



## The Resistance Axis Reacts to the Israel-US War against Iran and the Elimination of Ali Khamenei

March 2, 2026

### Overview<sup>1</sup>

- ▶ On February 28, 2026, Israel and the United States launched a combined preemptive strike against Iran, attacking dozens of military, security and government targets across the country. Iran's leader, Ali Khamenei, commanders of the army and the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, Khamenei's senior advisors and dozens of other officials were killed in the strikes.
- ▶ Iran confirmed the deaths of Khamenei and the others and announced the establishment of a temporary leadership council. The Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps launched Operation True Promise 4, launching missiles and UAVs at Israel and American bases and vessels across the Middle East.
- ▶ The resistance axis organizations in Lebanon, the Palestinian arena, Yemen, Iraq and Syria condemned the attack and claimed its objective was to support the vision of a "Greater Israel." They issued mourning notices for Khamenei's death, stating his decades-long support for the "resistance" and said they would continue their activity against the "Zionist enemy."
- ▶ On the night of March 1, 2026, Hezbollah fired rockets at northern Israel and claimed it was in response to the elimination of Khamenei, after the organization had previously threatened it would retaliate if Iran's leader were attacked. Hezbollah intervened despite the fact that the Lebanese leadership had exerted pressure on it in an attempt to prevent the country from being dragged into external conflicts.
- ▶ Hamas and the Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) said they would not open a support front for Iran because of the damage done in the Gaza Strip War and the Houthis have not yet announced a renewal of attacks against Israel and against vessels in the Red Sea. Pro-Iranian militias in Iraq claimed responsibility for launching UAVs at American bases in the Kurdish region in the north of the country and Baghdad following strikes on militia bases which killed at least six operatives.

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<sup>1</sup> Click <https://www.terrorism-info.org.il/en> to subscribe and receive the ITIC's daily updates as well as its other publications.

► In ITIC assessment, Hezbollah’s response was the result of Iranian pressure, despite the calls in Lebanon that it not respond. However, its commitment to Iran outweighed its loyalty to Lebanon and led to an extensive, forceful Israeli response. So far the Houthis have not responded but may join the fighting, although their considerations differ from those of Hezbollah.

## The Israel-United States War against Iran

► On the morning February 28, 2026, Israeli time, Israel and the United States launched a combined preemptive strike against Iran, attacking dozens of military, security and government targets in Tehran and across the Islamic Republic (Israeli and American media, February 28-March 1, 2026). The president of the United States said that since the negotiations were deadlocked, the objectives of Operation Epic Fury were to prevent Iran from obtaining nuclear weapons, disrupt its ballistic missile program and prevent Iran from posing a threat to the United States. An additional objective was to create the conditions which would enable the Iranian people to overthrow the regime (White House website, February 28, 2026).

► Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said the objective of Operation Roaring Lion was to remove the existential threat posed by Iran, and called on the Iranian public to take to the streets and overthrow the regime (prime minister’s office website, February 28, 2026). The IDF spokesperson confirmed that the strikes had eliminated dozens of officials, led by the leader of Iran, Ali Khamenei; the minister of defense, Aziz Nasir-Zadeh; the leader’s advisor for security affairs and secretary of the Defense Council, Ali Shamkhani; the chief of staff of the Iranian army, Abdolrahim Mousavi; the commander of the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps, Mohammad Pakpour; the head of the office of the leader of Iran, Mohammad Shirazi (IDF spokesperson, February 28-March 1, 2026).



### Khamenei and other Iranian official eliminated (IDF spokesperson, March 1, 2026)

► Iran confirmed the deaths of Khamenei, Shamkhani, Pakpour and others. The head of the Supreme National Security Council, Ali Larijani, announced the establishment of a temporary

leadership of the president, the head of the judiciary and one of the members of the constitutional council until the election of a new leader, and the president, Masoud Pezeshkian, announced that the leadership council had begun its work. The Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps declared the launch of Operation True Promise 4 and claimed responsibility for launching missiles and UAVs at Israel and American bases and vessels in the Gulf States, including Qatar, Bahrain and the UAE, Saudi Arabia and Oman (which mediated the indirect talks between the United States and Iran), as well as for closing the Strait of Hormuz (Iranian media, February 28-March 1, 2026).

## Responses from the Organizations Belonging to the "Resistance Axis"

### Hezbollah

► On the night of March 1, 2026, Hezbollah fired rockets at northern Israel (IDF spokesperson and Israeli media, March 2, 2026). Hezbollah reported it had attacked the "missile defense base Mishmar HaCarmel south of the 'occupied' city of Haifa with a barrage of precision missiles and a swarm of UAVs." Hezbollah claimed it was a response to the spilling of the "pure blood" of Khamenei "by the criminal Zionist enemy," in defense of Lebanon and the people and in response to the ongoing Israeli "aggression." Hezbollah further stated that the leadership of the "resistance"<sup>2</sup> had long said that continuing the "aggression" and killing leaders and Lebanese civilians "grants us the right to defend ourselves and respond at the appropriate time and place." Hezbollah called the attacks a "legitimate defensive response" and placed responsibility on the Lebanese leadership and the parties involved to put an end to the "Israeli-American aggression" against Lebanon (Hezbollah combat information Telegram channel, March 2, 2026). In response, the IDF attacked Hezbollah targets in south Lebanon and in the Dahiyeh al-Janoubia in Beirut, eliminating senior figures in the organization, and attacking headquarters, weapons depots and other military facilities (IDF spokesperson, March 2, 2026).

► Before Hezbollah joined the war it had expressed full support for Iran in view of the American and Israeli strikes and condemned the elimination of Iran's leader, Ali Khamenei, while stating it would continue the path of the "resistance." During the First Iran-Israel War in June 2025 Hezbollah had warned of "disastrous consequences" in the event of an attack on

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<sup>2</sup> Hamas and the other terrorist organizations operating in Lebanon.

Khamenei,<sup>3</sup> although the initial statements did not include explicit threats of a response against Israel:

- ◆ Hezbollah condemned the American-Israeli attack on Iran, calling it "dangerous escalation and a violation of international law and the UN Charter." The organization accused Israel of "treacherous aggression" which came after months of American-"Zionist" threats to subdue Iran, deny it the right to develop "civilian nuclear capabilities and defensive missile capabilities," claiming it reflected an "arrogant, hegemonic policy to undermine the stability of the region and impose a regional order by force." It was further alleged that the confrontation did not concern the nuclear program, but was rather result of Western refusal to accept the existence of a strong, sovereign independent regional state. Hezbollah claimed the attacks would strengthen Iran and its determination, declared full solidarity and called on the regional states to stand against "the aggression," warning that the United States and Israel would fail to achieve their objectives (al-Akhbar, February 28, 2026).
- ◆ Hezbollah secretary general Na'im Qassem issued a statement regarding "the great and blessed martyrdom of our leader and guardian, Imam al-Sayyid Ali al-Khamenei." He called the strike the "pinnacle of crime," a "mark of shame on the forehead of humanity." He said that alongside mourning and sorrow, he felt pride and honor that Khamenei had died during Ramadan, having achieved a great victory and honor. He claimed Khamenei had left behind "tens of millions" of "the faithful" who would continue in his path and work for the "liberation of 'Palestine' and Jerusalem." Qassem said Hezbollah and the Islamic "resistance" in Lebanon and all those who supported Khomeini's ideology would continue with "unshakable determination" and would not accept humiliation. He added that they would fulfill their duty to confront "the aggression" and would not abandon the field of "honor and resistance," but did not threaten a response (Hezbollah combat information Telegram channel, March 1, 2026).
- ◆ A Hezbollah figure said the organization was on the alert and closely monitoring the military-political developments following the strikes on Iran. He said any future position would come from a comprehensive, evolving assessment of the events (al-Diyar, February 28, 2026).

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<sup>3</sup> See the June 2025 ITIC report, "[Resistance Axis](#)" Reactions to the Israel-Iran Military Conflict".



**Hezbollah supporters at a rally in support of Iran in the Dahiyeh al-Janoubia in Beirut (al-Manar, March 1, 2026)**

- ◆ Hezbollah reportedly raised its level of preparedness to the maximum and was closely monitoring developments, concerned that Israel would simultaneously open a front against Lebanon. It was also claimed that Western information which reached Lebanon indicated that an Israeli strike was a reasonable possibility, and Israel had been given an American green light to act during the war on Iran or after it. Also mentioned were series of Israeli strikes on towns and villages in south Lebanon directed against Hezbollah tunnels and other infrastructure used to attack Israel (al-Madan, February 28, 2026).
- ▶ Given the possibility of Hezbollah's intervention in the war and concern that an Israeli response would not be limited to the organization's targets, the Lebanese leadership tried to persuade Hezbollah to exercise restraint and warned against dragging the country into new "adventures" after the severe damage caused by Hezbollah's "support" for the Gaza Strip:
  - ◆ The president of Lebanon, Joseph Aoun, noted the need to prevent repercussions which would harm Lebanon and its citizens. He called for maintaining a high level of preparedness and coordination by all constitutional authorities and relevant bodies, adding that the situation was sensitive and required a full commitment to national responsibility, placing the interests of Lebanon and the Lebanese above any other consideration. He said keeping Lebanon away from the repercussions of external conflicts and preserving its sovereignty, security and stability were the supreme objectives, and called for strengthening internal solidarity and uniting efforts to deal with emerging challenges. He said the state, with all its institutions, would continue to serve as the central, exclusive authority for ensuring security and stability and for protecting all citizens and Lebanese territory (al-Akhbar, February 28, 2026).

- ◆ The prime minister of Lebanon, Nawaf Salam, called on all Lebanese to act wisely and patriotically, to place the interest of the state above any other consideration, and not to allow Lebanon to be dragged into "adventures" that threatened its security and unity (Nawaf Salam's X account, February 28, 2026).
- ◆ Sources close to the speaker of the Lebanese Parliament, Nabih Berri, said he had warned Hezbollah's leadership not to drag Lebanon into another military confrontation, noting that the state, particularly the Shi'ite community, was no longer capable of bearing the consequences of a new war. According to the sources, Berri hinted that a continuation of Hezbollah's policy of escalation could lead him to reconsider his political relations with it and to withdraw his support (Radio Voice of Lebanon, February 23, 2026).
- ◆ An official source said President Aoun had consulted with Berri, Salam and other officials, emphasizing the need to neutralize Lebanon from the confrontation after the strikes on Iran. According to the source, the president had been informed that Hezbollah would not become involved. A speech by Na'im Qassem, which had been scheduled for February 28, 2026, was postponed, perceived as indicating there was no immediate intent to escalate. However, it was noted that the situation remained unclear, since the Hezbollah leadership has not yet guaranteed it would not open a front in the south, and the messages of calm contradicted the complexity of the internal and external arenas (al-Sharq al-Awsat, February 28, 2026).
- ◆ According to reports, contacts were held by the Lebanese and Hezbollah leaderships to prevent the organization from becoming involved in the war. Meanwhile, Beirut received international warnings according to which a deterioration into a military confrontation would lead to widespread destruction in Lebanon. It was further noted that with the outbreak of the war in Iran, the Hezbollah leadership had disappeared from the public arena pending clarification of the results of the first strike on Iranian figures. According to official sources, efforts were made to persuade the organization not to get involved, and Hezbollah said it would not intervene in the first days because Iran did not currently require assistance, assuming the war would be short, like the First Iran-Israel War. However, a scenario of prolonged escalation or an attempt to overthrow the regime in Iran could change Hezbollah's considerations (al-Madan website, February 28, 2026).

- ◆ Subsequently, diplomatic sources reported that the three heads of the Lebanese government had received messages from the international community, according to which any attack from Lebanese territory, regardless of the perpetrator, would be considered the responsibility of the Lebanese state. Hezbollah reportedly received direct messages through various channels stating that the room for military maneuver had been reduced to zero, and that any involvement in the regional confrontation would be met with a severe response exceeding pinpoint strikes. It was further noted that the strikes in south Lebanon and the Beqa'a Valley were not regarded as isolated events, but as part of a broader equation that distinguished between the organization's continued political integration in the state system and direct harm to its military and security infrastructure. According to the report, the distinction between the political and military wings still existed in international discourse, but it was defined as fragile and entirely dependent on refraining from escalation (Asas Media, March 1, 2026).
- ◆ The Lebanese army and security forces began taking steps to prevent the country from becoming a secondary arena of confrontation within the war. Government sources reported that security measures had been increased around several embassies, especially the American embassy, which also took measures to protect diplomats and staff. Security was reinforced at the Hamat air base following Iranian threats to strike regional American targets. However, it was noted that the measures were precautionary and not necessarily an indication of an immediate threat. On the military level, the Lebanese army and UNIFIL forces reportedly reinforced their patrols and deployments along the border and in areas north and south of the Litani River (Lebanon 24, March 1, 2026).

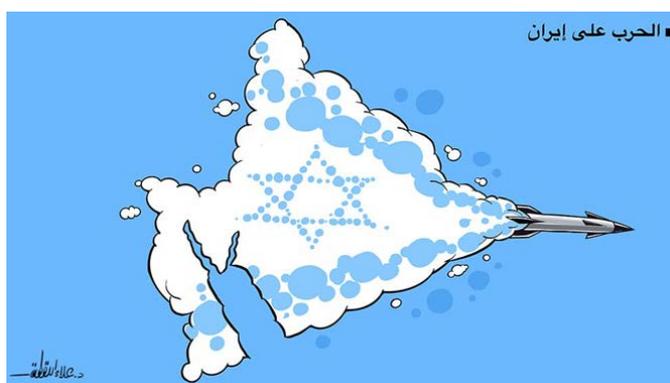
### **The Palestinian Terrorist Organizations**

► The Palestinian terrorist organizations, led by Hamas and the Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ), expressed full support for Iran, claiming the objective of the American-Israeli attack was to advance the vision of a "Greater Israel." They condemned the elimination of Khamenei and praised him for his support of the "resistance." However, the organizations said they would not join the fighting alongside Iran in view of the effects of the war in the Gaza Strip:

- ◆ Hamas expressed solidarity with Iran in the face of "the aggression." It called on the Arab-Muslim nation to unite and show solidarity in order to foil the move and its objectives, which it claimed were meant to reshape the region in accordance with

Israel's aspiration to establish a "Greater Israel" at the expense of Arab-Muslim lands and the interests of the peoples of the region ( Hamas Telegram channel, February 28, 2026; Telegram channel of Hamas spokesperson Hazem Qassem, February 28, 2026).

◆ The Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades, Hamas' military wing, gave its full support to Iran and its people, reportedly the result of its support for "Palestine" and the "resistance." The military wing said it supported the Iranian "response" and had confidence that Iran's armed forces and the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps could inflict heavy losses on the attackers, claiming Israel had failed to "break Gaza's will" for two years and therefore would also fail against Iran. They called on the peoples of the region to stand with Iran against American and "Zionist" policy. According to the Izz al-Din Brigades, "It is a jihad of victory or martyrdom" ( Hamas Telegram channel in Judea and Samaria, March 1, 2026).

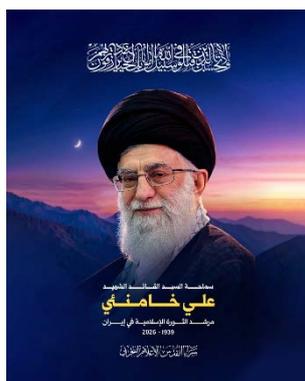


**Cartoon by Alaa al-Laqta, Hamas' house cartoonist: the war against Iran as an expression of "Greater Israel" (Alaa al-Laqta's Instagram account, February 28, 2026)**

◆ The PIJ condemned the American-Israeli strike on Iran, calling it a "dangerous escalation" whose objective was to reshape the Middle East in favor of Israel, damage the Palestinian cause and impose Israeli hegemony. The PIJ noted Iran's right to self-defense, and called on the peoples of the region and Palestinians to rally and unite. The PIJ later issued a mourning notice for the deaths of Iran's leader, Ali Khamenei, and other figures in "a strike which constitutes a war crime." The PIJ called him "a leader who defended the honor of the nation and supported 'Palestine' and al-Aqsa" (PIJ Telegram channel, March 1, 2026).

◆ The Jerusalem Brigades, the PIJ's military wing, issued a mourning notice for the death of "the shaheed of 'Palestine,' " Khamenei, who was "an exceptional leader on the path to Jerusalem, "and of the other "martyred leaders." According to the PIJ, Khamenei's life was full of faith, awareness and revolutionary zeal, and he died a

shaheed in the nation's "most difficult battle." It was further noted that Khamenei had expressed an unwavering position toward "Palestine," had supported the "resistance," provided weapons and had been "present" in every battle and round of fighting. The Jerusalem Brigades added that killing leaders was futile and claimed Iran was "stronger and more resilient," while the "resistance movements"<sup>4</sup> continued the struggle to "humiliate the attackers" (Jerusalem Brigades Telegram channel, March 1, 2026).



**PIJ military wing death notice for Khamenei  
(Jerusalem Brigades Telegram channel, March 1, 2026)**

◆ Senior Hamas and PIJ figures said that in light of the broad American and Israeli attack on Iran, no additional step beyond support and solidarity was required from the Gaza Strip at this stage, since Iran could defend itself and inflict severe blows on Israel if the "confrontation" continued. Sources in the terrorist organizations claimed that the Iranian leadership appreciated their position and did not seek to burden them after two years of a difficult war in the Gaza Strip. They further noted that the "resistance" in the Gaza Strip had nothing to offer beyond political and moral support, since it "had been destroyed and was exhausted." The sources added that there would be no organized attacks on Israel from the Gaza Strip due to its shortage of capabilities and medium- and long-range rockets after the loss of assets during the war, and also lest such a move provide Israel with a pretext for targeted strikes on commanders and operatives. It was also reported that Hamas' security forces and the "restraint forces" of the Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades were deployed more extensively in various areas, with the almost complete disappearance of prominent operatives and the tightening of security measures out of fear of Israeli targeted killings (al-Sharq al-Awsat, February 28, 2026).

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<sup>4</sup> Terrorist organizations.

- ◆ The Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) strongly condemned the "American-Zionist" attack on Iran and declared full support for Iran, its leadership, people and army. The PFLP claimed it was a move led by Washington and Israel as part of a "colonial policy" to control regional resources, especially oil, and reshape the political map in favor of American-"Zionist" interests, while attempting to break the "'resistance axis."<sup>5</sup> The organization claimed the strike violated the UN Charter and international law, and Iran had the right to "respond by all means." The PFLP called on "liberation forces" and activists worldwide to show solidarity, intensify protests, build an international front against the war and work to bring war criminals from Washington and Tel Aviv to justice (Telegram channel of the PFLP central information department, February 28, 2026).
- ◆ In another statement, the PFLP mourned the death of the "great leader," Ali Khamenei, calling his death a loss for the global "resistance" forces "seeking to break American hegemony and destroy the Zionist project." The organization described him as a "revolutionary fighter" who had "dedicated his life to the front lines [sic] of the confrontation against expansion and domination." However, said the PFLP, the will of the peoples to resist and defend sovereignty and honor was only increasing, and Iran was moving forward and overcoming the tragedy. The organization added that the effective way to confront imperialist and "Zionist arrogance" was by strengthening coordination among the "liberation" forces (PFLP Telegram channel, March 1, 2026).



**A PFLP notice mourning Khamenei's death (PFLP Telegram channel, March 1, 2026)**

- ◆ The Palestinian Mujahideen Movement and its military wing, the Mujahideen Brigades, expressed its condolences for the "martyrdom" of Khamenei. It praised his

<sup>5</sup> Iran, Hezbollah, the Palestinian terrorist organizations, the Houthis in Yemen and the Shi'ite militias in Iraq.

contribution to jihad and the "resistance" and his continued support for the Palestinians and their "struggle," calling "resistance" the "effective way to restore rights." It added that targeted killings would not break the spirit of the peoples or provide Israel and its supporters with security, but would increase determination to continue the "struggle" until "liberation and honor" (Palestine Mujahideen Brigades Telegram channel, March 1, 2026).

## The Houthis

► The Houthi leadership issued statements of support for Iran and its attacks on Israel and American bases, and condemned the elimination of Khamenei. However, the Houthis did not renew attacks on vessels in the Red Sea or renew launching missiles and UAVs at Israel:

- ◆ The Houthi leader, Abdul-Malik al-Houthi, called the American-Israeli aggression against Iran "unjustified," claiming its objective was to enable the "Zionist enemy" to control the region under the guise of changing the Middle East as part of its "Greater Israel" plan. He said the entire Islamic world should stand alongside Iran to stop the "aggression," adding that the Houthis fully supported Iran, which was waging the struggle of the entire Islamic nation, and they were fully prepared for any development. He claimed the Iranian strikes on American Middle East bases were a "legitimate right" and not an attack on the states in which they were located, since it was from those bases that it was itself attacked. He called on the masses to take to the streets to show support for the Iranian people (al-Masirah, February 28, 2026).



**A mass demonstration in Sana'a in support of Iran (al-Masirah, March 1, 2026)**

- ◆ The Houthi supreme political council condemned the "American-Israeli aggression" against Iran and claimed its objective was to break the "deterrence equation." The council expressed full, unwavering solidarity with Iran, its leadership, government and

people. According to the statement, the "aggression" was another step in the "American-Israeli project" to subjugate the Middle East and enable Israeli hegemony. The council added that escalation would not make Israel secure and its expansion would only lead to a broader confrontation and escalate the "resistance" (Houthi combat information X account, February 28, 2026). The council sent its condolences to the Iranian people and government on the death of Khamenei, claiming his death would only strengthen the determination of the Iranian people and jihad would continue without a pause. It said the "crime" of the United States and Israel would increase the steadfastness and determination of the [Islamic] faithful to confront "tyrants and oppressors" (Saba, March 1, 2026).

- ◆ The Houthi political bureau affirmed the solidarity of the Yemeni people with the Iranian people, leadership, army and government. According to the bureau, the "aggression" against Iran was caused by its support for the Palestinians, and was not directed only against Iran but against the entire region to shape "the new Middle East." The bureau claimed that Iran would remain a model of strength, determination, steadfastness and generosity as it has been for more than forty years (Houthi combat information X account, February 28, 2026). On another occasion, the bureau called Khamenei "a symbol of unwavering devotion in his struggle against the axis of evil, arrogance and tyranny led by the United States" (Houthi combat information Telegram channel, March 1, 2026).

- ◆ Mohammad Ali al-Houthi, a member of the Houthi supreme political council, called on the Arab-Muslim peoples to support Iran, which was waging the battle of the entire nation against "Israeli-American tyranny." He welcomed the "legitimate" Iranian strikes on Israel and the American bases, and claimed the Houthis were prepared for any scenario (Mohammad Ali al-Houthi's X account, February 28, 2026).

### **The Pro-Iranian Militias in Iraq**

► Reportedly, the pro-Iranian Shi'ite militias in Iraq were also targeted, but no formal statement was published by Israel or the United States regarding strikes. On February 28, two deaths were reported in a strike on the Jurf al-Nasr base, south of Baghdad, which belongs to the Popular Mobilization Forces, the umbrella organization of the militias. The Hezbollah Brigades in Iraq confirmed two militia operatives were killed. On March 1, the Popular Mobilization Forces confirmed that four of its operatives had been killed in another strike in

Diyala province, northeast of Baghdad, and that at least eight others were wounded. It was later reported that a headquarters of the Hezbollah Brigades in the al-Qa'im area in western Iraq was struck and that the Jurf al-Nasr base was struck again, and the Hezbollah Brigades published the names of five operatives who were killed (al-Arabiya, March 1-2, 2026; Sabereen News, March 2, 2026).

► However, the Islamic Resistance in Iraq stated that on February 28, 2026, its forces had used dozens of UAVs to attack 16 American bases in Iraq and other Middle Eastern countries (Baghdad Today, March 1, 2026). The Saraya Awliya al-Dam, which is considered a front group with ties to Asa'ib Ahl al-Haq, claimed responsibility for launching UAVs at American bases in Erbil, the capital of Iraqi Kurdistan and for launching a missile at the Victoria Base at Baghdad International Airport (Saraya Awliya al-Dam Telegram channel, March 1-2, 2026). (Saraya Awliya al-Dam Telegram channel, March 1-2, 2026).



**Saraya Awliya al-Dam operatives in a video before the launch of rockets  
(Militia's Telegram channel, March 1, 2026)**

► The militias in Iraq also condemned the American-Israeli strikes in Iran and the strikes on Popular Mobilization Forces bases, and issued mourning notices for the deaths of Khamenei and senior officials of the Iranian regime:

- ◆ The Hezbollah Brigades declared that the war ignited by "the criminal American president who represents the forces of falsehood, the allies of the Zionist entity," was against the "forces of truth, the nation of Muhammad." The Brigades called it the "moment of reckoning," with no room for neutrality, adding that the enemy had to be dragged into a war of attrition which would cause it suffering wherever it was, and there could be no American presence left in the region, especially in Iraq. The militia claimed it would attack American bases in retaliation for the deaths of the two operatives in the

Jurf al-Nasr attack, and called on the "resistance fighters"<sup>6</sup> in "Palestine," Lebanon and Syria to take revenge on the "criminals," settle accounts with them and penetrate into the heart of the "Zionist entity" (Hezbollah Brigades Telegram channel, February 28, 2026).

◆ The al-Nujaba Movement called for a "sacred campaign" of fighting and steadfastness. The militia called it a "sacred duty" because of fatwas calling for jihad if the center of Islam in Iran were exposed to danger from the "axis of evil and satanism" (al-Nujaba Movement Telegram channel, February 28, 2026). The militia's secretary general, Akram al-Kaabi, said the American president would be held accountable and punished for his tyranny and obstinacy, calling him a "toy" in the hands of Netanyahu. Al-Kaabi said the militia would not remain neutral, but would "shake the ground beneath its enemies, will not abandon its alliance and will not compromise on its honor" (al-Nujaba Movement Telegram channel, February 28, 2026).

◆ The Sarhat al-Quds Brigades, a front group militia of the al-Nujaba Movement, said what was yet to come would be greater and more severe, claiming there were precise weapons that had not yet entered service. It issued a video of the launch of three UAVs which it claimed were directed at American and Israeli targets (Sarhat al-Quds Brigades Telegram channel, February 28, 2026).

◆ The Asa'ib Ahl al-Haq militia condemned the "American-Israeli aggression" which "threatens regional and global peace and security," and said it would support Iran and was prepared to contribute to prevent the continuation of the aggression and to spare the peoples of the region the horrors of wars and destruction. It called the strike on the Jurf al-Nasr camp "aggression which must be confronted and prevented from recurring," and called on the Iraqi government to fulfill its national and moral duty to defend Iraq's sovereignty and preserve its security and stability (Asa'ib Ahl al-Haq Telegram channel, February 28, 2026). The militia's secretary general, Qais al-Khazali, said "the shaheed Khamenei fought against the tyrants and despots of the era, and the enemies of Allah" (Qais al-Khazali's X account, March 1, 2026).

◆ Saraya Awliya al-Dam, which is considered a front group militia and maintains ties with Asa'ib Ahl al-Haq, announced that it had raised its level of alert from the first moment of the "Zionist-American aggression" to support Iran. The militia claimed its

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<sup>6</sup> Terrorist operatives.

operatives had their fingers on the trigger and were ready to fire at all American military installations in Iraq and beyond because they were "legitimate targets" [sic]. The militia claimed the "jihad fighters" would determine how the campaign ended, and they would "fight under Khamenei's banner to the last drop of blood" (Saraya Awliya al-Dam Telegram channel, February 28, 2026).

- ◆ The chairman of the Popular Mobilization Forces, Faleh al-Fayyadh, mourned Khamenei's death, the result of "Zionist-American aggression." He said the strike was directed not only at a leader but at a senior religious and political position in an attempt to break the people's will and silence the voice of the "resistance" (Popular Mobilization Forces Telegram channel, March 1, 2026).

- ◆ The Sayyid al-Shuhadaa Brigades expressed its condolences for Khamenei's death and claimed that the "sin" committed by the "Zionist-American occupation" [sic] would be punished and have "no secure foothold in the region." It called on "fighters" to prepare for a long campaign to defend Islam and avenge the killers of the leader of the Muslims (Sayyid al-Shuhadaa Brigades Telegram channel, March 1, 2026).

### **The Militias in Syria**

- ▶ The Islamic Resistance Front in Syria – Men of Valor condemned the "Zionist aggression" against Iran, calling it a serious escalation which threatened regional security and stability and exposed the "expansionist project" of the "occupation entity." It claimed that an attack on Iran was an attack on every Arab-Muslim state and declared its full support for Iran and its "legitimate right to defend its sovereignty and security in accordance with international laws and conventions." It called on the Arab-Muslim nation to stand as one against the "Zionist strikes" and to foil the plots seeking to "dismantle the region" (Islamic Resistance Front in Syria Telegram channel, February 28, 2026). The organization issued a mourning notice for Khamenei, who "left a mark on the path of resistance and defense of principles." According to the notice, "messages of martyred leaders do not die but live in the conscience of the nation and the path of truth and 'resistance' for which they gave their lives continues generation after generation." The organization said confrontation with the enemy was not a choice but a religious duty, and called for preparation for the anticipated confrontation (Islamic Resistance Front in Syria Telegram channel, March 1, 2026).

- ▶ An unknown organization called Hay'at Ansar al-Tawhid claimed its fighters in the rural area of Daraa in southern Syria had used eight Grad rockets to attack "occupation entity" positions

as part of the "revenge of the free peoples of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip" attack. The statement claimed the attack was response to the "crimes of the occupier" and had breached the security belt established to prevent attacks along the borders, and threatened more severe retribution. However, there was no direct reference to the Israeli-American attack on Iran (Misdar Mas'oul X account, March 1, 2026). The IDF spokesperson did not confirm strikes on army positions.