



## Reactions to the Deaths of Fuad Shukr and Isma'il Haniyeh

August 2, 2024

### Overview<sup>1</sup>

- ▶ In the southern suburb of Beirut on July 30, 2024, the IDF eliminated Fuad Shukr, Hezbollah's most senior military commander and the head of the organization's strategic array. The attack was carried out in response to a rocket fired by Hezbollah which hit the Druze village of Majdal Shams and killed 12 children and teenagers. Hezbollah confirmed the death of Shukr, aka Sayyed Muhsen, stating that he was one of Hezbollah's founders and had led its military operations against Israel, especially since the beginning of the current fighting on October 8, 2023.
- ▶ Hezbollah secretary general Hassan Nasrallah spoke at Shukr's funeral service, stating that a new phase in the war had begun, claiming that revenge would come and there would be a real response. He told the Israeli public to "rejoice a little, because you will cry a lot," but did not comment on the nature of the response.
- ▶ On July 31, 2024, the Iranian Revolutionary Guards Corps and Hamas announced that Isma'il Haniyeh, head of Hamas' political bureau, had been killed in an attack on the building where he was staying in Tehran, having come to participate in the swearing-in of Masoud Pezeshkian, the new Iranian president. They claimed Israel was behind the attack; Israel did not claim responsibility.
- ▶ Hamas called Haniyeh "the shaheed of Gaza, Jerusalem and Palestine" and accused Israel of responsibility for a "cowardly, treacherous assassination;" Hamas' military wing has threatened to retaliate. The Palestinian Authority (PA) and other Palestinian organizations issued condemnations and a general strike was called in Judea and Samaria.

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<sup>1</sup> Click <https://www.terrorism-info.org.il/en> to subscribe and receive the ITIC's daily updates as well as its other publications.

- ▶Iran's leaders made it clear that they would respond to Haniyeh's killing in Tehran. According to reports, a direct attack against Israel has been decided on, possibly in coordination with the rest of the "resistance axis."<sup>2</sup>
- ▶The "resistance axis" condemned Israel's elimination of Shukr in Beirut and the killing of Haniyeh in Tehran [attributed to Israel], and threatened to retaliate against Israel and the United States.
- ▶Following the killing of Shuker and Haniyeh there were condemnations in the Arab-Muslim world: the president of Turkey accused Israel of "barbarism," and Egypt and Jordan called on the UN Security Council to pressure Israel to stop its "aggression."
- ▶Concern of escalation was expressed in the international arena, and the combatants were called on to maintain restraint. The United States denied involvement in Haniyeh's killing and called for a ceasefire agreement in the Gaza Strip which would affect all the arenas.
- ▶**In ITIC assessment, Hezbollah's response can be expected to exceed the parameters and the self-determined "equations" according to which it has operated from the beginning of the fighting. Hezbollah will most likely employ concentrated firepower, including the use of missiles and UAVs to attack military and civilian sites in northern Israel which so far have not been its targets, increasing the range of attacks on Israeli territory, possibly as far as the center of the country. Iran can also be expected to attack Israel with missiles and UAVs. The Houthis, the Shiite militias in Iraq and Syria may participate in the "response;" Hezbollah and Iran might coordinate and attack jointly. Hamas will try to increase terrorist activity in Judea and Samaria and attack inside Israeli territory as well. In the short term, the elimination of Haniyeh may also affect efforts to reach a ceasefire agreement in the Gaza Strip and to release the hostages, but in ITIC assessment the contacts will be resumed soon in view of statements by senior Hamas figures, who claimed they wanted an agreement to stop the war.**

## The Elimination of Fuad Shukr

- ▶On July 30, 2024, at around 7:40 p.m., media in Lebanon reported that an Israeli airstrike had been carried out on a residential building in the Harat Hreik neighborhood, near Bahman Hospital in the southern Shi'ite suburb (al-Dahiyeh al-Janoubia) of Beirut. According to reports, four people were killed and 74 were injured (al-Mayadeen and the Lebanese News

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<sup>2</sup> Iran, Syria, Hezbollah, the Palestinian organizations, the Shi'ite Houthis in Yemen and the pro-Iranian militias in Iraq.

Agency, July 31, 2024). The following day the number was updated to seven dead and 78 wounded (Lebanese Civil Defense, July 31, 2024).



Partial destruction of the building in Beirut (Fouad Khreiss' X account, July 30, 2024)

## IDF announcement

►The IDF spokesperson confirmed that the Israeli Air Force had attacked and killed Fuad Shukr, aka al-Hajj Muhsen, Hezbollah's most senior military commander and head of its strategic array. The IDF spokesperson reported that Shukr had been responsible for terrorist attacks which killed many Israeli civilians, including the rocket attack on Majdal Shams which murdered 12 children and teenagers on July 27, 2024 (IDF spokesperson, July 30, 2024).



Shukr's ID (IDF spokesperson, July 30, 2024)

## Hezbollah's reaction

►On the morning of July 31, 2024, Hezbollah published its first announcement regarding the attack, stating that Israel had attacked a "residential building" and killed "several civilians," injured others and damaged several floors of the building. The announcement also reported that Fuad Shukr had been in the building at the time and that the civil defense forces were continuing to clear the rubble, so his fate was so far unknown (Hezbollah combat information Telegram channel, July 31, 2024).

►On the evening of July 31, 2024, Hezbollah published a formal announcement for the death of Fuad Ali Shukr, aka, al-Sayyed Muhsen, calling him a "great jihadi commander," the highest title given to a Hezbollah casualty since the beginning of the current conflict. He was called a

"shaheed on the way to Jerusalem," like the other Hezbollah casualties (Hezbollah combat information Telegram channel, July 31, 2024).



**Hezbollah's announcement for the death of Fuad Shukr (Hezbollah combat information Telegram channel, July 31, 2024)**

►According to Hezbollah, Shukr was born al-Nabi Sheeth in the Lebanon Valley in 1961, was one of the founders of the organization and reportedly played a leadership role in the establishment and organization of the first Islamic "resistance groups" in Lebanon. He had been a member of Hezbollah's Jihad Council since its inception and also served on the Shura Council for certain periods (Hezbollah combat information Telegram channel, July 31, 2024). Hezbollah published videos and photos of Shukr throughout the years of his activity in the organization. He was photographed with Hassan Nasrallah, Hezbollah secretary general, with Imad Mughnieh, its former military commander (killed in an explosion in Syria in February 2008) and with Qassem Soleimani, former commander of the IRGC's Qods Force (killed in an American attack in January 2020) (Hezbollah combat information Telegram channel, July 31, 2024).



**Right: Fuad Shukr and Hassan Nasrallah. Left: Fuad Shukr and Qassem Soleimani (Hezbollah combat information Telegram channel, July 31, 2024)**

►On August 1, 2024, Shukr's funeral was held at the Sayyed al-Shuhadaa compound in al-Dahiyeh al-Janoubia. Hassan Nasrallah gave a speech in which he referred to the killing of Shukr and the response which could be expected from Hezbollah, but he did not provide

details, instead claiming that all the "support fronts" had entered a new phase and Israel had to expect revenge from the entire "resistance axis."<sup>3</sup> He said the following (al-Manar, August 1, 2024):

◆ **Denial of involvement in the attack on Majdal Shams:** Nasrallah claimed that Israel lied when it accused Shukr of murdering the children of Majdal Shams, adding that Israel's counterattacks were not in response to the attack on Majdal Shams but rather an aspect of Israel's war. He alleged that Hezbollah had the courage to admit its mistake and claimed that Israel was unable to admit that the damage to Majdal Shams had been caused by an Israeli interceptor missile. Nasrallah was lying, and all the data and facts presented by the IDF proved that Hezbollah had carried out the attack.<sup>4</sup>

◆ **Allegation of harming civilians:** Nasrallah claimed that the Israeli attack targeted a building full of civilians in al-Dahiyeh al-Janoubia, and that six other people had been killed besides Shukr, including three women and two children. He claimed that what happened in the southern quarter "was aggression and not just an assassination."

◆ **Threat of revenge:** He said that the [so-called] "Lebanese support front" would return to activity on August 2, 2024, after two days without attacks, but claimed it had nothing to do with the response to the attack in Beirut. In effect, Hezbollah fired dozens of rockets at the Western Galilee on the evening of August 1, 2024. He said "the enemy" and its supporters could expect an inevitable response and boasted that the enemy was on high alert and did not know where the response would come from. He added that operational considerations would determine the response, and Hezbollah was "looking for a real response and real opportunities."

◆ **A new phase in the war:** He warned that they were facing a major campaign, beyond "support fronts" (i.e., the attacks against Israel carried out by Hezbollah and the pro-Iranian militias since October 8, 2023) because of Israel's "open campaign" in the Gaza Strip, south Lebanon, Yemen, Iraq and Iran. He claimed that attacking senior figures did not affect the "resistance axis," the attacks only made it stronger. He claimed all the "support fronts" had entered the "new phase," and Israel could expect revenge. To the residents of Israel, he said, "You rejoiced over the attack on al-Hudaydah in Yemen, the

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<sup>3</sup> Iran, Syria, Hezbollah, the Palestinian organizations, the Shi'ite Houthis in Yemen and the pro-Iranian militias in Iraq.

<sup>4</sup> For further information, see the July 29, 2024 ITIC report, "[Reactions to the Hezbollah Rocket Attack on Majdal Shams.](#)"



killing of Haniyeh and Hajj Muhsen. Be happy a little, because you will still cry a lot, because you do not understand what red lines you crossed."

◆ **The eulogy for Fuad Shukr:** Nasrallah said Shukr started his career in Hezbollah at the age of 20 or 21 and was one of its founding members. According to Nasrallah, Shukr was brave and aspired to shahada, death as a martyr, and over the years had been responsible for many operations, especially "quality" operations. Nasrallah claimed to have been in daily contact with him because Shukr directed the fighting in south Lebanon.



**Right: Shukr's coffin (al-'Ahed, August 1, 2024).**

**Left: Nasrallah speaks at the service (al-Manar, August 1, 2024)**

► Before Hezbollah's official announcement of Shukr's death, the Hezbollah-affiliated Lebanese daily al-Akhbar related to a response from Hezbollah, claiming that "the enemy clearly opened the door to a new phase in the conflict, still connected to aggression in the Gaza Strip, but different in character...from now on the Lebanese resistance will not need anyone to tell it how to deal with the enemy" (al-Akhbar, July 31, 2024).

► Ibrahim al-Amin, editor-in-chief of al-Akhbar, said that according to "sources," in his eulogy for Fuad Shukr, Nasrallah distinguished between the "support front" in the Gaza Strip and Lebanon's front against Israel. According to the report, declaring a ceasefire in the Gaza Strip could stop the operations of the "support front," but would not prevent Hezbollah from responding to the killing of Fuad Shukr even if it led to a direct war between Lebanon and Israel, since Hezbollah would not allow Israel "a picture of victory" and "whatever the result might be" (al-Akhbar, August 2, 2024)

## Reactions in Lebanon

► Najib Mikati, prime minister of the Lebanese interim government, condemned the attack in Beirut and said that Israel was not satisfied with attacking south Lebanon, but attacked deep in Beirut and near a hospital. He added that the "crime" was a clear violation of international

law, and that the Lebanese government retained the right to take all necessary steps to repel "Israeli aggression" (NBN, July 30, 2024). He later stated that the killing of Ismail Haniyeh was an extension of the cycle of global instability and regional danger (NNA, July 31, 2024).

► Abdullah Bou Habib, the Lebanese foreign minister, condemned the attack and stated that they hoped Hezbollah would respond proportionately to stop the killing." He added that Lebanon would file a complaint with the UN regarding the attack in Beirut (Reuters, July 30, 2024).

► Ziad Makary, Lebanese minister of information, said Lebanon expected Hezbollah to respond to the Israeli attack. He stated that the government would engage in diplomatic efforts to calm tensions, emphasizing they did not want war (Reuters, July 31, 2024).

► After the attack in Beirut, Mikati, Bou Habib and Nabih Berri, the speaker of the Lebanese Parliament, met with a UN delegation which included Jean-Pierre Lacroix, head of UN Peacekeeping Department; Aroldo Lazaro, UNIFIL commander; and Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert, UN special coordinator in Lebanon (Lebanese News Agency, July 31, 2024). According to reports, they discussed ways to contain the escalation to prevent the war from expanding. Bou Habib said that security could only be ensured in south Lebanon by diplomatic means, a ceasefire and full commitment to all UN resolutions (al-Nashra, July 31, 2024). The UN delegation also met with Lebanese army commander Joseph Aoun (Lebanese army X account, July 31, 2024).

## The Death of Isma'il Haniyeh

► Before dawn on July 31, 2024, the Iranian Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC) announced that Isma'il Haniyeh, head of Hamas' political bureau, and one of his bodyguards had been killed in an attack on the "residence" where they were staying in Tehran (Nour News, July 31, 2024). Haniyeh was in Tehran for the swearing-in ceremony of the new president, Masoud Pezeshkian, which was held a day before.

► An "Iranian source" claimed that Haniyeh was killed by a missile launched from "another country" and not from inside Iran (al-Mayadeen, July 31, 2024). Later, "Iranian sources" said that an Israeli anti-tank Spike missile had been launched from a nearby building at the building where Haniyeh was staying (Sky News in Arabic, July 31, 2024). Seven "Middle East senior officials" said that he was killed by a bomb hidden in the IRGC guest house in northern Tehran where he was staying. According to the report, the bomb had been planted about two months previously and activated remotely after verification that Haniyeh was in the room

(The New York Times, August 1, 2024). The IRGC-affiliated Iranian news agency Fars claimed The New York Times report was untrue and intended to remove responsibility from Israel for violating Iran's sovereignty. Fars also reported that an investigation of the incident found that Haniyeh had been killed by launching an "explosive device," "and without a doubt Israel was involved" (Fars, August 1, 2024)

► Shortly after the IRGC announcement, Hamas issued an official announcement confirming Haniyeh's death and claiming that he "was killed by a Zionist attack on his bedroom in Tehran," after having participated in the new president's swearing-in ceremony. Hamas added that "we belong to Allah and to Allah we will return, in jihad, victory or martyrdom" (Hamas Telegram channel, July 31, 2024).

► Killed along with Haniyeh was Wasim Abu Shaaban, his bodyguard and formerly a platoon commander in the Tel al-Hawa Battalion of the elite nukhba forces of Hamas' military wing (Khaberni website, July 31, 2024; @Jales\_tinian2 X account, July 31, 2024).



**Haniyeh and Wasim Abu Shaaban (al-Alam TV X account, July 31, 2024)**

► Hamas issued a mourning notice for Haniyeh calling him "the shaheed of Gaza, Jerusalem and Palestine, the martyr of Operation al-Aqsa Flood, the leader of the mujahid." According to the notice, he was killed "by the cowardly, treacherous Zionist enemy" in "an act of terrorism, a violation of the sovereignty of the Islamic Republic of Iran, a dangerous escalation which extends of the cycle of aggression and a crime against our people and our nation." Hamas added that Haniyeh had instilled his "principles" in Hamas, the Palestinian people, and the nation, and they would remain consistent, "authentic," and permanent, and Hamas, through its leaders, its sons, and the Izz al-Din Qassam Brigades, would continue with all its strength and determination, together with all the members of the Palestinian people, the Palestinian "resistance" organizations, and the free people of the nation and the world, to strengthen the path of the entire "resistance" and Operation al-Aqsa Flood until the Palestinians' aspirations for total liberation, "return" and the establishment of a Palestinian



state with Jerusalem as its capital had been fulfilled. Hamas reiterated that a movement that sacrificed its leaders and founders for the freedom and "dignity" of the Palestinian people and the "liberation of their homeland" and Jerusalem would never be defeated, and such "crimes" would only increase its strength and determination (Hamas website, July 31, 2024).

►On August 1, 2024, Haniyeh's funeral ceremony was held in Tehran, attended by the heads of the Iranian government, including its leader, Ali Khamenei; a senior Hamas delegation led by Khalil al-Haya, a member of the Hamas political bureau and deputy head of the movement in the Gaza Strip; Na'im Qassem, Hezbollah deputy secretary general; and Ziyad al-Nakhalah, Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) secretary general (Press TV, August 1, 2024). Hamas stated that the funeral ceremony would be held in Doha, the capital of Qatar, on August 2 and that Haniyeh would be buried in the city of Lusail, Qatar (Hamas leader's communications Telegram channel, July 31, 2024).



**Haniyeh's funeral service in Tehran (Tasnim, August 1, 2024)**

## Hamas reactions

►Khalil al-Haya, a member of the Hamas political bureau and the deputy head of the movement in the Gaza Strip, said at a press conference in Tehran that Ismail Haniyeh had "sacrificed his life for the cause of his people and country" and that "nothing would be able to stop the continuation of the resistance." He said Haniyeh had not stayed at a secret location, and therefore it was not an intelligence achievement for Israel, which he claimed "wanted to release the anger that had accumulated for its failure to isolate the resistance." He added that "the occupation knows that Iran and the other resistance factions would not allow his murder to pass without a response, and they vowed to respond to the aggression." Al-Haya also said that Haniyeh's successor would follow the same path, and would adhere to the same views and goals. He claimed Israel did not want a ceasefire in the Gaza Strip, but rather to ignite to the entire region (Shehab Telegram channel, July 31, 2024).

- ▶Musa Abu Marzouq, a member of the Hamas political bureau, said the killing of Haniyeh was "cowardly " and that his death would not be in vain (Hamas in Judea and Samaria Telegram channel, July 31, 2024).
- ▶Sami Abu Zuhri, head of Hamas' "external" political bureau, called Haniyeh's killing a serious escalation whose objective was to break the willpower of Hamas and the Palestinian people. According to him, it would not succeed in achieving its goals, since Hamas was an idea and not people (Reuters, July 31, 2024). He added that Hamas only became stronger with every drop of blood shed for the freedom of the land, "the blood of the leaders is no different from the blood of Palestinian children, and it was a heavy price which Hamas was willing to pay for Jerusalem" (al-Aqsa TV Telegram channel, July 31, 2024).
- ▶Hamas spokesman Jihad Taha referred to the possible impact Haniyeh's death could have on the negotiations for a ceasefire and the release of the hostages. He claimed that at all stages of the negotiations, the Israeli government had "raised obstacles and tried to thwart the efforts which would lead to the end of the aggression." He pointed out that the mediators in Egypt and Qatar were aware of the situation and claimed that the "assassination" of Haniyeh, who was the cornerstone of the negotiations, was evidence thereof (al-Araby al-Jadeed, August 1, 2024).
- ▶Osama Hamdan, a senior Hamas figure in Lebanon, said that Haniyeh was killed "while leading the nation's battle towards the liberation of Palestine and Operation al-Aqsa Flood." He noted that with every leader and shaheed who was killed, the movement only increased its power and wisdom [sic] (Quds Agency Telegram channel, July 31, 2024).
- ▶Ismail Haniyeh's son, Abd al-Salam Haniyeh, said that his father survived four attempted assassinations in the past, and that this time he "achieved the martyrdom (shahada) he always sought." He called on Mahmoud Abbas to join the "resistance," adding that the "enemy" did not differentiate between one Palestinian and another (Palestine Online, July 31, 2024; SND website, July 31, 2024).
- ▶The Izz al-Din Qassam Brigades, Hamas' military wing, claimed that "the 'murder' was a significant, serious event which changes the dimensions of the campaign and will have major consequences for the entire region," adding that "the blood of our leader Ismail Haniyeh was mixed with the blood of the children, women, young, elderly in the Gaza Strip and of the mujahedeen of our people and our nation." They threatened that Israel would pay the price for its "aggression," its blood would be spilled in the Gaza Strip, Judea and Samaria, and in

"that 'monstrous entity' and wherever the mujahideen of our people and nation go" ( Hamas' Telegram channel, July 31, 2024).

► On July 31, 2024, Izz al-Din Qassam Brigades in Hebron claimed responsibility for two shooting attacks in Kiryat Arba near the Cave of the Patriarchs, calling them a "rapid response to the 'assassination' of the great national leader, Ismail Haniyeh," and adding the "resistance" promised more such attacks in the near future (Sabaq News Agency 24, July 31, 2024). The IDF confirmed that an Israeli civilian was injured in a combined shooting and stabbing attack near Kiryat Arba (IDF spokesperson, July 31, 2024).

► "Sources" in Hamas stated that Khaled Mashal, head of the "external" Hamas leadership, was expected to replace Haniyeh; Mashal was head of Hamas' political bureau from 1996 to 2017. Another prominent candidate was Khalil al-Haya, who was described as being preferred by Iran and the other "resistance axis" members (Reuters, July 31, 2024).

## Reactions in the Palestinian arena

► Palestinian Authority (PA) chairman Mahmoud Abbas strongly condemned the killing of Ismail Haniyeh, calling it a "cowardly act and a dangerous development." He called on the Palestinian people to "unite, be patient and stand firm against the Israeli occupation." He also contacted Khaled Mashal, head of the "external" Hamas leadership, and offered his condolences. A day of mourning was declared and the flags in the PA were lowered to half mast (Wafa, July 31, 2024).

► The PA government condemned the killing of Haniyeh and called on all Palestinians and their organizations to increase national unity and their firm stand against Israel (Wafa, July 31, 2024).

► Hussein al-Sheikh, secretary of the PLO's Executive Committee, called the killing of Haniyeh a "murder" and a dangerous escalation (Wafa, July 31, 2024). In a conversation with Khaled Mashal, he said Haniyeh's death was a great loss for the Palestinian people, adding that "we choose the unity of our people in the face of the occupation" (Hussein al-Sheikh's X account, July 31, 2024).

► Jibril al-Rajoub, secretary of Fatah's Central Committee, said the killing of Haniyeh had to be "a compass for unity against the occupation and for ending the shameful division between the Palestinians." He added, "We believe that good people will be able to turn over a new leaf of national unity" (al-Araby, July 31, 2024)

- ▶Abbas Zaki, a member of Fatah's Central Committee, called Haniyeh's killing an "open declaration of war." He added that the "cowardly assassination" made the "resistance axis face a historical responsibility which has to put an end to Israel and its crimes." He warned that the coming days would undoubtedly be full of [so many] events "that no one can count them," adding that the assassinations would not weaken the Palestinians but would increase their determination to move towards "liberation" (SND website, July 31, 2024).
- ▶Muhammad Dahlan, head of Fatah in the Palestinian dispersal, condemned the killing of Haniyeh, claiming that "the cowardly murder would not have happened if it were not for the Americans' green light to continue the crimes of the occupation against the Palestinian people and their leaders." He called for the strengthening of national unity to "deal with the plans to eliminate the Palestinian issue and attempts to impose a new situation on the ground" (Muhammad Dahlan's Facebook page, July 31, 2024).
- ▶The PIJ issued a mourning notice for Haniyeh's death, stating that "the brutal assassination of the symbol of the resistance by the criminal enemy will not deter our people from continuing the resistance to end the Zionist crime which has crossed all borders." The notice added that "We confirm our solidarity with our brothers in Hamas in opposition to the usurping entity" (Palestine breaking news, July 31, 2024).
- ▶The Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP) expressed sorrow over Haniyeh's death, which it called a "great loss" because of his important role in the "struggle" and the "resistance." According to the DFLP, the "resistance" would not stop because of his death but would overcome it and grow stronger (Shehab Agency, July 31, 2024). Fouad Othman, a senior DFLP member, claimed the killing of Haniyeh was "cowardly." He added that the killing of the Hamas leader "confirms that gambling on negotiations with Israel was futile, from the beginning of Oslo until today" (al-Aqsa TV, July 31, 2024).
- ▶A general strike was announced in Judea, Samaria and east Jerusalem. During the day mourning marches and rallies were held, in which Hamas flags were waved and calls for

revenge against Israel were chanted (Wafa, Quds Agency, and the Shehab Agency, July 31, 2024).



Right: General strike in Tulkarm.

Left: A march in Ramallah (Quds Agency Telegram channel, July 31, 2024)

## Reactions in Iran and the "Resistance Axis"

### Iran

► The death of Ismail Haniyeh in Tehran provoked condemnations from the Iranian leadership, along with threats of a direct response against Israel:

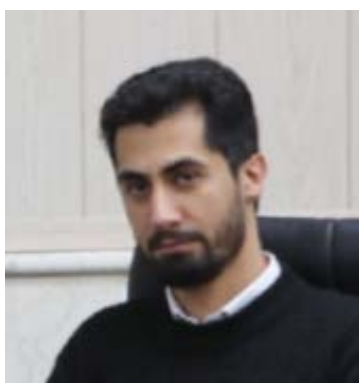
- ◆ Ali Khamenei, leader of Iran, said that "with this action the criminal and terrorist Zionist regime prepared the ground for harsh punishment" (Khamenei's website, July 31, 2024).
- ◆ President Masoud Pezeshkian said Haniyeh's death would strengthen relationship between Iran and "Palestine" and the path of "resistance," and Iran would make the "terrorist occupiers" regret their "cowardly action" (Masoud Pezeshkian's X account, July 31, 2024). In a conversation with senior Hamas figure Khalil al-Haya, he said that Tehran would in no way withdraw its support for the Palestinians, and emphasized its "strong desire to continue helping the resistance" (IRNA, August 1, 2024).
- ◆ At Haniyeh's funeral, Mohammad Bagheri, chief of staff of the Iranian armed forces, said that the Iranians were examining how Iran and the "resistance axis" would carry out their revenge, which would definitely happen. He said various steps had to be carried out and the Zionists would definitely regret [killing Haniyeh] (Tasnim, August 1, 2024).
- ◆ According to the IRGC, the "Zionist regime's crime" would be punished with a "severe, painful response from the great resistance, and especially Iran." It further claimed that the crime showed that "the gang of Zionist terrorist murderers did not hesitate to carry

out any criminal act, without regard for international rules, to cover up its shameful defeats in the past nine months of the war in the Gaza Strip" (Tasnim, July 31, 2024).

◆ Ali Bagheri Kani, acting Iranian foreign minister, said Haniyeh was an official guest of the Iranian government who had been invited to the swearing in of the new Iranian president. He claimed the attack on Haniyeh was a "terrorist attack by the terrorist mafia that controls the occupied Palestinian land," and said that Iran maintained its right to respond "appropriately" (Tasnim, August 1, 2024).

► Two "Iranian sources" said that the Iranian Supreme Council for National Security held an emergency meeting at Ali Khamenei's residence, attended by Esmail Qaani, commander of the IRGC's Qods Force. According to a different report, three "Iranian sources" said that Khamenei ordered a direct attack on Israel, and that one of the possibilities was a combined attack by Iran, the Houthis, Syria and the [pro-Iranian] militias in Iraq (The New York Times , July 31, 2024). On August 1, 2024, "Iranian sources" said that representatives of the "resistance axis" would hold a meeting with senior Iranian officials to discuss options for a response (Reuters, August 1, 2024).

► Senior Iranian officials also condemned the attack in Beirut which killed senior Hezbollah commander Fuad Shukr. Hossein Salami, IRGC commander, confirmed that Milad Bedi, one of Iran's military advisors in Syria and Lebanon, was also killed in the attack (Tasnim, August 1, 2024).



**Milad Bedi (SNN, July 31, 2024)**

◆ Nasser Kanaani, spokesman for the Iranian foreign ministry, condemned the attack, claiming it was "an evil move by the Zionist criminal gang," adding that the action would not prevent the "resistance" in Lebanon from continuing to support the Palestinians against "Israel's apartheid regime." He added that the government, the army and the "resistance" in Lebanon had the "right" to respond to Israel's actions. He placed responsibility for the expansion of tensions and the crisis in the region on Israel and the



American administration, and called on the international community and the UN Security Council to act against Israel's threats to the security of Lebanon and regional stability (Iranian foreign ministry Telegram channel, July 30, 2024).

◆ The Iranian embassy in Beirut condemned the "Israeli aggression that caused the death of several people" (al-Alam, July 30, 2024).

◆ Iran's ambassador to Lebanon, Mojtaba Amani, said that the "enemy" had to know that it would be a target for several forces of the "resistance axis." He claimed Iran did not want to expand the scope of the war, but would not accept the region's becoming a "victim" of the United States and Israel (NBN, July 31, 2024).

## The "resistance axis" organizations

► Hezbollah secretary general Hassan Nasrallah, who eulogized Fuad Shukr at his funeral, sent his condolences to the Hamas movement, the "Palestinian resistance" and the Palestinian people for the death of Isma'il Haniyeh. He said he wondered if Israel really thought it could eliminate Haniyeh in Tehran without an Iranian response, adding that Khamenei's reaction to Haniyeh's death was stronger than his reaction to the attack on the "Iranian consulate" in Damascus in April 2024, since Iran considered the present incident a direct attack on its sovereignty, national security and honor (al-Manar, August 1, 2024).

► Hamas condemned the Israeli attack in Beirut as a dangerous escalation, reiterated its support for Lebanon and threatened that Israel would pay a high price for its "arrogance" (Hamas Telegram channel, July 30, 2024). After Hezbollah announced Shukr's death, Hamas offered its condolences, praised his pivotal role in supporting the Palestinian "resistance" and constructing the resistance front over many years. Hamas reiterated its condemnation of the "Zionist aggression which violates the sovereignty and security of regional countries," and its claim that the "enemy's" actions would not prevent the "resistance forces" from continuing their support for the Palestinian people (Hamas Telegram channel, August 1, 2024).

► The Izz al-Din Qassam Brigades, Hamas' military wing, expressed their appreciation for Fuad Shukr's central role in supporting the Palestinian people and its "resistance" during Operation al-Aqsa Flood, and his contribution to the construction of the "resistance front" (Hamas in Judea and Samaria Telegram channel, July 31, 2024).

► The PIJ claimed that the "Zionist aggression" in Beirut "proved" the Israeli government's desire for regional conflict (PIJ combat information Telegram channel, July 30, 2024). Later, the PIJ expressed its condolences on the death of Shukr and "other civilians," stating that the

organization believes in the ability of Lebanon and its "resistance" to deter the enemy, claiming that eliminating senior officials strengthened the "resistance" and its "firm stance" in all the arenas. The PIJ said that it would stand with Lebanon against any "Zionist aggression" (PIJ combat information Telegram channel, July 31, 2024).

►The Muslim Brotherhood-affiliated al-Jama'a al-Islamiyya claimed the "resistance" forces, together with the Lebanese army, had the right to "protect our people and repel [Israeli] attacks" (al-Jama'a al-Islamiyya in Lebanon, July 30, 2024).

►Harakat al-Nujaba (the Nobles' Movement) in Iraq condemned the attack in Beirut claiming it was a "flagrant violation and a sign of stupidity that the entity [i.e., Israel] would regret," adding that "the supporters of the entity, including the United States, should know that the Islamic Resistance in Iraq will continue to attack the Zionist-American entity as support for Palestine and Hezbollah" (Harakat al-Nujaba Telegram channel, July 30, 2024). Akram al-Kaabi, the movement's secretary general, linked killing Ismail Haniyeh to killing Shukr and to the American attack on the pro-Iranian militias in Iraq on July 30, 2024, reiterating the often-stated claims that "Israel and the United States have opened the gates of hell" and "assassinations will not deter us, they will only increase our determination" (Akram al-Kaabi's X account, July 31, 2024).

►the Hezbollah Brigades in Iraq expressed their condolences on Haniyeh's death, claiming that "his murder expresses the enemy's inability to deal with the resistance on the battlefield" (Hezbollah Brigades Telegram channel, July 31, 2024).

►Qais al-Khazali, the secretary general of Asa'ib Ahl al-Haq (the League of the Righteous), condemned the attack in Beirut, claiming it was "proof that the Zionist enemy continues to be arrogant." He claimed that "Israel committed the crime while its American supporter attacked one of Asa'ib Ahl al-Haq's posts in Babel District in central Iraq, killing and injuring its fighters." He noted the importance of the unity of the "resistance fronts" against the enemy (Qais al-Khazali's X account, July 31, 2024).

►Following the attack in Beirut, Kataeb Sayyed al-Shuhadaa secretary general, Abu Alaa al-Walai, said "the Zionist enemy dares to exceed the rules of confrontation on the border with Lebanon and attack civilians" (Abu Alaa al-Walai X account, July 31, 2024).

►Abdelmalik al-Houthi, the leader of the Houthi movement in Yemen, said the position of the "Jerusalem-jihad-resistance axis" was that there had to be a military response to the "serious crimes and significant Israeli escalation." He claimed the attacks on Haniyeh and Shukr were

part of an escalation following the return of Prime Minister Netanyahu from the United States. He accused the United States of supporting Israel while talking about the need to prevent the expansion of the war, adding that killing Haniyeh "exposed the weak positions of several European and Arab countries which didn't even condemn it" (al-Masirah, August 1, 2024).

►Hazem al-Assad, a member of the Houthi political bureau, claimed that killing Haniyeh "crossed all the red lines." He added that they were coordinating their response, "which will be comprehensive and accordingly large." He also warned the United States that it "would pay a painful price for its support of the occupation and its crimes and massacres" (al-Risalah, July 31, 2024).

## Syria

►The Syrian foreign ministry condemned the attack in Beirut, calling it "a violation of international law after the crime committed by the occupation in Majdal Shams [sic]." According to the foreign ministry, Syria also sympathized with Lebanon and stood with it to combat "Israeli aggression" (SANA, July 30, 2024). The foreign ministry also condemned the killing of Haniyeh, accusing Israel of responsibility "for a new crime when it carried out a terrorist attack in Tehran," claiming that the "obscene act" had occurred after a series of several "vicious Israeli attacks", including on the occupied Golan Heights [sic], Lebanon and Iraq, in addition to the ongoing "massacres" of Palestinians in the Gaza Strip, Judea and Samaria" (SANA, July 31, 2024)

## Reactions in the Arab-Muslim World

►Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, the Turkish president, condemned the killing of Ismail Haniyeh, calling it "a despicable act aimed at weakening the Palestinian cause and dampening the morale of the Palestinians," and adding that "Zionist barbarism would not achieve its goals." He said he hoped "Israeli terrorism" would end and that there would be peace in the region. He also promised that Turkey would continue to support the Palestinians by all means (Erdoğan's X account, July 31, 2024).

►The Egyptian foreign ministry condemned "Israel's dangerous escalation in the last two days," and warned of the consequences of Israel's targeted attacks, violating the sovereignty of other countries and inflaming regional conflicts. The ministry added that the regional escalation, along with the failure to achieve progress in the negotiations for a ceasefire in the Gaza Strip, only complicated the situation and indicated Israel's lack of a desire for regional calm. Egypt called on the UN Security Council and countries with international influence to

take responsibility for stopping the "dangerous escalation" in the Middle East (Egyptian foreign ministry Facebook page, July 31, 2024).

►The Jordanian foreign ministry said that killing Ismail Haniyeh was a "crime" which increased regional tension and chaos. The spokesman for the Jordanian foreign ministry, Ambassador Sufyan al-Qudah, said Jordan opposed the violation of sovereignty and international law caused by "political assassinations." The foreign ministry also called on the international community to take immediate steps to stop Israeli "aggression" in Gaza and Beirut in order to protect regional stability (Ammon, July 31, 2024).

►Ayman al-Safadi, the Jordanian foreign minister, and Badr Abdelatty, the Egyptian foreign minister, discussed "the need for regional calm to prevent a comprehensive conflict." They blamed Israel for "dangerous escalation" caused by its "aggression in the Gaza Strip, violations of international law, illegal actions in Judea and Samaria and political assassinations." They also called on the Security Council to adopt a resolution obligating Israel to "stop its aggression in the Gaza Strip and its ongoing violations" (Petra News Agency, July 31, 2024).

►The UAE foreign ministry said it was following "rapidly developing developments" and expressed "deep concern" about the escalation and its consequences for regional stability and security. Its statement did not assign responsibility to Israel and noted that the UAE emphasized the "importance of demonstrating maximum self-restraint to reduce risks and prevent the expansion of the scope of the conflict" (UAE foreign ministry website, July 31, 2024).

►The Qatari foreign ministry strongly condemned Haniyeh's killing and claimed it was a "heinous crime, a dangerous escalation and a flagrant violation of international law." The announcement stated that "the assassination as well as Israel's continued assault on civilians in the Gaza Strip would lead to regional chaos and undermine the chance for peace" (Qatari foreign ministry X account, July 31, 2024).

►Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani, prime minister of Qatar, said that political assassinations and the deliberate escalation against civilians [sic] in the Gaza Strip at every stage of the negotiations raised the question of how negotiations could be held when one side was killing the side it was negotiating with. He added that regional and international peace needed serious partners and an international position against escalation and lawlessness (Qatari prime minister X account, July 31, 2024).

►The Taliban in Afghanistan expressed sorrow at the death of Ismail Haniyeh, claiming he was "an honorable, wise and determined Palestinian leader who sacrificed significantly in the successful struggle and jihad, thereby fulfilling his duty." The movement claimed his death was a "huge loss for the Islamic nation and the jihadist cause," and called on the entire Arab-Muslim world to "increase efforts to combat the Zionist invasion and its accompanying crimes" (Zabihullah X account, July 31, 2024).

## Reactions in the International Arena

►The American administration stated that Israel had the right to defend itself and that the United States continued to work towards a diplomatic solution which would stop the escalation in the Gaza Strip and south Lebanon. Secretary of State Anthony Blinken stated that the United States was not involved in Ismail Haniyeh's death. He said the incident underscored the urgent need to achieve a ceasefire in the Gaza Strip (State Department website, July 31, 2024). Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin expressed hope that the tensions after the Israeli attack on Beirut would not lead to war and that diplomacy could still play a significant role. He made it clear that the United States would support Israel's defense in the event of an attack, but emphasized Washington's desire to use [diplomatic] measures to ease tensions (Department of Defense website, July 31, 2024).

►Antonio Guterres, UN secretary general, said that the attacks in Beirut and Tehran constituted a dangerous escalation at a moment when all efforts should be aimed at achieving a ceasefire in the Gaza Strip, the release of all the Israeli hostages, a significant increase in humanitarian aid for the Gazans and the restoration of peace in Lebanon and along the border. He called for "maximum restraint from everyone" and added that "everyone should work continuously for preventing regional escalation for long-term peace and stability for all" (UN website, July 31, 2024).

►The Russian foreign ministry stated that "the attacks in Lebanon were a flagrant violation of international law" (RT, July 30, 2024). The ministry called the killing of Haniyeh a "completely unacceptable political crime" that would further escalate regional tensions. Mikhail Bogdanov, deputy foreign minister, said that the killing of Haniyeh would have negative consequences for the ceasefire talks in the Gaza Strip, adding that Russia condemned the regional violence and criticized the United States for ignoring the need for an independent Palestinian state (BBC News, July 31, 2024).

- ▶Tor Wennesland, UN envoy to the Middle East peace process, expressed concern about the events and called for restraint and avoiding actions that could further destabilize the region (Tor Wennesland's X account, July 31, 2024).
- ▶Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert, the UN special coordinator in Lebanon, expressed concern over the attack in Beirut, saying that a military solution did not exist and that Israel and Lebanon had to examine all diplomatic ways to stop the operations on the border and commit to Resolution 1701 (UNSCOL – Office of the United Nations special coordinator for Lebanon, July 30, 2024).
- ▶China condemned the attack on Haniyeh and warned it could lead to greater regional instability (BBC News, July 31, 2024).
- ▶Alma Baerbock, Germany's foreign minister emphasized that Hamas was a terrorist organization which carried out countless brutal and deadly attacks on Israel. She also called for restraint to prevent further escalation of the conflict in the Middle East (Reuters, July 31, 2024).

## Appendix 1: Fuad Shukr (Sayyed Muhsen)

▶According to Hezbollah's formal announcement Fuad Ali Shukr, aka al-Sayyed Muhsen, was born in al-Nabi Sheeth on April 25, 1961. He was one of the founding members of Hezbollah and led the establishment and organization of the first Islamic "resistance groups" in Lebanon. Other details in the announcement included the following (Hezbollah combat information Telegram channel, July 31, 2024):

- ◆ He participated in the clash with the "Israeli invasion" in the early 1980s and was wounded in the heroic battle in Khalde in 1982.
- ◆ He played a key role in planning and managing operations, especially "quality" operations, against the "Israeli occupation" forces in Lebanon.
- ◆ He was the first central military commander of Hezbollah during the founding period and in the first half of the 1990s.
- ◆ He directed and organized sending Hezbollah military squads to help the "oppressed" Muslims in Bosnia and Herzegovina between 1992 and 1995.
- ◆ He was responsible for developing military plans for the "Islamic resistance," especially in the July 2006 war [Second Lebanon War] and afterwards, both on the eastern front against the infidel groups [ISIS] and on the southern front against the "Israeli enemy."



- ◆ He led specific military and "security" missions during various stages of the history of the "resistance."
  - ◆ He was a member of the Shura Council at different times during his "jihad career," and was a member of the Jihad Council of the "Islamic resistance" since its inception.
  - ◆ He had led the military operations on the Lebanese "support front" since the beginning of Operation al-Aqsa Flood.
- ▶The IDF spokesperson stated that Fuad Shukr was the most senior military commander in Hezbollah and head of its strategic array. He was a member of the Jihad Council, Hezbollah's most important military forum. He was Hassan Nasrallah's right-hand man for planning and directing war, and responsible for the murder of many Israeli citizens and foreigners over the years. According to the IDF spokesperson (July 30, 2024):
- ◆ As the head of Hezbollah's strategic array he was responsible for most of the organization's most advanced weapons, in particular precision, cruise and surface-to-air missiles, long-range rockets and UAVs. He was responsible for Hezbollah's military buildup and for orchestrating all terrorist attacks on Israel.
  - ◆ In the 1990s he promoted terrorist attacks on IDF forces and the South Lebanese army. In 2000, he was directly involved in the kidnapping of the bodies of the three IDF soldiers who were killed by Hezbollah terrorists while patrolling along the perimeter fence in the Mount Dov area.
  - ◆ He had directed Hezbollah's fighting against Israel since October 8, 2023, and was responsible for the rocket attack on Majdal Shams on July 27, 2024, which murdered 12 children and teenagers (IDF spokesperson, July 30, 2024).
- ▶Shukr was also wanted by the American government because of his involvement in the mass-casualty attack on the United States Marine Corps compound in Beirut on October 23, 1983, in which 241 American soldiers were killed and 128 were wounded. The State Department issued a reward of \$5 million for information that would lead to his capture or killing (Rewards for justice website, July 21, 2015).

#### Reward offered by the United States (State Department, 21 July 2015)

- ▶ Since the outbreak of the civil war in Syria in March 2011, Shukr had played a central role in Hezbollah's activities in Syria. As a result, the United States imposed sanctions on him in 2012 (State Department, September 10, 2019).
- ▶ On July 21, 2015, additional American sanctions were imposed on him because of his activities for or on behalf of Hezbollah, and on September 10, 2019, he was designated by the State Department as an international terrorist operative (State Department, September 10, 2019).
- ▶ In November 2015, Saudi Arabia designated him as a terrorist operative and imposed sanctions on him for spreading chaos, destabilization and carrying out terrorist attacks (Aks al-Seir, October 11, 2017).

## Appendix 2: Isma'il Haniyeh

- ▶ Ismail Abd al-Salam Ahmed Haniyeh, aka Abu al-Abd, was born in the al-Shati refugee camp, west of Gaza City, on January 29, 1963. His family came from the village of al-Jura in the Ashkelon region. He was married and the father of 13 children. He completed high school at the al-Azhar Institute, and then studied Arabic literature at the Islamic University in Gaza.
- ▶ He began his political activity as a university student, where he was first a member and then the chairman of the student council. With the outbreak of the first intifada in 1987, he was detained several times by the Israeli security forces because of his activities in Hamas. In 1992 he was deported by Israel to Marj al-Zuhour in Lebanon along with 400 members of the Hamas and PIJ leaderships. During that time he strengthened his position in Hamas, and in 1993 he became the personal assistant of Ahmed Yassin, the movement's founder and leader.
- ▶ In the elections for the Palestinian Legislative Council in January 2006 he headed Hamas' Change and Reform slate, which won the majority of seats in the Council. PA chairman Mahmoud Abbas then appointed him prime minister in March 2006. In February 2007, he was

appointed to head a Hamas-Fatah national unity government, but Mahmoud Abbas removed him and dissolved the government after Hamas took over the Gaza Strip in June 2007.

► Haniyeh continued as prime minister of Hamas in the Gaza Strip until 2014. After that, he served as head of the Hamas movement in the Gaza Strip and later as the deputy chairman of Hamas' political bureau. On May 6, 2017, the members of Hamas' General Shura Council elected him as chairman of Hamas' political bureau, a position he held until his death on July 31, 2024 (Palinfo, July 31, 2024).

► On October 7, 2023 Haniyeh and several other senior Hamas figures abroad, were documented holding a thanksgiving prayer at a hotel in Qatar while al-Jazeera TV broadcast live the Hamas terrorist attack and massacre in Israel. Haniyeh issued an announcement of Operation al-Aqsa Flood and claimed it was a reaction to the "criminal Zionist aggression" against al-Aqsa Mosque, along with the issues of the holy places and the prisoners. He expressed hope that the "campaign" which began in the Gaza Strip would spread to Judea and Samaria and beyond, and wherever the Palestinians and the Arab nation were (Hamas Telegram channel, October 7, 2023).



**Haniyeh and Hamas figures at prayer on October 7, 2023, offering thanks to Allah (Hamas Telegram channel, October 7, 2023)**

► Throughout the war, he published statements and made speeches in which he defended Operation al-Aqsa Flood and expressed Hamas' demand that Israel completely stop its "aggression," withdraw its forces from the entire Gaza Strip and release the Palestinian prisoners in exchange for the release of the hostages. In his last speech, on July 28, 2024, he called for making August 3, 2024 a "national and international day of support for the Gaza Strip and the prisoners" and called for the demonstrations to continue until "the Zionist occupation was forced to stop the aggression and crimes against our people and against our

heroic prisoners in its prison facilities and Nazi concentration camps [sic]" (Palestinian Communications Center Telegram channel, July 28, 2024).

►In addition to his extensive "political" activity and meetings in his residence in Doha, Qatar, since the war began, he visited Turkey, Iran and Egypt several times. He visited Iran four times, the last of which was on July 30, 2024, for the swearing in of Masoud Pezeshkian, during which he also met with Iran leader Ali Khamenei. He visited Turkey twice; most recently on April 19, 2024, a visit which lasted two weeks, during which he met with the Turkish president.



**Right: Haniyeh and Erdogan meet in April 2024 (al-Aqsa TV Telegram channel, April 20, 2024).  
Left: Haniyeh and al-Nakhalah, the PIJ leader, meet with Khamenei, a day before Haniyeh's death (Mehar, July 30, 2024)**

►Several members of Haniyeh's family were killed in IDF strikes in the Gaza Strip during the war. On April 10, 2024, an Israeli Air Force airstrike killed three of Ismail Haniyeh's sons, all of whom were active in Hamas: Amir Haniyeh, a squad commander in Hamas' military wing; and Muhammad and Hazem Haniyeh, both Hamas terrorist operatives (IDF spokesperson and the Israeli Security Agency, April 19, 2024). On July 25, 2024, Haniyeh's office reported that his sister, Zaher Abd al-Salam Haniyeh, and nine members of her family were killed in an attack on the al-Shati refugee camp (Haniyeh's office Telegram channel, June 25, 2024).