

# To ∞ The Largest Funeral in History



*Millions of Iranians bid  
farewell to martyred Leader  
for the last time in Tehran*

An aerial view of a section of the vast crowd of mourners attending the funeral of Martyr Ayatollah Ali Khamenei along the 12-kilometer route from Imam Hossein Square to Azadi Square in Tehran, Monday, July 6, 2026.

## Tehran: Ocean of the Awakened Ummah for the Martyr Leader



By Maedeh Zaman Fashami

Let me begin by saying that this is not a news report, nor a statistical account of participants or a description of how the ceremony was organized. It is a narrative about ordinary people—housewives, students, and retirees—who came out into the streets to bid farewell to a man they feel eternally indebted to. From Mr. Vessali, a father of a martyr, to Ebrahim, who came to the funeral procession of the martyred leader of the Islamic Revolution despite his disability, saying, “I came to tell Sayyid Ali: You’re the best!”

They had said the funeral procession would begin at 6 a.m. Around that time, I arrived at the starting point of the procession route. The street was packed with people, and just like two days earlier at the mosque, the most visible flag was the red flag of vengeance bearing the phrase “Yā la-Thārāt al-Husayn” (O Avengers of Husayn). People of all ages were present in the streets. As far as the eye could see, there were people who had come to bid farewell to a man who, after more than 30 years, was to leave Tehran forever today.

As I moved along the route, a woman caught my attention. She was sitting in a wheelchair, holding an Iranian flag. Mrs. Goudarzi, 38 years old, said she suffers from multiple sclerosis and had come to the ceremony with her mother and sister. She spoke to me about her love for the martyred leader; she said it was this love that brought her to the street despite her condition. Mrs. Goudarzi said, “We have lost a father, and I had to attend the funeral.” With tears, she said she had never seen the martyred leader before, and today she had come so that the enemy would see that even in this condition, she stands with her homeland and the Revolution.

I say goodbye to the Goudarzi family and continue on my way. The image of the martyred leader of the Revolution stands out in the hands of the people. I look at the smile of the martyred leader. Without realizing it, I smile too, and that very smile in a photo frame decorated with white and purple flowers draws

me toward it. At the Mosalla as well, I had often seen people decorating the image of the martyred leader and his granddaughter, Zahra, 14 months old, with flowers and carrying them with them.

As I approach the photo, a woman says the martyred leader is very dear to her, and that his image deserves to be adorned with the finest flowers. Mrs. Aali, 45 years old, a housewife, speaks through tears about her longing for the martyred leader—about how she had never met him, and how this ceremony had become her first and last meeting with him. She says she prays to God to ease the burden of grief over his martyrdom and grant patience to our hearts.

The further I move forward, the more people I see in black clothing, carrying Iranian flags and the red flags of vengeance. In some parts of the street, I am forced to stop for a few minutes until the crowd eases and I can move again. During one of these pauses, I notice Mr. Ebrahim. He is 39 years old, physically disabled, and sitting in a wheelchair. He has attached the image of the martyred leader and the Iranian flag to his wheelchair and wears a headband reading “Yā la-Thārāt al-Husayn”.

I ask him why he came out in such condition. Tears roll down Ebrahim’s face as he struggles to speak. He replies, “I came to bid farewell to my leader. I had to come to say I will miss you. I am sad that I didn’t get to see the martyred leader earlier, and today I came to tell the martyr: You’re the best!”

I move past Ebrahim and think to myself about what love for the martyred leader has done to these people—most of whom have never even seen him in person, yet are willing, under any circumstances, from anywhere in Iran or even the world, to come to Tehran in the summer heat for this farewell ceremony.

As I am lost in thought, a sentence echoes in my mind: “We who never saw Khomeini considered Khomeini dearer than our own lives.” A man who had said, “I do not see you, but I love each and every one of you and pray for you.”

(See full text at [tehrantimes.com](http://tehrantimes.com))

## Millions of mourners stream through Tehran as national funeral procession honors martyred Leader

TEHRAN — A monumental sea of people filled the primary avenues of Iran’s capital on Monday, marking a historic and deeply somber final national funeral procession for the late Leader of the Islamic Revolution, Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei. Authorities described the turnout as the most massive public gathering witnessed in modern Iranian history. Millions of citizens converged from various regions to pay their final respects to a prominent figure whose sudden departure has profoundly impacted the entire country, transforming the metropolis into a vast arena of collective mourning, civic solidarity, and strategic resolve.

This monumental Monday procession represented the peak of a multi-day national mourning period. Throughout Saturday and Sunday, millions of residents across Tehran had already initiated their individual farewells, gathering at major civic landmarks and local mosques in a spontaneous demonstration of public sorrow. By Monday morning, this widespread grief coalesced into a highly structured, massive funeral cortège. The convoy bore the flag-draped casket of the martyred Leader alongside the coffins of his immediate family members, who tragically lost their lives during the initial joint US-Israeli military strikes on February 28.

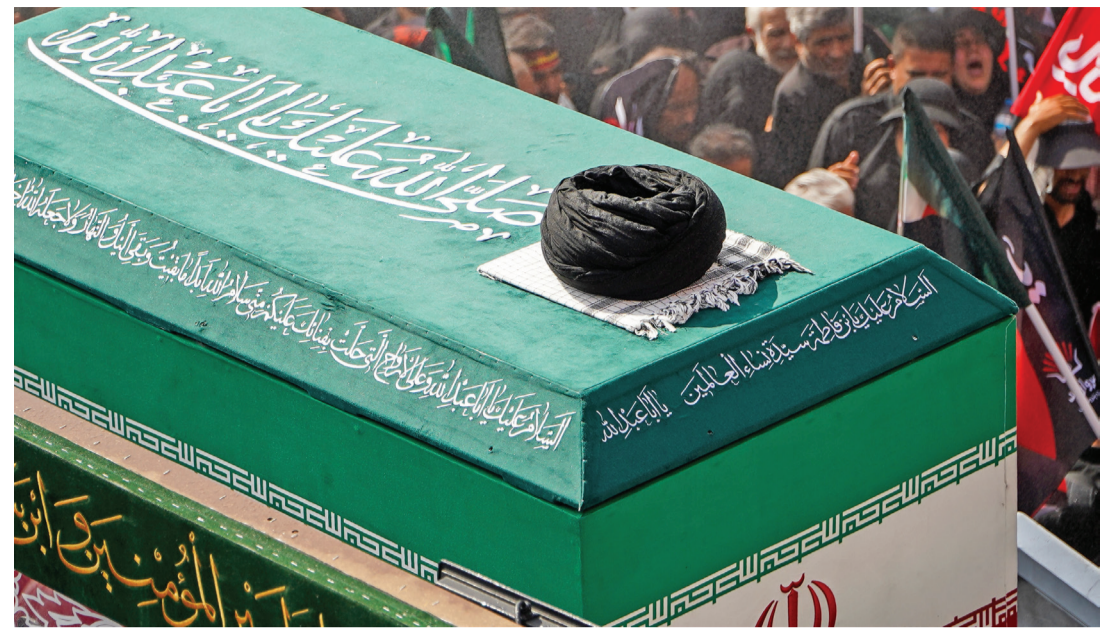
As the funeral procession made its way through the capital, dense layers of mourners, predominantly clad in black, observed traditional Shia funeral rites. The massive crowds simultaneously voiced resonant slogans reinforcing their adherence to the path of resistance and demanding accountability for the slain Leader and his relatives. The central march traversed a vital 10-kilometer route through the heart of Tehran, starting from Damavand Street, advancing toward Azadi Square, and extending down the Shahid Lashgari Highway.

As they passed under a bridge, mourners hurled stones at a billboard hung from above showing US President Donald Trump with a bullet aimed at his head. “The US killed our father,” it read. “We won’t let you go!”

Throughout the route, the intense devotion of the public was visible, as citizens continuously covered the passing cortège with flowers. High-ranking representatives of the Islamic Republic, including President Masoud Pezeshkian and Judiciary Chief Gholam-Hossein Mohseni Eje’i, walked alongside the general population to honor the memory of the deceased leader, demonstrating complete unity during the historic event.

The extensive public turnout on Monday followed an array of poignant religious services held over the weekend at Tehran’s Imam Khomeini Mosalla. This massive gathering emphasized the late Leader’s enduring legacy as both a spiritual guide and a major political strategist whose reach extended well beyond Iran’s domestic boundaries. Because the primary prayer hall filled to maximum capacity hours before the official services commenced, security staff were required to close all entry gates to the expansive complex. Even after access was restricted, additional mourners continued to arrive, turning the adjacent roadways, junctions, and overpasses into a massive, open-air congregation of individuals offering prayers.

Grand Ayatollah Ja’afar Sobhani, one of the most prominent religious figures, led the formal funeral prayers at the Mosalla. The religious rites were conducted first for the martyred Leader, followed by distinct prayers for the four members of his household who were martyred alongside him during the initial air strikes on February 28. This domestic trag-



edy has deeply affected the public consciousness, as the military strike claimed the lives of the late Leader’s son-in-law, Dr. Mesbah al-Hoda Bagheri Kani, and his eldest daughter, Seyyedeh Boshra Hosseini Khamenei. The attack also killed Zahra Haddad Adel, the late Leader’s daughter-in-law and spouse of Ayatollah Seyyed Mojtaba Hosseini Khamenei—the current Leader of the Islamic Revolution—as well as his 14-month-old granddaughter, Zahra Mohammadi Golpayegani.

During the weekend services, the small coffin of infant Zahra, positioned immediately adjacent to her grandfather’s casket, became a focal point for attendees and international news media. For the millions present in Tehran and external observers, this striking visual served as an undeniable symbol of the uncompromising nature of the external aggression, underscoring an offensive that resulted in the deaths of young children. The weekend prayers were attended by the surviving members of the family, including the late Leader’s sons Masoud, Meysam, and Mostafa, alongside the highest ranks of the nation’s



political and defense apparatus.

### Echoes of retribution and mourning

Throughout Monday’s expansive march and the preliminary weekend ceremonies, the streets of the capital echoed with rhythmic chants calling for definitive retribution. The assembled crowds combined traditional mourning laments with explicit expressions of justice, while thousands of crimson flags and banners were raised above the sea of black attire. Within traditional Shia terminology, the display of red banners is an explicit declaration that a person’s blood has been unjustly shed and that spiritual and physical vengeance remains an outstanding obligation until justice is served.

These crimson banners featured classical resistance slogans updated to reflect the contemporary national crisis, specifically “Ya Latharat al-Hussein” (O Avengers of Hussein) alongside “Ya Latharat al-Khamenei” (O Avengers of Khamenei). This specific phrasing intentionally connects the modern loss of the Leader with the historical martyrdom of Imam Hussein, the 7th-century grandson of the Prophet Muhammad, whose death at the Battle of Karbala in 680 AD forms the cornerstone of Shia identity and symbolizes resistance against

tyranny.

By interpreting the current geopolitical loss through this foundational cultural framework, the funeral ceremonies shifted public sentiment from passive grief into a collective duty of continuous resistance. Historically utilized to mobilize communities during times of existential conflict, the widespread adoption of this slogan on Monday reflected a unified public demand for a firm, structured response against the external entities responsible for the assassinations.

### Resilience on full display

Monday’s historic public gathering concluded a sequence of state ceremonies that opened on Friday with an official reception for foreign envoys and international statesmen. This prominent international representation indicated that the high-level assassinations did not succeed in isolating the Islamic Republic internationally. A highly diverse group of regional and continental leaders arrived in Tehran to extend their condolences, including Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov, Chairman of Turkmenistan’s Peo-

Khamenei, paired with the visible, joint presence of all political and military factions during Monday’s march, was highlighted by political analysts as an intentional display of systemic resilience. Within security frameworks, a targeted strike of this magnitude is calculated to trigger administrative paralysis or internal factional discord. However, the meticulous organization of this complex, multi-day funeral sequence demonstrated that the country’s institutional and legal mechanisms are designed to absorb severe external shocks. This clear cohesion conveyed a message to both domestic citizens and foreign adversaries that the core administrative and security command structure remains completely functional.

The transnational procession route

Mourners hurled stones at a billboard showing US President Donald Trump with a bullet aimed at his head. “The US killed our father. We won’t let you go!” it read.

The historic Monday procession through the streets of Tehran serves as the operational anchor for an extensive national and regional itinerary designed to honor the late Leader across multiple holy centers. Following the conclusion of the events in the capital on Monday evening, the funeral cortège traveled to the holy city of Qom, where religious seminars and local citizens will conduct further mass commemoration services on Tuesday.

In an important manifestation of regional solidarity and shared religious ties, the remains are scheduled to be transported to neighboring Iraq on Wednesday. Formal funeral processions will occur within the holy Iraqi cities of Najaf and Karbala, which host the sacred shrines of Imam Ali and Imam Hussein. Iraqi state authorities have already initiated major logistical preparations to accommodate an unprecedented number of participants. Saad Maan, a representative for the Iraqi media committee managing the international event, announced during a press briefing that initial forecasts indicate millions of Iraqi citizens will join the funeral rites. Maan emphasized that all necessary infrastructure, security details, and communication resources have been deployed to ensure a safe procession and comprehensive international media broadcast.

The final phase of this historic journey will occur on Thursday, when the body of the late Leader will return to Iran, arriving in his native city of Mashhad. There, in accordance with his explicit final instructions, Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei will be laid to rest in the holy shrine of Imam Reza (AS). This burial will bring a close to an unprecedented week of national mourning.

Furthermore, the smooth constitutional transfer of authority to Ayatollah Seyyed Mojtaba

# Global media frame Iran's largest funeral as geopolitical referendum

By Fardin Molaei

TEHRAN — As the Islamic Republic of Iran enters the third and most significant day of the funeral procession for the late Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, the global media narrative has shifted from reporting the sheer, staggering scale of the crowds to analyzing the profound political and geopolitical symbolism of a nation mourning its assassinated leader.

What has unfolded on the streets of Tehran over these three days has been described by international outlets as the “funeral of the century”—a carefully choreographed spectacle of grief, fury, and defiance that has compelled even hostile Western media outlets to acknowledge the Islamic Republic’s resilience. Like a somber symphony echoing through the ages, the wails of millions have risen to the heavens, transforming the Iranian capital into a vast theater of mourning where history and prophecy intertwine.

## The unfathomable scale of grief

From the outset, the dominant theme in international coverage—from Reuters to the Associated Press (AP), Al Jazeera, and Deutsche Welle (DW)—has been the unprecedented human tide that has flooded the Iranian capital. Drone footage broadcast worldwide showed a river of black-clad mourners choking Tehran’s main thoroughfares, a sea of humanity so vast it seemed to swallow the whole city. Reuters said the ceremonies were a national demonstration of continuity following one of the most consequential moments in the Islamic Republic’s history. The AP, covering live, described the mourners as larger than the one that turned out for the 2020 procession for General Qassem Soleimani.

The sheer density of the crowd was so immense that authorities had to spray water from fire trucks to cool mourners from the blistering July heat, a scene of immense, almost suffocating, grief. “This is the last time I am seeing him,” Maryam Alizadeh, while weeping, told AP. “Our generation lived with him for decades.” The Financial Times reported that authorities expected between 12 and 15 million visitors across the six-day ceremony, which would make it one of the largest funerals in modern history. Nearly two million trips



were made on the Tehran metro in less than two hours as the funeral procession began on Monday morning, according to Fars news agency.

The coverage has been deeply evocative, capturing the raw emotion of a populace in mourning. Reuters described the funeral procession as the powerful symbolism of a “Shiite tradition of martyrdom and mourning.” It added, “This potent symbolism has been evident since the death of Iran’s leader, seen in the black mourning flags hung over the city streets, flags that allude to the martyrdom of the third Shiite Imam, Hussein ibn Ali.” The BBC’s Lyse Doucet, reporting from Tehran, observed that the crowd was not just mourning but was also part of “a carefully choreographed and intensely political event,” with Iran’s new leaders wanting to send a message of strength and resistance. “The spectacle Iran wants the world to see,” she pointed out.

## The politics of vengeance: A “geopolitical manifesto”

While the sorrow is genuine and palpable, the international press has focused intensely on the political messaging embedded in the mass mourning. The ceremonies have served as a powerful platform for anti-American and anti-Israeli sentiment, a fact widely reported by major outlets. The Daily Mail noted that mourners were seen setting fire to British and American flags and hurling rocks at images of US President Donald Trump, with banners reading “Kill Trump” lining the streets. An effigy of Trump was hanged in Imam Hussein Square, while posters bearing the faces of Trump, Pete Hegseth, JD Vance, and Benjamin Netanyahu, each marked with crosshairs, were carried through the crowds.

CNN’s team on the ground witnessed mourners vowing revenge, with one mourner telling the network, “Today that we are here for the funeral for our leader, it’s a very tough day. We are not here to say goodbye to him, we are here for revenge. And we will take revenge.” Al Jazeera reported that “thousands filled the Grand Mosalla to pay their respects to Khamenei,” with delegations from Hamas and Hezbollah attending the ceremonies. A mourner named Sahar Zaraqat told AP: “We are here to show that his path will continue, and every single one of these people will continue down his path with clenched fists, and soon we will certainly avenge his death against the US and Israel.”

This transformation of grief into a call for action was framed by some analysts as a strategic success for Tehran. The Wall Street Journal admitted the ceremonies constituted a “massive show of defiance by the Islamic Republic against the West,” set to be one of the largest gatherings in history. A political analyst told Hawzah News Agency, “The crowd itself becomes a weapon; 15 to 20 million people marching in formation constitute a living statement that the will remains unextinguished.” For the Iranian leadership, the funeral has been a critical moment to reinforce political legitimacy and project stability after a devastating war and during a period of extraordinary political transition. Like the mythical phoenix rising from ashes of war, the Islamic Republic appears to be forging its renewed legitimacy from the very flames that sought to consume it.

Deutsche Welle’s Anthony Howard spoke to Behnam Ben Taleblu with the Foundation for the Defense of Democracies, who noted that “the funeral is a

chance for Iran’s authorities to showcase their resilience after five weeks at war with Israel and the United States.” The Guardian observed that “the scale and depth of the march, however engineered, represents an extraordinary turnaround for a country that only seven months ago was gripped by protests.”

## An international stage for solidarity

Diplomatically, the funeral has been a significant event. Xinhua reported that officials and representatives from over 100 countries attended, including delegations from Russia, China, Pakistan, and Saudi Arabia. Pakistan’s Dawn newspaper reported that “vast crowds gathered for the funeral procession of Iran’s assassinated leader,” with authorities estimating millions were on the streets in numbers that could rival those of his predecessor’s farewell nearly four decades ago. Turkish outlet Hürriyet Daily News similarly noted the immense turnout, describing how “flower petals covered the coffin as it made its way along the streets.”

This massive international turnout, which occurred despite reported State Department pressure to deter foreign dignitaries from participating, was seen as a diplomatic victory for Tehran and a stark reminder of the limits of American influence. Al Jazeera reported that the presence of representatives from over 100 countries transformed the capital into a hub of solidarity. The Lebanese newspaper Al-Akhar described the event as the “Funeral of the Century” for its sheer political weight. Pakistani Geo TV quoted Iranian army chief as saying, “This is a definitive decision that we will follow through until we achieve results,” pledging not to abandon the quest for justice.

DW reported that “the massive turnout was encouraged by Iran’s system to give a show of what it says is the country’s continued strength and unity as it holds negotiations on a permanent end to the war.” The Financial Times noted that “Iranian analysts argue that (Ayatollah) Khamenei’s death in a foreign military attack has allowed the authorities to rally more people around the themes of sovereignty and resistance than they would have been able to do before the war.”

(See full text at [tehrantimes.com](http://tehrantimes.com))

## A divine canvas of grief through Tehran’s blistering heat



By Garsha Vazirian

TEHRAN — To say it was historical doesn’t do it justice. That word feels too clinical for the civilizational gravity of what unfolded here on July 6.

As someone living not far from Azadi Square, I spent hours walking through the swelling avenues, watching people move as one colossal, grief-stricken body under a punishing summer sun.

I had not still been born during Imam Khomeini’s funeral in 1989, so my mind naturally drifted to General Qassem Soleimani’s farewell at the same spot in 2020.

Yet even those massive milestones felt eclipsed today. This was the heavy, aching culmination of the nightly wartime demonstrations we have joined since March 1, a profound answer to the criminal U.S.-Israeli war forced upon Iran.

The atmosphere carried the same defiant spirit I witnessed during the first day of ceremonies at the Mosalla on July 4, only magnified into an unprecedented national wave.

The incredible diversity of the crowd was gracefully striking. I met people from every corner of our land, hearing a rich tapestry of regional accents and seeing beautiful local clothes.

Many were completely unfamiliar with Tehran’s complex grid. Miscommunication had left hundreds of thousands stranded early that morning at the wrong spots. Some elderly mourners, unable to walk far, had to turn back. Yet even those frustrations melted into the larger current of unity.

Amid the confusion, I guided a family from Lorestan who said they had traveled for only their second visit to the capital. They were exhausted but filled with quiet purpose.

I also heard rumors, merely rumors, about Ayatollah Seyyed Mojtaba Khamenei being somewhere in the crowd incognito. Most probably, it’s not true. But it’s worth noting that the new Leader has written before about going incognito in Tehran’s taxis, about wanting to feel the pulse of the people. His absence from the official ceremonies was conspicuous.

The July heat was brutal, intensified because a vast majority of us wore thick black clothing that absorbed the sun. Yet, the capital transformed into a sanctuary of mutual care.

Local mowkebs served bread and eggs at dawn, followed by water, dates, cheese, and warm watermelon. For lunch, we shared steaming bowls of Khoresh-e Qeimeh.

The collective demand for strategic revenge was deafening. Thousands of red flags waved alongside placards demanding the killing of Donald Trump.

The crowd also targeted the intellectual

and financial architects of this imperialist assault, carrying banners explicitly condemning Zionist agents and warmongers such as Miriam Adelson, Lindsey Graham, Peter Thiel, Mark Levin, Ben Shapiro, Mark Dubowitz, and Laura Loomer.

Amid this sea of people, I randomly bumped into an old high school friend. Back then, he was entirely secular and bitterly criticized the Islamic Republic.

Laid off due to recent wartime economic pressures, he said he still holds strong criticisms, but the foreign aggression has completely reshaped his outlook.

A few incidents were reported in crowded elevators, such as the Ostad Moein metro station and parking garage, but they were calmed rather quickly.

I heard reports of children going missing, and my heart sank. I called an informed source who told me dozens of children had been separated from their families. My stomach dropped. But then he said not to worry; over half had already been found, and people were doing their best to locate the rest.

I worried about the vulnerable, about anyone collapsing from heat or the emotional weight. Some felt unwell, which is natural in such conditions. Thanks to the care shown by everyone involved, as of writing this, there has been no reports of lives being lost to the crush or exhaustion. God watched over us.

The dhuhur (noon) prayer time azaan sounded a few minutes past 12 PM after I had started returning home. The packed, roaring streets instantly found an absolute, breathtaking stillness as millions knelt on bare concrete and curbs to pray.

As I finally walked back toward my neighborhood, I was completely exhausted, with the thunderous slogans still ringing in my ears.

This is what it feels like to watch history being forged in real time. It was the same heavy, world-shifting gravity I felt when General Soleimani was martyred, during the 12-day war in June 2025, and throughout this entire war since late February.

Walking among those millions, I found myself reflecting on the old theory that history is shaped solely by great men, that towering individuals bend the arc of civilization through sheer will.

Ayatollah Khamenei was undeniably one of those towering figures, a man who anchored the Islamic Republic through decades of siege and sacrifice. Yet the true revelation of this day went far beyond any single individual.

What the world sees flows from a higher, sacred spirit alive in the people themselves, an unbreakable collective soul drawn from a source beyond our full understanding.



## From sunrise to sunset: witnessing a historic day in Tehran

By Afshin Majlesi

TEHRAN — About an hour after sunrise on Monday, I joined the growing crowds making their way toward Enqelab Square. Thousands of mourners were already filling the streets, walking quietly but steadily toward what would become one of the largest funeral processions in Iran’s contemporary history.

Despite the intense summer heat, the crowds continued to grow throughout the morning and well into the afternoon. Many had parked their vehicles in designated areas outside the city center before boarding shuttle vans organized for the event. Others arrived by metro, while countless mourners walked long distances to reach the ceremony. Some had even secured their places before daybreak, determined not to miss what they regarded as their final farewell to a leader they deeply admired.

The Tehran Metro was operating at full capacity. Every station near the procession route overflowed with passengers, many dressed in black, quietly making their way toward the gathering. Inside packed train cars, mourners repeatedly chanted: “Mourning is mourning today, mourning day is today. Our martyred leader is before God today.”

The funeral procession for Iran’s martyred leader, Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, was officially commenced from the midst of Azadi Street toward Azadi Square after two days of farewell ceremonies at Tehran’s Grand Mosalla Mosque. Every street leading to the parade was filled with people arriving

from across the country, many carrying national flags, portraits of the late leader, black banners of mourning, red flags symbolizing the call for justice for his blood, among many others.

For many participants, the funeral represented far more than a farewell. They described it as a renewal of national solidarity and a reaffirmation of their collective identity at a moment they regarded as historically significant.

Standing among the crowds, I found myself surrounded by people representing every generation of Iranian society. Elderly men who had witnessed the Islamic Revolution stood beside young families carrying children on their shoulders. University students walked alongside war veterans. Women, men, teenagers, and children all moved together through the capital in a solemn yet determined atmosphere.

Although grief dominated the gathering, another emotion was equally visible throughout the procession: determination. Many participants chanted revolutionary slogans, while others voiced demands for revenge against those they held responsible for the assassination of the martyred leader. The emotions reflected both profound personal loss and a collective resolve expressed openly throughout the day.

A middle-aged participant who introduced himself as Amir, told me that the unity displayed during the funeral carried an important message for Iran’s enemies.



“This unity is deeply worrying for our enemies, especially global arrogance and the Zionist regime,” he said. “The red flags people are carrying today symbolize our determination to seek justice for our martyred leader. They are the strongest response to those who believed they could weaken this nation.”

Nearby, I spoke with a man in his sixties who said the ceremony reminded him of another historic funeral.

“This brings back memories of Imam Khomeini’s funeral in 1989,” he recalled. “In both ceremonies, it became clear how far the Iranian people were willing to go to honor their leader. Today’s presence demonstrates a firm determination to continue the path of the [Islamic] Revolution. With such a nation, no outside power can impose its will upon us.”

A young woman attending the ceremony with several friends said: “This massive presence alone shows the profound connection between the people and the leadership,” she said.

(See full text at [tehrantimes.com](http://tehrantimes.com))



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JULY 7, 2026

## GUIDE TO SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

*He who constantly jests, exposes a part of his intelligence to destruction.*

**Imam Ali (AS)**

Prayer Times > Noon:12:08 Evening: 19:45 Dawn: 3:05 (tomorrow) Sunrise: 4:52 (tomorrow)

## Millions in Iraq prepare to bid farewell to martyred Ayatollah Khamenei



By **Wesam Bahrani**

TEHRAN – Iraq is making final preparations for a historic one-day funeral commemoration for Iran's martyred Leader, Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, with millions expected to take part in ceremonies in the holy cities of Najaf and Karbala.

Organizers are putting the finishing touches on the funeral arrangements, which will take place on Wednesday, July 8. The body is scheduled to arrive on Tuesday night at Najaf International Airport, where all commercial flights have been suspended until Thursday morning for operational reasons.

The Iraqi Supreme Preparatory Committee held an expanded meeting at the Culture Palace in Najaf to discuss final security, service, and administrative plans. A separate coordination meeting also took place at the Karbala Governorate headquarters, bringing together senior officials from both Iraq and Iran.

Speaking at a press conference, Dr. Saad Maan, spokesperson for the Media Committee overseeing the ceremonies, said: "A comprehensive and flexible plan has been put in place to manage crowd movement and ensure smooth operations."

### Popular Mobilization Forces take lead role

The Popular Mobilization Forces (PMF) have deployed their service and engineering units to Najaf and Karbala to support local authorities and provide logistical assistance. The PMF's Middle Euphrates Operations Command held an expanded meeting with senior commanders and directors to finalize the security and service plan.

The session was chaired by the PMF Chief of Staff, with the Deputy Chief of Staff and commanders of participating brigades in attendance. Discussions focused on the distribution of tasks, field coordination, and readiness levels. Organizational, service, and logistical aspects were thoroughly reviewed.

Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations, Yasser Hussein al-Issawi, confirmed that all organizational preparations are complete. "These plans were developed with participation from various PMF formations, including intelligence, security, medical services, and supporting units," he said. "Alternative plans have also been put in place to ensure smooth operations."

Al-Issawi emphasized that the ceremonies represent "a message of loyalty to the blood of the martyrs who fell as a result of the Zionist-American aggression." He added that Iraq is honored to host the event given the great religious and Islamic stature of the martyred Leader.

**Resistance officials: participation is a sacred duty**

Resistance officials across Iraq have framed

participation in the funeral as a duty no less important than fighting on the battlefield.

Sheikh Akram al-Kaabi, Secretary-General of Harakat al-Nujaba, issued a powerful statement calling for a mass turnout. "Your participation in the funeral procession of the pure body of the martyred Leader, who was killed at the hands of America and Israel, the Yazid of our time, is no less significant than taking part in fighting these despicable Zionists on the fields of jihad," he stated.

Al-Kaabi added that a million-strong presence "will be a thorn in the eye of the oppressive enemy" and that raising voices with "Death to America, Death to Israel" will be arrows of truth targeting their conspiracies and crimes.

Death to America is a chant in reference to the U.S. foreign policy of intervention, not the American nation.

In a separate statement, the Secretary-General of the Seyyed al-Shuhada Brigades, Abu Alaa al-Walal, called upon all segments of Iraqi society, tribes, educated elite, professors, youth, and social groups, to participate in this historic event.

"This funeral is not just a farewell ceremony," al-Walal said. "It is a moral and emotional stance toward one who stood firm in the fields of sacrifice when many had withdrawn."

He added: "Whoever among you was unable to attend the funeral of (Hezbollah Secretary-General) Martyr Sayyed Nasrallah, let them participate in the funeral of Imam Khamenei. For marching in this funeral is a march in the funeral of all the martyrs."

Al-Walal stressed that participation is "a testimony of loyalty and a message to the world that people do not forget those who stood with them, nor do they abandon their loyalty to those who made sacrifices for their dignity and honor."

### Tribal leaders call for mass turnout

Statements continue to pour in from Iraqi tribes welcoming the arrival of the blessed body. Tribal sheikhs and leaders have called on the Iraqi people to take part in the funeral processions as an act of loyalty to a life rich in sacrifice and struggle.

These stances reflect the deep-rooted character of Iraqi tribes, known for their fidelity to principle and unified position on major causes. Once again, they are proving that loyalty and pride remain everlasting values in the conscience of Iraq's people.

The official in charge of the Wasit branch, Abu Hawra' al-Ahmadi, has also called on the people of the province to turn out in large numbers for the ceremonies.

(See full text at [tehrantimes.com](http://tehrantimes.com))

# Global correspondents chronicle historic scale at Leader's monumental funeral in Tehran

By **Garsha Vazirian**

TEHRAN — The massive human landscape filling the central arteries of the Iranian capital on July 6 forced the global press corps to confront an unexpected geopolitical reality.

Following the February 28 airstrikes that took the lives of Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei and some members of his family, external strategic models frequently predicted the fragmentation of the domestic order.

Instead, the accredited international media delegation, numbering hundreds of journalists from the region, as well as the East and the West, stood witness to a popular mobilization of historic proportions.

From the earliest hours of dawn, foreign correspondents documented a capital city stripped of vehicular traffic and handed over entirely to an ocean of mourners, transforming an act of external aggression into a catalyst for domestic unification.

### A capital transformed by an endless human tide

Yevgeny Kuznetsov, the Tehran correspondent for the Russian official news agency TASS, captured the early momentum of this national convergence.

In his video dispatches, Kuznetsov documented the central avenues filling systematically well before the formal commencement of the ceremonies.

He said that citizens had begun their treks from dawn, drawing from all thirty-one provinces of the country, alongside foreign delegations representing over one hundred nations.

These specialized feeds provided early international evidence that popular participation spanned every segment of the country's demographic map.

This observation was reinforced by RT correspondents on the ground, who described the implementation of extensive traffic restrictions that turned major boulevards and adjacent side streets into a vast, pedestrian-only space.

The RT reports detailed how the scale of the gathering forced thousands of participants from outlying regions to park their vehicles kilometers away, continuing their journeys on foot.

The city's transport infrastructure faced unprecedented pressure, with local networks registering nearly two



million passenger trips on the Tehran metro within a brief two-hour window on Monday morning alone as it ferried the massive crowd.

### Mapping revolutionary continuity

The symbolic weight of the chosen procession route was a central focus for Western and regional commentators alike.

Financial Times (FT) reporters Bita Ghaffari and Najmeh Bozorgmehr tracked the slow, deliberate movement of the funeral vehicle as it navigated the dense crowds.

They reported that thousands of beating their chests in traditional expressions of grief, surrounded the transport, frequently halting its progress entirely.

The FT mapped the procession as it covered more than 10 kilometers.

This extensive spatial transit required extreme physical endurance from the mass assembly.

This geographic corridor was analyzed by Mahmoud Abdelwahed and other Al Jazeera correspondents, who noted that this east-to-west highway represents the historical spine of Iran's modern political architecture, heavily associated with the 1979 revolution and waves of popular mobilization.

Walking this axis, reporters encountered a vivid display of symbols. The FT highlighted the widespread presence of red flags demanding blood revenge.

In Imam Hossein Square, the crowd symbolically hanged an effigy of U.S. President Donald Trump, carrying a massive banner reading "We will kill Trump" in Persian and English.

Amid these demonstrations, Ghaffari and Bozorgmehr captured the human element, quoting Tahmineh, a 60-old woman near Azadi Square, who came to bid farewell to the martyred Leader, stating that after sus-

taining thousands of casualties in this conflict, Iran must demonstrate its regional strength.

### Confronting the reality of strategic miscalculation

For American journalist Max Blumenthal, editor-in-chief of The Grayzone, the gathering offered an unparalleled look at a living revolutionary society.

Writing from Tehran's Mosalla, Blumenthal called it the largest funeral in history, emphasizing that it is practically impossible to understand what this scene is like, or what it means, unless you are here.

He documented endless crowds pouring in, growing larger and more intense into the night.

Blumenthal witnessed indignant calls for vengeance, displays of sorrow and defiance, protest songs, and marathons of poetry, predicting these days of mourning will amount to one of the most resonant moments in the history of anti-imperialist movements.

Blumenthal argued that if the airstrike was designed by foreign authors to trigger regime change, the reality on the ground proved it had backfired catastrophically.

What unfolded in the Mosalla consolidated the Islamic Republic as a political reality that cannot be erased by sanctions or warfare.

He noted a critical nuance missing from Western analysis, describing an incandescent rage directed at the American leadership that authorized the assassination, coupled with an explicit refusal to hold ordinary American citizens collectively responsible.

Blumenthal also documented messages of admiration left by regular citizens on the door leading to the martyred Leader's office, while across the street, spontaneous crowds gathered

to chant against his killers.

### Generational resolve and the message to the world

Major Western television networks found themselves forced to report on a level of social cohesion that contradicted official foreign policy narratives.

CNN's Frederik Pleitgen reported live from the middle of thousands of citizens gathered around the central stage holding the caskets of Ayatollah Khamenei and his family members killed in the initial stages of the bombing campaign.

Pleitgen captured an atmosphere defined by tears and profound grief, but also deep anger directed toward Washington.

He relayed the testimony of mourners who spoke of the late Leader as a protective father figure, quoting one participant who warned that those responsible would be denied peace until retribution was achieved.

Pleitgen underscored that these ceremonies were tracking to become some of the largest in the history of the nation.

He emphasized that the broadcast footage delivered a clear message of popular defiance directly to global television screens.

Richard Engel of NBC News focused on the structural stability of the state, reporting that the millions converging on the capital framed this solidarity as a declaration of strategic victory.

Engel noted that despite being attacked by "the world's greatest military power," the system remains intact, standing, and prepared to fight under a new, more resilient generation.

This sense of a shifting global landscape was echoed by an Italian journalist whose video footage from the crowded avenues went viral online. The Italian correspondent described the turnout as unbelievable, writing that the world would change from this day forward.

Meanwhile, correspondents from the Al-Ahed network highlighted the waves of citizens carrying flags of blood vengeance, demanding retribution for the blood of the martyred Leader.

Through these varied accounts, the international press corps collectively recorded a revolutionary society consolidating itself for a long struggle ahead.

## Millions on the streets, millions online: social media captures Iran's farewell to martyred Leader

By **Samaneh Aboutalebi**

TEHRAN – As millions of mourners poured into the streets of Tehran on Monday to bid farewell to the martyred Leader of the Islamic Revolution, Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, social media platforms became an equally important arena where images, eyewitness accounts, and competing narratives unfolded in real time.

From X and Instagram to Telegram and short-video platforms, users inside and outside Iran transformed the funeral into one of the country's most extensively documented public events, sharing aerial footage, personal observations, and street-level videos that reached millions within hours.

While international media widely acknowledged the extraordinary scale of the procession, online users across platforms shared an even broader stream of videos and photographs documenting what many described as one of the largest public gatherings in Iran's contemporary history. Reuters, the Financial Times, AP, and several other international outlets also reported that massive crowds took part in the funeral procession, with aerial footage showing densely packed streets across central Tehran.

On X, one of the day's dominant discussions revolved around the scale of the procession.

While some anti-government accounts attempted to portray footage from Sunday's farewell ceremony at Tehran's Grand Mosalla as representative of Monday's funeral turnout, many other users pushed back by circulating aerial videos, drone footage and panoramic images recorded along Enghelab Street, Azadi Street and other sections of the funeral route.

High-angle videos filmed from rooftops, pedestrian bridges and nearby buildings spread rapidly across Persian-language timelines. Drone recordings showing densely packed avenues became among the most frequently shared visuals of the

day, with many users describing the turnout as exceeding their expectations.

Another conversation that gained traction involved the late adjustment to parts of the funeral route.

Several participants wrote that the unexpected changes prevented them from reaching planned gathering points or getting closer to the coffin. Yet even many of those expressing frustration stressed that the logistical changes did little to overshadow what they regarded as the extraordinary scale and emotional atmosphere of the ceremony. Comments such as "The route changed, but the people were everywhere" and "Nothing diminished the grandeur of today's farewell" were echoed across numerous Persian-language posts.

If X became the arena for debate, Instagram evolved into the visual archive of the day.

Official news agencies continuously uploaded photographs and live broadcasts, but some of the platform's most engaging content came from personal accounts belonging to photographers, journalists and ordinary participants documenting the event through their mobile phones.

Reels featuring endless rows of mourners, overhead drone footage, volunteers distributing water, families carrying Iranian flags and emotional moments along the procession route accumulated hundreds of thousands of views within hours. Unlike X, where political debate remained central, Instagram users largely focused on documenting the atmosphere and scale of the gathering.

Foreign correspondents covering the funeral also turned to their personal social media accounts, posting informal observations, behind-the-scenes footage and panoramic views that complemented their organizations' official reporting. International coverage likewise highlighted the unusually large foreign media presence in Tehran, with hundreds of journalists accredited to

report on the ceremony.

Another widely discussed aspect of the online coverage was the participation of foreign travel bloggers and digital creators visiting Iran.

Several posted videos expressing surprise at both the size of the crowds and the organization of the event. Rather than offering political commentary, many documented their own experience of walking alongside mourners, filming Tehran's packed streets and interacting with participants.

Their clips were subsequently reposted by numerous Iranian users, who viewed them as independent eyewitness perspectives shared beyond the country's official media outlets.

Telegram channels also played a significant role throughout the day. Users compiled footage recorded from multiple locations into extended montages, allowing viewers to follow different segments of the procession simultaneously. In many cases, drone videos, television broadcasts and mobile phone recordings were edited together, creating a collective digital record of the ceremony from dozens of different angles.

Despite the sharp differences in political interpretation visible across online platforms, one point appeared unmistakable: the funeral generated an extraordinary volume of user-produced content. Professional journalists, photographers, foreign correspondents, bloggers and ordinary citizens all contributed to documenting the event, producing an immense digital archive within just a few hours.

Long after the streets of Tehran began to empty, that online archive continued to expand. Images, videos and personal accounts kept circulating across platforms, ensuring that the funeral would be remembered not only as one of the largest public gatherings in recent Iranian history, but also as one of its most extensively chronicled events in the age of social media.