

# TODAY'S MEDIA TRENDS

## PRESSTV

MARCH 13, 2026

THE GDELT PROJECT

### THE ACCESSION OF MASHTABA KHAMENEI AMID REGIONAL WAR AND GLOBAL ENERGY PARALYSIS

MARCH 13, 2026: INFLECTION POINT IN TEHRAN & GLOBAL GEOPOLITICS

**1 LEADERSHIP TRANSITION IN TEHRAN**

Following martyrdom of Ali Khamenei in US-Israeli strike, Assembly of Experts elects Mashtaba Khamenei. Emphasizes "No Negotiation" and continuity of Resistance.

**2 BLINDED US-ISRAELI COALITION & REGIONAL INSURGENCY**

IRAQ: Systemic Destruction of US Early Warning Radar Architecture (AN/FPS-132, THAAD, Patriot).

JORDAN: Hezbollah, PMF

QATAR: Battle of Eaten Straw

SAUDI ARABIA: Expanded Resistance Fronts downing US assets, targeting Israeli command centers.

**3 GLOBAL ENERGY CRISIS & HORMUZ BLOCKADE**

STRAIT OF HORMUZ

\$120/BARREL & RISING

Effective closure halts 20% global oil supply. Major producers declare force majeure. US reserves released, insufficient to offset losses.

Economic Fallout Fractures Western Coalition. France, Italy open direct negotiations with Tehran for safe passage.

**4 KEY GOVERNANCE & POWER DYNAMICS**

**RESILIENCE & RESISTANCE**

Iranian Constitution

Economic Asymmetric Warfare

Rapid succession demonstrates institutional resilience. Blockade as tool of economic warfare. "Rally around the flag" effect in Iran.

**GEOPOLITICAL SHIFTS**

US "Decapitation" strategy fails. "Decolonization in real time" framing. Power shift to Global South & "G2" alignment.

**5 COGNITIVE WARFARE & THEOLOGY OF RESISTANCE**

PROPAGANDA MISINFO

CENSORSHIP IN ISRAEL

MARTYRDOM AS STRATEGIC ASSET

INTERNATIONAL QUDS DAY: UNITY OF BLOOD

Trump administration accused of "verbal diarrhea", "mafia-style" policy. Israeli censorship creates reality rift.

Religious narratives mobilize masses. Resistance leadership viewed as "one with the people".

**6 STRATEGIC FORESIGHT & IMPLICATIONS**

**SHORT TERM:** Intensified Blockade, False Flag Risks, Localized Skirmishes.

**MEDIUM TERM:** US Midterm Defeats, Deepening NATO Fractures, Solidifying G2 Alignment.

**LONG TERM:** "Samson Option" Risk, North-South Infrastructure Axis, End of US Dominance Era ("Graveyard of Dreams").

**RECOMMENDATIONS:** Diplomatic Realignment, Legal Warfare Oversight, Energy Diversification, Supply Chain Rupture, Maritime Risk, Investment Relocation.

REPORT DATE: MARCH 2026

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THE ACCESSION OF MASHTABA  
KHAMENEI AMID REGIONAL WAR  
AND GLOBAL ENERGY PARALYSIS

## DAY-AT-A-GLANCE

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March 13, 2026, marks a critical inflection point in the two-week-old conflict between the United States, the Israeli regime, and the Islamic Republic of Iran. The day is defined by the intersection of a massive leadership transition in Tehran and the observation of International Quds Day, held amid ongoing aerial bombardments of Iranian urban centers. Following the martyrdom of the late Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei in a "double-tap" strike by US-Israeli forces, the Assembly of Experts has [elected his son](#), Ayatollah Sayid Mashtaba Khamenei, as the third leader of the Islamic Revolution. This succession has been leveraged by the state to project an image of continuity and defiance, with the new leader's first address calling for the continued closure of the [Strait of Hormuz](#) and the opening of "unconventional" military fronts where the enemy is vulnerable.

The military situation is characterized by a "blinded" US-Israeli coalition and a burgeoning regional insurgency. Pro-Iranian

sources claim the systematic destruction of the US early warning radar architecture across the Persian Gulf, including the [billion-dollar AN/FPS-132](#) system in Qatar. These tactical successes coincide with the effective closure of the Strait of Hormuz, which has driven global oil prices toward \$120 per barrel and forced major producers like Saudi Arabia and Kuwait to declare force majeure. The economic fallout is beginning to fracture Western coalition cohesion, with reports that France and Italy have opened [direct negotiations with Tehran](#) to secure safe passage for their vessels, bypassing the increasingly bellicose rhetoric of the Trump administration.

The conflict has transitioned into a "Battle of Eaten Straw," as Hezbollah and the Iraqi resistance expand operations. The Iraqi resistance claimed the downing of a [US KC-135 refueling aircraft](#), potentially crippling long-range US strike capabilities. Simultaneously, the domestic narrative in the US is fraying; President Trump's erratic communications—alternating between claims of total victory and threats of a 47-year-long campaign—are viewed by analysts as desperate attempts to manage public opinion ahead of the US midterms. The convergence of energy scarcity, rising US casualties, and the failed "decapitation" strategy against Iranian leadership suggests that the US-Israeli coalition has entered a strategic quagmire with no clear exit ramp.

## MAJOR DEVELOPMENTS

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### The Accession of Mashtaba Khamenei

- The Assembly of Experts finalized the [election of Mashtaba Khamenei](#) following the assassination of his father, wife, and son in a US-Israeli strike.

- The new leader is described as having a strong military background from the Iran-Iraq war and close ties to the [IRGC network](#).
- His first official address emphasized a "no negotiation" stance and the requirement for US [war reparations](#) and total withdrawal from West Asia.

### **Systemic Destruction of US Regional Radar Architecture**

- Iranian tactical operations have reportedly destroyed critical THAAD and Patriot radar components in [Qatar, UAE, Jordan, and Saudi Arabia](#).
- The loss of the AN/FPS-132 radar in Qatar is cited as a catastrophic blow that could take [eight years to rebuild](#) due to supply chain constraints on rare earth minerals.
- The Israeli IDF has reportedly admitted it can no longer [guarantee missile alerts](#) before sirens sound, indicating a breakdown in the integrated early warning system.

### **Global Energy Crisis and the Hormuz Blockade**

- The Strait of Hormuz is effectively closed, halting 20% of global oil supply and forcing prices to [surge to \\$120](#) per barrel.
- Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and Qatar have declared [force majeure](#) on LNG and petroleum exports as storage facilities reach maximum capacity.
- The US is attempting to calm markets by releasing [172 million barrels](#) from strategic reserves, though analysts argue this is insufficient to offset the 230-million-liter reduction since the war began.

### **Expansion of the Resistance Fronts**

- The Iraqi resistance claimed responsibility for shooting down a [US KC-135 refueling tanker](#), resulting in several US casualties and the grounding of B-2 and F-15 strike missions.
- Hezbollah has initiated the "Battle of Eaten Straw," targeting Israeli military command centers in [Beer Al Saba](#) and ministerial buildings in Bat Yam.
- Reports suggest that 11 members of the [Iraqi Popular Mobilization Forces](#) (PMF) were martyred in direct US strikes, further radicalizing the local populace.

## **KEY GOVERNANCE TOPICS**

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### **Succession & Stability**

- The rapid election of Mashtaba Khamenei demonstrates the [resilience of the Iranian constitution](#) and the Assembly of Experts' capacity to function under fire.
- The new leader's lack of public speaking history is offset by his [deep institutional knowledge](#) and military credentials, signaling a shift toward a more securitized leadership.

### **Energy Security & Economic Resilience**

- The blockade of the Strait of Hormuz is serving as a tool of [economic asymmetric warfare](#), exposing the vulnerability of Western economies to energy price shocks.
- China and Russia are allegedly stepping in to [plug logistical holes](#) for Iran, while continuing to receive Iranian oil through non-traditional channels.

## Geopolitical Power Dynamics

- The US-Israeli "decapitation" strategy has failed to induce a [regime change](#), with mass rallies on Quds Day indicating a "rally around the flag" effect among even secular Iranians.
- The Trump administration is accused of [violating international law](#) by targeting civilian infrastructure and using "cognitive warfare" to demoralize the population.

## Security Architecture & Coalitions

- The GCC states (Saudi Arabia, UAE, Qatar) are increasingly [refusing to assist](#) the US military, banning the use of their airspace for offensive operations against Iran.
- The integrated regional defense system (THAAD/Patriot) is failing due to [intercept rationing](#), as commanders must choose which incoming warheads to target to preserve dwindling ammunition.

## Diplomatic Engagement

- European allies are distancing themselves from Washington; Italy and France are reportedly [negotiating safe passage](#) for merchant ships directly with the IRGC.
- Turkey is navigating a delicate balance, expressing support for [Islamic unity](#) while monitoring the potential for the conflict to destabilize its own borders via Syrian actors.

## LEGISLATIVE ROUNDUP

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Legislative activities during this period are largely reactive to the wartime state of emergency, focusing on the suppression of dissent in the West and the formalization of defense alliances in the East.

## BILLS DISCUSSED/DEBATED

- **Italian Anti-Hate Bill:** The Italian Senate has passed a bill [fighting hate speech](#), though critics argue it serves to criminalize any criticism of Israeli military actions.
- **US 25th Amendment Discussion:** Some international political figures, including George Galloway, have publicly called for the [invocation of the 25th Amendment](#) against President Trump, citing his erratic behavior and "clear and present danger" to global stability.

## HEARINGS & PRESS EVENTS

- **Meloni Parliamentary Address:** Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni delivered a [strong condemnation](#) of the US-Israeli bombing of a girl's school in Minab, signaling a major rift in the NATO stance.
- **UN Security Council Session:** The UN Security Council convened to discuss the regional escalation, resulting in a resolution condemning Iranian [attacks on regional assets](#), which was dismissed by Tehran as a byproduct of a "collapsed global order."
- **Wang Yi Press Conference:** The Chinese Foreign Minister rejected the concept of a ["G2" leadership](#) of the world, emphasizing multi-polarity and the equality of all 190+ nations.

## DEEP DIVE: TRENDS AND THEMES

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### Decolonization and the New Geography of Power

- The conflict is being framed by the Global South as a "decolonization in real time," where Iranian military action is physically [wiping the region clean](#) of US military infrastructure.
- The systematic targeting of radars and bases is viewed not as a mere military campaign, but as a [structural removal](#) of the "American cancer" from the Middle East.
- The shift of power from West to East is accelerating, with Iran positioned as a [central pillar](#) of a new regional security architecture involving China and Russia.

### Cognitive Warfare and the Death of Plausible Deniability

- The Trump administration's use of "verbal diarrhea" and [admission of assassinations](#) is seen as removing the "mask" of Western diplomacy, revealing a "mafia-style" foreign policy.
- Iranian media highlights the use of "propaganda MISINFO" regarding the [Epstein files](#), claiming the US leadership is being blackmailed by Israeli intelligence to maintain the war effort.
- Censorship in Israel is [reaching unprecedented levels](#), with five-year prison sentences threatened for civilians filming damage from Iranian strikes, creating a rift between official narratives and lived reality.

### The Theology of Resistance

- The concept of "Martyrdom" is being [weaponized as a strategic asset](#), with Iranian officials appearing in public without security to demonstrate that the leadership is "one with the people."
- The "Battle of Eaten Straw" (referencing the Quranic Surah Al-Fil) illustrates how [religious narratives](#) are being used to mobilize the masses against technologically superior forces.
- International Quds Day has evolved from a symbolic protest into a ["unity of blood"](#) between Iranians, Lebanese, and Palestinians, fundamentally altering the social contract between the Resistance and its base.

## STRATEGIC FORESIGHT

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### Short Term (1-4 Weeks)

- Expect an intensification of the "Strait of Hormuz Blockade" as Iran enforces [transit fees](#) or total bans on tankers affiliated with the US-Israeli coalition.
- Potential for "False Flag" attacks in the US or Europe to [sway public opinion](#) toward a ground invasion, as warned by alternative media outlets monitoring the Trump administration's desperation.
- The arrival of [2,200 US Marines](#) in the region may lead to localized ground skirmishes in Iraq or the Levant.

### Medium Term (1-6 Months)

- The US midterm elections will likely see a [major defeat](#) for the Republican party if energy prices remain high and "body bags" continue to return from the Persian Gulf.

- Fractures in NATO will deepen as Italy, France, and Spain [formalize separate security arrangements](#) with Tehran to protect their economic interests.
- A "G2" alignment between China and Russia will likely solidify to manage the [vacuum of influence](#) left by the retreating Anglo-American empire.

### Long Term (1-5 Years)

- The "Samson Option" remains a [long-term risk](#), as a cornered Israeli regime may resort to nuclear escalation to prevent a total collapse of the Zionist entity.
- Regional infrastructure will be rebuilt along a North-South axis, [integrating Iran](#) more deeply with Central Asian and Chinese trade routes, effectively nullifying Western sanctions.
- The 47-year era of US dominance in the Persian Gulf will be replaced by a ["graveyard of dreams"](#) for foreign powers, as indigenous military capabilities achieve parity with Western expeditionary forces.

## RECOMMENDATIONS & IMPLICATIONS

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### For International Policy

- **Diplomatic Realignment:** Neutral nations must prepare for a [post-US security architecture](#) in West Asia, focusing on direct bilateral agreements with Tehran and the Axis of Resistance.
- **Legal Warfare Oversight:** The international community must [enforce ICC warrants](#) against Netanyahu to prevent further escalation and restore the credibility of global judicial structures.

- **Energy Diversification:** Rapid development of trans-continental pipelines bypassing Hormuz is [no longer a luxury](#) but a requirement for European and Asian economic survival.

### For Private Sector/Investors

- **Supply Chain Rupture:** High-tech manufacturers should anticipate [indefinite shortages](#) of rare earth minerals if Chinese and Iranian counter-sanctions on radar components continue.
- **Maritime Risk:** The "Hormuz Transit Fee" and Force Majeure declarations mean that [maritime insurance premiums](#) will remain prohibitive for the foreseeable future.
- **Investment Relocation:** Capital flight from the GCC toward [stable BRICS+ economies](#) is likely to accelerate, favoring infrastructure projects in South Asia and Russia over the increasingly volatile Persian Gulf.

## ABOUT THIS REPORT

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**Today's Media Trends** is a public interest experiment in applying deep thematic trend analysis to television news coverage from around the world to explore how responsibly applied advanced AI can help journalists and scholars better understand the overarching trends, themes and patterns of our global world.

**No data is used to train or tune any AI model.**

Each morning, in collaboration with the Internet Archive's TV News Archive, we apply Google's Gemini 3 to deeply examine yesterday's coverage from each television news channel to tease out the overarching themes and trends of its news coverage into a

richly annotated thematic analysis. Each high-level insight is connected back to the original broadcast, allowing journalists and scholars to understand the dominate themes and trends and instantly click out to the underlying sources for details.

By helping journalists and scholars see the broader trends and patterns of global news coverage, this analysis helps them identify relevant stories and coverage they might not otherwise have encountered and uncover connections, emphases and narrative shifts

that enable more comprehensive reporting and deeper, evidence-based research.

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