

ODVV reply to Question No. 3 of the Questionnaire distributed by the Mandate of the Special Rapporteur on the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health on "Violence and its impact on the right to health"



The Deadly Effect of United States' Unilateral Coercive Measures (UCM)s on the Right to Health

ODVV Answer to question No. 3:

With offices in Tehran and Geneva, ODVV has been witness to the unending sufferings of the people who live under the sanctions of the United States including, Iran, Cuba, Venezuela and Syria. The scope of inhuman UCMs, imposed beyond the authority of the UN is so vast that leads to widespread violations of all human rights of all people, including patients' access to treatment leading to serious violation of the right to life and the right to physical and mental health.

The alarming human rights repercussions of UCMs made a multitude of UN reports to interpret UCMs as "collective punishment"¹, "de facto blockade"² and "economic warfare"³ because the measures claim human lives as in armed conflicts. Some UN reports have criticized UCMs as "crimes against humanity"⁴ due to systematic deprivation of target populations from access to essential services including food and medicine. Regrettably enough, research has proven thousands of lives to have been lost⁵ due the effect of UCMs.

Sanctioned countries have referred to sanctions as "economic terrorism"⁶ "crimes against humanity"⁷ and "genocide" considering the detrimental effects on civilian populations. However, to be committed to the word limit of this call we present three examples of the vulnerable groups target by UCMs:

¹ . A/HRC/42/46; A/HRC/39/54

² . A/HRC/39/54, A/HRC/42/46

³ . A/74/165; A/HRC/42/46; A/HRC/39/54

⁴ . A/HRC/39/47/Add.1

⁵ . According to a report by CEPR, in Venezuela, sanctions death toll was recorded to amount to 40,000 lives in a one-year period, the report is available at: <http://cepr.net/publications/reports/economic-sanctions-as-collective-punishment-the-case-of-venezuela>

⁶ . <https://rc.majlis.ir/en/news/show/1647833>

⁷ . <https://www.farsnews.ir/en/news/14000603000685/Venezela-Asks-ICC-Prbe-US-Sancins-as-Crime-Aqains-Hmaniy>; <https://globalnews.ca/news/7551401/syria-us-sanctions-un-remarks/>

Iran Chemical Weapon Victims

A group, systemically targeted by UCMs are the victims of chemical attacks during Iran-Iraq War⁸. The chemical air raids affected about 400 thousand civilians and combats, one of the largest populations of contemporary chemical weapon victims world-wide. Now, the United States secondary sanctions and the over compliance of pharmaceutical companies with sanctions due to fear of heavy financial penalties has led to scarcity of specific types of medicine, required by the victims of chemical weapons.

Children with Chronic Disease

The situation of EB children in Iran is another tangible example. The children suffer from a severe and life threatening rare skin condition, called epidermolysis bullosa (EB), which causes extremely painful wounds. The only effective treatment to relieve the life-long pain was the bandage produced by a Swedish company that decided to halt shipments to Iran in order to over-comply with U.S. sanctions. The decision harms the patients right to health, to be free from physical and psychological pain and the right to life.

The case of EB children and their lack of access to effective treatment was raised by a group of UN experts on Oct, 19th, 2021 who criticized the situation⁹.

The Aged

The elderly people living under UCMs consisted the other vulnerable group who paid the price of sanctions with their lives during the Covid-19 pandemic, due to delayed or banned delivery of quality medicine and vaccine because of the sanctions imposed on inter-bank systems.

ODVV notes the Special Rapporteur's decision to join some of the repeated calls made by the UN experts¹⁰ on lifting sanctions, and the fact that UN Special Rapporteurs, have repeatedly warned the world over the deadly impact of UCMs on populations. Unfortunately, the monopoly of the US over the Western media has shifted the whole responsibility of unilateral sanctions on the shoulders of the targeted governments, silencing the civilian voices of UCM victims.

Contact Details

⁸ . Conducted under the rule of Saddam Hossein, the former Iraq President.

⁹ . Over-compliance with US sanctions harms Iranians' right to health, available at: <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=27665&LangID=E>

¹⁰ . UN Experts: Sanctions proving deadly during COVID pandemic, humanitarian exemptions not working, available at: <https://www.ohchr.org/en/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=26155&LangID=E>

Please provide your contact details in case we need to contact you in connection with this survey. Note that this is optional.

Type of Stakeholder (please select one)	<input type="checkbox"/> Member State <input type="checkbox"/> Observer State <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify) NGO
Name of State Name of Survey Respondent	Organization for Defending Victims of Violence (ODVV)
Email	info@odvv.org ; odvngo@gmail.com
Can we attribute responses to this questionnaire to your State publicly*? *On OHCHR website, under the section of SR health	<u>Yes</u> No Comments (if any): Our submission can be made Public.