

Exclusive: Iran's Guards pull officers from Syria after Israeli strikes

Feb 1 (Reuters) - Iran's Revolutionary Guards have scaled back deployment of their senior officers in Syria due to a spate of deadly Israeli strikes and will rely more on allied Shi'ite militia to preserve their sway there, five sources familiar with the matter said.

The Guards have suffered one of their most bruising spells in Syria since arriving a decade ago to aid President Bashar al-Assad in the Syrian war. Since December, Israeli strikes have killed more than half a dozen of their members, among them one of the Guards' top intelligence generals.

As hardliners in Tehran demand retaliation, Iran's decision to pull out senior officers is driven partly by its aversion to being sucked directly into a conflict bubbling across the Middle East, three of the sources told Reuters.

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