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Human rights situations that require the Council's attention

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]

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

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Interactive Dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran

The United States of America (US) Has Cut off Iran from all Humanitarian Goods

Although the United States' Secretary of State Mike Pompeo has claimed that the toughest-ever sanctions on oil, shipping and banking will not hurt the Iranian people¹, Iran-based NGOs publicly announce that this is a lie for two reasons.

One is that a sanction on the inter-bank transactions system or SWIFT, which should not be manipulated for political intentions, seriously limits all Iranian medicine companies' access to raw material and will render the import of all items including medicine and medical equipment impossible. Under the United States sanctions any financial transaction between the Islamic Republic of Iran (Iran) and any medicine or food provider is cut off and serious shortage of medicine, medical equipment and food can threaten thousands of lives.

Iranian NGOs who deal with patients of chronic diseases including cancer, thalassemia, hemophilia and MS are warning against the deadly consequences of the new United States' sanctions on the Iranian's right to health. Many of the patients being treated in health care centers of the NGOs are children suffering from chronic disease.

The second way the sanctions intentionally target the Iranian's access to medicine is through the widespread inhuman attempts made by the American officials to keep threatening all foreign companies including the medicine producers and providers to force them to avoid doing any business with the Islamic Republic of Iran.

The on-the-ground experience of Iranian NGOs proves that the United States is making comprehensive un-public, unofficial systematic attempts to block any financial transactions between the Islamic Republic of Iran and ANY other country to import humanitarian items including food and medicine into the country. All medicine exporting companies located in European countries and even countries like China and India are bullied by the United States' representatives to avoid doing business with the Islamic Republic of Iran which means a blockade for import and export of all items including food and medicine for the country.

Deprivation of Iranian people of access to food and medicine is not the unintentional consequence of the economic sanctions against the Islamic Republic of Iran, on the contrary, our field surveys have proven that the United States is deliberately and consistently blocking the Islamic Republic of Iran's access to food and medicine since Nov. 4th 2018. Intentional prevention of access to food and medicine that can violate the right to life be considered as crimes against humanity.

Humanitarian consequences of Unilateral Coercive Measures (UCM) or economic sanctions are documented in the United Nations numerous reports prepared by the Secretary General, advisory committee and the Special Rapporteur on UCM, Mr. Idriss Jazairy.

The Organization for Defending Victims of Violence (ODVV):

- Confirming all the statements made by the reports² of the Human Rights Council on violation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran as a consequence of UCMs, including the right to life and the right to health,
- Considering the ill effects of the new array of the United States sanctions added to the previous sanctions which are already in place,
- Being deeply appalled by the fact that collective punishment of the Iranian people is taking place while the country's full compliance with its nuclear obligations is confirmed by the IAEA about than 12 times,

¹ <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/nov/04/pompeo-trump-us-sanctions-oil-iran-iranian-people>

² <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/UCM/Pages/Reports.aspx>

- Echoing the concerns expressed by the SR on UCM on the illegality of the unilateral sanctions and the rights of victims to effective remedy,
- Being deeply upset by the silence maintained by the United Nations while witnessing the Iranian citizens' sufferings,

ODVV makes an urgent call on the Human Rights Council to mandate a fact finding mission to study the negative effects of UCMs on human rights of civilians in all target countries.

ODVV echoes the recommendation offered by the UN SR on UCM for a central register to be established at the level of the Security Council or of the United Nations Secretariat to include the list of all unilateral sanctions in force so that the decisions in the United Nations are made with full knowledge of the unilateral measures.

ODVV urges the Special Rapporteur on the Islamic Republic of Iran to pay attention to the negative human rights and humanitarian consequences of the United States sanctions on Iranians' access to food and medicine.
