



Written by [Steve Bonta](#) on July 31, 2024

Israeli Assassinations Escalate Middle East Tensions

In a dramatic escalation of the Middle East war overnight, the Israeli military carried out two high-profile assassinations within hours of each other in two separate regional capitals.

First, IDF bombers carried out an air strike near Beirut, Lebanon, killing Hezbollah commander Fuad Shukr, who was wanted by the United States in connection with the 1983 Marine barracks bombing in Lebanon. The United States has had a longstanding bounty of \$5 million on Fuad for the massive truck bombing, which killed 241 U.S. military personnel, including 220 Marines, was part of a larger double terrorist attack that simultaneously killed an additional 64 people at a second bombing at a French military facility. The killing of Shukr was in retaliation for a recent Hezbollah strike on a soccer field in the Druze village of Majdal Shams in northern Israel, which killed 12 children. That attack was the highest civilian death toll in Israeli territory since the war began last October 7. Hezbollah denied the attack, claiming it was likely a malfunctioning Israeli air-defense missile that landed on the soccer field.

Hours later, an apparent Israeli missile struck a building in Tehran, Iran, killing Hamas political leader Ismail Haniyeh. Haniyeh, who lived outside of Palestine, was in Tehran for the inauguration of new Iranian president Masoud Pezeshkian. He was said to be a key broker in ceasefire and hostage release negotiations with between Israel and Hamas.

The brazen attack on Iran's capital may signal a renewal of direct tit-for-tat attacks between Israel and Iran, and a widening regional conflict. The Iranian government has vowed revenge against Israel and the United States for the killing of two leaders of the top two Iran-backed militant organizations in the Middle East.



AP Images

Hamas members protesting the killing of Ismail Haniyeh



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