

To The Esteemed Religious Leaders of the World

Tehran, April 5, 2020

Your Holiness,

I trust your Holiness and esteemed colleagues are in good health by God's grace, despite these miserable times the entire world is going through. May God give you the strength to spread hope and faith, while humanity is struggling with this difficult trial.

This pandemic reminded us once again, despite all our scientific achievements, of humanity's vulnerable and dependent nature; so that we may replace hatred, enmity and violence, with love, friendship and mercy. It attested that notions such as national security have lost all significance, since the security of London or Rome is intertwined with that of Baghdad, Damascus or Tripoli; just as the welfare and health of the residents of New York, Paris or Tokyo cannot be separated from the wellbeing of those who live in Delhi, Beijing or Tehran.

Centuries ago, Saadi, the renowned Iranian poet, stated:

*" All human beings are members of one frame,*

*Since all at first, from the same essence came.*

*When life afflicts one limb with pain,*

*The others cannot at rest, remain."*

Perhaps the Iranian poet expressed a normative statement concerning the solidarity among the members of human family, and this now has turned to a reality. It was again, this global pandemic that reminded us of the extent to which our destinies are interdependent. However, at this agonising time, when the entire world is making every effort to fight this unprecedented crisis, the Iranian people are suffering two-fold.

Needless to say, unilateral coercive measures imposed by the U.S. have, for years, deprived the Iranian people of their fundamental rights, pertaining to access to medicine and medical care. Despite the fact that the International Court of Justice, in its preliminary order, ruled that the re-imposition of sanctions should not include measures linked to humanitarian trade, food, medicine and civil aviation, the U.S. insists on its illegal sanctions which are directly harming the treatment of the infected patients in Iran. Moreover, amidst this global health crisis, not only is the U.S. defying its legally binding commitments, but it is also threatening and punishing other countries for their compliance with the UNSC Resolution 2231, provoking a new wave of hatred and hostility.

Furthermore, by virtue of the customary rules of international humanitarian law and also based on the regulations stipulated in the Geneva conventions and their additional protocols on humanitarian laws, the wounded and sick shall receive the medical care and attention required by their condition and they shall not be deprived of the right to medical care even under armed conflict. Until recent years, even many terrorist groups adhered to a certain code of conduct and refrained from targeting the sick, the elderly and children during their operations against state officials. It is lamentable that the U.S. unilateral coercive measures and inhumane sanctions have deprived the infected civilians, many of whom are in critical condition, of the right to receive medical treatment.

Your Holiness,

At a time when the corona virus is threatening the lives of all humanity, the economic terrorism of the United States has chosen the infected Iranians as its principal target; The U.S is attempting to use patients, who are in intensive care, to advance its inhuman policies and ambitions.

At this particular moment, when the infected patients desperately need our help, not only can religious leaders break this deplorable silence, but the pursuing efforts will certainly change this appalling situation. If, however, they do not initiate a campaign to urge the lifting of these illegal sanctions, tomorrow might be too late.

Our religious and moral duties call on us to take the side of faith and conscience, at this particular crossroads, when the coronavirus pandemic is exacerbated with the U.S.' unilateral coercive measures. It falls upon us to take a step to save the lives of coronavirus patients suffering in the hospitals of many cities in Iran. Any infected patient deserves the right to life and medical care. In light of this moral and religious responsibility, I ask you to show your support to these patients, by condemning these inhuman, illegal and cruel sanctions.

Once again, I sincerely wish you good health and peace. May these hard days be short and our Lord soon shower the earth with peace; and may all patients, especially the recently infected, be blessed with good health.

Yours sincerely,

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