

Item 3: General Debate

Effect of Unilateral Coercive Measures (UCM)s on Access to Vital Human Rights in Impoverished Areas



Based on the findings of the on-the-ground experiences, ODVV would like to discuss the effect of the Unilateral Coercive Measures (UCM)s on limitation of access to Fundamental Human rights for the people living in rural and impoverished areas of the target countries.

UCMs spur high inflation and currency depreciation. Economic decline and currency devaluation lead to increase of food and medicine prices to levels significantly above the annual inflation rate (which is common to sanctioned economies), making access to food items, medicine, medical care and medical equipment difficult for sanctioned populations, especially for the people living in disadvantaged communities who already live on the margins of poverty, threatening the lives and health of hundreds of millions of people, living in sanctioned countries including the people living in the Occupied Palestinian Territories.

While shortage of food and limitation of access to healthcare creates enough challenges for deprived communities, lack of equal access to education is yet another serious problem that jeopardizes the living standard for the future generation of sanctioned populations. Under sanctions, even middle-income families see the value of education deprioritized among more immediate needs and they are forced to make trade-offs between future lives and current livelihoods, because of the lack of financial means to pay for books, supplementary materials, transportation, and even food and snacks for their children. When the level of poverty increases in communities, many families prefer their children to be breadwinners rather than school students. Also in many cases, the student themselves feel the financial pressure, and some are more sensitive towards the burden of their education's cost on their families. Even without their parents' consent, many of them decide to sacrifice their future by leaving school and working to help their parents and siblings.

On the other hand, under sanctions, free educational programmers for children at primary and secondary schools are cancelled, upgrades to educational facilities get postponed and

transportation links are partially or totally cut, teachers and administrators face job insecurity and various sections of education system is destructively affected by sanctions.

ODVV expresses concern over the harmful effect of unilateral sanctions on the rate of school attendance of children residing in impoverished areas as well as the infrastructure of the educational system that negatively affects the future lives of these children in sanctioned countries.

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 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 the human rights of the target populations, ODVV calls on the UN SG to appoint a Special Advisor on unilateral coercive measures to find ways to prevent, the sufferings and the “collective punishment”¹ of civilian populations by unilateral sanctions.

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 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. A/HRC/42/46; A/HRC/39/54