



November 16, 2015

Profile of IRGC Fighters Killed in Syria during the Past Month (Updated to November 16, 2015) Dr. Raz Zimmt¹



The Syrian-Iranian operations room set up in Aleppo before the Syrian army attack, waged with the support of Iranian fighters. The poster in the upper left hand corner shows Khamenei, Khomeini and an unidentified third person. The Persian text at the right reports on the operation room's activities (Fars News, October 22, 2015).

Overview

1. Since the outbreak of the Syrian civil war in 2011, the Qods Force of the Iranian Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC), under the command of Qasem Soleimani, has led the effort to keep Damascus and strategic Syrian strongholds in the north from falling into the hands of the rebels, and to prevent the collapse of the Syrian regime. The Iranians have supported the Syrians with arms and guidance, and have sent Iranian advisors and fighters to Syria for close cooperation with the Syrian army and security forces. Iranians have also employed Shi'ite proxies in the fighting in Syria (including Hezbollah and foreign Shi'ite fighters from Iraq, Afghanistan and Pakistan).

¹ This study was written in coordination with the research staff of the Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center.

2. Iran's involvement in Syria, like its involvement in Iraq, Lebanon and Yemen, had, until recently, involved a few hundred Iranian advisors and several thousand Shi'ite fighters directed by the Qods Force. **The IRGC's presence was limited and its function was mainly advisory.** The Iranians did not employ organic military units against the rebels and usually did not involve themselves directly in the fighting (although on occasion IRGC operatives found themselves in the crossfire between the Syrian regime forces and the rebels, which led to their deaths).

3. The military successes of ISIS, Al-Nusra Front and other rebel organizations in northwest Syria raised doubts among the Iranians as to Assad's ability to survive over time as president of Syria. **That led Iran to significantly increase its support for the Syrian regime,** whose control was waning in regions vital to Syrian interests ("Little Syria"). Thus in the middle of September 2015 Iran increased the number of its forces in Syria, apparently dispatching between 1,500 and 2,000 fighters, some of them taking an active part in the fighting. The reinforcements, composed of IRGC and Shi'ite foreign fighters from Afghanistan and Iraq, were sent **to support the Syrian army in its attack in northern Syria at the beginning of October 2015.**

4. **The Syrian army attack,** with the combined aid of Iranian and Hezbollah fighters and Russian aerial support, **began on October 7, 2015.** A **joint Syrian-Iranian operations room was set up in the Aleppo region** to coordinate and command the attack forces. Fighting was waged in the areas of Hama, Idlib and Aleppo to relieve the strategic pressure exerted by Al-Nusra Front and its allies on the Syrian regime's vital strongholds in Latakia and along the coast. Apparently, at first the Syrian army had local successes, but at the end of October the attack petered out and **the rebel organizations, including Al-Nusra Front and ISIS, gained the initiative.** Battles are currently being fought in **the rural areas south of Aleppo, north of Hama and around Idlib, and so far they have not been won.**

5. **The fierce battles in northern and western Syria caused the Iranian forces heavy losses:** since the beginning of the ground offensive in the **north at least 53 Iranian IRGC fighters have been killed in Syria** (as of November 15, 2015).² That is a sharp increase in the number of Iranian dead relative to the period before the beginning of the ground offensive. **The large number of Iranians killed in a short**

² The IRGC calls the Iranians killed "martyrs [who died] defending the sacred sites" (shohada-ye modafe-e haram), after the mosque in the southern suburb of Damascus, where, according to the tradition, **Zaynab, the daughter of the Imam Ali and the granddaughter of Muhammad,** is buried. **The name was chosen deliberately because defending a "sacred site" provides religious legitimacy for Iran's involvement in Syria. Hezbollah uses a similar religious justification for its military involvement in Syria.**

time, and the strikingly large number of officers (including high-ranking officers), would seem to indicate that **IRGC fighters are on the front line of the current ground offensive**.



Qasem Soleimani, Qods Force commander, at the grave of an IRGC fighter killed in Syria (Afsaran.ir, April 14, 2015).

6. An analysis of the profiles of the Iranians killed indicates that **the overwhelming majority belonged to the IRGC's regular fighting units**. That means that most of Iran's military involvement in Syria is based on those units, at the expense of the Qods Force. While the Qods Force commander, Qasem Soleimani, personally leads the attack in northwest Syria and coordinates with the Syrian army, the IRGC and Hezbollah, **the main thrust is carried out by fighters in the regular IRGC units** (infantry, armored corps and special forces). The relatively large size of those units (compared with the Qods Force, which is relatively limited in size) makes it possible for them to send many more fighters to the battle zones and to provide a response for the constraints on Iran in Syria.

7. The profiles of the Iranians killed also indicate **the preponderance of fighters in special units** among the forces sent to Syria. They include the Saber brigade, the Ansar al-Mahdi security unit, the 33rd Airborne Brigade and the 154th Battalion. That would seem to indicate an Iranian effort to send **trained fighters with special skills** to carry out special missions, possibly including **gathering intelligence**. The **Shi'ite foreign fighters**, especially those from **Afghanistan** in the **Fatemiyoun Brigade**, continue to fight on the front lines of the ground offensive and to bear the brunt of the fighting. However, their numbers among those killed since the beginning of the Syrian

army attacks have been relatively low because of the sharp rise in the number of IRGC fighters killed.

8. **The heavy losses incurred by Iran in Syria have required the Iranian leadership to provide justification for Iran's military involvement in Syria and explanations for the high number of Iranians killed.** To that end the regime instituted a media campaign to enlist public opinion to support Iranian involvement in Syria and obviate any possible criticism. The campaign includes stressing Shi'ite religious symbolism and praising **sacrifice for the sake of defending the sites in Syria sacred to Shi'a**, especially the shrine of Set Zaynab (the prophet Muhammad's granddaughter), south of Damascus (a promotional tactic also used by Hezbollah). The Iranian leadership also employs the arguments of **Iran's fundamental commitment to continue its support for the Assad regime** and its benefits for Iranian national interests.

9. Public reactions in Iran to reports of the increasing number of Iranians killed in Syria have been mixed. While Iranian users in news websites and social media have expressed sorrow for the death of their fellow citizens, **they are beginning to wonder about the large number of deaths and have started asking if a campaign costing so many lives is worthwhile.** Although public criticism of the fighting in Syria is limited so far, it can be assumed that as the number of Iranians killed rises, and as Iranian military involvement in Syria becomes deeper, public criticism and protest against continuing involvement will increase.

10. A key question is whether **the heavy Iranian losses will lead to internal disagreement within the Iranian leadership regarding the advisability of Iran's strategy in Syria.** So far, there have been no significant indications of such disagreements. However, remarks recently made by Mohammad-Ali Jafari, commander of the IRGC, might hint at **the first cracks in the leadership's position on the political future of Bashar Assad in an eventual political arrangement in Syria.** Jafari, speaking to a group of students, said that some of Iran's officials did not understand why Iran had to show such sensitivity to President Assad, who enjoys great support and on whom the "resistance" in Syria depends. He did not mention the names of those officials but their names and positions might be exposed if Iran sinks deeper into the Syrian mire and internal criticism in Iran grows.

11. This study is composed of the following sections:

- 1) **Section 1:** Iranian involvement in Syria and recent changes
- 2) **Section 2:** Profile of Iranians killed in Syria
- 3) **Section 3:** The influence of Iran's heavy losses on its strategy in Syria
- 4) **Section 4:** Iranian public reactions to the heavy losses in Syria
- 5) **Section 5:** Iranian regime explanations and media propaganda regarding the heavy losses in Syria
- 6) **Appendix:** Names of Iranians killed since the beginning of the Syrian army's ground offensive (as of November 16, 2015).

Section 1: Iranian Involvement in Syria and Recent Changes

Iranian involvement in Syria prior to October 2015

1. The Syrian civil war that broke out in 2011 presented Iran with a significant challenge: the fall of the Bashar Assad's regime was liable to remove a strategic ally from the "resistance camp" and weaken Iran's regional status. It was also liable to weaken Hezbollah in Lebanon, Iran's most important and effective proxy, through the loss of its logistic base in Syria, vital for Iran's liaison with the organization and a conduit for the transfer of support.
2. Since the outbreak of the Syrian civil war, the IRGC's Qods Force, commanded by Qasem Soleimani, has led the Iranian effort to keep Damascus and the strategic strongholds in northern Syria from falling into the hands of the rebels and to prevent the collapse of the Syrian regime. Iran has sent Syria weapons, guidance and advisors to work closely with the Syrian army and security forces, and to direct the fighting proxies (Hezbollah operatives and Shi'ite foreign fighters from Iraq, Afghanistan and Pakistan). Beginning in 2012, the IRGC enlisted **several thousand Shi'ite volunteers from among the Afghan refugees living in Iran to fight in Syria**. They fought in the **Fatemiyoun Brigade** and received a monthly salary and other benefits.
3. In recent years senior IRGC officials related to the military support Iran gave the Syrian regime: Brigadier General Hossein Hamedani, senior Iranian military advisor in Syria killed on October 8, 2015 near Aleppo, said in May 2014 that Iran had established "a second Hezbollah" in Syria and that "cultural centers" of the Basij (a semi-military organization of volunteers operating in Iran) were operating in 14 Syrian governorates. At a conference held in the city of Hamedan, he said that Iran shared with Syria the knowledge it had gained in the Iran-Iraq War. He added that a number of groups supporting the Syrian regime had been established in Iran to make the Syrian regime and people aware of the Iranian people's support for them (Fars News and Tasnim News, May 4, 2014).
4. On October 26, 2015, Hossein Salami, deputy IRGC commander, answered an Iranian TV interviewer's questions about Iran's military support for the Assad regime. He said that in addition to Iran's political support for the Syrian regime, it provided the Syrian army with strategic, operational and tactical support. It shared its combat experience with the Syrian army, helped reconstruct it, provided guidance for its

commanders and had established a popular militia that operated the way the Basij force operated in Iran. Iranian support for the Syrian regime, he said, direct and indirect via Hezbollah, with the recent addition of Russian aerial support, have enabled the Syrian regime to survive so far.

5. **In the meantime, Iran has used local terrorist networks** (Hezbollah, local Druze networks and Palestinian Islamic Jihad operatives) **to construct a terrorist infrastructure in the Golan Heights to threaten Israel**, exploiting the vacuum created by the lack of Syrian governance. However, Iran's strategic preference is clearly to support the Syrian army ground offensive in northern Syria, with the objective of preserving the survival of the Syrian regime, not handling and directing the activities of terrorist networks in the Golan Heights against Israel (which can easily change, depending on developments in the Syria).

Recent changes in Iranian involvement in Syria

6. Until recently, Iran's involvement in Syria, like its involvement in Iraq, Lebanon and Yemen, was limited to Iranian advisors and Shi'ite proxies, while Iran itself did not operate fighting units. **The IRGC presence in Syria was limited**, and generally speaking not involved in the fighting (although IRGC personnel were sometimes caught in the crossfire and killed). As a result, until recently Iranian losses were relatively few and did not draw much attention or criticism in Iran or comment abroad.

7. At the beginning of June 2015 the Hezbollah-affiliated Lebanese website Al-Hadath reported that **Qods Force commander Qasem Soleimani had visited the front to see the fighting first-hand and to formulate a strategy for halting the radical Sunni organizations**. According to the report, he headed a delegation of high-ranking Iranian and Hezbollah military advisors to Idlib in the al-Ghab plain in northern Syria. There they examined the Syrian army's deployment and **ways to halt the advance of Al-Nusra Front and its allies towards Latakia from Idlib**. It was also reported that during the visit he appointed a high-ranking IRGC officer (apparently Hossein Hamedani) **to head a group of military advisors in Syria and to represent him in conducting military affairs in Syria, in collaboration with Hezbollah and the Syrian army**.

8. The mounting military successes of ISIS, Al-Nusra Front and other rebel organizations, some of them supported by the United States, Turkey, Qatar and Saudi Arabia, have raised doubts among the Iranians concerning the Syrian regime's ability to survive. The successes of the rebels, especially in northwestern Syria, the

result of the ongoing depletion of the Assad regime's resources, **forced Iran to increase its support of the regime**, whose control was dwindling to vital areas in Syria ("Little Syria"). It is possible that Russian military involvement in the fighting influenced Iran's decision. In any event, **Iran significantly increased its forces in Syria and the IRGC became directly involved in the fierce battles against the rebels in the northwest.**

9. **Iran sent about 1,500-2,000 reinforcements to Syria in the middle of September 2015.**³ They consisted of IRGC fighters and Shi'ite foreign fighters from Afghanistan and Iraq, and their mission was to support the Syrian army in a ground offensive in northwestern Syria begun on October 7, 2015. The Hezbollah-affiliated Lebanese newspaper Al-Akhbar reported that on **October 11, 2015, Qasem Soleimani had arrived in northwestern Syria** and commanded the Syrian army offensive with IRGC support (Al-Akhbar, October 13, 2015).



Qasem Soleimani briefs fighters, apparently in the region of Latakia (Facebook, October 13, 2015).

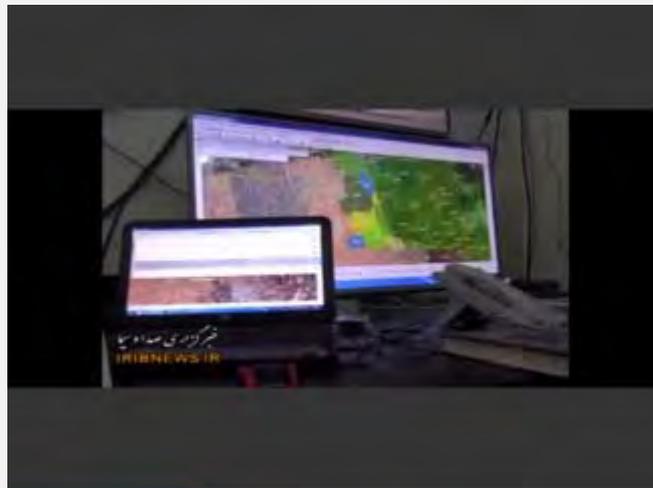
10. **On October 7, 2015, the Syrian army began a ground offensive that included the regions of Hama, Idlib and Aleppo.** One objective was most likely to **relieve the strategic pressure** exerted on the area by Al-Nusra Front and its allies (include the Al-Fatah Army) on the **Syrian regime's vital strongholds in Latakia** and along the coast. Another was to establish **Syrian regime control** in the cities of **Homs, Hama and Aleppo.** One goal was to retake the area around Idlib, which had fallen to the rebels, and to widen Syrian regime control from Aleppo to Syria's border

³ According to an AP report (October 14, 2015), Iran sent 1,500 fighters to Syria. According to Reuters (October 27, 2015), 2,000 fighters were sent. The Iranian media, relating to reports in the Western media, noted 2,000 fighters. The Israeli media (for example, Ma'ariv, October 14, 2015) cited 3,000 fighters.

with Turkey. However, apparently Al-Raqqah, ISIS's "capital", and the regions under ISIS control east of the Euphrates and the Syrian desert, **are not currently targets for a Syrian army ground offensive**. The rural areas south of Aleppo, north of Hama and around Idlib are still the sites of fierce fighting with no victory in sight for either side.



Qasem Soleimani in the town of Al-Hader, south of Aleppo, where the Syrian army is fighting the rebels (Twitter, November 13, 2015)



A picture from the joint Syrian-Iranian operations room from where the attack in southern Aleppo is directed (Iranian TV broadcast, October 23, 2015).

11. Iranian officials have denied or downplayed an essential change in Iran's involvement in Syria. They confirmed that **Iran had increased its forces in Syria**, but claimed they were "military advisors," and **denied that Iranian forces were directly involved in the ground fighting**. For example:

1) **Hossein Amir Abdollahian, deputy foreign minister for Arab-African affairs**, claimed "Iran has no soldiers fighting in Syria, only military advisors in a Muslim country in accordance with the request of the Syrian government. They are there to support the Syrian army in its fight against terrorism" (Fars News, November 3, 2015).

2) **Ahmad Vahidi, former Iranian minister of defense** and current head of Iran's center for strategic defense studies, speaking at the Azad Islamic University in Hamedan, also claimed that Iran was not directly involved in the fighting, but had only provided advisors (Fars News, October 29, 2015).

3) **Ali Asghar Gorjizadeh, commander of the IRGC's Ansar al-Mahdi security unit**, told a newspaper that the IRGC provided the Syrian regime exclusively with "advisory services." He added, however, that **if Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei ordered it, thousands of Iranian soldiers would be sent to fight in Syria** (Yjc.ir, October 30, 2015).

4) **Ali Shamkhani, secretary of the Supreme National Security Council**, when asked about the rise in the number of Iranians killed in Syria, answered that there were "less than fifty." He claimed that in view of the increasing severity of the clashes, it was only natural that the number of Iranian advisors in Syria would rise (Al-Ayyam, November 4, 2015).⁴ Asked if Iran would send ground forces to Syria, he answered that Syria had no lack of manpower and could defend itself, which was why Iran had not sent and would not send ground forces to Syria (ISNA, November 11, 2015).

12. The relatively large number of Iranians killed in the short period of time since the ground offensive began, and the large number of officers among them, clearly indicate that they **are not there only in the capacity of "military advisors."** It is now clear that the IRGC and the Shi'ite militias subordinate to **them are active participants in the fighting, including fighting in the front lines of the Syrian army's current ground offensive.**

⁴ The answer was true at the time the question was asked. In the meantime, the number of Iranian dead has risen to more than fifty.

Section 2: Profile of Iranians Killed in Syria



A picture of 36 Iranians killed in Syria as of November 5, 2015 (Maghreh News). Since then at least 15 more Iranians have been killed.

The number and profile of Iranians killed until recently

1. **Ali Alfoneh**, an expert on IRGC, has spent the past few years tracking IRGC losses in Syria and Iraq. In August 2015, based on reports of funerals held for fighters published in the Iranian media, he estimated that **between January 2013 and August 2015, 113 Iranian fighters had been killed in Syria, as well as 121 Afghan fighters (from the Fatemiyoun Brigade) and dozens of Pakistani fighters (from the Zaynabioun Brigade), who fought under IRGC direction.**
2. Alfoneh's analysis of the fighters killed until August 2015 indicated the following: eight of the **113 fighters killed belonged to the IRGC ground forces**; eight were identified as **Qods Force fighters**; three served in the IRGC **Basij militias** and the organizational affiliation of 94 was unclear. Only ten were identified as high-ranking officers.
3. Alfoneh therefore concluded that beginning in July 2014 there was an increase in the number of IRGC ground forces killed. It was the result of the IRGC's decision to increase the number of its forces in Syria with its own fighters. The decision was

apparently made in the wake of the losses suffered by the Qods Force, which is relatively small, which meant Iran had to use "regular" fighting forces in the fighting.⁵

Profile of Iranians killed after Iran increased its forces in Syria

4. Iranian forces spearheaded the hard battles the Syrian army fought in the rural areas around Aleppo and other locations in northwestern Syria, **resulting in serious Iranian losses**. Since October 8, 2015 (as of November 16, 2015), at least **53 Iranians and 15 Afghans from the Fatemiyoun Brigade** have been killed, as have a few Pakistani fighters from the **Zaynabiyoun Brigade**. The numbers were arrived at by counting the names and pictures of fighters killed as they appeared in the Iranian media and social networks. The general attributes are the following:

5. Officers vs. regular enlisted men:

1) **Among 48 of those killed, 20 have been definitely identified as officers.**

Three others were identified as officers by some of the reports.

2) **Seven were identified as high-ranking officers** (two brigadier generals, four or five colonels, one or two lieutenant colonels),⁶ two majors and ten others identified as low-ranking officers with the rank of lieutenant, second lieutenant or captain.

6. Organizational affiliation of Iranian fighters killed

1) The fighters killed belonged to **a variety of fighting units within the IRGC** (infantry, armored corps and special forces).

2) Four or five belonged to **the Saber special forces Brigade**, established in 1998 as rapid response reinforcements for threats along Iran's borders.

3) At least six belonged to the **Basij militia**.

4) Five belonged to the **Najaf Ashraf 8th Armored Brigade**.

5) Three belonged to the **Rasoul Allah Corps** in Tehran.

⁵ Ali Alfoneh, "Shiite Combat Casualties Show the Depth of Iran's Involvement in Syria", *Policy Watch* 2458, The Washington Institute, August 3, 2015, <http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/view/shiite-combat-casualties-show-the-depth-of-irans-involvement-in-syria>.

⁶ There is a lack of clarity as to the rank of some of the officers because of contradictory reports and because it is not clear if the rank reported to the media was the rank of the officer at the time of his death or a posthumous promotion

- 6) Two belonged to the **Ansar al-Mahdi security unit**.
- 7) Two belonged to the **Imam Hossein 161st Infantry Battalion**.
- 8) Two belonged to the **AI-Mahdi 33rd Special Forces Airborne Brigade**.
- 9) Others belonged to the following units (one fighter from each): Imam Reza 21st Armored Corps, 15th Khordad Artillery Division, Qamar Bani Hashem 44th Brigade, Imam Ali 43rd Combat Engineering Unit, First Brigade of the 92nd Armored Division; Ya Zahra Battalion of the Imam Hossein 14th Brigade, Ali ibn Abu-Taleb 14th Infantry Battalion, Hazrat Ali Akbar 154th Special Forces Battalion, Mohammad Rasoul Allah 23rd Division and the Qaem al-Mohammad 12th Artillery Brigade.
- 10) The organizational affiliation of the other fighters killed was not made public.

7. **Distribution of origins:**

- 1) Ten of the fighters killed were from Tehran Province.
- 2) Eight were from Khuzestan Province.
- 3) Seven were from Isfahan Province.
- 4) Five were from Hamedan Province.
- 5) Three were from Fars Province.
- 6) Two were from Khorasan Razavi Province.
- 7) Two were from Gilan Province.
- 8) The others, whose places of origin were noted, were from the following provinces (one fighter killed from each): East Azerbaijan, Qazvin, Mazandaran, Kermanshah, Golestan, Markazi, Yazd, Chaharmahal va Bakhtiari, Semnan and Alborz.

8. **Locations where the fighters were killed:** Most of the fighters (at least 30) were killed **in the environs of Aleppo**, apparently to the south of the city. Three were killed near **Hama**, one in the **AI-Hasakah Governate**. There are contradictory reports about the deaths of two fighters, who were either killed near Aleppo or Quneitra. It is probable that other fighters, about whom we have no information, were also killed south of Aleppo, where the Syrian army suffered serious setbacks.

9. **Ages:** The ages of most of the fighters killed were not mentioned, but 11 of them were **between the ages of 25 and 30**, which seems appropriate for most of the others as well according to their pictures (with the exception of the high-ranking officers among them).

10. **Main conclusions:**

1) **The battle zones were the Iranians were killed:** Apparently most of the Iranian losses were in **the rural areas south of Aleppo**, where the rebel forces, among of them from ISIS and Al-Nusra Front, halted the Syrian army ground offensive.

2) **The Iranian fighters were in the front lines of the attack:** The large number of Iranians killed, and the prominent number of officers (including high-ranking officers) indicates that in all probability **IRGC fighters are in the front lines of the current Syrian army ground offensive**.

3) **There is a large number of IRGC ground fighters in comparison to Qods Force members:** The fact that the overwhelming majority of Iranians killed belonged to regular IRGC units indicate that Iran currently bases its military involvement in Syria on those forces instead of on the Qods Force. Qods Force commander Qasem Soleimani does in fact personally oversee the ground attack in northwestern Syria in coordination with the Syrian army, the IRGC and Hezbollah. However, **most of the war effort is borne by fighters belonging to regular IRGC units (infantry, armored corps and special forces)**. That is because their relatively large size makes it possible for them to send a greater number of fighters to combat zones (as opposed to the Qods Force, which is relatively smaller).

4) **The preponderance of special unit fighters:** There is a preponderance of special unit fighters among the Iranians fighting in Syria from the Saber Brigade, the Ansar al-Mahdi security unit, the 33rd Airborne Brigade and the 154th Battalion. That indicates the Iranian effort to send **skilled soldiers with special training to carry out special missions, among them, in all probability, intelligence gathering**.

5) **Rise in the relative number of Iranian fighters compared with Shi'ite foreign fighters:** The Shi'ite foreign fighters, especially the Afghans in the Fatemiyoun Brigade, continue fighting in the front lines of the ground offensive and playing an important role in the combat. However, **a small number of them, relatively speaking, have been among those killed since the outbreak of the ground fighting because of the sharp rise in the number of Iranians fighters killed, which changes the ratio.**

Section 3: The Influence of Iran's Heavy Losses on Its Strategy in Syria

1. Despite the IRGC's heavy losses, there do not seem to be significant differences of opinion within the Iranian regime over Iran's involvement in Syria. Since the beginning of the ground offensive, senior Iranians **have repeatedly stressed Iran's commitment to continuing its support for the Assad regime**. For example, on October 11, 2015, Ali-Akbar Velayati, the supreme leader's advisor on international affairs and head of the Center for Strategic Studies in the Iranian Expediency Council, told ISNA that **Bashar Assad was a "red line" for Iran, and the West could not suggest a replacement for him**.

2. **Hossein Amir Abdollahian**, deputy foreign minister for Arab-African affairs voiced a similar opinion during the international talks for Syria's future recently held in Vienna. He said that the people who wanted President Assad ousted knew full well that only the Syrian people could make that decision and only through a political process (Fars News, October 29, 2015). Speaking to Iranian correspondents, he denied a report in the Western media claiming that Iran had agreed for ousting Assad after a 6-month intermediate period. He said that Iran's efforts had led to the removal of an article from the agreement's draft reached during the talks concerning a timetable for ousting Assad, (Mehr News Agency, October 31, 2015).



Hossein Amir Abdollahian, deputy foreign minister (Fars News Agency)

3. Despite the public declarations, **in all probability Iran's personal commitment to Assad cannot be taken for granted and Iranian losses in Syria may have an influence in the future.** The continued fighting in Syria and the high human and economic cost Iran pays might **strengthen the voices within the Iranian regime, especially in President Hassan Rouhani's administration calling for a political solution to the Syrian crisis that will ensure Iran's vital interests, especially its political influence, even at the price of willingness to waive the demand to keep Assad as president.**

4. Remarks recently made by IRGC commander **Mohammad-Ali Jafari** may hint at the **first schism within the leadership over Iran's policies in Syria**, especially those concerning Assad's position in any future political arrangement in Syria. Speaking to students at the Basij University in Tehran, Jafari hinted at differences of opinion within the Iranian administration about resolving the Syrian crisis. He said **there were officials who did not understand why Iran had to show such sensitivity to the issue of President Assad and claimed that there was no difference between him and any other figure.** He claimed they did not understand the situation in Syria and did not know Assad had many supporters, the Syrian people supported him and the "resistance" in Syria depended on him (Tasnim News, November 2, 2015).



Mohammad-Ali Jafari (Tasnim News, November 2, 2015)

Section 4: Reactions of the Iranian Public to the Heavy Losses in Syria

1. **Reactions of the Iranian public to the increasing number of reports about heavy losses incurred by Iran in the fighting in Syria have been mixed.** An examination of the reactions made by Iranian users on news websites and social networks indicate that **alongside sorrow for their fellow countrymen killed in Syria, some are beginning to wonder about their large number and ask if a campaign that takes so many Iranian lives is worth the effort.**

2. **Most of the web users express sorrow at the death of the fighters,** call them "martyrs" (shaheeds), and offer their condolences to the families. Their expressions of grief appear not only on the news sites operating inside Iran, but also on social networks posting responses from Iranian exiles, including those who oppose the regime. While some web users (apparently opponents of the regime living abroad) express joy at the deaths of the IRGC fighters and even hope more will die, apparently such reactions do not reflect the opinion of most Iranians, and they are criticized by many other web users.⁷

3. **Some of the web users justify the fighting in Syria.** They tend to agree with the official Iranian position that Iran's involvement in Syria is necessary to keep the radical Sunni Islamist organizations, especially ISIS, from nearing Iran's borders. Many accuse the United States and Saudi Arabia of responsibility for the deaths of the Iranian fighters because they provide support for the Syrian opposition.

4. However, there are also some web users who **wonder about the large number of Iranians killed and even demand an investigation of the rise in fatalities.** That would indicate that **there is some doubt regarding the official claim** that Iranian presence in Syria is limited to "advisors" and that Iranians are not directly involved in the ground fighting. **Some of the responses express concern lest Iranian involvement in Syria become like America's involvement in Vietnam and Iraq, and Russia's involvement in Afghanistan.**

⁷ See, for example, responses on the BBC's Facebook page in Persian and the Facebook page of Radio Farda, the Persian branch of Radio Free Europe funded by the United States:

<https://www.facebook.com/radio.farda/posts/10153724447333841> ;

<https://www.facebook.com/bbcpersian/posts/10153470565092713> ;

<https://www.facebook.com/radio.farda/posts/10153717649718841>.

5. Some of the web users **question the continuation of Iran's current form of involvement in Syria**. For example, one talkbacker poster to the Farda News site claimed that Iran should not endanger its military forces and could send weapons and missiles instead. That, he said, would change the balance without endangering the lives of young Iranians. Another wondered if there were no way to prevent, or at least reduce, the number of casualties, and raised his concerns that the deaths of so many young Iranians would, in the long run, have a negative effect on the Iranian armed forces (Farda News, October 17, 2015).

6. **In all probability a continuing rise in the number of Iranians killed will increase public criticism of continued Iranian support of the Assad regime**. Such criticism began to be voiced before the ground offensive in Syria began, especially by intellectuals and political activists aligned with the reformist opposition. On September 20, 2015, Rooz Online, a reformist website located outside Iran, posted an article by Reza Alijani, a human right activist living in exile. He said Iran's status in the eyes of the Arabs living in the Middle East had been damaged in recent years, leading to a deterioration of its regional influence. One reason for that, he said, was Iran's position on the civil war in Syria. Its siding with one of the cruelest regional dictators, its political, financial and military support of the Assad regime, its involvement in the bloodshed of Syrian civilians and sending its proxies to oppress the young and old of Syria all, he said, **severely eroded Iran's image** in regional public opinion and even distanced from its former allies, such as Hamas.

7. The article was predated in August 2015 by an open letter sent by **Sadegh Zibakalam**, a professor of political science at the University of Tehran and a political commentator, to Foreign Minister Zarif, **calling on him to change Iran's Syrian policy**. Zibakalam argued that "awarding Assad the Islamic Republic's Medal of Honor will not change anything" in its essence as a regime controlled by a [Alawite] minority that oppresses the absolute majority of its Sunni citizens. Iran's strategic dependence on Syria, the result of its struggle with Israel, made it ignore the situation in Syria and the fact that Assad had lost his legitimacy among the political players in the Arab world, regardless of their ideology. Zibakalam argued that Assad's determined opposition to political reforms was what had destroyed his country, and with his own two hands he had turned Syria into a base for the militant jihadist organizations. Iran, ended Zibakalam, could not expect respect and sympathy from the Arab world when it supported the Alawites, who made up only 12% of the Syrian population.

8. In the middle of September 2015 several dozen Iranian intellectuals and political activists launched a media campaign on the social networks to end Iran's support for the Assad regime. They started a Facebook page called "Sorry, Syria," where they accused President Assad and his supporters, including Iran, of responsibility for the political crisis in Europe.



9. An announcement issued by activists, most of them living in exile, **condemned Iran's destructive involvement, especially the involvement of the IRGC's Qods Force, in the Syrian crisis.** They called on Iran to respect the fundamental rights of the Syrian civilians, cut off all financial, military and intelligence aid to the Syrian regime and make it possible for an interim government to be set up without Assad. They explained on their Facebook page that their campaign was not partisan, they belonged to different political and cultural groups and had different opinions, but they were united in condemning the crimes carried out by Assad and Iran's support of him.

10. Liberal Iranian activists had previously expressed criticism of the Syrian regime, especially after it used chemical weapons to attack its enemies. However, the worsening of the Syrian refugee crisis, reports of the increasing distress of the Assad regime and its complete dependence on Iranian and Russian support renewed internal criticism of Iran's support for Assad. **While the criticism of intellectuals and political activists has no practical influence on Iran's Syrian policy,** the increasing protest of Iran's support for Assad indicates there are other sectors of the Iranian public dissatisfied with events, **especially because support for Syria comes at the expense of dealing with the distress of Iranian civilians and costs the lives of Iranian fighters.** As early as the beginning of 2013, there were enraged

responses to a statement made by radical Iranian cleric Hojjat ul-Islam Mehdi Taeb, who said Iran had to give greater importance to Syria than to Khuzestan Province, which lies on the Persian Gulf. His remark led to a widespread public protest and Taeb was even charged with treason.⁸

11. Growing criticism of Iranian fighting in Syria was also recently expressed in a Friday sermon in Pashamag in Sistan and Balouchestan Province in southeast Iran, populated by a Balouch majority (most of whom are Sunnis). A cleric named **Fazl al-Rahman Kouhi criticized sending poor, young Balouch to fight in Syria**, and threatened that anyone killed in Syria would not receive a Muslim burial. The Balouch opposition website that posted the report said that Kouhi had made the remark at a meeting with civilians in the Sarbaz district of Sistan and Balouchestan Province. According to the website, he accused the IRGC of exploiting the financial distress of the young Baluch to send them to fight in Syria in return for financial benefits (Balochcampaign.com November 7, 2015).

12. On November 3, 2015, the London-based English language newspaper Al-Sharq Al-Awsat reported the first signs of insubordination within the IRGC. According to the report (which might be biased because it reflects media supported by Saudi Arabia), following the rise reported in fatalities on the battlefield IRGC, officers began refusing to be sent to Syria. The paper reported that some officers and commanders were recently court martialled by the IRGC because they refused to serve in Syria. **The reliability of the report is uncertain and so far no other evidence of insubordination among IRGC fighters has been noted.**

13. **In summation, at this stage public criticism in Iran of the fighting in Syria is limited.** However, it is reasonable to assume that **as the number of Iranians killed in the fighting rises, and the more political and military failures Iran chalks up in its involvement in Syria, there will be more public criticism and protests against its continuation.**

⁸ For further information see the February 17, 2013 bulletin, "Spotlight on Iran." <http://www.terrorism-info.org.il/he/article/20477>

Section 5: Iranian Regime Explanations and Media Campaign Following the Heavy Losses in Syria

1. Iran's heavy losses in Syria **made it necessary for senior officials**, concerned by the growing public and administration criticism of the IRGC's involvement, **to provide explanations**. Although the influence of public opinion on the strategic decision-making process should not be exaggerated, the Iranian regime is, to a certain extent, sensitive to public reactions. Therefore, the regime, **which seeks to enlist public support** for the continued war in Syria, now finds itself **having to explain Iran's heavy losses**.

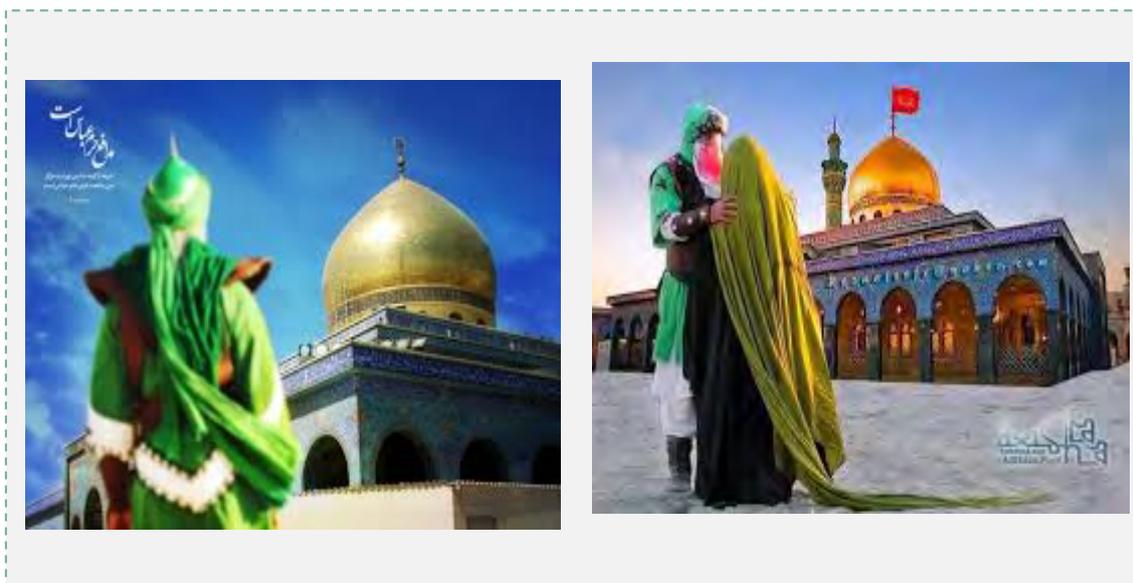
2. In view of the rise in the number of Iranians killed since the beginning of the ground offensive, **IRGC commander Hossein Salami** gave an interview to Iranian television on October 26, 2015, most of which was devoted to the fighting in Syria. He had no choice but to admit that Iran had increased the number of "advisory forces" in Syria, both qualitatively and quantitatively. **As to the number of Iranians killed, he said it had risen because the "advisors" could not stay in closed rooms, but had to go out into the field to better assess the situation in the combat zone and provide better support for the Syrian forces**. He claimed that the number was not large, just larger than formerly. He said he hoped the action begun by the Syrian forces with Russian air support **would lead, "in the coming days," to a strategic change in the combat zone**.



Hossein Salami (Defa Press, October 27, 2015)

3. **Masoud Jazaeri/Jazayeri, deputy chief of staff of the Iranian armed forces**, also noted the rising number of Iranians killed in Syria, saying that it was because the "advisory forces" were situated close to the combat zone. He called it the price Iran had to pay to preserve the "regional circles of resistance" (ISNA, November 1, 2015).

4. The declarations of senior Iranian officials have been accompanied by **a media campaign** to enlist public opinion in support of involvement in Syria and to prevent possible criticism. The campaign emphasizes Shi'ite religious symbols and praises **sacrifice for the sake of protecting the Shi'ite holy sites in Syria, especially the shrine of Set Zaynab (the granddaughter of Muhammad) south of Damascus.**



Iranian propaganda in support of "defenders of the holy sites" fighting in Syria (Iranian blogs)

5. The ground offensive in Syria began close to the Muslim month of Muharram, when the Shi'ites mark the days of Tasua and Ashura (on the 9th and 10th of Muharram, respectively), which are two days of mourning for the death of Imam Hossein bin Ali as a martyr in the Battle of Karbala in 680 AD. The story of Ashura is central to fostering the culture of self-sacrifice in Iran, and marking days of mourning in the midst of the fighting **lent the events in Syria a special symbolic importance, which was exploited by the Iranian propaganda campaign.** The Iranian media represented the IRGC fighters who were killed as "martyrs of Muharram," in order to establish a link between the fighting in Syria with the spirit of Ashura and the Battle of Karbala.

6. The use of Shi'ite religious rhetoric of Karbala resembles a similar use made by the Iranian regime during the Iran-Iraq War (1980-1988) to inspire the public to fight in the war. The slogan reiterated by the Iranian propaganda machine was "Every day is Ashura and every place is Karbala."⁹

7. As part of the campaign to praise the willingness of the fighters to sacrifice their lives, the hardline Iranian news sites started to **publish statements from friends and relatives praising fighters killed in Syria**. For example, on October 31, 2015, the Fars News Agency posted a recording of the wife of Mostafa Sadrzadeh, a Fatemiyoun Brigade commander recently killed in Syria, proudly praising his death.

8. The Iranian media also published the text of a speech **Qasem Soleimani, commander of the IRGC's Qods Force, gave before IRGC fighters in Syria, praising their willingness to sacrifice themselves**. He said that by fighting in Syria they were not only defending the shrine of Set Zaynab in Damascus, but Islam and all humanity as well. He stressed the value of sacrifice, saying that anyone who followed the path of the fighters was considered a shaheed, even if he did not die on the battlefield. **He called the fighters in Syria "holy war fighters" (*mujahedin*) and claimed there was nothing more satisfying or important than dying as a martyr for the sake of Allah** (Yjc.ir, November 2, 2015).



Qasem Soleimani (Miana.ir, November 2, 2015)

⁹ For further information see Efrat Harel, "Religion and nationalism: The question of Iranian identity during the Iran-Iraq War" (Hebrew) in *Iran: Anatomy of a Revolution*, Tel Aviv/Hakibbutz Hameuhad, 2009, pp. 148-173.

9. In addition to religious rhetoric, senior Iranian officials stressed **the importance of the fighting in Syria for Iran's national interests and the defense of its security.**

However, the great distance between Iran and the combat zone makes it more difficult for the Iranian regime to justify fighting in Syria in terms of defending the homeland and its borders, and therefore it emphasizes the religious aspects, as well. The regime is aware, however, of the limitations of the use of exclusively religious rhetoric, and makes an effort to use arguments related to national interests to convince the public that the campaign in Syria was vital for Iranian interests. For example, deputy IRGC commander Hossein Salami told an Iranian television interview that Iran had decided to increase its support for Syria because if it had left Syria alone in its struggle against the "terrorists," it would have found itself fighting them in other locations.

10. At the funeral held for senior military advisor Hossein Hamedani, killed in Syria, Mohsen Rezaei, secretary of the Iranian Expediency Council, also said **the security of Iran could not be ensured only within its own borders, because Iranian security was linked to the security of the entire region** (Fars News, October 11, 2015). A similar argument was raised by IRGC commander Mohammad-Ali Jafari who said that **Syria was the regional "forward line" of the Islamic front against "global arrogance [i.e., the United States] and the Zionist regime."** He claimed that the security of Western Asia, which included Iran, depended on Syria and the "resistance" of the Syrian front (Tabnak, October 12, 2015).

Appendix

Names of Iranians Killed since the Beginning of the Syrian Army's Ground Offensive (as of November 16, 2015)

Brigadier General Hossein Hamedani

- Senior military advisor in Syria and senior IRGC commander
- Killed on the outskirts of Aleppo, October 8, 2015. The circumstances of his death were not reported.
- Hamedani, 60, cofounded the IRGC after the Islamic Revolution in 1979. After the Iran-Iraq War he headed the IRGC's ground forces, was deputy commander of the IRGC's Basij, senior advisor the IRGC commander and IRGC commander in Tehran Province (Mohammed Rasoul Allah corps)



Brigadier General Hossein Hamedani

Brigadier General Farshad Hasounizadeh

- Former commander of the Saber Special Forces Brigade, established in 1998 as an early response force to deal with threats along Iran's border.
- Killed either near Aleppo or Hama, October 12, 2015.



Brigadier General Farshad Hasounizadeh

Colonel Hamid Mokhtarband (aka Abu-Zahra)

- Formerly head of the IRGC's Hazrat Hojjat 1st Brigade headquarters of the 92nd Armored Division at Ahvaz.
- From Khuzestan Province.
- Apparently killed in the region of Hama, October 12, 2015.



Colonel Hamid Mokhtarband (aka Abu-Zahra) (Shaheed News, October 14, 2015)

Colonel (or Lieutenant Colonel) Moslem Khizab

- Former commander of the Ya Zahra Battalion of the Imam Hossein 14th Brigade in Isfahan.
- From Isfahan Province



Colonel (or Lieutenant Colonel) Moslem Khizab

Abdollah Baqeri

- Apparently served in the Ansar al-Mahdi Security Unit established after the Islamic Revolution to protect senior regime officials and airports. Was one of former President Ahmadinejad's bodyguards.
- Killed near Aleppo on October 22, 2015.
- Was 34 years old, from Tehran Province.

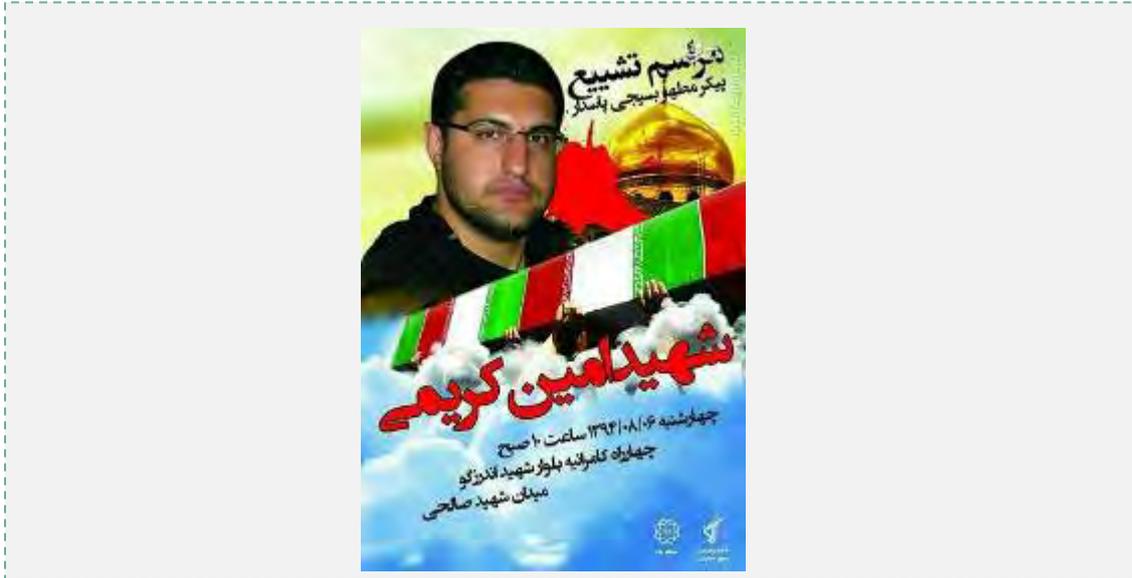


Abdollah Baqeri (Dowlatabahar, October 27, 2015)

Amin Karimi

- Served in the Ansar al-Mahdi Security Unit.

- Killed near Aleppo on October 22, 2015.
- From East Azerbaijan Province, studied in the electrical engineering department, belonged to the Basij.



Amin Karimi (Mashregh, October 28, 2015)

Lieutenant Hassan Ahmadi

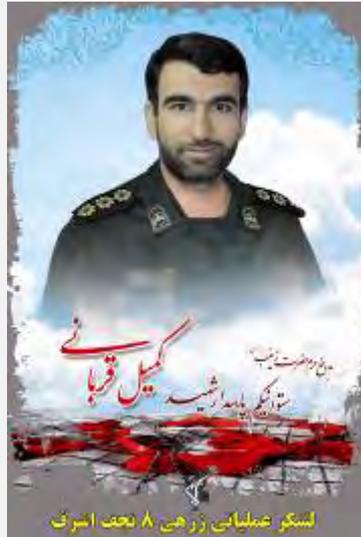
- Served in the Najaf Ashraf 8th Armored Brigade.
- Killed in the region of Aleppo or Quneitra.
- From Isfahan Province.



Lieutenant Hassan Ahmadi (Twitter, October 20, 2015)

Lieutenant Komeil Ghorbani

- Served in the Najaf Ashraf 8th Armored Brigade.
- Killed in Aleppo.
- From Isfahan Province.



Lieutenant Komeil Ghorbani (Twitter October 23, 2015)

Rasoul Pour-Morad

- Basij commander in Qazvin Province.
- Was 26 years old, from Qazvin Province, an engineer.



Rasoul Pour-Morad (Twitter, October 19, 2015).

Mehdi Alidoust

- Served in the Ali ibn Abu-Taleb 17th Battalion in Qom.
- Killed in Aleppo.
- Was 26 years old, from Qom Province.



Mehdi Alidoust (Hamaseh17.ir, October 20, 2015)

Nader Hamidi

- Apparently an officer.
- Wounded in Aleppo or Quneitra on October 12, 2015, and died several days later.
- From Khuzestan Province



Nader Hamidi with Qasem Soleimani (Asr-e ma, October 18, 2015)

Reza Damroudi

- Member of the Basij.
- Killed in Al-Hasakah on October 18, 2015.
- Was 27 years old, from Khorasan Razavi Province, engineer (specialized in agriculture).



Reza Damroudi (Mashregh, October 20, 2015).

Mojtaba Karami

- Served in the Hazrat Ali Akbar 154th Special Forces Battalion in Hamedan.
- Killed in Aleppo.
- Was 29 years old, member of the Basij in Hamedan Province.



Mojtaba Karami (Dana.ir, October 20, 2015)

Majid Sanei

- Served in the Imam Hossein 161st Battalion in Hamedan.
- Killed in the region of Aleppo.
- Member of the Basij in Hamedan Province, taught martial arts.



Majid Sanei (Dana.ir, October 20, 2015)

Mohammad Estehkami Jahromi

- Served in the Al-Mahdi 33rd Special Forces Airborne Brigade



Mohammad Estehkami Jahromi (Qasamsoleimani.ir, October 22, 2015)

Hadi Shoja'

- Killed on October 11, 2015.
- Was 25 years old, member of the Basij in Tehran Province.



Hadi Shoja' (4dangeh.ir, October 22, 2015)

Ruhollah Emadi

- May have held the rank of Lieutenant Colonel, a pilot with the Saber Special Forces.
- Killed near Aleppo, October 24, 2015.
- Was 35 years old, from Mazandaran Province.



Ruhollah Emadi

Sajjad Tahernia

- Killed near Aleppo on October 23 or 24, 2015.
- From Gila Province



Sajjad Tahernia

Lieutenant Mohammad Zahiri

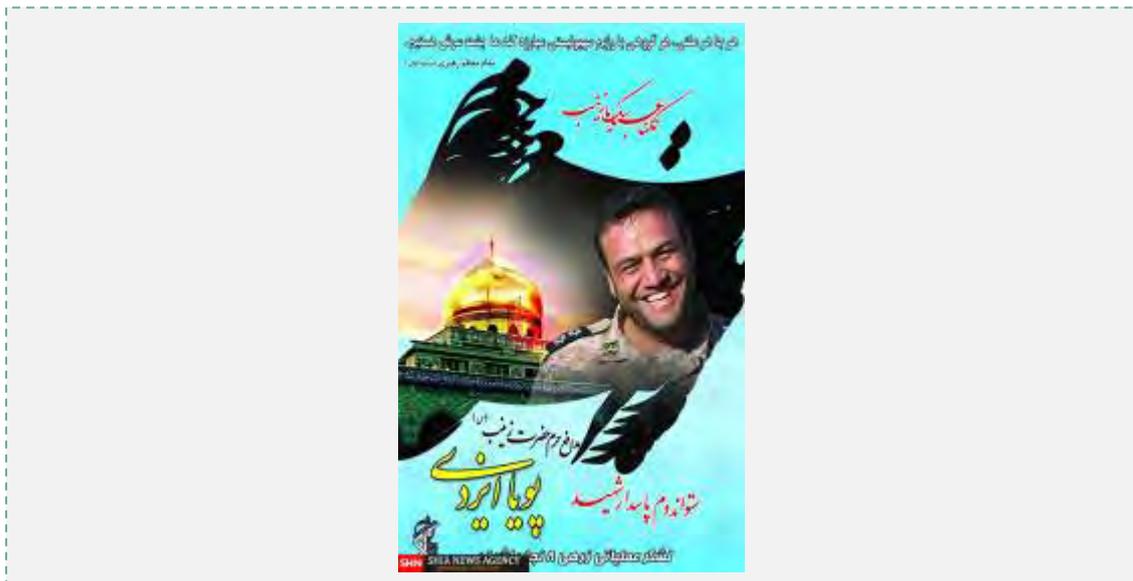
- Served in the Saber Special Forces Brigade.
- Killed south of Aleppo on October 23, 2015.
- Was 25 years old, from Khuzestan Province.



Lieutenant Mohammad Zahiri (Badriyoon.com, October 26, 2015)

Second Lieutenant Pouya Izadi

- Served in the Najaf Ashraf 8th Armored Brigade.
- Killed on October 26, 2015.
- Belonged to the Basij in Isfahan Province.

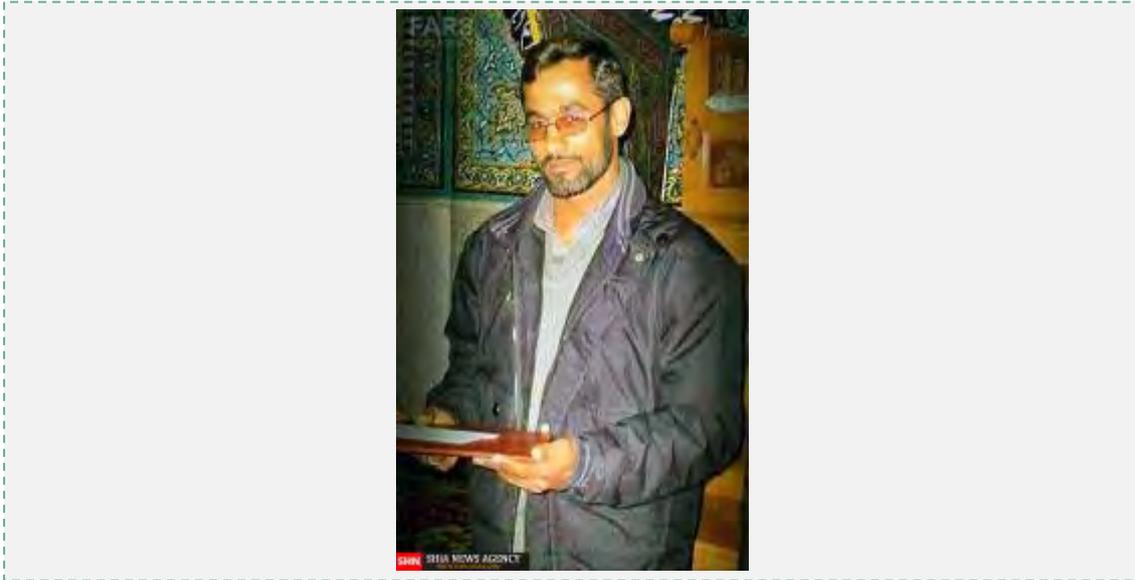


Second Lieutenant Pouya Izadi (Shi'a News, October 27, 2015)

Second Lieutenant Reza Daei Taghi

- Served in the Najaf Ashraf 8th Armored Brigade.
- Killed on October 26, 2015.

- From Isfahan Province



Second Lieutenant Reza Daei Taghi (Shi'a News, October 27, 2015)

Captain Abuzar Amjadian

- Killed on October 24, 2015.
- Was 29 years old, from Kermanshah Province



Captain Abuzar Amjadian (Soleinesonghor.ir, October 27, 2015)

Jabbar Araqi

- Apparently an officer.
- Killed on October 26, 2015



Jabbar Araqi

Mohammad Reza Asgari-Fard

- From Khuzestan Province



Mohammad Reza Asgari-Fard

Mehdi Kaeni

- No picture or information about his was issued.

Second Lieutenant Moslem Nasr

- Served in the 33rd Airborne Brigade.
- Killed in the region of Aleppo.
- From Fars Province



Second Lieutenant Moslem Nasr (Mizan Online, October 28, 2015)

Lieutenant Hossein Jamali

- Served in the Saber Special Forces Brigade
- Killed near Aleppo.
- Was 29 years old, from Fars Province.



Lieutenant Hossein Jamali (Fasae.ir, October 29, 2015)

Hojjat Asghari Sharabiani

- Served in the Mohammad Rasoul Allah 23rd Division
- Killed on October 24, 2015.
- Was 27 years old, from Tehran Province.



Hojjat Asghari Sharabiani

Mohammad Hossein Mirdousti

- Served in the Mohammad Rasoul Allah Corps in Tehran.



Mohammad Hossein Mirdousti (Javadghorban-parsib.alpgroup.ir, October 31, 2015)

Hamid Reza Fatemi Athar (aka Hamid Mombeyni)

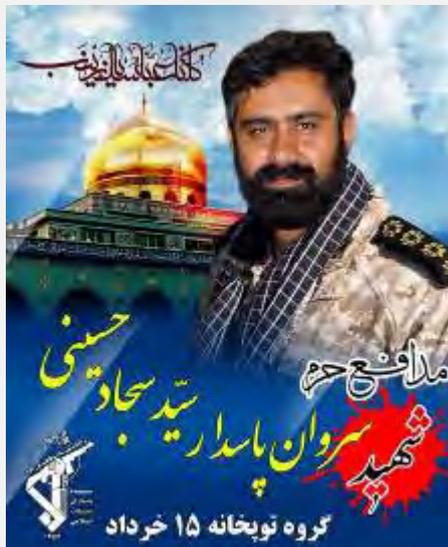
- Killed on November 1, 2015.
- Member of the Basij in Khuzestan Province



Hamid Reza Fatemi Athar (aka Hamid Mombeyni) (Tasnim News, November 3, 2015)

Major Seyyed Sajjad Hosseini

- Served in the 15th Khordad Artillery Division in Isfahan.
- Killed in Aleppo on November 1, 2015.
- from Isfahan Province.



Major Seyyed Sajjad Hosseini (Fars News, November 3, 2015).

Colonel Ezatollah Soleiamani

- Commander of a commando unit in the Ghamar Bani Hashem 44th Brigade in Shahrekord in Chaharmahal va Bakhtiari Province.
- Killed in Aleppo.



Colonel Ezatollah Soleimani with Qasem Soleimani (ABNA News, November 2, 2015).

Esmail Zahedpour

- Apparently from the Saber Special Forces Brigade
- Killed south of Aleppo on November 3, 2015.
- From Golestan Province



Esmail Zahedpour (Rakana.ir, November 3, 2015)

Second Lieutenant Mohsen Fanousi

- Served in the Imam Ali 43rd Combat Engineering Unit in Hamedan.
- Killed on November 3, 2015.
- From Hamedan Province.



Second Lieutenant Mohsen Fanousi (Badriyoon.com, November 4, 2015)

Ruhollah Qorbani

- Killed near Aleppo on November 4, 2015.
- Member of the Basij in Tehran Province.



Ruhollah Qorbani

Qadir Sarlak

- Served in the Mohammad Rasoul Allah Corps in Tehran.
- Killed near Aleppo on November 4, 2015.
- From Tehran Province.



Qadir Sarlak

Mostafa Sadrzadeh

- Iranian citizen, commanded the Ammar Battalion in the [Afghan] Fatemiyoun Brigade.
- Killed near Aleppo on November 23, 2015.
- Was 29 years old.



Mostafa Sadrzadeh (Fars News, October 24, 2015).

Seyyed Mohammed (Milad) Mostafavi

- Served in the Imam Hossein 161st Battalion.
- Killed near Aleppo on October 23, 2015.

- Was 29 years old, from Hamedan Province.



Seyyed Mohammed (Milad) Mostafavi (Fars News, October 24, 2015)

Ali Karimi

- From Markazi Province
- No information or picture was issued.

Amir Hossein Hivedi

- From Khuzestan Province.



Amir Hossein Hivedi (Twitter, November 5, 2015)

Colonel Mohammad Hossein Aziz Abadi

- Served in Imam Reza 21st Armored Brigade.

- From Khorasan Razavi Province



Colonel Mohammad Hossein Aziz Abadi

Lieutenant Mousa Jamshidian

- Served in the Najaf Ashraf 8th Armored Brigade
- Killed on November 7, 2015.
- Was 32 years old, from Isfahan Province



Lieutenant Mousa Jamshidian

Mohammad Hossein Khani

- Member of the Basij, had headed the student Basij during his studies at Azad University.

- From Azad Province.
- Killed on November 7, 2015.



Mohammad Hossein Khani

Seyyed Esmail Sirtania

- Served in the Mohammad Rasoul Allah Corps in Tehran.
- Killed south of Aleppo on November 7, 2015.
- Was 35 years old, from Gilan Province



Seyyed Esmail Sirtania (Twitter, November 8, 2015)

Meytham Modvari

- No information about him was issued.



Meytham Modvari (Fars News, November 8, 2015)

Hojjat-ul-Islam Ali Tamamzadeh

- Cleric from Karaj in Alborz Province.
- Of Iranian descent but fought in the [Afghan] Fatemiyoun Brigade.



Hojjat-ul-Islam Ali Tamamzadeh (Fars News, November 8, 2015)

Major Mohammad Tahan

- Served in the Qaem al-Mohammad 12th Artillery Brigade.
- Killed in the region of Aleppo.
- From Semnan Province.



Major Mohammad Tahan (Dana.ir. November 9, 2015)

Hamid Namdari

- Killed on November 8, 2015.
- No information about him or picture was issued.

Masoud Asgari

- Killed in the region of Aleppo on November 12, 2015.
- From Tehran Province.



Masoud Asgari

Mohammad Reza Dehqan

- Killed near Aleppo on November 12, 2015.

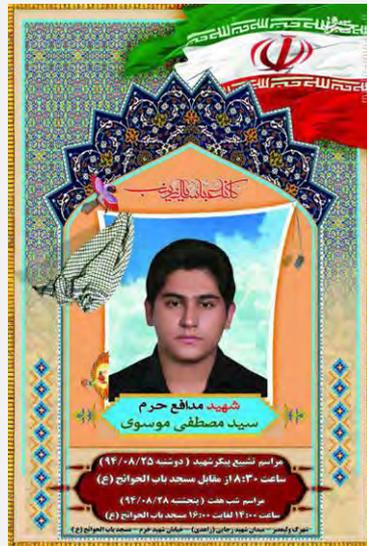
- From Tehran Province.



Mohammad Reza Dehqan

Seyyed Mostafa Mousavi

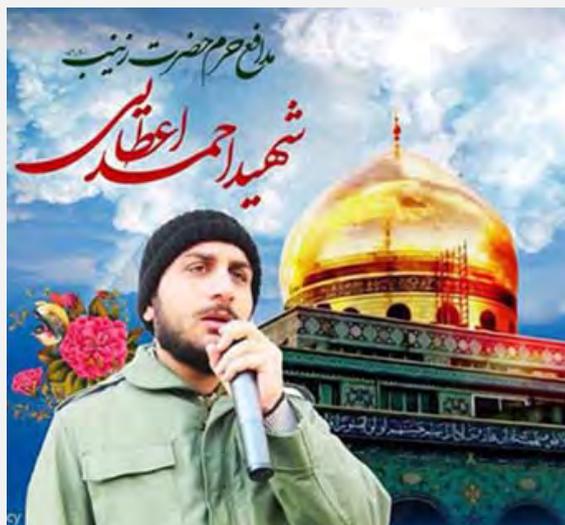
- Killed in the region of Aleppo on November 12, 2015.
- Was 20 years old (the youngest Iranian killed in Syria so far), from Tehran Province.



Seyyed Mostafa Mousavi (Fars News, November 15, 2015)

Ahmed Ataei

- Killed in the region of Aleppo, November 12, 2015.
- From Tehran Province



Ahmed Ataei

Lieutenant Iman Khazaeinejad

- Killed in the region of Aleppo, November 14, 2015.
- From Fars Province.



Lieutenant Iman Khazaeinejad (Badriyoon, November 15, 2015)

Fatemiyoun Brigade Fighters Killed in Syria

Brigadier General Reza Khavari

- Commander of Al-Zahra Battalion in the Fatemiyoun Brigade.
- Killed in the region of Hama on October 22, 2015.



Brigadier General Reza Khavari (Shaheed News, November 3, 2015)

Mohammad Ali Hosseini

- Killed in the region of Al-Ghab.
- Was 18 years old, from Kerman.



Mohammad Ali Hosseini (Mehr News Agency, October 25, 2015)

Heydar Anvari Rostami

- From Alborz Province.



Heydar Anvari Rostami (Alborz.basij.ir, October 27, 2015)

Khanali Yousefi

- Killed in the region of Aleppo.
- From Fars Province



Seyyed Ali Hosseini Alemi

- Killed in Aleppo.



Seyyed Ali Hosseini Alemi (Tasnim News, November 2, 2015)

Ibrahim Yaqubi

- Killed in the region of Aleppo.



Ibrahim Yaqubi (Twitter, November 11, 2015)

Mohammad Barati

- Was 24 years old, from Markazi Province



Mohammad Barati (Sobhemahallat.ir, November 11, 2015)

- The following Afghan fighters were killed; no information or pictures were issued:
 - Mohammad Ali Khademi
 - Mohammad Rahim Rahimi
 - Yar Mohammad Mardani
 - Seyyed Aref Hosseini
 - Nasrollah Mohammad
 - Eshaq Moradi
 - Qorban-Ali Ahmadi