

‘Completely untrustworthy’ - Iran leader bans import of US and UK-made COVID-19 vaccines



Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei —Reuters

Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei on Friday banned the import of US and British-produced coronavirus vaccines, saying they were "completely untrustworthy."

"It's not unlikely they would want to contaminate other nations. Given our experience with France's HIV-tainted blood supplies, French vaccines aren't trustworthy either," he said in a tweet accompanied by the hashtag #CoronaVaccine.

He was referring to a scandal in the 1980s in which blood infected with HIV was distributed in France, and later abroad, even after the government became aware of the problem, Agence France-Presse reported.

Hundreds of people in Iran were among those infected.

France's then-Prime Minister Laurent Fabius was charged with manslaughter, but acquitted in 1999. His health minister was convicted but never punished.

The Islamic Republic has reported more than 1.2 million COVID-19 cases and over 56,000 deaths, according to the news agency.

Vials of Iranian domestic coronavirus disease (COVID-19) vaccine —Reuters

It has accused the US of hampering its access to vaccines through a strict sanctions regime.

Iran, the Middle Eastern country hardest hit by the pandemic, last month launched clinical trials of its own vaccine.

While food and medicine are technically exempt from the sanctions, international banks tend to refuse transactions involving Iran.

Last month, President Hassan Rouhani said that Washington had demanded that Tehran pay for the drugs through US banks, adding that he feared the US would seize the money.

Source:

<https://nypost.com/2021/01/08/ayatollah-khamenei-bans-imports-of-us-uk-covid-vaccines-to-iran/>

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