

FALSE  
NARRATIVE

## The U.S. and Israel were behind the IS suicide bombings in the Iranian city of Kerman

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### The False Narrative

The U.S. and Israel were behind the Jan. 3, 2024, bombings at the grave of Iranian military Gen. Qassem Soleimani, who is hailed as a hero in Iran. While the Islamic State (IS) took responsibility for the attack in the Iranian city of Kerman, the perpetrators were ultimately acting under the direction of Israeli and American intelligence services.

### The Facts

There is no evidence that the U.S. and Israel were responsible for the Jan. 3, 2024, bombings in Kerman, Iran, at a commemoration ceremony for Qassem Soleimani, an Iranian general who was killed in a U.S. drone strike in January 2020. The Islamic State (IS) issued a social media post taking responsibility for the bombing, which killed 84 people and wounded 200, making it Iran's deadliest attack since its 1979 Islamic revolution.

In a Jan. 4, 2024, Telegram post, IS — which has been called different names throughout its history, including the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), and Daesh — called the attack a “dual

martyrdom operation” and said that two of its members approached Soleimani’s burial site wearing explosive belts and detonated them.

IS, a Sunni Muslim militant organization, considers Shia Muslims, a branch of Islam followed by most of Iran’s population, as apostates, and has previously targeted religious sites in Iran, according to the think-tank the Middle East Institute. The IS statement did not say why the group targeted Soleimani’s memorial service. However, the Iranian general was a sworn enemy of IS for his role in leading counter-IS operations in Syria and Iraq, and the practice of visiting a grave is forbidden under IS’s interpretation of Sunni Islam.

Communications intercepts collected by the U.S. confirmed that ISIS-K, the Islamic State’s Afghanistan branch, was behind the Kerman blasts, Reuters reported. “ISIS-K has demonstrated both intent and capability to attack targets inside Iran proper,” Collin P. Clarke, a counterterrorism analyst with the security consulting firm Soufan Group, told The New York Times, adding, “ISIS-K propaganda continuously focuses on denigrating Shia as apostates.”

Officials have refuted claims that the U.S. or Israel was behind the Kerman attack. “The United States was not involved in any way, and any suggestion to the contrary is ridiculous,” State Department spokesman Matthew Miller said at a Jan. 3, 2024, press briefing. National Security Council spokesman John Kirby said during a Jan. 3, 2024, White House briefing, “We have no indication that Israel was in any way involved in this.”

Moreover, people familiar with Israel’s military operations told The Wall Street Journal that the country informed its allies that it was not involved in the explosions. Shlomo Mofaz, a former senior official in Israeli military intelligence, told The Wall Street Journal that the Kerman bombings do not match the pattern of Israeli attacks, which typically target Iran’s security forces or infrastructure, and tend to avoid large-scale damage and mass civilian casualties.

Although Iranian officials and state media acknowledged that IS took responsibility for the Kerman attack, they continued to blame the U.S. and Israel. Iranian officials cited Iran's long-running false narrative that IS was created by the U.S. and Israel's Mossad intelligence agency as a tool for achieving foreign policy objectives. However, there is no evidence that IS was the creation of the United States or Israel, or that they currently control the group in any way. Rather, the group grew out of other organizations that can be traced to a radicalized Jordanian national, according to scholars and other experts in the region.

According to FactCheck.org, experts point to several actions by the U.S. that could have contributed to the rise of IS, including the invasion of Iraq, the subsequent dissolution of the Iraqi army, and the 2011 withdrawal of American troops from Iraq. However, there is no evidence that U.S. officials made any decision with the intention of creating or strengthening IS.

Furthermore, the U. S. has treated IS as a foe since its inception. According to the Wilson Center, a nonpartisan think tank, the U.S. and coalition forces began bombing IS in 2014 after the group gained territory in Iraq and Syria. By 2016, the U.S. and its allies had conducted over 11,000 strikes. A raid by U.S. military forces in 2019 led to the death of Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, who was the leader of IS at the time. In February 2022, President Joe Biden announced that another U.S. raid had killed Baghdadi's successor, Abu Ibrahim al-Hashimi al-Qurayshi.

## **How the False Narrative Emerged**

Hours after the Jan. 3, 2024, cemetery attack, Iranian officials and Iranian-backed militant groups issued social media posts blaming the U.S. and Israel. In an X post that generated 18,700 views, Mohammad Jamshidi, deputy chief of staff to Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi, wrote, "Washington says USA and Israel had no role in [the] terrorist attack in Kerman, Iran. Really? A fox smells its own lair first. Make no mistake. The responsibility for this crime lies with the US and Zionist regimes and terrorism is just a tool."

In a Jan. 3, 2024, speech, Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi said, “I warn the Zionist regime, don’t doubt it, you will pay the price for this crime.” A Jan. 3, 2024, statement from the Lebanese, Iran-backed militant group Hezbollah said “the Zionist-American bombing in Kerman ... represents the reality of the enemy’s criminal mentality.”

The false narrative that the U.S. and Israel were behind the Kerman explosions was also advanced by Iranian state-run news outlets including PressTV, Mehr News, Iran’s flagship Islamic Republic News Agency, and others, even after IS claimed responsibility for the attack.

For example, an article from Tasnim News Agency, titled “The ISIS statement was issued under the guidance of the Zionists,” said, “This act of the Zionists shows the regime's fear of the consequences of its actions, and also proves that the terrorist group ISIS is actually a tool of the Zionist regime.” An article from state-run Tehran Times titled “America and Israel are behind terror attack in Kerman” said, “ISIS's strange statement after the terrorist incident in Kerman once again revealed the hidden fact that the main perpetrators of the crimes of this terrorist group are America and Israel.”

## **Background**

A Jan. 5, 2024, report from the Study of War, a Washington, D.C., think-tank noted that Iran’s claim that the U.S. created IS “long precedes the Kerman terrorist attack” and that “officials have claimed repeatedly in recent years that the United States formed, trained, and provided funding to ISIS to sow instability in the region and harm Iran.”

The Atlantic Council wrote in a Jan. 8, 2024, report, “This conspiratorial mindset, which starts at the top, reinforces the Islamic Republic’s need to maintain an enmity with the United States and Israel despite ISIS being a threat to not only Washington and Jerusalem but also Tehran.” The report added that by weaponizing the Kerman attack against the U.S. and Israel, Iran “seeks to

capitalize on the slaughter to score propaganda points against the US and Israeli governments at a time when both are under international criticism for the Gaza war,” and “serves to fan the flames of hatred towards Israel around the world.”

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## Examples of this False Narrative <sup>①</sup>

- <https://www.nowtheendbegins.com/israel-drone-strike-memorial-service-for-top-commander-qassem-soleimani-in-iran-kills-73-people/>

“it stands to reason that the highly-sophisticated drone strike in Iran today that killed 73 people during a memorial service for slain top Iranian commander Qassem Soleimani was carried out by Israel.”

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 17.5 / 100 [nowtheendbegins.com \(en\\_US\)](https://www.nowtheendbegins.com)

- [https://twitter.com/MhmmdJamshidi/status/1742649297286422713?ref\\_src=twsrc%5Etfw%7Ctwcamp%5Etweetembed%7Ctwterm%5E1742649297286422713%7Ctwgr%5E704372a26275f7ead396d450036b7ed1d51036f5%7Ctwcon%5Es1\\_&ref\\_url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.polygraph.info%2Fa%2Ffact-check-iran-baselessly-blames-us-israel-for-kerman-attack%2F7428313.html](https://twitter.com/MhmmdJamshidi/status/1742649297286422713?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw%7Ctwcamp%5Etweetembed%7Ctwterm%5E1742649297286422713%7Ctwgr%5E704372a26275f7ead396d450036b7ed1d51036f5%7Ctwcon%5Es1_&ref_url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.polygraph.info%2Fa%2Ffact-check-iran-baselessly-blames-us-israel-for-kerman-attack%2F7428313.html)

“Washington says USA and Israel had no role in terrorist attack in Kerman, Iran. Really? A fox smells its own lair first. Make no mistake. The responsibility for this crime lies with the US and Zionist regimes and terrorism is just a tool.”

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- <https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/493511/Criminal-actions-will-not-halt-Zionists-decline-defense-minister>

“Iran's Defense Minister, Brigadier General Mohammad-Reza Ashtiani, addressed the recent terrorist attack in Kerman, asserting that such actions cannot thwart the decline of Zionists”

 7.5/100 [tehrantimes.com](https://tehrantimes.com) (en\_US)

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- <https://en.mehrnews.com/news/210353/ISIL-created-by-US-Israel-senior-cleric>

“The provisional leader of Tehran Friday Prayers said while ISIL has taken responsibility for the Kerman terrorist attack, the truth is that the terror group is the US and Israel's agent.”

 5/100 [en.mehrnews.com](https://en.mehrnews.com) (en\_US)

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- <https://www.tasnimnews.com/en/news/2024/01/05/3017034/daesh-claims-kerman-terror-attack-clues-point-to-israel>

“While Daesh (ISIL or ISIS) terrorist group claimed responsibility for the twin blasts that killed at least 89 people in Iran’s southern city of Kerman on Wednesday, there are indications that the Zionist regime has been behind the heinous attack.”

 7.5/100 [tasnimnews.com](https://tasnimnews.com) (en\_US)

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- <https://en.irna.ir/news/85346254/Killing-of-innocents-comes-from-a-US-Zionist-dirty-thought>

“Trace of the Takfiri groups in the region, the Zionist regime of Israel in Gaza and the United States in Iraq and Afghanistan is seen in those killings and massacre”

 7.5/100 [en.irna.ir](https://en.irna.ir) (en\_US)

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- <https://media.mehrnews.com/d/2024/01/05/0/4806265.pdf?ts=1704476210607>

“This horrible crime in Kerman must be seen within a triangle, one side of which is the intelligence, operational and espionage system of the Zionist regime and the United States of America. On the other side, the survivors of ISIS ”

 7.5/100 [tehrantimes.com \(en\\_US\)](https://tehrantimes.com/en_US)

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“Kan’ani also said that the Daesh Takfiri terrorist group has served the interests of the Zionist regime, highlighting confessions about the US’s role in the creation of the ominous phenomenon.”

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“Alleged DAESH Attack in Kerman: Israeli Connection Unveiled”

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- [https://ifpnews.com/tasnim-israel-was-behind-kerman-terror-attack/#google\\_vignette](https://ifpnews.com/tasnim-israel-was-behind-kerman-terror-attack/#google_vignette)

“Tasnim: Israel was behind Kerman terror attack ”

 52/100 [ifpnews.com \(en\\_US\)](https://ifpnews.com/en_US)

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- <https://sputniknews.in/20240104/india-shocked--saddened-over-terrible-bombings-in-iran-mea-6081387.html>

“The fear of the Zionist regime and its puppet terrorist groups led to another crime in Kerman during his (General Qassem Soleimani’s) commemoration ceremony”

 27.5 / 100 [sputniknews.com \(en\\_US\)](https://sputniknews.com/en_US)

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- <https://justicereport.news/articles/2024/01/03/zionist-fingerprints-all-over-terrorist-attack-that-killed-over-100-people-at-soleimanis-tomb/>

“Zionist fingerprints’ all over terrorist attack that killed 100 people at Soleimani’s tomb”

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- <https://iranpress.com/irgc-chief--isil-agent-serving-us--israel>

“ISIS agent serving US, Israel”

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“Iranian paramilitary commander says U.S., Israel 'behind' Kerman blasts  
”

 7.5 / 100 [english.news.cn \(en\\_US\)](https://english.news.cn/en_US)

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“America and Israel are behind terror attack in Kerman”

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“Iranian media: Israeli intelligence drafted the announcement of the acceptance of responsibility by ISIS for the attack in Kerman”

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- <https://www.sharghdaily.com/Section-iran-256/912973-isis-agent-for-us-israeli-regime-irgc-commander>

“The commander of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) has vowed revenge for the perpetrators behind Wednesday's deadly terrorist attack in Kerman, saying that ISIL is an agent that works for the US and Zionist regime.”

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- <https://english.aawsat.com/world/4772401-iran-lays-kerman-victims-rest-vows-revenge>

“Salami addressed ISIS militants, asserting that: 'We will find you wherever you are,' and the terrorist organization acts as an 'agent' of the US and Israel.”

 39.5/100 [english.aawsat.com \(en\\_US\)](https://english.aawsat.com/en_US)

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“ISIS (aka Israeli Secret Intelligence Service) claims responsibility for attack that killed more than 100 at memorial in Iran”

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بعد التفجير الصهيوني-امريكي في كرمان.. كتائب حزب الله: إن ارتكاب الجرائم بحق المدنيين يمثل حقيقة عقلية العدو الإجرامية للتعويض  
”عن كسر جبروته أمام العالم“

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- <https://www.tasnimnews.com/fa/news/1402/10/14/3017732/%D8%A8%DB%8C%D8%A7%D9%86%DB%8C%D9%87-%D8%AF%D8%A7%D8%B9%D8%B4-%D8%AA%D8%AD%D8%AA-%D9%87%D8%AF%D8%A7%DB%8C%D8%AA-%D8%B5%D9%87%DB%8C%D9%88%D9%86%DB%8C%D8%B3%D8%AA%D9%87%D8%A7-%D8%B5%D8%A7%D8%AF%D8%B1-%D8%B4%D8%AF-%D8%AF%D9%85-%D8%AE%D8%B1%D9%88%D8%B3-%D8%B5%D9%87%DB%8C%D9%88%D9%86%DB%8C%D8%B3%D8%AA%D9%87%D8%A7-%D8%A7%D8%B2-%D8%A8%DB%8C%D8%A7%D9%86%DB%8C%D9%87-%D8%AF%D8%A7%D8%B9%D8%B4-%D8%A8%DB%8C%D8%B1%D9%88%D9%86-%D8%B2%D8%AF>

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“Kan’ani also said that the Daesh Takfiri terrorist group has served the interests of the Zionist regime, highlighting confessions about the US’s role in the creation of the ominous phenomenon.”

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