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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.

[5 February 2023]

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



The Human Rights Situation In The Syrian Arab Republic

For a full decade, the Syrian Arab Republic was subjected to a fierce war that targeted all walks of life and left catastrophic effects on human life and the possibility of enjoying legitimate rights. The effects of the war did not stop there, but it reached further suffering caused by international sanctions that are furthest from all international conventions and international norms.

Since the outbreak of the war on the Syrian Arab Republic in 2011, the series of economic sanctions against the Syrian Arab Republic that was launched, led by the “Caesar Act” launched by the United States of America and adopted by the European Union, put huge pressure on the Syrian economy, and due to the side effects of war and sanctions, most Syrians are now living below poverty lines.

The Syrian economy has been significantly affected during the war years. The scale of the human and economic losses suffered by the Syrian people has increased. By 2021, the economic losses of the war reached \$1.2 trillion United States of America dollars. The costs resulted largely from the destruction of infrastructure and mass displacement caused by a decade of war. Likewise, the Syrian economic output shrank by 60%, and the value of the national currency fell to its lowest point in history.

Likewise, the Syrian government has sought to normalize its relations with several Arab, regional, and international countries, with the aim of working to secure the voluntary and safe return of Syrian refugees who immigrated from their country due to the scourge of war.

More than 90% of the population lives below the poverty line, and more than 12.4 million Syrians - out of a total population estimated at around 16 million - are food insecure, according to the World Food Programme, an alarming increase of 3.1 million in one year. More than 600 thousand children suffer from chronic malnutrition and over 13.1 million Syrians are in need of humanitarian assistance across the Syrian Arab Republic.

Likewise, Syrian educational institutions have been subjected to an organized process of vandalism, while the number of schools in the Syrian Arab Republic at the levels of basic and secondary education exceeded 22,500 schools, including about 5.5 million students receiving free education. The number of schools has decreased by almost half due to the destruction and vandalism that they were subjected to, which deprived millions of students of completing education and entering the illiteracy market, which has negative behavioural effects on children. Alongside the latter, and in an unprecedented step, what is called the “Syrian Democratic Forces” banned teaching the official Syrian curriculum in areas under its control, closed public schools, and deprived more than 1.5 million students of education, and all of this was sponsored and protected by the United States of America.

Furthermore, within the framework of the policy of starving the Syrian people, the American forces and their allies are stealing Syrian oil, about 60 thousand barrels every day, at a time when the Syrians are suffering from the loss of heating resources and fuel for transportation, and that is what the agricultural irrigation engines need, which affects the production of wheat, barley, and cotton, and deprives farmers of their source of living, in addition to the death of millions of livestock due to the lack of fodder. The water war can be added on top of what was mentioned, as the Syrian Arab Republic’s share of the Euphrates River declined from 500 cubic meters per second to less than 250 cubic meters, which caused the exit of thousands of hectares of land from agriculture and the receding of the river water and death of hundreds of thousands of livestock, resulting environmental pollution, which is what helped in the emergence of diseases and pandemics such as cholera and others in those areas, as well as the population migrating from the bed of the Euphrates River, and the water level in the dam decreased to its lowest levels.

It is worth noting that the continuation of the tragic situation in the Syrian Arab Republic is a result of the continuous military interventions of many countries that were and still are trying to impose their control over some Syrian lands, benefit from the economic wealth and impose their control over the geostrategic reality in the region.

In addition, the suffering of the Syrian people increases in the territories occupied by Türkiye, as Türkiye and the military factions it supports violate the rights of civilians and restrict their

freedoms without accountability. Türkiye is still repeating its threat of a military incursion into parts of northern Syrian Arab Republic, with all the fears that this entails regarding refugees and displaced persons, and the implications for the Syrians detained in that region. Knowing that this planned Turkish incursion is the fourth in northern Syrian Arab Republic since 2016, without forgetting that the previous incursions were fraught with human rights violations. We appreciate all the efforts of friendly countries seeking to end this situation.

On the other hand, the American forces continue to control many areas in Deir Ezzor and Al-Hasakah and extend their control over the oil fields and agricultural areas, thus depriving the Syrian people of their wealth.

On the other hand, Israel continues its attacks on Syrian territory through a series of air raids and missile strikes that leave a large number of civilian casualties and great damage to infrastructure, in flagrant violation of international law. It is noteworthy that the Israeli attacks affected various civilian facilities, the most important of which was Damascus International Airport, which was repeatedly subjected to missile strikes, causing it to be temporarily out of service. Despite the Syrian Foreign Ministry sending multiple letters and complaints to the UN Security Council and the United Nations, Israel continues to carry out its aggression repeatedly without the slightest degree of questioning or accountability.

In addition to the aforementioned challenges, the unfair unilateral sanctions, imposed by the United States of America, the European Union, and many countries on the Syrian Arab Republic, remain an obstacle to securing basic needs and materials that are essential for the Syrian people. These sanctions have severely impacted the lives of Syrian citizens represented in the scarcity of food sources, oil derivatives and medicines, which has increased the suffering of the Syrian people over the years of the crisis.

International Council Supporting Fair Trial and Human Rights calls for lifting unilateral sanctions imposed on the Syrian Arab Republic and make immediate action to allow the Syrian government to re-secure the necessities of life, including food sources, medicines, oil derivatives, and others, without restriction or condition. In addition, the International Council Supporting Fair Trial and Human Rights calls for the accountability of the countries that participated in the war on the Syrian Arab Republic and funded armed groups and push them to contribute to compensation for war victims, financing reconstruction, facilitating the return of refugees, and ensuring a decent life for the Syrian people in a way that guarantees human rights in the Syrian Arab Republic.
