

New Leader, New Blood

Branches of power, Armed Forces, people pledge allegiance to Ayatollah Seyyed Mojtaba Khamenei

International Desk

Ayatollah Seyyed Mojtaba Khamenei was appointed as the new Leader of Iran by the Assembly of Experts on Monday. The selection was made amid an ongoing war declared after a joint US-Israeli attack on February 28 resulted in the martyrdom of former Leader Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei.

The Assembly of Experts said in a statement that despite the "serious wartime conditions and direct threats and operations by the US and Israel against this popular body", it immediately initiated the process of convening an extraordinary session to prevent a leadership vacuum within the country.

"After thorough and extensive deliberations, and utilizing Article 108 of the Constitution... today's extraordinary session (Sunday) appointed Ayatollah Seyyed Mojtaba Hosseini Khamenei as the third Leader of the Islamic Republic of Iran, based on the overwhelming vote of the esteemed members of the Assembly of Experts," the state-

ment read.

Prior to the Assembly's decision, in accordance with Article 111 of the Constitution, the Islamic Republic had established a temporary leadership council comprised of President Masoud Pezeshkian, Judiciary Chief Gholamhossein Mohseni Ejeie, and Ayatollah Alireza Araf, a member of the Guardian Council.

Ayatollah Mojtaba Khamenei, the martyred Leader's second son, was born in Mashhad in 1969. He studied in theological schools in Tehran and Qom and served in the front lines during the eight-year Iran-Iraq War (1980-88).

He has advanced theological studies under prominent clerics, including his father, and is a popular instructor at the Qom Seminary. His innovative teaching methods have contributed to the growth of his classes into one of the most vibrant in Qom.

Beyond his academic pursuits, Ayatollah Khamenei maintains strong ties with influential religious figures in Qom and Mashhad, as well as with military commanders and leaders of the resistance movement.



Iranians rally across the country, displaying portraits of Ayatollah Seyyed Mojtaba Khamenei, to pledge allegiance to Iran's third Leader on March 9, 2026.
TASNIM

Heralding new era of pride & power

Following the announcement, various officials and organizations issued statements expressing their support for the new leadership.

President Pezeshkian hailed the appointment as "heralding a new era of pride and power for the Iranian nation."

He added that this "valuable selection" reflects the will of the Islamic nation to strengthen

national unity, which serves as a steadfast dam protecting the Iranian nation against the plots of its enemies.

Pezeshkian underlined Iran's historical resilience and its ability to overcome challenges through collective wisdom, faith, and persistent effort.

"We will undoubtedly overcome the current challenges through the wise leadership of the new Leader and with a spirit of trust, empathy and widespread popu-

lar resistance," he said.

Judiciary chief Ejeie described the Assembly's decision as "hope-inspiring and defining" for the continuation and growth of the Islamic Republic.

He urged national unity and obedience to the new leadership, stating, "The country is currently engaged in a campaign against a savage enemy steeped in endless miscalculations, and victory depends on allegiance and rallying around the Leader."

Parliament Speaker Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf called the decision a "sound and precise" measure that soothed the grievous loss of the former leader, effectively thwarting the hopes of Iran's enemies.

He described the new leader as a devout, capable, and knowledgeable figure, familiar with the nation's challenges and committed to the revolution's new approach.

Members of parliament also issued a separate statement, declaring Ayatollah Khamenei the most deserving individual to lead the nation. They pledged full cooperation and support for the new Leader.

Ali Larjani, Secretary of the Supreme National Security Council, said the selection dashed the hopes of "warmongering enemies" while inspiring hope in the rights-seeking Iranian people.

Separately, the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) re-

leased a statement calling the appointment a "new dawn" and the beginning of a new stage in the revolution. The IRGC reaffirmed its commitment to supporting the new leadership and safeguarding the revolution's values.

The Iranian Army and the Ministry of Defense also issued statements pledging allegiance and readiness to implement the new leader's directives.

Iranian citizens gathered in city centers across the country on Monday afternoon to pledge their allegiance to the new leader.

Following the announcement, Russian President Vladimir Putin congratulated Ayatollah Khamenei on his appointment as the new Leader of Iran, expressing confidence that he will "proudly continue his father's work" and unite the Iranian people "in the face of serious challenges."

Meanwhile, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Gao Jiankun, during a press briefing on Monday, stated that the selection of the new Iranian leader was carried out in accordance with Iran's constitution, and Beijing opposes any interference in such internal affairs under any pretext.

Earlier, US President Donald Trump had indicated that he believed he should have a say in the selection of Iran's next leader.

Backing anti-Iran war amounts to complicity: Pezeshkian tells Macron



International Desk

President Masoud Pezeshkian warned that any involvement by other countries such as France in support of the aggressors would constitute complicity in the US-Israeli "unlawful" war against Iran.

In a telephone conversation with French President Emmanuel Macron on Sunday night, Pezeshkian said all measures carried out by Iran had been in line with its right of self-defense.

He added that the United States and Israel launched the war in the midst of nuclear talks for the second time, a move which violated international law.

Pezeshkian warned that Iran would respond in kind to the US-Israeli strikes on civilian targets such as schools, hospitals and infrastructure.

"Such moves will only lead to further complications and intensification of the situation in the region. The Iranian nation, government and Armed Forces are determined to defend the country and the Establishment," Pezeshkian reiterated.

The French president said Paris considered the ongoing war inconsistent with international law, adding that his country had no involvement in the conflict.

Macron added that France was in talks with some countries to control and prevent further escalation of tensions. The US and Israel launched a war of military aggression on Iran on February 28, some eight months after they carried out unprovoked attacks on the country.

The attacks led to the martyrdom of the Leader of the Islamic Revolution, Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, as well as several military commanders. Hundreds of civilians, including women and children, have also been killed so far in the attacks by the US and Israel. The Iranian Armed Forces began to swiftly retaliate against the strikes by launching barrages of missile and drone attacks on the Israeli-occupied territories as well as on US bases in regional countries.

US only tries to protect Israel

Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Esmail Baghaei said on Monday the security of regional states did not matter to the United States as it only made utmost efforts to protect Israel.

Speaking at a press conference on Monday, Baghaei said developments in the past days proved that the US military presence in the region did not bring security and stability but only spread insecurity and caused rifts among regional countries.

He once again called on all regional countries not to allow the US to abuse their territory and facilities, saying, "This demand is not just based on the principle of neighborliness but made on the basis of a known principle in international law."

Commitment to humanitarian principles
The spokesman emphasized that the country's Armed Forces remained committed to humanitarian principles and rules and morality.

However, he said, the opposite side had targeted Iranian civilians, including innocent children, in various cities since

the outbreak of the war.

Baghaei added that the attacks on fuel storage facilities and an oil production transfer center in Tehran and the province of Alborz on Saturday were a crime against humanity and the environment and can even be listed as a genocidal crime as its consequences could have impacts on the next generations.

US audacity, irresponsibility 'abhorrent'

Baghaei slammed US President Donald Trump's lies in dealing with the Iranian nation and said the true meaning of "US help for Iran" is now clear to everyone.

He slammed the US "audacity, irresponsibility, crimes and killings of humans as abhorrent."

This is a war between a side that seeks domination, destruction and massacre while Iran, on the other side, resists strongly in order to protect human dignity and its people in the face of the most vicious acts, he emphasized.

No missile fired at Azerbaijan, Turkey, Cyprus

The spokesman also rejected claims about Iran's attacks on Turkey, Azerbaijan and Cyprus, saying that the country had not fired any missile into the three countries.

"We insist on maintaining relations based on neighborliness and friendship. The continuation of cordial ties based on mutual respect, including respect for national sovereignty and territorial integrity of all countries is a principle for Iran," Baghaei emphasized.

IRGC, Army pound Israeli-US targets in fresh massive strikes

National Desk

Iran's Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) launched on Monday a fresh round of massive missile and drone strikes against US military bases in the region and Israeli targets in the occupied territories in retaliation for the ongoing US-Israeli aggression against the country. The Public Relations Department of the IRGC announced in a statement that the 30th wave of Operation True Promise 4 was carried out on the 19th day of the holy fasting month of Ramadan, and concurrent with the election of the new Leader of the Islamic Revolution, Ayatollah Seyyed Mojtaba Khamenei.

The statement said the mass attacks struck US bases in the region as well as the Israeli regime's positions north of the occupied lands.

It added that liquid and solid-fuel missiles of Khorramshahr, Fattah, and



IRNA

Khaybar, as well as strategic drones, were deployed in the strikes, noting that all of them hit the designated targets successfully.

Meanwhile, the spokesman for the Khatam al-Anbiya Central Headquarters announced that the Iranian military had over the past 24 hours destroyed four advanced US THAAD missile system radars in strikes across the region.

The radars were targeted and destroyed during operations to suppress enemy anti-missile defenses.

The spokesman said the THAAD radars had been providing real-time data to the missile defense network of the US and the Israeli regime.

He added that with serious damage inflicted on the enemy's early warning network, attack sirens in the occupied territories now sound only at the moment of missile impact.

In a statement on Monday, the Iranian Army also announced that its ground, air, and naval forces hit American-Israeli targets by using drones in recent hours.

The Army's massive wave of drone attacks targeted assembly points and equipment depots at US Camp al-Adairi in Kuwait.

In addition, American-Zionist combat support units, as well as early-warning radar stations at the US base 512 in occupied territories were struck by Iranian drones.

Mohammad Ali Rajabi
Cartoonist

