

Iran Considering Replacement for Supreme Leader Khamenei Amid Rumors of Illness

According to a report on Iran International, Mojtaba Khamenei, son of Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, has been selected to be the replacement for his father as head of the Iranian regime.

On Saturday, Iran International reported that Mojtaba was selected during a secret meeting of the Assembly of Experts in September. The report also stated that the elder Khamenei is considering appointing his son before he dies.

Ali Khamenei is 85 years old, and his health condition has been speculated to be deteriorating over the last year.

Several rumors circulating on social media on Sunday mentioned Ayatollah Ali Khamenei's poor health and claimed he had fallen into a coma. Not long after the rumors began to spread, the Iranian government shared a video of Khamenei in a meeting with the Iranian ambassador to Lebanon, Mojtaba Amani, who was in Iran recovering from injuries he sustained in the Israeli pager attack.

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While the video was not dated, it was intended to instill confidence that the elder Khamenei is still in good health.

Iran International posted an article on Sunday night examining three possible choices for Khamenei's replacement. The article noted that Mojtaba is widely expected to take his father's place.

The successor to the Supreme Leader is usually chosen upon his

death, as happened following the death of the previous leader Ruhollah Khomeini. Ali Khamenei has reportedly been grooming his son for the role and making preparations for the younger Khamenei to take his place soon, possibly even within the next few weeks.

According to reports about the secret meeting, the younger Khamenei was chosen unanimously by the Assembly of Experts following threats from the elder Khamenei, who has control over the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC).

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The assembly met and voted in secret over fears of increased protests and unrest if Ali Khamenei's weakened condition were to become public knowledge before a successor was chosen.

The elder Khamenei also reportedly fears that if he died without appointing a successor, the Assembly of Experts, which is not as united as it was following the death of Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, would have difficulty choosing a successor quickly.

In the last two months, Mojtaba, who had previously lived largely outside the public eye, began to take a more visible role in the government. Mojtaba Khamenei taught theology at the Qom Seminary, the largest Islamic seminary in Iran, before suddenly announcing in September that he was stepping away from the position.

The Iran International report said that Ali Khamenei also believes he could be killed in a future Israeli strike if things between the two countries escalate.

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