

Organization for Defending Victims of Violence

Item 3: General Debate



Mr. President

We are alarmed by the responses of some pharmaceutical companies to the US sanctions against Iran, which has led to shortages of some vital medicines inside the country and serious health conditions for patients with chronic disease in contradiction with the responsibility of businesses under the "UN Guiding Principles for Business and Human Rights".

Although the sanctions permit the sale of medicine and some medical raw materials on paper, factors such as risks for secondary sanctions' enforcement and civil and criminal penalties for circumvention of sanctions' regimes has led to some decisions by pharmaceutical companies that violate both their own human rights obligations as well as international commitments of the states where the companies are based.

We condemn the justification provided by some States that their companies operate independently of government control when it comes to deciding whether or not to sell medicine to sanctioned countries. Under international law, the States are obliged to prevent violations of the right to health in other States.

Mr. President,

How can we stand idly by as the right to health is trampled upon by the imposition of the UCMs? How can we ignore the cries of those suffering, denied access to life-saving medications and essential healthcare?

It is time to confront these uncomfortable truths and demand justice for those whose right to health has been callously disregarded. The time for action is now.