



# International Liberty Association Newsletter

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## EDITORIAL

As the Coronavirus pandemic continues to wreak havoc across the world, we send our heartfelt wishes to all of you for your safety and well-being and that of those you love and care for.

In this issue of our newsletter we focus once again on the people in Iran who are suffering and dying of the virus in huge numbers, due to delays, denials and mismanagement by the regime and lack of a coherent plan designed for the benefit of the people.

As time goes on, it has become increasingly clear that, rather than trying to deal with the situation honestly and to share their data and experiences with other countries who are also suffering, for mutual benefit and understanding, the regime is deliberately issuing false reports and trying to manipulate the situation to their own advantage. Rather than having the welfare of their citizens and the citizens of the world at heart, they seem far more focused on their own survival.

As reported in our last bulletin, the official figures quoted by the regime for coronavirus infections and deaths are many times, consistently around 6, less than those generated by a network of dedicated activists on the ground, collecting data from hospitals around the country.

This is no mistake, as we now have many reliable reports of doctors and nurses, journalists and bloggers, even members of the regime's Ministry of Health who have been silenced by threats of losing their jobs if they speak out, or actually arrested and imprisoned for "spreading false information and propaganda against the ... continued on p.2

## COVID-19 AND IRANIAN REGIME'S COVER-UP



As of 23 April, the time this article is being written, the actual death toll due to COVID-19 in Iran has passed 34,000. This figure is the sum of numbers collected from reliable sources from hospitals across the country. At the same time the regime

officials report the number killed by COVID-19 as 5,391. The other deaths are due to "severe respiratory illness" according to Iranian officials, not COVID-19.

Meanwhile many people, including hospital staff, have ... continued on p.2

## MANY JOURNALISTS ARRESTED OVER CORONAVIRUS EPIDEMIC COVERAGE

### REPORTERS WITHOUT BORDERS FOR FREEDOM OF INFORMATION

In a detailed report published in April, Reporters Without Borders (RSF) condemned the Iranian regime's persecution of journalists and citizen-journalists who have published information about the coronavirus epidemic that lacked official approval. According to the report the latest victim is Mahmud Shariri, a former national radio and TV presenter, now very active on social media. He was arrested by intelligence ministry officials in Tehran on 14 April on a charge of "publishing false information about the coronavirus" after he posted a video seen by hundreds of thousands

of Iranians that referred to a cover-up of information about the spread of the virus in early March. His criticism of the handling of the health crisis has clearly annoyed the authorities, who have not said where he is being held.

Hadi Maharani, an activist and invalid from the 1980-88 war with Iraq who runs a Telegram news channel and edits a Twitter account entitled "Reformist Invalids," was arrested at his home on 11 April. He is accused of "insulting religious officials and religious belief" for posting information about the spread of the coronavirus and criticizing the information provided by state radio and TV. He is being held in Tehran's Evin prison, where he was transferred to the infirmary on 15 April.

Many other examples of the detention of journalists who exposed the truth are cited in the RSF report.



**Editorial**

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regime” when trying to alert people in Iran and across the world to the truth about the numbers and conditions in the hospitals..

Deaths are deliberately being put down to other respiratory illnesses rather than to Covid-19. The regime has also tried to deflect responsibility for the spread of the virus within Iran, across the region and to parts of the wider world, from their own delays and mismanagement to other factors, including accusing the United States of creating and spreading it as a bioweapon.

Building on their lies, not wanting to have to compensate workers who have been laid off due to lockdown, they are already announcing a return to work for all, consigning people to even more poverty if they stay home, or exposure to the virus.

At the same time the regime has tried to lay the blame for not being able to deal adequately with the virus on the sanctions imposed by the United States, using this excuse to mount a powerful pressure campaign for the sanctions to be lifted. Their argument ignores the facts that humanitarian and medical aid is exempt from sanctions and that both the United States and Médecins sans Frontières have offered substantial aid which has been rejected.

With the regime's lack of proper care evident, we have grave concerns especially for the prisoners of conscience, unjustly imprisoned and facing the coronavirus epidemic in seriously overcrowded and unsanitary conditions.

The Queen famously told us that we will overcome this peril stronger and more united. Let us hope and pray for the same for the suffering people of Iran and trust they too will soon be able to experience relief from the twin viruses of corona and oppression.



**COVID-19 and Iran Regime's cover-up**

*continued from p.1*

been arrested for “spreading false information and propaganda against the regime”, for putting information about the conditions in hospitals and the actual death toll on social media.

Mohammad Alikhani, head of the Tehran City Council’s Road and Transportation Committee, said 317 taxi drivers are infected with the coronavirus, 19 have died along with a taxi service employee in Tehran, according to a 22 April article published in the state-run Shahrvand.

The Iranian regime continues to mount repressive measures to prevent the leak of information about the scale of the fatalities due to the coronavirus outbreak. Ali Akbar Kiani, the commander of the Torbat Heydariyeh security forces told state news agency IRNA on 22 April: “After the publication of fake news about coronavirus in a social network, the Internet Police (FATA) has been tasked to handle this. Three women were identified as suspects and arrested in coordination with the judiciary.”

The state-run Sharq daily wrote on the same day: “The government has placed the people at a crossroads. On the one hand, it tries to keep the people at home to prevent the spread of the virus. When the government shuts down businesses for any reason, it should take responsibility for the damages they bear. But on the other hand, to avoid paying for these damages, the government has reopened stores so no one can claim damages. Unfortunately, the

reopening of businesses will push us back into the coronavirus peak. And when it happens, the government will have to spend billions of dollars on public health. Even Hassan Rouhani can’t choose one of these two. This double standard has caused despair in the population.”

While the regime is forcing the people to go back to work claiming that it can’t pay for the expenses of quarantines, the military has declared the launch of a space vessel, which has come at a huge cost to the Iranian people.

Daily business newspaper *Jahan-e Sanat* described the government’s handling of the coronavirus outbreak as “shows and publicity” and the regime’s decisions as “contradictory and ineffective.”

“Presently, the economic consequences of the coronavirus, and by extension, the social consequences of this disease have become evident. Economic and social collapse will be inevitable in the near future and it will be followed by social and economic unrest. But this time, the protests will be more intense and accompanied by violence, a phenomenon that can be described as a mega-protest movement which will encompass most lower and middle classes of the society”, the paper wrote.





## IRAN HEALTH MINISTER'S PHOTO OF HEROIC IRANIAN NURSE ACTUALLY COMES FROM BRAZIL

According to France 24 news agency: "During a live briefing on Instagram on 14 April, Iran's health minister, **Saeed Namaki**, showed a photo he said was of an Iranian nurse with sores on her face from wearing masks all day long. He praised Iranian medical workers for their courage in facing the Covid-19 crisis, contrasting them with doctors and nurses in other countries who 'have taken to the streets' as soon as they don't have enough equipment. But there was a problem: the woman he showed is indeed a nurse fighting the virus, but in Brazil, not Iran.

Iran's Health Ministry has been accused of downplaying the real number of coronavirus deaths in Iran, and of being responsible for a lack of protective equipment that has contributed to the deaths of dozens of doctors and nurses.

"During the session Namaki said: 'To get an idea of how much pressure our colleagues are under, just look at this photo. It's the image of a colleague, one of my sisters, an image that was sent to me from one of our

hospitals. She is a dear nurse who works in an ICU [intensive care unit]. This is what happened to her beloved face after hours of torture wearing a mask. In other countries, nurses and doctors facing equipment shortages have taken to the streets.'

"However, the Iranian health minister used a photo of a nurse from Brazil, Amanda Ramalho, who posts photos from the hospital in Rio de Janeiro where she treats coronavirus-infected patients. Her photograph appeared on a page called *Diaries From the Field* that features healthcare workers from around the world.

"It is unclear why Namaki chose the photo because there are many photos of Iranian medical workers with the same injuries on their faces circulating on social media, as well as photos of



nurses and doctors who lost their lives fighting the virus in Iran.

"In an article in *The Observers* [section on France 24 website], 11 doctors and nurses from cities around Iran spoke of shortages of equipment and medical supplies in the hospitals where they work, and of their own fear of being infected."

The unfortunate reality is that there is no shame for the regime officials to be caught lying. Truth has no value in their system and COVID-19 has exposed them even more.

## IRAN PARLIAMENTARY REPORT SAYS OFFICIAL COVID-19 DEATH TOLL SHOULD BE DOUBTED

Associated Press published a report on 15 April 2020 with the above title. Doubts about the official figures began to be expressed inside the regime. According to the AP report: The death toll in Iran from the coronavirus pandemic is likely nearly double the officially reported figures, due to undercounting and because not everyone with breathing problems has been tested for the virus, a parliamentary report said.

Iranian health officials offered no comment on the report, released Tuesday, which represents the highest-level charge yet from within the Islamic Republic's government that its coronavirus statistics are questionable, something long suspected by international experts.

Iran put the death toll on Wednesday at 4,777, out of 76,389 confirmed cases of the virus, which still makes it the worst outbreak in the Middle East by far.

The report comes as Iranian President Hassan Rouhani continues



to push for a slow reopening of the country's economy, which remains targeted by crushing US sanctions. Some observers fear that if the government's own figures offered to the World Health Organization are wrong, encouraging people to return to work prematurely could lead to a second wave of infections.

"In order to have more compatibility between protocol and estimated statistics, it is necessary

to increase laboratory and testing capabilities in the country," the parliamentary report said.

"By increasing the capacities, diagnosis of disease will be made more possible and spread of the disease will be more limited."

The 46-page report by Iran's parliament research centre, published online, carries the weight of being written by non-partisan experts within the country.



## PANDEMIC RELATED RISE IN DOMESTIC VIOLENCE WORSENS PLIGHT OF WOMEN IN IRAN

Stay-at-home lockdowns in response to the coronavirus crisis have led to a dramatic rise in domestic violence against women around the world so much that the UN calls it, “the shadow pandemic.” In Iran, however, lack of virtually any form of government support for low-income and impoverished families as well as the absence of any authority to attend to the victims of domestic violence have accentuated the impact of the shadow pandemic.

One of the women hit hard by COVID-19, is Maliheh.

Maliheh used to work at a workshop which shut down after the outbreak. Now, Maliheh has to stay at home in the poor south Tehran district of Shush. She has been battered every day by her husband since the first day of the lockdown. Her children,

3, 8 and 12, have also been abused by her addicted husband who used to be construction worker. Since he got addicted several years ago, he has abandoned all his family responsibilities, so Maliheh had to work to earn their living. After being laid off, she is being beaten by her husband every day.

Low income, lack of adequate savings and lack of resources to work from home, are causing tensions in families, and in addition to domestic violence against women, they have also put children at greater risk of abuse. According to state media, the general director of the Social Harms Office at the Welfare Organization of Iran, Mahmoud Aligou, asserted that child abuse and domestic violence against women had been on a steep rise since the outbreak of the pandemic. “The



middle class have taken the lockdown more seriously, so this sector is likely to have borne the brunt of violence”, he emphasised.

In these circumstances, women have no government support. Neither is there any authority to whom they can complain or any place where they are able take refuge from their cramped and confined living conditions.

## UNHRC: HORRIFIED AT DEATH OF A JUVENILE OFFENDER AFTER BEATING BY SECURITY OFFICERS

In a press briefing on 3 April 2020, **Rupert Colville**, spokesperson for the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, told reporters: “Returning to Iran, we are horrified at the death of a juvenile offender after he was reportedly badly beaten by security officers.



“According to information we have received, **Daniel Zeinolabedini** was put in solitary confinement and beaten by security officers in Mahabad prison in Orumiyeh city in West Azerbaijan Province after a riot erupted on 28 March. Prisoners were protesting at prison conditions and the failure of the authorities to temporarily release them amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

“He was then reportedly transferred to Miandoab prison, also in West Azerbaijan province, where he suffered further ill-treatment at the hands of prison officials.

His family said he called them on 31 March to tell them he had been badly beaten, could hardly breathe and desperately needed help. His death was confirmed on 2 April.

We are particularly shocked as Zeinolabedini was

on death row for a crime he allegedly committed in September 2017 at the age of 17. His murder conviction and death sentence were upheld by Iran’s Supreme Court in October 2018. He continued to profess his innocence. As we have repeatedly said, the imposition of the death penalty for crimes committed by people below the age of 18 at the time of the offence is strictly prohibited under international human rights law and such sentences should be immediately quashed.

We remind Iran of its heightened duty to protect the lives of individuals in detention. We call on the Iranian authorities to immediately conduct an independent and impartial investigation into Zeinolabedini’s death and hold those responsible to account.

“We are also concerned at the fate of six other people who were also reportedly beaten during the riot on 28 March and taken to Miandoab prison. We urge the Iranian authorities to take all measures to protect their lives.”



On 21 April the Iranian regime executed **Shayan Saeedpour** another juvenile offender in Saghez Prison, West of Iran. With a history of mental illness, he had committed the alleged crime when he was 17 years old and had been on death row for 6 years.

Amnesty International commented that ‘the Iranian authorities have yet again made a mockery of juvenile justice.’



## IRANIAN REGIME'S MISMANAGEMENT OF ITS COVID-19 OUTBREAK IS A THREAT TO THE ENTIRE WORLD



In an article published online on 23 April, **Dr Alejo Vidal-Quadras**, vice-president of the European Parliament from 1999 to 2014, highlighted

the threat of the Iranian regime's mismanagement of the COVID-19 calamity. Excerpts of this article appear below.

"Iran's coronavirus outbreak may be the worst in the world. If official government records are to be believed, Iran ranks behind several Western countries, but, in fact, the Iranian regime's statistics are not to be believed.

"Doctors and nurses have risked arrest by sharing stories of overwhelmed hospital systems and overloaded morgues. Meanwhile, regime authorities have declared that such "rumour-mongering" is punishable by up to three years in prison, plus flogging.

"These threats have failed to actually stop the spread of true information about the coronavirus outbreak and in recent days even some Iranian officials have broken away from the regime's narratives to admit that the problem is greater than previously acknowledged. One member of the Health Ministry task force in charge of the coronavirus response concluded that the total number of infections may have exceeded half a million earlier this month.

"Whatever the exact details, the general takeaway is the same. The spread of COVID-19 in Iran is nowhere to be under control and the risk to the Iranian public remains extreme. But it also bears noting that, as the risk from a pandemic increases for one population so too does it increase for surrounding countries and, ultimately, for the world. This is especially true when, as in the case of Iran, the initial risk is so closely tied to public disinformation and a general lack of government safeguards.

"Fortunately, other countries of the region have been far more proactive than Iran in responding to the

coronavirus pandemic. Most have implemented much more ambitious social distancing measures and have kept them in place for much longer. The Iranian regime only announced a lockdown to coincide with the Noruz holiday that began last month. And it began scaling back those measures on April 11, just a week after the holiday ended.

"Naturally, health experts have warned about the potential for this move to cause a second wave of infections in Iran. Then again, unofficial assessments of the crisis tend to indicate that the first wave never really ended. Although the Iranian Health Ministry recently announced multiple consecutive days with fewer than 100 fatalities, the timing was highly suspect. Coinciding exactly with the relaxation of social distancing measures, the announcements seemed tailored to provide an after-the-fact justification for a course of action the regime had already decided upon.

"Once it became clear that Iran was a major vector for transmission of COVID-19, many of those [regional] countries closed their borders and halted air travel to and from Iran. But by then, Iran's neglect of the outbreak had already done its damage. By early March, coronavirus infections could be traced to Iran from at least a dozen other countries, including several regional countries, whose very first patients had travelled from Iran.

"Since then, the Iranian regime has only continued to pursue the strategies that caused its own outbreak to spiral so wildly out of control while increasing the risk for the entire world. These strategies were even outlined in Iranian state media. For all to see, a report dated March 14 from the



hard-line think tank-Ara Research Centre.

"This report pointed to a number of actions that the regime had taken up to that point, before recommending more along the same lines. Notably, none of its recommendations actually involve addressing the public health crisis, much less fostering domestic trust in the government's response. Instead, they focus entirely on how Tehran might deflect blame away from itself while exploiting the pandemic to advance its own ends.

"Ara-Asra praised Iranian authorities for emphasizing that the disease is extraterritorial and for promoting conspiracy theories about it being a Western bio-weapon, even though the fact that it originated in China was amplified by Iranian mismanagement in the wake of ample warnings from the World Health Organization. The think tank also encouraged diplomatic efforts to identify coronavirus as grounds for the removal of US sanctions, even though medical resources and humanitarian goods are exempt from those same sanctions.

"The Iranian regime is responsible for tens of thousands of Iranian people's deaths and since it covered up the spread of the virus for weeks and the virus extended outside of its borders, it also inevitably is responsible for countless deaths all over the world."



Tehran, April 2020: there is little public trust in the government's response to the virus



## AN HOUR WITH ILA

Since the beginning of the lockdown in the UK, we at ILA cancelled our physical events and meetings and have been using the internet to communicate with supporters. We held an event for the occasion of Persian New Year, NoRuz, another on Easter weekend and one, called 'An hour with ILA', every Saturday at 4 to 5 pm, ever since.



Excerpt of remarks by **Dr Matthew Offord, MP** from Hendon and a great friend of the Ashrafris, in one of these events follows:

"I am very grateful to be here in front of you all this afternoon. It's very pleasing to see, not only so many people supporting this cause and continuing to do so, but also that so many people have heeded the Government of the United Kingdom's advice and have decided to stay at home in this weekend instead of enjoying the sunshine outside. I thank you all for that as well.

"The Iranian regime is attempting to hoodwink the international community into believing that sanctions on the international basis are the cause of the coronavirus in Iran. But nothing could be further from the truth of that. The mullahs, and only mullahs, are to blame for the rapid spread of this virus to all of Iran's 31 provinces, and quite possibly to at least 17 other countries around the world. The fact is that the regime knew about the presence of the coronavirus pandemic at least as early as January the 28th. There are the documents from the National Emergency Organisation showing that first responders had taken nine patients, including three Iranians, and three Iranian employees from the Chinese Embassy in Tehran, to hospitals in the capital from that time until 5th February. All have been diagnosed with coronavirus. The regime, however, hid this news from the people of Iran and from the rest of the world for at least 19 days. They did this to ensure their participation in the 11th February anniversary of

the mullahs assuming power and the sham parliamentary election on 21st February. The mullahs in the government did nothing to quarantine the city of Qom, the epicentre of the virus, where hundreds of recruited Chinese theology students were studying. Nor did it stop the IRGC's Mahan Air flights to and from China until late in March. And it rejected international aid, stopping the Médecins Sans Frontières from setting up a hospital in Isfahan. And much of the equipment and health-related materials sent to Iran found their way onto the black market and were selling for up to ten times their value. So the culprit of all this disaster in the country of Iran is no-one but the regime and the regime itself.

"We will emerge from this pandemic, and... we will overcome. "So I wish each and every one of you a happy Easter, a wonderful NoRuz, and most of all, the best of health for the coming year. Thank you very much."



Following are excerpts of the remarks of **Prof Firouz Daneshgari**, a surgeon-scientist from Case Western Reserve University Hospital in Cleveland, Ohio:

"This cause is very, very personal to me. It's not an intellectual exercise, it is not a charity work, it is really for

me the fight between good and bad in this world. It became very clear to me; I have two children, one of whom is 23, a boy, and a 19-year-old daughter. For the very first time I was able to show what happened to me in prisons about 40 years ago last July, when I took my son to Ashraf and because of the unbelievable work Ashrafris have done with that museum, ... I was able to show how I was tied to the bed and was tortured, was tortured over the dressing, how I lost the skin of my feet and the rest of it. Frankly, what happened to me was minimal compared to what has happened to others. But it was so important to me and so eye-opener for my son, as he's living in the US, to see what atrocities are going on in that land, in that beautiful land. And I think somehow that connects us to the topic of today's conversation.

"I have actually a company that provides some free services to people who are worried about coronavirus now, most of us in lockdown at home. As you know, a majority of the outpatient offices are closed, the hospitals are functioning primarily for emergency basis, so there are no elective surgeries going on. So, at the same time, my worries about Ashraf. As you know, Ashrafris are there in Albania; Albania is a poor country, so the resources are very limited, and I think they have done a marvellous job, the government of Albania, how to contain the spread of the COVID-19 there and as a result I think Ashraf, thank goodness, is still safe. But nevertheless I'm online with Ashraf, the medical part, almost on a daily basis to make sure we will contain the spread. And that is ... *continued on p.8*





## NEWS IN BRIEF

### UNHCHR OUTRAGED BY IRAN EXECUTING CHILD OFFENDERS



UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, **Michelle Bachelet** condemned the execution of two child offenders by the Iranian

authorities. “The executions of these two child offenders are absolutely prohibited under international human rights law. Numerous United Nations bodies and experts have made it clear time and time again that the imposition of the death penalty for crimes committed by people below the age of 18 at the time of the offence is strictly prohibited,” she said.

The Iran section of Amnesty International tweeted: The execution of Shayan Saeedpour on 21 April in Iran for a crime committed as a child is further proof of the authorities’ total disregard for the right to life. Shayan Saeedpour’s execution was vengeful and cruel.

### PRISONERS HAVE BEEN RELEASED UNDER INTERNATIONAL PRESSURE



The Iranian regime has been forced to release some prisoners under international pressure. Those recently released include **Afshin Hossein Panahi**, whose brother was executed last year; **Roya Moayeri, Ali Kamrani**, and **Mahin Ahmadpour**, student activists arrested during demonstrations in December 2017; and Christian convert **Aylar Bakhtari**.

### WHILE PEOPLE GRAPPLE WITH MONEY PROBLEMS, THE REGIME FIRES ROCKET INTO ORBIT

On 22 April 2020, the Iranian regime’s Revolutionary Guards (IRGC) claimed that it had sent the regime’s first military satellite into orbit. In this regard **Mike Pompeo**, the US Secretary of State told reporters: “I hope that the Iranian regime will respond to the Iranian people’s demands to prioritise resources, resources that the Iranian regime clearly has, to the health and security and safety of the Iranian people, rather than continuing their global terror campaign. You can see they’re still hard at it. You can see they still have resources.”

“At the very first news that the COVID-19 virus had hit Iran, [we] offered humanitarian assistance to the people of Iran. That offer was rejected. That offer still stands. We’ve assisted other countries in delivering humanitarian assistance to the Iranian people. I only wish that the Iranian regime cared about its people as much as the rest of the world has demonstrated that it does”.

### NURSES IN IRAN ARE SILENCED ABOUT CORONAVIRUS INFECTIONS



According to a shocking report from inside Iran hospital staff are not allowed to talk about patients with coronavirus and have been instructed to register the disease as “acute respiratory distress syndrome” instead of COVID-19.

According to an eyewitness from Milad Hospital in Tehran, two nurses were sacked from the hospital after telling some patients and those accompanying them that their illness was the virus.

### IRAN HANGS 11 PRISONERS IN ONE DAY



On the advent of the holy month of Ramadan and as coronavirus has spread to prisons across the country, the regime has embarked on a new wave of hangings nationwide. On Wednesday, 22 April, at least 11 prisoners were hanged in Gohardasht, Kermanshah, Sanandaj and Dastgerd (Isfahan) prisons.

### WHISTLEBLOWER DOCTOR PROSECUTED FOR UNRAVELLING STATE COVER-UP



Iran has prosecuted **Dr Rahim Yousefpour** from Saqqez in Iranian Kurdistan Province for warning about the Coronavirus outbreak.

In a video shared online, Dr Rahim Yousefpour announced that he was summoned for warning about the Coronavirus outbreak in the province.

“I warned about COVID-19 a month ago. For this reason, the authorities summoned me eight times. I have to appear in court for telling the truth... If you don’t see me again, it’s not because of being infected with Coronavirus or a road accident.”

In March, Dr Rahim Yousefpour shared another video online to warn locals about the emergence of COVID-19 in the city saying, “The city of Saqqez has been the epicentre of the COVID-19 in Kurdistan Province and the number of patients has so far been four digits.”

Members of civil society, including a soccer player and many journalists, have also been detained after criticizing the regime’s negligence.



## AN HOUR WITH ILA



**An Hour with ILA** continued from p.6  
really the job of almost every country.  
“As you know, this virus is ten times more contagious than the flu virus, and the transmissibility of it is also therefore very high.

“I remember in January, when the reports from China were coming, the first thing I started doing: I said, ‘I need to gather a group of physicians, go to Albania, do the screening, because I know their limited resources’. I spent about two weeks reaching out to the network of physicians I have to get to Albania, not being known to me that within two weeks I can’t even leave my home, let alone the country.

“So in terms of the preparation they [the mullahs] missed the boat. Now there are four kinds of – a wave of lies comes from the four corners.

One is from the Supreme Leader, who ... claimed that the virus is manufactured by the US, ... Then comes the Foreign Minister, Zarif, who says ‘Oh, the coronavirus is very bad and so forth, but we are hurting the most because of the sanctions’. And of course then the day after, his Minister of Health comes and says, ‘We are not short of medications or anything, we can actually export it’ Then comes Rouhani, the President, who says: ‘Sixty per cent of our beds are empty, ... and we are kind of going down the hill on the down part of the coronavirus’.

“So my fear is that Iran, by lying through their teeth, is going to continue to be the epicentre, not only for the first exposure but for the second exposure.

“We are in this together. There is a

poem from Saadi, an Iranian poet who says: We are all the parts of one body. When something hits one part of us, the whole body basically receives the pain. And this coronavirus is really the representation of that beautiful poem from several centuries ago.

“It was a pleasure to have the opportunity to talk with you, to see your faces, see that you are healthy, and my wish, like the others, is: Be safe, stay healthy until we see and meet each other in person. Thank you.



**ILA supporter James Eisner played guitar and sang for the participants**



**Dr Hanifeh Khayeri talked about prisoners of conscience**

## An Hour with ILA

**Join us at our Saturday specials  
Every Saturday 4 to 5pm**

**Please send us an email  
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