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Human rights situations that require the Council's attention

Written statement* submitted by International Council Supporting Fair Trial and Human Rights, 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.

[22 May 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.



Dimensions of Unilateral Sanctions and their Impact on Human Rights in the Syrian Arab Republic

For a decade, the Syrian Arab Republic has been subjected to a vicious war and catastrophic aggression that has targeted all aspects of life in the Syrian Arab Republic and has had a clear impact on human life and the enjoyment of legitimate human rights in the Syrian Arab Republic. The catastrophic consequences of this past decade have not been confined to the tragedies of the war, but to the further suffering caused by the unprecedented amount of unilateral international sanctions imposed on it far from all international instruments and norms.

Since the outbreak of unrest in the Syrian Arab Republic in 2011, the series of economic sanctions against the Syrian Arab Republic, headed by the Caesar Act, launched by the United States of America and the European Union, has begun to put great pressure on all aspects of the economy and livelihood, causing terrible repercussions on people's lives. In 10 years of the ongoing crisis and a grinding war, the Syrian's Arab Republic economy has lost two-thirds of its potential. The consequences of war and sanctions had brought the majority of Syrians below the poverty line.

The Syrian's Arab Republic economy has been subjected to systematic destruction, causing it to collapse dramatically, and the Syrian Arab Republic needs to obtain the necessary humanitarian assistance and rebuild its infrastructure by relying on foreign assistance. However, the United States of America Treasury Department's designation of the Central Bank of the Syrian Arab Republic as a money-laundering suspect clearly creates unnecessary obstacles to foreign aid dealings with the Syrian Arab Republic and humanitarian imports.

The wide range of the United States of America and Western sanctions on the Syrian Arab Republic may also target any foreigners who assist in the reconstruction process or even employees of companies and foreign humanitarian agencies who help rebuild the Syrian Arab Republic. Thus, these laws contain the largest-ever range of sanctions against the Syrian Arab Republic, which will inevitably exacerbate the already difficult humanitarian situation in the Syrian Arab Republic, especially in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, and expose the Syrian people to the dangers of grave human rights violations.

While the United States of America, when declaring the first sanctions under these laws, claimed that it did not intend to harm the Syrian people, the reality is that the application of these laws could make the humanitarian crisis worse and deprive Syrians of the opportunity to rebuild their important infrastructure. In fact, forcing people in the Syrian Arab Republic to live under degrading and inhumane conditions because of the prohibition of reconstruction and because of sanctions and blockades may affect their psychological and physical well-being and may in some circumstances amount to cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment.

Over the past years, the Syrian Government has endeavored to avoid the effects of the war, sanctions, and economic blockade imposed on it by strengthening its food security and trying to cover the need for wheat through local agriculture, but this has not come to fruition as a result of the decline in land available and suitable for agriculture. In addition to the weather factors, not to mention that large swathes of Syrian territory in the east and northeast of the country remain under the control of the United States of America-backed forces. Here it is worth noting that these lands are an important artery for the Syrian economy as they produce huge quantities of wheat in addition to concentrating oil wealth in them.

The International Council Supporting Fair Trial and Human Rights stressed the importance of the need to respect the Syrian people's right to adequate housing and to ensure their access to basic services. In addition, the International Council stresses that the application of the current sanctions regimes has contributed to the further suffering of the Syrian people, as well as to the deterioration of the humanitarian situation, contrary to the stated intentions of these sanctions.

The International Council Supporting Fair Trial and Human Rights considers that the sanctions imposed on Syria will inevitably exacerbate the already difficult humanitarian situation, particularly in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, and expose the Syrian people to the dangers of grave violations of human rights. Hence, the International Council

in Support of a Fair Trial and Human Rights calls on all Member States to pressure the Government of the United States of America to lift unilateral sanctions against the Syrian Arab Republic that could hinder the reconstruction of civilian infrastructure destroyed by the conflict. The International Council also stresses that the continued imposition of such sanctions by the United States of America and the European Union constitutes a grave violation of human rights and undoubtedly contributes to the further suffering of the Syrian people, which requires urgent international action to pressure the United States of America and the European Union to stop this tragedy.
