



COVID-19

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COVID-19 AND THE IRANIAN REGIME PART 2

The Spread of COVID-19: Iranian Accountability

July 13, 2020

Summary

- 1 | Iran became a global epicentre for the spread of COVID-19 due to the regime’s malevolence and malfeasance in its management of the crisis.
- 2 | Iran has been slow and reluctant to fund the fight against the spread of COVID-19, but continues to spend billions funding terrorism, Iran’s nuclear weapons program, the IRGC, and other malign activities.
- 3 | Despite the pandemic, Iran has used its resources to launch cyber attacks on the World Health Organization (WHO) and COVID-19 medical research centres.
- 4 | The regime must be held accountable by the international community.

Washington Post

“Iran’s reaction to coronavirus has become a danger for the world”¹

Foreign Policy

“How an Iranian Airline Tied to Terrorism Likely Spread the Virus”²

TIME

Iran Expert at the RAND Corporation – “There are a million ways in which Iran could have handled this situation, but they appear to have chosen some of the worst...”³

The Global Spread of COVID-19 & Iranian Accountability: Making the Case

Even a cursory review of the media coverage and reports coming directly from the government of Iran regarding its management of the pandemic demonstrates the regime's culpability in the death of its own citizens and the global spread of COVID-19. The short synopsis in the following pages will demonstrate:

- 1 Iran's culpability in the deaths and financial devastation of its own citizens
- 2 Iran's culpability in the spread of the virus to other countries
- 3 The awareness and premeditation of Iran's leadership in enacting these policies
- 4 The willingness of Iranian MPs and other VIPs to confront the regime for its failures (but to no avail)
- 5 The extensive international media coverage of the regime's actions during the pandemic
- 6 The regime's propagation of the most malign forms of antisemitic conspiracy theories to deflect blame away from the regime
- 7 The weaponization of the pandemic as a political tool to advance the regime's interests within Iran and across the globe, regardless of the cost in human life and suffering

The "Cynicism and Ideology"⁴ of the Iranian Regime Laid the Groundwork for Iran Becoming an Epicentre for the Global Spread of COVID-19

Selected Headlines and Reports

WASHINGTON POST: "Iran's reaction to coronavirus has become a danger for the world"⁵

THE NEW YORKER: "It was a political decision that led to this outbreak in Iran"⁶

THE NEW YORKER: "How Iran Became a New Epicenter of the Coronavirus Outbreak"⁷

NEW YORK TIMES: "Recipe for a Massive Viral Outbreak, Iran Emerges as a Worldwide Threat"⁸

WALL STREET JOURNAL: "Iran's Coronavirus Strategy Favored Economy Over Public Health, Leaving Both Exposed"⁹

Iran Primer: "At least 23 countries from the United States and Europe to the Middle East and New Zealand – reported coronavirus cases spread either by Iranian tourists or their own nationals who had recently returned from Iran."¹⁰

The President of the Mashhad University of Medical Sciences: The regime’s reluctance to halt travel between China and Iran “prepared the ground for dissemination” of COVID-19¹¹

FOREIGN POLICY: “How an Iranian Airline Tied to Terrorism Likely Spread the Virus”¹²

BUSINESS INSIDER: Georgetown Professor Cynthia Schneider states that “... The regime made a cynical political move by insisting on holding Parliamentary elections and the public celebrations for the anniversary of the Islamic Revolution before making any public announcements about social distancing.”¹³

TIME: Iran Expert at the RAND Corporation – “There are a million ways in which Iran could have handled this situation, but they appear to have chosen some of the worst...”¹⁴

NEW YORK TIMES: “Iran’s Coronavirus Response: Pride, Paranoia, Secrecy, Chaos”¹⁵

REUTERS: Hackers linked to Iran target WHO during coronavirus¹⁶

FORBES: “Gilead Sciences, the U.S. drug maker whose antiviral remdesivir has shown promise for treating coronavirus, has in recent weeks been targeted by hackers with ties to Iran, Reuters reported Friday.”¹⁷

The Iranian Regime Weaponizes COVID-19: Deceit, Malevolence, and Malfeasance as Public Policy

Selected Quotes and Reports

IranWire: “Contrary to WHO guidelines and previous claims by the Health Ministry, the government had chosen all to ignore all signs of coronavirus infections in Iran from mid-January”¹⁸ (Apr. 8, 2020)

Ayatollah Khamenei: Accuses U.S. of creating the coronavirus, says it would be “unreasonable” for Iran to accept assistance from the U.S.¹⁹

President Hassan Rouhani: “The sanctions have failed to hamper our efforts to fight against the coronavirus outbreak.”²⁰ “...We have been much more successful than many other countries in the fight against this disease.”²¹ “Iran has no problem in providing foreign currency until the end of the [Iranian] year.”²²

RADIO FARDA: “Iran Rejects Offer of Help by Doctors Without Borders to Fight Coronavirus”²³



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President Hassan Rouhani: “[Quarantine] is one of the enemies’ plots to spread fear ... and close down the country...”²⁴

Ayatollah Khamenei: “Foreign Media is Using Coronavirus as Propaganda to Influence Elections...”²⁵

Foundation for Defense of Democracies (FDD): “...The budget shows that the regime is not making the necessary sacrifices to fight the pandemic. ...The...budget includes a massive increase in military spending. The IRGC’s budget increased by 92 percent, from \$5.6 billion to \$10.7 billion. Propaganda organizations will receive \$6.5 billion, a remarkable amount given Iran’s economic plight.”²⁶

President Hassan Rouhani: “We must not let the U.S. attach a new virus to the coronavirus by stopping our social activities...”²⁷ (Feb.26, 2020)

Qom University of Medical Sciences – Dr. Mohammad Reza Qadir: “According to Health Ministry instructions, I am prohibited from presenting statistics...”²⁸

Iranian TV Host: “The Delivering of Information to the [Iranian] Public Is Catastrophic”²⁹ (Feb.24, 2020)

Iranian Government Spokesman: “Honesty is natural to us...Iran has been one of the most transparent countries when it comes to coronavirus.”³⁰ (Mar. 2, 2020)

President Hassan Rouhani: “We have no quarantines today and we shall not have quarantines before, during or after Nowruz [Iranian new year holidays]. All are free to carry on their businesses.”³¹ (Mar. 15, 2020)

Iranian MP accuses government of lying: “You cannot hide the graveyards...”³²

Iranian Interior Minister: “In terms of our capacity to [respond to the COVID-19 crisis], we have had no difficulty...”³³ (Mar. 26, 2020)

Iranian MP on parliament’s health committee: “By refusing to quarantine the country Rouhani was simply showing spite toward the Europeans.”³⁴

KAYHAN (Iranian government mouthpiece): Accuses U.S. and Israel of manufacturing and spreading the coronavirus throughout the world “in order to rid it of the elderly and the poor.”³⁵

Reporters Without Borders on Iran’s Deceit: “Withholding information can kill.”³⁶

UN Human Rights Commission: “Iran Using Covid-19 as a Weapon to Quash Dissent”³⁷

(IRGC-affiliated) TASNIM NEWS: “COVID-19 is an American research project at Stanford – likely conducted by Baha’is of secret Jewish origin...”³⁸

(IRGC-affiliated) TASNIM NEWS: “Corona is a Jewish Plot for World Domination”³⁹

Iranian Health Minister: “Iran is one of the world’s leading countries in the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic.”⁴⁰



ENDNOTES

- ¹ https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/global-opinions/irans-moment-of-truth-on-coronavirus/2020/03/03/f82548fe-5cca-11ea-b29b-9db42f7803a7_story.html
- ² <https://foreignpolicy.com/2020/03/30/mahan-air-iranian-airline-spread-coronavirus-and-lied-about-it/>
- ³ <https://time.com/5804706/iran-coronavirus/>
- ⁴ <https://foreignpolicy.com/2020/03/24/how-iran-botched-coronavirus-pandemic-response/>
- ⁵ https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/global-opinions/irans-moment-of-truth-on-coronavirus/2020/03/03/f82548fe-5cca-11ea-b29b-9db42f7803a7_story.html
- ⁶ <https://www.newyorker.com/news/our-columnists/how-iran-became-a-new-epicenter-of-the-coronavirus-outbreak>
- ⁷ <https://www.newyorker.com/news/our-columnists/how-iran-became-a-new-epicenter-of-the-coronavirus-outbreak>
- ⁸ <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/02/24/world/middleeast/coronavirus-iran.html>
- ⁹ <https://www.wsj.com/articles/irans-coronavirus-strategy-favored-economy-over-public-health-leaving-both-exposed-11584272132>
- ¹⁰ <https://iranprimer.usip.org/blog/2020/mar/10/global-map-coronavirus-traced-iran>
- ¹¹ <https://foreignpolicy.com/2020/03/24/how-iran-botched-coronavirus-pandemic-response/>
- ¹² <https://foreignpolicy.com/2020/03/30/mahan-air-iranian-airline-spread-coronavirus-and-lied-about-it/>
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- ¹⁴ <https://time.com/5804706/iran-coronavirus/>
- ¹⁵ <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/03/world/middleeast/coronavirus-iran.html>
- ¹⁶ <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-health-coronavirus-cyber-iran-exclusi/exclusive-hackers-linked-to-iran-target-who-staff-emails-during-coronavirus-sources-idUSKBN21K1RC>
- ¹⁷ <https://www.forbes.com/sites/sergeiklebnikov/2020/05/08/gilead-sciences-targeted-by-iranian-linked-hackers-report/#26e03c8313db>
- ¹⁸ <https://iranwire.com/en/special-features/6857>
- ¹⁹ <https://www.memri.org/tv/iranian-supreme-leader-ayatollah-khamenei-coronavirus-reject-american-aid-increase-hostility>
- ²⁰ <https://twitter.com/AlinejadMasih/status/1243286627511869448?s=20>
- ²¹ <https://aawsat.com/english/home/article/2211006/iran-coronavirus-death-toll-climbs-rouhani-presses-sanctions-relief>
- ²² https://en.radiofarda.com/amp/rouhani-says-us-sanction-no-obstacle-for-iran-s-fight-against-coronavirus/30525439.html?__twitter_impression=true
- ²³ <https://en.radiofarda.com/a/iran-expels-medical-team-sent-by-doctors-without-borders-to-fight-coronavirus/30505858.html>
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- ³⁹ <https://www.adl.org/blog/battling-covid-iran-regime-makes-jews-its-bogeyman>; <https://www.tasnimnews.com/fa/news/1399/01/09/2231520/%D8%AF%D8%B1%D8%A2%D9%85%D8%AF%DB%8C-%D8%A8%D8%B1-nssm200->
- ⁴⁰ <https://ifpnews.com/iran-among-leading-countries-in-fight-against-coronavirus-health-minister>