

Russian security chief: Haniyeh's assassins seek to stoke regional tensions



Chief of Staff of the Iranian Armed Forces Major General Mohammad Baqeri (R) and Secretary of Russia's Security Council Sergei Shoigu (L) meet in Tehran on August 5, 2024. **FARS**

International Desk

Russia's Security Council Secretary Sergei Shoigu condemned the assassination of Hamas leader in Tehran, saying there is no doubt that the perpetrators of such a crime intend to increase tensions in the Middle East region. Shoigu made the remarks during a meeting with Chief of Staff of the Iranian Armed Forces Major General Mohammad Baqeri in Tehran on Monday. Earlier on the day, the Russian official held a meeting with Secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council Ali Akbar Ahmadian.

Shoigu's visit to Tehran came as Iran is weighing a response to Israeli regime for the assassination of the Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh in Tehran on July 31. Haniyeh, head of the Palestinian resistance movement's political bureau, was assassinated alongside one of his bodyguards in the Iranian capital on Wednesday. He had traveled to Tehran to attend the inauguration ceremony of Iran's new President Masoud Pezeshkian. Russia had earlier condemned the assassination of Haniyeh, calling on all parties to refrain from steps that could tip the Middle East into a wider regional war. During the Monday meeting, the Russian official described relations between Tehran and Moscow as strategic and deep-rooted, which will not be affected by the change in the governments. Iran recently elected Masoud Pezeshkian as the country's new president in a snap election which was held following the death of the late president Ebrahim Raisi in a helicopter crash in May.

The visit by the top Russian official came a day after Jordanian Foreign Minister Ayman Safadi discussed regional issues and ties with Iranian officials during a one-day visit to Tehran. Pezeshkian told the Jordanian top diplomat that the Israeli regime's assassination of Haniyeh in Tehran violated all international regulations and was a "big mistake" that will not go unanswered. "The Islamic Republic of Iran expects all Muslim countries and free nations in the world to strongly condemn such crimes," he added. He emphasized that the biggest enemies and violators of freedom, democracy and human rights are making use of their utmost scientific and operational capabilities to carry out terrorist acts and commit heinous crimes. "They claim to defend freedom, democracy and human rights and introduce anyone who refrains from abiding by them as the enemy of such principles and values," the Iranian president said.

Silence on Israel's actions serves as reward to regime: *Iran*

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Iran reiterated its determination to avenge the Israeli assassination of Hamas leader, warning that silence on the regime's acts will be detrimental to regional stability. "Silence towards the [Israeli] regime's recent actions is a kind of rewarding them. Therefore, the Islamic Republic of Iran reserves its right to take countermeasures based on international rules and procedures," Iran's Acting Foreign Minister Ali Bagheri Kani told Bahraini Foreign Minister Abdullatif bin Rashid al-Zayani in a phone conversation on Monday. Bagheri Kani also said it is imperative to put an end to the Israeli regime's "vicious" scheme to expand the scale of war in the region. The Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh was assassinated by Israel in Iran's capital on July 31, while he was in Tehran to attend the swearing-in ceremony of Iran's President Masoud Pezeshkian. In a telephone conversation with Slovenia's Foreign Minister Tanja Fajon on Sunday, Bagheri Kani denounced the awkward silence of European countries on the

killing of the Hamas chief, stressing that the Islamic Republic will definitely exercise its legitimate right to create deterrence against Israel. "The Islamic Republic is surprised by Europe's silence as well as the absence of a UN Security Council statement in condemnation of the Zionist regime's acts of aggression against Iran, Lebanon and Yemen. Moreover, European countries' failure to condemn the killing of Hamas politburo head has raised questions for Iran," the top Iranian diplomat stated. Meanwhile, Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesman Nasser Kanaani called Israel's assassination of Haniyeh as a "blatant violation" of international rules and regulations. Kanaani said the assassination was a flagrant breach of the Islamic Republic's territorial integrity and the political norms of the international community. "In line with international law, Iran has the right to punish the aggressor. No one has the right to doubt Iran's legal right to punish the aggressor and create deterrence against the usurping Zionist regime," he added. He also said the

international community must support Iran's punishment of the Israeli regime. Kanaani added that an extraordinary meeting of the foreign ministers of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation will be held in Saudi Arabia on Wednesday at Iran's request to discuss the issue. Also on Monday, the chief commander of Iran's Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) Major General Hossein Salami said, "They think that through these measures [assassination of Haniyeh], they would succeed in prolonging their survival." "These [atrocities] are, however, holes that they (the Israelis) dug for themselves, and will gradually bury themselves in," Salami stated, adding, "Once they received a strong response, they would understand that they have committed another miscalculation." Following the assassination of Haniyeh in Tehran, Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei in a statement warned of a "harsh response" to the Israeli action and reaffirmed the Islamic Republic's duty to avenge the blood of the resistance leader.

Bangladeshi flees to India after protesters storm her palace

Bangladesh's prime minister resigned and fled the country Monday, after weeks of protests against a quota system for government jobs descended into violence and grew into a broader challenge to her 15-year rule. Thousands of demonstrators stormed her official residence and other buildings associated with her party and family. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's departure threatens to create even more instability in the densely populated nation on India's border that is already dealing with a series of crises, from high unemployment and corruption to climate change. Amid security concerns, the main airport in Dhaka, the capital, suspended operations, according to AP. After the embattled leader was seen on TV boarding a military helicopter with her sister, the country's military chief, Gen. Waker-uz-Zaman, sought to reassure a jittery nation that order would be restored. He said he met with opposition politicians and civil society leaders and would seek the president's guid-

ance on forming an interim government. He promised that the military would launch an investigation into the deadly crackdown on student-led protests that led to some of the country's worst bloodshed since the 1971 war of independence and fueled outrage against the government. He added that he ordered security forces not to fire on crowds. "Keep faith in the military, we will investigate all the killings and punish the responsible," he said. The military wields significant political influence in Bangladesh, which has had more than 20 coups or coup attempts. Even after Waker-uz-Zaman spoke, people continued to pour into and out of Hasina's official residence, taking furniture and pulling raw fish from the refrigerators. Crowds also ransacked Hasina's family's ancestral home-turned-museum where her father, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman — the country's first president and independence leader — was assassinated. They

torched major offices of the ruling party and the country's two leading, pro-government TV stations — both of which were forced to go off air. Elsewhere, protests were peaceful, and thousands gathered Monday evening outside the presidential palace, where the military chief, opposition politicians and the country's figurehead president met. Hasina, meanwhile, landed in a city in India on the border with Bangladesh, according to a military official who spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to release the information to the media. The protests began peacefully last month as frustrated students demanded an end to a quota system for government jobs that they said favored those with connections to the prime minister's Awami League party, but the demonstrations then morphed into an unprecedented challenge to Hasina and the party. The 76-year-old was elected for a fourth consecutive term in a January vote that

was boycotted by her main opponents. Thousands of opposition members were jailed in the lead-up to the polls. Protests have continued even after the Supreme Court last month ruled that the quota system — which set aside up to 30% of government jobs for family members of veterans who fought in Bangladesh's war of independence against Pakistan — must be drastically cut. The government attempted to quell the demonstrations with force, leaving nearly 300 people dead since mid-July. At least 95 people, including at least 14 police officers, died in clashes in the capital on Sunday, according to the country's leading Bengali-language daily newspaper, Prothom Alo. Hundreds more were injured. At least 11,000 people have been arrested in recent weeks. The unrest has also resulted in the closure of schools and universities across the country, and authorities at one point imposed a shoot-on-sight curfew.

Anti-government protesters display Bangladesh's national flag as they storm Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's palace in Dhaka on August 5, 2024. **K.M. ASAD/AFP**



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