

# Infamous Assassinated Hezbollah Terror Mastermind Imad Mughniyeh Revealed as Founder of Iran-Backed Shia Militias in Iraq

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One of the most historically-feared architects of Iran's terror network in Lebanon has been named as a key contributor to the growth of the Tehran-backed Shia militias that now wield decisive power in Iraq.

In an interview with Iraqi newspaper Al-Akhbar that was translated by the Middle East Media Research Institute (MEMRI), Abu Mahdi Al-Muhandis – the deputy commander of the Iranian-backed PMU militia – paid fulsome tribute to the late Hezbollah terrorist leader Imad Mughniyeh's role with Iraqi Shia organizations stretching back to the 1980s.

Together with his Hezbollah comrade Mustafa Badr Al-Din, Mughniyeh “trained the first armed jihad groups of the Iraqi opposition in 1982, as well as the first resistance units that opposed the [American] occupation in 2003,” Al-Muhandis said.

Before his assassination in Damascus in February 2008 in a car bombing widely assumed to have been the work of a joint CIA-Mossad team of agents, Mughniyeh was renowned as one of Hezbollah's most ruthless and effective operatives – spending nearly thirty years at the helm of a regional and global terror network that thrives more now than at any time in the past.

Mughniyeh, 45 at the time of his death, was personally responsible for the murder of hundreds of people in various terrorist outrages. As Hezbollah's chief of international operations, Mughniyeh masterminded several deadly terror attacks – among them the 1983 bombing of the US Embassy in Beirut, which killed 63, and the subsequent bombing in the same year of military barracks in the Lebanese capital in which 241 American and 58 French service members lost their lives.

Mughniyeh's footprint also extended to Latin America, where he directed the 1992 bombing of the Israeli Embassy in Buenos Aires and the 1994 bombing of the AMIA Jewish center in the Argentine capital – the worst single act of antisemitic terror since the Second World War.

As well as bombings, Mughniyeh was involved with hijacking, kidnapping – including the abduction of CIA Beirut station chief William Buckley, who was eventually murdered – and arms trafficking. Mughniyeh was a central player in the infamous “Karine A” affair of 2002, when the IDF intercepted a shipload of weapons bound for the Palestinian Authority (PA). Mughniyeh's deputy, Hajj Bassem, facilitated the delivery of the weapons to the carrier, the “Karine A” ship, from an Iranian vessel under his command.

While Mughniyeh's death was a blow to Hezbollah's global subterfuge, the arsenal at the terror organization's disposal in Lebanon is much greater than during its last war with Israel, in 2006, despite UN Security Council resolutions demanding its disarmament. Meanwhile, Mughniyeh's tactical vision of maximum harm against American as well as Israeli interests survives in the threat issued by Al-Muhandis, the Shia commander in Iraq.

“The possibility of friction or a confrontation between the PMU forces and the American forces is very real,” the Al-Akhbar report said. “Al-Muhandis does not rule this out ‘if Iraq's sovereignty comes under attack.’”