



Medical Professionals for Human Rights in Iran – Austria

گروه پزشکان وکادر پزشکی ایرانیان مدافع حقوق بشر

Dear Sirs,

Iran is known to be one of the most affected countries in the (corona) Covid-19 and in spite of governmental misleading statements uncontrolled spread with high and mounting infection and lethality rates (Iran has confirmed (17,361) 23049 cases and (1,135) 1812 deaths - status March 23rd 2020 , though many suspect higher numbers and massgraves have been reported on aerial photographs from the Qom area by some sources)¹.

We would like to thank the WHO and MSF for the humanitarian medical aid already provided to Iran.

As you are also unfortunately aware, large parts of this support have been passed on to neighboring countries such as Iraq because of in-transparent and obviously not only or primarily medical reasons and in some cases supplies have been sold on the black market in Iran. The medical staff in Iran are in spite of the medically and politically difficult situation working conscientiously and are extremely overstrained by the large number of people affected on the one hand, the lack of protective measures and of supplies such as tests, medication, and protective materials on the other. Unfortunately, many of our colleagues have consequently fallen ill themselves and a larger number, reportedly so far about 60, doctors and nursing staff have already died of the disease. This is further aggravated by the government's policy of imprisoning medical doctors, including those that are international experts in disaster medicine and public health such as Dr. Ahmadreza Djalali, based on dubious and incorrect political allegations, an abuse which had been criticized by WHO and Medical Associations worldwide.

Our request to you is that your organizations should consider taking fast steps to supervise and manage the distribution of these aid supplies in Iran themselves in future and not to entrust scarce medical supplies to governments that cannot be trusted to handle their responsibility for their populations in a coordinated and responsible manner. In a serious global pandemic adverse political factors should be considered and addressed by appropriate measures. It is of further concern that the Iranian government and especially the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) so far focuses on spreading misinformation, such as politically motivated misleading claims both on the origin and on necessary further action in regard to (Corona) Covid-19.

With sincere thanks,

Prof. Dr. Thomas Wenzel

Dr. Ali Gouche

Prof. Dr. Siroos Mirzaei

¹ <https://foreignpolicy.com/2020/03/19/iran-irgc-coronavirus-propaganda-blames-america-israel/> and <https://www.space.com/iran-coronavirus-graves-satellite-images.html> accessed 23.3.2020