

IRAN NEWS

Eleven Athletes In Iran Have Died Of Coronavirus Infection

By Radio Farda

March 22, 2020

More than ten current and former Iranian athletes have fallen victim to novel coronavirus, according to data collected by Radio Farda.

The local sports federations' channels on Telegram, the most popular messaging app in Iran, have been crammed in recent days with posts commemorating prominent active and veteran athletes.

The cause of their deaths is not mentioned in the official notices. Still, many are believed to have died of COVID-19.

Radio Farda has collected a list that names eleven Iranian athletes whose deaths from the virus have been officially confirmed.

Meanwhile, for some unspecified reasons, many bereaved families of athletes are reluctant to publicly admit that their loved ones have died of the virus.

Furthermore, it appears that the state-run media are banned from publishing news about Iranian athletes who fall victim to the Covid-19.

Director of Emergency Operations in the World Health Organization's (WHO) new Emergencies Program, Dr. Rick Brennan, revealed on Monday, March 14, that the number of coronavirus cases in Iran was potentially five times higher than what is being reported.

"We've said the weakest link in their (the Islamic Republic authorities) chain is the data. They are rapidly increasing their ability to test, and so the numbers will go up", Brennan who had earlier visited Iran said.

A 22-year-old member of Iranian women's futsal national team, Elham Sheikhi, was the first athlete publicly named as a victim of Covid-19. Ms. Sheikhi was from the province of Qom that was the epicenter of the deadly outbreak.

Nevertheless, the state-run Radio-TV (IRIB) attempted to cover up her death by interviewing an older athlete and Ms. Sheikhi's namesake, insisting that she was alive.

Images of Sheikhi's grave circulated on social media forcing IRIB and other state-run news outlets to relent and admit that the young futsal player indeed died of Covid-19.

The eleven athletes who died of the novel coronavirus were engaged in basketball, boxing, chess, futsal, judo, soccer, taekwondo, and wrestling.