



# General Assembly

Distr.: General  
26 May 2019

English only

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## Human Rights Council

Forty-first session

24 June–12 July 2019

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.

[26 May 2019]

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

## **Interactive Dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on the Right to Education:**

### **Impact of Unilateral Coercive Measures on the Right to Education**

Both sanctions literature and the on-the-ground experience of NGOs in countries targeted by sanctions prove that, Unilateral Coercive Measures (UCMs) destroy the economy and civilian infrastructures in the target country. The measures have destructive effects on health and education sectors among others and make them collapse. In addition, due to increase in the cost of all social services, UCMs limit the public access to education and prevent children from enjoying one of their basic rights. UCMs also leave harmful effects on the life of students who are studying abroad by preventing money transfers between the target country and foreign universities. Moreover, UCMs block the access of some countries to online education and online access to universities and libraries violating the people's right to freedom of access to information and knowledge.

#### **Increased cost of education**

The adverse impact of UCMs on the target economy leads to an increase in the cost of all basic services including education. The increasing cost is added to the decrease in income to seriously limit the quality and access to education for all, including the children's access to even free education – because they are not able to afford the requirements including clothes, books, stationary etc. – as well as the adult's access to higher education. Violation of the fundamental right to education as a consequence of UCMs must never be neglected by the international community and the United Nations which has the mandate of improvement of human rights in the world.

#### **Students abroad**

The students of target countries bear the brunt of UCMs while studying abroad. Sanctions on interbank messaging systems, prevent any financial transfer between the target country and all other states making it almost impossible for foreign students to pay their education fees. In the other hand, a drop in the value of currency in the target country makes it more difficult for students to afford the university fees. The new impediments facing students in foreign countries makes it impossible for some of them to continue their education abroad which is a serious violation of their right to education and a negative impact on their future life and career.

#### **Blocking online education**

The United States' sanctions made provider of free online university courses such as "Coursera" to block online learning in sanctioned countries including the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Syrian Arab Republic and Cuba. The providers of massive open online courses started blocking access to their sites for users on sanction targeted countries. The online courses were launched to meet the goal of creating a world where people can learn without limits. However the new polices of the United States will prevent the education websites from realizing their predetermined goals. In addition, sanctions deny online access to some universities and libraries, depriving students from access to the resources they need.

Considering the impact of UCMs on education in the target countries, the Organization for Defending Victims of Violence (ODVV) calls on the Special Rapporteur on the right to education to speak out against the breach of the right to education in target countries.

ODVV also calls on the Special Rapporteur on the right to education to assess the impact of UCMs on access to education in target countries.

ODVV also calls on the Special Rapporteur on the right to education to offer recommendations on how to alleviate the impact of UCMs on access to education in target countries.