



NCRI WOMEN'S COMMITTEE



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CORONAVIRUS OUTBREAK
IN IRAN TURNS INTO A
CRIME AGAINST HUMANITY
AFTER REGIME'S COVER-UP;
ROLE OF WOMEN IN
COMBATING COVID-19

Coronavirus outbreak in Iran turns into a crime against humanity after regime's cover-up; role of women in combating Covid-19

This year, the world marked the International Women's Day as Coronavirus had been transmitted to almost all countries and seriously impacted people's lives and livelihoods. In Iran, the ruling regime's political approach to this problem turned it into a "crime against humanity."

Since the outset, the Iranian regime has done its utmost to prevent leakage of accurate information on Coronavirus cases and victims. Reports from sources inside Iran, however, indicate that there are over 2 million cases and [more than 6,400](#) have died so far. This makes Iran the worst-hit country even compared to China.



In the absence of any effective government measures and lack of minimum protective items, Iranian women and youth, and particularly nurses and physicians have been selflessly endeavoring to combat the virus and save the lives of their fellow citizens.

As in the past 40 years, Iranian women have braved all risks to help their compatriots. Nurses who have not received their salaries and dues for months did not hesitate for moment to fulfill their duty to care for the patients. This is while because of the ruling regime's policies, they are deprived of minimum medical resources and equipment to cope with the epidemic.

Selfless members of Resistance units also rushed to the aid of those infected with the virus. Among them, a young woman by the name of [Negar Siyah Mansouri](#) contracted the disease while helping others, and became a victim.

So, in a country where the ruling religious dictatorship has institutionalized misogyny, and despite all the discriminations and inequalities, women have worked hand in hand with men to combat the Covid-19 pandemic. They have realized "generation equality," in practice. They are the true harbingers of "generation equality" and are "the force for change."

Just as they have proven in the political and social struggle where women have been the driving force, spearheading anti-regime uprisings and protests. This is why the International Women's Day 2020 was named the Day of Women Martyred in the Iran Uprising in November 2019, to pay homage to the women who sacrificed their lives in leading the uprising.

Rapid spread of Coronavirus across Iran and from Iran to other countries

The Iranian regime covered up the outbreak because they wanted to mobilize and attract large crowds to the 1979 Revolution anniversary on February 11, and the sham election on February 21. In the meantime, due to the regime's economic dependence on China, they did not stop their flights to that country. The IRGC's Mahan Airlines continued its China flights at least until March 5, some three months after the Coronavirus outbreak in Wuhan.

Concealment of the outbreak, continued flights back and forth to China, failure to quarantine Oom as the epicenter of the outbreak, inaction and denial of the severity of the situation, continuing the religious congregations, and failure to ban internal and international travel, were among the main factors contributing to the rapid spread of coronavirus. Some of Iranian passengers who travelled to Canada, U.S., Sweden, UAE, Lebanon, etc. tested positive for Covid-19 infection.

The Los Angeles Times wrote Iran became a hot zone for coronavirus in the Middle East.

Over 2 million cases of Coronavirus in Iran

The pace of spread of Coronavirus outbreak has been higher in Iran than in any other place in the world. The proportion of deaths to the total number of cases in Iran is considerably higher.

According to the remedial deputy at the Medical Sciences University of Isfahan, 50% of the suspected cases test positive. Physicians and nurses working in Iran hospitals estimate that between 50 to 60 percent of those infected die.

A massive humanitarian catastrophe is underway in Iran.

By the time of publishing this report, the Iranian Resistance estimates that at least 6,400 people have died in Iran due to Covid-19 infection in 196 cities and all 31 provinces.

The mullahs' supreme leader Ali Khamenei has tasked the Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC), the Ministry of Intelligence and other repressive agencies to prevent every form of leakage of accurate figures on the Coronavirus cases and victims through any means possible. Judiciary officials have announced that dissemination of "rumors" in this regard are considered as corruption on earth and punishable by death.

On March 9, 2020, [The Atlantic](#) published the outcome of a research on Iranian figures saying the average of all estimates indicate that more than 2 million Iranians have been infected by Coronavirus.

Hassan Rouhani confirmed a similar figure in his remarks on March 14, 2020. He said, "Several million people have been questioned and 97% of them have not experienced any symptoms of Coronavirus." So, he acknowledged that 3% of the populace, i.e. 2.5 million people, are suspected of or contaminated with the virus.

This is while the regime's Ministry of Health has announced only 17,361 cases in total.

An official at the World Health Organization said the Iranian regime's statistics of the coronavirus are one fifth of the actual number.

In such circumstances, the mullahs' regime has been incapable of providing the minimum necessary medical equipment to protect the physicians and nurses and the medical staff. Very soon, all pharmacies ran out of face masks, gel and alcohol.

The aid provided by the World Health Organization and other countries were hoarded by the IRGC or used only in IRGC special hospitals. Some part was also sold in black markets at inflated prices.

The conditions of physicians, nurses and hospital staff are cause of grave concern. Various regime officials have admitted that physicians and nurses face shortage of full protective equipment, including gowns, N95 masks, gloves, disinfectants, etc. At the same time, they are forced to work 12 to 18-hour shifts, something that has exhausted them. (The state-run Young Journalists Club – March 6, 2020)

Women's role in combating the Coronavirus outbreak

While the regime has refused to provide the minimums for the medical staff in hospitals, nurses who have been deprived of their basic rights for years, accepted all the risks and cared for the patients.

According to a report published by physicians and medical staff supporting the Iranian Resistance, at least [100 physicians and nurses](#) in Iran have so far lost their lives while fulfilling their duties. The number of deceased medical staff and physicians is particularly high in the northern provinces of Gilan and Mazandaran and rising.



[Narjes Khan Alizadeh](#), 25 and a nurse, died due to Coronavirus infection in the Milad Hospital of Lahijan, on February 25, 2020. (The state-run Fars news agency, February 25, 2020) Ms. [Nahid Noshad](#), also a nurse, lost her life in Golsar Hospital of Rasht. (The state-run Hamshahri online, March 15, 2020)

Ms. Fariba Izadpanah who was a nurse in Beheshti Hospital of Shiraz, and Ms. [Mowloud Jafari](#), a nurse in Fayazbakhsh Hospital of Tehran, also died due to infection contracted on duty. (The state-run asriran.ir, March 11, 2020) Ms. Azemat Mousavi, a midwife, died in the Medical Center of Sari, capital of Mazandaran Province, due to Coronavirus infection.

Ms. Anousheh Beikian, a midwife from the Az-Zahra Education, Research and Remedial Center in Rasht; Ms. Khoshgoftar, a staff member at Gilan University of Medical Sciences and the Secretariat of the Fouman Hospital (The state-run IRNA news agency - March 16, 2020); and Razieh Hosseininejad, a health care worker from Babol (The state-run Hamshahri Website - March 15, 2020); Haniyeh Edalati, a staff member of the Medical Records Unit at Shafa Hospital in Takestan; and Tahmineh Adibi, the emergency nurse at Beheshti Hospital in Bandar Anzali; were among the nurses and medical staff who died of the deadly coronavirus after a period of care and service to patients.

Dr. Fariba Farahi, specialist in emergency medicine working at Oom's Kamkar Hospital, diagnosed herself as being infected and signed up papers to hospitalize herself. (The state-run Fararu website, March 6, 2020)

We must also mention Ms. Negar Siyah Mansouri, one of the selfless members of Resistance Units in Iran who got infected while caring for Coronavirus patients and lost her life.

In addition to physicians, nurses and the medical staff, Ms. [Elham Sheikhi](#), a 23-year-old futsal player in Oom, lost her life due to Coronavirus infection on February 26, 2020. A 17-year-old young woman in Karaj, a pregnant woman in Kermanshah, and two elderly women in Saveh were among those who died of the infection early on.

Mrs. Marzieh Taghavizadeh, a chemistry teacher in Oom, and Leila Mir-Issa Khani, a teacher in Tehran, also died of coronavirus. (The state-run Hamshahri Online, March 15, 2020)



Iranian people's wealth used for suppression

Having left people defenseless [against the virus](#), the clerical regime blames its inaction and mismanagement, on international sanctions.

This is while the 100 billion dollars of assets and properties belonging to the Staff in charge of Implementing the Order of Khomeini, and the huge assets of the cooperatives belonging to the IRGC, Bassij and the State Security Force, and the assets of the Mostaz'afan Foundation, and the money the regime spends in Iraq, Syria, Yemen, Gaza, and Lebanon could be allocated to the Iranian people's health and medical treatment.

With the same money the regime could procure unlimited essential medical equipment through the World Health Organization and the International Red Cross, and put them at the disposal of hospitals and the public.

The IRGC's hospitals and medical clinics have the best resources and equipment; they could be opened to public and all the patients.

Also, the assets of Astan-e Quds-e Razavi, a huge financial conglomerate in Mashhad whose assets and income are under Khamenei's control, could pay for medical expenses of the public as well as for the unpaid wages and medical expenses of workers, teachers and employees.

Ali Khamenei, however, believes that, "this calamity is not a big deal and there have been bigger problems, before." He says this is "a transient issue" and nothing "extraordinary." (The state media – March 3, 2020)

He also claimed, "There is evidence that this is a 'biological attack' which could be considered as a defensive maneuver and it would even add to our national prowess and capabilities." (The state media – March 12, 2020)

By making such remarks, Khamenei offers a military solution to this crisis instead of providing the medical resources and equipment to the public to combat the virus. The regime's officials speak of entering a new stage where the country faces "military" and "war-time circumstances" which call for "a state of emergency."

Humanitarian catastrophe in Iranian prisons

The true dimensions of the clerical regime's crimes and cruelty could be best seen in abandoning hundreds of thousands of prisoners who are defenseless against this virus.

Families of political prisoners have repeatedly asked for granting furlough to their children, but their requests have so far been turned down by prison authorities and the Judiciary.

The temporary leave offered by the regime does not include political prisoners, and only one-fourth of the ordinary prisoners have been released.

Prisoners do not have access to face masks or disinfectants. In some prisons, they do not even have soap. Prisoners who have contracted the virus are being detained among other prisoners. For example, in the Greater Tehran Prison (Fashafuyeh), political prisoners who have tested positive are being detained in the same room alongside healthy inmates arrested during November 2019 protests.

A number of women political prisoners who suffer from serious illnesses, are deprived of medical care and treatment. Therefore, their lives are at greater risk after the Coronavirus outbreak. Zeinab Jalalian in the Prison of Khoj and Parvin Advai in the Women's Correctional Center in Sanandaj are among such prisoners.



Golrokh Iraee and Marjan Davari, two political prisoners who are detained in Qarchak Prison, are also exposed to the danger of infection by Coronavirus since one of their inmates has tested positive.

Also, the father of political prisoner Atena Daemi has announced that their request for granting temporary leave to their daughter has been turned down.

New heavy sentences and added pressure on political prisoners

The mullahs' regime has not only prevented temporary release of political prisoners despite the outbreak of Coronavirus, but has stepped up pressure on these prisoners and issued heavy prison sentences for more people.

- In continuation of the arrests and the sentences issued for those participating in the protests in November 2019 and January 2020, Nazanin Tousi was arrested and sentenced to two years in prison on December 19, 2019.
 - Late in January, Kurdish activist Farzaneh Jalali was sentenced to one year in prison by the Court of Kermanshah.
- Jhaka Esma'ili, another Kurdish civil activist from Boukan, was taken to jail on January 29, 2020 to serve her three-month sentence.
- Political prisoner Gita Horr, 31, one of the protesters arrested on November 21, 2019 and currently detained in Qarchak prison of Varamin, was sentenced to 6 years in prison.
- The Appeals Court of Tehran Province sentenced Ms. Raha Ahmadi to two years in prison.
- On February 19, 2020, Ms. [Mojgan Eskandari](#) was sentenced to 3 years in prison. She has been detained since December 10, 2019, in Ward 1 of Qarchak Prison for taking part in the November 2019 uprising.
- Political prisoner Samira Hadian was sentenced to 8 years in prison by the Revolutionary Court of Tehran. Arrested on November 21, 2019, she is also presently detained in Ward 1 of Qarchak Prison.
- Maryam Alishahi, also detained in Qarchak Prison for participating in the November 2019 uprising, was sentenced to 9 years in prison.
- Melika Gharagozlou, a student of journalism at Allameh Tabatabaiee University in Tehran, was sentenced to six months in prison by the Tehran Revolutionary Court. She was arrested on November 17, 2019, during Iran protests in November 2019.



Ill-treatment and denial of medical treatment to sick prisoners

- It was also revealed in February that conservationists [Niloufar Bayani and Sepideh Kashani](#) had been viciously tortured mentally and physically and sexually harassed. The interrogators tried to compel them to write false confessions against themselves.
- Mary Mohammadi, a Christian convert, was arrested during the protests to the IRGC downing of the Ukrainian passenger aircraft in January 2020. She was tortured and sexually and physically harassed during her interrogations. She was forced to take off all her clothes and do squats. Agents threatened her that if she did not do as they said, they would forcibly undress her.
- Marjan Davari, 52-year-old researcher, translator and writer, was sentenced to 75 years in prison by Branch 1 of the Tehran criminal court. In 2017, Marjan Davari's case was referred to the Supreme Court after receiving the death sentence. [Ms. Davari](#) is accused of translating

books on mysticism and metaphysics, as well as teaching at the Institute of Rah-e Marefat (The Way of Knowledge), of corruption on earth, and of assembly and collusion against the state. Marjan Davari is incarcerated in Qarchak Prison of Varamin.



- Six years was added to the prison sentence of civil activist [Rezvaneh Ahmad Khanbeigi](#) on February 2, 2020. Ms. Rezvaneh Ahmad Khanbeigi was detained from November 17 to December 12, 2019 in the IRGC Ward 2A in Evin Prison. Then she was transferred to the Women's Ward of Evin Prison. She suffers from epilepsy and must take special medications.
- Civil activist Hakimeh Ahmadi was sentenced to 16 months in prison by the Court of Maragheh. She was arrested by agents of the Intelligence Department at her home in late October 2018.
- Civil activist [Raheleh Ahmadi](#), mother of political prisoner Saba Kord Afshahri, was arrested upon reporting in to the Branch 3 of the Tehran Prosecutor's Office in charge of implementing the verdicts. She was taken to Evin Prison to serve her 4 years and two months' jail sentence.
- Political prisoner [Maryam Akbari Monfared](#) was deprived of her family visits starting on February 16, 2020. The punishment came after she protested lack of attendance to the health condition of one of the new arrivals in the Women's Ward.
- Political prisoner [Golrokh Ibrahimi Iraee](#) is incarcerated in Qarchak Prison of Varamin. She is deprived of having visits with her imprisoned husband, political prisoner Arash Sadeghi who suffers from cancer. Based on a new case filed against her, Golrokh Iraee has been imprisoned to serve her sentence of 3 years and 7 months.
- Zahra Jamali is presently serving her sentence of 3 years and six months in the Women's Ward of Evin Prison. She has an ovarian cyst and a tumor in the sole of her foot, and is experiencing a lot of pain but prison authorities refuse to send her to any medical center. The only reason for imprisonment of Ms. Jamali is that she made a speech during the funeral ceremony of political prisoner Alireza Shir Mohammadi, murdered by inmates incited by the authorities of the Greater Tehran Penitentiary.

- Political prisoner [Nejat Anwar Hamidi](#), 61, is in danger of losing her eye sight. A supporter of the People's Mojahedin of Iran (PMOI/MEK), she was arrested in March 2019 and is presently detained in the Sepidar Prison of Ahvaz.
- [Anis Sa'adat](#), a young writer and filmmaker, was arrested on January 12, 2020 by the IRGC Intelligence in Shiraz during ceremonies commemorating the victims of the [Ukrainian passenger airliner](#) downed by the IRGC. Ms. Sa'adat suffers from lupus but is deprived of receiving medical treatment.
- [Leila Tirandari](#), a nurse and a civil activist, was released on February 13, 2020 on a bail of 200 million tomans. She was on hunger strike for a month since December 28, 2019 when she was arbitrarily arrested.
- Student activist [Parisa Seifi](#) went on hunger strike on February 9, 2020 to protest her undetermined state of imprisonment. She had been imprisoned and detained since November 2019 in the quarantine ward of the Correctional Center of Sanandaj. On February 23, 2020, she was eventually released on a bail of 100 million tomans.