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US-Led Iran Sanctions Putting Millions of Lives at Risk, Iranian Charity Says

Posted By [John Glaser](#)

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US-led economic sanctions are putting millions of Iranian lives at risk by blocking the importing of medicines and hospital equipment, [according to country's top medical charity](#).



Fatemeh Hashemi, head of the Charity Foundation for Special Diseases, a non-government organisation supporting six million patients in Iran, is warning publicly about deep shortages of medicines for diseases like hemophilia, multiple sclerosis and cancer.

“Those with thalassaemia or in need of dialysis are facing difficulties too,” Hashemi tells [The Guardian](#), “all because of sanctions against banks or problems with transferring foreign currency.”

Although the sanctions don’t target medicine and humanitarian needs, they are “increasingly hitting vulnerable medical patients as deliveries of medicine and raw materials for Iranian pharmaceutical companies are either stopped or delayed,” the *Washington Post* [reported](#) last month.

Hashemi recently wrote to United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon urging him to intervene for the sake of Iranian patients who, she said, have had “their basic human right” taken away from them because of sanctions.

“The sanctions imposed on the Islamic Republic of Iran have had significant effects on the general population, including an escalation in inflation, a rise in commodities and energy costs, an increase in the rate of unemployment and a shortage of necessary items, including medicine,” Ban had warned the UN in a report earlier this month.

“The sanctions also appear to be affecting humanitarian operations in the country,” he wrote. “Even companies that have obtained the requisite licence to import food and medicine are facing difficulties in finding third-country banks to process the transactions.”

It’s increasingly obvious that Washington’s aim is to harm the Iranian people in a cruel form of collective punishment for a nuclear weapons program that even US intelligence admits does not exist.

Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta has [admitted](#) they aren’t changing the policies of the regime, but has insisted on their continuance nevertheless. As one of the top supporters of sanctions, [Rep. Brad Sherman \(D-CA\)](#), [said](#), “Critics [of the sanctions] argued that these measures will hurt the Iranian people. Quite frankly, we need to do just that.”