

Iran: Government Orders Nationwide Ban on Print Publications

01 April 2020

<https://www.ifj.org/media-centre/news/detail/category/press-releases/article/iran-government-orders-nationwide-ban-on-print-publications.html>

The Iranian State Board for Fighting Corona Disease (SBFCD) passed a nationwide ban on all print publications on 30 March. The International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) has urged the SBFCD to immediately review the ban and stop using Covid-19 to undermine press freedom.



Credit: ATTA KENARE / AFP

Since the pandemic outbreak in Iran, the coronavirus task forces and State Board, comprising both government officials and military commanders appointed by the Supreme Leader, have been in charge of decision-making on public measures. The new ban obliges Iranian media outlets not to publish print versions of their news and only publish them on the internet and on social media until the settlement of the Covid-19 crisis.

The reason put forward by the government is avoiding workers and journalists gathering while covering Covid-19 news.

The IFJ has repeatedly condemned the constant decrease of press freedom standards in Iran. On 7 February, the federation condemned security forces' raids on six journalists' home and fears that the Covid-19 outbreak has been used as another way to curb freedom of the press in the country.

IFJ General Secretary, Anthony Bellanger, said: *“We urge the Iranian government to stop entangling press freedom and the right for citizens to be informed about the pandemic both in print and online. Preventing the circulation of printed press will leave many of our colleagues jobless and deprive the population from their fundamental right to know. We also remain gravely concerned over the long record of mistreatment of Iranian journalists including outside Iran and demand full respect of journalists' rights.”*