

# Iran's General Qassem Soleimani

The U.S. has killed Iran's top military leader General Qassem Soleimani – head of the elite Quds Force of the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC) – in a drone strike in Iraq



**General Qassem Soleimani** (main picture), Supreme Leader **Ayatollah Ali Khamenei** (inset left), **Abu Mahdi al Muhandis** (inset right), deputy commander of the Popular Mobilisation Forces (Hashed al-Shaabi), who was also killed in attack

■ **Mar 11, 1957:** Soleimani born to impoverished family in Iran's southeastern Kerman Province

■ **1978:** During Iranian revolution, Soleimani begins his ascent through Iranian military

■ **1980-88:** Soleimani emerges from Iran-Iraq war as national hero for clandestine missions he leads behind enemy lines

■ **1998:** Khamenei makes Soleimani head of IRGC's Quds Force

■ **2006:** Soleimani acts as strategic adviser to Hezbollah in Lebanon during 34-day Israel-Hezbollah war

■ **2011:** Soleimani orders Iraqi-based militias into Syria to defend government of **Bashar al-Assad**

■ **2014:** Soleimani takes leading role, deploying Quds Force and Shia Popular Mobilisation Forces to fight alongside Iraq's military against Islamic State group

■ **Nov 2015:** Quds Force conducts successful rescue mission of Russian bomber pilot shot down by Turkish fighter jet

■ **Jan 3, 2020:** Soleimani is killed in U.S. airstrike at Baghdad's airport. Pentagon says attack was carried out "at the direction" of President **Donald Trump**

■ **Soleimani was considered Iran's second most influential leader behind Supreme Leader Ayatollah Khamenei and a potential future leader of Iran**