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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.

[15 January 2020]

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

Economic Warfare Kills in Silence

Comprehensive Unilateral Coercive Measures (UCM)s, that amount to de facto blockades or economic wars, have detrimental effects on fundamental human rights specially the right to life and the right to health. They adversely target all economic, social and cultural rights of the target population especially the right to life and health of the most vulnerable groups including the children, the patients, the disabled and the migrants.

Economic wars seriously harm the economy of the target country, leading to high rates of inflation and unemployment. The escalation of prices, coupled with decrease of income, limit the affordability of life-saving medicine, medical equipment and healthcare. The situation is worsened by prevention of the banking system of the target country from having any financial transactions with the international community which contributes to the scarcity of life-saving medicine in the market and limits the access of patients to the already difficult-to-afford medicine.

The complicated situation created by banning import, prevention of banking transactions, skyrocketing of prices of food and medicine and serious decrease in income, leads to the mass killing of the vulnerable people in silence. The collective punishment of the target population through silent mass killing amounts to crimes against humanity¹, and is proven to be forbidden under international law.

Numerous General Assembly (GA) resolutions which are annually adopted since 1992, reiterate on the necessity of ending financial embargo imposed on Cuba by the United States. The last resolution in the series is 73/8 adopted in 2018, with 189 votes in favour and 2 against. The voting record reflects the international community's wish to end the unilateral coercion against target countries. The resolution², calls upon all members of the international community not to resort to unilateral coercive measures against each other and terminate the existing measures.

In addition to General Assembly resolutions, there are also numerous Human Rights Council (HRC) resolutions³ and mandates⁴ against the use of unilateral coercive measures that undermine the United Nations and the rule of law and destroy global peaceful relations among countries. the adverse effects. The fact that the international community condemns UCMs is reflected in all treaties and laws that warn countries against violation of the right to health, the right to food, the right to development, the right to work etc.

While the illegality of normal types of UCMs are reiterated by the UN GA and UN HRC resolutions countless times, currently, the most detrimental types of UCMs, known as comprehensive UCMs that amount to Economic Warfare, target civilian lives of the most vulnerable groups of the target societies including the Islamic Republic of Iran, Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela⁵, Cuba, Gaza and the Syrian Arab Republic.

- Being over-concerned with the malignant effect of Comprehensive UCMs on human lives and reiterating on the main goal of the United Nations to prevent mass killings of civilians in wars,

1 . A/HRC/39/47/Add.1

2 . 73/8, paragraph2.

3 . A/HRC/RES/24/14

4 . A/HRC/27/L.2

5 . According to a report by CEPR, in Venezuela, sanctions death toll was recorded to amount to 40,000 lives in a one-year period; please see: <http://cepr.net/publications/reports/economic-sanctions-as-collective-punishment-the-case-of-venezuela>

the Organization for Defending Victims of Violence (ODVV) calls on the UN HRC, UN GA and UN Security Council to stay committed to their own mandate to prevent mass killings by Comprehensive UCMs or Economic Warfare.

- ODVV urges the United Nations to make its best to stop the current killer economic wars, because the main pillar that the UN stands on is prevention of war and mass killing of civilians.
- ODVV echoes the call on the international community made by the Special Rapporteur on the negative impact of UCMs on Human rights, Mr. Idriss Jazairy, to come together and adopt an international declaration on unilateral coercive measures and the rule of law.
