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**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.

[23 May 2020]

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

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Unilateral coercive measures put extreme discrimination on Enjoyment of the Right to Health under Covid-19

For the past decade, the Organization for Defending Victims of Violence (ODVV) has been expressing concern over the detrimental effect of Unilateral Coercive Measures (UCMs) on all economic social and cultural rights and specially the right to health.

Within the past two years, following the United States of America unilateral withdrawal from the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) and the United Nations' Security Council Resolution 2231, the re-imposition of multiple and comprehensive UCMs has created a situation of "de facto blockade"¹ for the Islamic Republic of Iran. ODVV has repeatedly expressed concerns to Your Excellency and the United Nations Human Rights Council that the comprehensive UCMs have a notorious effect on the health of all Iranians, especially the most vulnerable sector. Presently, ODVV is alarmed by the fact that, the-already-difficult situation is exacerbated by the Covid-19 out-break.

According to the statement presented by the United Nations (UN)' High Commissionaire for Human Rights on Coronavirus on March 6th, "To effectively combat the outbreak means ensuring that everyone has access to treatment, and is not denied health care...". This is while the people who are living in countries targeted by economic blockade, cannot have access to health care the same as the people living in other countries of the world. As an Iran based NGO, we clearly see the challenges created by the United States of America sanctions and this form of medical terrorism for the people living in the Islamic Republic of Iran. Prevention of banking transactions, leads to lack of access to basic medical treatment, and purchase of medical equipment, such as X-ray and CAT scan machines or maintenance of the available machinery and equipment.

Our organization has sent communications to the Special Rapporteur on the right to health several times and has expressed serious concerns over the detrimental effects of comprehensive sanctions on people, the sanctions that the Special Rapporteur on Unilateral Coercive Measures (UCM)s consider as economic warfare. Unfortunately, no feedback is given to our organization by the Special Rapporteur.

At the moment, we hope that your reiteration on necessity of international cooperation to combat corona leads to a stronger international will and more concrete action for ending comprehensive Unilateral Coercive Measures and the pain of civilians in UCM target countries.

Now that the international emergency coupled with maximum sanctions and economic pressure is causing a loss of health which is also mentioned in paragraphs 10 to 12 of the recent report of Special Rapporteur on the Islamic Republic of Iran, we call on Your Excellency to join the other UN Experts to call for an immediate lift of the sanctions on all sectioned countries including the Islamic Republic of Iran, both in written reports and oral public statements, so that the countries can use their full capacity to fight the virus.

¹ A/HRC/39/54, A/HRC/42/46.