



Possible Iranian Terrorist Attacks Abroad Following the Israel-Iran War

July 7, 2025

Overview

- ▶ Iran uses global terrorism to promote its national interests, including attacks on Israeli and Jewish targets in response to actions attributed to Israel, such as the attacks on Iran's nuclear program and the elimination of senior Iranian and "resistance axis"¹ figures.
- ▶ Iranian terrorist activity is supervised and directed by the Qods Force of the Revolutionary Guards and the Ministry of Intelligence. To obscure direct Iranian involvement, for the most part the attacks are carried out by proxy organizations, especially Hezbollah, local operatives, and criminal organizations.
- ▶ Following the Israel-Iran War, June 13 to 24, 2025, during which Israel eliminated dozens of Iranian commanders and attacked nuclear facilities and other strategic Iranian capabilities, Iran may, as part of its response, attempt to attack Israeli and Jewish targets worldwide. The arrest of one suspect who planned an attack on Israelis in Cyprus and of another who photographed Jewish targets in Germany, both of whom operated under Qods Force direction, were early signs the threat was manifesting itself.
- ▶ **In ITIC assessment, the unprecedented extent of the damage suffered by Iran, and its need to restore its image and create a balance of deterrence to keep Israel from taking further action, will increase Iran's motivation to attack Israeli and Jewish targets and assets around the world. As in the past, Iranian efforts to exact a price from Israel in the form of a showcase attack abroad can be expected to continue over time, using the wide range of capabilities, networks and facilities available to Iranian intelligence and security services in various countries, while Israel and friendly intelligence services continue to work against them.**

¹ Hezbollah, the Palestinian terrorist organizations operating in Lebanon, the Gaza Strip, Judea and Samaria, pro-Iranian militias in Iraq and the Houthis in Yemen.

Iranian Terrorism as Retaliation against Israel

►The use of global terrorism has been a main component of Iran's strategy to advance its national interests since the Islamic Republic was founded in 1979. Over the years, the targets of Iranian terrorism have been Israel and the Jewish people, the United States and its Western allies, Arab states opposed to Iran, and activists who oppose the Iranian regime.

►Despite terrorist attacks carried out primarily the Qods Force of the Revolutionary Guards and the Ministry of Intelligence, most of the actual operations are conducted by proxy organizations, primarily Hezbollah, or by foreign nationals recruited for the mission, to obscure evidence of Iranian involvement.

►In recent years, Iran's international terrorist activity, along with Hezbollah, has been part of its shadow war against Israel in response to actions attributed to Israel, including the elimination of Hezbollah military commander Imad Mughniyeh in February 2008, the elimination of at least five nuclear scientists in between 2010 and 2012, the elimination of the head of Iran's military nuclear program, Mohsen Fakhrizadeh, in November 2020, and the explosion at the centrifuge assembly plant in Natanz in April 2021. Iran's ability to carry out attacks is also based on an extensive global network, including in Western countries. There have been attempted attacks, plots which have been frustrated and recent exposures:²

◆**Azerbaijan:** An unsuccessful attempt to kill two Jewish individuals in Baku (January 2012) and an attempted attack on the hotel where the Israeli delegation to the Eurovision contest was staying (May 2012). In both cases, the Qods Force was behind the attempts, employing local operatives.

◆**India:** Attempted assassination an Israeli Defense Ministry representative in New Delhi by means of a bomb magnetically attached to his car by a motorcycle rider. An Israeli civilian, the wife of the Defense Ministry envoy, was injured in the blast. The Qods Force was behind the attack (February 2012).

◆**Thailand:** Exposure of a Qods Force plot involving Hezbollah agents who planned to attack an Israeli site in Bangkok using explosive devices (January 2012); the unsuccessful assassination attempt of an Israeli diplomat via a bomb magnetically attached to his car.

² For further information, see the August 2012 ITIC report, [The Qods Force, an elite unit of the Iranian Revolutionary Guards, spearheads Iran's global terrorist campaign](#); Yoram Schweitzer and Anat Shapira, "Iranian Involvement in the International Terrorism Arena," INSS, Memorandum 244 (July 2025).

The attack failed because of a "work accident," in which the bomb exploded prematurely. Three Iranian passport holders linked to the Qods Force were arrested (February 2012).

◆**Bulgaria:** A bomb on a bus carrying Israeli tourists in the town of Burgas. Five Israelis and a Bulgarian bus driver were killed, and more than thirty were injured. The investigation concluded that Hezbollah was behind the attack (July 2012).

◆**Turkey:** An Iranian cell planned to assassinate a former Israeli diplomat and Israeli tourists, the cell was exposed by Turkish authorities with the Mossad's assistance (June 2022).

◆**Greece:** The arrest of two Pakistani nationals who were suspected of planning an attack on the Chabad House in Athens. The Mossad confirmed its involvement in preventing the attack (Israeli media, March 28, 2023).

◆**Cyprus:** Exposure of a terrorist cell working for Iran. Its operatives included Azerbaijani and Pakistani nationals who, under Qods Force direction, tracked Israeli businessmen operating on the island and planned to assassinate them (September to October 2021); another cell directed by the Revolutionary Guards' intelligence organization was revealed to be plotting attacks on Jewish and Israeli targets. Mossad agents in Iran interrogated one of the cell operatives, an Iranian citizen who had planned to assassinate an Israeli businessman and escaped from Cyprus (Haaretz, June 29, 2023).

◆**Germany:** In July 2024, German authorities outlawed the Blue Mosque in Hamburg and the Islamic Center in Hamburg, which operated inside the mosque, because they were extensions of the Iranian regime and had ties to Hezbollah.³ It was also reported that German security authorities were investigating hundreds of individuals suspected of ties to the al-Mustafa Institute in Berlin, an academic institution operated by Iranian authorities in collaboration with a university in Qom, which was suspected of being used by the Qods Force to recruit agents and terrorist operatives (Bild, October 22 and 28, 2024).

◆**The United States:** In November 2024, United States federal prosecutors filed an indictment against an Iranian citizen and two American citizens from New York for planning to assassinate Masih Alinejad, an Iranian exile living in the United States known

³ For further information, see the November 2024 ITIC report, [Hamas and Hezbollah Activities in Europe: Germany as a Test Case](#).

for her criticism of the regime in Tehran. According to the indictment, the Revolutionary Guards also instructed the Iranian to formulate a plan to kill Trump before he was re-elected president (United States Department of Justice website, November 7, 2024).

◆**Australia:** In the 2025 threat assessment, Mike Burgess, director of the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation (ASIO), warned there was no immunity from hostile states such as Iran, whose conduct raised security concerns on Australian soil. He said Iranian activity could be prompted by an "internal interest" and target a regime opponent, or be directed against Israeli targets or other allied entities (ASIO website, February 19, 2025).

◆**The United Kingdom:** Dan Jarvis, Minister for Security in the British Home Office, reported in testimony before Parliament that the security service had foiled twenty Iranian terrorist plots in the UK since the beginning of 2022 (UK Government website, March 4, 2025).

►Iran also has intelligence agents operating under diplomatic cover. A prominent example was Assadollah Assadi, an Iranian intelligence officer who worked as a diplomat at the embassy in Austria and was convicted of involvement in a plot to bomb a conference of the Iranian opposition in France in 2018. According to the indictment, Assadi smuggled the explosives in his diplomatic pouch to avoid inspection and transferred them to an Iranian-origin couple residing in Belgium (De Standaard, May 26, 2023).⁴

►In recent years, Iran has also used criminal elements to carry out attacks. In March 2025, a New York jury convicted two members of an Eastern European crime organization, citizens of Iran and Georgia, of plotting to assassinate regime opponent Masih Alinejad (United States Department of Justice website, March 21, 2025; New York Times, March 14, 2025). An international investigation led by the Mossad and a media exposé in Sweden revealed that Iran used a Swedish criminal organization called Foxtrot to carry out attacks on Israeli and Jewish targets in Sweden and other European countries, including throwing a grenade at the Israeli embassy in Stockholm in January 2024, shooting at the embassies in Copenhagen and Brussels in May 2024, and the attempted bombing of Elbit Systems offices in Gothenburg (Prime

⁴ Assadi was arrested in Germany after information was received from the Mossad, and extradited to Belgium. In February 2021, he was sentenced to twenty years in prison, but in May 2023, he was released and deported to Iran in exchange for the release of a Belgian citizen who had been imprisoned in Iran on charges of espionage and other offenses.

Minister's Office, May 30, 2025; Haaretz, July 4, 2025). In March 2025, the American administration imposed sanctions on Foxtrot and its leader, Rawa Majid, for their activities on behalf of Iran (United States Department of the Treasury, March 12, 2025).

The Threat of Iranian Terrorism after the Israel-Iran War

►With the beginning of the Israel-Iran War on June 13, 2025, the security alert level at Israeli diplomatic missions worldwide was raised to red and strict security measures were put in place, in Jewish institutions as well, out of concern that Iran's response would include terrorist attacks around the world in addition to direct military retaliation against Israel (Israeli media, June 13, 2025). An urgent memo from the United States Department of Homeland Security warned that following the American attack on Iran's nuclear facilities on June 22, 2025, there was a growing threat of Iranian terrorist activity inside the United States. The memo noted that the risk could increase if the Iranian leadership issued a *fatwa* (religious ruling) calling for violent retaliation on targets in the United States, adding that there could also be attempts to attack Jewish and pro-Israeli targets (New York Times, June 23, 2025).

►During and after the war, Iranian terrorist plots were exposed, indicating an initial intent to retaliate by attacking Israeli and Jewish targets, as well as targets identified with Israel's allies:

◆On June 21, 2025, following intelligence from the Mossad, the Cyprus police arrested a British citizen on suspicion of espionage and terrorism. Operating under orders from the Revolutionary Guards, he photographed the main Royal Air Force base on the island and a Cyprus National Guard facility in Paphos, and planned an attack on Israeli civilians in Cyprus (Israeli and Cypriot media, June 21–22, 2025).

◆On July 1, 2025, following intelligence from the Mossad, Danish law enforcement authorities arrested a Danish citizen of Afghan origin on suspicion of operating on behalf of the Qods Force of the Revolutionary Guards. The suspect reportedly photographed institutions and individuals in preparation for possible attacks, including the headquarters of the German-Israeli Society in Berlin and an office frequently visited by Josef Schuster, the president of the Central Council of Jews in Germany (Der Spiegel, Bild, July 1, 2025).