

Trump says new Iran leader won't last long without his **approval**

Analysts warn there is still no clear path to ending the conflict

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● Israel's military has warned any successor that "we will not hesitate to target you"

AFP | Tehran, Iran

US President Donald Trump warned yesterday that Iran's next supreme leader would not last long without his approval, as Tehran prepared to reveal the successor to the slain Ayatollah Ali Khamenei.

Nine days after US-Israeli strikes on his compound killed Khamenei and plunged the Middle East into war, Iran's Assembly of Experts met privately and chose their next leader, members of the body said.

The clerics did not say who had been selected, only that a name would be announced soon. Some suggested Khamenei's 56-year old son Mojtaba Khamenei would succeed his father.

Trump had previously demanded a say in the appointment and dismissed the younger Khamenei as an unacceptable "lightweight".

"He's going to have to get approval from us," Trump told ABC News on Sunday, referring to Iran's next leader. "If he doesn't get approval from us he's not going to last long."

But Tehran's top diplomat said earlier in the day that the deci-



First aid responders are seen at the site of an Israeli airstrike that targeted an area in the Palestinian refugees camp of Ain al-Helweh, on the outskirts of the southern Lebanese coastal city of Sidon

Trump again refused to rule out sending US ground troops into Iran, but continued to insist that the war was all but won despite the ongoing Iranian missile and drone strikes.

Guards spokesman Ali Mohammad Naini said Iran had so far used only first- and second-generation missiles, but would use "advanced and less-used long-range missiles" in the coming days.

sion was Iran's alone, adding it would "allow nobody to interfere in our domestic affairs".

Speaking on NBC's "Meet the Press", Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi went on to demand that Trump "apologise to people of the region" for the spiralling war.

The younger Khamenei is regarded as a conservative figure, notably because of his ties to



US and Israeli bombardment of Iran

Strikes and explosions recorded by ISW-CTP* from February 28 to March 7 at 2100 GMT and by the Iranian authorities as of March 8 at 0930 GMT (non-exhaustive)

● Since March 7 ● Before

*Institute for the Study of War and AED's Critical Threats Project
Map data: OSN, NASA

AFP

the Revolutionary Guards, the ideological arm of the Islamic republic's military.

Israel's military has warned any successor that "we will not hesitate to target you".

No clear way out

Analysts warn there is still no clear path to ending a conflict that US and Israeli officials say could last a month or longer.

Trump has suggested Iran's economy could be rebuilt if a leader "acceptable" to Wash-

ington replaces the late supreme leader.

China and Russia have largely stayed on the sidelines despite close ties with Tehran.

China's top diplomat Wang Yi said the war in the Middle East should "never have happened", telling a press conference in Beijing: "The world cannot return to the law of the jungle."

On Sunday, Pope Leo XIV prayed "that the roar of the bombs may cease, the weapons may fall silent, and a space for dialogue may open".

Possible terror motive in US embassy blast, say Norway police

AFP | Oslo, Norway

Oslo police said Sunday an explosion at the US embassy in Norway overnight may have been an act of terrorism, but stressed they were also investigating other possible causes.

The blast, which caused no injuries and minor material damage, occurred around 1:00 am (0000 GMT) at the entrance to the embassy's consular section.

Police did not provide details about what might have caused it, but did say that an "explosive device" had been used.

Norway's Prime Minister Jonas Gahr Store called the incident "very serious and completely unacceptable". In a statement, he said he had spoken with the head of the US embassy in Oslo on Sunday.

Shattered glass could be seen in the snow outside the building's entrance, as well as cracks in a thick glass door. Overhead lamps dangled from wiring, and there were black marks on the ground at the foot of the door, presumably from the blast.

"One of the hypotheses is that it is an act of terrorism," Frode Larsen, the head of the police's joint unit for investigation and intelligence, told public broad-



caster NRK. "But we are not completely stuck on that. We have to be open to the possibility that there may be other causes behind what has happened," he said, speaking on the sidelines of a news conference.

Police were searching for the perpetrators but had "no suspects" yet, Larsen told journalists.

Oslo police official Grete Lien

Metlid appeared to confirm that an explosive had been thrown at the embassy.

Asked by a reporter if the device used was a hand grenade, she replied: "We haven't said anything about what was thrown."

Link to Middle East war?

US embassies have been placed on high alert in the Middle East over American military opera-

tions in Iran and several have faced attacks as Tehran hits back at industrial and diplomatic targets. Investigators in Oslo have not ruled out a possible link to the war in the Middle East.

"It is natural to see this in connection with the current security policy situation," Larsen said, adding that police had increased security at the scene after the attack. Prime Minister Store said

security had also been beefed up at "at other American, Israeli, and also Jewish targets" in Norway, but stressed that "nothing indicates that the situation is dangerous for people in Oslo or elsewhere in the country."

Foreign Minister Espen Barth Eide had earlier stressed that "the security of diplomatic missions is extremely important to us."

The Norwegian security service PST told AFP it had called in extra staff to assist police with the investigation.

Spokesman Martin Bernsen stressed there had been "no change" to the threat assessment level in the Scandinavian country, which has been at three on a five-point scale since November 2024.

He refused to disclose whether any threats had been made against US interests in Norway prior to the explosion.

Investigators examined the scene overnight, while dogs, drones, and helicopters were brought in to search for the perpetrators, Oslo police said in a statement. Security is normally high outside US embassies worldwide. It was not immediately known what security the

Oslo embassy had at the time of the incident.

Three 'bangs'

Several hours after the blast, police declared the area around the building "safe" for residents and passersby.

A 16-year-old identified only as Edvard told TV2 that he had been watching television when he heard the blast.

"My mother and I first thought it came from our house so we looked around a little, but then we saw the flashing lights outside the window and a ton of police," he said.

"There were police dogs and drones and police with automatic weapons and helicopters in the air," he said.

A group of three friends meanwhile told TV2 they were waiting for a taxi near the embassy when the explosion went off.

"We felt three 'bangs' that made the ground shake," Kristian Wendelborg Einung said.

Once in their taxi, they drove past the scene and saw the street in front of the embassy covered in smoke. We arrived before the police. The blanket of smoke was very strange. It was like thick fog," he said.