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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 (ODVV), 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.

[19 August 2019]

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



Panel on Human Rights and Unilateral Coercive Measures

Unilateral Coercive Measures (UCMs) contradict with the UN Charter and international law because they undermine, among other things, the principles of sovereignty, territorial integrity, political independence, self-determination and non-interference that are considered as international commitment of all States.

In addition to violation of international law, UCMs are designed to deprive people from all human rights including the right to life and the right to health as well as crippling all aspects of the right to development in countries that should receive support to be able to address the multiple challenges of meeting development goals.

In recent years, the near-unanimous adoption of the UN General Assembly annual resolutions on the necessity of ending Unilateral Coercive Measures against Cuba¹ and the Human Rights Council Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela resolutions² indicates that a universal consensus is emerging on the negative impact of UCMs on violation of human rights and undermining the credibility of international law while few States still insist on over-using UCMs against others in order to force them to change their policies.

While there seems to be a concerted view on condemning UCMs, among the member states, as inhuman measures that fail to meet their political objectives³, a “United Nations declaration on the negative impact of unilateral coercive measures on the enjoyment of all human rights, including the right to development” seems to be a promising step forward.

In this regard, the Organization for Defending Victims of Violence (ODVV) stresses on the necessity of including a compensation mechanism in the Declaration or any other instrument which is going to be adopted to control the increasing flow of unilateral sanctions under the rule of international law. It is vitally important that the right of all UCM victims to an adequate remedy including sufficient financial compensation is guaranteed in the instrument. It is hoped that the monetary loss will make the UCM source courtiers to think twice before over-using UCMs against defenceless civilians in target countries, and at the same time mitigate the sufferings of UCM victims including all who have suffered loss of life and health.

Also, ODVV echoes the recommendation made by the Special Rapporteur on the negative impact of unilateral coercive measures on the enjoyment of human rights, Mr. Idriss Jazairy, on the appointment of a Special Representative of the Secretary General on Unilateral Coercive Measures, so that the process of UCM relief is facilitated in target countries, the extensive use of UCMs is controlled and the process of prohibition of UCMs as illegal, inhuman measures is accelerated. We believe that UCMs are forms of collective punishment and in some cases amount to “crimes against humanity”⁴ by targeting thousands of lives and they need to be stopped as soon as possible.

¹ General Assembly resolution 73/8 is the latest in a long series of Assembly resolutions, adopted annually since 1992, on the necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States against Cuba.

² e.g. A/HRC/40/L.5.

³ There are no reports indicating that the UCMs target countries surrender to UCMs.

⁴ A/HRC/39/47/Add.1.