



# General Assembly

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## Human Rights Council

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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 Organization for Defending Victims of Violence, Fundación Latinoamericana por los Derechos Humanos y el Desarrollo Social, 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.

[21 August 2021]

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\* Issued as received, in the language(s) of submission only.



## Continued Imposition of UCMs is Alarming

We are deeply alarmed by the continuation of imposition of unprecedented unilateral coercive measures (UCM)s during the emergency of the Covid-19 pandemic which is intensified by the spread of new variants in target countries including Cuba, the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela. We are further appalled by the bitter reality that the repeated calls made by the UN Experts,<sup>1</sup> the UN Secretary-General<sup>2</sup> and the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights<sup>3</sup> to eliminate or ease sanctions during the pandemic only lead the sanctioning States to tighten their grip on targeted countries.

Following the repeated comments made on the negative impacts of UCMs in the Human Rights Council for the past years, one more time, we reiterate on the fact that unilateral coercive measures violate the principles of international law, including the prohibition of the use of force, non-intervention into domestic affairs of States, non-discrimination, sovereign equality and above all, promotion and protection of human rights. In addition, the measures undermine the global role of the UN as the main lawmaking body in the international arena.

We echo the concerns expressed by UN experts that UCMs have proved to be deadly during COVID pandemic and the humanitarian exemptions are not working.

Research has proved that UCMs systematically violate all economic, social and cultural rights including the right to life,<sup>4</sup> therefore they must be stopped.

We support the Special Rapporteur's recommendation that the humanitarian impact of unilateral sanctions shall be assessed<sup>5</sup> and believes that Sanctioning States shall become subject to reporting obligations when imposing sanctions, with appropriate UN monitoring mechanisms evaluating the consequences of sanctions on target populations for their humanitarian impact.

## Recommendations

Considering the mass killings of UCM victims in silence, resulted by limitation of access to medicine, medical equipment, vaccine and food, under Covid-19 pandemic, we urge the UN Special Rapporteur on the negative impact of unilateral coercive measures on the enjoyment of human rights to use all capacities at hand to eliminate the deadly effect of sanctions on targeted populations.

Considering the ineffectiveness of the calls made by the UN on easing or elimination of sanctions, we call on the Special Rapporteur to offer recommendations to the UN on how to approach the state parties' resort to UCMs that undermine the authority of the UN as the main body that processes the jurisdiction to decide on international sanctions.

Considering the scope and intensity and disproportionality of violations of human rights caused by UCMs and the alarming number of victims,<sup>6</sup> we call on the Special Rapporteur on UCMs to encourage the establishment of a compensation mechanism to mitigate for the widespread losses of UCM victims and offer recommendations on creation of such a

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<sup>1</sup> e.g. UN Experts: Sanctions proving deadly during COVID pandemic, humanitarian exemptions not working; available in <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=26155&LangID=E>.

<sup>2</sup> e.g. <https://www.un.org/press/en/2020/sgsm20024.doc.htm>.

<sup>3</sup> e.g. <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=25744&LangID=E>.

<sup>4</sup> e.g. According to a report by CEPR, in Venezuela, "sanctions death toll was recorded to amount to 40,000 lives in a one-year period": Economic Sanctions as Collective Punishment: The Case of Venezuela; cited in <http://cepr.net/publications/reports/economic-sanctions-as-collective-punishment-the-case-of-venezuela>.

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/UCM/expert-consultation-26April2021.pdf>.

<sup>6</sup> e.g. According to a report by CEPR, in Venezuela, "sanctions death toll was recorded to amount to 40,000 lives in a one-year period": Economic Sanctions as Collective Punishment: The Case of Venezuela; cited in <http://cepr.net/publications/reports/economic-sanctions-as-collective-punishment-the-case-of-venezuela>.

mechanism, with the sanctioning States being responsible to allocate a budget for the establishment and working of the mechanism.

Considering the ease of imposing unilateral sanctions, we call on the Special Rapporteur on UCMs to offer the targeted countries with recommendations on how to use the international law tribunals to hold the sanctioning countries accountable for all the genocidal effects of UCMs on their populations and the “crimes against humanity”<sup>7</sup> being committed through UCMs.

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<sup>7</sup> A/HRC/39/47/Add.1.