

# The Deadly Combination of Economic Sanctions and Government Mismanagement during Covid-19 in Iran

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## Abstract

*Iran's response to the COVID-19 pandemic has been severely impacted by economic sanctions and government mismanagement. These factors have made it difficult for the country to access lifesaving medical supplies and equipment, leading to shortages of personal protective equipment, ventilators, and pharmaceuticals. The sanctions have also impacted the country's economy, making it harder for people to afford basic necessities like food and shelter. The government's mismanagement of the crisis has further complicated the situation, with a delayed response to the pandemic and inadequate measures to contain the spread of the virus.*

**Keywords:** Economic Sanctions, Governments Mismanagement, Covid-19, Public Health, Socioeconomic Impacts

## 1. Introduction

Iran has been one of the countries hit hardest by the COVID-19 pandemic, with over 3.5 million confirmed cases and more than 87,000 deaths as of August 2021. However, the country's response to the crisis has been hampered by a combination of government mismanagement and economic sanctions imposed by other countries and international organizations [1]. In Iran, the government has faced criticism for its slow response to the pandemic, including delays in implementing lockdowns and a lack of transparency in reporting COVID-19 cases and deaths. As a result, many Iranians have taken it upon themselves to protect their communities, with volunteers stepping up to provide crucial services such as delivering food and medical supplies to those in need. Meanwhile, economic sanctions imposed by the United States and other countries have made things even more challenging for Iran's economy and healthcare system. These sanctions have prevented Iran from accessing crucial medical supplies and equipment, including COVID-19 vaccines, which has further exacerbated the impact of the pandemic. Additionally, the sanctions have made it difficult for Iran to obtain the funds it needs to support its healthcare system and provide economic relief to those in need [2]. This article will explore how government mismanagement and economic sanctions have worsened the impact of COVID-19 in Iran, and what can be done to address these problems.

## 2. The Human Cost of Economic Sanctions

The economic sanctions on Iran influenced the country's ability to address the COVID-19 pandemic. For instance, the sanctions made it difficult for Iran to import much-needed medical equipment, such as ventilators and testing kits. This resulted in a shortage of medical supplies and equipment, which ultimately led to more deaths among COVID-19 patients [3]. In addition to medical supplies, the sanctions also impacted the country's economy. Iran's oil exports, for example, severely restricted, which led to a decline in the country's revenue and devaluation of its currency. This has made it harder for people to afford basic necessities like food and medicine, which was particularly concerning during a pandemic. Sanctions on Iran during the COVID-19 crisis was unjustifiable and inhumane. US sanctions made it difficult for Iran to access medical supplies and medication during the COVID-19 pandemic, with some right-wing lobby groups calling for all global humanitarian trade with Iran to be stopped [4]. Iranian leaders called on world leaders to ease sanctions to help fight the pandemic, but the US government rejected allegations that sanctions include the import of medicine and medical facilities to Iran. The US accused Iranian officials of stealing funds intended for medical supplies and hoarding medical equipment for sale on the black market. Despite this, the UK, Pakistan, China, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, and the Group of 77 have urged the US to ease sanctions on Iran to help it fight the pandemic. Also the government has requested an emergency loan from the IMF to combat the outbreak, but the US has opposed this request [5].

### 3. The Consequences of Government Mismanagement and Global Impact

The global impact of the COVID-19 pandemic has been significant and far-reaching, affecting countless individuals and communities around the world, and Iran is no exception. However, the situation in Iran was made worse by the government's mismanagement of the crisis [6]. The Iranian government's response to the pandemic had been inadequate, to say the least. Despite early warnings from health experts, the government failed to take swift action to contain the spread of the virus. As a result, the virus quickly spread throughout the country, overwhelming the healthcare system. One of the main issues that have compounded the crisis in Iran is the lack of access to vaccines. The Iranian government had been slow to roll out its vaccination program, and many Iranians died due to lack of vaccination. Iran may have had its first COVID-19 case in December 2019, earlier than previously reported, according to anonymous physicians who spoke to journalist Dexter Filkins [7]. The physicians claimed that hospital officials instructed staff not to release any statistics on infection and death rates, and ordered them not to wear masks or protective clothing, in an attempt to prevent fear in society and maintain voter turnout for the parliamentary election in February 2020. The government has faced criticism for cover-ups and mismanagement, with leaked data suggesting a higher death toll than reported. The Iranian government's mismanagement of the pandemic has also had a significant impact on the country's economy. The pandemic has led to widespread job losses and economic hardship for many Iranians. The government's failure to provide adequate financial support to those who have lost their jobs has only made matters worse. Furthermore, the Iranian government has been accused of suppressing information about the true extent of the pandemic in the country. Human rights organizations have raised concerns about the government's censorship of information related to the pandemic [8]. This lack of transparency has made it difficult for health experts to assess the situation accurately and provide appropriate advice. Government has unbanned the import of Pfizer and Moderna shots and promised to bring in more foreign vaccines. However, there have been challenges with vaccine partnerships, such as Russia delaying its delivery of vaccines. In addition to the health crisis, there have been legal challenges to the government's handling of the pandemic, with lawyers and activists attempting to sue the supreme leader. It is time for the Iranian government to take responsibility for its failures and prioritize the health and well-being of its citizens [9].

### 4. Bridging Health Inequalities in Times of Crisis

The Role of International Aid in Supporting Iran's Covid-19 Response Various countries and organizations provided humanitarian assistance to Iran in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. This includes the UN's Children Fund (UNICEF) which flown in multiple cargo planes with personal protective equipment (PPE) and medical supplies [10]. The World Health Organization (WHO) also dispatched testing kits, while Russia provided Iran with 500 kits for 50,000 tests [11]. Chinese medical experts and the Chinese Defense Ministry have also provided aid [12,13]. On 23 March, the European Union pledged €20m in humanitarian assistance, and

US President Donald Trump has offered to provide aid if requested by Iran[14,15].

### Conclusion

COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the importance of governance and leadership in the time of crisis. The Iranian government's mismanagement coupled with economic sanctions exacerbated the crisis, leading to unnecessary deaths and hardship.

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