

Anti-Israel Fanatic Would Rather Be Infected By Coronavirus Than Be Protected By Israeli Vaccine

by Hugh Fitzgerald



[Here](#) is one more example of the demented hatred of Israel that so many Muslims exhibit:

A journalist for the Tehran regime's official English-language mouthpiece was widely mocked online on Thursday after he said he would prefer getting the coronavirus over using an Israeli-produced preventative shot.

Roshan Salih – of Press TV – tweeted a Haaretz article about an expected announcement by an Israeli research center that it had developed a vaccine for the disease currently spreading around the world with the comment, “I’d rather take

my chances with the virus than consume an Israeli vaccine.”

No one would be surprised – would you? – if the first successful vaccine against the coronavirus turned out to have been developed by an Israeli research center. Tiny Israel punches far above its weight in so many different areas – in waste-water recycling and irrigation, in cyber security and drone technology, in new drugs and novel therapies, in heart and cancer treatments, in technological advances of every kind, that what comes out of these Israeli research centers no longer surprises us. Even now, before the definitive announcement of such a coronavirus vaccine coming out of Israel, we have come to expect such achievements from the Start-Up Nation.

And even in the Arab and Muslim countries, people who have been raised to hate Israel and the Zionists would not be surprised if a coronavirus vaccine were to first be produced in Israel. And most would be glad to use it, though without any gratitude to the Israeli researchers.

So great is the hatred of Israel among some Muslims, however, that even if it were a matter of potentially limiting the spread of coronavirus in their own countries, or even likely to save their very own lives, they would refuse to use an Israeli-produced vaccine.

An example of that suicidal attitude is one Roshan Salih, a journalist who writes for PressTV, an English-language propaganda organ of the Iranian state. After an article appeared about an Israeli research center that announced it was close to producing a coronavirus vaccine, Salih tweeted “I’d rather take my chances with the virus than consume an Israeli vaccine.”

No doubt that same sentiment would be echoed by the fanatics who run Iran, especially by Ayatollah Khamenei, who, in any case, has dismissed the seriousness of the illness and whose

regime has consistently pooh-poohed its danger and deliberately under-reported the incidence of the disease in Iran, which has led to great anger from the mass of Iranians, people who have ceased to trust their government, which has so mishandled other events, for example, by lying about its responsibility for shooting down a Ukrainian passenger jet, and failing to explain why, in a situation of attack-and-counterattack with America, it had not closed the airspace over Tehran to civilian planes in order to avoid precisely what happened: the mistaken identification of a passenger jet for an American bomber.

What must surely worry the mullahs are the new protests in the street against the regime. This time the target for their fury is the mishandling of the coronavirus outbreak. By failing to recognize the seriousness of the outbreak, the regime did not impress on the people the need for simple precautions such as frequent hand-washing and maintaining social distances. Nor did it enforce in time a ban on large gatherings – including prayers in giant mosques, sports events, and political rallies. It did not at the beginning of the outbreak in Iran distribute test kits. For more than a month, as the number of cases and deaths inexorably rose, the Iranian government continued to under-report both. Ayatollah Khamenei assured the populace that the danger would soon pass; few believed him.

For weeks the government was still in a state of denial. It did not shut down the city of Qom, the epicenter of the disease in Iran. Instead of closing down public sites, a measure that public-health experts have taken in other countries, the head of the shrine in Qom called on pilgrims to keep coming. “We consider this holy shrine to be a place of healing. That means people should come here to heal from spiritual and physical diseases,” Mohammad Saeedi, who is also the representative of Iran’s Supreme Leader in Qom, said in a video. Cases traced back to Iran have been reported in Azerbaijan, Afghanistan, Bahrain, Canada, Georgia, Iraq,

Kuwait, Lebanon, Oman, Pakistan, and the United Arab Emirates. Many of these cases have been linked specifically to visits to Qom. Even today, the city of Qom has not been shut down; the pilgrims keep traveling in and out of Qom, with many returning, after study or worship in Qom, to their homes around the Middle East. The Tehran regime has been ruthless in everything except where it could do some good: shutting down the city of Qom, the way China did in Wuhan Province, and the way the government of Italy has done by closing down the entire country, leaving only pharmacies and grocery stores open. Iran's government has done some things: it has halted an Islamic festival, sought to curb mass congregations of worshipers, and canceled Friday prayers in 23 cities across the country, including Qom. But it has not shut down Qom altogether to travelers going in and out. Some worshipers in Qom are pushing clerics to continue delivering prayers. The custodian of the holiest site in the city, the Fatima Masumeh Shrine, insists it should remain open to visitors.

Even as high government officials, including the Deputy Minister of Health who had been put in charge of dealing with the outbreak, have come down with the coronavirus themselves, and some have died, Ayatollah Khamenei keeps downplaying the crisis, with official numbers always well under the real figures.

Now comes a well-known Iranian journalist for PressTV, in the midst of all this mishandling of the crisis by Iran's leaders, who have done too little too late, to declare in a tweet that he would rather risk getting the coronavirus than use a vaccine produced by Israelis. This proud display of fanatical hatred did not win him the support he no doubt expected; instead, replies to his tweet were nearly unanimous in either denouncing or mocking him. These counter-tweets show that many people in Iran, despite the best efforts of the regime over the past 40 years, have refused to accept the murderous hatred of Israel displayed by Roshan Salih.

That's a good sign. As for Roshan Salih himself, I'm sure many of us share the hope that if the Israelis do come up first with a coronavirus vaccine, he keeps his promise not to use it.