



# General Assembly

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## Human Rights Council

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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 Medical Support Association for Underprivileged Iranian Patients, 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.

[5 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.



## **Impact of Unilateral Coercive Measures on Cancer Patients**

Even though humanitarian goods are exempt from sanctions, but the existence of other sanctions such as banking and transactions, have created challenges for drugs manufacturers and also the consumers. Restrictions on money transfers for the purchase of drugs or equipment as well as causing problems in sending merchandise to the Islamic Republic of Iran, also have made speedy and extensive access to these humanitarian goods more difficult.

A sector which has been threatened more than others with these restrictions is nuclear medicine. A field which is necessary for diagnostic testing of pat-scan for cancer patients, but due to it being linked to the Iranian nuclear energy industry, it has been put under the pressure of sanctions.

Pars Isotope Co. is the only supplier of radioactive drugs used in the Islamic Republic of Iran's nuclear medicine centres. It is one of the companies which following the United States of America's unilateral withdrawal from JCPOA, was added to the list of sanctions by the United States of America Department of Treasury. This inhuman resulted in the disruption of diagnosis and treatments related to radioactive drugs which includes more than 180 nuclear medicine centres in the Islamic Republic of Iran and each year provides more than one million patients with health services.(1)

The executive director of this company has clearly said that the activities of this company are only for medical goals, and each year around one million patients use the company's products. According to the reports of the United States of America Department of the Treasury website Pars Isotope Co. has been sanctioned as "company in connection with the Iranian Atomic Energy Organization." (2)

Another problem is the delay in delivery of raw materials that are used for manufacturing of radioactive drugs, following the impacts of unilateral coercive measures. These materials usually have very low shelf-lives and the matter of their speedy transportation is very crucial. According to nuclear pharmaceutical experts, the raw materials of these drugs are like ice and if they are not delivered in time, they melt and deteriorate. When due to sanctions and restrictions to the aeronautics services the delivery of these drugs are disrupted, not only what is delivered is less than the real requirements, but this results in patients diagnostics tests be postponed and they cannot start any treatment until accurate diagnosis is made.

Lack of enough and cheap access to cancer drugs, particularly for child patients, is another serious concern of this NGO, something that WHO has also echoed.

According to the announcement of this organization, the inherent complexities of fighting cancer and the disease put together and have turned it into one of the most serious threats to public health in the Islamic Republic of Iran. Currently this country is struggling with a notable weight of NCDs which make up 82 percent of fatalities in the country. Meanwhile, cancer is the third cause of death and the trend is on the increase.

Each year in the Islamic Republic of Iran 3500 children are diagnosed with cancer, and one out of two succumb to the disease. Access to cheap and good quality children's cancer drugs has become a serious problem due to unilateral sanctions which has affected the manufacturing of these vital lifesaving drugs. These sanctions were imposed following the United States of America's unilateral withdrawal from the Islamic Republic of Iran nuclear agreement in May 2018. This resulted in the prohibition of Iranian inter-bank transactions with the global banking system. Alongside the excessive observation of global suppliers who are active in the United States of America markets, this resulted in major disruptions in the imports of finished products, medicinal raw materials and medical equipment, also rise in drugs prices and shortage of around 70 vital drugs for critical diseases, such as specialised cancer drugs. It must be said that all cancer patients need uninterrupted, continued and safe access to necessary drugs studies show that a four-week delay in starting of treatment can result in a 10 percent increase in fatalities among cancer patients. (3)

This is while the United States of America continues to insist that humanitarian activities are exempt from sanctions, while at the same time the ICC has announced that these exemptions are not enough and with the sanctions remaining there's not much hope for improvement in conditions and reduction of the destructive consequences on the health and lives of Iranians.

The Medical Support for Iranian Impoverished Patients Association while deems unilateral coercive measures as an example of crime of violation of the right to health and crimes against humanity, calls on the Human Rights Council, especially the Special Rapporteur on the Right to Health to condemn these inhuman measures, in unison with the Special Rapporteur on Unilateral Coercive Measures.

Also this Association calls on the Special Rapporteur on Unilateral Coercive Measures to make efforts to convince the international community on the basis of the urgency of the lifting of drugs sanctions, particularly cancer patients medicines and radioactive medicines, and to more seriously be in line with other UN mechanisms to put maximum pressure on sanction imposing states to lift the sanctions.

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1- <https://abcnews.go.com/international/us-withdrawal-iran-nuclear-deal-restored-sanctions>

2- <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2020/04/01/2020-06652/notice-of-ofac-sanctions-actions>

3- <https://www.who.int/about/accountability/results/who-results-report-2020-mtr/country-story/2020/systematic-approach-of-cancer-in-the-islamic-republic-of-iran-emergency-interventions-for-children-information-management-system-national-cancer-control-program>