

Iran commander warns of ‘harsher revenge’, Iraq’s PMF vows retaliation against US



Iranians take part in an anti-US rally to protest the killing of Iranian Revolutionary Guards’ Quds Force commander Qasem Soleimani by a US airstrike in the Iraqi capital Baghdad, at Palestine Square in the capital Tehran, Iran on 4 January 2020. [Fatemeh Bahrami - Anadolu Agency]

A senior commander in Iran’s Revolutionary Guards Corp (IRGC) warned that Iran will take “harsher revenge soon” following the missile strikes claimed by the IRGC at two US bases in neighbouring Iraq in response to the assassination of Major General Qassem Soleimani in Baghdad last week.

The semi-official *Tasnim News Agency* quoted Abdollah Araghi who made the comments following US President Donald Trump’s statement on Wednesday that Iran appeared to be “standing down” based on claims that the missile attacks did

not harm any American troops.

Tasnim also cited Rear Admiral Ali Fadavi who said: “No country has ever made such a great move against the United States as we did, we dropped dozens of missiles into the heart of the US base in Iraq and they couldn’t do a damn thing [in response].”

Iraq: We were informed of Iran’s strikes before they happened

Meanwhile, Ismail Qaani, Soleimani’s successor as head of the IRGC’s Quds Force, has said Iran will continue with its “luminous path with power” which will eventually lead to the US pulling out of the region.

In Iraq, the Popular Mobilisation Forces (PMF) – known locally as the Hashd Al-Shaabi – an umbrella of armed factions integrated into the Iraqi armed forces has vowed its own retaliation for its slain deputy commander Abu Mahdi Al-Muhandis, who was killed alongside Soleimani.

On Wednesday, the media office of Qais Al-Khazali, an Iraqi politician and leader of the Asa’ib Ahl Al-Haq movement, a subdivision of the PMF, explained on Twitter that the missile attacks on the US bases, was the initial Iranian response “of the martyred commander Soleimani” and that there is yet to be an Iraqi retaliation over the assassination of Al-Muhandis. Al-Khazali promised that it will be “no less in size” to the Iranian missile strikes.

Yesterday there was a further statement issued, saying that armed factions should form a united front to resist US military presence, reiterating that the revenge for Al-Muhandis had not yet commenced and that diplomatic missions are not to be targeted. Al-Khazali also stated that the PMF was not behind last night’s rocket attacks on Baghdad’s Green Zone, where three Katyusha rockets fell within the heavily fortified site, with one landing 100 metres away from the US embassy, according to *Reuters*. The *Iraqi News Agency* also quoted PMF spokesperson Jawad Al-Talibawi who stressed that the PMF has not taken any military operations against the American embassy and will not violate the orders of the Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces, caretaker Prime Minister Adil Abdul-Mahdi.

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