



General Assembly

Distr.: General
23 February 2021

English only

Human Rights Council

Forty-sixth session

22 February–19 March 2021

Agenda items 2 and 3

Annual report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and reports of the Office of the High Commissioner and the Secretary-General

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

Written statement* submitted by International Association of Justice Watch, 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.

[29 January 2021]

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



COVID-19: Increase of Violence against Children in terms of Exacerbated Inequalities and Vulnerabilities

It is a disturbing fact that as the United Nations (UN) Children's Fund has displayed approximately 1 billion children, half of all children in the world, are the victims of the physical, sexual and psychological violence each year. The Covid-19 pandemic and the mitigating measures are even expected to intensify the risk of children being exposed to violence at home during the confinement and lockdown.

The situational context derived from COVID-19, isolation, mounting anxieties, and intra-family tension are among the major risk factors which trap children in their homes, isolating them from the outside world and depriving them of the resources that could assist them.

The economic uncertainty, unemployment crisis, and job losses still stand amongst the principal underlying reasons which fuel violence against children and adolescents. However, we did not live in an equal world before the pandemic, the current crisis will widen the already worrisome levels of inequality while minimizing any ensuing economic recovery for many developing countries.

The unilateral coercive measures (UCMs) make the situation even worse. Any deep structural reforms or recovery programs in order to shield children and families from financial misfortune and restore livelihoods in affected countries are tightly restricted due to the United States of America illegal and illegitimate extraterritorial measures.

Restricting oil exports and limiting access to the international banking system by Americans under the rude announcement of "maximum pressure" policies is an explicit instance of breaching the international law. Children in the Islamic Republic of Iran, then, are subjected to the most brutal form of "health and economic terrorism" that nurtures other consequential forms of violence.

Amidst a grave global health crisis, Iranians fulfill the promise that no one shall be left behind. The government and civil society have had a constructive collaboration. Releasing cultural products including "Our Home" or "Marham" is an excellent example of this cooperation to raise awareness about familial problems during the lockdown and to provide families with practical guides to tackle such challenges. Children, their mental wellbeing and prevention of any forms of violence against them, have been the core of such activities. As children's education is of paramount significance in this regard, various campaigns were motivated to provide sufficient learning equipment, particularly for those students in remote and rural areas. Smart phones, tablets, and printed material were provided for pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds so that they could have access to the Internet and the national remote learning courses.

Recommendations:

1. Call for the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence against Children to have a close collaboration with UN Special Rapporteur on the negative impact of unilateral coercive measures on the enjoyment of human rights, in order to identify the violations of the children's rights and violence against them in the medium and long term in consequence of the UCMs.
 2. Call for the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence against Children in order to identify the depth of the misery and the violence against Iranian children with disabilities and rare diseases, making them most vulnerable during the Covid-19 pandemic as a result of the United States of America extraterritorial measures and sanctions.
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