A BLOOD SOAKED LEGACY

Profiling the Islamic Republic's Top Military Brass Killed During the 12-Day War

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This report is dedicated to the brave Iranians who have sacrificed their lives in the pursuit of freedom and justice; to the victims of the October 7th terrorist attack, funded by the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC); to the innocent passengers of Ukraine International Airlines Flight PS752, killed by the IRGC Aerospace Force; to the U.S. service members who have been killed or wounded by the IRGC or its terrorist proxies; and to the countless men, women, and children around the world who have been oppressed, tortured, or murdered by the Islamic Republic.

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A Long List of Crimes Against Humanity

The IRGC commanders killed during the 12-Day War were key players in the Islamic Republic's so-called "360-degree security doctrine," an institutionalized framework of domestic repression and external aggression. This doctrine prioritized the use of proxy forces to wage indirect warfare across the region, asymmetric naval tactics to counter technologically superior adversaries, and the development of a robust domestic ballistic missile program to enhance strategic deterrence. The following is a list of human rights violations, war crimes, and other breaches of international law for which these IRGC officers bear responsibility **through direct involvement in planning and execution, issuing orders to subordinates, or making public statements calling for these crimes to be carried out.**

1. **Arbitrary detention and extrajudicial killings, including sham "revolutionary court" proceedings without due process.**
2. **Authorization of systemic torture and ill-treatment of detainees.**
3. **Violent suppression of peaceful dissent, including unlawful or excessive use of force and the deployment of prohibited munitions against unarmed protesters.**
4. **Authorizing and/or encouraging the systemic discrimination and persecution of people from Iran's marginalized groups.**
5. **Authorizing and/or encouraging illegal and unprovoked asymmetric naval warfare.**
6. **Providing support to internationally designated terrorist organizations.**
7. **Development, procurement, or facilitation of weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems, including ballistic missiles and nuclear capabilities.**

This report outlines the careers of the 12 most senior and influential IRGC commanders killed during the 12-Day War. While this is not exhaustive in detailing the careers of all officers killed, it focuses on those who played the most significant roles in shaping and executing the Islamic Republic's repressive security doctrine. It also examines how their actions contributed to the regime's widespread domestic oppression and destabilizing foreign policy.

Examples of IRGC Crimes: From the Oppression of Protests to the Exportation of Terrorism



1994 AMIA Bombing - Argentina: In July 1994, a van packed with explosives drove into the AMIA Jewish Community Center in Buenos Aires, Argentina, and subsequently detonated. The attack killed 85 people and injured over 300. In 2024, an Argentine court formally ruled that the Islamic Republic directed the attack.



1999 Student Protests - Iran: In 1999, security forces stormed university dormitories in response to widespread student protests against censorship. Students were beaten, detained, killed, and even thrown from rooftops of dorms.



2009 Green Movement - Iran: In 2009, millions took to the streets to protest presidential election fraud. The regime responded with brute force, beating, killing, and detaining thousands of peaceful demonstrators.



2019 Bloody November Protests - Iran: In November 2019, protests sparked by a sudden 300% hike in gas prices grew into a nationwide uprising. The regime responded with extreme violence, deploying tear gas and live ammunition against unarmed protesters killing 1,500 people and arresting many more. The crackdown became known as the Bloody November (Aban) Uprising.



2020 IRGC Downing of Ukraine Flight PS752: Amid heightened tensions with the U.S., the IRGC kept Iran's airspace open, using civilian flights as human shields. As a result, Flight PS752 was shot down by the IRGC, killing all 176 passengers and crew on board.



2022 Women, Life, Freedom Movement - Iran: Sparked by the death of 22-year-old Mahsa Amini in regime custody for "improper" hijab, protests erupted nationwide. The security forces launched a violent crackdown, killing over 500 people, including at least 68 children, and injuring and detaining thousands more.



2023 October 7 Terror Attack - Israel: After years of coordination, training, and funding by the IRGC, terror group Hamas launched a gruesome attack on October 7, 2023.

Executive Summary

A Blood-Soaked Legacy: Profiling the Islamic Republic's Top Military Brass Killed During the 12-Day War examines twelve senior commanders of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps who were killed in Israeli strikes in June 2025. The report documents how these officers shaped and enforced the Islamic Republic's military and ideological system, which merges domestic repression and foreign aggression into a unified framework of control.

OVERVIEW

The report analyzes the structure of the Islamic Republic's security apparatus and the symbiotic relationship between the clerical leadership and the IRGC. The clerical establishment provides ideological legitimacy, while the IRGC guarantees the regime's survival through coercion and force. This relationship has produced a system that sustains itself through a combination of propaganda, internal suppression, and external conflict.

PROFILES OF KEY COMMANDERS

Each of the twelve commanders profiled played a major role in advancing this system.

- **Major General Mohammad Bagheri,** Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces, helped plan the 1999 crackdown on student protesters and later authorized lethal force during the 2019 "Bloody November" uprising, which killed more than a thousand Iranians.
- **Major General Hossein Salami,** Commander-in-Chief of the IRGC, oversaw the regime's ballistic-missile program, directed the downing of Flight PS752, and led the violent suppression of the 2022 Women, Life, Freedom movement.
- **Major General Gholam Ali Rashid,** Commander of the IRGC Khatam al-Anbiya Central Headquarters, coordinated military operations in Syria, Iraq, Lebanon, and Yemen, and served as Tehran's principal strategist in regional conflicts.
- **Major General Amir Ali Hajizadeh,** head of the IRGC Aerospace Force, expanded Iran's missile and drone programs and facilitated military cooperation with Russia in its war against Ukraine.
- **Major General Mohammad Kazemi,** head of the IRGC Intelligence Organization, directed mass arrests, censorship, and surveillance during the 2022 and 2023 protests.
- **Brigadier General Mohammad Saeed Izadi,** commander of the Quds Force's Palestine Division, managed funding and weapons transfers to Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad and played a key role in planning the October 7 terror attack on Israel.

Other commanders, including **Davoud Sheikhian, Behnam Shahriari, Reza Mozaffarinia, Mehdi Rabbani,** and **Gholamreza Mehrabi,** contributed to missile development, arms smuggling, intelligence coordination, and domestic-security operations. Together, they represented the leadership core of the regime's apparatus of repression and foreign warfare.



A RECURRING PATTERN

The report traces a consistent pattern in the Islamic Republic's response to crises. When confronted by internal dissent or external pressure, the regime relies on the same sequence: propaganda, violence, and renewed investment in military and security capabilities. Examples include the 1999 student protests, the 2009 Green Movement, the 2019 demonstrations known as "Bloody November," and the 2022 Women, Life, Freedom movement. Each case was met with large-scale violence at home and expanded aggression abroad.

Following the 12-Day War, this pattern reappeared. The regime carried out mass detentions and deportations, accelerated the use of political trials, and began rebuilding its missile and air-defense networks.

STRUCTURAL WEAKNESSES

The deaths of the twelve senior commanders dealt a major blow to the IRGC's command structure. Their loss disrupted the coordination between the clerical leadership and the military establishment that underpins the regime's control. The report also highlights the Islamic Republic's deepening isolation. During the 12-Day War, Tehran received no tangible military support from either Moscow or Beijing, revealing the limited and transactional nature of those alliances. Renewed UN snapback sanctions have further constrained the regime's economy and reduced its capacity to rebuild its security forces.

The report concludes that the Islamic Republic's system of governance depends on a small group of ideologically loyal commanders who connect internal repression to external aggression. The deaths of these figures have weakened that structure and exposed its dependence on propaganda to maintain legitimacy. Although the regime continues to project strength through violence and disinformation, the events of the 12-Day War reveal its growing vulnerability and the fragility of the network that sustains its power.

Mohammad Bagheri
محمد باقری



POSITION
Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces

RANK
Major General

REPLACEMENT
Major General Abdolrahim Mousavi

1979–Late 1980s:
Hostage-Taker, Loyal Soldier

Mohammad Bagheri had been a staunch loyalist to the Islamic Republic since its inception, as he was among the hardline students who stormed the U.S. Embassy in Tehran in 1979, during which 52 American diplomats and citizens were held hostage for 444 days. In 1980, he joined the IRGC and was deployed to the frontlines at the onset of the Iran–Iraq War. Bagheri initially served alongside his then more well-known brother, Hassan, who was killed in combat in 1981.[2] The death of Bagheri's brother was a boon for his career, as the Islamic Republic expedited his subsequent ascension through the ranks as a symbolic compensation for his brother's "martyrdom."[3]

In 1983, Bagheri was appointed to be the intelligence head of the IRGC Ground Forces and the first deputy for intelligence and operations of the overall IRGC. Bagheri's new leadership position allowed him to sit in on high-level intelligence meetings, during which he cultivated strong ties with senior IRGC commanders, including Qasem Soleimani and Ali Shamkhani. These relationships would later prove pivotal, as these commanders would vouch for him and facilitate his accelerated rise through the ranks of the IRGC.[4]

1988–2008:
Spymaster Earns Trust with Blood

In 1988, following the end of the Iran–Iraq War, Bagheri was appointed acting Deputy Chairman of Intelligence of the newly formed Armed Forces General Staff (AFGS), which was established to centralize and integrate the command structures of the IRGC and the Artesh (the conventional/"regular" armed forces), and later becoming the permanent head of intelligence and operations within the AFGS.[5] In this role, Bagheri maintained a hardline stance and displayed unwavering loyalty to the IRGC. Upon his promotion, Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei issued a decree ordering him to "oversee an upgrade in military and security capabilities and readiness of the armed forces and Basij, and to improve their ability to respond in a timely fashion to any threat against the Islamic Republic at any level, using revolutionary determination." In the 1990s, Bagheri helped plan and execute cross-border missions into Iraq targeting Kurdish groups. His leadership role in these operations further solidified his position as a trusted figure within the AFGS.[6]

In 1999, during widespread student protests against censorship sparked by a crackdown on journalism, Bagheri was among 24 top IRGC commanders who issued a public letter to then-President Mohammad Khatami (1997–2005), threatening military intervention if the Khatami administration failed to suppress the unrest. In the letter, the commanders warned: "Our patience is at an end. We do not feel it is our duty to show any more tolerance... Mr. President, if you don't make a revolutionary decision today and fail to abide by your Islamic and nationalistic duty, tomorrow will be too late and the damage done will be irreparable and beyond imagination."[7] The threat of military intervention by Bagheri and other IRGC commanders provided the Khatami administration with adequate justification to launch a brutal crackdown on dissent, resulting in the death, injury, and detention of students.[4]

2009–2017:
Crushing Green Movement, Shaping Defense Doctrine

Between 2009 and the late 2010s, Bagheri remained a central figure in shaping the Islamic Republic's military and ideological posture, particularly in response to domestic unrest and regional developments. During the 2009 Green Movement, Bagheri echoed the sentiments of his then-supervisor, General Hassan Firouzabadi, and called for a hardline response to demonstrators, framing the protests as part of a "soft war" orchestrated by foreign enemies seeking to undermine the Islamic Republic from within.[8] Pressure from the military apparatus once again spurred a harsh internal crackdown, as regime forces moved aggressively to suppress dissent,

resulting in the deaths of more than 100 protesters and the arrests of over 4,000 Iranians, many of whom were arbitrarily charged, sentenced in sham trials, and subjected to years of illegal detention, abuse, and torture.[9]

Bagheri spent the next few years refining the regime's defense doctrine to emphasize asymmetric warfare and regional power projection. He was instrumental in advancing the Islamic Republic's strategy of supporting proxy groups, including Hezbollah, Hamas, the Houthis, and Iraqi Shia militias, to extend Tehran's influence across the Middle East.[4] At the same time, he worked to deepen partnerships with key allies such as Syria, China, Russia, and Pakistan.[10, 4]

In 2011, Bagheri issued a statement signaling a shift in the Islamic Republic's defense strategy toward a more preemptive and forward posture, declaring that "the Islamic Republic will counter threats with threats of its own."[11] As a result of this more aggressive defense policy, Bagheri began playing a more direct role in Syria. At the time, the Islamic Republic used Syria as a corridor to funnel weapons and personnel to and from its regional proxies. Thus, at the outbreak of the Syrian Civil War, Bagheri held several high-level meetings with then-Syrian President Bashar al-Assad and oversaw military and logistical support to ensure Assad remained in power.[2, 4]

In 2016, Bagheri was promoted to Chief of Staff of the AFGS. During this period, Bagheri continued to advocate for an aggressive foreign policy toward Israel and the United States.[12] His rhetoric escalated in 2017, following President Donald Trump's recognition of Jerusalem as Israel's capital. In response, Bagheri issued a pointed warning, declaring that "an intifada would erupt and reject not only the decision but Israel's very legitimacy."[13]

2018–2022:

Arming Axis of Resistance, Russia, Assad Regime

As part of the Trump administration's Maximum Pressure Campaign, the U.S. Treasury Department sanctioned the AFGS, including Bagheri, on November 4, 2019, for implementing what it described as Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei's "destabilizing policies." The sanctions also cited that the AFGS had supported and funded terrorist groups involved in the 1983 bombing of the U.S. Marine Corps barracks in Beirut, which killed 241 American service members, and the 1994 bombing of the Argentine Israelite Mutual Association (AMIA) in Buenos Aires, which left 85 dead. The Treasury also emphasized that Bagheri and other AFGS officers were directly involved in torture, extrajudicial killings, and the repression of civilians.[14] Bagheri's response to these sanctions was to double down on his hardline policies, once again affirming his support for the regime's backing of terrorist proxies. During an interview on state-run TV, he openly lauded Tehran's growing support for the Houthis, declaring that "We are giving the Houthis advisory and intellectual assistance, and the IRGC is in charge of this."[15]

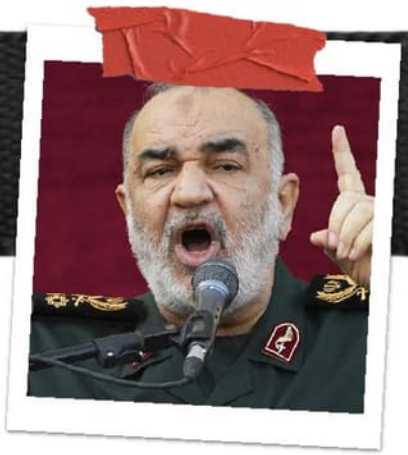
In November 2019, nationwide protests erupted across Iran over deteriorating economic conditions and an overnight 300% hike in fuel prices. Iranians widely blamed the regime's corruption and its support for regional proxies as key drivers behind the sanctions and the worsening economy. During this unrest, Bagheri once again called for a violent crackdown on protesters. This time, however, his position within the AFGS gave him the authority to act on his hardline views. He greenlit the deployment of the Artesh Ground Forces and authorized the use of live ammunition against unarmed civilians, resulting in the deaths of over 1,500 Iranians.[16, 17]

Throughout the next few years, Bagheri continued his efforts to bolster the regime's regional and international military influence. In July 2020, he again traveled to Syria to sign an agreement supplying the Bavar-373 and Khordad-3 air defense systems to the Assad regime.[18] In 2022, Bagheri continued to play a pivotal role in deepening Tehran's military ties with Moscow. On October 20, 2022, the European Union sanctioned him for supplying drones to support Russia's invasion of Ukraine.[19] That same day, the U.S. Department of Defense confirmed that Tehran had deployed military personnel to Crimea to assist Russian forces in conducting drone operations against Ukraine.[20]

In September 2022, as nationwide protests erupted following the death of 22-year-old Mahsa Amini while in regime custody for allegedly wearing an "improper" hijab, Bagheri once again echoed his hardline views, dismissing Mahsa's death as a "small thing" and referring to the protesters as "rioters."[21]

Bagheri remained in his position as Chief-of-Staff of the Armed Forces until he was killed on June 12, 2025, in an Israeli strike on the IRGC's command headquarters in Tehran.[22]

Hossein Salami
حسین سلامی



POSITION
Commander-in-Chief of the IRGC

RANK
Major General

REPLACEMENT
Major General Mohammad Pakpour

1980s:

Iran–Iraq War

Hossein Salami joined the IRGC in early 1980. He served in the Iran–Iraq War, initially fighting Kurdish groups in northern Iraq and Iran's northwest Kurdistan province.[24] Later, he served under Hossein Kharrazi in the 14th Imam Hossein Division, fighting on the front lines of one of the war's largest, bloodiest, and most significant battles, during which, according to CIA reports, "Tehran showed a willingness to accept high casualties to seize and hold areas." Toward the end of the war, Salami was assigned to the 25th Karbala Division, where he conducted intelligence-gathering operations, and later became the commander of operations at the Nooh Naval Base.[25]

1992–1997:

Asymmetric Warfare Innovations, Investment in Missiles

After the war, Salami was promoted to commander of the IRGC University of Command and Staff, a military staff college responsible for training future IRGC officers.[26] During his tenure, he worked closely with a network of IRGC-affiliated universities, research centers, and think tanks to analyze lessons from the Iran–Iraq War and help develop the "360-degree" defense doctrine. This doctrine prioritized the use of proxy forces to wage indirect warfare across the region, asymmetric naval tactics to counter technologically superior adversaries, and the development of a robust domestic ballistic missile program to enhance strategic deterrence. Additionally, the doctrine emphasizes integrating the regime's ideological framework into all levels of military planning, ensuring that security objectives remain tied to "revolutionary values."

Salami's contributions helped shape the concept that viewed external and internal threats as the same, enabling the regime to deploy the same resources and tactics against both Iranian dissidents and foreign adversaries.[27]

His central role in the security apparatus's academic institutions would propel his career forward.

1997–2006:

Proxy Wars and Sanctifying Suicide Attacks

His leadership role and influence over refining and implementing the regime's malign defense strategy expanded in 1997, when he was promoted to Deputy of Operations to the IRGC's Joint Staff.[28] In this role, he continued to advance the regime's unconventional warfare tactics by facilitating the full integration of proxy forces into Tehran's broader security apparatus. Salami was also instrumental in the IRGC's recruitment and indoctrination efforts. He traveled extensively across the country, delivering fiery speeches sanctifying suicide attacks as "martyrdom-seeking operations." Notably, in a speech he gave at a conference hosted by the World Islamic Organization's Headquarters for Remembering the Martyrs, Salami referenced the 9/11 terrorist attacks as an example of how such operations bring about "strategic results," proclaiming that "by cutting down two towers in the U.S., the history of the world has been divided into two, before this event and after it. By means of this small event, the policy of the U.S. and of regional powers has changed. This greatly affects the U.S., such that 3% annual growth in the American economy drops to 1%, and unemployment increases to 5.6% for the first time."[25, 29] His rhetoric and actions laid bare the Islamic Republic's expansionist ambitions and its calculated embrace of jihadism as a means to achieve geopolitical objectives, with reckless disregard for the civilian cost.

2006–2008:

Patron of Proliferation

In 2006, Salami was promoted to Commander of the IRGC's Air Force (IRGC-AF).[30] At this post, he oversaw a significant expansion of the regime's ballistic missile program. Under his leadership, the program developed and tested nine medium- and long-range missiles, including the solid-fueled Sejil-2 missile in 2009. Salami also played a key role in accelerating the IRGC's UAV program, enhancing both surveillance and remote strike capabilities.[31] As a result of his efforts to expand and modernize these weapons systems, he was sanctioned by the United Nations Security Council in 2006 and by the United States in 2007 under Executive Order 13382 for his involvement in the "proliferation of weapons of mass destruction."[32, 33]

2009–2016:

Propaganda Master Help's Decentralize Oppression Network, Expanded Military Capability

The 2009 Green Movement posed the most serious domestic security threat the Islamic Republic had faced until that point. Its sheer scale overwhelmed regime forces, which were often stretched too thin to respond effectively. Although the regime ultimately suppressed the protests and retained control, the unrest served as a wake-up call for the Supreme Leader. In its aftermath, he redirected the IRGC's focus toward internal security and quelling dissent, initiating a leadership reshuffle and tasking senior commanders with tightening control over domestic unrest.[34]

As part of this effort, Salami was promoted to serve as the deputy commander of the IRGC, reporting directly to then-IRGC chief Ali Jafari.[35] Salami played a key role in decentralizing the command structure of the IRGC-controlled Basij militia and creating provincial IRGC bases with the autonomy to respond rapidly to unrest without needing to escalate decisions up the chain of command. This resulted in faster and more coordinated crackdowns on dissent.[34]

Salami also leveraged his position and the accelerated development of UAV and ballistic missile capabilities he had helped spearhead to issue direct threats against Tehran's adversaries. This saber-rattling frequently manifested in public demonstrations showcasing the regime's operational readiness and deterrent power. For example, Salami oversaw orchestrated military exercises such as Great Prophet 5 and the unveiling of underground military bases. He would often follow these displays of military capability with provocative public statements directly threatening the West.[36] In 2011, he declared, "Our fingers are still on the triggers... We have the power to execute preventive and swift, retaliatory mass missions on all enemy targets."[37] He also issued a direct warning to Europe, stating, "We tell the European countries... we have no limitations for the range of our missiles in technological terms."[38] Salami also directed threats at Israel, taunting Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu by saying he should "practice swimming in the Mediterranean."[39] In 2016, he escalated his rhetoric further, boasting that "100,000 missiles [in Lebanon] are aimed at Israel... just waiting for the command," and warning that Israel could be "wiped off the geopolitical map." These actions served as another means of projecting Tehran's power and asserting its regional dominance through both military posturing and inflammatory rhetoric. Salami's saber-rattling also took the form of public praise and open endorsement of the regime's regional proxies. He frequently lauded these groups, describing the Houthis as a "similar copy" of Hezbollah and citing Hezbollah's urban combat experience in Syria as preparation for future conflict within Israeli cities. He also glorified jihadi uprisings in Bahrain, Yemen, and Iraq, declaring: "The victory in Aleppo will pave the way for liberating Bahrain... the Yemeni people will be delighted, and the residents of Mosul will taste victory."[25]

2019–2025:

Commander-in-Chief of the IRGC

In 2019, Salami was promoted to Commander-in-Chief of the IRGC.[40] During his first speech following his appointment, Salami outlined a two-pronged strategy aimed at advancing Tehran's long-term goal of curbing U.S. influence in the Middle East. The plan called for aggressive forward operations by the IRGC targeting U.S. interests throughout the region, as well as global actions designed to ensure that "the enemy has no safe haven around the world."[41] His domestic security strategy continued to prioritize empowering and equipping provincial commanders to respond autonomously. Additionally, he placed trusted and loyal commanders in key provincial posts who would unquestionably and violently subdue any domestic unrest.[42] In 2021, Salami and seven other officials were sanctioned by the EU for ordering and/or participating in "the widespread and disproportionate use of force ... which led to high numbers of deaths and injuries during the response to the November 2019 demonstrations."[43]

In 2020, after a targeted U.S. drone strike killed IRGC Quds Force commander Qasem Soleimani, Salami vowed "harsh revenge" and predicted the U.S. would be expelled from the region.[44] Salami led Tehran's retaliatory missile strikes targeting U.S. bases in Iraq. During the operation, and despite heightened tensions, Iran's airspace remained open to civilian flights, using innocent people as human shields. As a result, the IRGC downed Civilian Ukraine International Airlines Flight PS752, killing all 176 passengers and crew on board.[45] Later, Salami led the IRGC's swift and violent crackdown on the Women, Life, Freedom movement of 2022, justifying the brutality by claiming the protests were a "sinister plan hatched by the White House and the Zionist regime."[46]

In 2022, Salami sought to capitalize on Russia's invasion of Ukraine by positioning the IRGC as a key arms supplier to Moscow, providing both a new financial lifeline for the IRGC and deepening Tehran's security relationship with the Kremlin. He made multiple visits to Moscow and publicly promoted the export of Iranian drones and missiles, including the Shahed/Geran class of kamikaze drones to Russia.[47, 48]

Salami continued to strengthen ties with regional proxies, hosting meetings in Tehran with Hezbollah leaders and operatives from Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ). It was later reported, and widely speculated, that these high-level discussions laid the groundwork for the October 7, 2023, terror attack. In the aftermath of the Hamas attack, Salami called for "Israel's destruction" and seemingly gave Tehran's proxies the green light and order to launch further attacks.[25]

Soon after, the Houthis launched missiles and drones toward Israel and began targeting and seizing more than 60 merchant vessels in the Red Sea. Meanwhile, Hezbollah opened a northern front, drawing Israel into a multi-front conflict. Salami continued to publicly praise these attacks and pledged that the IRGC would maintain its support for these groups, further enhancing their operational capabilities across the region.[49]

In 2025, under Salami's command, the IRGC launched a series of missile and drone strikes against Israel, deliberately targeting population centers and civilian infrastructure. One Sejjil missile struck Soroka Medical Center in Beersheba, the largest hospital in southern Israel, causing extensive damage, triggering a suspected chemical leak, and injuring between 50 and 70 people.[50] Salami also oversaw a coordinated wave of missile attacks in mid-June 2025 on major urban areas in Israel, including Tel Aviv, Ramat Gan, Holon, and Bat Yam. These strikes damaged residential buildings and critical infrastructure, resulting in at least eight deaths and over 200 injuries.[51] Additionally, under his leadership, the IRGC used cluster munitions in residential areas in Israel, such as Azor, further escalating civilian harm and prompting Israeli officials to accuse the IRGC of war crimes.[52]

Salami remained the Commander-in-Chief of the IRGC until he was killed on June 12, 2025, in an Israeli strike on the IRGC's command headquarters in Tehran.[53]

Gholam Ali Rashid
غلامعلی رشید



POSITION
Commander of the IRGC Khatam al-Anbiya Central Headquarters (KACHQ), Wartime Chief of Staff

RANK
Major General

REPLACEMENT
Major General Ali Shadmani

1979:

Pre-Islamic Revolution Activities

Gholam Ali Rashid's entanglement with the clerical establishment started before the Islamic Revolution of 1979, as he actively participated in anti-Shah protests and aligned himself with Islamist revolutionary groups. Throughout this period, he consistently advocated for establishing an Islamic state led by the clerical establishment and frequently supported the ideology and rhetoric of the emerging revolutionary and Islamist leadership.[55]

1980–1988:

Iran–Iraq War

Following the revolution, he joined the IRGC and became part of the organization's first generation of senior commanders tasked with consolidating the regime's power and organizing its defense structures. During the Iran–Iraq War, he played a central role in planning and leading several major operations, including Operation Fath-ol-Mobin, Operation Beit ol-Moqaddas, and the Karbala series.[56] Throughout this period, he worked closely with other influential military figures such as Mohsen Rezaei, Qasem Soleimani, and Mohammad Bagher Zolghadr. He became known for emphasizing ideological warfare, promoting the "culture of martyrdom," and employing asymmetric tactics to counter better-equipped adversaries.[4]

1990s:

Post-War Military Restructuring

After the war, he shifted his focus to post-war military planning. He advocated for strengthening the IRGC's role in shaping Tehran's strategic deterrence and expanding the regime's regional influence through unconventional means. His efforts were instrumental in laying the groundwork for a defense strategy centered on missile capabilities, proxy forces, and asymmetric warfare.[57]

1999–2016:

Deputy Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces

On April 18, 1999, he was appointed Deputy Chief of the General Staff of the Armed Forces, a position he held until July 5, 2016. In this role, he oversaw long-term strategic defense planning and coordinated operations between the IRGC and the Artesh. He continuously refined Tehran's asymmetric defense doctrine, advocating for the strengthening of missile forces and the institutionalization of regional proxy militias as instruments of foreign policy.[58, 59]

Following the outbreak of regional conflicts in 2011, he called for expanding Tehran's military presence in Syria and Iraq, aligning military operations with the regime's broader regional ambitions. During this period, he served under influential commanders Major General Hassan Firouzabadi and, later, Major General Mohammad Bagheri.[60]

2016–2025:

Commander of Khatam al-Anbiya Central Headquarters

In 2016, he was appointed as the Commander of the Khatam al-Anbiya Central Headquarters (KACHQ), the Islamic Republic's top military operational command. In this capacity, he became the primary authority responsible for overseeing all joint operational planning between the IRGC and Artesh.[56] His command extended to the management of missile and air defense systems and the coordination of cyberwarfare strategies. Under his leadership, Khatam al-Anbiya emerged as the nerve center of Tehran's military strategy, and he was widely viewed as Tehran's de facto war strategist. He consistently advocated for a combination of preemptive action and deterrent force posture to defend the regime's interests at home and abroad.[61, 62]

In 2019, the U.S. Department of the Treasury sanctioned him as part of a broader campaign targeting senior IRGC officials. The Treasury listed his direct involvement in human rights violations and playing a key role in providing military support to Tehran's proxy forces in Syria, Iraq, Lebanon, and Yemen as the reason for the designation. The Treasury also described him as a key figure within the Supreme Leader's inner military circle, highlighting his influence over both domestic repression and foreign aggression.[14]

In 2024, Canada announced that alongside its G7 partners, including the U.S, it had imposed new sanctions on Rashid for his role in Tehran's "first-ever direct attack on Israel."[63] Gholam Ali Rashid was killed in an Israeli strike on June 13, 2025.[55]

Ali Shadmani
علی شادمانی



POSITION
Commander of IRGC Khatam al-Anbiya Central Headquarters (KACHQ), Wartime Chief of Staff

RANK
Major General

REPLACEMENT
Ali Abdollahi

1979–Late 1980s:
Early IRGC Career and War Time Experience

Ali Shadmani joined the IRGC in early 1979, shortly after the Islamic Revolution. During the Iran–Iraq War, he commanded the IRGC's 32nd Ansar al-Hussein Division, which was primarily responsible for operations on the western and southern fronts, including the Liberation of Khorramshahr, Valfajr-5, Karbala-4, Karbala-5, Karbala-8, Karbala-10, and Beit al-Moqaddas-2, 5, and 7. Following the end of the war, he was appointed commander of the Kermanshah Besat Division, and later took command of the Najaf Ashraf Headquarters. He held this position for a short time before being promoted to Deputy Chief of Operations of the IRGC Ground Forces in 1988.[64]

Late 1990s–Early 2000s:
Post-War Career, Role in AFGS

In 1999, Shadmani was once again promoted, this time to commander of the 3rd Division of the Hamzah Seyyed al-Shohada Special Forces, a position he held until 2003, when he was appointed commander of the 4th Division of the Kermanshah Be'sat Division. Shortly thereafter, in 2005, Shadmani began his first stint with the Armed Forces General Staff (AFGS), serving as head of Operations. In 2012, he was promoted to Deputy Chief of Operations of the AFGS.[64] This new position raised Shadmani's public profile, and during his tenure, he gave several interviews, echoing Tehran's official talking points and defending the regime's security doctrine. In a 2013 interview with state-run television, Shadmani declared, "We are waiting on the Supreme Leader of the Islamic Revolution's order to shower the enemies, who are behind Iran's borders and have evil thoughts of aggression, with thousands of long-range missiles."[65]

Shadmani also consistently argued against diplomacy. In 2014, as JCPOA negotiations were underway, he issued another warning that "If diplomatic talks fail to succeed, there will be other ways of confronting the enemies, and we will fight them again to the last drop of our blood." He also called for a more assertive and forward-operating role for the IRGC across the region. In a 2015 interview with Fars News Agency, he criticized what he saw as a soft approach toward adversaries, stating, "Negligence and indifference sometimes occur. We must have a holistic view of the enemy. We should not greet enemies, laugh, or bribe them. In this case, such things [security vacuums] will not take place." He added, "We presented the preventive strategy instead of a war of attrition. This strategy certainly needs its own instruments. The country's strength in political, economic, military, social, and cultural fields should be accumulated to fulfill the preventive strategy."[66]

2016–Early 2025:
Appointed to Khatam al-Anbiya Central Headquarters

He remained in his position, providing operational support to senior commanders in the Armed Forces General Staff (AFGS) until 2016, when he was appointed Deputy Coordinator of the Khatam al-Anbiya Central Headquarters. This marked Shadmani's most influential role until that point, reflecting both his proven loyalty and the high level of trust he had earned from Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei. In this role, he served as a key intermediary, fostering coordination and communication between senior commanders and officials within the IRGC, Artesh, and the Ministry of Defense.[67]

In 2019, Shadmani began working closely with Naval Commander Admiral Hossein Khanzadi to oversee the Shiraz Project, which involved the construction of an intelligence-gathering naval vessel in Bandar Abbas.[68]

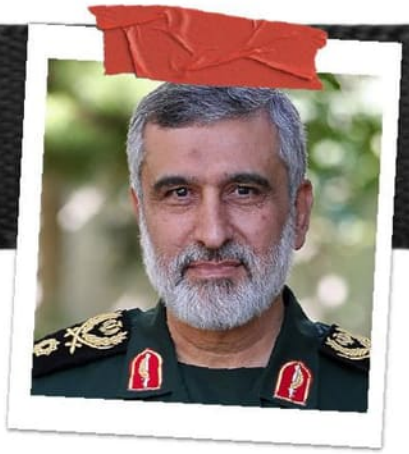
In 2025, his role expanded as he began leading and organizing large-scale military exercises, such as Operation Great Prophet-19, which integrated air, land, and sea assets and personnel from the IRGC, including tens of thousands of Basij members from provincial bases, alongside the Artesh.[69]

Shadmani's efforts ultimately streamlined and integrated the operational capabilities of each branch of the regime's security apparatus. He ensured a high level of trust across top military leadership, while also allowing provincial commands to maintain the autonomy and capability to mobilize and address security threats independently. Additionally, Shadmani leveraged his relationship-building skills to enhance defense cooperation between Tehran and Moscow, which culminated in the Islamic Republic's acquisition of Russian Sukhoi-35 fighter jets. Commenting on the deal, Shadmani stated, "Whenever necessary, we make military purchases to strengthen our air, ground, and naval forces."[70]

2025:
Wartime Commander for Three Days

On June 13, 2025, Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei appointed Shadmani as the Commander of the Khatam al-Anbiya Central Headquarters, who serves as the de facto Armed Forces Chief of Staff in wartime, following the death of his predecessor, Major General Rashid.[71] Shadmani held the position for only three days before he was severely injured in an Israeli strike on June 16. State media reported that Shadmani succumbed to the wounds he sustained during the strike and died a week later on June 25.[72]

Amir Ali Hajizadeh
امیرعلی حاجی‌زاده



POSITION
Commander of the IRGC Aerospace Force (IRGC-AF)

RANK
Major General

REPLACEMENT
Major General Majid Mousavi

1980s:

Architect of Missile Program

Amir Ali Hajizadeh joined the IRGC shortly after the 1979 Islamic Revolution. During the Iran–Iraq War, he served as a sniper and later in the artillery division. He was eventually promoted to Chief of Artillery and later became Deputy Commander of ground-to-ground missile units.[74, 75] In these roles, he played a significant part in the early development of the Islamic Republic's ballistic missile capabilities along with IRGC Brig. Gen. Hassan Tehrani Moghaddam, who died in 2011. In 1984, he helped establish one of the IRGC's first missile units, and in 1986, he reportedly traveled to North Korea to acquire missile technology.[74, 76]

1990s–2000s:

Rocketing to the Top

Throughout the 2000s, he advanced through senior positions within the IRGC Air Force. By 2002, Hajizadeh was reportedly connected to operations at a secret underground nuclear facility in Parchin.[77] In 2009, following the reorganization of the branch into a combined missile and space command, he was appointed Commander of the IRGC Aerospace Force (IRGC-AF).[74]

2010s:

Expansion of the Ballistic Missile Program

Throughout the 2010s, Hajizadeh emerged as the central military figure behind the Islamic Republic's ballistic missile program. In 2011, Hajizadeh issued a direct threat to NATO, warning Ankara not to implement a NATO missile defense system, citing that "Should we be threatened, we will target NATO's missile defense shield in Turkey and then hit our next targets." In 2012, in an effort to confront what he described as American "bullying," Hajizadeh oversaw a missile exercise simulating a strike on a mock U.S. base.[78] During this period, he also leveraged his position to defend the Islamic Republic's claimed "right" to maintain a ballistic missile program for purposes of "self-defense." On the international stage, Hajizadeh repeatedly echoed Tehran's accusations that world powers, primarily the U.S., U.K., France, and Israel, were manipulating international law for political gain by demanding inspections of Islamic republic's missile facilities. Under his command, the IRGC-AF also expanded its regional role by providing technical and advisory support to Iraq's air force and deepening military cooperation with the Assad regime in Syria.[79, 80]

2019:

Downing U.S. Drone

In June 2019, Hajizadeh led an operation that resulted in the downing of a U.S. RQ-4 Global Hawk surveillance drone. According to regime officials, the drone had violated international law by entering Iranian airspace with the intent to gather intelligence, to which the IRGC responded by utilizing the domestically produced Khordad-3 Medium-Range Surface-to-Air Missile System (SAM), successfully destroying the drone. U.S. military officials, however, condemned the action as illegal and unprovoked, asserting that the drone was operating in international airspace at the time of the strike. Regime officials later used the incident as a demonstration of military deterrence, framing it as evidence of U.S. provocations and a contributor to rising instability in the region.[81, 82]

Hajizadeh later appeared on state-run TV channel IRINN, where he claimed that his division now possessed "all codes and frequencies" of a U.S. surveillance drone that had been brought down over the Strait of Hormuz. He added that "Iran is capable of tracking drones from thousands of kilometers away and rendering them ineffective."[83]

2020s:

Downing Ukrainian Airliner PS752

Following the January 3, 2020, U.S. strike that killed IRGC commander Qasem Soleimani in Iraq, Hajizadeh was tasked with launching retaliatory strikes on U.S. personnel and assets in the region. On January 8, 2020, Hajizadeh led the IRGC-AF missile strike on the U.S. Ain Al-Asad airbase in Iraq.[84] According

to after-action reports, more than a dozen ballistic missiles were launched, and although most of the military personnel had already evacuated before impact, more than 100 service members, who stayed behind to maintain the base's security, suffered traumatic brain injuries.[85] At the time, a U.S. official told Fox News that Iran had warned Iraq before the attacks, and Baghdad had passed that information to the United States. However, afraid of a possible U.S. response, the Islamic Republic intentionally kept Iran's airspace open during the attack, using civilians as human shields. This led to the IRGC downing Ukraine International Airlines Flight (PS752), killing all 176 passengers and crew. The tragedy created a pause in tensions and possibly prevented a direct confrontation between the Islamic Republic and the United States. Publicly available evidence shows that the Supreme Leader was directly involved in all decisions leading to the plane's downing and the regime's subsequent cover-up.[86, 45]

Over the following months, Hajizadeh embarked on a media tour, amplifying the Supreme Leader's vows of retribution against the U.S. for the killing of Soleimani, while also working to preserve the IRGC's image as a capable force able to counter "U.S. aggression." On February 9, 2020, Hajizadeh again appeared on IRINN, this time alongside then-IRGC Commander-in-Chief Hossein Salami. Together, they unveiled the Ra'd (Thunder) 500 missile, part of the new generation of Fateh missiles. Hajizadeh announced that the missile "weighs half, costs half, and its range has increased by 200 kilometers." In April 2020, Hajizadeh, along with other senior IRGC commanders, oversaw the successful launch of the Nur military satellite. He used the event as an opportunity to send a threatening message to the U.S., warning that the Islamic Republic would continue weaponizing its space systems, asserting that "Acquiring and using space technology is not a choice but an inevitable necessity." He also praised the IRGC's technological advancements, noting "that the Qased launcher used during the launch had a combination of liquid and solid propellants and featured a non-metallic composite body, similar to the Salman space engine, declaring that "Only superpowers have such capability." Throughout the rest of 2020, Hajizadeh continued his media campaign, saber-rattling and asserting that "vengeance against the U.S. is a certainty."[87, 88]

In early 2021, Hajizadeh broadened his rhetoric to include threats against Israel. On January 2, 2021, during a ceremony marking the one-year anniversary of Soleimani's targeted killing, he declared that Tehran would "support anyone on the front lines fighting the Zionist regime." He added, "Gaza and Lebanon are on the front lines of this fight, and all the missile power you see in Gaza and Lebanon is due to the Islamic Republic of Iran's support." Notably, he implied that the IRGC had already equipped its regional proxies, stating, "Today, instead of rocks, they use missiles in Palestine. This has instilled fear in Zionist officials because the Resistance Axis is not what it was 10 years ago. Today, the Zionist regime is under fire from Palestine, Lebanon, Syria, and other Islamic countries. If our friends once had only rocks and rudimentary rockets, today they are equipped with high-precision missiles, and many now possess this technology."[89]

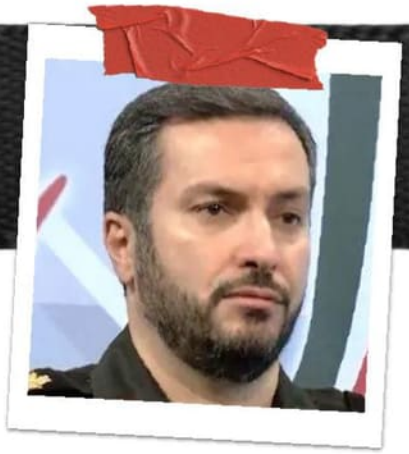
In May 2021, Hajizadeh unveiled the Gaza Drone, which state-run media outlet IRIB described as a "heavy drone capable of carrying 13 bombs up to 2,000 kilometers on a combat mission, as well as transporting 500 kilograms of various intelligence and signal-gathering equipment."[90] At the end of 2021, Hajizadeh helped oversee a large-scale military exercise aimed at showcasing the Islamic Republic's military strength. During the five-day drill, the IRGC launched dozens of missiles at a mock-up of Israel's Dimona nuclear facility. Hajizadeh described the exercise as proof that the IRGC had "upgraded its ballistic missiles to move in different directions and perform maneuvers to evade interception."[91] Following the exercise, he again appeared on state TV, declaring: "We will not allow peace for the murderers of Haj Qasem (Soleimani); the quest for revenge is ongoing."[92]

In February 2023, Hajizadeh again appeared on state TV and openly declared that the IRGC was "looking to kill Trump, [former Secretary of State Mike] Pompeo, and [former commander of U.S. Central Command Gen. Kenneth] McKenzie."[94] In June 2023, under Hajizadeh's leadership, the IRGC unveiled the Fattah missile, which Hajizadeh claimed was "Iran's first hypersonic missile." He asserted that the missile was capable of reaching speeds up to Mach 15 and could maneuver during its terminal phase, making it difficult to intercept. However, independent defense analysts and experts have disputed these claims, classifying the Fattah as a medium-range ballistic missile with no clear evidence of true hypersonic capabilities.[95] Following the October 7, 2023, massacre, Hajizadeh continued to spearhead the development of the IRGC's ballistic missile and drone programs. This effort culminated in a January 15, 2024, IRGC strike on an Israeli intelligence outpost near Erbil, Iraq.[96]

Shortly after the strike, Hajizadeh oversaw another military exercise meant to demonstrate the IRGC's growing capabilities. During the drill, the 9-Dey air defense system was unveiled and test-fired, showcasing its ability to "intercept hostile flying objects moving at low altitudes, covering an area of 600,000 square kilometers."[97] Just a month later, on February 13, 2024, Hajizadeh supervised yet another military drill during which the IRGC launched Emad and Qadr missiles at a mock-up of Israel's Palmachim Airbase, which houses the IDF's F-35 fighter jets.[98]

In April 2024, Hajizadeh helped lead Operation True Promise One, during which the Islamic Republic launched over 170 drones, 120 surface-to-surface ballistic missiles, and 30 cruise missiles in a retaliatory strike against Israel for its attack on a building near the Islamic Republic's embassy in Syria, which killed seven IRGC commanders.[99] In October 2024, as the conflict between Tehran and Jerusalem escalated and moved beyond the shadows of proxy warfare, Hajizadeh oversaw Operation True Promise Two, during which the IRGC launched more than 300 ballistic missiles and drones toward Israel, most of which were intercepted.[100] Throughout the remainder of 2024 and into early 2025, Hajizadeh continued to issue threats against Israel and the U.S., while working to advance and unveil new ballistic missile and drone systems, until he was killed on June 12, 2025, at the onset of the 12-Day War, in an Israeli strike targeting the IRGC's command headquarters in Tehran.[101]

Davoud Sheikhian
داوود شیخیان



POSITION
Commander of the Air Defense Branch of the IRGC Aerospace Force

RANK
Brigadier General

REPLACEMENT
To Be Announced/Not Yet Announced

Davoud Sheikhian joined the IRGC early in his career and steadily rose through the ranks, specializing in air defense and aerospace systems. Over the years, he became a key figure within the IRGC Aerospace Force, serving directly under its longtime commander, Amir Ali Hajizadeh.[102]

Throughout his tenure, Sheikhian played a central role in the development and oversight of the regime's air defense infrastructure. His portfolio included overseeing missile systems designed to target aircraft, the deployment of advanced radar networks, and the integration of anti-aircraft weaponry. He was instrumental in the design and production of several surface-to-air missile platforms, most notably the Khordad-15 and Bavar-373.[103] Sheikhian also supervised the procurement and operational integration of Russian S-300 missile systems into the regime's broader air defense network.[104]

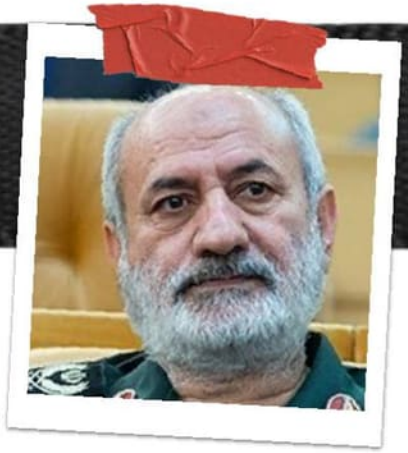
Considering his senior role in the IRGC-AF, he was part of decision-making processes leading to the IRGC strikes on U.S. Ain Al-Asad airbase in Iraq, the subsequent downing of flight PS752 killing all 176 passengers and crew, and the Islamic Republic's strikes against Israel in 2024. His rank and proximity to the IRGC-AF leadership also put him in a position to be involved with the development and transfer of missiles and drones to the Islamic Republic's proxies and terror groups.

On June 12, 2025, Sheikhian was killed in an Israeli strike on the IRGC's command headquarters in Tehran.[105]





Mohammad Kazemi
محمد کاظمی



POSITION
Commander of the IRGC Intelligence Organization

RANK
Major General

REPLACEMENT
Major General Majid Khademi

1980s:

Early Support for the Islamic Republic

Mohammad Kazemi began his career in the early stages of the Islamic Revolution of 1979, when he joined the Islamic Revolutionary Committee, also known as the Committees of the Islamic Revolution, which functioned as the regime's primary internal security force prior to the formal establishment of the IRGC. The Committee played a central role in consolidating power of then Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ruhollah by conducting "revolutionary tribunals," detaining, and executing former officials loyal to the Shah and enforcing Sharia law, including mandatory hijab for women.[107]

1990s–Mid-2010s:

Chief Spy Catcher

Kazemi's first major role was as the head of the IRGC's Intelligence Protection Organization. It is unclear exactly when he was appointed to this position, but most reports indicate that he served in the role as early as 2013. Notably, his appointment came well after the organization had been restructured. Originally, the branch was a unit within the IRGC focused on military intelligence operations. It was reorganized in 1991 into an independent, centralized intelligence agency reporting directly to the Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei. Kazemi's appointment to this position demonstrates the high level of trust the Supreme Leader placed in him, as the organization is tasked with combating domestic espionage, including within the IRGC, thereby monitoring the actions and personnel of the IRGC. As a result, it is considered one of the most powerful and sensitive security bodies within the IRGC's structure.[108]

2022

Spymaster Crushing Protests

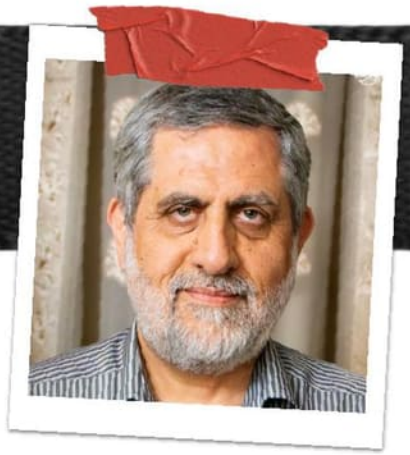
In 2022, Kazemi was promoted to Brigadier General and appointed Chief of the IRGC Intelligence Organization (IRGC-IO). In this role, he became a key figure in the regime's brutal crackdown on the Women, Life, Freedom movement, which was triggered after the death in police custody of Mahsa Amini in 2022.[107, 109] Kazemi was directly responsible for numerous human rights abuses during the suppression of protests. He issued statements and internal directives instructing security forces to confront demonstrators violently, justifying the crackdown by claiming that the unrest was orchestrated by "foreign intelligence agencies." He also oversaw the regime's broader surveillance and censorship operations.

During the 2023 Women, Life, Freedom movement, Kazemi led efforts to block major social media platforms such as WhatsApp, Facebook, and Instagram, and directed cybersecurity operations to disrupt external internet services, including Starlink. These measures significantly hampered the ability of protesters to organize, communicate, and share information with the outside world, allowing the regime to crack down on demonstrations more swiftly and with less international scrutiny. During the uprising, Kazemi also ordered the arrest and interrogation of hundreds of journalists, activists, and students. Many of those arrested were held without formal charges, often for months, in conditions that violated basic legal and human rights standards. Detainees were frequently subjected to torture, forced confessions, and psychological abuse. In numerous cases, they faced sham trials lacking due process, with some ultimately sentenced to lengthy prison terms or execution.[110] In 2022 and again in 2023, the U.S. State Department sanctioned Kazemi for overseeing crackdowns, citing his role in repressing protests, surveilling and restricting internet access, and arresting dissidents.[111]

Kazemi died on June 15, 2025, after reportedly being trapped in the rubble following an Israeli strike on the IRGC Intelligence Organization building in Tehran.[112]



Mohammad Saeed Izadi
محمد سعید ایزدی



POSITION
Commander of the Palestine Division of the IRGC Quds Force

RANK
Brigadier General

NOM DE GUERRE
Haj Ramadan (aka Haj Ramezan)

1980s–1990s:

Patron of Proxies

Mohammad Saeed Izadi joined the IRGC during the Iran–Iraq War, where he served as an intelligence officer. Following the war, he completed advanced officer training at the IRGC's military academy, preparing him for leadership roles within the regime's security and intelligence apparatus. Throughout the 1990s, Izadi was deployed multiple times across the Middle East and Africa to advance the operational capabilities of the regime's proxy forces. In Lebanon, he played a pivotal role, training personnel and assisting Hezbollah in the development and expansion of its missile infrastructure. In Sudan, Izadi focused on strengthening the regime's logistical lines between Tehran and its regional proxies, developing covert weapons smuggling networks throughout the Middle East.[113]

2014–2023:

IRGC Palestine Force

In 2014, Izadi was promoted to lead the Palestine Force, a division of the IRGC Quds Force specifically tasked with coordinating support for Palestinian terror groups. In this role, he oversaw the expansion of sophisticated arms smuggling networks that spanned East Africa, Syria, and Lebanon. Izadi helped expand the regime's material and financial support to its proxies by facilitating the transfer of tens of millions of dollars to Hamas, Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ), and Hezbollah, and assisting the development of local missile production facilities in Gaza. Additionally, he led efforts to organize and plan training exercises for Tehran's proxy forces throughout the region.

Leaked communications from 2016 to 2022 reveal the depth of his involvement and growing authority over terror groups. In a 2016 letter to Hamas officials, Izadi responded to concerns about delayed funding by assuring the group that the problem stemmed from financial constraints, not political mistrust, stating, "If the day comes when a decision is made to halt the assistance and sever ties, I will inform you directly with full transparency and without hesitation." Further correspondence illustrated his central role in coordinating between Hamas and Hezbollah. In a June 2017 email, Izadi relayed a message from Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah, writing, "We have fulfilled our duty, and the brothers are our guests, with care and trust." A 2022 message confirmed the delivery of $5 million to Hamas, and in a May 2021 letter to Hamas chief Ismail Haniyeh, Izadi detailed Tehran's post-war reconstruction efforts in Gaza, including a $10 million allocation to the al-Qassam Brigades and additional funds to support the families of slain terrorists through the Palestine Shaheeds Fund.[113]

2023–2025

Direct Involvement in the October 7 Massacre

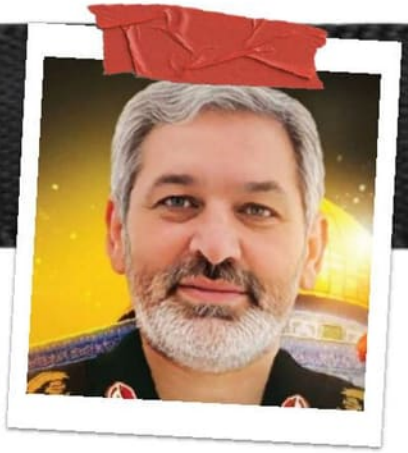
According to Israeli intelligence, Izadi played a key role in orchestrating the October 7th massacre and was the architect of what he described as a "two-stage plan to destroy Israel." The plan reportedly involved an initial wave of coordinated rocket and missile attacks from across the region, followed by a large-scale ground infiltration by tens of thousands of militants from Lebanon, Gaza, Syria, and the West Bank. His involvement in the October 7th attack highlighted the depth of his influence within Tehran's military strategy and its network of regional proxy forces.[114] The U.S. Treasury Department sanctioned Izadi in 2019 under Executive Order 13224, which targeted individuals and entities involved in supporting acts of terrorism.[115]

Izadi was killed on June 21, 2025, in a targeted Israeli strike on his apartment in Qom.[116]



On the second anniversary of the October 7 terror attack, IRGC-affiliated media circulated a photo of Izadi, presumably in Beirut, showing him detailing the terror operation on a map of Gaza.

Behnam Shahriari
بهنام شهریاری



POSITION
Commander of the IRGC Quds Force Weapons Transfer Unit (Unit 190)

RANK
Brigadier General

REPLACEMENT
To Be Announced/Not Yet Announced

Little is publicly known about Behnam Shahriari, and the exact dates of his career timeline are largely unknown, for he was the commander of the IRGC's highly covert Weapons Transfer Unit (Unit 190). As commander of Unit 190, Shahriari operated a sophisticated network of shell companies and smugglers to launder money on behalf of the IRGC and transfer weapons to the regime's proxies throughout the region. His operations included facilitating payments for oil shipments from Venezuelan state-owned energy companies and brokering deals with buyers in China and Russia, all aimed at circumventing international sanctions.[117]

Shahriari also worked closely with Quds Force associates based in Turkey to obscure the origins of illicit proceeds generated from the sale of gold, oil, and petrochemicals. These transactions were laundered through South Korea-based entities using falsified invoices and front companies to mask financial transfers. Shahriari also served as a business and marketing manager for an IRGC-affiliated shell company that provided material support, including weapons, to Hezbollah. He leveraged these networks to transfer millions of dollars and weapons systems. His arms smuggling operations spanned multiple countries, including Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Iraq, Lebanon, Sudan, and Turkey. Notably, he facilitated the shipment of rockets and missiles to Hezbollah and Hamas, leading up to the October 7th massacre.

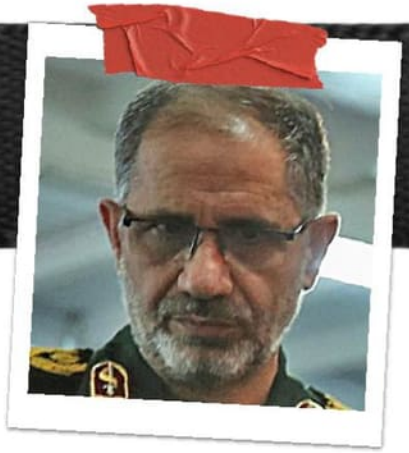
In 2023, Shahriari and his associated shell companies were sanctioned by the United States as part of broader counterterrorism measures targeting networks that support the IRGC and its regional proxy operations.[118]

On June 21, 2025, the IDF reported that they carried out a targeted strike which killed "Shahriari while traveling in western Iran, more than 1,000 kilometers from Israel's border."[119]





Reza Mozaffarinia
رضا مظفرینیا



POSITION
Head of the Organization of Defensive Innovation and Research (SPND)

RANK
Major General

REPLACEMENT
To Be Announced/Not Yet Announced

2013:
Weapons of Mass Destruction

Reza Mozaffarinia entered the public eye in 2013, when he was sanctioned by the U.S. State Department for his involvement in the development of the Islamic Republic's ballistic missile and nuclear weapons programs, as well as other weapons of mass destruction. At that time, he was concurrently serving as Dean of Malek Ashtar University of Technology (MUT) and Deputy Defense Minister of Armed Forces Logistics Industrial Research.[120, 121]

Founded in 1986 during the Iran–Iraq War, MUT was established to train engineers and researchers to advance the missile program. The Ministry of Defense and Armed Forces Logistics (MODAFL), created in 1989, oversees a vast network of firms and front companies involved in the procurement, development, and proliferation of military technologies. Both institutions have long been linked to providing material support to Tehran's proxies as well as the IRGC Quds Force.[122, 123]

2018–2020:
Head of Research at Ministry of Defense

As Deputy Defense Minister of Armed Forces Logistics, he continued to lead research and development initiatives related to the ballistic missile program and played a critical role in advancing new weapons systems. His work included the enhancement of drone capabilities and the integration of emerging technologies into the armed forces' strategic arsenal.[124]

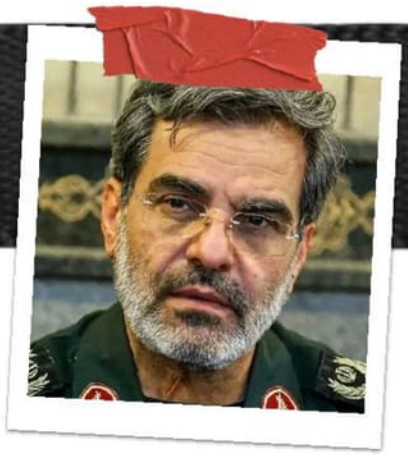
2020–2025:
Involvement in Nuclear Program

In 2020, Mozaffarinia was promoted to head the Organization of Defensive Innovation and Research (known by its Persian abbreviation, SPND), a secretive research institute under MODAFL responsible for advancing the Islamic Republic's nuclear weapons program. SPND focuses on uranium enrichment, the development of nuclear detonation mechanisms, and the weaponization of nuclear technology. Mozaffarinia assumed leadership of SPND following the targeted killing of his predecessor, Mohsen Fakhrizadeh-Mahabadi, the father of the Islamic Republic's nuclear weapons program. Under Mozaffarinia's command, SPND gained greater financial independence and autonomy, enabling the organization to accelerate its operations. These efforts ultimately enabled SPND to bring the regime significantly closer to completing the full nuclear weapons production cycle.

By July 2024, the organization had developed a functional nuclear detonation device and made substantial progress toward producing a missile capable of delivering a nuclear warhead.[125]Additionally, SPND played a key role in advancing the regime's uranium enrichment program, expanding its stockpile of fissile material necessary for weaponization. These developments marked a critical escalation in the regime's nuclear capabilities and its potential to produce deployable nuclear weapons.

Mozaffarinia was killed in a targeted Israeli strike on June 15, 2025.[126]

Mehdi Rabbani
مهدی ربانی



POSITION
Deputy Head of Operations for the General Staff of the Armed Forces

RANK
Major General

REPLACEMENT
To Be Announced/Not Yet Announced

1980s–Early 2000s:
Iran–Iraq War

Mehdi Rabbani began his military career during the Iran–Iraq War, gaining extensive frontline combat experience and steadily rising through the ranks of the IRGC. After the war, he was promoted to commander of the strategic Najaf Ashraf Base, a key IRGC facility responsible for regional security and coordinating logistics for units along the western border. He later assumed command of the Samen-ol-A'emeh Base, a critical operations hub for planning IRGC military and internal security operations. His leadership at Samen-ol-A'emeh reinforced his reputation as a reliable and capable officer within the IRGC hierarchy. Rabbani was subsequently appointed commander of the 5th Nasr Division, a prominent unit involved in both conventional military engagements and domestic security operations.[127]

2006:
Refining Domestic Supression Capabilities

In 2006, Rabbani was appointed commander of the Sar-Allah Headquarters, the IRGC unit tasked with the security of Tehran and coordinating internal security. Sar-Allah oversees various intelligence and security entities, including the Imam Ali, Imam Hussein, Beit al-Moqadas, Ashura, and Al-Zahra Corps, as well as the Saheb-al-Zaman Special Unit, to monitor, surveil, and suppress protests. The unit played a central role in the suppression of the 1999 student uprisings and was instrumental in detaining, interrogating, and torturing protesters during the 2009 Green Movement. Sar-Allah has also conducted extensive cyber and surveillance operations targeting civil society, journalists, and social media users, as well as cultural figures like musicians and fashion influencers. It also maintains oversight of Tehran's notorious Evin Prison, a facility known for the detention and torture of political prisoners.[128,129]

While commanding Sar-Allah, Rabbani continued and enhanced the unit's operations and led the large-scale "Second Great Prophet" military exercise, which involved 20,000 Basij militiamen, along with units from the IRGC's 27th Mohammad Rasoolollah Division, the 10th Seyyed ol-Shohada Division, and Tehran-based Ashura battalions. He praised the drills for improving operational readiness and preparing units for "natural disasters and civil defense," language often used by the regime to justify domestic crackdowns.[130]

2012:
Boosting Asymmetric Naval Warfare Capabilities

Rabbani was later promoted to Deputy for Operations of the IRGC, where he helped oversee the "Fajr 91" naval drills in the Persian Gulf. The exercises brought together IRGC coastal, sea-to-shore, ranger, and maritime combat units to refine tactics and enhance readiness. The advertised objective of the drill was to strengthen the regime's capacity to protect critical energy infrastructure such as Asaluyeh and the South Pars gas field. In practice, however, the drill was a form of posturing, intended to demonstrate the regime's ability and willingness to employ unconventional naval warfare tactics to assert control over the Strait of Hormuz and the Persian Gulf.[131]

2016:
Restructuring Basij Militia for Domestic Repression

In 2016, Major General Hossein Bagheri, then Chief of Staff of the AFGS, appointed Rabbani as Deputy Chief of Staff. In this capacity, Rabbani reorganized the Basij paramilitary into roughly 180 Imam Ali battalions and 2,000 Bayt al-Maqdis battalions. This restructuring created a streamlined command structure designed to respond more swiftly to domestic unrest. Rabbani described these units as critical to addressing "internal threats," reflecting the regime's growing emphasis on internal suppression.[132]

2018–2019:
Expanded IRGC Naval Reach

In 2018, Rabbani placed IRGC naval units to protect the regime's influence in the Mediterranean. In an interview, he declared that the Islamic Revolution had "extended its strategic influence to the Mediterranean" and "expanded its defensive borders" through the Resistance Axis.[133] In October 2018, Rabbani traveled to China to attend a three-day international security forum held at the Beijing International Convention Center. Rabbani participated in discussions aimed at strengthening military and intelligence cooperation, including expanding city-level security partnerships. The forum, themed "Maintaining International Order and Promoting Peace in the Asia-Pacific," featured four plenary, or general, sessions attended by all participants and eight panel discussions covering topics such as major power relations, maritime security, AI's role in future warfare, and the interests of smaller states. With over 530 participants from 76 official delegations, the event served as a platform for Tehran to deepen ties with Beijing through cooperation in surveillance technologies, smart city policing tools, and joint military training.[134]

2023–2025:
Strengthening Ties with Russia, Continued Role in Domestic Repression

In his final years, Rabbani played a key role in strengthening Tehran's strategic partnership with Moscow. He attended high-level meetings in Russia to advance bilateral military cooperation around arms development, security coordination, and regional operations. Rabbani also remained an influential figure in the regime's efforts to suppress dissent.[135]

He was killed in an Israeli strike on June 13, 2025.[136]

Gholamreza Mehrabi
غلامرضا مهرابی



POSITION
Deputy Chief of Intelligence for the General Staff of the Armed Forces

RANK
Brigadier General

REPLACEMENT
To Be Announced/Not Yet Announced

Gholamreza Mehrabi served on the front lines of the Iran–Iraq War, where he was wounded in combat, an experience that established his reputation as a battle-hardened officer.[137] After the war, he steadily advanced through the ranks of the regime's military intelligence apparatus, eventually becoming a key coordinator of intelligence operations across the IRGC, Artesh, Ministry of Intelligence, and the Supreme Leader's Office. He specialized in counter-espionage and internal security, playing a central role in shaping the regime's intelligence doctrine.

In 1999, during the widespread student demonstrations sparked by press censorship and the crackdown on journalists, Mehrabi was among 24 IRGC commanders who signed a public letter to then-President Khatami, warning that the military would intervene if the government failed to suppress the protests.

In 2016, Major General Mohammad Bagheri appointed Mehrabi as Deputy Chief of Staff for Intelligence at the AFGS. In this position, he coordinated and oversaw intelligence operations across all branches of the armed forces, managing surveillance, cyber operations, and counterintelligence efforts aimed at both foreign adversaries and internal dissent.[4]

Mehrabi was killed on June 13, 2025, alongside Brigadier General Mehdi Rabbani in an Israeli airstrike that targeted senior military leadership at an AFGS facility in Tehran.[136]





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