



General Assembly

Distr.: General
XX August 2025

English only

Human Rights Council

Sixtieth session

8 September–8 October 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.

[10 August 2025]

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

Safeguarding Global Order: Confronting Unilateral Actions and Strengthening Multilateral Cooperation

We express our growing concern regarding the harmful effects of recent unilateral actions by the United States government in the international arena. In particular, the United States' expansive use of unilateral sanctions, its disengagement from key multilateral frameworks, and obstruction of international institutions undermine the international legal order and impose disproportionate and often devastating economic and social burdens on the Global South, exacerbating inequality and obstructing sustainable development efforts. We urge renewed commitment to multilateralism, respect for sovereignty, and adherence to international law, as detailed below.

Unilateral U.S. Sanctions and Humanitarian Impact

Over the past decade, the United States has increasingly relied on extraterritorial sanctions as a dominant tool of foreign policy. Currently, over 8,000 active U.S. sanctions affect nearly one-third of the world's population.[1] These unilateral sanctions are causing an estimated half a million excess civilian deaths every year, a toll comparable to that of armed conflicts.[2] Unilateral Sanctions lack the United Nations Security Council authorization and violate fundamental principles of the UN Charter, including sovereign equality and non-intervention, by attempting to coerce independent States through economic strangulation.

The U.S. has also imposed secondary sanctions that compel third-party States, companies, and financial institutions to comply with its unilateral restrictions, often under threat of massive fines or blacklisting. This global enforcement mechanism extends the reach of U.S. domestic law into sovereign jurisdictions, eroding legal predictability and institutional trust, a practice that UN Special Rapporteur Alena Douhan criticized as a "clear violation of due process rights, including the presumption of innocence and fair trial." [3] As noted by the Mihir Kanade, Member of the Expert Mechanism on the Right to Development, unilateral coercive measures impede the full realization of human rights, including the right to development and the right of peoples to self-determination.[4]

U.S. Withdrawal from Multilateral Mechanisms

The credibility of the International legal system has also been shaken by the U.S. withdrawal from critical global institutions. Within the last year, the U.S. government has exited the UN Human Rights Council, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the Paris Agreement, and the World Health Organization. It has withheld financial contributions to UN bodies and blocked consensus on critical reforms. Its refusal to ratify core international human rights instruments such as the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), and Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) further distances it from global norms.

The U.S. has also targeted international judicial mechanisms. In 2025, it imposed sanctions on the Prosecutor and judges of the International Criminal Court (ICC) in response to investigations involving Israeli Officials.[5] Similarly, U.S. sanctions against UN experts such as the Special Rapporteur on the Occupied Palestinian Territories [6] constitute acts of reprisal that threaten the independence of UN mechanisms and violate the Convention on the Privileges and Immunities of the UN (1946).

Destabilizing Actions in Support of Israel

In recent months, the United States has intensified its political, military, and economic support for Israel during the ongoing conflict in Gaza and in operations targeting Iran. In Gaza, this has included the provision of advanced weaponry and diplomatic shielding of Israel from accountability measures in the UN Security Council, despite well-documented

allegations of grave breaches of international humanitarian law.[7] Such actions have contributed to the prolongation of hostilities, exacerbated civilian suffering, and undermined prospects for a just and lasting peace. Similarly, in June 2025, following Israel's large-scale strikes on Iranian territory, including civilian and critical infrastructure, the United States not only refrained from condemning the attacks but also actively participated in the military aggression against Iran and imposed additional sanctions on Iran in the immediate aftermath, deliberately obstructing post-conflict recovery.[8] These measures have destabilized entire regions, eroded the authority of international legal norms, and emboldened the use of force and coercion over diplomacy, contrary to the foundational principles of the UN Charter.

Multilateralism must not be reduced to a rhetorical ideal; it must be practiced. Only through renewed commitment to a cooperative legal order can the promises of peace, human rights, and development be meaningfully realized for all. The international community must decisively reject unilateralism and reaffirm its commitment to multilateralism, equity, and the rule of law to shape a strengthened and more just international order.

Recommendations

To this end, we urge the Human Rights Council and international community to:

- Call for the immediate cessation of unilateral coercive measures that lack UN Security Council authorization and have documented humanitarian impacts, particularly those affecting access to food, medicine, and critical infrastructure.
- Establish a transparent monitoring mechanism within the UN to assess and publicly report on the human rights and development impacts of unilateral sanctions and other forms of unilateralism.
- Ensure accountability for violations of international law by supporting investigations and judicial processes, including at the International Criminal Court, without political interference or acts of reprisal against UN mandate holders.
- Strengthen multilateral dispute resolution channels to address inter-state conflicts and economic coercion, prioritizing diplomacy and cooperative solutions over unilateral measures.
- Enhance protection for UN mandate holders and experts from acts of reprisal, including targeted sanctions, in order to safeguard the independence and integrity of international human rights mechanisms.
- Reaffirm the centrality of the UN Charter by ensuring that all measures with extraterritorial effect comply fully with principles of sovereign equality, non-intervention, and peaceful settlement of disputes.

1)Report: One Third of The World Under US Sanctions - PopularResistance.Org.

2)Unilateral and Illegal Sanctions – Mainly by the United States – Kill Half a Million Civilians Per Year: The Thirty-First Newsletter (2025) | Tricontinental: Institute for Social Research.

3)United States: Efforts to use sanctions to expand jurisdiction abroad violate human rights says UN expert | OHCHR.

4)High Commissioner for Human Rights to the Human Rights Council: Sanctions that Threaten People's Lives and Health Need to be Halted | OHCHR

5)US hits international court's top prosecutor with sanctions after Trump's order | AP News; Rubio announces sanctions on International Criminal Court judges - The Washington Post.

6)US Imposes Sanctions on UN Special Rapporteur | Human Rights Watch.

7) Israel's assault on the foundations of international law must have consequences: UN experts | OHCHR.

8) US issues first wave of Iran sanctions after ceasefire in 12-day war | Israel-Iran conflict News | Al Jazeera