

**Submission to the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination
(CERD) on eliminating discrimination in access to health services in the
Islamic republic of Iran**

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Presented by:

Medical Support Association for underprivileged Iranian Patients

Amir Sirous Saeedi



Address:

Central Office: Unit 7, 2rd floor, Shadman bldg, Delavaran Ave, Homa Hotel three ways
Bandarabbas, Hormozgan province, Iran Tel : +98 076-33555898

Tehran Branch: unit 21, no.9, Ahmad Ghasir st, Beheshti st Tel : +98 21-88518209-10

E-mail: info@amsiup.com **Web:** aa-medical-charity.ir

About Us

The Medical Support Association for underprivileged Iranian Patients was registered in 2017 with the number 1358 that has a consultative position from the United Nations, The initial idea of establishing the association was made by Amir Sirous Saeedi and Meysam Azizi (founders of the association) with the knowledge of the problems of children with incurable diseases and cancer due to the mentioned relationship with the underprivileged patients.

We have had over 75 medical and treatment tours across the entire country so far, where all services are provided completely free of charge and for public welfare. We also provide services for people of other nationalities.

Our organization has a group of medical professionals including:

- gynecologists and obstetricians
- Neonatal specialist
- Heart specialist
- Internal neurologist
- Ear, nose and throat specialist
- optometrist
- physicians , psychologists and psychiatrists.
- and general medical teams.

Introduction

Equitable access to medical services, health products, and equipment should be considered an inalienable right for everyone. Despite the unilateral sanctions and their negative consequences in the field of health, which is considered one of the cases of discrimination against the Iranian people, especially the patients, Medical justice and access to health services based on strengthening the health infrastructure and removing deprivation in this field has been one of the primary measures. In the field of health, in addition to increasing the capacity of accepting students in fields related to medicine, creating a platform to strengthen access to modern medical technologies, removing deprivation and fair access to doctors and medical services in underserved areas has been one of the achievements and advances of this field.

Increasing access to doctors and medical services

- Access to treatment index includes doctors, hospitals, treatment centers, and medicines. Now, 97% of the country has access to hospitals and medical centers. The country's hospital beds have increased from 50,000 to 150,000. There are 16 doctors for every 10,000 people.
- There are 160,912 doctors in the country, which has increased more than 11 times. Currently, about 60,000 doctors are studying for general doctorates and medical assistants. If we add these people to the number of doctors in the country, the number is about 200 thousand, so there is no need for a foreign doctor in the country.
- Other notable achievements in the past years have been in public health and the prevention and control of communicable diseases. Diseases such as whooping cough, tuberculosis, smallpox, polio, infantile tetanus, leprosy, measles, rubella, and diphtheria have been eliminated, diarrheal diseases have been controlled, and other infectious diseases such as hepatitis and acute respiratory infections have been eliminated. This has been among the important achievements in medicine and health.
- So far, more than 500 medical equipment companies are active and provide more than 80% of the country's needs. Currently, medical equipment manufacturing units in the country produce and supply more than 8 thousand types of medical equipment in different classes to domestic and foreign markets.
- Iran has the first rank in drug production in the region, and 97% of the drugs needed by the country are produced inside. Also, now Iran has the fourth place in the production of recombinant drugs in Asia, and so far, 14 drugs of this type have been produced in the country. Recombinant medicine is mainly used to treat incurable diseases such as cancer, some viral diseases, MS, and Hemophilia.

Recommendations

- ✚ Continue its efforts to provide equal access to health care services for all citizens throughout the country, to ensure no one is left behind;
- ✚ Stress the need to continue implementing the health system development program in the field of public health and prevention and control of communicable diseases for more achievements in recognizing the right to health;
- ✚ Maintain the significant achievements of the health system development program in the field of medical equipment and expand the range of services to citizens.

Strengthening the infrastructure of new technologies in the field of health

- According to the "Performance Report of the document on the expansion of the use of nanotechnology in Iran in 2021", the rank of Iran's science production in this field has been upgraded from the 58th rank in the world in 2000 to the fourth rank in the world in 2021.
- Based on the statistics published by the Vice President for Science, Technology, and Knowledge-Based Economy, Iran ranks 13th in the world and first in the region based on the production of science in the field of stem cells.
- In 2020, 55,212 doctors and 312,602 paramedics were working in medical universities in the country.
- This year, 17,131 people working in the medical department are general practitioners, 4,673 dentists, 406 laboratory science doctorates, 2,803 pharmacists, 19,300 medical specialists, 2,986 subspecialist doctors, and 7,913 doctors.
- In 2022, the total number of hospitals in the country will be 985, of which 704 hospitals belong to the government sector and 281 hospitals belong to the non-government sector. This year, the total number of approved hospital beds was 156,455, of which 133,340 beds were active.
- In 2022, there will be 5592 comprehensive health service centers, 5094 health centers, and 17048 active health homes in the country. Also, this year, 4827 medical diagnosis laboratories and 100 genetic medical diagnosis laboratories were active in the country, and the total number of active pharmacies was 13190.

Justice treatment and removal of deprivation

- An increase in the capacity of the medical field by 20% annually, an increase in the capacity of the dental field (15% in 2023 compared to 2022), a two-fold increase in admissions to the specialist level, a 25% increase in the fellowship capacity are among the advances in the medical field.
- Low-income people in the bottom five deciles of society can enjoy the medical services of insurance coverage by visiting government medical centers without an insurance book and only by presenting the national code.
- The free treatment of 11 million children under the age of 7 is another achievement for people's health, citing paragraph A of Article 9 of the Law on Permanent Decrees of the Country's Development Programs and in line with the implementation of the Law on the Protection of the Family and Youth of the Population.
- Comprehensive insurance for students, housewives, and girls, covering all infertility problems for the first time in the world, and by 2024, 1.2 million people will benefit from this service. One of the other achievements of the justice plan was freeing medical expenses for terminally ill patients during the past three years.
- In line with justice in health, insurance coverage for infertile couples, insurance coverage for 107 types of unique and incurable diseases and their free medicine, insurance coverage for pregnant women and children under five years old, free cochlear implantation, electronic prescription, and electronic health services have been established

Recommendations

- ✚ Continue to develop health insurance coverage and free medical services to all citizens, including residents of rural areas;

- ✚ Increase the capacities of the educational system in medicine and strengthen justice in access to the educational system in less privileged areas.

Unilateral sanctions and discrimination against Iranian people

- Iran's pharmaceutical industry, demonstrating remarkable resilience, produces about 95% of its essential drugs and vaccines. This is a testament to the country's commitment to reducing the impact of unilateral sanctions, with robust production systems and stringent quality assurance measures in place. However, Iranian pharmaceutical companies need help providing raw materials of the necessary quality, and the cost increase affects purchases from abroad.
- Although, according to human rights documents, medicines and medical equipment are not affected due to humanitarian exemptions, however, the supply of these essential items to Iran has been dramatically reduced due to the impact of sanctions on financial, commercial, shipping, and insurance companies and restrictions on international payments and foreign businesses. This has led to a severe strain on the Iranian healthcare system. Also, the excessive compliance of the suppliers of these items is considered a severe obstacle to all Iranians' right to achieve the highest health standards.
- The imposed trade and financial restrictions have had a direct and concerning impact on Iran's labor market. This is particularly evident in sectors directly related to international markets and in the lives of Iranians living abroad who are actively involved in business activities. Sanctions lead to instability and insecurity in the labor market and increase employment risk in the informal economy without access to social protection coverage¹.

Recommendations

- ✚ Document the negative effects of unilateral sanctions on patients due to the lack of access to medicine and medical equipment and submit them to the special rapporteurs of the Human Rights Council to pursue the victims' rights.
- ✚ Continue its efforts to deal with the negative effects of unilateral coercive measures on the right to health of the Iranian people.

¹ Report of the Special Rapporteur on the negative consequences of unilateral sanctions