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Mission Permanente  
De La  
République Arabe Syrienne  
Genève



الجمهورية العربية السورية  
البعثة الدائمة لدى مكتب الأمر المتحد  
جنييف

N : 264

Geneva, 7 October, 2014

The Permanent Mission of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations Office and other International Organizations in Geneva presents its compliments to the Secretariat of the Human Rights Council Advisory Committee, and with reference to the questionnaire on “**human rights and unilateral coercive measures**”, has the honour to attach, herewith, the response of the Syrian Arab Republic to the above-mentioned questionnaire.

The Permanent Mission of the Syrian Arab Republic avails itself of this opportunity to renew to the Secretariat of the Human Rights Council Advisory Committee the assurance of its highest consideration.



Secretariat of the Human Rights Council Advisory Committee, (OHCHR)  
Palais Wilson, Room 4-062.  
CH-1211 Geneva.

Unilateral Coercive Measures (UCMs) violate a large scale of international law rules and principles:

**-United Nations Charter:**

(UCMs) contradict the purposes enshrined in UN charter, particularly the promotion of friendly relations among all nations and the promotion and protection of human rights to all people, as well as they breach the principles of sovereign equality, non-intervention in internal affairs and peaceful settlement of international disputes.

**-Human Rights Law:**

(UCMs) violate:

- UN resolutions, including Human Rights Council, General Assembly and Economic and Social Council resolutions;
- The Vienna Declaration and program of Action;
  
- The spirit of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, (ICCPR), (ICESCR), and other HRs declarations, such as the Declaration on the Right to Development, as will be explained later.

**-International Humanitarian law:**

(UCMs) violate numerous rules and principles of international humanitarian law, such as the prohibition of starvation, the prohibition of collective punishment, the right to obtain humanitarian aid and the principle of distinction, as they have random effects on civilians.

Despite all clear legal restrictions on the use of (UCMs), certain states and regional organizations insist to apply them, in order to exert pressure on independent states to obtain political and economic benefits, preventing people of these states from exercising their right to choose their own political, economic and social systems.

As a state affected by different types of (UCMs) imposed by some states and regional organizations, the Syrian Arab Republic, would like to express appreciation for the work of HRC Advisory Committee in examining the adverse consequences of (UCMs) on human rights, and for every initiative or effort in this field.

***- Do you consider that unilateral coercive measures have an impact on human rights of citizens in targeted States? If yes, in what way? If no, why?***

Yes, (UCMs) negatively affect Human Rights in targeted states, particularly:

**The Right to life and the Right to health:**

They badly affect the efficiency of health system and impede governmental efforts to ensure its continuation, as they resulted on the lack of necessary medical equipments for operating hospitals and medical centers, lack of certain types of medicines, especially for non-communicable diseases.

**The Right to food:**

They lead to increase of food prices, which may amount to a serious lack of food security.

**The Right to adequate standards of living:**

These measures negatively affect purchasing power of citizens in targeted states; they usually caused increase of basic goods prices and deprivation of means for survival and subsistence in a way impede enhancing the standards of living.

**The Right to work:**

(UCMs) usually caused increase in unemployment rates and impede the achievement of full and productive employment. Economic hardship caused by them lead to the closure of factories and companies used to accommodate large number of workers, especially when they target financial sector, or prevent the exportation of equipments which are necessary to operate these factories and companies.

**The Cultural rights:**

(UCMs) affect these rights as they are:

- A serious Impediment to the rehabilitation of educational institutions, particularly when they are imposed for a long period.
- A serious obstacle to the right to benefits of scientific progress.
- Governmental financial allocations for education sector may decrease as they might be converted to replenish the shortage in other basic sectors, such as food and health.
- Participation in international cultural activities and the ability to exchange experiences in different fields of knowledge may be affected, especially when these measures include restrictions on travel and navigation by sea, land and air.

**The right to economic self - determination and the right of people and nations of permanent sovereignty over natural resources:**

In certain cases, (UCMs) are imposed on natural resources sectors in targeted states, such as oil sector, herein, they impede exporting the products of this sector, as well as, importing the necessary equipments to operate it.

**The right to development:**

- impede the ability of targeted states to participate in international development process, and to benefit from its fruits.

- contradict the principle of international cooperation which is an inalienable condition to achieve development.

- open the doors, widely, for the accumulation of foreign debts.

- constitute a serious obstacle to transfer technology to targeted states; especially they usually target developing countries.

***2. a) What specific aspects of human rights are affected by unilateral coercive measures in targeted States? Can you give examples of particular groups most affected by unilateral coercive measures and in what way?***

***(b) Do such unilateral coercive measures have an impact on citizens in non-targeted third States? Can you provide examples of this impact?***

2. (a), as mentioned above, in answer (1), it can be added that children, women and older persons are the most vulnerable groups to (UCMs) effects, lack of medical necessities, such as vaccines and other basic medicines may cause increase in rates of morbidity and mortality of under five years of age, as well as, maternal morbidity and mortality.

2.(b) Yes, examples for that:

- Restrictions on cross borders movement of small and big trucks may affect people of third countries, as they cause losses in goods used to be transferred cross borders, such as agricultural corps.

- Abolition of bilateral agreements, halt of contracts, investment projects, common enterprises, and other types of disruption in mutual commercial relations with targeted state negatively affect people of non-targeted states, for examples; many of them may loss their work in the targeted state.

- Restrictions on navigation by sea, land and air, usually affect the movement of people of non-targeted states.

***3. Are current human rights norms and mechanisms effective in addressing the negative impacts of unilateral coercive measures on human rights in targeted States?***

Unfortunately no, despite condemnations by different HR norms and mechanisms of these measures, their negative impact still ongoing.

Ideas such as what so called targeted or smart measures or sanctions, or humanitarian exemptions, have done nothing to recover (UCMs) negative effects.

Double standards and politicization still the main feature of many international organizations, preventing the full eradication of these phenomena from international relations.

***4. What specific human rights mechanisms can be used to assess the negative impact of unilateral coercive measures on the enjoyment of human rights in targeted States or in any other third State, and to promote accountability?***

- Special rapporteurs and existing thematic mechanisms of the Human Rights Council in the field of economic, social and cultural rights, within the scope of their respective mandate.
- The resolution of (HRC) in its last session regarding the appointment of a Special Rapporteur on the negative impact of unilateral coercive measures on the enjoyment of human rights is an important step to address these impacts.
- Human rights treaty bodies should keep an eye on this vital issue, through their comments, observations and recommendations.

***5. Can you provide specific examples of the impact of unilateral coercive measures on human rights in your country, if any?***

The unilateral coercive measures imposed on the Syrian Arab Republic by some states and regional organizations have left negative impacts on the livelihood of the Syrians and increase their suffering.

Children, women and older persons are the most affected groups of them.

Health sector is one of the most affected sectors by these measures, as they caused lack of basic drugs to manufacture vaccines and medicines, lack of medicines for non-communicable diseases, serious difficulties in operating hospitals and other medical facilities as they restrict importation of basic medical equipments.

Other examples of the effects of (UCMs) in Syria:

- (UCMs) imposed on public and private banking sectors caused bad effects on the daily life of the Syrians, they impede importation of basic needs like food and medicines, as well as necessary equipments to operate main civil facilities and institutions, such as hospitals and other health institutions.

-(UCMs) imposed on commercial and industrial sectors deprive the Syrians of their own means of subsistence as they resulted on general increase of main goods prices, such as food. In addition to that; exportation of building and reconstruction materials faced many difficulties which reflected in increase of house prices and hindering rehabilitation of infrastructures.

- (UCMs) target oil sector violate the sovereign right of the Syrians over their own natural resources. The (UCMs) imposed by the European Union on Syria contain a permission to purchase oil from what so called "opposition armed groups", such permission can be simply considered as a support for terrorism, as these groups smuggle the looted oil across borders, and the revenues attaining from that are used to finance terrorist groups.

- (UCMs) imposed on Transport sector, such as those prohibiting air navigation or preventing exportation of spare parts for planes, affect the availability of basic goods and hinder the free movement of Syrian citizens.

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