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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.

[03 February 2020]

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

Interactive dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on Right to Adequate Housing: The Negative Impact of Comprehensive Unilateral Sanctions on the Realization of the Right to Adequate Housing

Right to adequate housing means the right to live in a safe and calm place. With this definition, right to adequate housing and the right to life which has been stated in Article 6 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights are directly connected.

Article 11(1) of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights states: “The States Parties to the present Covenant recognize the right of everyone to an adequate standard of living for himself and his family, including adequate food, clothing and housing, and to the continuous improvement of living conditions. The States Parties will take appropriate steps to ensure the realization of this right, recognizing to this effect the essential importance of international co-operation based on free consent.”

Also, Article 25(1) of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states: “Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control.”

Just as the UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Adequate Housing has stated, issues such as homelessness, no access to housing, migration, eviction, climate change and inequality are instances that must be considered for any policy setting for the right to housing. We as an NGO with 20 years of experience believe that one of the most important factors which affects this right is bad economic conditions.

One of the root causes of bad economic conditions are the comprehensive unilateral coercive measures (UCM) that are imposed by some countries on target countries. In fact, towards reaching their foreign policy goals, some States use economic pressures to get other States accept their demands.

The United States of Americas' comprehensive unilateral sanctions or in other words the economic de facto blockade¹ against the Islamic Republic of Iran (Iran) is one of these cases where problems are caused in the economy, international banking transactions, buying and selling of goods between Iran and other countries, and have had direct negative impacts on all aspects of the lives of the people of Iran, including the right to suitable housing.

The United States of America's economic terrorism, through the blockade, has affected the lives of the people of Iran in various aspects:

1 – Negative impact of sanctions on people's income

Countries that are faced with economic blockade, suffer from various problems. Economic and social problems and rise in inflation which is followed by rise in price of goods, closure of factories, closure of industries and rise in unemployment, all of which have huge negative impact on the lives of people.

The living conditions of the people has worsened following the comprehensive unilateral sanctions. The decrease in purchasing power and drop in income levels because of a drop in national revenue generated by imports and exports and ban on oil export have sharply reduced the access of people to some goods. Also, the health, medical treatment, adequate housing conditions and their qualities have gotten worse than before.

2 – Policy setting of the government to provide cheap housing

In the current conditions when the country's economy is under comprehensive unilateral sanctions, the government is responsible for attention to the matter of provision cheaper housing. Therefore, more than any other time it is necessary for the government to present policies for cheap housing, such as housing construction.

3 – Sanctions against the construction sector

The United States of Americas' sanctions imposed against Iran's construction industry is nothing new. The comprehensive unilateral sanctions have affected import and export of construction raw materials. This has resulted in in the trade of countries and production units of the country with other countries to reach a bare minimum. Drop in imports and exports has caused the closure of factories and increased unemployment, also this has caused an increase in price of construction materials and

1 . According to the Special Rapporteur on the negative impact of unilateral coercive measures on human rights, Mr. Idriss Jazairy, in his 2019 report submitted to the UN General Assembly 74: A/74/165.

increase in the salaries of engineers and builders. All these put together have caused a rise in price of property that directly affects the lives of people and limits access to adequate housing.

Recommendation

As a nongovernmental organization which is witnessing the effects of sanctions on the right to adequate housing, Organization for Defending Victims of Violence (ODVV) asks the UN Special Rapporteur on adequate housing to allocate part of his report to review the economic blockades and their negative impact on the right to adequate housing of people of countries that are targeted by the comprehensive unilateral sanctions.
