

TODAY'S MEDIA TRENDS

IRINN

MARCH 31, 2026

THE GDELT PROJECT

IRAN'S NEW ORDER: MOJTABA KHAMENEI, 'RAMADAN WAR', & HORMUZ BLOCKADE



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IRAN SOLIDIFIES NEW LEADERSHIP UNDER MOJTABA KHAMENEI AMID OPERATION TRUE PROMISE 4 AND STRAIT OF HORMUZ BLOCKADE

DAY-AT-A-GLANCE

March 31, 2026, marks a critical juncture in the "Ramadan War," as the Islamic Republic navigates a historic leadership transition following the martyrdom of the "Great Leader" (Ayatollah Ali Khamenei). The rapid consolidation of power under [Ayatollah Seyyed Mojtaba Khamenei](#) has been framed as a "divine success," emphasizing his 37 years of preparation and his focus on "knowledge-based governance" and "technological transformation." This transition occurs during the height of "Operation True Promise 4," specifically "Wave 88," a multi-front escalation involving over 120 coordinated strikes by Iran and the "Axis of Resistance" against U.S. and Israeli assets across the Middle East.

The conflict has transitioned into a "war of attrition" and "infrastructure targeting," with Iran reporting significant civilian casualties, most notably the ["Minab School Massacre,"](#) where U.S. Tomahawk missiles reportedly killed 165 schoolgirls. In retaliation, the IRGC

has launched sophisticated missile and drone barrages against U.S. "mother bases" in the UAE (Al-Dhafra), Kuwait (Ahmed Al-Jaber), and Iraq (Victoria). Domestically, the "Jan-fada" (Soul-sacrificing) campaign has reportedly mobilized [over one million volunteers](#) to defend the southern islands, particularly Khark, against a feared U.S. ground invasion. Meanwhile, Iran has effectively seized control of the Strait of Hormuz, moving to codify "transit fees" in Rials, fundamentally altering the global energy security architecture.

MAJOR DEVELOPMENTS

- **Leadership Succession and Stability:** Following the death of the previous Leader, the Assembly of Experts has formally selected Mojtaba Khamenei. Narratives emphasize his ["anonymous interactions"](#) with common citizens in taxis to understand their grievances, signaling a populism-driven shift in the Imamate's style.
- **Military Escalation (Wave 88):** IRGC and the "Axis of Resistance" launched a massive combined operation using [Emad, Ghadr, and Khorramshahr missiles](#) targeting the Israeli Internal Front Command's meeting in Tel Aviv and U.S. flight crews at the Al-Kharj base in Saudi Arabia.
- **The Strait of Hormuz Legal Siege:** The Iranian Parliament (Majlis) is fast-tracking a bill to [collect maritime transit fees](#) in Rials from all vessels passing through the Strait of Hormuz, treating the waterway as Iranian sovereign territory for environmental and security management.

- **High-Level Martyrdoms:** The funeral of Admiral Alireza Tangsiri, Commander of the IRGC Navy, and General Ishaqi has become a focal point for national mobilization, with the IRGC declaring that ["the flag will not remain on the ground."](#)
- **US/Israeli Strategic Failure Narrative:** Iranian media is heavily promoting a narrative of U.S. exhaustion, citing reports that the U.S. has [depleted nearly all its interceptor missile stocks](#) in the region after facing 1,200 Iranian ballistic missiles and 4,000 drones since February 28.

KEY GOVERNANCE TOPICS

Geopolitical Power Dynamics: The "Ramadan War" is being framed as a terminal crisis for U.S. hegemony. Iranian analysts argue that Trump is trapped in a ["strategy-less quagmire"](#) and is seeking an "honorable exit" that the IRGC is unwilling to grant. The conflict has also exposed fissures in NATO, with [Spain and France](#) reportedly refusing overflight rights for U.S. missions against Iran.

Critical Infrastructure and Cybersecurity: Iran claims to have [hacked over 50 Israeli security cameras](#) and 60 defense firms, erasing data and creating "blind spots" in Israeli defenses. Conversely, U.S. and Israeli strikes have increasingly targeted [civilian infrastructure](#), including charity centers, orphanages in Karaj, and a pharmaceutical company specializing in cancer medication.

Energy Security: The closure of the Strait of Hormuz has reportedly caused global gas prices to spike by 70%. Iranian officials are leveraging this, stating that ["Hormuz revenue"](#) will soon replace oil exports as the primary driver of the national budget.

Domestic Stability & Social Order: Despite the war, the state is emphasizing "business as usual." The judiciary has moved to [fully digitize legal services](#) to ensure continuity during bombings, and the Ministry of Education has transitioned all schools to [virtual learning](#) until the end of April.

Legal Warfare (Lawfare): 74 law professors have submitted a letter to the Supreme National Security Council arguing that any [ceasefire before achieving strategic goals](#) and receiving war reparations would be unconstitutional and a violation of the state's inherent right to "legitimate defense."

LEGISLATIVE ROUNDUP

Governance during this war period is marked by high-velocity legislative action to codify the "new reality" of Iranian maritime dominance and domestic wartime austerity.

- **Hormuz Sovereignty Bill:** A double-emergency bill in the Majlis designed to [legalize the collection of transit fees](#) from international shipping, specifically targeting nations that adhere to U.S. sanctions.
- **Wartime Judicial Amendments:** The Judiciary has issued a new directive [sharpening penalties for "collaboration with the enemy,"](#) with information sharing or "spreading fear" via social media punishable by death or up to 25 years in prison during wartime.
- **Agricultural Price Support:** The Ministry of Agriculture has set a new [guaranteed wheat purchase price](#) of 20,000 Tomans per kilo (adjusting to 47,500-49,500 Tomans based on quality) to ensure food security amid supply chain disruptions.

HEARINGS & PRESS EVENTS:

- **Vice President Arif's Market Directive:** Instructions issued to [facilitate the immediate release of essential goods](#) from customs to prevent shortages.
- **Judiciary Press Conference:** Spokesman Jahangir warned that taking [photos of bombed sites](#) and sharing them with "terrorist networks" like Iran International will be treated as espionage punishable by death.

DEEP DIVE: TRENDS AND THEMES

The "Mojtaba Era" Narrative Construction: The transition to the new Leader is being characterized by "Transformation and Modernization." State media is pivoting from the "mystical/charismatic" authority of Ali Khamenei to a ["technocratic/strategic"](#) authority for Mojtaba. His past involvement in "startups and knowledge-based companies" is highlighted as the solution to Iran's economic woes, suggesting a future regime focus on digital sovereignty and indigenous tech.

International Fragmentation: A significant theme is the perceived abandonment of the U.S. by its European allies. Reports emphasize that [EU nations are "learning to live without America."](#) with specific focus on the Spanish and French refusal to support "Trump's illegal war." This is framed as a shift from a "unipolar" to a "multipolar" world where Iran is a primary pole.

Cognitive Warfare and "Jan-fada": The state has successfully co-opted "Generation Y" into the war effort. Interviews with youth and volunteers emphasize a ["hymn-driven resistance"](#) where street rallies (Khiyaban) are

considered as vital as the missile silos (Meydan). This "integration of field and street" is presented as the reason for the [failure of U.S. "regime change" calculations.](#)

STRATEGIC FORESIGHT

Short Term (1-4 Weeks): Expect an intensification of IRGC Navy operations in the Persian Gulf to finalize the "transit fee" regime. Domestic crackdowns on "media collaborators" will likely increase as the Judiciary [identifies assets of individuals](#) abroad for seizure. National funerals for Tangsiri and others will serve as catalysts for Wave 89 operations.

Medium Term (1-6 Months): The "Trump honorable exit" narrative suggests a potential back-channel negotiation, though Iran's [demand for Trump's prosecution](#) and the "removal of Israel" remains a total barrier. If the Hormuz Bill passes, global shipping insurance rates will likely skyrocket, forcing a major international maritime crisis.

Long Term (1-5 Years): Under Mojtaba Khamenei, Iran will likely seek a ["structural transformation"](#) of its economy toward a "resistance-tech" model, deeply integrated with China and Russia. The "Strait of Hormuz transit fee" could become a permanent fixture, essentially making Iran a "maritime rentier state" that controls the flow of 20% of global oil.

RECOMMENDATIONS & IMPLICATIONS

For International Policy:

- The unilateral Iranian move to [tax international shipping in Rials](#) creates a precedent that bypasses the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), requiring an immediate diplomatic or multilateral maritime response.
- U.S. interceptor depletion is a critical risk; regional partners (Saudi Arabia, UAE) may seek independent de-escalation with Tehran as U.S. [defensive "umbrellas" fail](#).
- The martyrdom of senior IRGC leaders has not degraded command-and-control; rather, it has [accelerated the deployment](#) of next-generation indigenous systems (Fattah/Kheibar-Shekan missiles).

For Private Sector/Investors:

- **Supply Chain Risk:** The Persian Gulf is no longer a "peace-time" transit zone. The risk of [cargo seizures](#) or "accidental" missile strikes is at an all-time high.
- **Energy Volatility:** Markets should price in a long-term Iranian [Hormuz surcharge](#) and potential sustained disruptions to LNG and crude flows.
- **Regulatory Compliance:** New Iranian laws regarding [digital assets and wartime collaboration](#) pose severe risks for any remaining Western-linked entities or individuals within Iranian jurisdiction.

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.

This report is entirely machine generated using Gemini 3 and may include errors and omissions. Please verify all findings. No data is used to train or tune any AI model.

For questions or suggestions, please contact kalev.leetaru5@gmail.com. You can also learn more about the GDELT Project at <https://blog.gdeltproject.org/> and the Internet Archive's TV News Archive at <https://archive.org/details/tv>.