



# General Assembly

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## Human Rights Council

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Agenda item 3

**Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil,  
political, economic, social and cultural rights,  
including the right to development**

## **Written statement\* submitted by Organization for Defending Victims of Violence, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status**

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[21 January 2019]

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\* Issued as received, in the language(s) of submission only.



## **The United States of America Unilateral Coercive Measures, Systematic Violation of the Right to Life in the Islamic Republic of Iran**

The United States of America (US) has publicly announced that the Unilateral Coercive Measures (UCMs) against the Islamic Republic of Iran (Iran) have exempted food and medicine, however, the on-the-ground reality is totally different from political propaganda. The experiences of Iran-based NGOs proves that UCMs lead to widespread violations of human rights in the targeted country including the right to life and the right to health of all people especially the vulnerable groups, as well as the right to development and the right to a clean and healthy environment.

### **UCMs and the Right to Health**

The West has always announced that food, medicine and medical equipment are exempt from sanctions, however, on the ground, comprehensive sanctions seriously limit the access of civilians to food, medicine and medical care.

Since August 7th 2018, the United States has banned banking transactions between the Islamic Republic of Iran and other countries. Therefore, money cannot be transferred to foreign countries and medicine companies cannot pay for medicine or raw material; companies that import medical equipment cannot pay for their items and food companies will not be able to import food. In such a situation, the target country is in a blockade of import of all essential items including food and medicine. Consequently, the price of food and medicine escalates and the supply of essential items decreases which in itself adversely affects the lives of and health of all vulnerable groups in the country.

Another factor that limits access to food and medicine is that the re-imposed United States Sanctions on the Islamic Republic of Iran, prohibited the purchase or acquisition of the United States' dollar banknotes by the Iranian government. The ban accelerates the drastic decline of Iranian currency, Rial, against the dollar that leads to the skyrocketing of prices of all essential items including medicine, thus limiting the public access to food, medicine and healthcare.

### **UCMs and the Right to Development**

According to "the Art of Sanctions"<sup>1</sup>, "The objective of this class of sanctions is to impair the technological development of a country, either in specific ways (such as denial of assistance with the development of an important national resource or economic opportunity) or more generally (p.45). Therefore, it is crystal clear that the United States' sanctions against the Islamic Republic of Iran are intended and designed in a way to target the people's right to development. The inhuman goal is achieved through a various means including prohibition of transfer of money as well as banning the import of modern industries and modern technology into the country on the excuse of their dual use and alleged contribution of such technologies to nuclear programs. The allegations reach a stage that the Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) of the United States' Department of the Treasury, even bans some medical equipment such as autoclave sterilization machines from being imported to the Islamic Republic of Iran!

### **UCMs and the Right to Environment**

Part of the violation focuses on prevention of nature friendly technologies that contribute to protection of environment. Green sources of energy including the wind and solar energy are less accessible under sanctions since the necessary equipment are prevented from being

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<sup>1</sup> Nephew, Richard. (2018). *The Art of Sanctions: A View from the Field*. New York: Columbia University Press.

imported into the Islamic Republic of Iran. The limitation of access to green technologies is created by preventing the import of modern technologies into the Islamic Republic of Iran and sanctioning the interbank transactions to make financial transfers between Iranian banks and their foreign counterparts impossible. As a result, the country maintains reliance on old industries and sources of energy including fossil fuels that increase environmental pollution and destruction, jeopardizing the present and future generation's right to health and the right to a clean and healthy environment.

### **UCMs, Aviation industry and the Right to Life**

Sanctions on the Islamic Republic of Iran continue to have a crippling effect on the country's aviation industry and market. Many airlines have cancelled their flights to the Islamic Republic of Iran<sup>2</sup> following the announcement of new round of the United States sanctions which restrict banking and currency exchanges with the country. Also, sanctions ban refueling services to Iranian planes in a way that some Iranian airliners are not allowed to refuel in other countries.

Another serious challenge for Iranian aviation industry is created by the prohibition on the purchase of the parts and equipment of passenger planes. The United States Treasury has prohibited transactions, with the Islamic Republic of Iran, including transactions involving the sale, lease and export of commercial passenger aircraft, parts, components and related services into the country. Iranian NGOs strongly believe in the fact that the decision will seriously violate the civilian's "right to life" through decreasing the security of flights and increasing the reliance of Iranian airlines on old components and parts.

### **UCMs and the Right to Education**

Prohibition of financial transfer between Iranian banks and their foreign counterpart has adversely affected the Iranian students' access to higher education in all foreign universities. American banks refuse to give education loans to Iranian students solely because of their nationality. A decision that discriminates against people based on their country of origin and can be considered as racism.

Also, prevention of financial transfer into and out of the Islamic Republic of Iran leads to students' inability to pay the university fee, making continuation of their education impossible.

#### **Recommendations:**

Being over-concerned about the widespread and systematic violation of human rights as a result of UCMs in the Islamic Republic of Iran, The Organization for Defending Victims of Violence (ODVV) calls on the High Commissioner for Human Rights to monitor the violations of human rights as a result of UCMs in all targeted counties including the Islamic Republic of Iran.

ODVV calls on the Human Rights Council to implement the recommendations offered by the Special Rapporteur on UCMs in order to partially mitigate the notorious effects of UCMs on civilians especially the vulnerable groups.

ODVV calls on all the Special Procedures mandate holders to co-operate with the Special Rapporteur on UCMs and to pay attention to the negative effects of UCMs on people within the scope of their mandate and to offer recommendations on how to prevent such effects.

ODVV calls on the member States such as Cuba, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Qatar and the Russian Federation to support establishment of a consolidated central register at the level of the Security Council or of the United Nations Secretariat to recapitulate the list of all unilateral coercive measures in force.

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.businessinsider.com/british-airways-air-france-suspend-flights-to-tehran-2018-8>,  
<https://thepointsguy.com/news/aegean-airline-ends-iran-flights/>