



# General Assembly

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## Human Rights Council

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### Human rights situations that require the Council's attention

## **Written statement\* submitted by International Association of Justice Watch, 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.

[7 February 2022]

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\* 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.



## **Interactive Dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran Lessons Learnt during the New Normal: Universality Re-considered**

The universal human rights has a long way ahead to its full realization as it still confronts the grave inequities and poverty, discriminatory policies, and inadequate living standards across the world.

The COVID-19 pandemic even made the situation worse by widening the social divisions, leaving children behind from school experiences, and restricting access to health care, specifically in case of those who had been susceptible to human rights violations.

The Islamic Republic of Iran was not an exception in suffering pains of the pandemics which reduced its GDP over 5 percent and made the employment levels fall by over 1 million YoY, according to the World Bank. It was simultaneous with the most severe unilateral coercive measures (UCMs) imposed by the United States of America. These inhumane sanctions blocked the inter-bank transactions system (SWIFT), meaningfully restricted Iranians' access to the food and pharmaceutical purchases, and refrained from obtaining raw materials to manufacture vaccines.

A majority of Iranians, thus, consider such illegal and illegitimate acts as embodiments of the health and economic terrorism which not only caused difficulties in providing medications for COVID patients, but also badly affected other vulnerable groups like patients with chronic diseases such as cancer for whom the cost of treatment has increased to 30 times due to the announced "paralyzing" UCMs.

The mentioned challenges are serious and require a global commitment to be addressed. This, though, doesn't mean that everyday life in the Islamic Republic of Iran is anything other than a normal experience similar to many other countries.

Lessons learnt during the pandemics pushed for much investment in infrastructure and engaging the youth in decision-making positions. The science parks, whose number has increased to 19% since 2013, became the hubs for research on biotechnology and stem cells, making diagnostic kits, developing ventilators and vaccine R&Ds. Regarding the fact that 30% of university professors are women and they also make up about 40% of medical doctors (MDs), one may imagine their big share in such projects.

Digital transformation during the pandemics would definitely continue to have a great impact on the overall economic development, and women's entrepreneurship. Women-founded virtual startups have multiplied in this period of time in the Islamic Republic of Iran as the Vice President for Science and Technology in cooperation with the Ministry of Communications and Information Technology have developed the virtual marketplaces based on 63 startups and 10 community engagement facilitators. Nevertheless, the development of women's virtual business stands as a national priority and the 'National Plan of ICT Priorities for Women's Empowerment' is being currently prepared in an intersectional working group for reducing the digital gender gap.

Iranians response to this pandemic encompasses the civil society activation, in terms of awareness campaigns and voluntary medical services even in remote areas, along with the policy improvements such as safeguarding the most vulnerable populations to human rights violations. The latter has significant examples such as protecting children from violence through ratification of the Bill on Protecting Minors and Adolescents, activation of the "123" hotline, and the establishment of 17 Specialized Clinics for Children's Rights across the country for further necessary consultations. These were few among many instances to be recalled here as steps taken by the Islamic Republic of Iran for developing the situation of human rights toward a more inclusive and accountable framework.

Ultimately, the International Association of Justice Watch is to recommend the following points:

1. Take note that that the universality of the human rights shall not be the object of limited political ends as the Human Rights Council is not expected to fall

into imperial avarice of some countries, underestimating its obligation to protect all nations in an equal status.

2. Urge the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran to have a comprehensive and balanced view on achievements and shortcomings, take a fair position based on dialogue with parties of diverse orientations, and avoid politically overloaded language.
  3. Urge the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran to re-consider the depth of the negative consequences of the UCMs with specific regards to women and children's human rights.
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