Iran's Supreme Leader 'orders direct attack on Israel' after assassination of Haniyeh

Hamas's political bureau chief Ismail Haniyeh was killed in Tehran by an airstrike widely attributed to Israel less than 24 hours ago.

Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Khamenei issued an order for Iran to strike Israel directly. (Image: Getty)

Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Khamenei has ordered a direct attack on Israel (/latest/israel) in retaliation for the assassination of Hamas's political bureau chief Ismail Haniyeh.

Security sources told the New York Times that Khamenei is enraged by the killing in Tehran and wants an immediate response.

The Supreme Leader gave the order at an emergency meeting of Iran's Supreme National Security Council this morning, following the announcement that Haniyeh had been killed.

This has been revealed by three Iranian officials, two of whom are members of the Revolutionary Guards. Their names are not publicly known.

Iran vowed a "harsh and painful response" to the rocket attack on a veteran's facility in northern Tehran. Khamenei also said that "avenging Haniyeh's blood (is) our duty".

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Israel (https://www.express.co.uk/latest/israel) has not acknowledged or denied the attack, but the country has a lor history of killing enemies abroad, including Iranian nuclear scientists and military commanders, according to the Nev York Times.

It is currently unclear how exactly Iran will respond and whether it will once again calibrate its attack to steer clear o escalation.

Iranian military officials are reportedly considering an attack using drones and missiles on military targets near Tel Aviv and Haifa, avoiding civilian areas.

The Iranian officials said they are also considering a coordinated attack from Iran and other fronts where it has allied forces, including Yemen, Syria and Iraq, for maximum effect.

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Khamenei has reportedly instructed military commanders to prepare an attack and defence should the conflict expa and see Iran hit by both Israel (https://www.express.co.uk/latest/israel) and the United States.

Other Iranian officials, including the new president, Masoud Pezeshkian, the foreign ministry, the Guards and Iran's mission to the UN, have all said that Iran would retaliate and had a right to defend itself against a transgression of it sovereignty.

Many supporters of the Iranian government expressed outrage at the failure to thwart the assassination, saying only handful of senior security officials would have known where Mr. Haniyeh was staying.

"Iran likely believes it has no choice other than retaliating to deter further Israeli attacks, defend its sovereignty, and preserve its credibility in the eyes of its regional partners," said Ali Vaez, the Iran director of the International Crisis Group.

Iran (/latest/iran)   Israel (/latest/israel)