



General Assembly

Distr.: General
24 February 2022

English only

Human Rights Council

Forty-ninth session

28 February–1 April 2022

Agenda item 3

**Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil,
political, economic, social and cultural rights,
including the right to development**

Joint written statement* submitted by The Institute for Protection of Women's Rights (IPWR), Iranian Thalassemia Society, non-governmental organizations 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.

[6 February 2022]

* Issued as received, in the language of submission only. The views expressed in the present document do not necessarily reflect the views of the United Nations or its officials.



The effects of unilateral coercive measures on access to medicine and medical equipment in the Islamic Republic of Iran

The attempts for imposition of the unilateral coercive measures against the Iranian people has led to creation and imposition of tragic impacts at the public level, and particularly on the vulnerable people in the Iranian society. The United States of America's unilateral sanctions have posed many problems on the provision of medical, laboratory and treatment services and equipment, and the sale of health- centered goods (especially in relation to vital medicines and health items) to Iran (Islamic Republic of). Imposition of such a situation has left negative irrecoverable impacts and consequences on patients' access to health items. In addition, those sanctions have created difficulties in the financial exchange, currency, insurance and transportation of companies for the import of the above-mentioned goods and products into the country. Those widespread restrictions on the supply of medicine and medical equipment direly needed by patients in Iran (Islamic Republic of), befall at a time when the United States of America officials have been claiming, in recent years, that the imposed sanctions do not include medical equipment and that they would not prevent, stop or hinder provision of medical equipment and aid to Iran (Islamic Republic of); but we have been witnessing and experiencing that the imposed extensive sanctions against Iranian banks have severely limited Iran (Islamic Republic of) ability to even pay for the importation of humanitarian goods; and the United States of America, through measures such as imposition of sanctions on Iranian banking institutions, has effectively curtailed and caused serious difficulties on the process of import of food, medicine and medical equipment.

On the basis of international human rights instruments, the right of access to essential medicines is recognized as part of the fundamental right to "enjoy the highest attainable standard of health" or the same as the "right to health" in the international human rights system, to which many other human rights are also dependent. This right has been enshrined in various humanitarian and human rights conventions and instruments, including Article 25 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and Article 12 of the Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. Therefore, any international sanction that restrict the access of citizens to food and medicine, in any way, violate the above-mentioned conventions, Jus Cogens and customary international law, and in this regard, the government that imposes sanctions is, hence, internationally accountable. Also, according to international instruments, including Article 55 (b) of the Charter of the United Nations and the rules of the World Health Organization, the principle of sanction, especially the imposition of sanctions against medicine, is in contradiction with the principle of justice and human rights. Thus, the imposition of such sanctions is a blatant example of the violation of human rights and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. It should be emphasized that the right to food and medicine in time of war is also one of issues addressed in the four Geneva Conventions of 1949 and its two Additional Protocols. On this basis, the imposition of sanctions on medical item are among the humanitarian cases of the Charter of the United Nations, which should be avoided and not resorted to, in any way, not even in the time of war. As a result, every impartial human being is of the belief that imposition of sanctions on medical items constitutes violation against humanity and the international human rights law.

The Institute for the Protection of Women's Rights (IPWR), in collaboration with the EB (Epidermolysis bullosa) Home, Iranian Thalassemia Society, and MPS Society of Iran (under the Rare Diseases foundation of Iran), as non-governmental organizations advocating for the rights of special patients in Iran (Islamic Republic of), explicitly states that the increasing and worsening trend of medical sanctions in recent years has led to the silent deaths of a significant number of innocent patients, including women and children, causing irreparable harm to special patients and inflicting constant pain and suffering on them. The lack of essential medicines for those patients to advance the healing process has put their condition in a dangerous aggravating situation. Many companies which exclusively manufacture the medicines needed by the patients, such as Monica of Sweden, BioMarin Pharmaceutical Inc. of the United States of America have refused to export the needed medicine to Iran (Islamic Republic of) due to the impossibility of financial transfers and fear of punishment and punitive measures by the United States of America institutions. Recalling that unilateral

coercive measures deprive the affected population of the full realization of their human rights which impede their social welfare, especially for women, children, the elderly and special patients, the afore-mentioned organizations call for the complete and immediate lifting of the ongoing unilateral coercive measures against the Iranian people. They emphasize that it must be ensured that humanitarian aid reaches those patients without any delay or obstruction and reduce their suffering. While appreciating the efforts of the UN Special Rapporteur on the Negative Impact of the Unilateral Coercive Measures on the Enjoyment of Human Rights to draw the attention of the international community to the consequences of the unilateral sanctions imposed against the Iranian people, the above-mentioned organizations call on the Special Procedures mandate holders to take every necessary step to lift and reduce the impacts of the cruel unilateral sanctions.

The EB Home and The MPS Society of Iran, NGO(s) without consultative status, also share the views expressed in this statement.