

Hezbollah's pledge of allegiance to Mojtaba Khamenei

written by Dr. Yossi Mansharof | 24.08.2026

The letter of allegiance that Hezbollah sent in July 2026 to Iran's new supreme leader, Mojtaba Khamenei, and the latter's public response were not merely a ceremonial gesture between Tehran and Hezbollah, the "crown jewel" of Iran's network of proxies.

Rather, they constitute an event of profound political and ideological significance, aimed at consolidating Mojtaba's standing as Iran's new leader precisely at a time when his legitimacy is being challenged both inside and outside Iran.

Hezbollah's swift pledge of allegiance provides him with a seal of approval from the Iranian regime's most important strategic asset and assists him in projecting continuity with the path of his father, Ali Khamenei.

Mojtaba's need to strengthen his standing stems first and foremost from the circumstances of his rise to power.

Contrary to the principles on which the Islamic Revolution was based since 1979, the transfer of the leadership from father to son gives the regime a dynastic character, reminiscent of the very monarchy the revolution sought to overthrow.

For decades, Iran's leaders presented the Islamic Republic as a system based on the leader's qualifications and religious authority, rather than on hereditary succession. Mojtaba's elevation to the leadership undermines this narrative and could provoke criticism even among circles identified with the Islamic regime.

Adding to this are opposition reports that Ali-Asghar Hejazi, Ali Khamenei's chief of staff, confidant, and trusted aide, who accompanied him ever since his selection as supreme leader in 1989, testified during the deliberations preceding the selection of the new leader that Khamenei himself had not supported appointing his son as his successor.

These reports further undermine Mojtaba's legitimacy, as they deprive him even of the claim that he is fulfilling his father's final wishes. Under such circumstances, every expression of support from key actors in the Axis of Resistance takes on particular significance.

Mojtaba's personal image also requires him to invest in consolidating his standing.

For years, his name has been associated with the regime's most hardline centers of power, and an image has developed around him in Iranian public opinion of an extremist and hawkish figure identified with domestic repression and an uncompromising ideological line.

This image makes it difficult for him to be perceived as a leader capable of uniting

all factions within Iran's political system. He therefore needs public demonstrations of loyalty from his regional allies to show that his authority is accepted not only in Tehran but throughout the resistance camp.

Mojtaba's problematic image is further highlighted by opposition reports that his close associate, Hossein Taeb, played a leading role in pushing for his appointment as supreme leader.

Taeb is a deeply reviled figure in Iranian public opinion because of his senior role in suppressing the public, first as commander of the Basij (2007-2009) and later as head of the IRGC Intelligence Organization (2009-2022).

It is against this backdrop that Hezbollah's letter should be understood.

In the letter, the organization declared that its allegiance to Mojtaba is in fact allegiance to the "Hidden Imam" (who, according to Shi'ite belief, entered occultation in 941 and will reappear at the end of time to redeem the Shi'ites), because the supreme leader is his "deputy and representative during the occultation."

In doing so, Hezbollah granted Mojtaba the full religious legitimacy afforded by the doctrine of Velayat-e Faqih ("Guardianship of the Jurist"), making clear that, in its view, there is no difference between the authority of the new leader and that of Khomeini and Mojtaba's father, Ali Khamenei.

Moreover, the organization pledged to continue under his leadership to "carry the banner of Islam," pursue jihad and sacrifice, and lead the resistance camp toward "divine victory." This is a declaration that goes beyond ordinary political allegiance and grants Mojtaba the status of a religious and strategic authority beyond Iran's borders.

A building block in Mojtaba's legitimacy

Hezbollah's participation in the Israel-Iran war had already demonstrated that it was prepared to assume enormous risks and act manifestly against Lebanon's interests as part of its absolute loyalty to Iran.

Indeed, in March 2018, Nasrallah emphasized in a speech to Iranian citizens living in Lebanon that his allegiance to supreme leader Khamenei was "stronger than the Lebanese Constitution," and boasted that "our belief in the rule of the jurist differs from that of many Iranians who accept this doctrine, because ours is stronger."

This report, published by the conservative Iranian news website Farda News, embarrassed Hezbollah and was subsequently removed and denied.

Accordingly, the current pledge of allegiance does not represent a turning point but, rather, another public expression of the deep loyalty the organization has demonstrated for years toward the institution of the supreme leader, whom Hezbollah regards as its ultimate source of religious and political authority.

The significance of Hezbollah's letter also stems from the fact that the organization aligned itself with the regime's attempt to portray the supreme leader as the representative of the "Hidden Imam," even though the 1989 constitution separated *velayat* (religious rule) from *marja'iyyat* (supreme religious authority), in contrast to the original constitution of March 1979.

When he was appointed supreme leader, Mojtaba's father, Khamenei, was overnight elevated in 1989 from the rank of *hojjat al-Islam* to that of *ayatollah*, and in 1994 declared himself a *marja' taqlid* (source of emulation).

Now, it appears that Mojtaba, who does not yet feel sufficiently secure to present himself as an *ayatollah*, is gradually working toward recognition as a senior religious authority in the coming years. Hezbollah's letter is an important building block on the way toward achieving this goal.

Mojtaba's response to Hezbollah, published on July 26, likewise indicates that he seeks to project full continuity with his father's policies.

It is important to note that, to date, direct correspondence between Mojtaba and any organization belonging to Iran's proxy network has taken place only with Hezbollah, underscoring its unique standing in the eyes of the new leader.

Mojtaba stressed that Iran continues to regard the protection of and support for Hezbollah as a strategic policy and that, despite its significant weakening, it continues to regard the organization as the "vanguard of the jihadist groups."

Mojtaba also stated that the Islamic Republic remains committed to the first article of the memorandum of understanding, which calls for Israel's full withdrawal from Lebanon, even though Tehran is not currently acting to enforce it.

In doing so, he made clear that Tehran will continue to intervene in the issue of Hezbollah's weapons and will continue to view the organization as a central actor in the Lebanese arena, contrary to the positions of the Lebanese state, the United States, and Israel, all of which seek to disarm it.

No less significant was Mojtaba's ideological commitment to the resistance path. He praised the residents of southern Lebanon for their sacrifices, declared that "there is no path left but jihad and resistance," and expressed full confidence that God would grant the resistance camp another victory in the future.

In this way, he adopted almost in full the rhetoric that had characterized his father for decades and conveyed a clear message that the change in leadership in Tehran would not be accompanied by a strategic shift.

In conclusion, the exchange of letters between Hezbollah and Mojtaba Khamenei is not a symbolic event, but an important building block in the construction of the new leader's religious and political legitimacy.

While inside Iran Mojtaba faces a problematic crossroads because of the contradiction between his appointment and the doctrine of governance, reports that his father did not support his appointment, and his extremist public image,

outside Iran he is receiving public backing from the most important organization in the Axis of Resistance.

From the regime's perspective, Hezbollah's pledge of allegiance is not merely a declaration of loyalty, but an attempt to present Mojtaba as the sole and legitimate successor to his father Ali Khamenei's path and as the new leader of the entire regional resistance camp.

This is intended to enhance his prestige and, at least partially, compensate for the questions surrounding his very appointment as supreme leader. Published in The Jerusalem Post, August 24, 2026.

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