

# *Ayatollah Khamenei leads prayers as millions of mourners gather for Raisi funeral*

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Tehran, May 22 (RHC)-- Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei has led prayers over the bodies of President Ebrahim Raisi and his companions in Tehran as millions of people gathered to hold funeral procession.

The martyred lost their lives in a tragic helicopter crash in the northwestern province of East Azarbaijan. The mass public received the coffins of the eight victims of the crash at the University of Tehran on Wednesday morning before Ayatollah Khamenei led prayers on the bodies.

World leaders, presidents, ambassadors and international personalities as well as high-profile figures of the Axis of Resistance, including Ismail Haniyeh, the political bureau chief of the Palestinian resistance movement Hamas, and Sheikh Naim Qassem, deputy secretary-general of Lebanese Hezbollah resistance movement, attended the ceremony.

The millions-strong procession started from the University of Tehran to the iconic Azadi Square.

Iranians attended a ceremony at Imam Khomeini Mosalla of Tehran as part of mourning ceremonies in the late hours of Tuesday to pay homage to President Raisi and his late associates.

The northwestern Iranian city of Tabriz and the holy city of Qom were on Tuesday morning and evening the scene of millions of people who had gathered to pay tribute to Raeisi.

The Leader said on Monday that he received the bitter news of the martyrdom of the popular, competent and hardworking president and his companions with great sorrow. Ayatollah Khamenei noted that the tragic incident happened when Raisi and his team were making an attempt to serve the Iranian people.

The entire period of responsibility of this noble and devoted man, both during the short term of the presidency and before that, was completely spent in non-stop efforts to serve the people, the country and Islam, Ayatollah Khamenei emphasized.

“Dear Reisi did not know fatigue,” the Leader said, adding that the Iranian nation lost a sincere and valuable servant in this tragic incident.

Speaking at the ceremony in Tabriz, Iranian Interior Minister Ahmad Vahdidi said that Iran is mourning the loss of a beloved, popular, and humble president.

The Iranian nation is also saddened by the death of a foreign minister who left active diplomacy in the critical moments of the resistance as his legacy, Vahidi added.

He also praised the constructive efforts of the late governor of East Azarbaijan province and the province's Friday prayers leader. “We had a bad landing in this matter, but we will have a brilliant rise,” Vahidi stressed.

Haniyeh said in an address ahead of the Wednesday's procession that, “On behalf of the resilient nation of Palestine and Palestinian resistance groups, we have come from Gaza to offer our condolences to the Islamic Republic of Iran,”

“During the holy month of Ramadan and our trip to Tehran, we had a meeting with the martyred president, and he underscored the Islamic Republic of Iran's steadfast position in supporting the Palestinian nation,” he noted.

Haniyeh quoted Raeisi as saying that the issue of Palestine is the “first issue of the Islamic Ummah,” and the Islamic Ummah must fulfill its responsibility so that the Palestinian nation will be liberated.

The Hamas chief asserted that the resistance movement is confident that the Islamic Republic will continue to support the Palestinian nation by the Leader of the Islamic Revolution and his officials.

On Sunday, the helicopter carrying Raisi and his entourage crashed as it was on its way to Tabriz, the capital of Iran's East Azarbaijan province, from a location on the border with the Republic of Azerbaijan where the Iranian president had opened a major dam project.

Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian and two senior provincial officials along with crew members and bodyguard also died in the crash.

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