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**Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil,
political, economic, social and cultural rights,
including the right to development**

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.

[13 August 2024]

* Issued as received, in the language of submission only.

Adverse Impacts of Unilateral Coercive Measures on the Right to Development

We emphasise the importance of the right to development, as enshrined in the United Nations Declaration on the Right to Development and reinforced by the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action as an inalienable human right for all individuals and peoples. This right empowers every human being and all peoples to actively participate in, contribute to, and enjoy the economic, social, cultural and political development. However, the realisation of Right to Development encounters significant challenges, particularly due to the imposition of inhuman unilateral sanctions.

We draw the Council's attention, with deep concern, to the negative impact of UCMs, imposed outside the framework of the UN Security Council, pose a serious obstacle to the economic and social development of targeted countries which is contrary to Article 8(2) of the Draft international covenant on the right to development.

We express deep concern over the proliferation and intensification of UCMs in recent years. According to the Global Sanctions Database (2022), the imposition of sanctions has increased dramatically in the past five years (1).

The negative impact of UCMs on human rights is undeniable. The exclusion of sanctioned states from the Worldwide Interbank Financial Telecommunication (SWIFT) system severely impedes their ability to conduct international financial transactions (2). The sanction regime including overcompliance by banks, insurance companies, financial institutions and businesses located in the sanctioning State, or based elsewhere, jeopardises people's access to their primary human rights which have effect on the right to development.

This restriction not only hampers the provision of essential goods such as medication, healthcare equipment, food and humanitarian aid but also hinders the businesses located in these states of their essential supplies and markets upon which their survival depends.

These illegal Sanctions disproportionately affect developing countries which exacerbate existing economic inequalities. As noted by Surya Deva, The Special Rapporteur on the right to development, "Such widespread inequalities are a major barrier to realising the right to development (3)." Additionally, the businesses in the sanctioned states and their ability to employ and pay personnel (4) are affected which decreases the capability of them to pay living wages to workers as a solution by these businesses to reduce existing economic inequality (5). UCMs have demonstrably slowed economic growth and reduced job opportunities in targeted countries. This trend directly contradicts Goal 8 of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which aims to promote inclusive and sustainable economic growth, employment, and decent work for all.

The economic inequality resulting from UCMs contributes to a growing digital divide, contradicting the obligation of businesses to take steps to reduce this divide and provide affordable technologies for all people.

UCMs often limit access to international software and online services for individuals and businesses in sanctioned countries. This restriction extends to cutting-edge technologies, such as artificial intelligence services, hindering technological advancement and innovation.

Generally, UCMs significantly impede access to technology and knowledge for both sanctioned governments and their populations, creating barriers to scientific and technological advancement. This impediment exacerbates existing inequalities and undermines the realisation of the right to development. The impact of restricted access to technology is intricately linked to the SDGs and their associated targets, with particular relevance to Goal 17, as sanctions hinder international cooperation and technology transfer.

The economic inequality resulting from UCMs contributes to a growing digital divide. It is noteworthy that Iran, a nation subject to sanctions, experiences deleterious effects on its GDP

trajectory and welfare outcomes. This lack of economic growth is further compounded by inflationary pressures, which erode purchasing power.

The increase in poverty rates in Iran is indicative of an underlying deficiency in economic growth. Economic sanctions have been demonstrated to have a direct negative impact on economic development (6). Fluctuations in international oil prices, in conjunction with the effects of sanctions have contributed to significant economic instability (7).

A recent World Bank report highlights a dramatic increase in poverty in Iran against the backdrop of a "lost decade" of economic growth. Iranian households allocate 45 percent of their budget to food, while consumer goods prices have experienced a steady increase over time (8). This inflation implies that an increasingly large segment of Iranian society is experiencing, and will continue to experience, economic insecurity and, ultimately, poverty (9).

The economic stagnation resulting from UCMs has led to approximately 10 million Iranians falling into poverty over the past decade. Moreover, 40 percent of Iranians are vulnerable to poverty, facing a significant risk of economic hardship in the near future (10). In the medium term, GDP growth is expected to remain modest if economic sanctions persist. However, the growth outlook could improve significantly if economic sanctions were to be lifted (11). The increase in poverty rates directly contravenes Goal 1 of the SDGs which calls for the eradication of poverty in all its forms everywhere.

The ODVV reminds the international community to the report by Ms. Alena Douhan, the Special Rapporteur on UCMs which elucidates the adverse impact of UCMs (12) on the public health and health-care system. These negative effects stem not only from unilateral sanctions but also from overcompliance and financial restrictions, which jeopardise individuals' right to access healthcare, nutrition, clean water, and sanitation.

Iran is currently experiencing shortages of critical medical products and medicines, including those used to treat haemophilia, cancer, HIV, and thalassemia (13). These shortages have serious implications on the Goal 3 of SDGs which aims to ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages. Restrictions on the import of medicines and medical equipment have limited access to healthcare services thereby impeding Iran's right to development.

In light of these findings, it is imperative that the international community reassess the implementation and impact of UCMs, with particular attention to their effects on fundamental human rights and the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

Recommendations:

1. We urge the Human Rights Council to support Article 14 of the "Revised draft convention on the right to development". This article is crucial for protecting the rights of millions of people living in countries targeted by sanctions.
2. We call for the implementation of recommendations made by the Special Rapporteur on UCMs and the establishment of a mechanism to monitor the impact of sanctions on the achievement of the SDGs.
3. Finally, we encourage constructive dialogue between countries to find diplomatic solutions instead of imposing cruel sanctions. Only through international cooperation and respect to the rights of all nations to development can we achieve a more just and sustainable world.

1- <https://www.econstor.eu/bitstream/10419/267717/1/1827897171.pdf>, p. 9.

2- https://drive.google.com/file/d/1vm_wAWtuTqY63WnK0QOZq8MAMr3MaZn3/view, p. 16

- 3- <https://documents.un.org/doc/undoc/gen/n23/203/69/pdf/n2320369.pdf>, para 47.
- 4- <https://www.icj-cij.org/sites/default/files/case-related/175/175-20190524-WRI-01-00-EN.pdf>, para. 1.11.
- 5- <https://documents.un.org/doc/undoc/gen/n23/203/69/pdf/n2320369.pdf>, para 48
- 6- <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC8511607/>;
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- 9- Two More Income Brackets Dropped Below Poverty Line”, Iran International, 19 November 2018
- 10- OHCHR, “Iran sanctions are unjust and harmful, says UN expert warning against generalised economic war”, 22 August 2018,
<https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/099110623175541902/pdf/P1777150fa1dcd02108b55086af5f3268f5.pdf>, p.3
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