

Op-Ed

## **Calls to reduce pressure on Iran's regime are reckless and misguided**

**The desperate Iranian people must get humanitarian aid, but the maximum pressure policy against their corrupt, bumbling leaders must be maintained**

By [Amos Yadlin](#) and [Ari Heistein](#) / April 7, 2020

As the Iranian people suffer devastating losses from COVID-19, humanitarian relief makes sense, but emergency aid should not weaken the US-led “maximum pressure” campaign, the main line of defense against resurgent Iranian adventurism and malign activity.

The combination of malice and incompetence of the Islamic Republic has killed thousands of its citizens over the past year. In November 2019, an estimated 1,500 Iranians were murdered in the streets by the regime during protests against a tax hike on gasoline. Little more than a month later, an airliner carrying 146 Iranians was shot out of the sky by two Iranian surface-to-air missiles shortly after taking off from Tehran's international airport. Now, the regime's bumbling response to the coronavirus combined with country's crumbling medical system is likely to needlessly kill tens of thousands more.

But the radical and dangerous nature of the Iranian regime complicates global efforts to provide humanitarian assistance to the country's 80 million citizens coping with the ongoing pandemic. The leadership in Tehran has not only mismanaged the pandemic, but it has committed a wide range of offenses in the realms of nuclear activity, regional subversion, and human rights violations that have led to international sanctions against major segments of the economy. Disentangling the regime from the “civilian” economy is made especially difficult by the major, if opaque, role that shadowy forces like the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) play in the Iranian market.

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