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**Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil,
political, economic, social and cultural rights,
including the right to development**

**Joint written statement* submitted by Organization for
Defending Victims of Violence, Asociacion Cubana de las
Naciones Unidas (Cuban United Nations Association),
Fundación Latinoamericana por los Derechos Humanos y el
Desarrollo Social, non-governmental organizations 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.



Unilateral Coercive Measures (UCM)s: A modern form of Genocide

Unilateral Coercive Measures (UCM)s can easily act as weapons of mass destruction and lead to slow collective and painful death of civilians through deprivation of food and medicine. In recent years some political figures and official documents have announced their opinion that unilateral sanctions can amount to genocide in the target countries.

In its contribution to the Report of the Secretary-General on resolution 74/7, entitled “Necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba” (A/75/81), Cuba denounced this embargo as “an act of genocide under the 1948 Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide”, as well as “a massive, flagrant and systematic violation of the human rights of all Cubans”. The report further reiterates that “The genocidal nature of this policy has been reinforced in the fight against the new coronavirus, since the Government of the United States ... deliberately ... deprive the Cuban people of ... items necessary to the management of the disease.”

In March 2020, there were public announcements that considered unilateral sanctions against the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela as “absurd” and “wild” and an “instrument of genocide” at a time when the world join efforts to fight coronavirus ¹. Before the outbreak of the pandemic, a study proved that 40000 people has died in Venezuela² as a result of sanctions, in one year and the Covid-19 has considerably added to the complications that the sanctioned countries are experiencing, preventing them from access to fundamental items including testing kits, medicine, medical care, food and vaccine.

The same case applies to the Islamic Republic of Iran, among other countries targeted by sanctions, where extraterritorial effects of UCMs deliberately limits people’s access to all necessary items as well as the life-saving medicine and Covid-19 vaccine that can threaten many lives during the outbreak of the pandemic.

While the repeated calls on the United States for the unilateral sanctions removal under the emergency of Covid-19 only led to the increase rather than the decrease of the sanctions, the world is witnessing the ongoing systematic mass killing of vulnerable groups in UCM target countries through sanctions even under the emergency of Covid-19.

Therefore, our organizations call on the Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide to study the genocidal nature of unilateral economic sanctions or unilateral coercive measures and report the findings to the Human Rights Council.

Also, we urge the Special Adviser to offer recommendations to the United Nations member states and the UN human rights council on how to prevent this form of genocide.

¹ <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-venezuela-maduro-russia-idUSKBN21E38A>.

² <http://cepr.net/publications/reports/economic-sanctions-as-collective-punishment-the-case-of-venezuela>.