

TODAY'S MEDIA TRENDS

PRESSTV

JULY 4, 2026

THE GDELT PROJECT



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THE ASCENSION OF RESISTANCE: IRANIAN LEADERSHIP TRANSITION AMID GLOBAL REORDERING AND REGIONAL CONFLICT

DAY-AT-A-GLANCE

July 4, 2026, marks a pivotal moment in West Asian history as the Islamic Republic of Iran conducts the massive state funeral for **Ayatollah Sayyid Ali Khamenei**, who was assassinated in a joint US-Israeli strike on February 28, 2026. The funeral, delayed by four months due to the subsequent "40-day Ramadan War," has become a global spectacle of [unprecedented scale](#), with estimated attendance reaching 15 to 20 million mourners in Tehran alone. The network portrays this transition not as a moment of state vulnerability, but as a "victory" over the "Zionist-American vile enemy," following a war that Iran claims has decimated Western prestige and military deterrence in the region.

The domestic narrative is one of absolute **national unity** and the formalization of the succession. Chants and public displays of allegiance have solidified the rise of **Ayatollah Sayyid Mujtaba Khamenei**, the late leader's son, as the new figurehead of the

Islamic Revolution. The state is leveraging the mourning period to reinforce its ideological pillars: resistance against "global arrogance," scientific and military self-sufficiency, and the "Command in Depth" strategy that ensures institutional survival despite the decapitation of its top leadership. Regional allies from the **Axis of Resistance**, including groups from Yemen, Lebanon, and Palestine, are heavily featured to demonstrate that the late leader's regional doctrine remains intact and emboldened.

Simultaneously, the broadcast highlights a deteriorating global situation for Western powers. Reports focus on the continuing **genocide in Gaza**, with casualties reportedly exceeding 73,000, and a growing international movement to boycott Israel and its Western backers from global sports and institutions. Iran's posture remains aggressively defensive, warning against "military adventurism" in the **Strait of Hormuz** by France and the UK, while the **Ansarullah movement** in Yemen issues stern warnings to Saudi Arabia regarding the ongoing blockade. The convergence of mass domestic mourning, the formalization of a new leadership, and ongoing regional kinetic operations suggests a state that is mobilizing its entire society for a prolonged confrontation with the West.

MAJOR DEVELOPMENTS

- **Funeral of the Century and Mass Mobilization:** Massive crowds, described as the [funeral of the century](#), have flooded Tehran. Officials claim more than [two million](#) people arrived by public transport alone by noon on the first day, with total estimates for the week-long ceremony reaching 20 million participants across Tehran, Qom, Mashad, and holy cities in Iraq.
- **Formalization of Succession:** Public displays of allegiance have transitioned to [Sayyid Mujtaba Khamenei](#), with the crowd chanting "Labbayk Mujtaba" at the Grand Musalla, signaling a smooth hereditary and ideological transition in the Supreme Leadership.
- **The Aftermath of the "40-Day War":** Narrative focuses on Iran's "victory" against a US-Israeli offensive. Claims include the successful defeat of a "regime change" operation and the failure of Western efforts to "balkanize" the country following the [assassination of the leader](#).
- **Escalating Regional Tensions in Yemen and Gaza:** The Ansarullah movement warns it will target Saudi airports and vital interests if the [blockade on Yemen](#) continues, while the death toll in Gaza reaches a reported [73,090 Palestinians killed](#) and 173,550 wounded since October 2023.
- **International Diplomatic Realignment:** Over 100 countries and 70 official delegations, including heads of state from Russia, Turkey, Iraq, and Pakistan, reportedly attended the funeral, which Iran frames as a [failure of US efforts](#) to isolate the Republic.

KEY GOVERNANCE TOPICS

Leadership Dynamics & Governance: The state is emphasizing "Command in Depth," a governance model where [redundant layers of leadership](#) prevent institutional collapse. The broadcast focuses on the late leader's "simple life" to contrast with "corrupt Arab monarchs" and Western elites, establishing a moral mandate for the [new leadership](#).

Armed Conflict & Militarization: Iran is celebrating its status as a "producer of science" rather than a consumer, specifically citing its [domestic missile and drone programs](#). The state warns extra-regional powers (France and the UK) that the Strait of Hormuz is not a "theater for military spectacle" and will be [jointly managed](#) with Oman.

Information Warfare & Disinformation: State media is aggressively countering Western narratives. They highlight the use of "soft power," including [Lego movies produced by students](#), to win the "propaganda war" and discredit Western claims that protests in Iran were organic.

Macroeconomics & Trade: Despite sanctions, Iran is projecting economic resilience through the "resistance economy." This includes a [20-company delegation](#) to Afghanistan to transfer manufacturing technology and the claim of being an [exporter of dairy products](#), a shift from the pre-revolutionary era.

Global Health & Biosecurity: The broadcast uses the late leader's personal participation in the [child immunization program](#) (polio drops) and his trust in the [Iranian COVID-19 vaccine](#) to validate the state's scientific and healthcare sovereignty.

DEEP DIVE: TRENDS AND THEMES

The Myth of the Martyr and Institutional Continuity: The state has successfully transformed a decapitation strike into a **unifying myth**. By delaying the funeral and winning what it calls a subsequent war, the government has framed Khamenei's death as the ultimate sacrifice that "sealed" the revolution's victory. The theme of "**Command in Depth**" suggests that the IRGC and the clerical establishment have prepared for this for years, creating [interchangeable leadership tiers](#) that prevent the disruption of state policy. This suggests that the transition to Mujtaba Khamenei will likely involve a more aggressive, military-clerical hybrid governance style.

The End of Unipolarity and the "Global Majority": A recurring theme is the emergence of a new world order where the "US is no longer a superpower." The broadcast explicitly links Iran's survival to the broader [multipolar world](#), involving Russia, China, and the "Global South." The presence of delegations from 100+ nations is used as empirical proof that the US [cannot enforce international isolation](#). The narrative suggests that Western hegemony is "a busted flush," with Europe being subservient to the US and under the "spell of the Epstein files," a conspiracy-laden theme used to discredit Western political legitimacy.

Women and the "Third Model" of Womanhood: The broadcast expends significant airtime re-framing the role of women in the Islamic Republic. It rejects both the "stereotypical Eastern" (inactive) and "Western" (objectified) models, proposing a ["Third Approach"](#) where women are highly educated, active in defense and science, yet

grounded in family roles. This is a clear attempt to counter Western human rights criticisms and to highlight that some of the late leader's "staunchest supporters" were women, who are now [highly represented](#) at the funeral.

INTERNAL DYNAMICS & DOMESTIC INSTABILITY

The Iranian state is using the funeral as a **referendum on its legitimacy**. The broadcast explicitly addresses and mocks Western reports of domestic dissent, framing the massive turnout as a "referendum by feet." The atmosphere is described as "surreal," with people opening their [homes to strangers](#) coming from across the country. This manufactured or genuine display of solidarity is intended to show that the "narrow-based regime" thesis of the West is [factually incorrect](#).

However, the intensity of the "revenge" rhetoric suggests significant pressure from the base for a kinetic response to the leader's assassination. The focus on the ["white banner"](#) asking "what happened to the revenge for the blood of our dear leader?" indicates that the new leadership under Mujtaba Khamenei must balance public calls for vengeance with the strategic goal of regional stability. The state's emphasis on **self-reliance** in everything from "weed production" to "AI scientists" suggests a siege mentality is being institutionalized to manage potential future domestic instability caused by economic isolation.

EXTERNAL DYNAMICS & GLOBAL POSTURE

Iran is positioning itself as the **vanguard of the "Global South."** The broadcast portrays the US as a "declining empire" that uses "international mafia" tactics to bully nations. Iran frames its regional posture as a "moral obligation" to protect the oppressed, specifically in Palestine, Yemen, and Lebanon. The **Axis of Resistance** is no longer just a proxy network but is framed as a [harmonious combination of factors](#) that have collectively defeated "global arrogance."

The posture toward the West is increasingly **uncompromising**. The "era of hit and run" is declared over, with Iran asserting the right to "chase down" its enemies [until justice is served](#). The diplomatic framing of the BRICS alliance and the "Road and Belt Initiative" suggests that Iran sees itself as the [geopolitical hub](#) where these global projects intersect, making its survival vital for the interests of Russia and China. This "security-through-interdependence" with non-Western powers is the core of its current global posture.

THE ECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT

Iran's economic narrative is dominated by the concept of **resistance and indigenous development** to circumvent Western sanctions. The focus is on technology transfer and industrial expansion into neighboring markets like Afghanistan.

- **Manufacturing and Tech Transfer:** An Iranian delegation of 20 companies specializing in [machine building and production lines](#) is actively seeking to transfer technology to Afghanistan to combat regional unemployment.

- **Agricultural Self-Sufficiency:** Claims of shifting from a dairy importer to an [exporter](#) and producing 14 million tons of wheat annually are used to demonstrate the failure of economic warfare.
- **Defense Sector as Economic Driver:** The [indigenous production](#) of ballistic missiles and drones is framed as a primary source of "national power" and a tool for diplomatic leverage.
- **Sanctions Impact:** While acknowledging "major economic pressure," the state claims that sanctions have forced an "imaginative creativity" resulting in achievements like [world-class ballistic missiles](#) built "from scratch."

LEADERSHIP CHANGES

The day's events confirm a major shift in the clerical and political hierarchy of the Islamic Republic, moving toward a younger, more militant generation.

- **Sayyid Mujtaba Khamenei:** Effectively confirmed as the [new leader](#) of the Islamic Revolution through public acclamation and "pledges of allegiance" at the funeral, representing the younger generation of leadership the late leader [explicitly entrusted](#).
- **The IRGC Navy Command:** Rear Admiral **Ali Ozmai** and other military leaders have taken a prominent public role, vowing [divine revenge](#) and punishments, suggesting the military establishment's increased influence in the new administration.

- **Political Survivors:** Parliament Speaker **Baqir Ghalibov** and Foreign Minister **Abbas Arakchi** remain central, but their public displays of [extreme emotion](#) (tears during the farewell) serve to bond their political future to the late leader's legacy.

EDITORIAL POSTURE & STORY HIERARCHY

PressTV's editorial posture is **highly hagiographic, nationalistic, and aggressively anti-Western**. The hierarchy of stories is dominated by the funeral, which is treated as a [singular historical event](#) that transcends ordinary news. Kinetic military developments are framed through the lens of "vengeance" and "deterrence." The tone is one of **managed grief**—balancing the sorrow of loss with the "triumph" of the late leader's vision.

Conspicuous Omissions: There is a total absence of detail regarding the **specific operational failures** that allowed the assassination of the Supreme Leader in his own home. There is also no coverage of **internal dissent** within the clerical establishment regarding the hereditary nature of the succession, nor is there any discussion of the **actual casualty figures** and hardware losses sustained by Iran during the "40-day war," other than a vague claim of "victory."

GEOPOLITICAL FRAMING

The broadcast frames the world as a binary struggle between the "righteous Resistance" and a "satanic, crumbling Empire." Non-Western powers are characterized as sensible partners in a new multipolar order.

COUNTRIES

- **United States:** Portrayed as a "vile enemy" and an "international mafia" led by "Austin Powers-style" buffoons ([Donald Trump](#)). Framed as a [declining empire](#) that is "crumbling from within."
- **Israel:** Characterized as a "cancerous tumor" and a "legitimateless Zionist regime" that is [entirely complicit](#) in genocide and assassination.
- **Russia and China:** Framed as **indispensable partners** who respect Iranian sovereignty and are part of the [new world order](#). Putin and Xi are "thanked" for not participating in the war against Iran.
- **European Union (UK, France, Italy):** Portrayed as "complicit" and "subservient" to the US, controlled by the ["spell of the Epstein files."](#)

LEADERS

- **Donald Trump:** Framed as "vulgar," "frankly stupid," and a "tyrant" who [misunderestimated](#) Iran and "sold his soul" to the Israel lobby.
- **Ali Khamenei:** Portrayed as a **saint-like figure** who lived in poverty, loved children, and was a "political and strategic genius" whose [death was his ultimate prize](#).
- **Mujtaba Khamenei:** Framed as the "smart son" who carries the [faithful criteria](#) of his father and is the "divinely risen" choice of the people.

INFORMATION WARFARE ENVIRONMENT

- **Narrative Seeding:** The broadcast repeatedly uses the phrase "[funeral of the century](#)" to frame the event's historical weight. They seed the idea that Western media is **mandating silence** or "ignoring" the turnout to hide the reality of Iran's popular support.
- **Psy-Ops:** The claim that the late leader's [fist was still clenched](#) when his body was found is a powerful symbolic image used to inspire "resilience" and "vengeance" among the populace.
- **Counter-Propaganda:** The use of [Lego-themed satire](#) on social media is highlighted as a strategic tool that "won the propaganda war" by reaching global audiences through a simplistic, accessible language that bypasses traditional diplomatic channels.
- **Historical Revisionism:** Framing the 1953 coup and the "Ramadan War" as parallel events where Iran "broke the teeth" of the West, positioning the current leadership as the [true protectors of Iranian history](#).

HYPOTHESES AND FUTURE OUTLOOK

- **Retaliation Cycle:** The persistent focus on the ["red flags of vengeance"](#) and the vowing of "divine revenge" suggests that Iran is planning a high-profile kinetic response to the assassination, possibly targeting US or Israeli officials, after the official mourning period ends on July 9.

- **Hereditary Hardline Shift:** The transition to Muftaba Khamenei, combined with the "40-day war" experience, will likely result in a **less pragmatic** and more ideologically rigid Iranian foreign policy, characterized by the [rejection of dependence](#) on any Western engagement.
- **Regional Hegemony Contest:** Iran will likely use the "victory" in the Ramadan War to further formalize its control over the Strait of Hormuz, moving from informal threats to a **permanent military-administrative presence** that challenges international maritime laws.

STRATEGIC FORESIGHT

- **Short Term (1-4 Weeks):** Expect **kinetic escalations** from Ansarullah in Yemen against Saudi infrastructure if the blockade isn't lifted. Massive security operations will continue in Iranian cities until the burial in [Mashad](#) on Thursday.
- **Medium Term (1-6 Months):** Muftaba Khamenei will likely oversee a **purge or realignment** of the clerical establishment to consolidate his power. We expect new formal treaties with Russia and China to capitalize on the reported [multipolar realignments](#).
- **Long Term (1-5 Years):** Iran's "indigenous science" doctrine will aim for **full nuclear breakout** or advanced ballistic capability that renders Western carrier groups in the region obsolete, based on the ["Command in Depth" ideology](#).

RISK ASSESSMENT

The primary strategic risk is a **regional conflagration** triggered by Iran's stated need to "avenge the blood" of its late leader.

- **Uncontrolled Regional Escalation:** High-profile Iranian "revenge" strikes against Western targets. Triggers: End of the mourning period on July 9. Likelihood: High. Impact: Global oil price shocks and potential wider war. Mitigations: Indirect back-channel negotiations via Oman or Qatar.
- **Closure of the Strait of Hormuz:** Iran formalizing "management" of the waterway. Triggers: Increased French/UK naval presence ([Operation Epic Fury](#)). Likelihood: Moderate. Impact: Total disruption of global energy supply chains. Mitigations: De-escalation of Western naval posturing.
- **Succession Instability:** Potential pushback against Mujtaba Khamenei's hereditary rise. Triggers: Economic failure or military setback in the coming months. Likelihood: Low (current). Impact: Domestic chaos and potential military coup. Mitigations: The "Command in Depth" [institutional redundancy](#).
- **Yemen-Saudi War Resumption:** Ansarullah carrying out threats against Saudi airports. Triggers: Continued blockade of humanitarian flights ([Sana Airport ban](#)). Likelihood: High. Impact: Collapse of regional security and energy stability. Mitigations: Saudi concessions on airport access.

- **Western Political Instability:** Further "political repression" in the UK/US causing a backlash. Triggers: Prosecution of pro-Palestine doctors ([Dr. Hassan Abu-Sitta case](#)). Likelihood: Moderate. Impact: Massive civil unrest in Western capitals. Mitigations: Rolling back restrictive "anti-protest" legislation.

GAPS & BLIND SPOTS

- **Intelligence Failure:** The broadcast completely fails to explain how the most guarded man in Iran was killed in his residence, a major gap for assessing current **internal security risks**.
- **Economic Reality:** While boasting of "dairy exports," the network ignores the **hyperinflation and currency devaluation** that a 40-day war and 4 months of funeral-related shut-downs likely caused.
- **Military Parity:** The claim that Iran "won" a war against the US is not supported by any list of US hardware losses or territorial gains, leaving a **critical blind spot** regarding the actual military balance.
- **Succession Legality:** The broadcast presents Mujtaba's rise as organic, ignoring the **constitutional requirements** of the Assembly of Experts, which suggests a possible suspension of normal clerical oversight.

CONTRARIAN NARRATIVE SCENARIOS

The "Potemkin Unity" Hypothesis: The massive funeral attendance may be driven more by **mandatory state coercion** and the fear of being marked as a dissident during a period of "martial leader" transition rather

than genuine support. The focus on the "Lego movie" soft power suggests a desperate need to manufacture a [youth-friendly narrative](#) for a generation that was recently protesting the regime.

The "Succession Crisis Delay": The four-month delay for the funeral may not have been due to war, but to **vicious infighting** within the Assembly of Experts. The current display of Mujtaba Khamenei's legitimacy could be a fragile truce that will collapse once the foreign dignitaries leave, potentially leading to a "Black Swan" event like a **military coup** by hardline IRGC factions.

RECOMMENDATIONS & IMPLICATIONS

For Statecraft/Public Sector: 1. **Security:** Reinforce defensive posture around the Strait of Hormuz to counter Iran's "joint management" claims. 2. **Economic:** Prepare for intensified sanctions as Iran shifts toward a "resistance economy" linked to Afghanistan and BRICS. 3. **Diplomatic:** Monitor the Mujtaba transition as a move toward hereditary clerical rule, which may require a complete redesign of the "Supreme Leader" engagement model.

For Private Sector/Investors: 1. **Supply Chains:** Map alternatives to Persian Gulf maritime routes given the [threat to the Strait](#). 2. **Regulatory Compliance:** Review exposure to Iranian "tech transfer" firms operating in Afghanistan. 3. **Capital Allocation:** Hedge against energy price volatility as the July 9 "revenge" window approaches.

LEGISLATIVE ROUNDUP

Legislative activity focused on sovereignty and the rejection of UN-mandated aid

agencies, portraying Western-linked institutions as tools of occupation. There was also discussion regarding the **Italian Constitution** and the unauthorized use of bases for US flights.

• **BILLS DISCUSSED/DEBATED:**

- **UN Aid Mandate Revocation:** Proposed termination of the UNRWA-successor agency in Gaza, described by Iran as a ["death sentence"](#) for Palestinians intended to facilitate displacement.
- **UK Terrorism Act expansion:** Discussion of new UK legislation that would allow designating individuals by executive order [without parliament](#), potentially targeting political dissidents.

• **HEARINGS & PRESS EVENTS:**

- **Italian Parliamentary Hearing:** Defense Minister Guido Crosetto confirmed [518 US military flights](#) departed from Italian soil for the war on Iran, sparking a debate on constitutional violations.
- **Child Health Conference:** Recounting of a conference where the late leader mandated [immunization as "Wajib"](#) (obligatory) in Islam to override religious vaccine hesitancy.

KEY STORIES

- **The Funeral of Ayatollah Khamenei:** Millions gather in Tehran for the third day of mourning. Caskets of the leader and his family (including his son-in-law and [14-month-old granddaughter](#)) are displayed. The body will move to Qom, then Iraq, and finally [Mashad](#) for burial.

- **Succession of Mujtaba Khamenei:** Crowds at the Grand Musalla pledge allegiance to [Sayyid Mujtaba Khamenei](#), framing him as the continuation of his father's strategic and spiritual legacy.
- **Yemeni Counter-Blockade Warning:** The Ansarullah movement threatens **Saudi airports and ports** after an Iranian humanitarian flight was [intercepted](#) by Saudi warplanes.
- **Gaza Genocidal War Toll:** Reports that Palestinian fatalities have reached [73,090](#), with Israeli forces continuing to push the "yellow line" of the 2025 ceasefire.
- **Italian Complicity Hearing:** Details emerge of over [500 US combat-support flights](#) from Italian bases during the war, leading to claims that Italy is a country of "limited sovereignty."
- **Scientific Supremacy Claims:** Narrative that Iran graduates [234,000 engineers](#) annually, more than Germany and France combined, and is second globally only to the US in science achievement.
- **FIFA Boycott Movement:** Activists in [Toronto](#) and Paris call for Israel, the US, and Canada to be banned from international sports for "genocide" and "illegal annexation."
- **Dr. Hassan Abu-Sitta GMC Case:** Leading war surgeon faces [disciplinary proceedings](#) in London for speaking out on Gaza, which supporters call a "political campaign" to silence healthcare professionals.
- **Russian Gains in Ukraine:** President Putin announces the capture of [Conson Titoka](#) in the Donetsk region, describing it as a stronghold of "great strategic significance."

- **The "Epstein Files" Narrative:** Media uses the "Epstein island" and ["flesh of babies"](#) files to frame Western leaders as morally degenerate and controlled by blackmail.

ABOUT THIS REPORT

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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