



# General Assembly

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## Human Rights Council

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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.

[03 February 2020]

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



## **ID with the SR on the rights of persons with disabilities**

### **Disabilities rights under sanctions**

Economic sanctions and blockades are increasingly becoming a threat to international peace and security, to the extent that their unwarranted and systematic use exacerbates inter-State tensions and leads to more violations of human rights.

The effects of comprehensive Unilateral Coercive Measures (UCM) can be seen on patients and also the disabled. These individuals require access to medicines, therapy and medical equipment from outside the country for their treatment. While, imposition of unilateral sanctions, and economic blockades by the United States of America (the US) has endangered the lives of thousands of people in target countries.

The economic terrorism launched against the Islamic Republic of Iran (Iran) and the lack of international banking transactions have caused countless problems in the medical care sector of the target countries. These problems resonate even more with individuals with disabilities.

We echo the voice of the Special Rapporteur on the rights of persons with disabilities in his recent report that States must deem disability as a part of human diversity according to the standards set in the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and based on human rights, preserve respect and personal independence of the disabled, protect their right to life and participation in decision making.

As an NGO in Iran we believe that the imposition of unilateral comprehensive sanctions is one of the factors which creates obstacles for the realization of the right of people with disabilities as the special rapporteur raises in this report.

### **Equipment and medicine**

According to the US officials, the sanctions have been designed in a way that access to humanitarian items including food and medicine are exempt, but in practice, Washington's unilateral measures amount to an economic war as stated by the Special Rapporteur on unilateral coercive measures (UCM).<sup>1</sup> Imposed banking sanctions against Iran, are more dangerous than before and cause disruptions in the people's – especially the impoverished, the elderly, children, women, people suffering from contracted diseases and the disabled' access to medicines and needed equipment.

Drugs prices have skyrocketed and their quality has dropped. The existence of the untrusted cycle of getting them has caused incompleteness of medical treatment and lack of continued rehabilitation for individuals with disabilities.

This has resulted in rehabilitation equipment such as wheelchairs, walking sticks and prosthetics (hands, arms and legs, prosthetic kneecaps) to be produced with poor quality due to shortage of raw materials and this has caused countless problems for individuals with disabilities.

For example, these unilateral measures have caused problems in provision of cochlea implantation. Currently the provision of hearing prosthetics has become time consuming. The costs of cochlear implantation has risen to 500 million Rials.<sup>2</sup> UCMs have caused the price of imported rehabilitation equipment to quintuple and also domestically manufactured equipment to triple.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> A/74/165

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.isna.ir/news/981102011269/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.rouyadad24.ir/fa/news/189214/>

## **Modification of public places for the disabled**

The most natural right of every citizen is to have the right to safe and easy use of public places. Thus, the way city services are distributed among various sectors and groups can be of significance. Various groups with diverse needs must benefit from available facilities in a fair way, and the disabled are one of these groups.

One of the needs of the disabled which to an extent has been ignored is public paths, their design and obstacles (potholes, uneven surfaces, scaffoldings on pavements etc.) which has resulted in this group to be omitted from normal city activities in practice. In the recent years a significant part of these modification, have been taken out of top priority due to the comprehensive sanctions, and their budget is allocated to more crucial expenditures. This has resulted in the commuting conditions for the disabled in city areas to become more difficult than before.

## **Allocation of budget for individuals with disabilities**

With regards to allocation of rehabilitation and provision of rehabilitation equipment budget for the disable, have also created problems due to the economic blockade launched by the United States of America (the US) against Iran. Due to sanctions, the country, the authorities and individuals with disabilities and their families are having countless problems in provision of rehabilitation aid equipment. In spite of the fact that the budget allocated for them has increased, the re-imposition of sanctions has caused problems such as prevention of financial transactions, purchasing of equipment and shortage of raw materials have all caused price increases and these patients are having difficulties to provide for their needs.

## **Recommendations**

- As an NGO with access to existing information which all indicate the impact of sanctions on the lives of individuals with disabilities, ask the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights to, prepare a report for the investigation of the economic blockade of the human rights of civilians in Iran, particularly the lives of the disabled.
  - The ODVV asks the Human Rights Council to set up a mechanism for compensation to resolve the suffering of all victims of comprehensive unilateral coercive measures against the people of Iran especially the worsening of living conditions for individuals with disabilities for providing their medicines and rehabilitation services.
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