

Hamas chief assassinated in airstrike in Tehran

International Desk

Ismail Haniyeh, chief of the political bureau of the Palestinian resistance movement Hamas, was assassinated in a targeted attack blamed on Israel in the Iranian capital in the wee hours of Wednesday. The Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) in a statement said Haniyeh and one of his bodyguards were assassinated early on Wednesday July 31, 2024 at their accommodation in Tehran as a result of a terrorist act perpetrated by the cowardly and criminal Israeli regime.

The IRGC stated that the late Hamas chief was among the distinguished personalities of about 110 foreign delegations, who had been invited by the Iranian Parliament to attend the inauguration ceremony of Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian.

The IRGC warned Israel of a harsh and stinging response from the forces of the Axis of Resistance, particularly Iran, in retaliation for the assassination of Haniyeh.

"Undoubtedly, the heinous crime committed by the Zionist regime concerning the killing of Ismail Haniyeh, chief

of the political bureau of the Palestinian Islamic Resistance Movement Hamas, will be met with a harsh and painful response from the powerful Resistance Front, especially the Islamic [Republic of] Iran," the elite force said in a statement released on Wednesday.

According to Iranian media reports, the 2:00 a.m. strike targeted "the special residences for war veterans in north Tehran" where Haniyeh was staying.

Iran declared three days of national mourning for the loss of the Palestinian resistance leader.

An "official and public" funeral ceremony for Haniyeh will be held in Tehran today before his body is flown to Qatar, his base in recent years, for burial on Friday, Hamas said.

Haniyeh, 62, was born in a refugee camp near Gaza City and joined Hamas in the late 1980s during the First Intifada or uprising.

As Hamas grew in power, Haniyeh rose through the ranks and was appointed part of a "collective leadership" in 2004 and reached the Hamas top job in 2017. Three of his sons were killed in an Israeli airstrike on Gaza in April.



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The assassination of Hamas's Political Bureau Chief Ismail Haniyeh drew strong warnings from Iran, with the Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei vowing of a "harsh response" to Israel. Ayatollah Khamenei said it is the Islamic Republic's duty to

avenge the blood of the Palestinian resistance leader.

The Leader made the remarks on Wednesday, hours after Haniyeh, who had traveled to Tehran to attend the swearing-in ceremony of Iran's new president, was killed in a dawn attack in the capital.

"The criminal and terrorist Zionist regime martyred our dear

Avenge of Haniyeh's blood a duty: *Leader* Pezeshkian warns terrorists will regret 'cowardly act'

guest in our homeland and left us bereaved, but it also set the ground for a harsh punishment for itself," the Leader said.

Ayatollah Khamenei commended Haniyeh's years-long sacrifices in his fight against the Israeli occupation and said he was ready for martyrdom and sacrificed his children and households on this path.

"He was not afraid of embracing martyrdom in the way of God and saving God's servants, but we consider it our duty to avenge his blood in this bitter and horrific incident that came to pass in the Islamic Republic's

territory," the Leader asserted. Haniyeh was in Tehran to attend the inauguration ceremony of new Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian on Tuesday. Pezeshkian issued a statement saying Tehran will defend its territorial integrity and dignity. The Islamic Republic of Iran will defend its territorial integrity, honor, dignity and pride, and make the terrorist occupiers regret their cowardly action."

Israel violates int'l law

The Iranian president said Israel's terrorist act violates international law and demands united

action by the world, especially Islamic countries, to deal with this criminal and occupying regime.

"Yesterday, I raised his victorious hand and today I should carry him on my shoulders," Pezeshkian wrote in a message posted on his X account.

"The bond between the two proud nations of Iran and Palestine will be stronger than ever, and the path of resistance and protection of the oppressed will be followed stronger than ever."

Also on Wednesday, Iran's Parliament Speaker Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf reacted to the as-

assassination of Haniyeh, saying that the Islamic Republic and the resistance front will avenge the blood of Haniyeh.

"May God have mercy upon the brave leader of the Palestinian resistance, the courageous fighter and wise mentor, protector of the dignity of the resilient Palestinian nation and guardian of Islamic values, martyr of al-Quds, Haj Ismail Haniyeh," Qalibaf said. "The two nations of Iran and Palestine are grieving over this great tragedy together. Iran and the resistance front will avenge the blood of their martyred brother," he added.

Haniyeh targeted killing reverberates across world

International Desk

The assassination of Hamas political leader Ismail Haniyeh in a targeted attack in Tehran on Wednesday blamed on Israel has stunned the international community and drew condemnations from many countries, international bodies and figures. Hamas's armed wing said that the assassination of its political leader Ismail Haniyeh would take the war with Israel to "new levels," warning of repercussions for the entire region.

"The criminal assassination of leader Haniyeh in the heart of the Iranian capital is a watershed and dangerous event that takes the war to new levels and will have enormous consequences for the entire region," the Ezzedine al-Qasam Brigades, whose fighters are engaged in fierce battles with Israeli troops in Gaza, said in a statement.

Mohammed Ali al-Houthi, a member of Yemen's Ansarullah movement's political bureau, called it a "heinous terrorist crime," saying that the assassination is a flagrant violation of laws and

ideal values.

Lebanon's Hezbollah group also condemned the killing of Hamas leader, warning his death will only increase the resolve of resistance groups. "The martyrdom of leader Haniyeh... will increase the determination and stubbornness of the resistance fighters on all fronts... and will make their resolve stronger in confronting the Zionist enemy," Hezbollah said in a statement. The group described Haniyeh as "one of the great resistance leaders of our time who stood bravely against the American hegemony project and the Zionist occupation."

Palestinian Authority President Mahmud Abbas slammed the killing as "a cowardly act and a serious escalation," his office said in a statement.

'Shameful assassination'

Haniyeh was based in Qatar, which has been a mediator in the Gaza conflict, but also spent time in Turkey after going into exile. Qatar's Foreign Ministry called the killing a "heinous crime" and "shameful assassination."

The ministry said, "This assassination and the reckless Israeli behavior of continuously targeting civilians in Gaza will lead to the region slipping into chaos and undermine the chances of peace."

Turkey's President Recep Tayyip Erdogan condemned what he called the "treacherous assassination" of his "brother" Haniyeh.

"This shameful act aims to sabotage the Palestinian cause, the glorious Gazan resistance and our Palestinian brothers' just fight, and to intimidate Palestinians," Erdogan added in a social media post.

Call for cease-fire

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken said Wednesday that the United States was "not aware of or involved in" the killing of Hamas's political leader Ismail Haniyeh in Iran. "I can't tell you what this means. I can tell you that the imperative of getting a cease-fire, the importance that that has for everyone, remains," Blinken said in an interview with Channel NewsAsia in Singapore.

Germany stressed international calls for restraint to avoid "a regional conflagration," with a foreign ministry spokesman saying, "The logic of tit-for-tat reprisals is the wrong path."

Reactions from Russia, China

Haniyeh went to Moscow in September 2022 for talks on the Israel-Palestinian conflict while Hamas and rival Palestinian faction Fatah held talks in Beijing last week.

"It is a completely unacceptable political assassination, and this will lead to a further escalation of tensions," Russia's Deputy Foreign Minister Mikhail Bogdanov told the state-run RIA Novosti news agency.

China's Foreign Ministry spokesman Lin Jian said, "We are highly concerned about the incident and firmly oppose and condemn the assassination."

Threat to West Asia's security

Egypt's Foreign Ministry said that Israel's "dangerous escalation" in recent days "risks igniting a confrontation in

the region that could yield to dire security consequences." Iraq's Foreign Ministry also called Haniyeh's killing "a threat to security and stability in the region." Oman also condemned the action.

Afghanistan's Taliban rulers called Haniyeh's death "a great loss."

Syrian government condemned Haniyeh's assassination, accusing Israel of launching an attack against Iran that constitutes "a violation of international law."

Jordan has accused Israel of the assassination of Haniyeh. Jordan's foreign minister described the assassination as a heinous crime and violation of international law.

The UK Foreign Ministry called for de-escalation and an immediate cease-fire following Haniyeh's assassination. Pakistan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs offered condolences to Haniyeh's "family and the people of Palestine," expressing "serious concern" over "growing Israeli adventurism in the region."

Iraq on Wednesday condemned the killing in Tehran, warning that it threatens the region's

stability. Iraq's Foreign Ministry in a statement described the killing as a "flagrant violation of international law and a threat to security and stability in the region."

Extrajudicial killings

The European Union "has

a principled position of rejecting extrajudicial killings," said Peter Stano, the EU's spokesperson for foreign affairs and security policy.

He said the EU was closely following developments around the assassination of Ismail Haniyeh.



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