

US should save itself from coronavirus, not bully others – Iranian military

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The US should focus its efforts on fighting the coronavirus instead of provoking Iran, a spokesman for the country's military has said. Earlier, President Donald Trump threatened to "shoot down and destroy" Iranian warships.

"Today, instead of bullying others, the Americans should put all their efforts toward saving those members of their forces who are infected with coronavirus," Iranian military spokesman Sardar Abolfazl Shekarchi told the state-run [ISNA](#) news agency on Wednesday.

With the US leading the world in sheer numbers of coronavirus infections and fatalities, Shekarchi said that *"US officials need to think about rescuing themselves and resolving this issue."*

[Also on rt.com Trump instructs US Navy to shoot down and destroy all Iranian gunboats that 'harass our ships at sea'](#)

Earlier on Wednesday, Trump announced on Twitter that he had instructed the US Navy *"to shoot down and destroy any and all Iranian gunboats if they harass our ships at sea."* Trump's threat came several days after the American Navy accused the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps of harassing one of its naval patrols in the Persian Gulf. Video footage released by the Navy shows around a dozen IRGC gunboats *"buzzing"* the larger American ships.

The IRGC did not deny the incident, but accused the US of portraying it as a *"Hollywood"* scenario. Iran maintains that US patrols in the Gulf are highly provocative, and condemned the latest patrol as military *"adventurism."*

[Also on rt.com Iran releases VIDEO of its ships intercepting 'unprofessionally' acting US Navy vessels in Persian Gulf](#)

As well as infecting more than 800,000 people in the US and killing more than 45,000, the Covid-19 coronavirus has not spared the country's military. Nearly 600 sailors on board one aircraft carrier in the Pacific Ocean have tested positive for the deadly virus, along with a total of around 2,600 US troops around the world. Underscoring the seriousness of the outbreak in the military, Defense Secretary Mark Esper announced last month that the

Pentagon would no longer publish precise details of cases within the ranks, for fear of revealing weaknesses to the US' adversaries.

Iran was also hit hard and early by the pandemic. The Islamic Republic has confirmed more than 85,000 cases of the virus, and more than 5,000 deaths.
