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Written statement* submitted by Organization for Defending Victims of Violence, 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.

[03 February 2020]

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

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Impact of comprehensive Unilateral Coercive Measures (UCM)s on international cooperation

Organization for Defending Victims of Violence (ODVV) statement submitted in line with the Study of the Advisory Committee on the role of technical assistance and capacity-building in fostering mutually beneficial cooperation in promoting and protecting human rights (HRC res. 37/23)

International cooperation and the sharing of practices are essential to the efforts undertaken by States towards the advancement of the enjoyment of human rights and the strengthening of the mechanisms established to that aim. In fact, the UN Human Rights Council itself was created on the basis of the purpose and principles of the UN Charter, including achieving international cooperation in the promotion of human rights.

Also, 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development cannot be achieved without the serious cooperation of the countries around the world. Solidarity is the key to reach international peace and fight against hunger, poverty, inequality and climate change.

Cooperation among developing countries, south-south cooperation, is an important factor for these countries to generate both new ideas and concrete projects to enable voices from the Global South, to drive innovation, and promote human rights and development.

South-South cooperation refers to the technical cooperation among developing countries in the Global South. It is a tool used by the states, international organizations, academics, civil society and the private sector to collaborate and share knowledge, skills and successful initiatives in specific areas such as agricultural development, human rights, culture, technical domains, urbanization, health, climate change etc.

However, these policies and initiatives require fiscal space which is an ongoing dilemma for several developing countries. Public expenditure needs greater support and resources. For instance, sanctions on the Islamic Republic of Iran (Iran) have negatively affected non-targeted neighbouring States, such as Pakistan, by blocking a gas pipeline project critical for Pakistan to overcome its grave energy crisis.

Unfortunately, the political use of human rights and following double-standards, prevent the promotion of human rights and sustainable development around the world, increase violence and endanger international peace and security. The and silence of the world towards the extensive and systematic violation of the human rights of the people of Iran due to the re-imposition of harsh and illegal sanctions, is proof to the claim.

The United States of America's (USA) economic war¹ against Iran, despite the false claims made by the US leaders, have blocked Iran's vital economic arteries and crippled financial transactions in such way that the government has had budget shortages for most domestic infrastructural issues. Furthermore, the maximum pressure policy by the United States puts increasing daily pressures on ordinary citizens of the country and causes problems in their living.

International cooperation for supporting development and promotion of human rights, requires mutual trust and when companies are threatened to be fines by the USA for having trades with Iran, they prefer to avoid such trades and we cannot expect international cooperation to take place. Economic war against Iran, Cuba, the Gaza Strip, Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela etc. has created problems for all these countries and all other countries who have financial trades with them.

For instance, the comprehensive unilateral sanctions on Iran have negatively affected non-targeted neighbouring States, such as Pakistan, by blocking a gas pipeline project critical for Pakistan to overcome its grave energy crisis.

Comprehensive sanctions on oil and technology cause problems for growth and development. Most companies which provide software and hardware services, prefer to completely avoid

¹ As stated by the Special Rapporteur on unilateral coercive measures (UCM) in his 2019 report to the UN General Assembly: A/74/165.

any trades with Iran since they cannot separate legal and illegal services in the highly complex comprehensive sanctions process.

The ODVV believes that comprehensive Unilateral Coercive Measures (UCM) have an adverse impact on the enjoyment of human rights of the civilian population of targeted States and, in some cases, non-targeted States.

The right to life, the right to an adequate standard of living, including food, clothing, housing and the right to medical care, and health are in serious danger due to comprehensive UCMs that amount to economic warfare.²

Believing that international cooperation for promotion of human rights must be based on mutual trust and amicable relations of countries, ODVV urges the Human Rights Council to investigate the destructive impacts of unilateralism on the improvement of human rights and attainment of development goals in countries targeted by UCMs, and to present necessary recommendations to the international community in this regard.

Also, ODVV urges the Human Rights Council to mandate the Advisory Committee to study the negative impact of the UCMs that amount to economic warfare on technical assistance and capacity-building for fostering mutually beneficial cooperation in promoting and protecting human rights.

² Ibid.