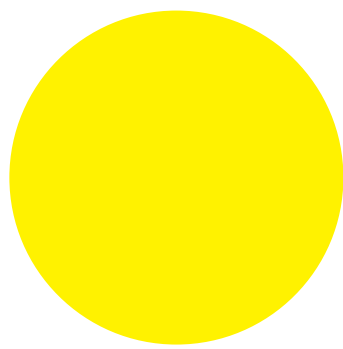


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FEATURE REPORT
EXCLUSIVE



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Iran holds ceremony to honor martyred Leader 40 days after his burial



People take part in a ceremony to mark 40 days after the burial of Iran's martyred Leader Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei in Tehran on August 18, 2026.

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False-flag operation aimed to turn Iraqi Kurdistan against Iran

By Delaram Ahmadi
Staff writer

INTERVIEW
EXCLUSIVE

The office of Iraqi Kurdistan Prime Minister Masrour Barzani and the residence of the head of the Kurdistan Region's security and intelligence agency came under a drone attack on Sunday, which Kurdistan Region officials claimed had been launched from Iranian territory. Iranian Foreign Ministry officials, however, rejected the claim and described it as "suspicious." Iraqi Prime Minister Ali Al-Zaidi's office said an investigative committee had been tasked with determining the location and origin of the drone launches. Amid regional tensions stemming from the US



Emad Abshenas

and Israeli aggression against Iran, the incident has raised suspicions about the possible involvement of other actors. In an interview with Iran Daily, international affairs analyst Emad Abshenas said that given the Kurdistan Region government's opposition to the presence of US and Israeli forces and the use of its territory against Iran, such a false-flag operation was an attempt to turn the regional government against the Islamic Republic.

IRAN DAILY: Given the Kurdistan Region officials' claim that the drones were launched from Iranian territory, and Iran's rejection of the allegation, what scenarios have emerged regarding the origin of the attack and those behind it?

ABSHENAS: Iranian officials have stressed that if Kurdistan Region officials have evidence, they should present it. This ap-

pears to be part of a false-flag operation by Israel. In fact, it was carried out by Israel and the US, and the aim is to create divisions between Iran and the Kurdistan Region.

If Iran had carried out the attack, it would have claimed responsibility for it. Iran has never denied its actions whenever it has carried out an operation, and when it does not claim responsibility, that means it had nothing to do with it. This applies both to operations conducted in the Kurdistan Region against opposition groups and terrorists based there, and to operations against other countries that provide bases to Israel or the US to launch attacks against Iran.

What would the planners of such an operation gain from it, and what could their objective be?

One objective could be to provoke the Kurdistan Region government against Iran. The re-

gional government is strongly opposed to the presence of these terrorists, but its hands are tied because of US and Israeli influence in the area and the presence of US bases.

US forces and weapons are brought in without the authorities' knowledge, and no one knows what the US flights are carrying. According to some reports, Israel and the US had also established bases in desert areas in western Iraq, from where US and Israeli drones and aircraft would launch missiles at Iran, attack Iran and refuel. The Iraqi resistance even shot down one or two of these refueling aircraft over Iraq.

Unfortunately, Iraqi territory and airspace have now been taken over by the Americans and Israelis. Since the Kurdistan Region government is strongly opposed to this situation, they want to somehow provoke the regional government against Iran.

On the other hand, reports have emerged about the role of Kurdistan Region officials in relaying messages between Tehran and Washington. In any case, the Americans are trying to establish contact with Iran and send messages through every possible channel. If such reports are accurate, this operation could have been aimed at undermining that mediation role. Israel was certainly very unhappy about it and may therefore have wanted to send a warning to the Kurdistan Region.

Could the attack be linked to broader regional developments and efforts by some parties to open new fronts against Iran?

Yes. Such an operation is also intended to open new fronts against Iran, in addition to creating divisions between Iran and the Kurdistan Region. Even before the war began, according to reports, the US and

Israel brought terrorists from various parts of the world to the Kurdistan Region. Some of them are ethnically Kurdish, while others are not Kurdish at all but are there dressed and presented as Kurds.

They had all been prepared to attack Iran before the war began, and the Americans had stationed them in the Kurdistan Region. Both [US President Donald] Trump and [Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin] Netanyahu officially announced that they had sent weapons to these groups to create unrest inside Iran.

Given the sensitive relations between Baghdad and Erbil and Tehran, and Iraq's efforts to prevent the country from being drawn into regional conflicts, what impact will this incident have on Iran's relations with the central Iraqi government and the Kurdistan Region?

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