



Barbed Wire Around Science: The Politicization of Knowledge

Over the past three decades, American publishers under direct orders from the President of the United States have, on at least two occasions, been prohibited from publishing scholarly articles authored by researchers from Iran and other sanctioned nations. More broadly, Iranian scholars have frequently encountered politically motivated barriers in the peer-review and publication process. Some publishers have even restricted financial support for research projects affiliated with Iranian institutions, citing sanctions or political pressure ¹.

Despite these constraints, many journal editors have upheld the principle of scientific neutrality, resisting external political influence and continuing to evaluate submissions based on scholarly merit alone. This editorial independence has served as a vital safeguard for the integrity of global scientific discourse ².

However, recent developments have raised serious ethical concerns. Following a 12-day military conflict initiated by the Zionist regime against Iran, the publisher Springer Nature reportedly declined to review manuscripts submitted by Iranian researchers, citing sanctions as the reason. In some cases, even papers that had already been accepted and reached the post-galley proof stage were abruptly withdrawn from publication without explanation. Such actions represent an alarming departure from the norms of scientific publishing and threaten the foundational principle that science should remain free from political interference.

While governments such as the United States and Israel publicly advocate for the separation of science and politics, their actions in this context suggest a troubling contradiction. As an Iranian researcher and editor of an international journal, I call upon independent editors and scholars worldwide to voice their opposition to Springer Nature's decision ³. This politicization of science is not only unethical, it is antithetical to the values of academic inquiry and global collaboration.

Let us not forget the broader humanitarian context: over 70,000 civilians in Gaza have been killed, more than 40 hospitals and medical centers have been destroyed, and international organizations such as the World Health Organization have remained largely silent. Now, the same silence is being extended to the realm of science, where political barbed wire is being erected around knowledge itself. Despite these injustices, Iranian scholars continue to persevere, drawing inspiration from the legacy of luminaries such as Avicenna and Razi, figures who once stood as guiding lights in the global scientific community. Their legacy reminds us that science, at its best, transcends borders, ideologies, and regimes.

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