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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, 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.

[31 May 2020]

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

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Violation of the rights of aboriginal women and children in Canada including discrimination against indigenous women and girls in all sectors of life and in the world of work

Structural and systematic discrimination against Canada's aboriginal people in general and women and girls in particular, has had a long period of pain and humiliation for the original occupants of this land, in such a way that it has turned into one of serious human rights concerns. This is while the Canadian government deems the date of talks between the government and the aboriginal as the most failed part of the history of the Canadian people.

While expressing concern over the aboriginal communities' conditions in the country, Organization for Defending Victims of Violence (ODVV) calls for the Human Rights Council's special attention to the systematic discrimination.

The findings of a national study on missing or murdered aboriginal women and children in June 2019¹ shows that aboriginal women experience more abuse and violence than non-aboriginal women and girls in Canada. While the Canadian government is refusing to take action, the investigation and compensation for the damages caused by these abuses has failed miserably and these abuses continue increasingly on a daily basis against aboriginal women and girls.

Not putting a stop to forced sterilization of aboriginal women is equal to a form of torture, besides other forms of systematic abuse of the Canadian government against aboriginal women which has racist roots and takes place with the aim of preventing population increase of the countries aboriginal people.

Also, according to studies in Canada² in the last decade, 47 percent of aboriginal children live in high levels of poverty and almost half of their families are living on very low incomes the reflects the structural discrimination against the aboriginal people and women in equal access to well paid jobs in the world of work. According to this study, the number of poor children living in reservations reaches 53 percent, which is the highest percentage of poverty in Canada.

Recommendation

While condemning all forms of discrimination against aboriginal women, girls and children in Canada, the ODVV stresses on the necessity for the Canadian government to investigate and adopt swift measures in this regard, in view of the severity and extent of the human rights crisis. ODVV calls upon the Human Rights Council to pay special attention to this issue and call for immediate halting of the ongoing trend by the Canadian government.

Violation of the right to health of the Aboriginal Women

Placing the First Nations in more danger in the middle of the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic is another source of concern for ODVV. Lack of access of the First Nations, especially women, to clean drinking water, has made it difficult for these people to access one of their basic rights and observation of the simplest recommendation for fighting this virus – repeated washing of hands with soap and water. Most of the First Nations in Canada struggle daily to access clean water and the limitation of access threatens women's health. This is while the Congress of the Aboriginal People has deemed the actions of the Canadian government in confronting the COVID-19 virus for the First Nations discriminatory and inadequate. The permanent problems in the infrastructure of these people, such as homes with too many people living in them, lack of sewer systems and years of neglect by central governments, are problems that have threatened the health of the aboriginal women in Canada

¹ https://www.nwac.ca/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/fact_sheet_missing_and_murdered_aboriginal_women_and_girls.pdf

² https://www.thinkupstream.net/first_nations_child_poverty_rates

for years. Finally, under the current conditions, the outbreak of COVID-19 has increased the mortality rate among the aboriginal communities in Canada.

Another source of concern on the health of Canada's indigenous people under Covid-19 is that the local medical facilities are often under equipped and under staffed if there are any. ODVV finds the discrimination against indigenous people's access to health care and treatment under Covid-19 alarming and calls on Canada to address the situation.

Recommendation

While condemning the neglect and violation of the right to health of the aboriginal women and all aboriginal people, in Canada during the COVID-19 pandemic, ODVV stresses on the necessity for the Canadian government to take action with regards to the outbreak of COVID-19, based on the needs of the aboriginal people, and calls for the removal of structural problems and the problems within the medical and treatment sector for these people and facilitate their access to health infrastructures for the fight against this pandemic.
