

WHO says six hospitals evacuated in Iran but health system holding up

Mar 16, 2026, 14:10 GMT

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Six hospitals in Iran have been evacuated since the start of the US-Israeli war on the country, but the health system is holding up for now, a World Health Organization official said on Monday.

WHO regional director Hanan Balkhy said Iran's healthcare infrastructure remained robust and authorities had not requested emergency relief from the global health agency.

"The primary healthcare and the health infrastructure of Iran is quite good and robust, and they're able to accommodate the casualties as of now," Balkhy told Reuters.

The WHO said it has verified 18 attacks on healthcare facilities and the deaths of eight medical workers.

Balkhy added that the agency had contingency plans to send emergency supplies if conditions worsen, warning that toxic pollution from damaged oil facilities could increase respiratory illnesses.

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Military adviser appointment by Khamenei Jr draws online mockery

Mar 16, 2026, 13:37 GMT • Hooman Abedi

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The appointment of a military adviser by Iran's new Supreme Leader triggered a wave of ridicule on Iranian social media, with users mocking both the decision and the figure chosen for the role.

Users on X and Instagram circulated the announcement with laughing emojis and sarcastic commentary, questioning the move and turning it into a fresh round of online satire.

"I first thought this was a joke, but the news is real," one user wrote shortly after the reports appeared online.



The adviser named in the decree was former Revolutionary Guards commander Mohsen Rezaei, a longtime political figure who has repeatedly run for Iran's presidency but never succeeded.

Another post mocked the circumstances of the appointment: "This is good news. Apparently, no one else is left alive, so Mohsen Rezaei has been appointed military adviser."



Mohsen Rezaei holds a banknote during a televised debate in Iran.

Some users played with the language of the announcement itself, replacing official terms with parody.

"Mohsen Rezaei has been appointed military adviser to the command of recycled and non-recycled cardboard," one comment read, using a pun aimed at Mojtaba Khamenei, the son of Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei, whom critics refer to sarcastically as a "cardboard leader."



The nickname reflects jokes online that he has rarely been seen publicly since assuming power, with supporters sometimes carrying cardboard cutouts of him at gatherings.



Power vs piety: Khamenei Jr inherits legitimacy dilemma of Iran's theocracy



Satire spreads online as Iranians await new leader unveiling

Others suggested the appointment reflected heavy losses within the security establishment.

“The fact that Mohsen Rezaei got a position means every Guards commander must have been wiped out and they had to bring him back,” another user wrote.

Several comments also mocked Rezaei personally.

“You’re making fun of him, but the only reason Mohsen Rezaei is still alive is that belt buckle,” one user wrote, referring to a widely shared meme about the former commander.

“For drones, the angle of the belt buckle makes them think he’s coming when he’s actually going,” the user joked.

شما مسخره می‌کنید ولی تنها دلیل زنده بودن محسن رضایی همین سگک کمر بندشه!

برای اینکه پهپادها بخاطر زاویه کمر بند فکر می‌کنن محسن داره میاد در حالیکه داره
میره pic.twitter.com/rd0SbEQZWb

— Mona Ahmedi (@Mona_ahmedi) March 16, 2026

Reaction to remarks at funeral ceremony

The ridicule intensified after a video circulated of Rezaei speaking at the funeral of former senior adviser and Defense Council Secretary Ali Shamkhani.



In the remarks, Rezaei said Iran was already winning in multiple arenas.

“Even now we are in victory. Politically, defensively and economically we are victorious at this very point,” Rezaei said in the speech.

He argued that the United States had weakened itself through confrontation with Iran.

“America attacked Iran and made itself smaller while making us bigger,” he said, adding that Iran would emerge from the conflict with greater influence in the region.

Online reactions to the remarks were swift, with many users reposting clips of the speech alongside sarcastic captions or parody edits.

One post read: “Someone admit this man to a psychiatric hospital.”

Longstanding subject of online satire

Rezaei has repeatedly run for president over the past two decades.

He entered the presidential race in 2005, 2009, 2013 and 2021 but failed to win in any of the contests.

In recent years, his repeated candidacies and public statements have turned him into a recurring subject of humor among Iranian internet users.

A recurring joke on Persian social media is that whenever an election is held anywhere in the world, users comment that “Mohsen Rezaei Mir-Ghaed is also a candidate,” a meme referencing his repeated appearances on Iranian presidential ballots.





Mohsen Rezaei shows his identification after registering to run in Iran's presidential election.

Some of his television appearances and campaign debates also generated viral moments online, particularly when he outlined ambitious economic plans or discussed new “unknown military tactics.”

For many users, the latest appointment simply revived a familiar online pattern. As one post put it: “Looks like Mohsen Rezaei is finally getting closer to his dreams.”

EU sanctions Iranian firm over cyber-attacks against member states

Mar 16, 2026, 13:33 GMT

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The European Union on Monday imposed sanctions on an Iranian company over cyber-attacks targeting EU member states and partners, the Council of the EU said.



The company, Emennet Pasargad, unlawfully accessed a French subscriber database and offered the data for sale on the dark web, the Council said in a statement.

It also said the firm compromised advertising billboards to spread disinformation during the 2024 Paris Olympic Games and breached a Swedish SMS service affecting a large number of EU citizens.

Under the sanctions, the company is subject to an asset freeze and EU citizens and companies are banned from providing funds or economic resources to it.

The EU also sanctioned two Chinese individuals and two China-based companies over cyber-attacks against member states and critical infrastructure.

Iran asks India to release seized tankers in Hormuz passage talks - Reuters

Mar 16, 2026, 13:02 GMT

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Iran has asked India to release three tankers seized in February as part of talks aimed at securing safe passage for Indian-flagged or India-bound vessels through the Strait of Hormuz, three sources familiar with the matter told Reuters.

Indian authorities seized the vessels near Indian waters, alleging they had concealed or altered their identities and were involved in illegal ship-to-ship transfers.

Iran's ambassador to New Delhi met officials at India's foreign ministry on Monday to discuss the issue, one source said, adding Tehran had also sought supplies of some medicines and medical equipment.

India's foreign ministry spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said recent ship movements reflected a history of engagement between the two countries and said nothing was being exchanged.

India said at least 22 Indian-flagged vessels and 611 Indian seafarers remain in the Persian Gulf as shipping through the Strait of Hormuz has slowed sharply since the start of the conflict involving Iran.



Indian authorities seized the tankers Asphalt Star, Al Jafzia and Stellar Ruby, which are currently anchored off Mumbai.

Pakistan tanker transits Strait of Hormuz after sailing near Iran coast - Bloomberg

Mar 16, 2026, 12:29 GMT

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A Pakistan-flagged oil tanker has transited the Strait of Hormuz and is sailing toward Pakistan after traveling close to Iran's coastline, Bloomberg News reported on Monday, citing ship-tracking data.

The Aframax tanker Karachi, operated by Pakistan National Shipping Corp., cleared the strait on Sunday and was later seen near Sohar in Oman, according to the report.

The vessel loaded crude inside the Persian Gulf after leaving Fujairah in the United Arab Emirates last month and is expected to arrive in Pakistan on March 18, Bloomberg reported, citing a company spokesperson.

Shipping through the Strait of Hormuz has largely halted since US and Israeli strikes on Iran began last month, with traders closely watching the few vessels that still pass through the key oil chokepoint.

Israel says it struck Iranian facility tied to anti-satellite capabilities

Mar 16, 2026, 12:07 GMT

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Israel's military said on Monday it had destroyed a facility in central Tehran that it said was used to develop capabilities to attack satellites in space.



The Israeli air force struck what it described as a center linked to Iran's military space program that was used to develop offensive systems capable of damaging satellites, the military said in a statement.

It said the facility was involved in programs including the development of the Chamran-1 satellite, which it said was built by Iran's defense ministry electronics industries and launched by the Revolutionary Guards in September 2024.

در حمله‌ای مهم در قلب تهران: ارتش اسرائیل یک مرکز رژیم تروریستی ایران را که برای توسعه توانایی‌های حمله به ماهواره‌ها در فضا استفاده می‌شد، نابود کرد.

نیروی هوایی یک مرکز در حوزه فضایی متعلق به رژیم تروریستی ایران را که برای توسعه توانایی‌های تهاجمی با هدف آسیب رساندن به...
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