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**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 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.



Impact of Unilateral Coercive Measures (UCMs) on International Solidarity

We would like to welcome remarks made by the UN Independent Expert on International Solidarity in the Joint Statement with other UN Experts published on 25 March 2022, that urged States to consider humanitarian impacts when imposing or implementing sanctions.

We also note with interest, the discussion presented by the UN Independent Expert on International Solidarity - in His Excellency's report to the UN Human Rights Council (A/HRC/47/31) - on the detrimental impact of unilateral coercive measures (UCMs) on target States' COVID-19 response during the pandemic including the public access to diagnostics, therapeutics and vaccines in addition to the damages that already existed in the health and social protection systems of sanctioned countries, as a result of long-standing sanctions.

However, being concerned with all massive human rights of unilateral sanctions and in line with our previous submissions to the Human Rights Council, we would like to reiterate on the discussion presented by the Independent Expert on UCMs adding that the unilateral sanctions seriously threaten the enjoyment of all human rights by millions of people in countries - such as Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of) and Iran (Islamic Republic of) – including the right to health, life, education, food, housing, work and the right to non-discrimination.

UCMs that directly target the economy of sanctioned countries, widen income divides and deepen gaps of inequality among various social strata of the targeted populations, strengthening the factors that generate and perpetuate poverty and inequality.

Equally important and at the same time regrettable is the impact of UCMs on international solidarity. UCMs are designed to isolate targeted countries and deprive them from any international trade and cooperation. Even more troubling is the fact that, within the past two years, all the harmful UCM impacts have been exacerbated by the outbreak of the pandemic, while the sanctioning countries turned a blind eye to the repeated calls made by the UN Secretary-General and the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (1) and the UN Special Procedures mandate holders (2) - to ease sanctions during the pandemic and refrain from endangering human lives by unilateral sanctions. So far, the sanctioning countries have also intentionally overlooked other voices raised in the UN against the human rights repercussions of imposition and implementation of unilateral sanctions especially the numerous UN resolutions (3) that emphasized on the illegality of unilateral coercive measures.

Unfortunately, no statistics are available to give evidence on the number of lives lost and physical conditions worsened during the pandemic as a result of UCMs and limitation of access to medicine, medical equipment and medical care caused by the extraterritorial reach of sanctions that prevented the free flow of humanitarian goods toward sanctioned countries.

In addition to creating inequalities in access to all fundamental goods including humanitarian items, UCMs destroy trust, mutual respect and friendly relations among the sanctioned country and third States who are threatened by the sanctioning countries against getting engaged in any business with the sanctioned States. That is, UCMs serve to undermine international peace and security and opportunities for international cooperation. The techniques used in economic coercion which include diplomatic isolation; blocking of formal channels of trade as well as export and import of all goods including humanitarian items; creating serious obstacles for formal and legal financial transactions and imposing restrictions on international travel, all contribute to increasing international hostilities and diminish mutual understanding and trust among countries, threatening international peace.

Another drawback associated with economic and diplomatic isolation of sanctioned States is prohibition of international cooperation to achieve suitable development goals and promote human rights. UCMs undo the endeavors toward attainment of all Sustainable Development Goals including eradication of extreme poverty and hunger, providing equal, inclusive and quality education for all, ensuring the right to health and wellbeing for all and access to sustainable sources of energy and utilizing green technologies to protect the environment and mitigate the harmful impacts of climate change.

Considering the continuous and destructive impacts of UCMs on all human rights and international solidarity and cooperation, we would like to call on the Special Rapporteur on International Solidarity to continue supporting the mandate of the Special Rapporteur on UCMs, including by joining her public statements.

We also call on the Special Rapporteur to continue His Excellency's fruitful discussions on the adverse impact of UCMs on human rights and international solidarity, offering valuable recommendations in this regard.

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1. António Guterres, “Remarks at G-20 Virtual Summit on the COVID-19 Pandemic”, 26 March 2020, available at: www.un.org/sg/en/content/sg/speeches/2020-03-26/remarks-g-20-virtual-summit-covid-19-pandemic; António Guterres, “We Are All in This Together: Human Rights and COVID-19 Response and Recovery”, 23 April 2020, available at: www.un.org/en/un-coronavirus-communications-team/weare-all-together-human-rights-and-covid-19-response-and; “COVID-19 Shows ‘Urgent Need’ for Solidarity, UN Chief Tells Nobel Forum”, UN News, 11 December 2020, available at: <https://news.un.org/en/story/2020/12/1079802>. See also UNGA Res. 74/270, “Global Solidarity to Fight the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)”, 3 April 2020, available at: <https://undocs.org/en/A/RES/74/270>; UN Human Rights, “Bachelet Calls for Easing of Sanctions to Enable Medical Systems to Fight COVID-19 and Limit Global Contagion”, 24 March 2020, available at: www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=25744&LangID=E.
 2. Including the repeated calls by the Special Rapporteur on UCMs in individual and joint statements with other mandate holders including the UN Independent Expert on International Solidarity, e.g.: UN experts urge States to consider humanitarian impacts when imposing or implementing sanctions, available at: <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2022/03/un-experts-urge-states-consider-humanitarian-impacts-when-imposing-or>; UN Experts: Sanctions proving deadly during COVID pandemic, humanitarian exemptions not working, available at: <https://www.ohchr.org/en/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=26155&LangID=E>. OHCHR | Over-compliance with US sanctions harms Iranians’ right to health, available at: <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=27665&LangID=E>
 3. HRC Res. 15/24, 6 October 2010, paras 1–3, available at: <https://undocs.org/en/A/HRC/RES/15/24>; HRC Res. 19/32, 18 April 2012, paras 1–3, available at: <https://undocs.org/en/A/HRC/RES/19/32>; HRC Res. 24/14, 8 October 2013, paras 1–3, available at: <https://undocs.org/en/A/HRC/RES/24/14>; HRC Res. 30/2, 12 October 2015, paras 1–2, 4, available at: <https://undocs.org/en/A/HRC/RES/30/2>; HRC Res. 34/13, 24 March 2017, paras 1–2, 4, available at: <https://undocs.org/en/A/HRC/RES/34/13>; HRC Res. 45/5, 6 October 2020, Preamble, available at: <https://undocs.org/en/A/HRC/RES/45/5>. UNGA Res. 69/180, 18 December 2014, paras 5–6, available at: www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/UCM/Res/A-RES-69-180.pdf; UNGA Res. 70/151, 17 December 2015, paras 5–6, available at: www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/70/151; UNGA Res. 71/193, 19 December 2016, paras 5–6, available at: www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/71/193