



## Economic and Social Council

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### Commission on the Status of Women

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Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and to the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly entitled “Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century”

### **Statement submitted by Imam Ali’s Popular Students Relief Society, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council\***

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

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\* The present statement is issued without formal editing.



## Statement

### **The economic sanctions and the livelihood of female-headed households**

The economic sanctions that have been justified as a means of pursuing and advancing human rights goals, in fact, not have only fallen short of these goals but have led to violations of human rights. This is especially the case for female-headed households living in deprived neighborhoods. The imposition of the economic sanctions in the form of trade and financial restrictions that have restricted exports and imports of products, have intensified in recent years against Iran, directly affecting the livelihoods of female-headed households.

As an organization supporting women and promoting equality and fairness, we are supporting over 1000 female-headed households in Iran. These women play a key role in the rural neighborhoods but face poverty and an unsuitable economic status. Forced to manage households on their own, these women can be divided into three categories;

- i. Women whose men are permanently absent, either because women are widowed or divorced, or because they have not married and are living alone.
- ii. Women whose men are temporarily absent due to emigration, escape, sickness, imprisonment, or military services. These groups of women must devote their lives to support their families financially.
- iii. Women whose men are present, but due to unemployment, disability, or substance addiction do not provide household income. As a result, women must take care of the whole family.

Women who are heads of households and living in the suburbs or deprived areas face many problems for themselves and their children, including the provision of affordable food, housing, medical services, and the opportunity to educate their children. In addition, in the suburbs, there are Iranian and immigrant women who for various reasons, including illegal immigration, are deprived of their identity papers and are therefore unable to qualify for insurance, which multiplies their problems.

The experience in neighboring countries, including Iraq and Syria has shown that these sanctions have a direct impact on the quality of life for women and children in various social, economic, and health dimensions, making it even more difficult to realize the Sustainable Development Goals.

The economic sanctions limit and eventually stop manufacturing jobs and reduce other job opportunities. For female-headed households, this means that women face job losses and unemployment, which may lead them to take up street peddling, brutality, and prostitution in the suburbs. In addition to the economic impact occurring broadly throughout society, there is an overwhelming increase in basic living expenses, especially for health care and food. As the family's food basket shrinks, these women become more physically vulnerable due to a lack of proper nutrition. In many cases they become disabled, which can drive them and their children into severe poverty.

Under United Nations law, sanctions should respect the economic, social, and cultural rights of people. In reality, however, and even with the exemptions announced by the United Nations, female-headed households confront many difficulties in securing a healthy, peaceful, and prosperous life for themselves and their children.