

# Iranian Terrorism Bullying the International Community

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Iranian leaders have claimed a military victory in Aleppo, with the Ayatollah Ali Khamenei's chief military aide boasting that Syrian president Bashar al-Assad's forces would have been unable to retake the besieged city without support from Tehran. "Aleppo was liberated thanks to a coalition between Iran, Syria, Russia and Lebanon's Hizbollah," said Seyed Yahya Rahim-Safavi (Guardian, 14.12.2016).

Steffen Seibert, a spokesman for Chancellor Angela Merkel said the regime has committed crimes in the besieged northern Syrian city, including mistreatment, torture, starvation and indiscriminately killing civilians. "We know that Iranian fighters as well as Shiite militia financed by Iran have been involved in all these," he said.

Osama Abu Zayd, legal adviser to Syrian opposition factions, says an evacuation deal for Aleppo is being obstructed by the Iranian field commander in Syria. "It is clear that the Russians can't get Iran to abide by the deal." and Iranian militias and Hezbollah are shelling four Aleppo neighborhoods still held by the opposition (AP).

Future will tell if Iran, and Russia, will be held responsible by the international community for the massive humanitarian crimes their troops and proxies committed along these years of civil war in Syria.

While the US, the West and most of the international community have focused on the threat of Sunni jihadist terrorism by ISIS and al-Qaeda, little has been published or discussed about the potential threat of Shia jihadists active on the global arena, where they are present since the 1980s. Numerous former Shia fighters in Syria and Iraq could spread to the five continents and be used by Iran in its offensive to achieve regional supremacy and global influence.

Thousands of Hezbollah, Iraqi, Afghani and Pakistani fighters were recruited, financed, trained and armed by Iran to fight in Syria, Iraq and some in Yemen. In August 2016, the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) established the Shia Liberation Army (SLA), commanded by Gen. Qassem Soleimani, commander of the Quds Force. Its primary objective would be to fight in Arab countries and would recruit heavily from non-Iranian Shia Muslims across the world.

Let's consider the Iranian international terrorist activity during the last 4 - 5 years and how the international community has responded to this threat.

**Kenya.** On December 14, a Kenyan court ordered the deportation of two Iranians, Sayed Nasrollah Ebrahimi and Abdolhosein Gholi Safaee, who were accused of plotting an attack on

the Israeli embassy in Nairobi. The two men were arrested on November 29, when they were caught filming the Israeli embassy in Nairobi. The court order was released after the Kenyan prosecution and the Iranian Embassy in Kenya reached a mutual agreement in regard to the completion of the criminal process against the two Iranians.

Ebrahimi and Safaee had been traveling in an Iranian diplomatic car after visiting a prison where they saw two other Iranians who have been jailed for 15 years on terrorism charges.

The two jailed Iranians, members of Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps Quds Force Ahmad Mohammed and Sayed Mousavi, were planning to attack Israeli, American, British and Saudi targets in Kenya when they were arrested in 2012, after police found a 15-kilogram the explosive RDX in their possession.

IRGC's 2012 Kenyan operation was part of [a larger Iranian/Hezbollah global terrorist campaign since January 2011](#). **At least 30 terrorist Iranian/Hezbollah plots were foiled or failed during that year. Here are the main known ones.**

**United States.** On October 11, 2011, charges had been filed in New York against dual U.S.-Iranian citizen Mansour Arbabsiar and a Quds Force commander for their alleged roles in a plot to murder the Saudi ambassador, Adel al-Jubeir. The plot had developed quickly over just a few months, starting in spring 2011 and culminating with the arrest of Arbabsiar in September. At the UN General Assembly, member states passed a resolution by an overwhelming majority deploring the plot to assassinate the Saudi Arabian ambassador and calling on Iran to “cooperate with States seeking to bring to justice all those who participated in the planning, sponsoring, organization and attempted execution of the plot.

**In Azerbaijan** three men were detained in January 2012 after planning to carry out attacks on Israeli and US embassies and the Chabad Jewish school in Baku. The trio -- Rasim Farail Aliyev, Ali Alihamza Huseynov and Balaqardash Dadashov, an Azeri citizen who lives in the Iranian city of Ardabil – were given smuggled arms and equipment by Iranian agents. In all, 22 Azeris were arrested in connection with the Iranian-led plot. In March 2013 Bahram Feyzi, was arrested and accused of being an Iranian spy and was sentenced in the Baku Court on Grave Crimes, AFP reported.

In May 2012, the Ministry of National Security of Azerbaijan announced that they had thwarted a series of planned terror attacks against the Eurovision Song Contest, among the targets being Baku Crystal Hall, Marriott and Hilton hotels in Baku. According to Western intelligence services, Iran's Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei personally gave orders to the elite Quds Force unit to launch terrorist attacks against the West and its allies, including Azerbaijan during the Eurovision Song Contest (The Daily Telegraph).

**Thailand.** On January 12, Thai authorities arrested Hussein Atris, a Swedish citizen of Lebanese descent linked to Hezbollah. Atris led police to a commercial building rented since January 2010 where it found boxes containing more than 2,800 kilograms of ammonium nitrate and 4,000 kilograms of urea fertilizer, which can be used to make rudimentary explosives. Atris has been sentenced only to 2 years and eight months in prison by a Thai court for illegally possessing

chemicals that could be used to make bombs. The court reduced Mr. Hussein's punishment from four years "due to his useful testimony during the investigation and hearing." (Chiang Rai Times)

This clearly did not deter Hezbollah: In April 2014, Thai authorities arrested two Lebanese nationals with French and Filipino passports on suspicion of planning a Passover attack on Israeli tourists.

On February 14, 2012, an Iranian team planning to attack the Israeli ambassador and other Israeli representatives in Bangkok was uncovered after Iranian citizen Saeid Moradi was seriously wounded in a "work accident." Mohammad Hazaei, who headed the Iranian operational group, was captured. Other suspects fled: Masoud Sedaghatzadeh managed to reach neighboring Malaysia and a woman, Leila Rohani, escaped. A fifth Iranian, Nikkahfard Javad, is thought to be an instructor in making bombs authorities said were "strikingly similar" to devices used in later attacks on Israeli diplomats in Georgia and India. Thai police later arrested a sixth operative, Madani Seyed Mehrded, who entered Thailand back in July 2011. A seventh suspect, Norouzi Shaya Ali Akbar, wanted on charges of possessing and making explosives, fled to Iran.

Saeid Moradi received a life sentence for throwing an explosive device at police, while Mohammad Khazaei was sentenced to 15 years in prison for possession of explosives. Leila Rohani, Javad Nikkahfard and Ali Akbar Norouzi Shaya are still at large.

**India.** On February 13, a bomb was attached to an Israeli Embassy car wounding the wife of the Israeli defense attaché. New Delhi Police arrested Indian journalist Syed Mohammed Ahmad Kazmi, a Shi'ite with long-standing Iranian connections who was employed part-time by an Iranian broadcaster, for allegedly facilitating the operation. An Indian court issued arrest warrants for Iranians Housan Afshari, Syed Ali Mehdi Sadr and Mohammed Reza Abolghasemi in connection with the attack. Housan Afshari, who had visited Delhi twice and left for Malaysia shortly after the Delhi attack, was in contact with Masoud Sedaghatzadeh, one of the Iranian suspects in the January Bangkok bomb plot, who was later named on an Indian arrest warrant. Interpol has issued international arrest warrants against these three men. It seems the Indian government has not made any strong pressure on Iran in connection with this breach of its sovereignty or to obtain information about the accused.

**Georgia.** On February 13, the same day that the Israeli diplomatic car was bombed in New Delhi, local police defused a similar device in a car belonging to an Israeli embassy staff worker in Tbilisi, the Georgian capital.

**Turkey** In mid-March, based on information provided by Israel, Turkish security authorities reportedly foiled an Iranian terror plot against Israel's diplomatic missions in Istanbul. Four members of the Iranian Revolutionary Guards Quds Force who entered Turkey from Iran were in possession of weapons and materials to be used in the attacks on Turkish soil.

**Cyprus.** On July 7, 2012, local authorities arrested Lebanese-born Swedish citizen Hossam Yaakoub in Limassol, a Hezbollah terrorist tasked with surveilling the arrival of Israeli tourists

on Arkia Airlines from Tel Aviv. Yaakoub acted also as a Hezbollah courier inside the E.U.: France, Netherlands, Turkey.

**Bulgaria.** The gravest terrorist attack has been the bombing of a bus carrying Israeli tourists at the Burgas airport on July 18 2012 (exactly 18 years after the AMIA bombing in Buenos Aires) which killed five Israeli tourists and a Bulgarian citizen. Two Hezbollah operatives were involved in the attack: Australian citizen Malid Farah and Canadian citizen Hassan al-Haj and they were never caught. Already in January 2012 a package suspected of containing explosives was spotted on a bus carrying Israeli ski tourists **from Turkey** to Bulgaria.

The Iranian/Hezbollah foiled or failed attacks took place in what could be defined as “soft countries” in Asia and Africa, countries where the intelligence and law enforcement agencies are not sufficiently professionally trained to challenge this kind of threat, and where the Iranian and Hezbollah activities are in any event low priority for the local security forces. Additionally, some of the attacks have been aimed at “soft targets” like Israeli tourists or local Jewish facilities where the level of security may be even lower.

Moreover, the Tehran regime apparently has calculated, based on past experience, that the governments of these countries will react leniently and that Tehran will pay only a minimal political price. And indeed, no country where these recent attacks occurred has openly accused the Tehran government of involvement, and no country has taken open and strong diplomatic measures against Iran.

Indeed, the experience of the 2012 failed terror attacks has not deterred Iran and its Hezbollah acolytes to continue their aggressive strategy, as the repeated April 2014 attempt in Thailand or the November 2016 in Kenya, demonstrate.

**Nigeria.** Nigeria’s State Security Service (SSS) announced in February 2013 the arrest of three members of an Iranian-backed terror cell that was reportedly planning to carry out attacks on US and Israeli interests as well as former Nigerian officials. The cell was led by a Shiite leader, Abdullahi Mustapha Berende, who was arrested in December 2012. Berende, who had received training in Iran, was aided by Sulaiman Saka, Saheed Adewumi, and Bunyamin Yusuf. Yusuf is still at large. The cell was planning attacks against the Lagos offices of the U.S. Agency for International Development [USAID], the Haifa-based ZIM Integrated Shipping Services Ltd. and the Jewish Cultural Center, according to Bloomberg. Additional press reports have indicated that the cell also staked out hotels frequented by Israelis and Americans.

On the background of the 2013 shameful agreement, the so-called Memorandum of Understanding, between the Argentinian government of President Christina Kirchner and Iran, to “jointly investigate” the terrorist bombing of the Jewish Community building of AMIA in Buenos Aires on July 18, 1994, Hezbollah has permitted itself to return to South America, more specifically **Peru**.

Mohammed Amadar, also known as Mohammed Galeb Hamdar, traveled to Peru from Brazil and married a woman, Carmen Carrion Vela, who holds dual citizenship of Peru and the United States. He was arrested in October 2014 in Lima after the Police found in his apartment hundreds

of pictures of high value targets and critical infrastructure in Peru, Israeli and Jewish targets, including the Israeli Embassy in Lima, Chabad houses and Jewish community centers. Traces of TNT, detonators, and other bomb making paraphernalia were found in the basement of his house. Carrion Vela staged the marriage with Amadar, receiving money from Hezbollah in exchange.

Amdar is standing for trial and if convicted it would be the first time a member of an Islamic terrorist organization has been convicted in Latin America for plotting a terrorist attack. It would also constitute a de facto designation of Hezbollah as a foreign terrorist organization in Peru, a legal precedent that may spur additional designations throughout the region.

To the honor of the new Argentinian President Mauricio Macri it should be stressed that the memorandum with Iran was voided on December 2015, shortly after his inauguration.

It is time the international community understands that the policy of the Iranian government is a whole: combining the export of its radical Islamist revolution, nuclearization, aggressive interference in the internal affairs of Arab and Muslim states, and sophisticated use of international terrorism in order to achieve its strategic goal to become a regional hegemon and a global player, as the flag of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) so clearly proves.

