



General Assembly

Distr.: General
1 June 2022

English only

Human Rights Council

Fiftieth session

13 June–8 July 2022

Agenda item 2

**Annual report of the United Nations High Commissioner
for Human Rights and reports of the Office of the
High Commissioner and the Secretary-General**

Written statement* submitted by Organization for Defending Victims of Violence, 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.



Unilateral Coercive Measures Undo Any Attempts to Fight Pandemics and Promote Human Rights

One of the purposes of the United Nations is to enhance international cooperation in order to find solutions to international problems of an economic, social, cultural or humanitarian character, and promoting respect for human rights for all people without any kind of discrimination based on race, colour, sex, language, religion, opinion or nationality, while the painful experience of the outbreak of Covid-19 has proven that the world suffers from widespread inequalities in the confrontation of international calamities.

The inequalities that existed prior to the pandemic negatively impacted the capacity of societies to face emergencies and overcome them while the Covid-19, in itself, further exacerbated the pre-existing inequalities.

Elimination of the existing inequalities is vital for improvement of human rights and obstacles should also be urgently removed in order to pave the way for States to play their central role of providing timely and effective response to crisis and pandemics which have repercussions on all human rights, specifically on the right to health and the right to life.

Unilateral coercive Measures (UCM)s which are imposed on countries beyond the authority of the United Nations create systemic inequality both within the target community and between the sanctioned country and other countries. The sanctions violate the principles of nondiscrimination described in international human rights treaties, including the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

The imposition of sanctions contradicts with the General Assembly resolution 74/270 of 2 April 2020, on global solidarity to fight the coronavirus disease, and 74/274 of 20 April 2020, on international cooperation to ensure global access to medicines, that vaccines and medical equipment to face COVID-19, because the sanctions on the banking transactions ban international cooperation and access to all humanitarian items, including medicine and vaccine.

In addition, numerous UNHRC and UNGA resolutions have considered imposition of economic sanctions as illegal (1) while the sanctioning States chose to overlook all voices raised in the UN on easing the sanctions during the pandemic, so as to enable the target States to utilize their full capacity to fight against the pandemic.

The sanctions continue to prevent international cooperation and multilateralism required for ensuring that all States, including the Islamic Republic of Iran can enjoy effective national protective measures and access to vital medical supplies, medicines and vaccines.

Morbidity and mortality caused by the COVID-19 pandemic has had negative impact on the enjoyment of all human rights, including physical and mental health and social well-being, on the economy and society and deepened inequalities within and between countries.

Considering the continued impact of UCMs on our societies, Organization for Defending Victims of Violence (ODVV) calls for international community's collective action to compensate for the damages.

ODVV emphasizes that universal, timely and equitable access to all quality and affordable medicine, medical care, diagnostic, therapeutics, and other pharmaceutical products is still essential in all sanctioned countries and the urgent removal of unjustified unilateral coercive measures, in accordance with the provisions of relevant international treaties is necessary.

Also, ODVV reiterates that guaranteeing the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health and "ensuring healthy lives and promoting well-being for all at all ages", requires States to take the necessary steps to prevent, treat and control pandemics, while they are free from unilateral coercive measures.

Therefore, in line with the UN Secretary General calls on the sanctioning countries to lift or ease Unilateral Coercive Measures (UCM)s (2), ODVV calls on the UN High Commissioner to Continue Her Excellency's call (3) for immediate removal of all UCMs all over the world in order to release the sanctioned countries of the ubiquitous and

detrimental repressions that are responsible for loss of lives and wide scoped and unnecessary human sufferings especially during the pandemic.

In addition, ODVV urges the UN High Commissionaire to effectively address malicious effects of UCMs on the millions of targeted people, specifically on the vulnerable, the children, the patients and the elderly and to find solutions to the social crisis generated by UCMs.

Finally, we echo our previous calls that UCMs hamper and reverse all efforts to achieve 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, therefore, we call on the UN High Commissionaire to discuss the widespread violations of human rights by UCMs in Her Excellency's annual reports to the United Nations.

-
1. 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>. 4 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.
 2. 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>.
 3. 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.