

Quwat al-Imam al-Rida (Imam al-Rida Forces)



Logo: Identical to Hezbollah's logo with added text

Flag Text: Above rifle: "Then surely the party of God are they that shall be triumphant" (Quran 5:56); bottom: "Islamic resistance in Syria. Al-Imam al-Rida Forces"

FOUNDING

- 2013

KEY LEADERS

- Hamza al-Heydar, aka Hajj Abu Mustafa (d. 2013)

SIZE

- Estimated at 3,500 fighters

POLITICAL WING

- None

IDEOLOGICAL ALLEGIANCE

- Iranian Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei

ATROCITIES

- Unknown

WEAPONS

- Has displayed Soviet-era vehicles and weapons, including rocket launchers, that were available in Syria prior to the war

CURRENT DESIGNATIONS

- None

CONNECTIONS TO OTHER MILITIAS

- Close operational relationship with Lebanese Hezbollah, including training and serving under Hezbollah command

AREAS OF OPERATION

- Homs-based group that has fought across Syria, including East Ghouta, Daraa, Aleppo, Palmyra, and al-Bukamal

SOCIAL MEDIA

- Facebook



CONNECTIONS TO THE IRGC
Under command and control of the IRGC Quds Force, led by Iranian Maj. Gen. Qassem Soleimani

BACKGROUND AND ANALYSIS

Quwat al-Imam al-Rida is a Syrian Shiite militia that recruits heavily from the province of Homs, near the Lebanese border, where Syria's small Shiite community has historically lived.¹

Founded in 2013 and named for the eighth Shiite imam, al-Rida is modeled on Lebanese Hezbollah, which has trained and advised the unit with the help of Iran's Revolutionary Guard.²

It is largely focused on Homs, where it has fought alongside the Assad regime and Hezbollah forces.³ It has also fought in East Ghouta, Aleppo, Palmyra, Idlib, Daraa, and al-Bukamal.⁴

According to a pro-Hezbollah outlet, Quwat al-Imam al-Rida is the "main nucleus of Hezbollah in Syria," and recruits both Sunnis and Shiites from Homs, Aleppo, Daraa, and the Damascus countryside. In addition, the article says "their eyes are on fighting Israel in the Golan."

Like most Iranian-backed militia, Quwat al-Imam al-Rida presents Israel as its ultimate enemy, even though the group is currently preoccupied with defending the regime of Bashar al-Assad.⁵

1. Aymenn Jawad al-Tamimi, "Quwat al-Ridha: Syrian Hezbollah," *Syria Comment*, July 31, 2015. (<http://www.joshualandis.com/blog/quwat-al-ridha-syrian-hezbollah/>)

2. "Who are the Liwa al Raqqiya and Quwat al Ridha militias?" *Orient News*, February 23, 2015. (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GBiw3o2nmBo>)

3. Phillip Smyth, "How Iran Is Building Its Syrian Hezbollah," *Washington Institute for Near East Policy*, March 8, 2016. (<http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/view/how-iran-is-building-its-syrian-hezbollah>)

4. Aymenn Jawad al-Tamimi, "Quwat al-Ridha: Syrian Hezbollah," *Syria Comment*, July 31, 2015. (<http://www.joshualandis.com/blog/quwat-al-ridha-syrian-hezbollah/>)

5. "Quwat al Ridha, a popular faction of its type, joins the fight alongside the Syrian Army," *Al-Hadath News* (Lebanon), May 15, 2014. (<http://www.alhadathnews.net/archives/121957>)