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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 Afro-European Medical and Research Network, 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.

[7 March 2019]

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



Impact of scientific on Iranian researchers

This brief report on the impact of scientific sanctions on Iranian researchers covers the following issues:

- a) Impacts related to getting visa in order to attend international conferences, meetings, etc.;
- b) Financial difficulties due to international sanctions; and
- c) Complicated problems related to establishing joint research activities with research institutions or foreign universities.

Each of the above issues need to be elaborated upon separately so that their different aspects and impacts could be analysed in detail.

- Issues related to obtaining visa

Iranian researchers need to attend different international scientific meetings, conferences, etc. Therefore, they need to apply and to get visa in order to travel to different countries around the world. As an Iranian researcher and a lawyer who is in contact with many fellow researchers who contact me to get my legal advice, I could observe that it has been (and it has become more and more) very difficult for Iranian researchers to get visa to travel to the European Union, or Canada or the United States of America. It is clear that after receiving the visa rejection decisions and studying them carefully, normally one cannot find “international sanctions” on the list of reasons for rejection of a visa application. However, when the reasons mentioned in the decisions are not really related to actual specifications of the application, one can logically presume that the real reason behind the rejection decision was (and continues to be) the international sanctions imposed on the Islamic Republic of Iran.

- Financial difficulties

Every research activity requires financial support in its different phases. Getting financial support from different scientific organizations in the form of loan or fund is a normal way of meeting the heavy load of financial charges required for every real scientific project. Further, providing Iranian researchers who are involved in different scientific projects around the world with financial support requires transferring money to their banking accounts in their country of temporary residence. International sanctions imposed on banking operation with or from Iran makes it very difficult or almost impossible to get financial support for internationally approved scientific projects or to provide Iranian researchers with even minimum financial support around the world. In this way, these researches have to stop their scientific researches to return to Iran. As long as these financial complications continue to establish barriers for scientific researches and Iranian researchers, it would be very difficult to expect scientific development and progress in Iran because real scientific development and progress call for international cooperation.

- Existing Barriers in establishing joint research activities

One of the best ways of helping a country to benefit from its scientific capacity in order to establish and manage scientific projects for Iran is to conclude joint research activities with foreign universities or research institutions who are interested in sending their researchers to Iran or to allow Iranian researchers to travel to their countries to be involved in joint research projects. International sanctions make these activities more and more difficult.

Legal barriers as well as the overall hostile political environment that these projects have been facing recently have made it very difficult for Iranian researchers to find enough breathing space to start or continue such joint research activities. Pressures imposed on universities and research institutions to stop their activities with or in Iran has resulted in either reducing the level of scientific collaboration or stoppage of these activities altogether.

Conclusion

Scientific activities by nature need to be beyond and above political disputes and differences. Researchers in various fields of science are normally working to progress scientific researches in their own field of study and research. International sanctions imposed on Iran makes it very difficult to Iranian researchers to get visa, to attend different scientific gatherings, to obtain financial support for their projects or to establish and manage joint research projects with their fellow researchers around the world.

New mechanisms need to be established to allow science and scientific researchers to get back their scientific freedom that is the cornerstone of every scientific activity globally.

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