

MIDDLE EAST

FUNERAL BEGINS FOR SLAIN IRAN SUPREME LEADER



OFFICE OF THE IRANIAN SUPREME LEADER

People mourn Friday during a farewell ceremony for Iran's late Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei near the office of the late Iranian leader in Tehran.

Tehran warns US, Israel against attacks during ceremonies

PARISA HAFEZI AND JANA CHOUKEIR
Reuters

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates — The body of Ayatollah Ali Khamenei lay in state Friday in a vast hall in Tehran as clerics, officials, foreign dignitaries and other mourners paid their respects to Iran's late supreme leader, slain by U.S. and Israeli bombs.

In a show of public devotion to the Islamic Republic's theocratic state and revolutionary zeal, Iran is staging a week of mass funeral processions for Khamenei, whose 37-year reign was brought to an end Feb. 28 by the first airstrike of the war.

Khamenei's body was expected to be taken to Qom, Najaf and Kerbala, the great Shi'ite centers of Iran and Iraq, before being laid to rest Thursday in Mashhad, home to the country's holiest pilgrim shrine.

His coffin was unveiled late Thursday to a throng of sobbing supporters, swaying and beating their heads in time to a sung lament as flowers were thrown from the bier into the crowd.

On Friday the coffin — and those of family members killed with him — was

laid in state in the great prayer hall built to honor his predecessor, Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini.

The funeral is taking place at a critical moment for Iran, where the clerical rulers backed by the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps are riding high from surviving what they saw as an existential war against their greatest and most powerful foes.

Authorities aim to mobilize millions of people for the big processions over the coming days, offering transport, food and lodging to buoy the numbers.

But almost five decades after the 1979 revolution, and for all the official proclamations of national unity in the run-up to Khamenei's funeral, the Islamic Republic has rarely been so internally fractured.

Support for the clerical leadership is paper thin, analysts say, and the new supreme leader, Khamenei's son Mojtaba Khamenei, has not been seen in any new image since being wounded in the strike that killed his father.

Years of crippling sanctions paralyzed the economy as security forces put down accelerating bouts of mass nationwide

protests with increasing force — culminating in the killing of thousands of demonstrators in January.

Those deep problems were brushed aside this week, with the authorities mounting a display of state power and mass support.

Tehran streets were tightly controlled, with military and police vehicles lining the major roads and police and members of the black-shirted volunteer Basij paramilitary force patrolling on motorbikes. Iran warned the United States and Israel against attacks during the funeral.

After the coffin arrived Friday, borne high across the upraised hands of a waiting crowd, it was laid in the prayer hall on a white, stepped dais before a high, intricately tiled, arched recess, flanked by national and black mourning flags.

A black turban, worn by clerics claiming descent from Islam's Prophet Mohammed, lay on the coffin on a folded checkered scarf, a symbol in Iran of militant revolutionary ideals and solidarity with Palestinians.

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Andy Manske not letting 'longshot' odds deter him

Greenfield Republican, 27, hoping to top Tiffany in gubernatorial primary

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Twenty-seven-year-old Greenfield resident Andy Manske is hoping to do the unthinkable: defeat a far better-known U.S. House member in the Republican primary to advance to the state's first open contest for governor in 16 years this November.

Manske said he's well aware of the uphill battle he faces.

U.S. Rep. Tom Tiffany, the presumptive Republican nominee, has cleared the field

of all other major GOP hopefuls, has the endorsement of President Donald Trump, backing from the state Republican Party and 17 years of experience in federal, state and local politics.

Tiffany, of Hazelhurst, raised more than \$2.1 million in the final three months of last year after launching his bid for governor in September. Manske, whose bid for governor marks his first foray into politics, reported raising less than \$400 last year.

"It is a longshot candidacy, absolutely," Manske acknowledged in a Monday interview with the Wisconsin State Journal. "Am I aware of the odds? Absolutely. Do I get people who shut me out or don't treat me seriously? Sure. I don't care. I tunnel

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AMBER ARNOLD, STATE JOURNAL

Wisconsin Republican gubernatorial candidate Andy Manske during an interview last week at the Wisconsin State Journal in Madison. "You don't trust either party? I get that, because they've failed you time and time again," he says.



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