

Deadly Impacts of US Sponsored Sanctions on Iran

"Iranian Mothers for Peace" Alert the World on Sanctions and Shortage of Medicines

By [Mehrnaz Shahabi](#)

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by Farid Marjai and Mehnaz Shahabi

"Iranian Mothers for Peace," in an [open letter](#) of January 2013 to Mr. Ban Ki-moon, the UN Secretary General, and Dr. Margaret Chan, the Director General of the World Health Organization, have alerted the responsible world bodies and human rights organizations to the critical shortage of vital medication due to the US/EU-led sanctions on Iran and their deadly impact on the lives and health of the Iranian population.

"Iranian Mothers for Peace" is a non-profit forum, well known and respected in Iran's civil society. In 2006 a number of social activists came together to form this forum. "Mothers for Peace" is not a political party and organizationally it has a flexible structure. "Mothers for Peace" takes pride that its 700 participants come from very diverse political backgrounds and different social classes. It affirmatively celebrates diversity which it considers a reflection of the tolerance the group espouses.

With the ideal of peace in mind, "Mothers for Peace" is open to all participants who take a stand against any form of violence, poverty, and oppression.

"In our campaigns to protect the environment, we encourage measures that reduce the impact of human violence against it. We take solid steps to eliminate and mitigate gender inequality. Over the years, our projects have focused on welfare of addicts and prisoners, and publicizing their rights.

The scope of our vision and work is to achieve social security and permanent peace. Hence, this non-profit institution has a wider definition of the concept of 'peace'; it refutes the narrow perspective of 'peace' as mere absence of external military violence and confrontation. And it is precisely in this context that we view the Western-imposed crippling sanctions on the people of Iran as a form of structural violence — a silent, yet a predatory war.

The everyday reality we observe on the ground in Iran has convinced us that the draconian sanctions are victimizing the very fabric of the society we intend to strengthen.

Presently, a number of the core group members of 'Mothers for Peace' are suffering from cancer. Sadly, they are having a difficult time obtaining the medicines needed for their treatment, and like many of their compatriots they suffer from unnecessary additional anxiety that might further deteriorates their precarious health condition."

Below is the text of the open letter (published at mothersofpeace-iran.com/?p=1049) in English.

January, 26, 20013

Dr. Margaret Chan
Director General
World Health Organization
Avenue Appia 20
1211 Geneva 27
Switzerland

Dear Dr. Margaret Chan

As you know, the illegal and inhumane actions led by the US and the EU, targeting the country and the population of Iran, with the stated intention to put pressure on the government of Iran, have intensified in the past two years and increasingly harsher sanctions are imposed almost on a monthly basis. The regulations governing these inhumane and arbitrary sanctions are executed with such strict inflexibility that Iran is now excluded from the Society for Worldwide Interbank Financial Telecommunications (SWIFT) and the sanctions on banking transactions are preventing Iran from even purchasing its needed medical supplies and instruments. On the other hand, to avoid suspicion for dealing with Iran, the European banks are fearful not to engage in any kind of financial transactions with Iran and, therefore, in practice, refuse any transfer of payment for medical and health-related items and raw materials needed for the production of domestic pharmaceutical drugs, even payment for well-recognized drugs for the treatment of Special Diseases, which are not of dual use.

Madam Director,

Are you aware that while American and European soldiers' lives in Afghanistan are being saved by Iranian anti-snake venom potions and medication, Iranian hemophilic children, cancer patients, and those suffering diabetes, under the pretext of the execution of 'smart sanctions', are being deprived of their lifeline medication and face death or irreversible disability? We ask you: What could possibly be the intended target of the wealthy and powerful US and European statesmen's 'targeted' and 'smart' sanctions but to destroy the physical and psychological health of the population through the increase of disease and disability?

Madam Director,

We respectfully request from you and from all the relevant international bodies, specially, the World Health Organization and human rights organizations, to act according to their humanitarian and legal responsibilities, and demand the American and European countries leading sanctions on Iran to urgently create the necessary mechanism for opening financial transactions and letters of credit to facilitate the purchase of medicine for Iranian patients.

The right to health and access to medical treatment and medication is one of the fundamental human rights anywhere in the world. Please do not allow the killing of our sick

children, beloved families, and fellow Iranians from the lack of medicine, caught in instrumental policies of coercion and power.

Iranian Mothers for Peace

***Farid Marjai** is a writer and activist. **Mehrnaz Shahabi** is an anti-war activist and independent researcher.*

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