

# *Iran's Foreign Ministry ready to continue cooperation with IRGC Quds Force*

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Tehran, January 3 (RHC)-- Iran's Foreign Ministry is ready to continue its cooperation with the Quds Force of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) and its new commander Esmail Qaani, Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif says.

In a message to Qaani on Friday, Zarif extended his congratulations to the new IRGC commander, who was appointed by Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei earlier in the day following the assassination of Lieutenant General Qassem Soleimani in a U.S. airstrike in the Iraqi capital Baghdad. The top Iranian diplomat wished the IRGC Quds Force success under the new chief.

In a statement posted on his official website, Ayatollah Khamenei, described Brigadier General Qaani as one of the IRGC's most prominent commanders during former Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein's imposed war on Iran, which lasted eight years starting in 1980.

"Following the martyrdom of the glorious General Qassem Soleimani, I name Brigadier General Esmail Qaani as the commander of the Quds Force of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps," the Leader said. The IRGC announced in a statement on Friday morning that General Soleimani and Abu Mahdi al-

Muhandis, the second-in-command of Iraq's Popular Mobilization Units (PMU), were martyred in the vicious operation.

Following Soleimani's assassination, Ayatollah Khamenei said those who assassinated the IRGC Quds Force commander must await a harsh revenge.

Ayatollah Khamenei said the “cruellest people on earth” assassinated the “honorable” commander who “courageously fought for years against the evils and bandits of the world.”

The Iranian Intelligence Ministry also said the criminal act would certainly not go unanswered. In a statement, the ministry said the global arrogance once again revealed its support for terrorists by committing such a brutal crime.

It warned the United States and its stooges to be aware of the fact that the killing of Iranians and Iraqis, who had committed no crime but eliminating the US-led Daesh Takfiri terrorists, has created unbreakable and eternal unity between the Iranian and Iraqi nations.

The Islamic resistance front would cut the hands of the US and its allies from the region, the ministry said, adding Iranian security forces would also spare no efforts to punish the brutal American terrorists. The ministry emphasized that commanders of the resistance front are determined to continue the path of Soleimani and his companions.

Iran's Defense Minister Brigadier General Amir Hatami condemned the evil act by the American terrorists and expressed his deep condolences over the assassination of the senior PMU commander after years of his fight against terrorism.

In a message to his Iraqi counterpart Najah Hassan Ali al-Shammari on Friday, Hatami said the martyrdom of Iranians and Iraqis would certainly strengthen convergence and unity between the two Muslim nations and raise hope that they would achieve final victory.

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