

# Annual Report 2019

Organization for Defending Victims of Violence



ODVV



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# FOREWORD

With all its ups and downs, 2019 came to an end and it was a year full of hopes and fears. The thing that was more highlighted was the rise in tensions, challenges, clashes and cracks all across the world. The majority of the developments and human rights violations in 2019, such as migrants' crisis, rise in the number of victims of human rights violations in Yemen, Myanmar, Syria, and in parts of Africa, and other thematic issues such as concerns over the environment, health, development, water and healthy diet, were escalated in most instances.

Continuation and increase of unilateral and illegal sanctions imposed by the United States against the Iranian people, once again showed that Washington has no respect for international rule of law.

Throughout the whole of 2019, the ODVV tried to reflect on positive human rights developments inside the country and broadcast the inhuman pressures of sanctions on the people of Iran to international addressees.

In this regard, all activities, researches, publications and journals, sittings and workshops held that are reflected in this Annual Report, are all the results of the tireless efforts of ODVV's directors, researchers, experts and team who either as full-time and part-time throughout the year were the scientific, research and executive capacities of our NGO, Mr. Haroot Azarian, Ms. Hamideh Aboutorabi, Mr. Esmaeel Oveisi, Ms. Sara Balkh, Ms. Negar Paidar, Mr. Lotfolah Parvaneh, Ms. Maasoomah Taghavi, Mr. Ahmadreza Salamati, Ms. Elham Shooshtarizadeh, Mr. Iman Ziabari, Ms. Maryam Erzi, Ms. Marzieh Azizian, Ms. Leila Enayati, Mr. Reza Alameh, Mr. Hassan Fartousi, Mr. Majid Feizikhah, Ms. Mansooreh Mohammadi, Ms. Somayeh Mesbahi, Ms. Farzane Mostofi-far, Ms. Sanaz Moazes, Ms. Firoozeh Mir-razavi, and also experts and counsellors from the ODVV Rehabilitation Department (Raha), Ms. Jaleh Afshari Monfared, Mr. Seyed Hassan Taghavi, Mr. Mir Saeed Jaafari, Ms. Maryam Jahangiri, Ms. Foroogh Chitsaz, Ms. Tayebah Haghighatkah, Ms. Salimeh Daremi, Ms. Maryam Sabzabadi, Ms. Liora Saeed, Mr. Mohammad Sadeghi, Ms. Maryam Saberipour, Ms. Mansooreh Fazilati, Ms. Maasoomah Mohseni Kabir and Ms. Maryam Namayeshi.

As always, we wish for the days ahead to shape a world which is safer, better and more stable.

Mahmoudreza Golshanpazhooh(ph.D)  
Director

# Introduction

The Organization for Defending Victims of Violence (ODVV) is a non-governmental, non-profit, non-political organization in Special Consultative Status to the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations (ECOSOC). The ODVV was established in 1988 in Tehran. Some of the benefits of ODVV's 31-year history can be summarised in the following: provision of legal and humanitarian services, holding education courses, conducting general or thematic researches through the use of a team of experienced experts in fields needed by society, productions and publications, transfer of experiences and an effective and influential presence in international arenas. The ODVV received its Consultative Status from ECOSOC in 1988 and since 2014 it has had an office in Geneva, Switzerland and has been active in the field of human rights and humanitarian activities.

ODVV is also associated to the United Nations Department of Public Information (UNDPI), a member of the Conference of Non-Governmental Organizations (CONGO), AMAN Network of Rehabilitation Centers in the Middle East and North Africa and International Rehabilitation Council for Torture Victims (IRCT). ODVV has cooperated with international organizations in a variety of issues and has working relations with many NGOs in Iran and around the globe.



# ODVV Mission Statement

## Being committed to its moral principles the ODVV's mission is:

- To respect high human values;
- To respect the rule of law and be committed to national values, moral principles and laws,
- To respect national interests and to avoid entering political groupings,
- To respect human dignity and status, and to recognise individual's rights and respect of society's public interests,
- To believe in justice, equality and observe everyone's rights (women and children in particular),
- To believe in being responsible, transparent, responsive, honest and virtuous;
- To accept the expansion and promotion of creativity;
- To respect knowledge, competence and experiences of individuals;
- To accept ideas, notions, recommendations and constructive criticisms;
- To be committed to collective unity and cooperation;
- To promote the spirit of service and voluntary campaigns;
- To promote and expand a culture of non-violence;

## For the purpose of reaching its goal which is to promote and expand a human rights culture the ODVV shall utilise the following practices:

- Hold educational, seminars, forums and workshops with the aim of information dissemination and raise the society's culture, preparation of articles and research in this regard;
- Protect and defend the rights of victims of violence and society;
- Promote and expand a culture of non-violence;
- Present advisory and counselling services for the rehabilitation of victims of society, and to refer these victims to the relevant centres to receiving care and services;
- Establishment and facilitation of links with national, regional and international organizations that follow similar objectives, and to facilitate the opportunity to exchange views, experiences and knowledge;

# Structure

## The ODVV conducts its activities and campaigns under the following structure

- Research Department ■ Education Department ■ Communications Department ■ Rehabilitation Department ■ Administrative and Financial Management

Through benefiting from experienced experts in the board of directors and the use of the expertise of close to dozens experts and volunteers in human rights, international law, international relations etc. the ODVV endeavours to through the combination of science and strategy to have the best effectivity in the field of nongovernmental human rights activities of the country.

The following is a brief narration of the activities that the ODVV conducted in 2019.

## Workshops, Conferences and Education Courses

### Education Course on the Introduction to the UPR Mechanism and Report Preparation for the 3rd UPR on the Human Rights Situation of Iran

On 8 January 2019, the ODVV held the Education Course on the Introduction to the UPR Mechanism and Report Preparation for the 3rd UPR on the Human Rights Situation of Iran.

This course was held with the aim of increasing knowledge of NGOs on the UPR mechanism, how to play an effective role and preparation of report for the UPR. The course was held in the presence of 35 representatives from NGOs in consultative status to ECOSOC, NGOs with consultative status and experts from various education and research centres active in various areas of human rights.

The course discussed: UN human rights mechanisms such as treaty bodies in general, the UN Human Rights Council and the UPR mechanism specifically, how the reviews are done and preparation of reports on human rights activities done by NGOs for the 3rd UPR on Iran, and how to submit the reports to the Council.





## Education Course on Training of Solution-Focussed Brief Therapy

On 22 to 25 January 2019, the ODVV Rehabilitation (Raha Counselling Centre) with the partnership of Solution-Focussed Brief Therapy Club, held the Education Course on Training of Resolution Oriented Coaches.

This workshop was held towards the Rehabilitation Centre's activities in increasing the technical knowledge of counselling and support on children's issues, in the presence of 80 psychologists, counsellors and experts on child training with the presentation of Ben Forman International coach on solution-focussed brief therapy and the founder of children's skills learning method. Fifteen steps of the resolution oriented approach in training, counselling and treatment of children were some of the important subjects of this four-day workshop.



## Successful Marriage with Knowledge of Law and Psychology Workshop

On 22 September 2019, the ODVV Rehabilitation Department held the Successful Marriage with Knowledge of Law and Psychology Workshop.

In this 4-hour workshop Ms. Fatemeh Sanaee-nasab, attorney at law, explained the conditions during marriage ceremony and its related legal effects, spoke of ideas on replacement of the dowry and reduction of its related disputes, and highlighting existing laws in this regard, she reviewed the legal vacuums and shortfalls in this regard.

In the psychology part of this workshop, Ms. Salimeh Daremi, psychologist, while pointing out the importance of the family in today's society and the necessity to start a family as the main nucleus of society, spoke of pre-marriage counselling as one of the ways to guarantee a successful marriage and reduce divorce cases. In this regard while talking about the important considerations while choosing a spouse, the most crucial skills necessary for marriage and living together were discussed and reviewed.



## Commemoration of International Days

### Commemoration of the International Day in Support of Victims of Violence

Like in past years, 26 June on the occasion of the International Day in Support of Victims of Violence, the ODVV held a technical sitting on the documentation of torture and review of post-modern therapies for the rehabilitation of torture victims, in the presence of psychologists, counsellors and experts on resolution oriented short-term therapy. The aim in the holding of this sitting was to strengthen and expand support for torture victims, technical review of torture, exchanges of views regarding how to document torture, helping the victims to return to normal living methods through the use of the experiences of short-term therapy experts and other experts.

This commemoration began with the speech of ODVV director, Dr. Golshanpazhooh. Next speaker was member of university science group and head of the Solution-Focussed Brief Therapy Club Dr. Mir Saeed Jaafari. In view of his experience in working with the victims of violence and torture he said that because of the situation that torture victims have and they are not very much inclined to attend lengthy therapy and counselling sessions, solution-focussed brief therapy provides the opportunity for their rehabilitation and getting their mental health back and as a result return to society. In this technical sitting, post-modern solutions were reviewed as a part of the prevention of abuse and also psychological approaches for the purpose of helping torture victims for their return to normal life were discussed and reviewed.

The participants and expert attending the workshop stressed on the efforts of solution-focussed brief therapy experts to help torture victims. Also at the end of the workshop a Q&A was held and the students and experts exchanged views and ideas. At the end members of the Solution-Focussed Brief Therapy Club. This was followed by the participants practicing these techniques of this approach on the subject of rehabilitation of torture victims.





### **District-Focussed Intervention in Prevention of Violence Programme**

On 22 July 2019, the Social and Crime Prevention Department of the Judiciary held the District-Focussed Intervention in Prevention of Violence Programme with the cooperation of ODVV facilitators and psychologists, with the attendance of Judiciary officials, members of local team and target group in the Bagherabad district of Gharchak.

This programme was held with the aim of prevention of violence and teaching life skills. effectiveness of the program was accessed and it was statistically proved that the interventions and the follow ups have significantly controlled occurrence of violence.

District-Focussed Intervention in Prevention of Violence Programme with the attendance of 60 young boys and girls began in Bagher Abad of Gharchak in winter 2019 and continued till midsummer the same year.

## International Activities

### Positive Human Rights Developments in Iran Newsletter for the International Audience

For the purpose of information dissemination of its international audience such as UN special rapporteurs, diplomats, experts, ambassadors and workers of international organizations and various countries inside and outside the country, the ODVV placed the publication of Positive Human Rights Developments in Iran Newsletter in its working agenda.

From the beginning of February till the end of December 2019, six pamphlets were published in English (No. 5 in May, No. 6 in June, No. 7 in July, No. 8 in September, No. 9 in November and No. 10 in December 2019), and with their law and human rights positive developments contents were sent to the aforementioned audience via email.

It must be said that four issues of the newsletter were published in 2018 through January 2019 (No. 1 in August 2018, No. 2 in November 2018, No. 3 in December 2018 and No. 4 in January 2019) and sent to the addressees.



## Holding Exclusive Interviews

One of the international activities of the ODVV in 2019 was holding 29 exclusive interviews with renowned international experts, especially western ones, on various human rights issues, with the aim of review and transparency of human rights situations in various parts of the world. The human rights situation in the UAE, Saudi Arabia, United States, Occupied Palestinian Territories, Bahrain and Myanmar, and Islamophobia and the anti-human rights impacts of unilateral sanctions against Iran were some of the subjects of the interviews. The interviews were as follows:

### **Lawrence Wilkerson**

Former chief of staff to United States Secretary of State Colin Powell, retired United States Army Colonel and Distinguished Adjunct Professor of Government and Public Policy at the College of William and Mary.

Subject of the interview: Iran should stick to the nuclear deal and make the U.S. the isolated party.

### **Edward Wastnidge**

Lecturer in Politics and International Studies at the Open University.

Subject of the interview: The U.S. withdrawal from the JCPOA was a short-sighted, political move.

### **Prof. Reem Bahdi**

Associate professor at the University of Windsor's faculty of law. She is the co-Director of "KARAMAH, The Project on Judicial Independence and Human Dignity.

Subject of the interview: Islamophobia is institutionalized in Canada's most important agencies.

### **Prof. Suleiman Ali Mourad**

Lecturer in Smith College shared his views about Islamophobia in the United States and the U.S. relations with the Muslim world. Prof. Mourad researches the hermeneutics of Quran, medieval Islam and Islamic history.

Subject of the interview: Mainstream media in the U.S. perpetuates a very negative view of Muslims.

**Gary Haufbauer**

Gary Haufbauer, a nonresident senior fellow at the Peterson Institute for International Economics. He has previously served as the Maurice Greenberg Chair and Director of Studies at the Council on Foreign Relations and deputy assistant secretary for international trade and investment policy of the U.S. Treasury.

Subject of the Interview: Prospects for peace in the Middle East will decline if JCPOA falls apart.

**Dr. Yassir Morsi**

Lecturer in politics at La Trobe University to discuss the rise of Islamophobia and the growth of anti-immigrant sentiments in Australia.

Subject of the interview: Debate about racism and Australia's history seems persistent and ongoing.

**Dr. Ben Rich**

Lecturer in international relations at the Curtin University in Australia.

Subject of the interview: The administration in the U.S is unlikely to openly criticize Saudi Arabia.

**Dr. Ineke van der Valk**

Researcher at the University of Leiden's Faculty of Governance and Global Affairs and the interrelationship between Dutch Muslims and the wider society.

Subject of the interview: Press coverage of Muslims in the Netherlands has become more negative.

**Dr. Amina Easat-Daas**

Project Officer of the Counter-Islamophobia Kit at the University of Leeds.

Subject of the interview: The French government inflames Islamophobic tensions.

**Prof. Joan Wallach Scott**

Prominent American historian and Professor Emerita in the School of Social Science at the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton, New Jersey.

Subject of the interview: The goal of the sanctions is to create chaos in Iran.

**Robert Buzzanco**

Distinguished historian and scholar of 20th century US history and diplomatic history and a professor of the University of Houston.

Subject of the interview: Little support for Trump's aggression toward Iran inside the US or among allies.

**Noel Ignatiev**

Prominent American historian and author.

Subject of the interview: The world owes a moral debt to the Palestinian people.

**Dr. Hanlie Booysen**

Lecturer at the school of social and cultural studies at the Victoria University of Wellington.

Subject of the interview: An increase in Islamophobia poses a threat to a primarily peaceful New Zealand.

**Dr. Muzammil Quraishi**

Senior Lecturer in Criminology & Criminal Justice at the University of Salford in Manchester.

Subject of the interview: Populist narratives conflating crime and religion: drivers of Islamophobia.

**Sasan Fayazmanesh**

Professor Emeritus of Economics and Director of the Middle East Studies Program at California State University, Fresno.

Subject of the interview: The US sanctions are affecting all aspects of human life in Iran.

**Dr. Rizwaan Sabir**

Lecturer in criminology in the Faculty of Humanities and Social Science at Liverpool John Moores University.

Subject of the interview: Islamophobia within the UK has come to the fore through events like Brexit.

**Dr. Nazia Kazi**

Ethnographer and educator based in Philadelphia. She is assistant professor of anthropology



at Stockton University in New Jersey.

Subject of the interview: It's foolish to expect the US government to respond to Islamophobia.

**Prof. Nader Entessar**

Professor Emeritus and former Chair of the Department of Political Science and Criminal Justice at the University of South Alabama .

Subject of the interview: Sanctions are weapons of war if they are comprehensive and prolonged.

**Greg Shupak**

PhD in Literary Studies and teaches English and Media Studies at the University of Guelph in Toronto.

Subject of the interview: Israel will only change its approach if it is forced to do so.

**Nasrin Rahimieh**

Howard Baskerville Professor of Humanities and Director of the Humanities Core Course at the University of California, Irvine.

Subject of the interview: Attempt to heighten tensions between the US and Iran is short-sighted.

**Ciaran Tierney**

Works as an online journalist, blogger, social media manager, and digital storyteller.

Subject of the interview: The people of Palestine feel the international community has abandoned them.

**Prof. Ather Zia**

Assistant Professor of Anthropology at the University of Northern Colorado.

Subject of the interview: Kashmiris fear the specter of demographic change in the region.

**Michael Lynk**

UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Occupied Palestinian Territories.

Subject of the interview: Israel maintains a cost-free occupation over the Palestinian territories.

**Sayed Yousif Al-Muhafdah**

Prominent Bahraini political activist and a member of the Bahrain Centre for Human Rights.  
Subject of the interview: Bahrain's human rights record regressed rapidly in 2019.

**Erik Love**

Associate Professor and Chair of Sociology at Dickinson College in Pennsylvania.  
Subject of the interview: President Trump's Muslim ban policy has no actual national security purpose.

**Evelyn Alsultany**

Leading scholar on anti-Muslim racism and an associate professor in the Department of American Studies and Ethnicity at the University of Southern California in Los Angeles.  
Subject of the interview: Challenging Islamophobia requires learning about Islamophobia as a political construct.

**Vijay Prashad**

A widely-published Indian author, historian and journalist. He is the Director of Tri-continental Institute for Social Research and the chief editor of Left Word Books.  
Subject of the interview: The human impacts of the sanctions need to be studied and broadcast.

**John F. Tierney**

Former Democratic member of the US House of Representative from Massachusetts.  
Subject of the interview: The Trump policy with respect to Iran has failed miserably.

**Dr. Lene Kühle**

Professor with special responsibilities at the Department of the Study of Religion at Aarhus University.  
Subject of the interview: Antipathy against Muslims is not rising in Denmark.

It must be said that the full texts of all the above mentioned interviews are available to read in the ODVV English website and summarized versions are also available in the Farsi website.

## Communication with UN Officials in Criticizing US Unilateral Sanctions against Iran

In protest and objection to United States leaving the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) and extensive violation of the rights of the people of Iran through re-imposition of illegitimate sanctions and in condemning this ugly decision of America, the ODVV has sent letters to UN Special Rapporteurs, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, UN Secretary General, various countries' permanent representatives in Geneva, UN agencies. Some of the important points of these letters are as follows:

- *Information received by Iranian NGOs shows that in an organized effort the United States is totally and unofficially trying to prevent any form of financial transactions between Iran and the rest of the world for the import of humanitarian goods such as food and medicines into the country.*
- *Special Rapporteur on the negative impact of the unilateral coercive measures on the enjoyment of human rights, Mr. Idriss Jazairy, regarding the negative impact of sanctions, confirm the United States violation of the human rights of the people of Iran through sanctions.*
- *In the letter ODVV asked the recipient to utilise its international capacities for opening the blocked humanitarian goods channel for the people of Iran, who are subject to this crime against humanity.*

## Letter Sent to the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights and 66 Special Rapporteurs and Human Rights Council Experts and Members of Human Rights Council Committees

Criticising United States unilateral coercive measures against Iran, in May 2019 the ODVV sent a letter to the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights and 66 Special Rapporteurs and Human Rights Council Experts and Members of Human Rights Council Committees.

Proving the conflict of these sanctions with basic human rights principles and calling on Human Rights Council Mechanisms to seriously confront this inhumane phenomenon were the main points of this letter.

## Letter on the Effects of Sanctions on the Iranian Banking System

In May 2019, the ODVV sent a letter to 60 UN special rapporteurs and Human Rights Council committees' members on the effects of sanctions on Red Crescent's bank account regarding the recent floods in Iran.

Objection to the impact of the banking system on the blocking of Iranian Red Crescent's international account, refusal to transfer humanitarian aid funds to Iran were some of the subjects of the letter.

### **Communication in Response to the Request of the Special Rapporteur on Torture and other Cruel and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment**

In a letter in response to the request of the UN Special Rapporteur on Torture regarding information on Torture Ban Act and domestic violence in Iran, in May 2019 the ODVV sent a letter to the Special Rapporteur.

In this letter the ODVV comprehensively provided explanations about positive actions and steps taken in Iran on reduction of domestic violence and torture ban laws, such as clarification of the roots of violence and Iran's measures for the prevention of violence such as the adoption of the Protection of the Rights of Children and Juveniles Act and also the Fight against Child Abuse National Document.

### **Letter to the Head of the Right to Development Intergovernmental Working Group**

In August 2019 in a letter sent to the head of the Rights to Development Intergovernmental Working Group, the ODVV submitted its views and recommendations for the drafting of right to development legal mechanisms. Some of the highlighted points in the letter are as follows:

- *Including the subject of unilateral sanctions in the right to development legal mechanism which is being drafted.*
- *Help to create an international mechanism for the prevention of unilateral sanctions imposed against countries*

### **Participation in the Preparation of Report on the Impact of War against Terror Laws on the Violation of Human Rights**

In response to the call for NGO contributions made by the UN Special Rapporteur on Terrorism for the participation of NGOs in the preparation of a report on the impact of the war on terror on the violation of human rights, in August 2019, the ODVV positively responded and took part in the preparation of this report.

It must be said that the Special Rapporteur thanked the ODVV for taking part in the process.

Some of the points highlighted in the response are as follows:

- *Information dissemination to various parts of special procedures to make them aware of US imposed sanctions.*
- *Falseness of claims to medicines being exempt from sanctions.*
- *Imposition of sanction on the pretext of the war on terror, result in the grave violation of human rights of countries under sanction.*

### **Reply to UNHCHR Questions**

In August 2019 the ODVV responded to some questions sent from the UNHCHR regarding HRC Resolution 22/37 and the rights of persons with disabilities that included the impact of US unilateral sanctions on the violation of the rights of persons with disabilities in Iran. The reply to these questions is used in the research regarding Article 8 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Also the consultant to the human rights and the disabled deputy of the UNHCHR, Victoria Lee thanked the ODVV for its input in the research regarding the disabled.

### **Participation in the Urgent Action Mechanism**

In August 2019, the ODVV used the urgent action mechanism in the Human Rights Council special procedures to raise the issue of the impact of sanctions on Iran and reiteration that the issue required urgent action. Some of the points raised included:

- *Further raising the subject of sanctions in the Council*
- *Utilization of Human Rights Council mechanisms for the voices of the people and their complaints about the impact of comprehensive sanctions to be heard.*
- *Stress on the serious violation of human right, international law and Security Council Resolution by the United States as a result of comprehensive unilateral sanctions.*

### **Letter Sent to the Special Rapporteur on the Right to Health**

In August 2019 in a letter sent to the Special Rapporteur on the Right to Health the ODVV strongly stressed on undermining the right to health of the people of Iran as a result of America's comprehensive unilateral sanctions, America's unilateral restrictions on the access to medicines and medical equipment.

## International Conferences

### Participation in the 40th Session of the Human Rights Council

The 40th Session of the Human Rights Council took place from 25 February to 22 March in Geneva, Switzerland. This Session took place at the same time as important events in the world such as the human catastrophes in Yemen, refugee crisis, unilateral inhuman sanctions, the terror attacks against Muslims in New Zealand, Islamophobia etc. Thus, in all its activities in this Session – from writing written and oral statements, holding sidelines panels, preparing thematic reports, reading statements in the Session, all forms of meetings and sittings with other experts and NGOs – the ODVV was fully active and involved.

The pre-planned activities of the ODVV for this Session included:

- *Preparing and submitting written statements and registration in the Council*
- *Writing Sanctions issue number 4 research paper.*
- *Preparing oral statements and reading them at the Council*
- *Holding sidelines panels*
- *Meetings with country and thematic rapporteurs*



## 1 – Preparation of written statements and their submission to the Council

For this Session the ODVV submitted 7 written statements on the following subjects:

- Item 2: Human rights violations in Yemen, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, the UAE and the United States of America
- Item 3: America's comprehensive unilateral sanctions, violation of right to life in Iran
- Item 4: Iran's denial of access to all humanitarian assistance by the United States
- Item 6: Human rights situation in Saudi Arabia
- Item 7: Human rights situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territories and prolonged occupation
- Item 9: the United States and rise in Islamophobia in the country
- Item 10: Human rights violation in Yemen

## 2 – Issue 4 of the Sanctions Research Paper entitled: “Human Impacts of Sanctions”

The issue of comprehensive unilateral sanctions imposed against Iran, is one of the subjects that due to the extent of human rights violations, has been published by ODVV. Therefore, following the publication of issues one, two and three of the sanctions research paper in the September 2017, March 2018 and September 2018 Sessions, the fourth issue of this research paper entitled “Human Impacts of Sanctions” was prepared by the ODVV and distributed in the Council.



### 3 – Preparation of Sanctions on Human Rights Booklet

With America's unilateral decision in leaving the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action or JCPOA and for the purpose of showing the extent of these comprehensive inhuman sanctions imposed in Iran, the "Sanctions on Human Rights Booklet" was prepared by the ODVV and distributed in the 40th Session of the Human Rights Council. In this booklet the various dimensions and impacts of sanctions on banking system, education, medicines and medical equipment were discussed as violation of international conventions, resolutions and agreements.



### 4 – Defenders Newsletter

The ODVV published its latest issue of Defenders Newsletter (winter 2019). This issue of Defenders was made available to its addressees, special rapporteurs and experts in the 40th Session of the Council. It must be said that two of the articles in this issue entitled "the Meaning of the New Sanctions Imposed by America against Iran, Experts Respond" and "The Art of Sanctions in Reality" were exclusively discussing the subject of illegitimate unilateral sanctions against Iran. Also the digital edition of this issue of Defenders is available in the ODVV website: [www.odvv.org](http://www.odvv.org).





## 5 – ODVV 2018 Annual Report

As every year, at the end of the Gregorian year, the ODVV prepares and publishes its annual report of its activities and distributes them in the March sessions of the Human Rights Council. This time too with the cooperation of all the staff and colleagues, the ODVV Annual Report was prepared and distributed in the 40th Session of the Council.



## 6 – Preparation of Oral Statements and Reading them on the Session Floor

Considering the ongoing concerns and human rights priorities, in this Session of the Council, the ODVV prepared a total of seven oral statements under Items 4, 5, 6, 7 and 10 and read them on the Session floor. The subjects of the statements included: negative impacts of unilateral sanctions on Iran and review of human rights situations in Canada, Saudi Arabia, and the United States etc.

## 7 – Sending Letter to International Officials

At the same time as the 40th Session of the Human Rights Council and to protest and object against the America's unilateral exit from JCPOA, and the extensive and inhuman violation of all the rights of the people of Iran through re-imposition of illegitimate sanctions and in condemnation of this uncalled for behaviour of the US President in the international arena, the ODVV sent letters to the UN Secretary General, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, 11 UN Special Rapporteurs members of the Economic, Social and Cultural Rights Committee, members of the Rights of the Child Committee, and members of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Committee. Also in this letter, requests were made to the Secretary General, the High Commissioner, Special Rapporteurs and members of treaty bodies committees, to submit their executive recommendations to the Council on the removal of any form of unilateral coercive measures, especially America's behaviour towards Iranians, and in fact facilitate an environment for debate and discussion and banning this anti-human rights measure. Some of the main points of the letters were as follows:

- In this letter ODVV asks the recipient to use its international capacity for the opening of humanitarian aid blocked channels to the people of Iran.
- The reports of the Special Rapporteur on the Impact of Unilateral Coercive Measure on the Enjoyment of Human Rights confirm the violation of the human rights of the people of Iran by

US imposed sanctions.

- The ODVV deems the imposition of comprehensive and extensive unilateral sanctions under any conditions as a fundamental violation of human rights and a form of crime against humanity.
- In view of the duties and mandates of each aforementioned international official, in these letters the ODVV asks for steps to be taken for the reduction of the weight of sanctions from the shoulders of the people of Iran, especially the vulnerable groups.

At the end of this letter, a request has been made to the UN Secretary General to appoint a special representative to review the negative impacts of sanctions on human rights for the purpose of carrying out the recommendation of appointment of a Special Representative of the Secretary General on UCM. In contrast to the current Special Rapporteur, this representative will have broader powers.

## 8 – Meeting with the Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights Situation in Iran

Participating in this Session of the Council, ODVV made efforts to have meetings with special rapporteurs to discuss and exchange views on Iran's issues including America's sanctions, leaving JCPOA, and its impact on the human rights of Iranian. One such Rapporteur was Javaid Rehman, the UN Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights Situation in Iran. While confirming the negative impact of sanctions, in this meeting Mr. Rahman reiterated on the necessity to prevent juvenile executions and making the legal criminal responsibility of boys and girls the same and increase the legal age of marriage of girls and boys. He also raised the matter of the need for the protection of the rights of LGBTQs. ODVV representatives and representatives from other NGOs stressed on the impact of sanctions on Iran and their negative impact on drugs, medical treatment, health, rise in prices of items such as drugs and medicines, increase in problems of patients such as those suffering from HIV/AIDS, Thalassaemia, Hepatitis, pregnant women, shrinking of international organizations' financial support of NGOs because of banking sanctions, and reiterated that problems caused by sanctions undermine efforts for the realisation of all human rights.



## 9 – Holding Sidelines Panels

With the cooperation of a number of NGOs, the ODVV held 9 side events on the following subjects:

### - Health situation in Yemen

The participants were Dr. Taha-almutavakel the Yemeni Health Minister via Skype, and other human rights activists from Insan Institute.

Call to cease the airstrikes in Yemen, call to remove Yemen's blockade, the killing of more than 3456 children in the Saudi-led war on Yemen, loss of any chance of children's education and 2 million children deprived of schools, violation of international laws in the war on Yemen, embargo on the import of medicines and drugs and threats against the lives of the people of Yemen were the main subjects of discussion of this panel.



## - Unilateral Coercive Measures and Violation of Human Rights

In this side event UN Special Rapporteur on the Impact of Universal Coercive Measures on the Enjoyment of Human Rights, Mr. Idriss Jazairy, Geneva university professor and, Grégoire Mallard, Rouhollah Nasrollahi, Middle East Studies PhD student at Oxford University and Peyman Raoufi, head of the Youth Department of Beverly Hills United Nations Association, all gave speeches.

Some of the important points that the guest speakers raised included: sanctions create an environment of fear, as a result in fear of getting punished business companies avoid business relations with country under sanctions. Iran's conditions are economic blockade conditions and in protection of civilians under blockade, actions must be taken in accordance with the Geneva Four Conventions. Sanctions outside of United Nations procedures, are both illegitimate and illegal. Sanctions against Iran are designed in such way that in practice block the way for the import of any drugs and medicines into the country. In spite of permits issued by US Treasury Department's Office of Foreign Asset Control (OFAC) for international organizations such as the Child Foundation, American banks refuse to do banking business with Iran.



### **- Children and Human Rights Situation in Yemen**

This side event was jointly held with the ODVV, the Child Foundation and Insan Institute. Statistical presentation of human rights conditions in Yemen and the fallout of the prolonged war in the country and discussion on Yemeni children's conditions were some of the subjects that were raised in this side event.

### **- Human Rights Situation in Yemen**

The Human Rights Situation in Yemen sidelines panel was held by the ODVV and with the participation of Insan Institute.

In this sitting, parts of the Geneva Convention relating to international laws and treaties, and human rights based on the protection of the general rights of prisoners were reviewed. Also highlighting that the imprisonment of thousands of Yemenis by Saudi Arabia and the UAE has resulted in torture committed against Yemeni prisoners by the Saudi-led Coalition were also discussed and reviewed.

### **Participation in the 41st Session of the Human Rights Council**

The 41st Session of the Human Rights Council was held from 24 June to 12 July in Geneva, Switzerland, under its usual 10 Working Agenda items. Representatives from the ODVV took part in this Session and as in the past they tried extensively and effectively through the use of all their opportunities to achieve their objective in the international field. ODVV's activities in this Session included writing 11 written and 9 oral statements and distribution of ODVV products and materials

### **Participation in the 42nd Session of the Human Rights Council**

The 42nd Session of the Human Rights Council was held from 24 June to 12 July in Geneva, Switzerland, and at the same time as the increase of unilateral sanctions imposed against Iran by the United States, and international developments such as the complex and human rights repercussions of the Yemen conflict, the human rights situation of some western and Arab countries, the matter of the West's weapons aid to the Saudi-led Coalition in the Yemen conflict. Thus, in all its activities in this Session from drawing up written and oral statements to holding sidelines panels, preparation of thematic reports, reading oral statements on the Session floor, talks and meetings with other experts and NGOs, the ODVV was not left behind from these important issues. Report of all of the ODVV's activities in this Session of the Council are as follows in brief:

## **Sanctions**

Towards reaching its goals, the ODVV has always tried to provide information to the Council on America's unilateral coercive measures and their impact on human rights in all countries under comprehensive sanctions with a special stress on the Islamic Republic of Iran.

### **Highlighting the Subject of Sanctions through 6 Written Statements:**

Important points:

- i) ODVV's request to the international community and the UN to take practical measures in condemnation of unilateral coercive measures and putting an end to the suffering of the people of target countries immediately.
- ii) Express concern over the impact of comprehensive unilateral coercive measures and reversing of all efforts taken towards the eradication of poverty and hunger.
- iii) Highlighting the negative impact of comprehensive sanction on right to life and health of individuals, including restriction on the import of drugs, medical equipment and care.

### **Highlighting the Subject of Sanction through 7 Oral Statements:**

Important focal points:

- i) Request the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights to condemn the negative impact of sanctions on the daily lives of the people of countries under sanction.
- ii) Request all thematic Special Rapporteurs to cooperate with the Special Rapporteur on the Impact of Unilateral Coercive Measures on the Enjoyment of Human Rights in reflecting all the inhuman aspects of sanctions.
- iii) Condemning America's unilateral pull out from JCPOA and re-imposition of sanctions.
- iv) Highlighting the undermining of international peace, stability and order following the United States withdrawal from international agreements.
- v) Highlighting unilateral coercive measures as the disrupter of international order and multilateralism and violator of human rights in target countries.
- vi) Highlighting that vulnerable groups, children in particular, suffer the most from comprehensive sanctions.
- vii) Request the Council to create a punishment and a compensation mechanism to prevent some States from using this all out economic war against other countries and to offer the victims with adequate remedies and redress.

## Highlighting the Subject of Sanctions through Technical Sitting on “Unilateral Coercive Measures and Violation of Human rights.

Some of the points raised in this sitting included:

- i) America’s unilateral coercive measures against Iran is one of the most wide-ranging and complex sanctions in the world, Trump’s ignorance towards human rights issues through the “sanctions are coming” slogan, sanctions against Iran in the drugs and medicines, medical equipment spheres, and the negative impact on people’s health.
- ii) Turning targeted sanctions into comprehensive sanctions, the multi-dimensions of the current sanctions regime and their hegemony through America’s presence, the diminishing of the humanitarian impacts of sanctions by America, disruption in the import of advanced drugs and medicines which cannot be produced in Iran due to high risk for banks to work with Iran.



## **ODVV Reading Oral Statements during Holding the Council's Biannual Panel on Unilateral Coercive Measures**

The Human Rights Council's Experts' Panel on Unilateral Coercive Measures was held at 10 am on 12 September 2019. This panel is a prelude for the review of adoption of the Universal Declaration of the Impact of Unilateral Coercive Measures on Human Rights and Right to Development which was held in the Human rights Council main Hall. In the opportunity made available to NGOs to express their views in this regard, the ODVV read a statement. The main points of this statement are as follows:

- Unilateral sanctions are "collective punishments", and in some cases a "crime against humanity" and must immediately end.
- Comprehensive sanctions violate all the rights of people. There is international consensus for the prohibition of sanctions, and UN resolutions show that those that impose sanctions must accept the responsibility of the violation of the rights of people as a result of sanctions.
- The aim of comprehensive sanctions is to violate all the rights of people that include, right to life, health and development.
- In the recent years, UN General Assembly resolutions on Cuba and NAM resolutions on Venezuela indicate that there is global consensus against sanctions, therefore adoption of a universal declaration on Unilateral Coercive Measures and their negative effect on Human Rights and Right to Development is a very effective step.
- It is necessary for this declaration to define victims' compensation so that sanctions imposing countries are forced to pause and think a little before imposing numerous sanctions on other countries
- ODVV's reiteration on the recommendation of the Special Rapporteur on UCM that says there is a need for the UN General Secretary to appoint a Special Representative on UCM.

## **The Subject of Sanctions and Contents Produced for Distribution in the Human Rights Council**

In continuation of producing specialised contents on the subject of sanctions, the ODVV also in this Session produced two research papers, a CD, one infographic, one issue of Defenders Newsletter, a book entitled Denial of Human Rights, 4 previous issues of research papers, and distributed them at the Council.

### **i) Research Papers**

The subject of comprehensive unilateral sanctions against Iran, due to the extent of human rights



violations, has always been ODVV's centre of attention in its research and activities. Following the publication and distribution of the first, second, third and fourth issues of the sanctions research papers in previous Sessions of the Council, the fifth and sixth issues of the research papers entitled "Impact of Sanctions on Refugees and Migrants" and "Sanctions and Medicines: Fact and Fiction", were prepared by ODVV colleagues and distributed in the Council.



## ii) Defenders Newsletter

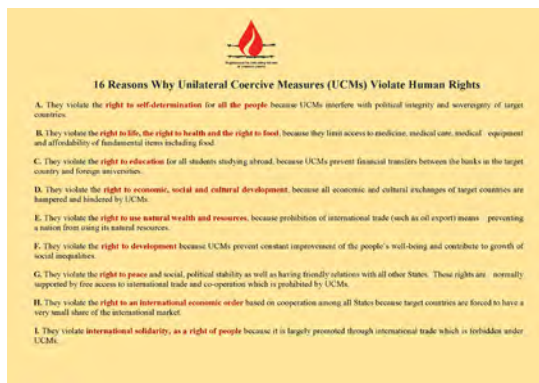
The Defenders Newsletter is a quarterly by ODVV on human rights, the summer 2019 issue of which was published as a special issue dedicated to the subject of "humanitarian law in natural disasters". This newsletter is produced in English and distributed in the Human Rights Council Sessions. This special issue was distributed in the 42nd Session. The articles collected in this issue included:

- Review of challenges in the way of humanitarian aid.
- A look at humanitarian aid in the recent Iranian floods.
- Review of the results of unilateral coercive measures on international humanitarian organizations' activities in Iran (ICRC and International Red Crescent Society).
- Comparative review of the impact of humanitarian assistance with developmental assistance in the protection of human dignity.
- Impact of sanctions on humanitarian assistance in the recent Iranian floods.
- Exclusive interview with international experts on the prohibition of sanctions (interview with Media Benjamin).



### iii) Infographics

This text with reference to seventeen human rights such as right to life, health, education and right to enjoy suitable living standards, fully proves that unilateral sanctions are contrary to basic human rights. This text was distributed in the Session.



### iv) CDs

At the same time as the increase of America's comprehensive unilateral sanctions imposed against Iran and ODVV's activities in the preparation of content, the ODVV experts gathered all Commission on Human Rights, UN General Assembly, Human Rights Council resolutions regarding the prohibition of unilateral measures alongside all the reports of relevant special rapporteurs in a CD and distributed it in the Council.

As well as the aforementioned activities, ODVV read other statements under Human Rights Council working agenda Items which are as follows:

#### i) Oral statements:

Reading 11 oral statements under Items 2, 3, 4, 7 and 10 on the subjects of Kashmir developments, the Nigerian Shia rights as well as violation of human rights in countries such as Syria, Bahrain, Yemen and Myanmar, anti-human rights actions by Saudi Arabia and Israel.



## ii) Written Statements:

Preparation and submission of 10 written statements under Items 2, 5, and 7 on subjects such as human rights situation and evaluation of anti-human rights actions in Canada, United States of America, United Kingdom, France, Saudi Arabia, UAE, Bahrain and Israel, review of human rights in Venezuela and violation of human rights in Myanmar (Rohingya Muslims).

### Defenders Newsletter Autumn 2019

This latest issue of Defenders was published by the ODVV with the subject of Unilateralism and Violation of Human Rights in 56 pages in autumn 2019 on various subjects and articles. Copies of this issue were handed to addressees, rapporteurs and experts present in the 43rd Session of the Council.

A look at the impact of America's comprehensive unilateral actions at the international level, America's unilateralism, its effect on human rights, the extent of human rights violations as a result of comprehensive unilateral coercive measures are the titles of some of the articles published in this issue of Defenders.



### Rehabilitation Department: Raha Counselling Centre

With a wish to mend and end mankind's pains and sufferings, and expansion of humanitarian campaigns, the ODVV Rehabilitation Department provides advisory and educational services.

For the protection of victims of domestic and social violence, the department presents counselling and therapy in legal, family, marriage, psychological disorders at the Rehabilitation Centre.

With the cooperation of 40 mental health experts and lawyers the Centre provides pre-marriage, education and legal counselling. The statistics of the cases is determined on the basis of gender, age, occupation, marital status, education levels and the reason for coming to the Centre.

In 2019, 3788 cases benefited from the Centre's services. 2134 of them were women and 1654 were men. According to the statistics most of the cases were married and the majority of them had family problems.



*As an active member of the Employment and Education Committee the ODVV Rehabilitation Centre, through the preparation of the “Prevention of Domestic Violence” document, has always endeavoured to work towards the prevention of violence.*

For the realisation of the goals of this Committee, by participation in all meetings with a description of practical activities in this regard, the Rehabilitation Department has undertaken a number of important measures, the important ones of which are:

1. Identification of victims of violence at the Raha Rehabilitation Centre
2. Review of effective approaches in counselling and psychotherapy in prevention of violence.
3. Identification of suitable titles for technical sittings on prevention of violence and treatment of the victims, to hold at the Raha Rehabilitation Centre.
4. Setting a suitable research method to review the link between violence and impractical schemas, depression and anxiety among victims of violence cases.
5. Identification of counselling problems of related governmental departments with the Rehabilitation Centre project for treatment intervention and counselling towards increasing the mental health of target group.

**ODVV Raha Rehabilitation Centre Had the Following in its Working Agenda for 2018:**

1. Expand direct communication with the Centre’s audience through increasing the audience number via Telegram to 845 and uploading materials daily.
2. Expand the Centre’s team of counsellors, psychologists, psychoanalysts and psychiatrists in various fields.
3. Preparation of product packs and introduction of Raha Centre.
4. Talks with services centres for cooperation with Raha Centre.
5. Uploading Raha Centre’s activities reports on its website.
6. Signing letter of understanding with two rehabilitation centres in Iraq (the Bejat Al-Fawad Medical and Psychological Centre in Basra and Wachan Organization for Victims of Human Rights Violations).
7. Organization and training of 199 crisis intervention psychologists to help victims of the floods in Iran.
8. Holding education workshop on psychology such as stress management education course, pre-marriage education course etc.

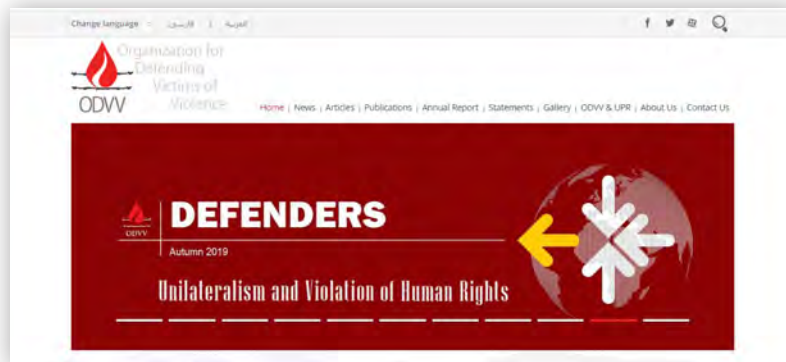
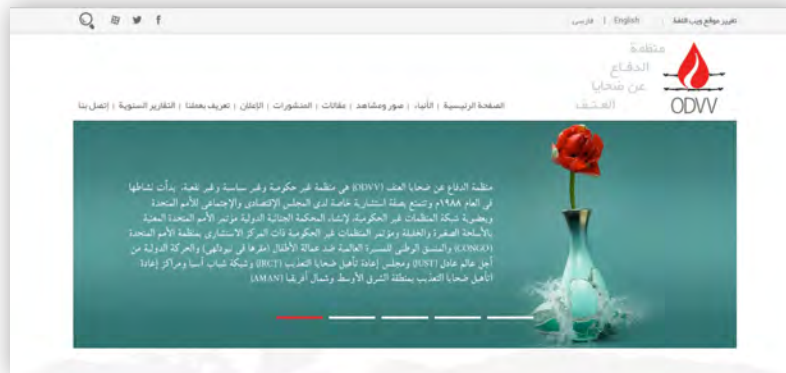
## Communications and Public Relations

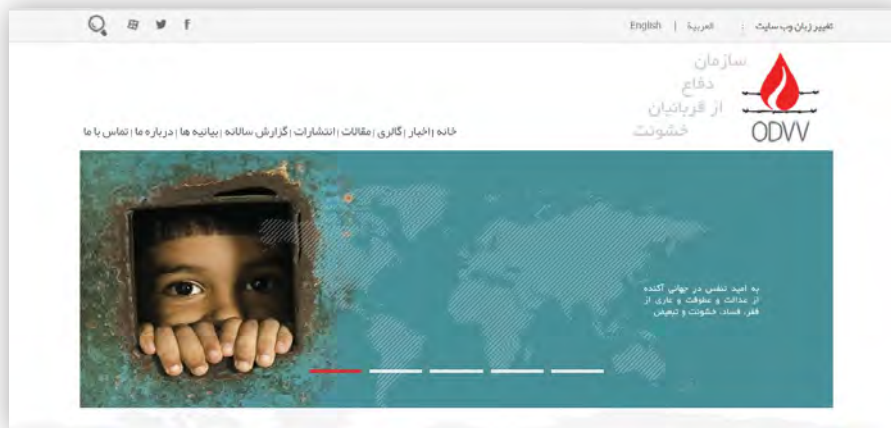
### *Coordination and Publication the Contents of Websites and Social Networks*

Information dissemination is another one of ODVV's activities towards its objectives. The ODVV uses various tools to achieve this.

#### - Farsi, English and Arabic Websites

The worldwide web is one of the necessary communications channels to access the audience. Through utilisation of a trilingual website – Farsi, English and Arabic – the ODVV has managed to make human rights news and development, its activities and positions towards various issues, its advancements throughout the year, objectives and programmes available to the addressees and keep them updated on a daily basis. In 2019 a total of 231 articles and 168 various news items on human rights issues were published on the three websites for interested parties to read.

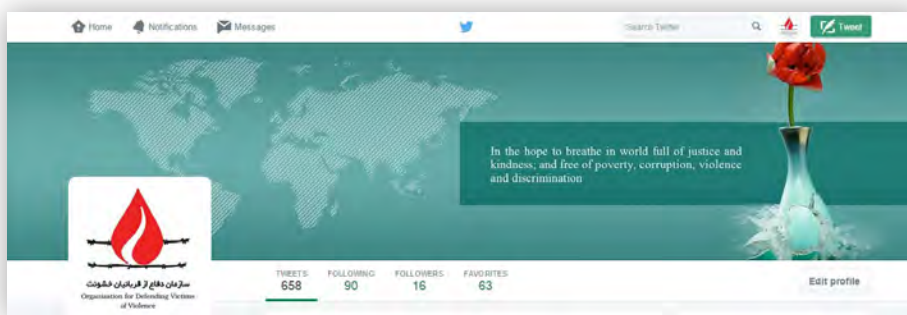




### - ODVV Social Media Accounts

For the purpose of strengthening the links of the ODVV with sister international organizations and other addressees, the ODVV is active in Facebook and Twitter.

<https://twitter.com/ngoodvv> ; <http://www.facebook.com/ODVVNGO>



### - ODVV's Telegram "Human Rights Studies" Channel

The Telegram "Human Rights Studies" channel was launched by the ODVV with the aim of raising the awareness of the addressees of scientific processes and human rights developments. Up to the end of 2019, more than 1700 members and daily uploads of human rights related materials, the channel is a communications arm of the ODVV with the addressees, volunteers and honorary members.



### - Data Bank of Documents and Reports of Human Rights Situation in Iran

Through the designing and launching a data bank of documents, resolutions, reports and all important human rights treaties, the ODVV has facilitated the possibility of searching for reference sources and preparation of all its written and oral statements from the first Human Rights Council Session of the year which include more than 300 oral and written statements to date.

<http://www.odvv.org/page-category-18-oral-statements>

<http://www.odvv.org/page/category-17-written-statements>

### Links with Honorary Members

Towards the realisation of its objectives and activities, the ODVV utilises the volunteer force with consideration of their field of expertise.

To this aim, with the launching of the ODVV Volunteers Group and the facilitation and exchange of up to date communication and information in human rights fields among the group members, the scene for their activities and the blossoming of their capacities and talents was created.

An example of the activities of this group is the active participation and cooperation and presence of these members in holding education workshops and courses and also writing articles for the Farsi, English and Arabic websites and Defenders Newsletters.

## Exhibit

### Unilateral Coercive Measures, Equal to Economic Terrorism Exhibit

On the sidelines of the Unilateralism and International Law in Today's World International Conference, on 5 May 2019, the ODVV held an exhibit with the theme of Unilateral Coercive Measure, Equal to Economic Terrorism. Attending the Conference and the Exhibit were foreign Ambassadors, diplomats and also university experts and lecturers. The event took place in the Foreign Affairs Ministry's Centre for Political and International Studies. In this Exhibit 18 educational and research pictorial texts on the subject of impact of unilateral coercive measures and sanctions on the people of Iran and other countries were put on display. Medicinal, financial, educational, oil and IT sanctions were the main themes of this displays.

Also, a collection of ODVV publications on sanctions with subjects such as the human impacts of sanctions, economic impacts of sanctions, sanctions: destroyers of human rights, and sanctions on human rights were available for the visitors of the exhibit.





### Preparation and Publication of Human Rights 365 Booklet

The Human Rights 365 Booklet, a human rights dictionary was compiled and published by the ODVV. In this small pocket book, there are 365 important words commonly used in law and human rights environments. For each of the words, there are the meanings in Farsi and a phrase or sentence as an example of the use of the word. The publisher believes that university students and experts who carry with them this special booklet, will notably be more knowledgeable in the fields of interest.

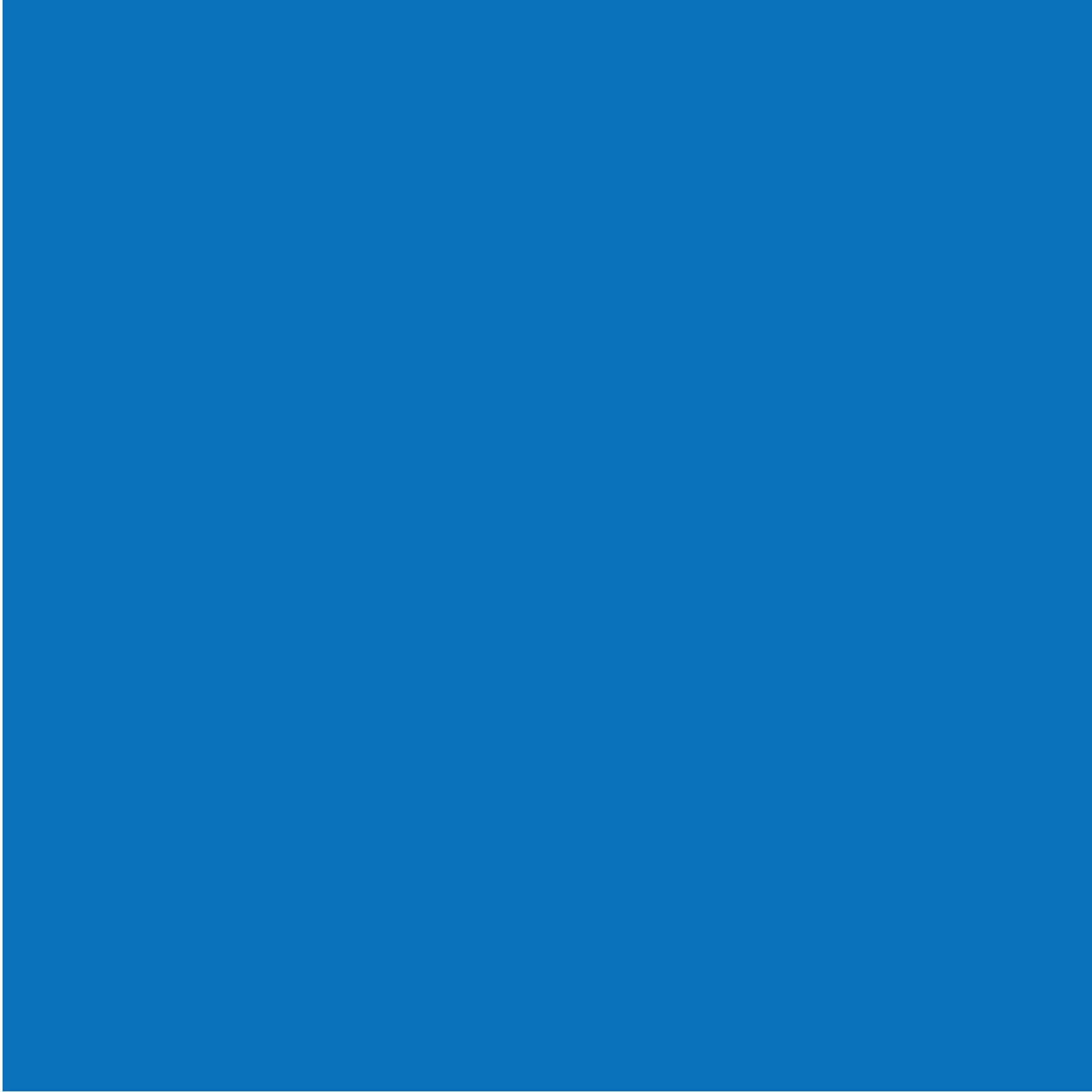


### Organization and Updating of the Library

The ODVV is equipped with a specialist library and up-to-date in the field of human rights which contains books in Farsi and English. Also in 2019, with purchasing of dozens of new books on human rights and refining of the library the use of booklets, existing researches and articles, ODVV has facilitated the access of honorary members, volunteers, researchers and students to the resources required for their studies and work.









ODVV

[www.odvv.org](http://www.odvv.org)