

Iranian forces in Syria to help al-Assad- opposition

Contributed by Amro Ahmad, asharg-e.com
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Cairo, Asharq Al-Awsat- An oppositionist based in Ahvaz has stated to Asharq Al-Awsat that members of Iran's Revolutionary Guards Corps were sent to Syria to break up the protests there, after the Iranian Revolution guide issued instructions to support the regime of Bashar al-Assad.

Nasir Jabr, head of the press office of the Arab Struggle Movement for the Liberation of Ahvaz in western Iran, said that the Iranian Revolutionary Guards personnel deploy in many Syrian cities, including Damascus, Baniyas, and Latakia to closely follow the escalating events in Syria. He added that the Revolutionary Guards Corps have been training Syrians loyal to the regime of Bashar al-Assad in Iran since 2009.

Jabr said: "The Revolutionary Guards Corps currently provides the latest military training for the forces of Bashar al-Assad and helps them with tactics to bring the protests in Syrian cities under control."

Speaking to Asharq Al-Awsat in a telephone interview, Jabr said a lot of reports indicate that Syrian army and police officers and men recently went to Iran where they were housed at the Imam Ali Camp of the Revolutionary Guards Corps in the north of the Iranian capital Tehran.

He added that a military unit of the Revolutionary Guards Corps' Qods Force went to Syria acting on instructions from Iranian Guide Ali Khamenei to support the regime of Bashar al-Assad. He noted: "The Tehran regime knows very well that downfall of Bashar will pose a grave danger to the regime of the clergymen in Iran. Therefore, Iran works to ensure that its regime will stay, not to serve Syria's interest."

The Ahvaz-based source expressed his astonishment at Iran's stand toward the Arab revolutions. He said at a time when Tehran criticized the Peninsula Shied forces' role in preserving security in Bahrain and when the Iranian regime denounced foreign intervention in Libya, Iran now sends military forces of the Revolutionary Guards Corps to Syria to help the Syrian regime suppress the popular demonstrations in Syria.

For two months, Syria has been rocked by increasingly deadly demonstrations against close to five decades of rule by the Alawite-controlled Baath party.

Meanwhile Syrian authorities freed several dissidents, including prominent opposition figure and former MP Riad Seif and rights activist Catherine Talli, human rights groups said.

They were released two days after Information Minister Adnan Mahmud said a "national dialogue" would be launched with opposition figures as part of efforts by the government to forge ahead with reforms.

More than 850 people, including women and children, have been killed and at least 8,000 arrested as security forces cracked down on the protest movements, according to rights groups.

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