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Written statement* submitted by Imam Ali's Popular Students Relief Society, a non-governmental organization in general consultative status

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[6 February 2019]

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



Unilateral Sanctions against the Islamic Republic of Iran

During the First World War from 1914 to 1918, despite declaration of neutrality, the Islamic Republic of Iran got invaded by the greatest powers of that time. Drastic sanctions were imposed Iran against import of food to the extent that according to estimations, some 40% of the population starved to death. A war had started in another continent, yet one of its most catastrophic consequences occurred in Iran and the country fell victim due to prevention of food imports to the country.

Years passed and the world once again encountered a bloody battle in World War II. After two consecutive world wars in which and numerous innocents people were killed, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was adopted in 1948 to protect lives of people in each corner of the world from war, famine, injuries, and fatalities rooted in politicians' indefinite appetite for power and money. However, this has only remained a declaration and the world still witnesses human rights violations in different names and for different excuses.

In political disputes, the nations are the ones who are being sacrificed. Today, this could be well observed in different parts of the world. When looking at the history behind these political discords, no signs of appreciation, nor any fruitful efforts to improve human rights, hygiene, health and educations could be seen. Although many of these disputes were started for such excuses, what has happened has actually weakened human rights, hygiene, health and life quality factors.

Years of sanctions imposed against Iran has merely caused brokers who bypass the sanctions to rake in money. People of Iran have paid pounds of their flesh for these bypasses which have caused reduction in their standards of living. In the past year, these sanctions caused a significant increase in unemployment rate in different industries and therefore pushed more people into poverty. Moreover, protection of structure of family which has been emphasized in Declaration of Human Rights faced deep insecurity due to financial difficulties imposed on families which in turn result in an increase in the number of divorces and mental breakdowns in the society.

Workers were left unpaid for consecutive months during last year for critical financial problems caused by financial sanctions. This has caused many Iranian families to be negligent about their nutrition, health, hygiene, education, sports and other parameters for basic life and face struggles on a daily basis.

The effect of these sanctions in different aspects especially in healthcare is more visible among middle and lower classes of the society. As the sanctions get stricter, inflation rate increases and therefore more people are incapable of affording their medication and in most cases prefer to terminate their treatments. This issue is more important for special diseases like cancer, the medical costs of which are significantly higher and in many cases results in death of the patient. Deaths which in many cases are accompanied with extreme pain for patients and financial, and emotional losses for their families.

According to Article 25 of the Declaration of Human Rights, "Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing, and medical care..." In addition, Article 30 of the same Declaration states "Nothing in this Declaration may be interpreted as implying for any State, group or person any right to engage in any activity or to perform any act aimed at the destruction of any of the rights and freedoms set forth herein." Therefore, since imposing sanctions has clearly caused significant problems in health standards and social welfare of the people of Iran, especially labourers and lower classes, and expanded poverty, it is a violation of Declaration of Human Rights and we ask the international community not to keep silent. It is definite that for political disputes there are political solutions which would work better than sanctions. Solutions that would neither affect lives of a nation nor expand poverty as the source of all problems.
