

Six Million Iranian Patients suffer from lack of medicine due to US Sanctions

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Washington has reportedly decided to ease restrictions on the sale of medicine to Iran in fear that it may lose global support for anti-Iran sanctions, the *Los Angeles Times* reported.

Though US rules have not imposed any bans on American firms to sell medicine and medical supplies to Iran, exporters have been required to apply for special licenses. Besides, as the aftermath of the sanctions, the impossibility of transferring money through banks has cast its cumbersome shadow upon medicine and healthcare in Iran and has gravely affected the import of medicines to Iran.

The move comes as Iran has protested that the US-engineered sanctions are hurting ordinary Iranian citizens.

In a letter to the UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon in August, head of the Charity Foundation for Special Diseases Fatemeh Hashemi urged Ban to prevent sanction-induced damages to six million Iranian patients suffering from such intractable diseases as thalassemia, hemophilia, kidney conditions, multiple sclerosis (MS), cancer, etc.

The letter stated that shortage and increased price of medicine caused by illegal sanctions has directly affected the lives and well-being of millions of patients.

Ban said in a subsequent UN report that sanctions were, in fact, taking a toll on humanitarian operations in the country. "Even companies that have obtained the requisite license to import food and medicine are facing difficulties in finding third-country banks to process the transactions," he wrote.

According to the *Los Angeles Times*, analysts believe that protests over humanitarian effects of US unilateral sanctions against Iran could undermine support for those sanctions among US allies.

At the beginning of 2012, the United States and the European Union imposed sanctions on Iran's oil and financial sectors with the goal of preventing other countries from purchasing Iranian oil and conducting transactions with the Central Bank of Iran. The sanctions entered into force in early summer 2012.

On October 15, the EU foreign ministers reached an agreement on another round of sanctions against Iran.

The illegal US-engineered sanctions were imposed based on the unfounded accusation that Iran is pursuing non-civilian objectives in its nuclear energy program.

Iran rejects the allegations, arguing that as a committed signatory to Non-Proliferation Treaty and a member of International Atomic Energy Agency, it has the right to use nuclear technology for peaceful purposes.

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