

# [Deputy commander of Iran's Quds Force dies from 'heart condition'](#)

Author:

Sun, 2021-04-18 22:27

RIYADH: The deputy commander of Iran's military wing that oversees its foreign proxy militias has died from a "heart condition."

Brig. Gen. Mohammad Hejazi's death was announced by the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC), Iranian media reported. No further details were given about his death.

He was a senior figure in the Quds Force, the overseas arm of the IRGC, whose overall commander Qassem Soleimani was killed by a US airstrike in January 2020.

The statement said Hejazi, who was 65, was involved in operations in Lebanon where Iran supplies and funds Hezbollah.

The Quds force is considered a terrorist organization by the US, Europe and many countries in the Middle East.



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Iran names Esmail Qaani new Quds chief after Soleimani killing  
Iran's top Al-Quds officials in Baghdad to support Abdul Mahdi

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## Abducted Yemeni model in Houthi prison threatens hunger strike

Sun, 2021-04-18 21:56

AL-MUKALLA: Abducted Yemeni model Entesar Al-Hammadi has threatened to launch a hunger strike as the Houthis refuse to release her or allow local prosecutors to question her, the model's lawyer told Arab News on Sunday.

Khaled Mohammed Al-Kamal said that the Houthi-controlled Central Prison, where the model has been held since Feb. 20, has rejected a request to transfer the model to the court for investigation.

"My client has threatened to go on hunger strike if she is not released. She has also complained about [verbal] abuses by her [female] captors," Al-Kamal said, adding that the Central Prison officials gave no convincing reasons for not transferring the model to the court.

"The prison has rejected three demands to transfer my client to the court. I believe that they refused to release her due to the huge media coverage of the case," the lawyer said.

The 20-year-old model and actress was on her way to a film set when a Houthi checkpoint stopped her vehicle and abducted her and two friends.

"There are no clear charges brought against my client," he said.

The abduction has triggered outrage on social media as activists renewed demands for designating the Houthis a terrorist organization for their crimes against Yemenis.

The Mothers of Abductees Association, an umbrella organization for thousands of female relatives of war prisoners, strongly condemned the abduction, saying that the Houthis prevented the model's relatives and lawyer from visiting her.

In a statement, the organization demanded the international community and right groups to pressure the Houthis to stop abusing women and release all abductees.

"The Houthi group is fully responsible for the lives of Entesar and all kidnapped women in its prisons," the organization said.

Several prisoners have launched a hunger strike in Houthi-held Sanaa to force the Houthis to release them, complaining about prison treatment and the refusal of their captors to set them free, two right groups said.

SAM, the organization for rights and liberties, and the Mothers of Abductees Association said in a joint statement on Saturday that several prisoners who

were abducted by the Houthis in 2015, were transferred from the military prison to an unknown location after they launched a hunger strike, and they cautioned that their captors might torture them to force them to end their strike.

The organizations said that the Houthis are still holding hundreds of people inside small, insanitary and overcrowded cells in the military prison in Sanaa.

In March, hundreds of African migrants were killed or wounded when the Houthis caused a fire inside their overcrowded detention center in Sanaa in an attempt to suppress a riot.

The rebels later used force to disperse a protest by survivors of the fire who demanded justice and compensation, and then deported them to government-controlled areas in southern Yemen.



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Who is Entesar Al-Hammadi, the Yemeni model kidnapped by the Houthis? Exposed: Houthi plan to prosecute kidnapped Yemeni model Entesar Hammadi

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# Iran hit by 5.9-magnitude quake in nuclear plant province

Author:

Sun, 2021-04-18 20:07

TEHRAN: A 5.9-magnitude earthquake Sunday hit Iran's southwestern Bushehr province, which houses a nuclear power plant, injuring five people but causing no major damage, state media said.

The 10-kilometre (six mile) deep quake hit 27 kilometres northwest of the port city of Genaveh at 11:11 am local time (0641 GMT) and was felt in nearby provinces, Iran's seismological agency said.

State news agency IRNA reported that the quake and several aftershocks caused power blackouts and cut phone lines nearby but caused "no damage" at the Bushehr nuclear complex about 100 kilometres away.

"The minor damage to Genaveh's water, electricity, telecommunication and gas infrastructure has been repaired," the head of the province's crisis management told IRNA.

Iran sits astride the boundaries of several major tectonic plates and experiences frequent seismic activity.

In 2003, a 6.6-magnitude quake in southeastern Iran levelled the ancient mud-brick city of Bam and killed at least 31,000 people.

Iran's deadliest quake was a 7.4-magnitude tremor in 1990 that killed 40,000 people in the north, injured 300,000 and left half a million homeless.



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Kingdom reiterates Bushehr concern Earthquake strikes northeastern Iran near Turkmenistan border

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## [Rockets hit Iraqi air base, 2 security forces wounded](#)

Sun, 2021-04-18 19:54

BAGHDAD: Multiple rockets hit an Iraqi air base just north of the capital Baghdad Sunday, wounding two Iraqi security forces, an Iraqi military commander said.

In comments to Iraq's official news agency, Maj. Gen. Daa Mohsen, commander of the Balad air base, said at least two rockets exploded inside the base, which houses US trainers. The attack comes days after an explosives-laden drone targeted US-led coalition forces near a northern Iraq airport, causing a large fire and damage to a building.

Mohsen said the attack resulted in the injury of two security forces, one of them in serious condition and the other only slightly. There was no material damage inside the base from the attack, he added.

The incident was the latest in a string of attacks that have targeted mostly American installations in Iraq in recent weeks. There was no immediate responsibility claim, but US officials have previously blamed Iran-backed Iraqi militia factions for such attacks.

American forces withdrew from Iraq in 2011 but returned in 2014 at the invitation of Iraq to help battle Daesh after it seized vast areas in the north and west of the country. In late 2020, US troop levels in Iraq were reduced to 2,500 after withdrawals based on orders from the Trump administration.

Calls grew for further US troop withdrawals after a US-directed drone strike killed Iranian Gen. Qassem Soleimani and an Iraqi militia leader in Baghdad in January 2020.

Last month, a base in western Iraq housing US-led coalition troops and contractors was hit by 10 rockets. One contractor was killed.



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Western powers condemn attacks in Kurdish Iraq

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## [Libya launches public vaccination drive](#)

Sat, 2021-04-17 23:04

TRIPOLI: Libya on Saturday launched its coronavirus vaccination campaign for the general population in Tripoli, with the elderly and healthcare workers given priority in the conflict-hit North African nation.

Those over 70 would get the AstraZeneca jab while the Russian Sputnik V vaccine would be administered to medical personnel and those aged 50-60, the National Center for Disease Control said.

NCDC head Badreddine Al-Najjar said the vaccines would be distributed across Libya "in the coming days," adding that China's Sinovac jab would also be available.

Libya has so far received 400,000 doses, including 200,000 Sputnik V shots,

57,600 AstraZeneca jabs and 150,000 from Turkey thought to be China's Sinovac.

The AstraZeneca doses were delivered through the Covax program for lower and middle-income countries.

Since the pandemic emerged last year, there have been 171,131 confirmed COVID cases in Libya, including 2,882 deaths, out of a population of seven million, officials say.

On Saturday, dozens of men and women wore face masks and sat on chairs that were spread out to ensure physical distancing in the courtyard of a vaccination center in Tripoli as they waited to get a jab.

Libyan authorities have appealed on the general population, including illegal migrants, to register for vaccination and set up an electronic portal in March for that purpose.



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