

Articles & Op-Eds

Sanctions Relief Isn't Necessary to Assist Iran's Coronavirus Response

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Washington can facilitate aid without fundamentally altering the sanctions infrastructure, in part by clarifying the rules on allowable humanitarian trade, expanded NGO activities, and Tehran's existing financial options.

The pandemic's rapid domestic spread is deeply alarming, as are the severe difficulties facing the Iranian government—which continues to mishandle its response. Iran ranks sixth worldwide for confirmed cases of COVID-19 and fourth for deaths. The reality is likely far worse, considering the lack of testing capacity and the government's inclination to lie. The instinct to assist Iran in its efforts to flatten the curve is perfectly understandable. However, sanctions relief is not a cure-all—the government's systematic corruption and weak capacity mean it is doubtful that lifting sanctions would translate into the robust response the Iranian people need and deserve...

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