



# General Assembly

Distr.: General  
XX May 2025

English only

---

## Human Rights Council

### Fifty-ninth session

16 June–11 July 2025

Agenda item 3

**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.

[25 May 2025]

---

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

## Impact of Unilateral Sanctions on International Solidarity

International solidarity, a cornerstone of global cooperation for advancing human rights and sustainable development, is enshrined in United Nations resolutions (A/RES/60/1, 2005) (1) and the Declaration on International Solidarity (A/RES/64/136, 2009) (2). This principle calls on states and international organizations to collaborate without discrimination to ensure fundamental rights, including health, food, and education. However, unilateral sanctions, particularly extraterritorial measures imposed by the United States, undermine this solidarity, obstructing access to essential resources and participation in global initiatives. The Islamic Republic of Iran, as a sanctioned state, faces significant barriers to humanitarian and international cooperation.

International solidarity, as defined by the UN Declaration (A/RES/64/136, 2009), promotes mutual cooperation among states, organizations, and civil society to advance global justice and human rights. It ensures equitable access to humanitarian aid, financial resources, and technology to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Yet, unilateral sanctions, by violating the principle of non-intervention (UN Charter, Article 2(7)), disrupt these collaborations, excluding sanctioned states from global efforts. (3)

In Iran, U.S. unlawful extraterritorial sanctions have severely restricted humanitarian and international cooperation. Over-compliance by international banks and companies has disrupted financial transactions, hindering the receipt of humanitarian aid from international organizations. Iran hosts millions of refugees, mostly from Afghanistan, placing a significant financial burden on the country (4). These restrictions have limited Iran's ability to collaborate with UNHCR to provide educational and healthcare services to refugees, exacerbating challenges in meeting their needs. (5)

Sanctions have also disrupted Iran's participation in global health initiatives. In 2023, Iran was unable to procure advanced medical equipment, such as MRI machines, for public hospitals due to banking restrictions, reducing chronic disease detection rates. (6) This has jeopardized Iran's collaboration with the World Health Organization (WHO) on non-communicable disease prevention programs. Furthermore, sanctions have restricted access to green technologies for environmental projects, stalling progress on SDG 13 (Climate Action) and limiting Iran's participation in global initiatives like the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). These barriers violate the principles of international solidarity.

Sanctions have had tangible impacts on the daily lives of Iranians. In 2024, shortages of essential cancer drugs, such as chemotherapy agents, disrupted treatment of patients, increasing cancer-related mortality rates. (7) Additionally, trade restrictions have hindered the import of raw materials for producing generic drugs, forcing reliance on costly foreign alternatives. (8) This violates the right to health (Article 12, ICESCR) and by preventing Iran's cooperation with organizations such as the World Health Organization to provide essential medicines, it weakens the principle of international solidarity, which emphasizes non-discriminatory cooperation to ensure human rights.

These challenges are not unique to Iran. In Venezuela, U.S. unilateral sanctions have disrupted cooperation with humanitarian organizations, limiting access to essential goods and services. In Zimbabwe, sanctions have restricted access to international loans, hindering the government's ability to develop healthcare infrastructure. These examples illustrate the global nature of sanctions' impact on international solidarity. The UN Special Rapporteur on the negative impact of unilateral coercive measures has emphasized that sanctions undermine fundamental rights by restricting humanitarian cooperation. (9)

Extraterritorial sanctions, through over-compliance by banks and companies, further disrupt global cooperation. In 2024, international shipping companies, fearing U.S. penalties, refused to deliver agricultural equipment to Iran, reducing food production and threatening food security. (10) This has undermined Iran's cooperation with the Food and Agriculture

Organization (FAO) on food security programs, exemplifying the violation of international solidarity.

In summary, unilateral sanctions—by disrupting humanitarian, financial, and technical cooperation—have undermined international solidarity and violated fundamental rights, including access to health, food, and development in Iran and other sanctioned states. These measures have hindered Iran's participation in global initiatives and undermined the principle of non-discriminatory cooperation. The international community must address these barriers to strengthen global solidarity and uphold human rights.

#### Recommendations

1. We urge the Independent Expert on human rights and international solidarity to highlight the effects of sanctions on international solidarity in her reports and advocate for their immediate removal.
2. We call upon the international community, particularly Human Rights Council members, to address banking and financial barriers caused by sanctions to ensure Iran and other sanctioned states access humanitarian resources and essential technologies.
3. We call upon the United Nations to establish a framework for monitoring the impact of sanctions on international solidarity and propose practical measures to mitigate these effects.

- 
- 1) United Nations General Assembly. (2005). Resolution 60/1: 2005 World Summit Outcome. Available at: [https://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/migration/generalassembly/docs/globalcompact/A\\_RES\\_60\\_1.pdf](https://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/migration/generalassembly/docs/globalcompact/A_RES_60_1.pdf)
  - 2) United Nations General Assembly. (2009). Resolution 64/136: International Solidarity. Available at: <https://undocs.org/A/RES/64/136>
  - 3) Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR). (2024). Report of the Special Rapporteur on the Negative Impact of Unilateral Coercive Measures on the Enjoyment of Human Rights. Available at: <https://www.ohchr.org/en/documents/thematic-reports/negative-impact-unilateral-coercive-measures>
  - 4) UNHCR Iran Factsheet, April-June 2024. Available at: <https://reliefweb.int/report/iran-islamic-republic/unhcr-iran-factsheet-april-june-2024>
  - 5) <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2022/05/iran-unilateral-sanctions-and-overcompliance-constitute-serious-threat-human>
  - 6) World Health Organization (WHO). (2025). Global Health Observatory: Iran 2025. Available at: <https://www.who.int/data/gho/publications/global-health-observatory-2025>
  - 7) World Health Organization (WHO). (2025). Global Health Observatory: Iran 2025. Available at: <https://www.who.int/data/gho/publications/global-health-observatory-2025>
  - 8) <https://www.unocha.org/publications/report/iran-humanitarian-response-plan-2024>.
  - 9) Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR). (2024). Report of the Special Rapporteur on the Negative Impact of Unilateral Coercive Measures on the Enjoyment of Human Rights. Available at: <https://www.ohchr.org/en/documents/thematic-reports/negative-impact-unilateral-coercive-measures>
  - 10) Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). (2024). Global Food Security Assessment 2024. Available at: <https://www.fao.org/publications/global-food-security-assessment-2024>