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Agenda item 2

**Annual report of the United Nations High Commissioner
for Human Rights and reports of the Office of the
High Commissioner and the Secretary-General**

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.

[25 May 2021]

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



ITEM 2 - Presentation of reports (Islamic Republic of Iran) and oral updates

Organization for Defending Victims of Violence (ODVV) notes the concerns expressed by UN High Commissioner for Human Rights and the UN Secretary General concerning the negative impact of economic sanctions on the people of the Islamic Republic of Iran and the call for an easing of sanctions against countries such as Iran under the COVID-19 pandemic¹.

We also take note of concerns expressed by UN HC and the UN SG on the adverse effect of economic sanctions on people's right the adequate standard of living and the right to health, as well as the repeated calls made by the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights and the UN Secretary General on the sanctioning countries to lift or ease sanctions under the Covid-19 pandemic in order to save human lives.

In addition, we express concerns that unilateral sanctions and banking restrictions have affected the rate of unemployment, Iran's oil exports, Iran's economy and the most adverse effect is being observed on the health sector, including in shortages of pharmaceutical and medical items.

Considering the fact that to date, the repeated calls made by the UN SG/ UN HC and the UN experts including the Special Rapporteur on the negative impact of the unilateral coercive measures on the enjoyment of human rights and the UN Special Rapporteur on the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health on lifting and removing the unilateral sanctions, specifically during the outbreak of the pandemic has only led to the increasing of sanctions by the sanctioning countries, ODVV calls on the UN HC and the UN SG to use all their potential to support establishment of international legally binding instruments on prevention of unilateral sanctions.

Considering the inefficiency of the repeated calls on the sanctioning countries to lift the illegal unilateral sanctions in order to protect lives during the pandemic, ODVV calls on the UN SG to appoint a Special Advisor on unilateral coercive measures to find ways to prevent, death, sufferings and the "collective punishment"² of civilian populations by unilateral sanctions which are referred to as "genocide"³ or "crimes against humanity"⁴, by some UN documents.

Also, we call on the UN HC and the UN SG to join the experts of the Human Rights Council including the UN Special Rapporteur on unilateral coercive measures and the UN Special Rapporteur on the right to health and continue to call for removing the unilateral sanctions so as to add to the strength and efficiency of the efforts made by the experts.

¹ <https://news.un.org/en/story/2020/03/1060092>; <https://foreignpolicy.com/2020/03/24/un-coronavirus-cuba-iran-venezuela-north-korea-zimbabwe-sanctions-pandemic/>.

² A/HRC/42/46; A/HRC/39/54.

³ A/75/81.

⁴ A/HRC/39/47/Add.1.