

Tehran says U.S. blocking Iranian media outlets infringes on freedom of expression



Tehran, April 26 (RHC)-- Iran's Ministry of Foreign Affairs says a recent decision by the administration of U.S. President Donald Trump to block the domains of Iranian news outlets is in "stark infringement" of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and freedom of expression.

In a twitter post on Sunday, the Iranian ministry "strongly" condemned the U.S. Treasury Department's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) move as an effort to muzzle free speech.

The tweet came a day after managing director of the Iranian state-run newspaper "Iran" said the OFAC has, in an arbitrary move, blocked and seized the official domain name of the paper.

The U.S. Treasury Department has arbitrarily blocked and seized the domain of Iranian newspaper "Iran." Mahdi Shafiei added that legal efforts are underway to unblock and take back the domain "iran-newspaper.com" and said the newspaper's online version will be available via "irannewspaper.ir".

The U.S. government says "it has the right to seize any .com, .net and .org domain name because the companies that have the contracts to administer them are based on United States soil," a U.S. Homeland

Security official said.

In January 2020, the website of Iran's Fars News Agency was also blocked upon the U.S. Treasury's order.

The news agency said that it had received an e-mail from the server company, which explicitly said that the blockage is due to an order by the OFAC and its inclusion in the list of Specially Designated Nationals (SDN).

Previously, Google, YouTube, Facebook, Instagram and Twitter targeted Iranian accounts, including those belonging to broadcasters. In December 2019, Google blocked access to Press TV and Hispan TV's official YouTube accounts without any prior notice.

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