

GD 5

Report of the Forum on Human Rights, Democracy and the Rule of Law on its third session (2021) (theme: “Equal access to justice for all: a necessary element of democracy, rule of law and human rights protection”) (HRC res. 28/14 and 40/9)¹



Unilateral Coercive Measures Undermine Democracy and the rule of law

We express serious concerns over the negative impact of Unilateral Coercive Measures (UCM)s - imposed beyond the authority of the United Nations - on international democracy, the rule of law and equal access to justice and remedy for all whose human rights are extensively violated by the measures.

The experiences, existing documents and media outlets have made it obvious that sanctions have failed to achieve the sanctioning countries stated intentions in coercing the target States to alternate policy decisions. Instead, UCMs have detrimentally affected all human rights of civilians with vulnerable groups and the marginalized bearing the most burnt.

UCMs have negatively affected the economy and livelihood of the people living in all target countries including the Islamic Republic of Iran, Cuba, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela.

It is alarming that the UCMs, with proven failure in pursuit of their political goals, continue to systematically violate all human rights of all target people. The sanctions breach the right to life of those in urgent need of specific medicine the import and purchase of which is banned by the UCMs; the right to health of those who need special medical care hampered by UCMs; the right to an adequate living standard for many people whose livelihoods are aggravated by the UCMs as well as all human rights of the vulnerable groups including the people, women and children with chronic disease (including EB,¹ cancer, thalassemia, hemophilia, diabetes), people with disabilities and the marginalized and disadvantaged groups.

¹The Forum has been postponed from 2020 to 2021; the report thereon will be submitted after the Forum has been held, at a session to be confirmed.

¹. Over-compliance with US sanctions harms Iranians' right to health, <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=27665&LangID=E>

We draw the attention of the Forum on Human Rights Democracy and the Rule of Law to the negative effect of UCMs on the international rule of law and their “external threats to democracy”^r of the target counties in addition to extensive and inhuman violation of the human right of the target populations. Also, we draw the attention of the Forum to the fact that UCMs are imposed on people, unilaterally, illegally and beyond authority of the UN.

The Forum is called upon to consider the bitter reality that comprehensive sanctions - that are considered as “economic warfare”, “de facto blockades”[‡]; “collective punishment”[°] and a form of “crime against humanity”[¶] by some UN experts - continue to extensively violate all economic, social and cultural rights of millions of people in sanctioned countries, while failing to gain any achievements in international relations.

Considering the fact that UCMs are condemned and considered illegal by the UN SG,^y the UN HC,[^] the Special Rapporteurs,[^] UN reports and UN resolutions,[¶] We call for a mechanism to be established to compensate for all the systematic human rights violations conducted through UCMs, including the widespread violations of the right to life and the right to health during the pandemic, so that the forgotten UCM victims can have access to justice as well as adequate remedy and redress.

Also, We call on the Forum to find solutions for the UN so that it can stand against unilateralism and unilateral human rights violations in order to strengthen democracy, the international the rule of law and a democratic international order.

^r. <https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/RuleOfLaw/GuidanceNoteOnDemocracy.pdf>

[‡]. A/HRC/39/54, A/HRC/42/46

[°]. A/HRC/42/46; A/HRC/39/54

[¶]. A/HRC/39/47/Add.1

^y. [Secretary-General Urges G20 Countries to Suppress COVID-19 Transmission](#)

[^]. [Bachelet calls for easing of sanctions to enable medical systems to fight COVID-19 and limit global contagion;](#)

[^]. e.g., [Sanctions proving deadly during COVID pandemic, humanitarian exemptions not working; Over-compliance with US sanctions harms Iranians' right to health](#)

[¶]: e.g., Reports: A/HRC/48/59; A/HRC/48/59/Add.2; A/HRC/45/7; A/HRC/42/46; A/HRC/36/44; A/HRC/33/48
Resolutions: A/HRC/RES/24/14; A/HRC/RES/30/2; A/HRC/RES/34/13; A/RES/71/193; A/HRC/RES/46/5