

U.S. told it's time to lift Iran sanctions amid COVID-19 pandemic

By: RHC
25/03/2020



Top diplomats and officials from all around the world are increasingly urging the United States to remove its unilateral sanctions against Iran amid the country's battle against the novel coronavirus.

The United Nations leadership has called for rolling back international sanctions regimes around the world, including the ones against Iran, amid an outbreak of the COVID-19. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said the sanctions are heightening the health risks for millions of people and weakening the global effort to contain the spread of the new coronavirus.

"I am encouraging the waiving of sanctions imposed on countries to ensure access to food, essential health supplies, and COVID-19 medical support. This is the time for solidarity not exclusion," Guterres wrote in a letter to the G-20 economic powers. "Let us remember that we are only as strong as the weakest health system in our interconnected world."

Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov also reiterated his calls for the removal of U.S. bans against Iran in a Tuesday phone conversation with his Iranian counterpart Mohammad Javad Zarif. During the talks, Lavrov pointed out that Russia continues to urge Washington to immediately lift its inhumane sanctions that prevent the government of Iran from combating COVID-19.

Earlier in the day, the United Nations rights chief said any sanctions imposed on Iran, among other countries grappling with the coronavirus pandemic, should be "urgently re-evaluated" to support lives of millions of people worldwide.

"At this crucial time, both for global public health reasons, and to support the rights and lives of millions of people in these countries, sectoral sanctions should be eased or suspended," Michelle Bachelet said in a statement.

Back on Sunday, Pakistan's Prime Minister Imran Khan urged US President Donald Trump to lift unilateral sanctions that his administration has imposed on Iran as Tehran is engaged in a diligent fight against the ongoing pandemic of the deadly new coronavirus, known as COVID-19.

As more and more countries press Washington and stress the evident necessity of lifting inhumane sanctions in the wake of the coronavirus outbreak, rumors have begun to circulate that the US Treasury will temporarily lift some of its sanctions against Iran.

An unconfirmed report says the US Treasury is to release within the next 24 hours a list of anti-Iran sanctions which will be suspended to show what is described as Washington's determination to help Iran's battle against COVID-19.

In Iran, the number of coronavirus deaths has increased to 1,934 and the total infections to 24,811 during the past 24 hours, according to Health Ministry figures. "There have been 122 new deaths and 1,762 new infections since Sunday," Iranian Health Ministry spokesman Kianoush Jahanpour said.