



Iran executes 19-year-old champion wrestler Saleh Mohammadi, two others in horrific public hangings

March 19, 2026 nypost.com reported: "Iran executed a 19-year-old champion wrestler in a public hanging Thursday along with two other people who were arrested during the brutal crackdown on anti-regime protesters in January.

Saleh Mohammadi, a rising star from Qom, was allegedly tortured to confess to the capital crime of waging war against God, with the teen executed without a fair trial, according to human rights groups.

"His execution was a blatant political murder, part of the Islamic Republic's pattern of targeting athletes to crush dissent and terrorize society," Nima Far, a human rights activist and Iranian combat athlete, told Fox News.

EU urges moratorium on strikes on Mideast energy, water facilities

March 19, 2026 spacewar.com reported: "The European Council calls for de-escalation and maximum restraint, the protection of civilians and civilian infrastructure and full respect of international law by all parties," the bloc's leaders said in conclusions adopted at summit talks in Brussels.

Energy markets were left reeling Thursday by Iranian attacks on the world's largest liquefied natural gas plant in Qatar and refineries in Saudi Arabia and Kuwait -- in retaliation for Israel's air raid on Iran's South Pars gas field.

EU leaders further condemned "any acts that threaten navigation or prevent vessels from entering and exiting the Strait of Hormuz".

And they welcomed "the increased efforts announced by member states, including through strengthened coordination with partners in the region, to ensure freedom of navigation in the Strait of Hormuz, once the conditions are met".

An effective Iranian blockade of the strait has paralyzed commercial shipping through the crucial maritime chokepoint, which in peacetime saw a fifth of global crude oil and liquefied natural gas pass through it.

Six major powers, including EU members France, Germany, Italy and the Netherlands, said earlier Thursday they were ready "to contribute to appropriate efforts to ensure safe passage through the Strait of Hormuz".

More broadly, the 27-nation EU vowed to "protect its security and interests" from the impact of Middle East hostilities, including working to prevent any repeat of the 2015 migration crisis, which was driven by the Syrian civil war..."

Oil Rises After Israel Strikes Iran Gas Field and Tehran Hits Qatar Fuel Hub

March 18, 2026 wsj.com reported: "Oil prices are climbing higher in after-hours trading, after new attacks on critical energy infrastructure in the Middle East. Iranian strikes caused extensive damage to a major Qatar fuel hub. Earlier, Israel struck a large Iranian gas field shared with Qatar.

Qatar's Foreign Ministry condemned both the Israeli and Iranian attacks, calling them dangerous escalations. Gulf oil officials evacuated refineries, petrochemical facilities and gas fields..."



Trump demands more enthusiasm from allies for Hormuz mission

March 16, 2026 spacewar.com reported: "President Donald Trump on Monday demanded that US allies help secure the Strait of Hormuz, but European powers pushed back on a possible mission to reopen the vital waterway shut by Iran in response to US-Israeli attacks.

Trump criticised the lukewarm response to his call for world powers to send warships to escort tankers through the strait, which normally carries a fifth of global crude oil, demanding a more enthusiastic response.

Global oil prices have surged by 40 to 50 percent as Iran attacks shipping in the Strait of Hormuz and launches waves of missile and drone strikes in the Gulf in retaliation for the war launched by the United States and Israel on February 28.

The conflict has also spread to Lebanon, where Israeli forces have carried out strikes and launched a "limited" ground incursion that Western leaders warned Monday should not become a large-scale operation.

Trump said he thought Britain and France would get involved in efforts to secure the Strait of Hormuz -- but only reluctantly.

"We strongly encourage the other nations to get involved with us and get involved quickly and with great enthusiasm," Trump told reporters at a White House event.

British Prime Minister Keir Starmer said London was working with allies to craft a "viable" plan to reopen the strait, but ruled out a NATO mission, while Berlin also said it "has been clear at all times that this war is not a matter for NATO".

Japan, Australia, Poland, Spain, Greece and Sweden also all distanced themselves from any military involvement in the Strait of Hormuz.

EU foreign ministers discussed the war in Brussels on Monday but showed "no appetite" for extending their Red Sea naval mission to help reopen Hormuz, the bloc's top diplomat said.

Trump told the Financial Times on Sunday that it would be "very bad for the future of NATO" if they refused to help. He said Monday he has asked to delay a summit with Chinese leader Xi Jinping by a "month or so..."

IDF: It will take Iran years to rebuild its military industrial complex

March 15, 2026 jpost.com reported: "Even if the war were to end immediately, the damage that Israel and the US have inflicted on Iran's military industrial complex will take years to rebuild, the IDF said Sunday.

At the start of the war, the IDF mapped out 2,600 Iranian military industrial sites.

So far, two-thirds to three-quarters of them have been destroyed by Israeli and US airstrikes, the IDF said.

For comparison, in October 2024, the IDF struck 14 military-industrial complex targets, and in June 2025, it struck about 100.

Currently, the IDF is focused on destroying an additional one-third to one-quarter as one of its highest targeting priorities.

The IDF hopes this broader destruction of Iranian military supply chains and military sectors will set back any future push by the Islamic regime to try to rebuild its ballistic-missile and terror-spreading capabilities.

This is important because, so far, about 70% of Iran's ballistic-missile launchers have been destroyed or neutralized, yet a smaller percentage of actual ballistic missiles appears to have been destroyed.

Furthermore, Iran showed that it could rebuild missile launchers at a rapid speed, given that in about eight months, it rebuilt and exceeded the number of missile launchers – an estimated 200 – that the IDF destroyed last June.

Pressed on whether all the attacks the IDF has carried out against the wider supply chain would really block Iran from rebuilding its ballistic-missile apparatus, or would only more generally weaken other portions of its military power, the IDF gave no clear answer.

Currently, the IDF has reduced Iran's missile fire from around 100 at the start of the war to nearly 20 in the following days, to around five per day. While the military has not promised that it can stop Iran from again increasing the number of daily attacks, over the coming days and weeks, it expects the daily average to continue to decrease, even while not halting entirely, the IDF said..."

Europe needs to lose 'nostalgia' for US: Germany's Merz

February 2, 2026 AFP reported: Europe cannot afford to be sentimental in its relations with an increasingly hostile United States, German Chancellor Friedrich Merz said Monday.

Speaking at the headquarters of Deutsche Boerse Group, which operates the Frankfurt Stock Exchange, Merz called on Europe to become more independent of its traditional ally and argued that old certainties no longer held.

"We must become more sovereign and independent, especially in terms of technology," Merz said. "And yes, this also applies to the United States of America".

Suggestions by US President Donald Trump that his country could annex Greenland, an autonomous territory of European NATO ally Denmark, have rocked European leaders.

French President Emmanuel Macron called the episode "a strategic wake-up call for all of Europe" and EU energy commissioner Dan Jorgensen warned the bloc risked becoming dependant on imports of US liquefied natural gas.

Merz said Europe had to adjust to "a new part of the reality we are confronted with".

"Transatlantic relations have changed," he said. "No one in this room says this with more regret than I do, but nostalgia and memories of good times gone by do not help."



German Chancellor Merz & French President Macron