

FROM IRAN: The Voices of Mourners Rarely Heard in the Media

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Dimitri Lascaris (DL): Good morning, this is Dimitri Lascaris coming to you from Tehran, Iran on the early morning of July 5th, 2026, for Reason2Resist. It's about 4.30am, we can still see the moon outside, we have gotten up early to go to the Grand Musalla Mosque where the slain Supreme Leader of Iran Imam Ali Khamenei is lying in state, where also the family members who were killed with him are lying in state and we will be there to observe and record the gathering of mourners. A very large number of them is expected this morning for the morning prayer. I say we, I'm referring to about 25 journalists, most of them foreign journalists from around the world who are staying here at this hotel with me. And it has been quite unusual, to say the least, to be monitoring the Western press, which are finding it increasingly difficult to ignore the huge numbers of people who have come out or who are coming out right now for this, the third day of a seven day funeral programme. The crowds are only likely to become even larger from here. And this is all challenging directly, the narrative that the West has been hearing for years, that the Supreme Leader of this country was widely despised and enjoyed very little support amongst the population. People could see the physical evidence of the absurdity of this at this very moment and that of course is one of the reasons why we are recording and observing these events at this critically important time in the progress of this criminal war of aggression. I'll be reporting back to you later today.

DL: We are standing on a veranda overlooking the main square of the Grand Musalla Mosque in Tehran. This is the largest mosque in Iran and here on the third day of the seven-day funeral programme for the slaying of the Supreme Leader Imam Ali Khamenei, well in excess of 100,000 people had gathered in the square below, many more outside the mosque for morning prayer. It's approximately 7.45 a.m. And they have removed the coffin of the Supreme Leader from the scaffolding where it was situated yesterday, lying in state.

DL: The prayer has apparently concluded, so this may give you a sense of the enormity of this gathering of the outflow of humanity from this space.

DL: I'm now down in the square of the Musalla Mosque complex, the morning prayer today, July 5th has concluded. I had to wait in that stairwell where I was situated for about 45 minutes so that the massive drawing could empty out. And now the vast majority of the people who were here for the morning prayer have clearly departed. I mean there was barely a space on which to sit or stand during the prayer itself and I couldn't get down into the square because there were so many people. It is quite difficult to estimate how many are here but I guess the best operator I have is, I've been in many football stadiums, I'm talking about European football, not American football, that were filled to the brim and had a capacity of 85-90,000 people, and so I have a good sense of what a crowd of that size looks like. All I can say is that the number of people who were in here was many times larger. It was many times larger than 85-90,000 people. Certainly hundreds of thousands of people and I wouldn't exclude the possibility that there were over a million people in this square and in the immediate vicinity of the mosque complex where there were many more. And I just had an interesting – I'm sorry?

DL: Thank you for speaking with me today. I come from Greece and I wanted to know why people have gathered today for the funeral of Imam Khamenei. Could you please explain why you have come?

Family mother: In fact, he was our father, the leader was our father and if in reality you lost your father maybe after one week, two weeks you will forget it. But this lasts, our leader is very difficult for us and we are waiting for the revenge of this assassination of our leader.

DL: Why do you believe that the Americans and the Israelis killed Imam Khamenei? Khamenei, why did they kill him in your opinion?

Family mother: It's like the Zionist regime of Israel and the United States have problems with our belief, with our thoughts, with our school of thought. So if our leader would have been another person, they would kill him, or another person. Because they have a problem with our beliefs, with our thoughts. And with the assassination and martyr of our leaders, this way it will continue and continue as his son now is our leader and we believe that he's our leader forever.

DL: I have one more question for you. Do you want the government to negotiate with Trump?

Family mother: None of the Iranian people would like to negotiate with the United States. During the war, we were powerful and also now we are powerful and we do not like to negotiate with the US. But based on our leader's order, we just follow him and we are waiting for doing what is their responsibility on the American side.

DL: Thank you very much. I appreciate it.

Family mother: This is Zainab Soleimani and Muhammad Ali Soleimani. They are related to the Lieutenant General Qassem Soleimani.

DL: You are actually related to him?

Family mother: Yeah, relative of Martyr Soleimani.

DL: Thank you. Thank you very much.

DL: Thank you for speaking with me. Could you please tell me your names?

Male believer 1: I am [Name] Iranmanesh. I'm from the Kermanshah province. I'm a follower of Ayatollah Khamenei, our martial leader and also his son, Mojtaba Khamenei. I am a Shia muslim and I am here for you.

Male believer 2: My name is Hassan Rezaee.

DL: Is he from Tehran?

Male believer 2: Yes, he is from Tehran.

DL: Sir, could you please tell me why you've come here today?

Male believer 1: They say, I'm a Muslim and I'm Shia and I follow the Holy Quran because it's the guideline of our Muslims and in the Holy Quran God says the creation of God in three different categories. Some of them are Satan, some of them are animals and some of them are human.

Male believer 1: In our religion, our prophet says you have not been arrogant and you have not to tolerate any arrogant government.

DL: Okay.

Male believer 1: Our leader was fighting against the arrogant government, our leader Ali Khamenei was fighting against arrogant governments.

Male believer 1: He taught us that you should fight against any arrogant country and people.

Male believer 1: They say now that Trump and Netanyahu are Satan. And the symbol of Satan is they do a massacre, killing of children, women in Gaza and Iran.

DL: So today or in the last two days or so, Donald Trump was asked about all of the people who come to the mosque and who are mourning, they're crying for the Supreme Leader, and he said that maybe the tears are not real, they are fake tears. What's your response to that?

Male believer 3: He says this is a complete lie because we are crying and this feeling that comes from our heart. We are waiting for the presence of Imam Zaman and this could be the beginning of these procedures of this person. They are real tears that came from our hearts, but because Trump is a big liar and a big actor he thinks that all the people are the same like him, but no.

DL: My last question for all three of them, do they want their government to negotiate with Donald Trump?

Male believer 1: Although we do not like to negotiate with the United States, but in the reality, in fact, we are the followers of our new leader, Ayatollah Mojtaba Khamenei, and we should follow him and anything he says we have to follow.

Male believer 3: He said finally we do not have any problem with negotiations, but finally we believe that Israel will be removed and we are ready to sacrifice our family or children, myself for our leader.

Male believer 2: He said we cannot trust the US. Because as the Secretary of State of the US said, that they are to bring forces to the region, they want to again attack us. We do not believe nor trust them.

DL: Thank you very much. Thank you.

DL: Okay, could you tell me your names?

Young adult: Hessam Kazari.

DL: And how old are you?

Young adult: He said, I am Hessam Kazari, 17 years old. I come from the Kurdistan province.

DL: And you, young man?

Young adult 2: I'm Mohammed Hossein Karimi, 17 years old, I come from Hamedan city.

DL: How far is Hamadan city from here?

Young adult 2: Five hours by car.

DL: Did he come alone?

Young adult 2: Yes.

DL: Yes, and this young man, did he come alone?

Young adult: Right.

DL: Is he from Kurdish origin?

Young adult: He is Kurdish.

DL: So why did you come all the way to Tehran for this funeral?

Young adult: We love our leader and he was very valuable to us.

DL: And did you decide to come on your own or did somebody tell you that you had an obligation?

Young adult: No, any people that you see here, came on their own decision.

DL: And this young man, why did he come?

Young adult 2: Because of our leader, he was our father.

DL: And why do they believe that the United States and Israel murdered the Supreme Leader?

Young adult 2: When we had our leader, he protected us and he guided us to find the right way. But the US and also Israel want us to be like them.

DL: And this young man, could you ask him why or if he wants his government to negotiate with the Americans?

Young adult: We lost our commander, we lost our leader, so we don't like to negotiate with the United States because they are the arrogant government and they want to force us to do anything that they want. We do not like this.

DL: Thank you very much. Thank you.

DL: My name is Dimitri. Thank you for speaking with me.

Female believers: We are also happy and glad to talk to you.

DL: And your names are?

Female believer 1: I'm Nasrin Saifi.

Female believer 2: I'm Sadat Hosseini.

DL: And your mother and daughter.

Female believers: Yes.

DL: Where do you live? What city?

Female believers: In Karaj, Alborz province, close to Tehran, not Tehran, but it's close to Tehran.

DL: And they both live in the same city?

Female believers: Yes.

DL: How far is that from here?

Female believer 1: One hour and a half.

DL: So why did you come here today?

Female believer 2: Thank you so much for being so kind to our leader, for being kind to his soul, and thank you for all the work you have done for us in the past few years. Thank you. Thank you for being with us.

Female believer 2: We came here to say thanks to our martyr leader and say goodbye to him and also to say we are ready to support the new leader and thanks for them to do anything for us.

DL: And why do you think that the Americans and the Israelis murdered the Supreme Leader?

Female believer 1: Because from the beginning they were enemies of us and they didn't like our leader to stay and they wanted to murder him.

Female believer 2: They had a problem with our Islam, with our Shia people. And our leader was very brave and a powerful man, so it's very clear that they had a problem with him.

DL: So Netanyahu and Trump say they want to bring democracy to Iran. What is your answer to them?

Female believers: He never ever accepts this because he is a big liar.

DL: He's a big liar?

Female believers: Yes.

DL: And finally, if they could tell me, do they want their government to negotiate with Trump?

Female believers: They say, we don't like him, as we said to you, he's a big liar and we cannot trust him and this negotiation is not based on justice.

DL: Thank you very much. Thank you.

DL: Thank you. Thank you for speaking with me. What's your name?

Male speaker: Hi, my name is Saeed Mahir Mohammed.

DL: And how old are you?

Male speaker: 29.

DL: 29? What city do you come from?

Male speaker: I'm from Qom.

DL: Can you tell us what unit – I assume you serve in the Iranian military – what unit? Is it the Navy, IRGC? What unit is it?

Male speaker: Actually, we're not from any part of the military, we are volunteers from Basij and we help people here and show them where to come, where to exit and we control the crowd.

DL: Okay, so how would you describe the Basij? Is it like a paramilitary service? Is it a police service? How would you describe it?

Male speaker: Unlike what in the world people usually think of Basij, Basij in our country is a place that you go to socialise from the beginning, and yes, there is a part that you can learn military activities and attend them. But the biggest part of Basij is not the military. The biggest part of Basij is what we call Bobasaht. People help each other and in the more poor parts of our country where people need help, we call it Basiji, those who are in the Basij. Basiji's go help people build houses, build mosques, build health care centres...

DL: So it sounds a little bit like the National Guard in the United States, is it similar to the National Guard in the United States?

Male speaker: I'm not sure what the National Guard in the US does, but it has a lot of different aspects and does lots of different things.

DL: So how is it you speak English so well?

Male speaker: Ah, TV shows and movies.

DL: So, I wanted to ask you about the negotiations. Do you think it's a good idea for the government to negotiate with the Americans?

Male speaker: In Farsi we have a saying that a wise man never gets bitten twice.

DL: Understood. Do you believe the war is over?

Male speaker: No. Absolutely not.

DL: How do you feel about the way the war has gone so far?

Male speaker: We have some very good achievements against nuclear powers, to repressions, to oppressive governments. We also had some losses, very big losses. Our

Islamic Supreme Leader who lost his life. The very first day of war, he was martyred in his home with his family while he was fasting. So I have to say, I have very good hopes for this war for us.

DL: So, lastly about the negotiations, do you, the people that you interact with, your friends, your family, do most of them feel the way that you do?

Male speaker: Mostly yeah.

DL: Mostly yeah, thank you very much for speaking with us today.

Male speaker: Thank you.

DL: Thank you for speaking to me. What's your name?

Male believer 4: In the name of God, the Most Gracious, the most Merciful, I am Mohammad [inaudible].

DL: How old are you?

Male believer 4: I'm 23.

DL: Are you a student?

Male believer 4: I'm the electorate of the Islamic hodja, the Islamic school.

DL: What are the people chanting?

Male believer 4: Down to the USA, down to Israel.

DL: What brought you here today? Why are you here?

Male believer 4: I came here to say that with the assassination of our leader and with martyrdom of his, we will be more powerful than in the past and we are staying here to damage any arrogant government.

DL: Do you believe the war is over?

Translator: What do you mean with: the war is over?

DL: The war, does he believe the war is over?

Translator: He said no, the war will continue up to remove arrogant countries from the earth.

DL: Why do you think the Israelis and the Americans murdered the Supreme Leader?

Translator: He said because they were exactly powerful men and they stay against the arrogant government and he won't let them do any bad thing to oppress people.

DL: Does he want the government to negotiate with the Americans?

Male believer 4: Through the negotiation we can take advantage from the US, this is good. But during the war we were very powerful and now I believe we are very powerful. And yes, the negotiation will give us the advantage.

DL: And lastly, if you had the opportunity to say one thing to people in the West, what would it be? If you had the opportunity to just say one thing to people of the West what would be?

Male believer 4: My message to the Western youth is to listen to their heart, listen to the heart that came from his heart and stay against the arrogant government and support the Iranian nation.

Male believer 4: There are other messages that say that history will be right and will be made by poor people and God says that the poor people will make history. Thank you.

DL: We are now leaving the Grand Musalla Mosque and we're heading back to our hotel. I'll just give you a glimpse of what's going on out here. We're about, I don't know, three or four hundred metres from the gate where we exited from the mosque complex. You'll see there are quite a few people out here, even though it's getting sweltering hot.

END

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