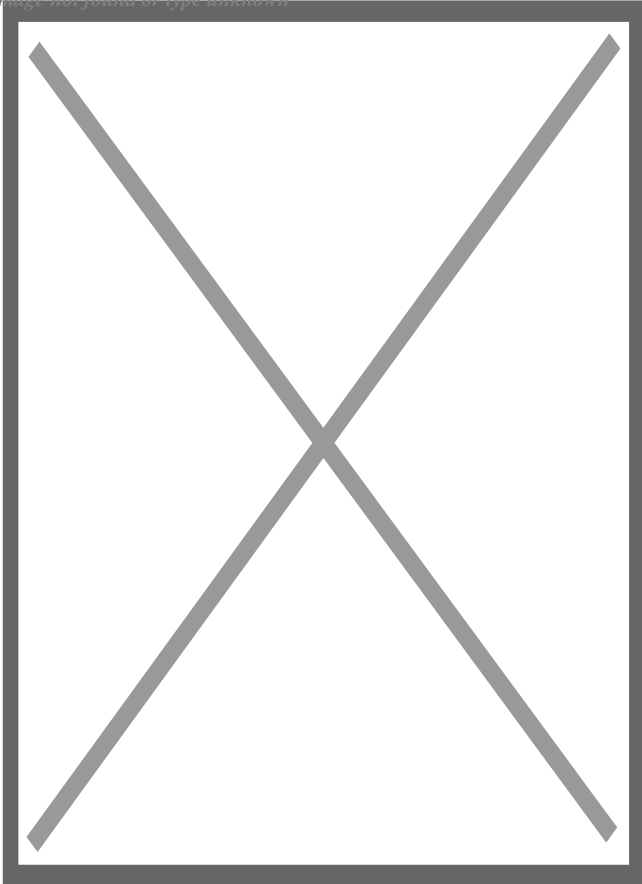


Iran affirms Ismail Haniyeh assassination designed and executed by Israel, supported by U.S.

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Late head of political bureau of the Hamas resistance movement, Ismail Haniyeh (Photo via social media)

Tehran, August 3 (RHC)-- The Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) says the assassination of the head of the political bureau of the Hamas resistance movement, Ismail Haniyeh, in the Iranian capital Tehran, was designed and executed by Israel, with support from the U.S. administration.

In a statement released on Saturday, the IRGC reported that the attack involved the use of a short-range projectile armed with a warhead weighing approximately seven kilograms, which subsequently caused a massive explosion. It further noted that the projectile was launched from an area outside the late Hamas leader's residence.

The IRGC vowed that it would avenge the blood of Haniyeh, noting that the terrorist Zionist regime would face severe punishment at "the appropriate time, place and manner."

Haniyeh, who was in Tehran to attend the swearing-in ceremony of Iran's newly-elected President Masoud Pezeshkian, alongside other Axis of Resistance leaders, was martyred along with his bodyguard, in an attack early on July 31st.

Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei has warned the Israeli regime of a "harsh response" for Haniyeh's assassination, saying it was the Islamic Republic's duty to avenge the Palestinian resistance leader's blood. "The criminal and terrorist Zionist regime martyred our dear guest in our homeland and left us bereaved, but it also set the ground for a harsh punishment for itself," the Leader said.

Israel is feeling anxious about potential retaliatory moves from Iran and the Lebanese Hezbollah resistance movement following the assassinations of Haniyeh and top Hezbollah commander Fuad Shukr.

On July 30, Israel killed Shukr in an airstrike in southern Beirut. A day later, the head of Hamas' politburo was killed in Tehran.

Over the past two days, Air India, Germany's Lufthansa Group, U.S. carriers United Airlines and Delta Air, and Italy's ITA Airways said they had suspended flights to Tel Aviv in the 1948 Israeli-occupied territories.

On Friday, Washington announced it would send navy cruisers, destroyers and fighter jets to West Asia to bolster support for its main regional ally Israel.

Iran's interim Foreign Minister Ali Bagheri Kani has said that the Islamic Republic will use its legitimate and inherent right to punish the Israeli regime for the assassination of senior Palestinian resistance leader Ismail Haniyeh on Iranian soil.

Several foreign officials have contacted the top Iranian diplomat over the past few days, calling on Tehran to exercise self-restraint over a widely anticipated military response.

In the early hours of April 14, the IRGC Aerospace Force launched around 300 of missiles and drones at the Israeli-occupied territories.

The strikes came in retaliation for the Israeli regime's April 1st airstrike on the consular section of Iran's embassy in the Syrian capital Damascus which killed seven Iranian military commanders and advisers.

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