



DEBKAFfile

We Start Where the Media Stop | Est. 2000

Iran points finger at Israel for IRGC general's death, vows revenge

DEBKAFfile *Special Report* February 15, 2013, 7:29 PM (GMT+02:00)

Tags: [IRGC general](#) >> [targeted assassination](#) >> [Syria](#) >> [Iran](#) >> [Hizballah](#) >> [Bashar Assad](#) >>



IRGC General Hassan Shateri

The depth of Iran's loss by the death of senior Iranian Revolutionary Guards general Hassan Shateri aka Hossam Khosh-Nevis was signified by the rank of mourners at his funeral in Iran Thursday, Feb. 15. Among them were Iran's Defense Minister Ahmed Wahidi, Foreign Minister, Ali Akbar Salehi and Al Qods Brigades commander

Gen. Qassem Soleimani.

Gen. Shateri was in fact the live wire of the tremendous military effort Iran is investing in Syria for keeping President Bashar Assad in power, DEBKAFfile's Iran and Persian Gulf sources say.

He acted additionally as the vital Iranian link in the military partnership between Assad and the Lebanese Hizballah leader Hassan Nasrallah.

Iran is reported by Gulf intelligence sources to have initially drawn a veil of secrecy over the time and place of his death for fear exposure would force a military confrontation with Israel. They reveal that Gen. Shateri was in fact killed two weeks ago Saturday, Jan. 30, in the course of the alleged Israeli air strike against a Syrian military complex and arms convoy destined for Hizballah in Lebanon.

Those sources claim that that the Iranian general and two aides who were driving in the same car were the real targets of that air strike.

After the event, Damascus reported two people killed and five injured, without identifying them or releasing their photos as would normally have been routine.

Targeted assassinations by foreign hands claimed by no one are not unusual Syria. In February 2008, Hizballah's security chief Imad Mughniyeh, who carried out many of the same functions for Tehran as Gen. Shateri, was assassinated in Damascus. Eight months ago, in July 2012, a mysterious explosion wiped out half of Assad's inner circle, targeting the men running the war against the Syrian uprising.

Tehran was taken aback this time by the precise foreknowledge of Shateri's movements and the accuracy of the attack, which presumed deep intelligence penetration in Tehran and Beirut as well as Damascus. Now, the Iranians appear to have decided not to take this setback lying down after all. Israel is in their sights for payback – either directly or through their allies, Syria or Hizballah, which both suffered loss from the general's death.

DEBKAFfile has learned that the IRGC general was in the process of rapidly establishing a small guerrilla army of 5,000 Revolutionary Guardsmen and 5,000 Hizballah operatives for strengthening the defensive ring around Assad's governing institutions in Damascus and its outskirts, secure the main Syria-Lebanon road routes and keep them open to free military movement between the two countries.

For Tehran, an open highway between Syria and Lebanon is an overriding strategic goal in view of its determination to get Hizballah's stock of sophisticated weapons out of Syrian stores and across to Lebanon whatever it takes - despite Israel's reported action to frustrate the transfer.

In Tehran, the influential IRGC preacher, Hojjat-ol-Eslam Mehdi Ta'eb, declared Wednesday in a sermon that Syria's importance to the Islamic Republic is greater even than the oil region of Khuzestan in southern Iran.

Copyright 2000-2013 DEBKAFfile. All Rights Reserved. [Terms and Conditions](#).