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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.

[20 May 2021]

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



Impact of Unilateral Coercive Measures (UCM)s on international solidarity and International Cooperation during the pandemic

International cooperation and the sharing of practices are essential to the efforts undertaken by States towards the advancement of international solidarity and the strengthening the mechanisms established to that aim. In fact, the UN Human Rights Council itself was created on the basis of the purpose and principles of the UN Charter, including achieving international cooperation in the promotion of human rights.

Global challenges cannot be overcome without serious cooperation of the countries around the world. Solidarity is the key to reach international peace and fight against hunger, poverty, inequality, climate change and international crisis such as the out-break of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Cooperation among developing countries, south-south cooperation, is an important factor for these countries to generate both new ideas and concrete projects to enable voices from the Global South, to drive innovation, and promote human rights and development. At the same time, all developing countries need to get engaged in international trade with developing countries vis versa.

However, in recent years, certain unilateral and illegal policies are adopted by some countries in order to prevent certain developing countries from having trade relations or banking exchanges with the world. For instance, economic sanctions imposed on the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Syrian Arab Republic, Cuba and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela and some other countries have negatively affected the civilian population as well as non-targeted neighbouring States, and international companies who were engaged in business with the sanctioned States. In the case of Iran for example, Pakistan was affected by sanctions because of the blocking of a gas pipeline project which was critical for Pakistan to overcome its energy crisis.

Unfortunately, the political use of human rights and following double-standards, prevent the promotion of human rights and international solidarity around the world, increase instability and endanger international peace and security.

The United States of America's economic war¹ against Iran, despite the false claims made by the US leaders, have affected Iran's economy and financial transactions. The most regrettable effect of sanctions was witnessed in prevention of Iran government from importing humanitarian items including medicine and medical equipment's and the most inhuman effect of sanctions was seen in preventing Iran from having adequate and timely access to Covid-19 vaccine. Furthermore, the maximum pressure policy by the United States puts increasing daily pressures on ordinary citizens of the country and negatively effects their living standard.

International cooperation for supporting development and promotion of human rights, requires mutual trust and when companies are threatened to be fined by the US for having trades with Iran, they prefer to avoid such trades and international cooperation cannot be expected to take place. Economic war against Iran, Cuba, the Gaza Strip, Venezuela etc. has created problems for all these countries and all other countries who have financial trades with them.

Comprehensive sanctions on oil and technology cause problems for growth and development. Most companies which provide software and hardware services, prefer to completely avoid any trades with Iran and other targeted countries since they cannot separate legal and illegal services in the highly complex comprehensive sanctions process.

¹ As stated by the Special Rapporteur on unilateral coercive measures (UCM) in his 2019 report to the UN General Assembly: A/74/165.

ODVV believes that comprehensive Unilateral Coercive Measures (UCM) have an adverse impact on the enjoyment of human rights of the civilian population of targeted States and, in some cases, non-targeted States, adversely affecting all efforts to promote international co-operation and solidarity.

The right to life, the right to an adequate standard of living, including adequate access to food, clothing, housing and the right to medical care, and health are in serious danger due to comprehensive UCMs that amount to economic warfare.²

Believing that international solidarity must be based on mutual trust and amicable relations of countries, ODVV urges the Independent Expert on international solidarity to investigate the destructive impacts of unilateralism on the international peace and solidarity, especially during pandemic, and to present necessary recommendations to the international community in this regard.

Also, ODVV encourages the Independent Expert on international solidarity to continue supporting the mandate of the Special Rapporteur on Unilateral Coercive Measures to publicly condemn resort to unilateral sanctions.

² Ibid