

Greatest...

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"We are not here to say goodbye to him, we are here for revenge. And we will take revenge," a mourner told CNN's team on the ground. Sahar Zaraqar, another mourner, declared: "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."

The procession was attended by top officials, including President Masoud Pezeshkian, Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi, judiciary chief Gholamhussein Mohseni Ejei, and the current head of the Quds Force, General Esmail Qaani.

Commander-in-Chief of the Iranian Army Major General Amir Hatami declared: "We will not let go of the collars of those who martyred our Leader."

IRGC Quds Force Commander Brigadier General Esmail Qaani described Ayatollah Khamenei's martyrdom as the culmination of a lifetime of service, saying: "An Imam who spent a lifetime striving purely should have had such a blessed end."

The head of Iran's Supreme National Security Council, Muhammad Bagher Zolghadr, who was making his first public appearance since being named to the post, declared: "The presence of millions of people with red flags and slogans, demanding bloodshed, is a clear message from the Iranian nation to its enemies."

Zolghadr declared on the sidelines of the procession that the massive turnout had created a "new equation".

"Astute observers noticed today that a new equation has taken shape in Tehran," he said, emphasizing that the mass gathering demonstrates Iranians' unity and solidarity in the face of foreign threats.

President Pezeshkian wrote on social media: "The leadership of the martyr taught everyone that Iran's greatest asset is its people and their unity." Pezeshkian pledged to continue Imam Khamenei's path: "I promise to continue the path of the martyr Imam."

Following the Tehran procession, the body of the martyred Leader was transported by helicopter to the holy city of Qom, the center of Iran's religious education, arriving on Monday evening.

The stop in Qom was deeply symbolic for the Islamic Republic, as the city has played a significant role in Iran's history and politics over the last century. It was home to some of the most strident opposition to Iran's monarchy, particularly in the 1960s and 1970s, and clerics educated there under the leadership of Imam Khomeini emerged victorious during the revolution and the internal power struggle that followed.

On Tuesday, millions of mourners gathered at the Holy Jamkaran Mosque for the official funeral prayer and street procession. Grand Ayatollah Abdullah Javadi Amoli led the funeral prayers early Tuesday morning in the presence of worshippers, religious scholars, government officials, and military commanders.

Following the prayers, the coffins were carried by mourners from the

Jamkaran Mosque along Payambar Azam Boulevard to the Shrine of Hazrat Fatima Masumeh, a path that had been prepared to accommodate the massive crowds.

Mourners from provinces across Iran had begun arriving in Qom the previous afternoon, filling the mosque's courtyards and surrounding streets. Processions of mourners, traveling on foot and by vehicle while carrying red "Ya Litharat al-Husayn" banners alongside the Iranian national flag, continued to converge on the site.

Aerial footage broadcast by national television showed the streets of Qom, home to about 1.5 million people, submerged in a sea of mourners. Thousands of red flags were visible among the predominantly black-clad crowds.

The massive crowd chanted in unison, "Death to America." Crowds began arriving in Qom from across Iran since Monday afternoon, filling the mosque's courtyards and prayer halls before dawn.

Qom Friday prayer leader Ayatollah Muhammad Saidi had declared beforehand that the funeral turnout would serve as a "referendum for the Islamic Republic".

The ceremonies in both Tehran and Qom sent a clear message to Iran's adversaries at a time of war and national mourning, indicating the country's unity and resilience.

Hassan Abdullah, a Nigerian student studying in Iran, told reporters that he came to the farewell ceremony to pray for the martyred leader. "Sayyid Ali Khamenei was the father of the oppressed," Abdullah said, visibly emotional.

"He always spoke about the oppressed and helped them. He hated injustice throughout his life and helped people around the world. This incident is a very big thing in our hearts. I was very sad because they separated us from our father. God willing, with his blood, Israel and America will come to an end."

U.S. President Donald Trump drew widespread condemnation when he suggested that the tears of Iranian mourners were "fake" and claimed the United States could have eliminated Iran's leadership with "one shot" while they gathered for the funeral.

When asked about the large crowds mourning Ayatollah Khamenei, Trump said he was surprised. "Maybe it's fake tears," he told Axios.

President Pezeshkian declared that the mourning of the Iranian people is the "best evidence of the greatness, dignity, and strength of the martyred leader of the revolution".

Araghchi also issued a warning: "Any threat against our people and leadership will receive an immediate, powerful response." The chants of "Death to Trump" that echoed through the crowds in Tehran served as a resounding popular response to the U.S. president's provocations.

"I heard the call for revenge, but our leader should say what we need to do. And we must listen to him," said Ziba Naderi, a 42-year-old nurse attending the funeral.

"I want to say one sentence to President Trump and the world," declared a grey-haired man named Mojtaba, who approached journalists with a message of defiance.

"Soon, very soon you will see signs of revenge at the top of the

White House, and soon the color of the White House will be the color of my red flag."

"We lost our father," a woman from Bosnia told Iranian media, summing up the sentiment of many foreign mourners who traveled to Iran to participate.

The scale of the international presence at the ceremonies has been a powerful counter-narrative to the isolationist policies of the United States. Representatives from approximately 100 countries attended the official farewell ceremonies, with high-level delegations from at least 30 nations present.

The presence of leaders and officials from Russia, China, Pakistan, Turkey, Iraq, Armenia, and many others illustrated that the Iranian nation's friends are numerous and stand in solidarity with it during this time of immense grief.

Robert Pape, a University of Chicago political scientist, stated that the massive funeral ceremonies demonstrate growing nationalist resolve and will strengthen Iran's negotiating position.

"The balance of military capabilities did not change over the weekend," Pape said. "The balance of political will shifted."

The funerals are scheduled to continue in Iraq's holy cities of Najaf and Karbala on Wednesday, where President Pezeshkian is expected to travel to attend the ceremonies.

The final burial will take place on Thursday at the shrine of Imam Reza (AS) in Mashhad, the martyred Leader's hometown, in accordance with his stated wishes.

As the weeklong mourning rituals unfold across Iran and into Iraq, the images of tens of millions grieving in unison have become a defining moment for the Islamic Republic—a testament both to the depth of public devotion to the martyred Leader and national unity.

Officials...

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the historic funeral ceremonies.

"The world must know that we will avenge our martyred leader, our commanders, and our martyred populace," Azizi declared. "The message of this ceremony at the Tehran Musalla is strictly a message of revenge."

Ali Akbar Ahmadian, the Representative of the Leader in the Defense Council, declared that the pure blood of Iran's martyred Leader has ignited a powerful popular awakening and strengthened the resolve of the Iranian people against humiliation and aggression.

"Today, the martyred Leader of Iran himself entered the arena and, with his own blood, completed the proof for everyone and placed an even heavier responsibility on the shoulders of us all than before," Ahmadian said.

"The surging blood of the martyr has sparked a massive popular awakening, with Iranians rising as one voice: 'Far be it from us to accept humiliation.'"

The senior official stressed the unbreakable covenant of the Iranian people, declaring: "O leaders! We stand firm upon our covenant until our last breath, and in harmony with you we declare: 'Peace to those who make peace with you, and war to those who wage war against you.'"

Eslami...

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with environmental studies partly completed and projects now entering the contracting phase.

He added that engineering contracts have already been signed for a planned 5,000-megawatt nuclear power plant in the southern Iranian Hormozgan Province.

"This project forms part of the plan to achieve the target of producing 20,000 megawatts of nuclear electricity by the [Iranian calendar] year 1420 (which starts on March 20, 2041), a goal that has been among the martyred Leader's stated priorities since 2007."

Eslami said that under Iran's long-term development plan, additional nuclear power plants are expected to begin entering service around 2030 and 2031 to help supply electricity for industry and households.

Highlighting the performance of the Bushehr Nuclear Power Plant, Eslami said the facility has generated 80 billion kilowatt-hours of electricity since becoming operational.

According to the official, producing the same amount of electricity using fossil fuels would have required more than 130 million barrels of oil, valued at roughly \$10 billion at approximate market prices.

He also said the plant has generated economic returns equal to about two and a half times its initial investment over its 12 years of operation, while retaining an estimated operational lifespan of another 50 years.

"This demonstrates the plant's strong economic viability as well as its significant environmental advantages through reduced pollution."

Eslami said the country's nuclear program extends beyond electricity generation, pointing to its role in healthcare through the production of radiopharmaceuticals.

According to the AEOI chief, the organization's product portfolio now includes about 80 radiopharmaceuticals supplied to medical centers and nuclear medicine facilities under an agreement with the country's Food and Drug Administration.

"Approximately 1.5 million people benefit from these products each year."

He added that Iran also exports radiopharmaceuticals when scheduled air transportation is available, saying exports are interrupted only when suitable transportation routes are unavailable.

Concluding the interview, Eslami pointed to the extensive farewell and funeral ceremonies that have gone underway to honor the martyred Leader, saying the turnout demonstrated that Iranians are a well-informed nation.

"The massive public turnout and the slogans chanted by participants sent a clear message to Iran's enemies, enemies whose actions have shown that they have no commitment to humanitarian or ethical principles and pursue only their own interests," he stated.

"With this awareness, they (the nation) have chosen a path that brings dignity to themselves and their country, while continuously enhancing the nation's strength."

Ministry...

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has made it crystal clear that only Iran is in charge of reopening

the waterway under the bilateral agreements reached with the United States, warning that any foreign meddling will only complicate the process.

Iran has introduced a structured system for safe passage, including the option of maritime service fees, a legitimate sovereign measure backed by regional partners such as Oman.

Germany's posturing cannot erase its documented alignment with the US-led camp that waged the illegal war against Iran through sanctions, military support, and political cover.

Now, Berlin seeks to insert itself into post-conflict arrangements under the guise of "mine clearance" or "safeguarding" missions, moves Tehran has firmly rejected as provocative interference.

Iranian officials have warned time and again that the era of Western dictates over Iran's territorial waters and security is over.

The Islamic Republic, which defended the Strait against foreign threats during the war, will not allow external powers to complicate stabilization or impose their will on Iranian sovereign assets.

Wadepul's statements are a classic example of Western double standards. He is lecturing the world on "freedom of navigation" while supporting aggression and now trying to dictate terms to the very nation that suffered the illegal war and its consequences.

Part...

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this conviction, and his proposal that Persian become the second language of the Islamic world demonstrated his broader vision of a culturally confident and intellectually connected Ummah.

He regarded linguistic integrity as a fortress protecting national identity from gradual erosion, expressing this concern through the powerful warning that "when a nation loses identity, it melts in the palm of enemies."

Perhaps the most profound expression of this cultural commitment appeared in his extraordinary relationship with Persian literature. His life reflected the habits of a deeply engaged intellectual: a serious and relentless reader whose interests extended across philosophy, mysticism, history, social sciences, poetry, and literature.

Yet his engagement with literature was not merely that of a reader or admirer. He was also a poet himself, with a refined literary sensibility and a deep appreciation for the artistic and intellectual power of the written word.

The...

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development and continuous evaluation.

Scholars in applied linguistics, translation studies, comparative literature and intercultural education contribute to the language's international development.

The late Yadollah Samareh and Ahmad Saffar Moghadam in the field of teaching Persian to non-native speakers highlight the importance of theoretical and methodological foundations, representing the link between linguistic knowledge, teaching practice and cultural

engagement.

Researchers worldwide in Persian language, Iranian studies, Persian literature and related fields have contributed to academic exchange and introduced Persian to new generations across Europe, Asia and North America.

Language is one of the principal instruments of soft power, through which a nation conveys its worldview, values and cultural patterns. Persian, in this sense, serves as a medium for dialogue, offering learners access not only to a linguistic system but also to Iranian history, literature, thought and aesthetics. The development of Persian-language education abroad is therefore part of broader cultural diplomacy.

Writers and researchers are architects of cultural memory. Each educational, academic and literary work strengthens the global presence of the Persian language, which continues to be sustained by the efforts of those who use the pen in service of culture.

Tehran's...

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Ahmad Masjed Jamei, senior officials from the Ministry of Culture, the Rudaki Foundation and Iran's performing arts institutions.

Veteran composer and conductor Muhammad Mirzamani said the festival demonstrates the enduring role of art in preserving cultural and religious identity.

Quoting Imam Khomeini's oft-cited statement that "no ideology endures unless it is expressed through art," Mirzamani stated that the event represents more than a routine cultural gathering.

He said the program draws on authentic Iranian artistic traditions, spanning visual arts, regional music, ceremonial songs, chavoshi recitations and devotional performances, adding that many musicians regard religious and ritual music as one of the historical foundations of Iranian musical culture.

Hamid Sael, leader of the Afghan group Salam, said the ensemble selected three pieces specifically for Muharram, noting that Afghanistan also maintains longstanding traditions of musical performances during Muharram and Ramadan.

One composition, titled "Hussein Shahid" ("Martyr Hussein"), was dedicated to those killed during the Iran-Iraq War, he said.

Sael explained that while the full ensemble consists of around 50 members, touring performances are typically presented by smaller groups. The Tehran performance featured five musicians playing the dotar, rubab, dambura and vocals.

He described cultural initiatives such as Kheymeh-ye Honar as an important means of passing Ashura traditions to younger generations.

The second edition of Kheymeh-ye Honar runs through July 7 at Tehran's City Theater complex.

Organized by the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance in partnership with several national cultural institutions and Tehran Municipality, the festival features nightly programs of religious music, regional traditions, ta'zieh theater, ceremonial storytelling, poetry and visual arts inspired by the remembrance of Ashura.