

Check against delivery



Statement by Ms. Alena Douhan

**SPECIAL RAPPORTEUR ON THE NEGATIVE IMPACT OF
UNILATERAL COERCIVE MEASURES ON THE ENJOYMENT OF
HUMAN RIGHTS**

Biennial panel meeting

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Honourable Chair, Excellencies, Distinguished delegates,

It is a privilege for me to participate today in the biennial panel meeting for discussion of issues relevant to the impact of unilateral sanctions, means of their enforcement and over-compliance to the right to food and food security.

Today the rapid expansion of various forms of unilateral sanctions is taking place in the face of intensive political debate, with very little attention paid to their legality and humanitarian impact especially as regards the right to food and food security.

Reports received as well as country visits demonstrate that usually the whole population of a country under unilateral sanctions becomes subjected to the negative impact of them and also of over-compliance, with the most vulnerable groups facing the most dramatic effects.

Unilateral sanctions regimes are usually pretending to introduce humanitarian exemptions to deliver in particular food as a survival good. At the same time this allegation is generally misleading, humanitarian exemptions are not effective and additionally SDG 2 (Zero hunger) aims to insure not only food availability but rather food sustainability that is not possible when unilateral sanctions, means of their enforcement or implementation and over-compliance affect access to water, electricity, transportation, gas, gasoline infrastructure and accessibility.

Due to the limited time it is not possible to address all elements of the impacts of UCMs on the right to food in my presentation, therefore I will only address a few ones and I am sure that other elements will be elaborated in depth by other panelists.

In particular, unilateral sanctions, means of their enforcement and over-compliance create impediments in delivery of food, seeds, agricultural mashinery, spare parts, fertilizers, livestock vaccines etc, that has serious transborder effects, decreases the effectiveness of agriculture and make people to come back to hard and low-effective food cultivation;

Insufficiency of fuel due to sectoral and transportation sanctions affects agricultural mashinery, food processing and storage, delivery of food for remote areas;

Multiplying costs of food and goods necessary for agriculture, transportation costs make it unaffordable for the most vulnerable groups, and in

some countries for the majority of population. All the above results in the growing poverty rates, unavailability of food basket, reduced ratio, unavailability of the proper nutrition

Impediments in access to the newest knowledge prevent countries from development of more effective agriculture and often make them to use old often environmentally unfriendly agriculture technologies resulting in deteriorating labour environment, violating inter alia the right of everyone to benefit from the results of academic progress;

Unavailability of vaccination undermines plant and livestock disease prevention capacities;

Reduced access to clean water and sanitation, transportation, use of sewage for irrigation purposes increases risks of water-borne diseases;

Sanctions imposed against fertilizers' industry have deteriorating effect over the population of countries in many parts of the world especially those which already faced hunger elimination problems, due to multiplied costs of fertilizers, risks of punishment for circumvention of sanctions' regimes or their absolute unavailability;

Even the delivery of food as such which is claimed by sanctioning states as being fully exempted from any limitations is usually very problematic and very expensive due to the transportation, financial, insurance sanctions as well as fear of food producers to get subjected to penalties in the face of unclear sanctions regimes and possibility of severe punishments.

The same reasons impede the implementation of the UN Security Council humanitarian resolutions requesting to release frozen assets to ensure basic needs of the population and to deliver food.

Honorable Chair, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The above reasons increase moderate and severe malnutrition/ hunger;

Result in unbalanced food baskets, insufficiency of proteins and vitamins;

Violate fundamental human rights under the International covenant on civil and political rights including: the right to life, right to decent life, freedom from torture, prohibition of discrimination with growing mortality rates and reduced life expectancy;

Freedom from hunger and right to the highest attainable level of health under ICESPR, CRC; CEDAW; CRPD, as food is one of the fundamental prerequisites for implementation of the right to health;

Severely affects vulnerable groups: children due to unavailability of baby formula; people dependent on health related diets; women – as they sacrifice food on behalf of men and children and in the environment of insufficiency of nutrition are more subjected to the home violence;

Increase the level of poverty and dependence on governmental support and humanitarian assistance, which is also reduced due to the general economic impact of unilateral sanctions

Poverty and hunger are viewed by the UN General Assembly as conditions conducive to terrorism and other types of transboundary crimes as well as involvement into the gray economy;

Honorable Chair, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Right to food is the right vital for survival and living in dignity of every individual around the world every day. It cannot be postponed to the next year or even the next month.

It consists of two parts: **availability of food** today and **food sustainability** in every country for every person.

Due to the high importance of this right no unilateral measures can be taken to affect the right to food both today and continuously. As the right to food and SDG 2 are directly dependent on the proper functioning of electricity, water supply, transportation, gas etc., in the country I request again to lift any measures which can negatively affect functioning of critical infrastructure and goods necessary for agriculture and food sustainability.

I also want to remind that states cannot justify negative impacts as unintended due to over-compliance of private actors, as **it is their obligation under international law not to violate human rights** as well as other international obligations but also **acting under the principle of due diligence to ensure that all actors acting under their jurisdiction and control do not violate human rights**. I align here the position of the Committee on economic, social and cultural rights that if the right to food is violated by the action of private actors, states, on the territory or under the jurisdiction of which such businesses are registered, are equally responsible.

Honorable Chair, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

To my regret representatives of the FAO and WFP were not able to be present here today, however the impact of unilateral sanctions, means of their

enforcement and over-compliance on the world hunger is so bad that I hope they will focus on the issue much more in the near future.

Collecting statistical data, revealing factors caused or developed due to the impact of UCMs as regards the implementation of the right to food, identification of causality links is important for us **to know the truth, to move forwards the achievement of the SDG 2 (zero hunger) and to protect those, who are affected.**

I welcome the all states as well as UN organs and organizations including the FAO to monitor the impact of UCMs on the right to food, as lots of information has already been submitted in the sphere to the Monitoring tool developed by the mandate, collected during country visits and to help me to identify the problems and to implement such monitoring and assessment properly.

I stay fully open for cooperation in the addressing humanitarian impact of UCMs, their enforcement and over-compliance on the right to food. And will be happy to assist as only joint efforts can assist us to achieve the SDG2 – Zero hunger.

Due to the importance of the topic my last report I prepare for the HRC in 2026 as a mandate holder on unilateral coercive measures will focus on the impact on the right to food and food security and I invite all stakeholders to share their views and data.

I thank you for your attention