

# 750 Iranian thalassemia patients fall victim to pharmaceutical sanctions



IRNA

## Social Desk

The cruel and illegal sanctions imposed by the United States on Iran have resulted in the lack of essential medicines reaching patients, especially those suffering from thalassemia. This has led to devastating consequences, with over 750 thalassemia patients losing their lives due to the scarcity of medicine and imported drugs. Additionally, more than 12,000 patients are reported to have been seriously injured. Unilateral sanctions, which are imposed against a country unlawfully, can be seen as a form of economic terrorism. However, when these sanctions directly target the health, food, and medicine of citizens, causing immense pain, suffering, and violation of fundamental rights, it becomes a clear violation of human rights and an act of terrorism. The harsh US sanctions against

Iran, which have intensified in recent years, not only restrict the sale of oil and essential equipment, but also hinder the availability of medical and pharmaceutical supplies. These restrictions have had a harmful impact on the lives of countless individuals, particularly those suffering from severe and incurable diseases like cancer. Last year, United Nations special rapporteurs on human rights called attention to the challenges faced by Iranian patients in accessing necessary medicine and medical equipment due to the US sanctions. They emphasized that these sanctions prevent patients from enjoying their basic human rights, especially the right to health. Preventing people from accessing medical equipment violates their freedom to enjoy the right to health. If this obstruction leads to increased pain and suffering, it is entirely inhumane, even if un-

intentional.

While the US government, which claims to champion human rights, insists that drugs and medical equipment are not subject to the sanctions, the reality is far from that. Importing raw materials for the production of vital drugs becomes practically impossible due to the lack of direct delivery channels. Additionally, sanctions also impede acquiring medical equipment parts such as MRI, CT scan, radiology, and angiography devices. United Nations experts believe that the root cause of this dire situation for patients in Iran lies in the US sanctions and the fear of punishment faced by foreign companies and banks if they engage with Iran. However, it is crucial to recognize that medicines and health-related items are of utmost importance. Various international documents affirm that people's health, whether di-

rectly or indirectly, should not be compromised by sanctions, and all governments should adhere to this principle. The impact of sanctions on thalassemia patients is particularly distressing. According to Younes Arab, the head of the Iranian Thalassemia Society, more than 750 thalassemia patients have lost their lives due to the lack of medicine. "Iran falls within the thalassemia belt, with an estimated 23,000 thalassemia major patients and five to eight million thalassemia minor patients," Arab said. Arab emphasized the significance of proper genetic screening and monitoring for couples affected by thalassemia minor, as there is a 25 percent risk of giving birth to a child with thalassemia major in such cases. "Iran has made significant advancements in treating thalassemia and providing free medi-

cation and treatment since 1997, with government support for special patients," he said, adding, "However, these patients require regular blood transfusions and a range of drugs to eliminate excess iron from their bodies." Since 2018, the imposition of sanctions has created challenges in the drug supply chain, affecting both foreign suppliers and domestic companies facing raw material shortages. Tragically, this situation has resulted in the loss of over 750 thalassemia patients' lives and caused serious suffering for more than 12,000 affected individuals. "Importing the necessary drugs for thalassemia patients faces numerous obstacles, including financial transactions with Swiss companies due to sanctions," Arab said, and went on to explain, "Although efforts have been made by the country's Food and Drug Administration and the Central

Bank to transfer currency for this purpose, drug orders have been unsuccessful, leading to returned funds." It goes without saying that although drugs and food are exempt from sanctions, difficulties persist in accessing them for the heavily sanctioned countries. Circumventing the embargo to provide necessary treatments for these vulnerable groups is challenging, and there have been instances of counterfeit medicine being supplied. "The priority should be given to essential drugs for special patients, including thalassemia, as their lives depend on continuous medication," Arab said, and added, "Furthermore, it is crucial for influenza vaccines to be made available to thalassemia patients through insurance coverage or health departments at universities, ensuring their accessibility in medical centers free of charge."

# Water crisis looms as country's watersheds extremely dry

## Social Desk

Iran's Minister of Energy has expressed concern over the critical water shortage, equating it to a matter of life and death. He emphasized that each individual bears a significant responsibility in managing the country's water resources. Highlighting the unpredictable nature of climate change, the Minister pointed out that Iran has experienced alternating periods of increased rainfall, decreased rainfall, and prolonged droughts, Tasnim News

Agency reported.

According to a recent report by the Supreme Water Council, almost all of the country's watersheds are currently classified as either very dry or dry based on rainfall data from the past 36 months. Mehrabian, in reference to the severity of the situation, stated that some areas have faced severe drought conditions over the past 10 years. However, thanks to the efforts of colleagues, the situation has been relatively managed, with fewer acute problems arising," he said. The Minister further dis-

cussed the two key aspects of water resources management: supply management and demand management. He emphasized that while both are necessary, focusing on managing the demand from a sector can effectively overcome obstacles and challenges at a lower cost. Recognizing the multidimensional nature of the issue, Mehrabian stressed that success in this field requires a comprehensive approach. "While managing the supply sector involves structural, hardware, and policy measures, managing the demand

sector holds special importance," he said. Mehrabian also criticized the lack of specific actions taken in the field of water demand management. He pointed out that consumers can play a role in managing their water consumption through the application of scientific knowledge and optional methods. The Minister then mentioned that the installation of smart water meters is a crucial tool for demand management. Implementing a comprehensive and intelligent management network in this regard can greatly assist

in controlling consumption. Mehrabian emphasized the need for policy modifications and effective regulations in the water consumption and distribution sector. He stressed the importance of using the drinking water network solely for its intended purpose and suggested alternative sources, such as sewage water, for irrigation and other non-drinking purposes. In comparison to the electricity sector, the Minister highlighted that managing water consumption is simpler and more feasible, with higher potential for savings. He called upon the country's water and sewage engineering company to devise a practical and timely plan. Acknowledging the need for incentives, Mehrabian proposed a bonus system for water consumers who manage their consumption below a certain threshold, potentially even offering free water for those who consistently conserve. Conversely, higher tariffs would be applied to those who exceed the designated consumption limits. The Minister emphasized the importance of prioritizing and closely over-



seeing special projects in the water and sewage sector. Timely implementation and effective management of these projects are crucial, with minimal damage and concerns for public safety in the event of any water-related incidents. He emphasized the need for the responsible managers to be available 24/7 and promptly respond to any emergencies. Mehrabian, expressing his satisfaction with the remarkable progress of the high priority water supply projects across various regions of the country, emphasized the pressing need for increased investment in this sector. "This year, unfortunately, only a meager amount of funding has been allocated

to the projects," he said. However, he fervently stressed the importance of completing the funding requirements within the next two to three months. "The president himself has been actively involved, frequently raising, pursuing, and advocating for this crucial initiative in his reports. This plan holds immense significance, giving rise to great hopes for its successful implementation," the Minister said. According to Mehrabian, with the execution of 12,000 high priority water supply projects in rural areas, the majority of water-related challenges faced by these communities should be effectively resolved.

## First Announcement

### Tender invitation

Invitation to public tender for CHIMEC  
3035 // 26000 kg

Tabriz petrochemical company intends to procure its required quantity of CHIMEC 3035 for Olefin plant. Interested suppliers should submit their request to below email in order to get tender documents until November 20, 2023.

Deadline for submission of offers for tender is: December 02, 2023.

Email: me.rahimi@tpco.ir Phone No.: +98-41-34282592

Tender	No	Quantity
CHIMEC 3035	PVS-0231091	26000 kg

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