

Please Note:

News will be limited this week. I am getting things ready for a Cardia Catheterization this Thursday March 19. RDB

6 wounded after Hezbollah rocket impact sparks fire in northern Israel

IDF begins 'targeted ground op' to expand south Lebanon buffer against Hezbollah; Katz says displaced Lebanese will not return to area until residents of Israel's north are safe

By [Emanuel Fabian](#)

and [Tol Staff](#) Today, 12:45 pm Updated at 7:33 pm



First responders at the site of a blaze sparked by a Hezbollah rocket impact in Nahariya on March 16, 2026. (Magen David Adom)

A Hezbollah rocket impacted in northern Israel on Monday evening, sparking a fire and wounding several people, hours after the IDF announced it was deploying troops further into southern Lebanon.

Rocket and drone fire from the Lebanese terror group rained down on northern Israel throughout the day, with a rocket impacting in Nahariya shortly after 6 p.m.

According to the Magen David Adom ambulance service, the rocket in Nahariya wounded six people,

including two adults and four minors who were treated for signs of smoke inhalation after a fire was sparked by the impact.

All six were listed in good condition after being treated.

At another impact site, near Kibbutz Kabri, a man in his 40s was listed in light-to-moderate condition after being hit by a blast, MDA said.

Throughout Monday morning, sirens had sounded in the Galilee Panhandle and in communities near the Lebanon border, amid rocket fire by the terror group. There were no reports of injuries in those attacks.

The IDF said earlier Monday that it had begun a "targeted ground operation against key targets" in southern Lebanon, pushing more forces deeper into the area as part of an expanded buffer zone, after Hezbollah began attacking Israel earlier this month amid the US-Israeli war with Iran.

Defense Minister Israel Katz said the operation would continue until Hezbollah no longer poses a threat to the residents of northern Israel, and said displaced Lebanese would not return to their homes until then.

The 91st "Galilee" Regional Division began a raid late Saturday in the eastern sector of southern Lebanon, during which troops encountered and killed several Hezbollah operatives, according to the military.

The IDF said the operation was aimed at expanding "the forward defense area."

"This operation is part of the effort to establish forward defense, including the destruction of terror infrastructure and the elimination of terrorists operating in the area, to remove threats and create an additional layer of security for residents of the north," the military said.

Before the troops pushed into the area, the IDF said it carried out massive airstrikes and artillery shelling "to remove threats."



Meanwhile, the 146th Reserve Division remains deployed to the western sector of southern Lebanon, and the 36th Division has been carrying out a raid in the eastern sector.

An Israeli self-propelled howitzer artillery gun fires rounds towards southern Lebanon from a position near the border on March 15, 2026. (Odd Andersen/AFP)

The defense minister, after holding an assessment with army brass, said: "The IDF has begun a ground maneuver in Lebanon to remove threats and protect the residents of the Galilee and the north."

“Hundreds of thousands of Shiite residents of south Lebanon who have evacuated and are evacuating from their homes will not return to the area south of the Litani [River] until the safety of the residents of the north is guaranteed,” Katz said.

He added that the operation in south Lebanon is meant to resemble the military’s operations in Gaza during its two-year war against Hamas.

Katz said that he and Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu have told the military to destroy terror infrastructure close to the border in order to prevent Hezbollah’s return, “just as was done against Hamas in Rafah, Beit Hanoun, and the terror tunnels in Gaza.”

The defense minister vowed to restore a sense of security to the residents of northern Israel, saying that Hezbollah leader Naim Qassem is hiding underground as his actions make over a million Lebanese “refugees in their own country.”

Katz said that if the Hezbollah chief misses his predecessor Hassan Nasrallah and former Iranian supreme leader Ali Khamenei, both of whom were killed by Israel, “he will soon be able to meet them in the depths of hell.”

Hezbollah will pay a “heavy price” for its efforts to destroy Israel, Katz said.



Defense Minister Israel Katz (2nd L) holds an assessment at the Kiriya in Tel Aviv on March 16, 2026. (Ariel Hermoni/Defense Ministry)

The IDF has been preparing to deploy more forces in southern Lebanon and further expand its buffer zone to push away the threat of Hezbollah from the border.

Multiple recent reports have indicated that Israel is [planning a large-scale ground operation](#) in southern Lebanon aimed at uprooting Hezbollah. Defense Minister Israel Katz has even [threatened to seize territory](#) there.

In recent days, there have also been several [reports](#) of plans for direct talks between Israel and the Lebanese national government, which has previously pledged to crack down on

the terror group. Foreign Minister Gideon Sa’ar has [denied](#) such plans, despite reports citing Israeli officials.

Since March 2, when Hezbollah began attacking Israel in response to the killing of Iran’s supreme leader Ali Khamenei, the terror group has launched around 100 rockets a day, according to the IDF, as well as more than a hundred drones over the entire period.

The IDF has said that Hezbollah is launching most of its attacks from deeper within southern Lebanon, and not from close to the border.



Smoke plumes rise following an Israeli strike on the village of Khiam in southern Lebanon near the border with Israel, as seen from nearby Marjayoun, on March 16, 2026. (Photo by AFP) /

The attacks came following a period of relative quiet after a November 2024 truce agreement mostly ended a previous round of fighting, which had begun when Hezbollah attacked Israel on October 8, 2023.

Overnight Sunday-Monday, the IDF said it had launched a new wave of airstrikes against Hezbollah infrastructure in Beirut.

No further details were given by the military.

Earlier, the IDF had

repeated an evacuation warning for several neighborhoods in Beirut’s southern suburbs, a Hezbollah stronghold.

Firefighters work at the site of overnight Israeli airstrikes in the southern suburbs of Beirut on March 16, 2026. (Photo by AFP) /

Meanwhile, after Lebanon [outlawed Hezbollah military activity](#) earlier this month following the terror group’s renewed fighting against Israel, a Lebanese judge began legal proceedings against four Hezbollah members for weapons offenses on Monday.



A Lebanese judicial official told AFP, speaking on condition of anonymity, that two of the four Hezbollah members “were arrested while transporting rockets towards south Lebanon,” while the others were found in possession of “unlicensed military weapons.”

The judge has referred the case “to the first investigating judge in Beirut... requesting they be questioned and arrest warrants issued,” the official added.

Earlier this month, three Hezbollah members were released on bail of around \$20 after being questioned in the military court over the alleged possession of unlicensed military weapons, in a move that sparked controversy and anger. <https://www.timesofisrael.com/idf-begins-targeted-ground-operation-to-expand-south-lebanon-buffer-against-hezbollah/>

Injuries and heavy damage to homes as Iran fires multiple missile salvos at Israel **Five missile attacks target north, center, south and Jerusalem; woman lightly injured after impact on home in Rishon Lezion; fragments land near Knesset, Church of Holy Sepulchre**

By [Emanuel Fabian](#), [Diana Bletter](#)

and [Agencies](#) Today, 5:02 pm



The scene where a missile fired from Iran at Israel caused damage to a house in Rishon Lezion, March 16, 2026. (Chaim Goldberg/Flash90)



Security and rescue forces at a house damaged in an Iranian missile attack in Shoham, March 16, 2026 (Yossi Aloni/Flash90)



View of a house damaged in an Iranian missile attack in Rishon Lezion, March 16, 2026 (Chaim Goldberg/Flash90)



A woman carrying a dog stands in a building damaged in an Iranian missile attack in Rishon Lezion in central Israel on March 16, 2026 (AHMAD GHARABLI / AFP)

Iran fired several salvos of missiles at Israel on Monday, with impacts damaging homes and an apparent cluster bomb injuring one person in the central region of the country.

The Iranians launched five barrages at Israel after midnight and into the afternoon. Though air defense systems worked to shoot down the missiles, some warheads impacted on residential areas, as did debris and fragments from interceptions.

Meanwhile, the Israel Defense Forces said it launched extensive strikes on Iran, destroying slain former supreme leader Ali Khamenei's private jet, and a space research center.



A missile fragment is seen in Safed following an Iranian attack on March 16, 2026 (Israel Police)

The Iranian attacks on Israel set off sirens in the north, central, and southern regions, and in two attacks, also in Jerusalem.

Multiple impact sites were reported across central Israel, including a home in Rishon Lezion. On Thursday afternoon, a man in Jerusalem was lightly wounded after touching a missile fragment, and there was damage to several buildings from falling fragments.

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The Fire and Rescue service said a large chunk from an intercepted missile struck a home in East Jerusalem, causing damage. Other fragments landed near the National Library, which is close to the Knesset, and in the Old City, near the Church of the Holy Sepulchre.



A missile fragment is seen in Jerusalem following an Iranian attack on March 16, 2026. (Fire and Rescue Service)

Lir Itzik, 30, whose home was hit in Rishon Lezion, told Hebrew media that she had entered a shelter before a warhead hit the location.

After the sirens went off, she went to the shelter, shared with the neighbors, taking her dog with her.

“The siren ended, there were booms (apparently from missile intercepts),” Itzik said. “Suddenly, there was a whistle and a really strong explosion. The whole shelter went white, I couldn’t see where to go, and I didn’t know if it was at all possible to open the

door. I didn’t know if the home was on fire, I didn’t know anything.”

Itzik telephoned her father and alerted the fire and rescue services.

Her father, Yaron, arrived first, and gave the door a really hard push, she said. “I pushed from the other side.”

Between them, she said, they managed to open the door enough that she could squeeze out.

Itzik said that the walls of the home had collapsed onto the safe room door.

“I inhaled a lot of dust, and I also fell over as I was coming out of the shelter because of debris,” she said.

Itzik was taken to the Shamir Medical Center for treatment.



President Isaac Herzog, center) and his wife Michal at the scene where a missile fired from Iran at Israel caused damage to a house in Rishon le Tzion, March 16, 2026. (Chaim Goldberg/Flash90)

President Isaac Herzog visited the site of the missile impact on Monday.

“Our enemies in Iran are trying, in a cowardly way, to harm citizens in the heart of a peaceful residential neighborhood. We will overcome these challenges and defeat our enemies,” he said.

Herzog urged Israelis to follow instructions from the IDF Home Front as “they save lives,” an apparent reference to several people who have been injured when they did not enter secure

locations during previous missile attacks.

During the attacks, another warhead hit a home in the central region town of Shoham, causing serious damage, while a third impacted on Route 431, forcing the closure of one lane.

The attacks came as the Israeli Air Force launched a new wave of “extensive” airstrikes in Tehran, Shiraz, and Tabriz, the IDF announced.

The military said the strikes were targeting Iranian regime infrastructure sites.

Among the targets hit and destroyed was an Iranian space facility in Tehran that was used by the regime to develop “capabilities for attacking satellites.”

The site was used to develop various military space programs, including the Chamran-1 satellite, as well as “capabilities to strike satellites, posing a threat to the State of Israel’s satellites and to space assets of other countries around the world,” the military said.

The military released images showing the site before and after the strike

Earlier, the military said the IAF struck and destroyed Khamenei’s aircraft at Tehran’s Mehrabad Airport overnight. The IDF said the plane had been used by Khamenei and other top Iranian officials “to advance military procurement and manage relations with axis countries through domestic and international flights.”

The military added that the destruction of the “strategic asset” is a blow to Iran’s “coordination capabilities” with proxy groups, its “building of military power, and the regime’s rehabilitation capabilities.”

Khamenei and 40 other top Iranian figures were killed in the opening strikes of a joint US-Israeli air campaign against Iran that began on February 28. Iran has responded by firing missiles at countries hosting US bases in the Middle East, and Israel.

Iran’s Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi said that Tehran had shown it was ready to take the war with Israel and the United States as far as necessary.

“I think by now they have learned a good lesson and understood what kind of nation they are dealing with, one that does not hesitate to defend itself and is ready to continue the war wherever it may lead, and take it as far as necessary,” said Araghchi during a weekly foreign ministry briefing.

142 injured in 24 hours

The Health Ministry reported that over the past 24 hours, 142 injured people were taken to hospitals as a result of the conflict with Iran.

Among those treated in hospitals, three were in moderate condition, and 134 were in good condition. Five were treated for anxiety.



Israeli security and rescue forces at the scene where a missile fired from Iran caused damage in Shoham, March 16, 2026. (Yossi Aloni/Flash90)

The ministry did not give a breakdown of the causes of injuries, and some may have been sustained by people trying to reach shelter rather than as a direct result of missile fire from Iran or rocket fire from Lebanon.

The ministry said that since the beginning of the war with Iran on February 28, 3,369 people have been admitted to hospitals, 81 of whom are currently hospitalized.

Among those hospitalized, one person is in critical condition, seven are in serious condition, 14 are in moderate condition, and 59 are in good condition. The ministry’s figures included both civilians and soldiers. <https://www.timesofisrael.com/heavy-damage-and-light-injuries-as-iran-fires-multiple-missile-salvos-at-israel/>

Iran hits Gulf neighbors, keeps stranglehold on oil shipping, fueling energy crisis fears

Dubai Airport temporarily closed, passengers evacuated to lower floor after drone strike sets fuel tank on fire; Saudi crown prince said to be urging Trump to keep hitting Iran hard

By Agencies and Tol Staff Today, 9:38 am



A smoke plume rises from a fire sparked by an Iranian drone attack at Dubai International Airport in Dubai on March 16, 2026. (AFP)

Dubai was forced to temporarily close its airport early Monday after an Iranian drone hit a fuel tank and a major refinery was on fire as Iran maintained its attacks on its Gulf neighbors, heightening fears of a global oil crisis.

Since being attacked by the United States and Israel more than two weeks ago, Iran has been regularly hitting Israel, American bases, and its Gulf Arab neighbors’ energy infrastructure and other key infrastructure targets with drones and missiles.

It has also effectively stopped shipping traffic in the Strait of Hormuz, through which a fifth of the world's oil is transported, giving rise to growing fears of a global energy crisis and putting pressure on Washington as consumers are already feeling the pain at the pump.

Brent crude oil, the international standard, remained stubbornly over \$100 a barrel on Monday. It was at \$104 in early trading, up nearly 45 percent since the US and Israel attacked Iran on February 28. It has spiked as high as about \$120 during the conflict.

US President Donald Trump said he has made demands to about seven countries to send warships to keep the Strait of Hormuz open, but his appeals have brought no commitments. His party is growingly concerned that rising prices for American consumers will hurt the Republicans in elections this fall.

"I'm demanding that these countries come in and protect their own territory, because it is their own territory,"

Trump told reporters as he flew back to Washington from Florida aboard Air Force One. He did not identify the countries, but has [previously appealed](#) to China, France, Japan, South Korea, and Britain.



US President Donald Trump gestures to the media as he walks on the South Lawn upon his arrival at the White House, in Washington, March 15, 2026. (Jose Luis Magana/AP)

Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi [called claims](#) that his country may be seeking a negotiated end to the war "delusional," saying in a social media post early Monday that his country was seeking neither "truce nor talks."

"Our Powerful Armed Forces will keep firing until POTUS realizes that illegal war he's imposing on both Americans and Iranians is wrong and must never be repeated," he wrote on X.

Iran hits Dubai airport, forcing temporary closure

As morning broke Monday, a drone hit a fuel tank near Dubai International Airport, the world's busiest for international passenger traffic, causing a large fire.

Firefighters were able to contain the blaze and there were no injuries reported, but the airport temporarily suspended all flights. UAE airline Emirates, which uses the airport as its main hub, said all of its flights were "suspended until further notice."

Later, the UAE's Defense Ministry said its forces were working to intercept another round of Iranian missiles and drones.

"UAE air defences are currently responding to incoming missile and drone threats from Iran," the ministry posted on X. It noted that "sounds heard" were from air defense systems intercepting missiles and drones.

"Dubai Civil Aviation Authority announces the temporary suspension of flights at Dubai International Airport as a precautionary measure to ensure the safety of all passengers and staff," the Gulf financial hub's media office posted on X.

Emirates told passengers in a statement on X not to come to the airport and said it was working with authorities "to assess the situation and support the safe resumption of operations when possible."

The national carrier said in a later post that it expected to operate a "limited schedule" after 10:00 am Dubai time (0600 GMT) and that some flights had been cancelled.

Dubai's police said the main road to the airport had been temporarily closed to traffic.



A smoke plume rises from a fire sparked by an Iranian drone attack at Dubai International Airport in Dubai on March 16, 2026. (AFP)

The airport operator later said flights were resuming.

"Flights to and from DXB are gradually resuming to selected destinations, following the temporary suspension implemented as a precautionary measure," Dubai Airports said in a statement on X.

The latest incident near what is usually the world's busiest airport for international travel affected a fuel tank, the Dubai media office said, later adding that authorities had contained a fire that broke out and reporting no injuries. Two witnesses told AFP they saw a thick plume of black smoke rising from the direction of the airport at around

10:00 local Dubai time, hours after the incident.

A witness at Dubai airport told AFP that passengers awaiting their flights had been evacuated to a lower floor after the attack for several hours.

“It has been a difficult few weeks hearing explosions regularly, but the Iranian attacks followed me in my last hours before I could fly back home,” the witness added.

Another drone attack on the UAE’s east coast Fujairah oil industry zone sparked a fire, authorities said.

“A large fire broke out in the Fujairah Oil Industries Zone as a result of being targeted by a drone, with no injuries reported,” Fujairah authorities said, adding “efforts continue to bring it under control”.

The site sits on the UAE’s Gulf of Oman coast, beyond the Strait of Hormuz.

Iran has fired over 1,800 missiles and drones at the United Arab Emirates, more than any other country targeted by Tehran in the Middle East war, upending travel plans in the financial hub despite its air defense intercepting a vast

majority of the projectiles. Debris and some drones have fallen inside the country.

A smoke plume rises from an ongoing fire at Dubai International Airport in Dubai on March 16, 2026, after a “drone-related incident” sparked a fuel tank fire nearby, as Iran kept up its Gulf attacks. (Photo by AFP)

Iran has also fired hundreds of missiles and drones toward Gulf countries hosting US military assets since the war began, as well as at Israel.

Iranian officials have recently accused the UAE of allowing its territory to be used for attacks against Iran. Emirati officials have rejected the allegations as misleading and said the country’s actions have been defensive.

Saudi Arabia, meanwhile, said it had intercepted a wave of 35

Iranian drones sent at its eastern region, home to major oil installations.

Despite the attacks, Saudi Arabia was reported to be encouraging the US to keep hitting Iran hard.

Several officials told the [New York Times](#) that Trump was speaking regularly to Gulf leaders, particularly Saudi Crown Prince Mohammad Bin Salman, who had been urging him to continue the strikes.

The report said Bin Salman was “essentially repeating the advice that King Abdullah of Saudi Arabia, who died in 2015, repeatedly gave to Washington: ‘Cut off the head of the snake.’”

Israel’s military said early Monday that Iran launched missiles toward Israel as well.

Israel’s military says Iran is firing cluster bombs that can evade some air defenses and indiscriminately scatter submunitions across multiple locations.

Trump threatens to ‘remember’ which allies do not help

On Air Force One, Trump wouldn’t say which countries could be part of the coalition he wants to police the Strait of Hormuz to provide security for oil tankers and other commercial ships passing through.

But he said he won’t forget the countries that decline to help. He named British Prime Minister Keir Starmer, who he said initially declined to put British aircraft carriers “into harm’s way.”

“Whether we get support or not, but I can say this, and I said to them: We will remember,” Trump said.

Japan’s Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi walks to her seat to prepare her policy speech during the special Diet session in Tokyo, February 20, 2026. (Eugene Hoshiko/AP)

On Monday, Japanese Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi told parliament that her government “has not heard anything” from Washington about Trump’s call for ships to help protect the Strait of Hormuz.

Japan imports more than 90% of its crude oil from the Middle East, however, and she said there had been discussions about what could be done to protect Japanese ships “regardless of a US request.”

Japan’s Defense Minister Shinjiro Koizumi said he has no plans to send warships to the Strait of Hormuz under the current safety conditions.

Japan on Monday began releasing its oil reserves to address concerns about supply shortages and rising prices.



Trump has speculated that prices would fall, but wouldn't directly answer whether his administration is talking about selling oil futures as a way to cap surging oil prices, something his interior secretary had mentioned as a possibility.

"The prices are going to come tumbling down as soon as it's over. And it's going to be over pretty quickly," he told reporters. <https://www.timesofisrael.com/iran-hits-gulf-neighbors-keeps-stranglehold-on-oil-shipping-fueling-energy-crisis-fears/>

Europeans mull US request to help open Hormuz Strait, seek clarity on war goals

EU foreign policy chief Kaja Kallas says bloc could expand existing Red Sea naval operation into Persian Gulf as countries aim to secure vital shipping route closed by Tehran

By [Agencies](#) Today, 5:17 pm



EU High Representative and Vice-President for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Kaja Kallas addresses the media as she arrives for a Foreign Affairs Council to discuss Ukraine and the situation in the Middle East, in Brussels on March 16, 2026. (Nicolas Tucet/AFP)

5 The European Union is seeking more strategic clarity about the US and Israel's plans for Iran and when the conflict might end as the bloc weighs whether to send ships to help shore up security in the

Persian Gulf.

US President Donald Trump has asked allies — including France, China, Japan, South Korea and Britain — to help secure the Strait of Hormuz for global shipping.

He said the US was talking to "about seven" countries for military support to help reopen the critical conduit for crude oil that Iran has effectively closed. But he wouldn't say which ones and gave no indication of when such a coalition might be formed.

"It is in our interest to keep the Strait of Hormuz open, and that's why we are also discussing what we can do in this regard from the European side," Kaja Kallas, the EU's foreign policy chief, said Monday ahead of a meeting of the 27-nation bloc's foreign ministers in Brussels.

Kallas said the EU could expand its Operation Aspides naval mission into the Persian Gulf, or it could form a "coalition of the willing" with member nations contributing military capacity on an ad hoc basis.

Operation Aspides was formed to thwart attacks on shipping in the Red Sea by Somali pirates and Yemen's Iran-backed Houthi rebels, who have yet to join the current fray.

"If we want to have security in this region, then it would be easiest to actually already use the operation that we have in the region and maybe change a bit," Kallas said. "There is also talk of a coalition of the willing in this regard, but we also need to see what could be the fastest to provide this opening for the Strait of Hormuz, but of course, as you can see, it's not easy."

The war, sparked after Israel and the US struck Iran on February 28, has driven up energy prices worldwide, with Brent crude oil up more than 40 percent. But the conflict has also disrupted the wider [global supply chain](#) beyond oil.



Smoke rising from the Thai bulk carrier 'Mayuree Naree' near the Strait of Hormuz after an attack on March 11, 2026. (Royal Thai Navy/AFP)

Cargo ships are stuck in the Gulf or making a much longer detour around the southern tip of Africa. Planes carrying air cargo out of the Middle East are grounded. And the longer the war drags on, the more likely it is that there will be shortages and price increases on a wide range of goods.

German Foreign Minister Johann Wadepful said it will be important for the US and Israel to define "when they consider the military aims of their deployment to have been reached."

He said before meeting his EU colleagues in Brussels that "we need more clarity here" from the US and Israel.

Neither the US nor Israel has clearly defined their goals for the war. Trump has vacillated on questions regarding a timeline, while declaring Iran defeated. Israeli military officials, meanwhile, said Sunday that despite the mission proceeding ahead of schedule, the army was preparing for at least three more weeks of operations in Iran. Wadephul said the Iranian government poses a significant danger to the region, the freedom of shipping and the global economy, and “this danger definitely must not continue.” He said he would back sanctions against those responsible for blocking the Strait of Hormuz, without elaborating.

Once there’s clarity on the US-Israeli aims, Wadephul said it will be time to enter a phase in which “a security architecture for this whole region” is defined. He said that will also entail speaking to Iran.



A person points at a page on the Marinetrtraffic website that shows commercial boats traffic on the edge of the Strait of Hormuz near the Iranian coast, in Paris on March 4, 2026. (JULIEN DE ROSA / AFP)

France has said it is working with countries — President Emmanuel Macron mentioned partners in Europe, India and Asia — on a possible international mission to escort ships through the strait but has stressed it must be when “the circumstances permit,” when fighting has subsided.

Senior French officials, speaking anonymously on ongoing talks, said the Netherlands, Italy, and

Greece had shown interest and that Spain might be involved in some way.

Outside the EU, the UK may also be part of it if they have some capabilities available, the officials said.

UK Prime Minister Keir Starmer said Monday that Britain was working with allies to come up with a “viable” plan to reopen the key Strait of Hormuz, but ruled out a NATO mission.

During a press conference in Downing Street, Starmer told reporters he had discussed the situation with US President Donald Trump.

“We’re working with all of our allies, including our European partners, to bring together a viable collective plan that can restore freedom of navigation in the region as quickly as possible and ease the economic impacts,” said the UK leader.

He added the intention was to make the plan “credible” and ruled out NATO involvement.

“Let me be clear, that won’t be and it’s never been envisioned to be a NATO mission,” Starmer said.

“That’ll have to be an alliance of partners, which is why we’re working with partners, both in Europe, in the Gulf, and with the US,” he added.

His comments came after Trump said NATO faces a “very bad” future if US allies fail to help reopen the key oil transport route.

“It’s only appropriate that people who are the beneficiaries of the Strait will help to make sure that nothing bad happens there,” Trump said.

Starmer also insisted that while Britain was “taking the necessary action to defend ourselves and our allies, we will not be drawn into the wider war.”

Luxembourg Foreign Minister Xavier Bettel said the EU remains uncommitted to any military action.

“The fact is, for the moment, the EU is not directly part of the situation. So we need to decide if we are going to be part or not. That’s an important decision,” Bettel said. <https://www.timesofisrael.com/europeans-mull-us-request-to-help-open-hormuz-strait-see-clarify-on-war-goals/>

Seizing Iran’s uranium could take ‘largest special forces operation in history’ – WSJ

Upward of 1,000 personnel could be required on-site to secure Isfahan facility, dig through rubble for near-weapons grade nuclear material, amid Iranian missile and drone fire

By [Tol Staff](#) Today, 10:35 am



This handout satellite picture, provided by Maxar Technologies and taken on June 22, 2025, shows damage after US strikes on the Isfahan nuclear enrichment facility in central Iran. (Satellite image ©2025 Maxar Technologies / AFP)

A military operation to seize Iran's stockpile of enriched uranium would require "the largest special forces operation in history," The Wall Street Journal reported on Sunday, citing US and Israeli security experts.

When American and Israeli fighter jets bombed three of the Islamic Republic's key nuclear sites last June, the regime was believed to have had some 440 kilograms of 60 percent-enriched uranium — a short step away from weapons-grade material, enough for an estimated ten nuclear bombs.

Another almost 200 kilograms, at 20% enriched, were also believed to be in the regime's possession. Weapons-grade uranium is 90%-enriched.

International Atomic Energy Agency chief Rafael Grossi said last week that around half of the 60%-enriched uranium was stored in a tunnel complex at the Isfahan nuclear site. A report earlier this month said the US believes there is a ["very narrow access point"](#) through which the material could potentially be retrieved.

Seizing the uranium amid the war would require a major operation, which former NATO commander James Stavridis told the Journal could be "the largest special operations forces in history."

The daily, citing former military officials, reported that upward of 1,000 military personnel would have to be present on-site.



A cleric and other people pray at the graves of Iranian nuclear scientists, their families and a Revolutionary Guard commander, most of whom were killed in Israeli strikes in June 2025, at the shrine of Saint Saleh during the Muslim holy fasting month of Ramadan in northern Tehran, Iran, on February 19, 2026. (AP Photo/Vahid Salemi)

Combat troops would need to secure perimeters while engineers dug through tons of debris while checking for mines and booby traps, the newspaper reported.

To deliver the equipment to the site and move the recovered material out of the country, a local airfield would be required, and if none was available, a makeshift airfield would have to be set up as part of the operation, the report said.

And forces would likely come under drone and missile fire, requiring ground forces and planes to ward off the attacks.

Also noted in the report was the possibility of diluting or destroying the material rather than removing it, though this would bring the risk of contaminating the area.

On Sunday, Iranian Foreign Minister [Abbas Araghchi](#) told CBS: "Our nuclear facilities were attacked, and everything is under the rubble."

He said the regime has no plan to recover the material, but also that it is not willing to negotiate about the stockpile's future while under fire.

Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi speaks during an interview on CBS on March 15, 2026. (Screenshot/CBS)

US President Donald Trump, asked last week if there is a plan in place to seize the stockpiled uranium, told Fox News radio, "No, not at all."

"We're not focused on that. But at some point we might be," he said. "Right now we're focused on knocking the hell out of their missiles and their drones."



A longstanding dispute over Iran's nuclear program escalated into military conflict on February 28, with the US and Israel launching strikes against Iran and the Islamic Republic responding with attacks across the Middle East. Tehran, which routinely calls for the destruction of Israel, maintains that its nuclear program is for purely civilian purposes. However, before the June war, Iran had been enriching uranium to levels far beyond what's necessary for any peaceful application, and consistently obstructed international inspectors from checking its facilities. Israel has also said Iran was taking steps toward weaponization. <https://www.timesofisrael.com/seizing-irans-uranium-could-take-largest-special-forces-operation-in-history-wsj/>

Knesset committee advances bill expanding Orthodox control over Western Wall Plaza

Controversial legislation referred to Knesset Constitution Committee; Women of the Wall say Israel 'spitting' in the face of Diaspora Jewry

By [Sam Sokol](#)

Today, 5:17 pm



Conservative/Masorti Movement leaders praying at the egalitarian plaza at the Western Wall in October 2025. (Courtesy MERCAZ Olami)

The Knesset House Committee on Monday voted to send a bill expanding Orthodox control over the Western Wall Plaza to the Constitution, Law and Justice Committee for preparation for its first reading in the Knesset plenum, drawing harsh condemnations from liberal Jewish groups.

The Constitution, Law and Justice Committee is chaired by Religious Zionism's MK Simcha Rothman, a national-religious lawmaker with a history of cooperation with the Knesset's ultra-Orthodox factions.

The bill, which is sponsored by far-right Noam MK Avi Maoz, advanced in a preliminary reading last month. It is intended to undercut a recent [High Court of Justice ruling](#) that the state must move forward with a planned upgrade to the Western Wall egalitarian plaza, a side area used for non-Orthodox prayers at the Jewish holy site.

The stalled upgrade was part of the [Western Wall Compromise](#) agreed to by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's government a decade ago, which called for a pluralistic prayer platform at the site.

If passed into law, the bill would give the country's two chief rabbis, both Orthodox, ultimate authority over Jewish holy sites including the egalitarian plaza, and would define any activity at the site contrary to their instructions, including non-Orthodox worship, as a "desecration."

The bill currently states that "desecration" of a holy place carries a penalty of seven years in prison.



MK Simcha Rothman presides over a meeting of the Knesset Constitution, Law and Justice Committee on the Sde Teiman affair at the Knesset, November 5, 2025. (Yonatan Sindel/Flash90)

In a post on X on Thursday, Maoz celebrated his bill's advancement, writing that "the curbing of the High Court of Justice's intervention at the Western Wall is drawing nearer" and that the legislation will return authority over the holy site "to its natural and proper place, the Chief Rabbinate of Israel, and will safeguard the sanctity of the remnant of our Holy Temple."

Anna Kislanski, the CEO of the Israeli Movement for Progressive Judaism, which has championed non-Orthodox prayer at the

Western Wall, blasted the advancement of the law as a slap in the face of non-Orthodox Jews, both in Israel and abroad.

"In the midst of a war, while Jews of all stripes are fighting for their lives and are in the army, in the reserves, and on the home front, the coalition chooses to promote the Western Wall Law, the same law that defines those citizens as second-class Jews, the same law that divides the people and harms one of its most unifying symbols," she said.

As antisemitic violence in the Diaspora, where most Jews are not Orthodox, is increasing, “the Israeli government chooses to take advantage of the emergency to tell the Jews of the Diaspora you are not Jewish enough to pray in your own way at the Western Wall,” she added.

Women of the Wall, an activist group that advocates for egalitarian prayer and women-led Torah readings to be allowed at the Western Wall, also protested the decision, saying in a statement that “you have to rub your eyes in disbelief.”

“In the midst of a war, when millions of Israeli citizens are in safe rooms and shelters, the economy is not functioning, the education system is paralyzed and children are sitting at home, and the Western Wall plaza stands empty, the coalition finds it urgent to continue to advance the disgraceful” bill, the group said.



Conservative rabbis pray at the Ezrat Yisrael egalitarian prayer space at the Western Wall, December 12, 2024. (Courtesy/ File)

“At a time when we need our sisters and brothers in the Diaspora more than ever to stand with us on the international stage, the State of Israel is spitting in their faces and telling them: Your place is not here with us.” Addressing the Knesset House Committee, The Democrats MK Gilad Kariv pointed out that the decision came only days after an [attempted terrorist attack](#) on Temple Israel in West Bloomfield, Michigan, the largest Reform synagogue in the United States. Advancing such a law is a stab in the back of “millions of liberal Jews around the world,” he said.

Former Diaspora Minister Nachman Shai, currently the dean of the Hebrew Union College Jewish Institute of Religion, similarly noted that the move came only days after the attack, tweeting sarcastically, “Who said that the Israeli Knesset and government do not identify with Jews in the Diaspora and especially with Temple Israel in Detroit?”

Lawmakers voted 56-47 late last month in favor of the preliminary reading of the bill, only days after Netanyahu canceled a meeting of the Ministerial Committee for Legislation in order [to prevent the government from backing the bill](#) in an apparent bid to avoid pushback from Diaspora Jews.

Netanyahu ultimately allowed members of his coalition to vote according to their own views as opposed to requiring a unified coalition line, although several Likud lawmakers, including Yuli Edelstein and Knesset Speaker Amir Ohana, ended up skipping the vote. <https://www.timesofisrael.com/knesset-committee-advances-bill-expanding-orthodox-control-over-western-wall-plaza/>

1 in 5 UK university students ‘reluctant’ to share house with Jewish student — poll

In poll covering 170 institutions, about half of students report seeing glorification of proscribed terror groups; large majority (82%) say ‘globalize the intifada’ is antisemitic

By [Tol Staff](#) Today, 2:59 pm



Students gather around tents at an anti-Israel, pro-Palestinian protest camp at Kings College at Cambridge University in Cambridge, eastern England on May 7, 2024 (HENRY NICHOLLS / AFP)

One in five university students in the UK would be “reluctant” to share a house with a Jewish student or would never do so, according to a poll commissioned by the British Union of Jewish Students and published Monday.

The poll was conducted by JL Partners between January 26 and February 4, and polled a representative sample of 1,000 UK university

students at 170 institutions. The [report](#) did not give a margin of error, nor was the precise wording of all the questions immediately available.

The survey found that nearly one in four students (23 percent) had seen behavior that targeted Jewish students for their religion or ethnicity. Almost four in 10 (39%) who “witness regular Israel-Palestine protests” had seen frequent harassment of Jewish students, according to the poll.

In addition, close to half had heard chants or slogans “glorifying Hamas, Hezbollah or other proscribed groups on campus” (49%) or seen justification of the October 7, 2023, attack led by Hamas (47%), the poll said. Among those who encountered Israel-related protests regularly, the latter number rose to 77%.

A large majority (82%) said calls to “globalize the intifada” are antisemitic.

Most students (65%) said that protests had in some way disrupted their learning, and 69% said they disapproved of demonstrations that block access to learning.



Students march and wave Palestinian flags during an anti-Israel inter-university march in London on the second anniversary of the Hamas onslaught that sparked the war in Gaza, October 7, 2025. (AP Photo/Kin Cheung)

In its report, UJS described a marked worsening of conditions for the UK’s roughly 10,000 Jewish university students in the two and a half years since the October 7 attack on Israel triggered a regional war, saying “relative inaction has bred a culture of normalized antisemitism.” Along with its finding that one in five students “would be reluctant to, or would never, house share with a Jewish student,” UJS noted one instance when an apartment of non-Jewish students wrote on social media that they had

“only one rule – no Zios in the flat,” using a term first popularized by white supremacists as an antisemitic slur.

The poll surveyed students’ opinions about what views or actions qualify as antisemitic, as well as what they believed should be protected as free speech.

According to the poll, 16% of students didn’t think it was antisemitic to claim Jews control the media, with the number rising to 24% when “Zionists” was substituted for “Jews.”

A similar number (26%) said it was not antisemitic to call for “Zionists” to be removed from campus. The report did not provide an equivalent figure about calling for Jews to be removed.

Glorification of Oct. 7 attacks sometimes veiled, often open

The poll found that “one in six (16%) students believes that glorifying the October 7 attack, including the murder of civilians and children, should be protected as free speech.”

It was not immediately clear from the report whether this was in reference to campus codes of conduct or British state law. The latter currently forbids expressing support for a proscribed terror organization, of which Hamas is one.

The report included graphics put out by student organizations with pro-Hamas imagery, including one that quoted a Hamas spokesman and depicted a fighter holding an RPG; an image eulogizing October 7 architect Yahya Sinwar; and a poster celebrating “one year of resilience” on October 7, 2024, with a photo from the attack itself.

Students reported anti-Israel activity that disrupted university life, with 27% of students saying classes had been cancelled or postponed as a result of anti-Israel activity, 23% saying they were stopped from accessing social spaces, and 20% saying they were unable to access university buildings.

Institutions ‘demonstrably care,’ but suffer ‘general paralysis’

UJS said that “Most institutions demonstrably care, deeply, about these issues, but have lacked the speed and conviction of action required to stem the normalization of antisemitism,” adding: “When everyone is somewhat responsible, no one takes the lead.”

In light of the survey, UJS called for “new enforceable standards” for how universities probe and punish hate crimes, with mandatory reporting to the Office for Students state regulator. It called on the country’s Charity Commission to enforce schools’ rules for student unions.

The union also called for a “national counter-extremism strategy with a dedicated focus on campus radicalization,” as well as better coordination between universities, law enforcement, and government bodies.

<https://www.timesofisrael.com/1-in-5-uk-university-students-reluctant-to-share-house-with-jewish-student-poll/>

Iran's new supreme leader purportedly issues fresh statement as questions linger over his health

Trump says 'we don't know' if Mojtaba Khamenei 'dead or not'; leaked audio from official suggests he narrowly survived airstrikes by stepping outside, was lightly wounded

By [Agencies](#) and [Stav Levaton](#)

16 March 2026, 10:35 pm



A woman holds a picture of Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Mojtaba Khamenei during the annual anti-Israeli Quds Day, or Jerusalem Day, rally in support of Palestinians in Tehran, Iran, March 13, 2026. (AP/Vahid Salemi)

A new statement was issued in the name of Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Mojtaba Khamenei on Monday, amid persistent questions about his whereabouts and health, as he has yet to make any public appearance since being appointed to the role.

The brief statement, carried by Iranian state media, simply said that all those previously appointed to government positions by his father,

the late ayatollah Ali Khamenei, will remain in their posts and should "continue to carry on with their work."

Khamenei also appointed the former chief of the Revolutionary Guards, General Mohsen Rezaei, as a military adviser, the Mehr news agency reported.

Mojtaba Khamenei has not been seen in public since he was chosen to replace his father, who was killed in the initial wave of US-Israeli airstrikes on Iran that started the war. Last week, a [statement was issued](#) in his name, carried by state media, vowing to "avenge the blood" of Iranians killed in the strikes.

It marked the first ostensible public statement from the younger Khamenei since he became supreme leader. State TV offered no explanation for why those remarks were read out by a presenter rather than delivered in a video or audio address.

US President Donald Trump suggested Monday that it is unclear if the new Iranian leader is alive.



US President Donald Trump during an event at the East Room of the White House, in Washington, March 16, 2026. (AP/Alex Brandon)

"We don't know... if he's dead or not," Trump told reporters at the White House.

"A lot of people are saying that he's badly disfigured. They're saying that he lost his leg — one leg — and he's, you know, been hurt very badly. Other people are saying he's dead. Nobody's saying he's 100 percent healthy. You know he hasn't spoken," he said.

"We don't know who we're dealing with" in Iran, Trump added.

"We don't know who their leader is."

On Sunday, Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi [claimed that](#) Khamenei "is in excellent health" and remains "in control of the situation, and present at his post."



Two days earlier, US Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth asserted that Khamenei is "wounded and likely disfigured."

Iranian state media have said that Khamenei was wounded in the February 28 Israeli strike that killed his father, wife, son and brother-in-law.

A plume of smoke rises following a reported explosion in Tehran on February 28, 2026, as the US and Israel announce the start of strikes. (AFP)

Leaked audio obtained by The Telegraph and [published on Monday](#) asserted that Khamenei narrowly survived the airstrike after stepping outside his residence minutes before missiles hit the compound.

The recording purportedly features remarks by Mazaher Hosseini, head of protocol in the office of Ali Khamenei, delivered to senior clerics and commanders of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps at a March 12 meeting in Tehran.

According to Hosseini, Mojtaba had stepped into the compound's yard shortly before Israel struck the residence at 9:32 a.m. local time.

"God's will was that Mojtaba had to go out to the yard to do something and then return," Hosseini says in the recording, speaking in Persian. "He was outside and was heading upstairs when they struck the building with a missile."

According to Hosseini, Mojtaba Khamenei sustained only "a minor injury to his leg" in the strike that killed many of his family members.

Times of Israel staff contributed to this report. <https://www.timesofisrael.com/irans-new-supreme-leader-issues-fresh-statement-as-questions-linger-over-his-health/>

Iran's 'Game of Thrones': Report reveals drama behind Mojtaba Khamenei's selection as supreme leader

NYT publishes details about the process of electing Mojtaba Khamenei as Iran's supreme leader; before his death, Ali Khamenei gave his close advisers three names as potential successors, his son was not among them

ynet|Updated:16:01

Details about the dramatic process that led to the selection of Mojtaba Khamenei as Iran's new supreme leader were published on Monday by the New York Times. The newspaper described the process as the Iranian version of "Game of Thrones," with two dynasties — that of Ali Khamenei and that of Ruhollah Khomeini, the founder of the Islamic Republic — competing against each other.

Hardliners in the regime promoted Mojtaba's candidacy, while reformists had two potential candidates: Hassan Khomeini, Ruhollah's grandson, and former president Hassan Rouhani. Moderates also proposed Ali Reza Arafai — one of the deputies of the chairman of the Assembly of Experts — as a compromise candidate.



Ali Khamenei did not want his son Mojtaba to be elected Supreme Leader after him

The details about the selection of the 56-year-old Mojtaba Khamenei, considered a relatively low-profile figure, are based on interviews with senior officials in Iran. According to all the sources, Mojtaba likely would not have been chosen as supreme leader had his 86-year-old father died a natural death rather than being killed in the opening strike of the war.

Before his death, Khamenei gave his close advisers three names as potential successors. His son was not among them. The elder Khamenei did not want to turn the [position of supreme leader into a hereditary role](#), after the Islamic Revolution ended Iran's monarchy.



Extremists wanted Khamenei's son to lead Iran after his assassination(Photo: Vahid Salemi/AP)

On March 3, the Assembly of Experts — made up of 88 senior clerics responsible for selecting the supreme leader — convened in a secret virtual meeting, for security reasons, to begin the selection process. Under the law, the process ends once a candidate secures a two-thirds majority. Earlier that day, Israel bombed the headquarters in the city of Qom where the meeting had been scheduled to take place.

Hardliners backing Mojtaba sought to maintain a confrontational line against the United States, while reformists argued that Iran needed a new face, a new style of leadership and even, eventually, an end to hostility toward Washington. Among those who supported Ali

Khamenei's son were Ahmad Vahidi, the new commander of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, and parliament speaker Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf. Hossein Taeb, the former head of the Revolutionary Guards' intelligence unit, also supported Mojtaba for the role of supreme leader.



Ali Larijani, head of the Supreme National Security Council and described by the New York Times as effectively Iran's current leader (Photo: AP)

Ali Larijani, head of the Supreme National Security Council and described by the New York Times as effectively Iran's current leader, told members of the Assembly of Experts that in his view Iran needed a moderate and unifying leader — and that Mojtaba would be a divisive figure. President Masoud Pezeshkian, a reformist, along with several other senior

officials and clerics, also joined those opposing Mojtaba's selection.

According to the New York Times, anger within the regime toward President Donald Trump and Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu led members of the Assembly of Experts to insist on continuing a hardline approach, despite the efforts of moderates. As the selection process progressed, it appeared that council members were less interested in a supreme leader who could rescue Iran from its current crisis and more interested in Ali Khamenei's son, who could ostensibly avenge his killing.

In the first vote on March 3, Mojtaba received the required majority, and Iranian media began preparing to announce the new supreme leader. Then the drama began: Larijani canceled the announcement following statements by the United States and Israel that Khamenei's successor would be assassinated, and proposed delaying the announcement until the war ended.



Hassan Khomeini, grandson of Ruhollah Khomeini, alongside Ali Khamenei (Photo: Office of the Iranian Supreme Leader/WANA)

[The delay](#) gave reformists another opportunity to pressure the Assembly of Experts to reconsider their decision. Larijani, who had been a close ally of Ali Khamenei, argued that a virtual vote was illegal because the constitution requires the experts to gather in person. The assembly was then told that Mojtaba — who had recovered from [injuries sustained in airstrikes at the start of the war](#) — did not want the position. For security

reasons, it was not possible to contact him to verify the claim.

Mojtaba said: 'Choose someone else'

One of his associates said the refusal was merely a matter of politeness. "When Mojtaba was told he had been chosen, he said: 'I don't want it, choose someone else,'" said Abdolreza Davari, a politician close to Khamenei. "This is a Shiite custom of polite refusal by clerics who 'do not want power,' but eventually agree."

Moderate figures who sought to block Mojtaba's selection met with members of the Assembly of Experts and [testified that Ali Khamenei had told them he did not want his son to inherit his position](#). They later presented a will in which that message appeared and called on the assembly to cancel the voting results. The clerics were stunned and asked for time to consult. One of them said the moderates were attempting to stage a "coup."

On March 7, President Masoud Pezeshkian said Iran would stop attacking its neighbors in the Persian Gulf and apologized to them. He said the decision to ease tensions with the Gulf states had been made by the transitional council in which he serves — a body intended to replace the authority of the supreme leader until a new one is chosen. Hardliners in the regime were furious and pressed the assembly to convene immediately for a final vote. Taeb, the former Revolutionary Guards intelligence chief, called all 88 members of the Assembly of Experts and urged them to vote for Khamenei, telling them that voting for the slain ayatollah's son was a moral, religious and ideological duty.



Pazhakian apologized to Gulf neighbors - and angered extremist

The assembly reconvened on March 8 — again virtually. Some members said they must respect Ali Khamenei’s wishes and disqualify his son’s candidacy. Others argued the constitution does not require them to honor his will. All agreed that during wartime a virtual vote could be considered valid and that there was no requirement for a physical meeting. Each expert wrote a name on a slip of paper and placed it in an envelope. Couriers delivered the envelopes to the committee responsible for counting the votes. Khamenei received

59 out of 88 votes. Shortly before midnight, Iranian media announced that Tehran had a new supreme leader. Even those who had tried to block his selection issued statements wishing Mojtaba success, though he had yet to appear in public.

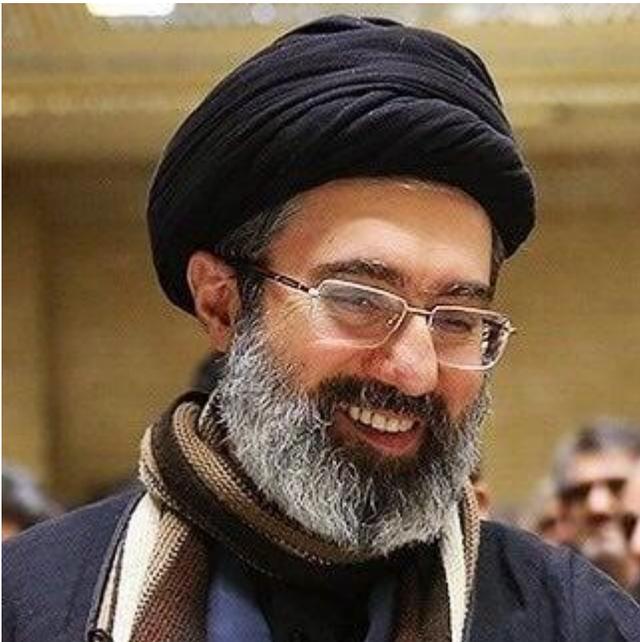
'Mojtaba is gay, Trump received the intelligence update and laughed'

Meanwhile, another American newspaper, the New York Post, published a report about Mojtaba’s sexual orientation as it was allegedly presented in a briefing to Trump. According to the intelligence cited in the report, Mojtaba may be gay, and for that reason his father feared that his son would not be suitable to serve as supreme leader of the Islamic Republic.

The report said Trump was stunned when he heard the information during the intelligence briefing and burst out laughing. The report, which has not been independently verified, is based on two sources in the intelligence community and a third source close to the White House. <https://www.ynetnews.com/article/byqjyhscwl>

Trump informed that Iran’s supreme leader is likely gay – report

March 16, 2026



Mojtaba Khamenei. (X)

The revelation stunned Trump, who reportedly laughed out loud during the briefing, according to sources cited in the report.

By World Israel News Staff

Iran’s new supreme leader, Ayatollah Mojtaba Khamenei, is believed by American intelligence estimates to be gay, the New York Post reported Monday.

According to the report, President Donald Trump was briefed on Khamenei’s suspected homosexuality, which was mentioned in the context of an assessment of the new Iranian leader.

During the briefing, the president was informed that despite Mojtaba’s involvement for years in assisting his father, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, in governing, the elder Khamenei had serious reservations about tapping his son to be his heir.

One of the primary reasons for the previous supreme leader’s anxiety, according to US intelligence, was his awareness of Mojtaba’s homosexuality.

The revelation stunned Trump, who reportedly laughed out loud during the briefing, according to sources cited in the report.

Other officials present in the room at the time of the briefing are said to have found the matter “hilarious,” with a number of people laughing along with Trump.

One senior intelligence official “has not stopped laughing about it for days,” a source said.

Three separate sources, including two intelligence officials and one close to the White House, confirmed that American spy agencies view the assessment of Mojtaba as a homosexual as credible.

Two sources told the *Post* that Mojtaba has been in a longterm romantic relationship with his childhood male tutor. Another source said Mojtaba has been having an affair with a man once employed by the Khamenei family. According to yet another source, Mojtaba has also made “aggressive” sexual advances toward multiple men assigned to care for him.

A source told the *Post* that the reports on the 56-year-old cleric’s homosexuality were “derived from one of the most protected sources that the government has.”

Earlier reports cited a State Department file on Mojtaba that noted he did not get married until the age of 30 – relatively late for a Shi’ite cleric – stating that this was likely due to an “impotency problem” that was “eventually resolved” during extended visits to three British hospitals for treatment.

The leaked intel file indicated that Mojtaba made a fourth visit for treatment before his wife conceived their first child. The couple’s first child, Mohamed Amin, was born eight years after their marriage.

<https://worldisraelnews.com/trump-informed-that-irans-supreme-leader-is-likely-gay-report/>



BS”D

STEP BY STEP

STEP BY STEP: Good news is that many friends and supporters of Lev U’Neshama (Heart and Soul) donated towards the Education Fund project to provide basic school supplies for actually 350 children within our Lev U’Neshama families.

We are grateful that the school supply part of our effort has been successful.

According to the Israel Population and Statistics office, Tzfat’s population is about 40,000, and one third live at the poverty level. We do what we can so at least the children within our struggling LUN families can get the things they need.

Every week we are providing new sport shoes and eye exams/eyeglasses to the children on our request list. However, previous donations are rapidly dwindling. I am reaching out now before the fund has been emptied and we will have to say “no” to additional requests.

We work with two local shoe merchants who give Lev U’Neshama a discount but they advised us the cost of the shoes has increased. Also, we work with an accredited optician in town who also gives us a discount but his cost is stable.

Lev U’Neshama is an Israeli registered non-profit charity organization, volunteer run, no business expenses whatsoever and every \$ goes into our programs.

Shoes: \$45 per pair regular and \$60 for First Steps, baby shoes.

Eye Exam/Eyeglasses: \$60 per child.

Your support is urgently requested.

Or use the Zelle US to US bank transfer system (contact me at mortsmo@aol.com for bank information).

US Donors may also send checks made payable to

Simcha Smolensky, my son, who is also a volunteer. Send to:

Rabbi Simcha Smolensky, 6739 N Mozart St Chicago IL 60645

Your support will be appreciated.

Yaffa Smolensky