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Statement submitted by Institute of Sustainable Development, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council*

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

* The present statement is issued without formal editing.



Statement

Sanctioned and violence against immigrant women

In the armed conflicts, women and children are often the targets of mass displacement, sexual violence, abduction, ethnic cleansing, or genocide. Once displaced to a host country, they are often powerless to control the conditions in which they live. The Refugee and asylum-seeking women are exposed to hardships and different types of extreme violence throughout the migration process and in the context of the destination countries. Among the crimes against women and girls are repeated experiences, during and after the rapes, of tortures and bodily harm. The pain and suffering from such heinous crimes take years to heal for those who survive, and leave many with physical handicaps and emotional turmoil for the rest of their lives.

The U.S. invasion of Afghanistan and nearly two decades of war have displaced millions in a country where mass displacement has been a fixture of life. Afghans remained the largest refugee population in the world, with an estimated three million refugees in Iran, who most of them are women and children. Some host countries such as Iran, although facing economic problems due to unilateral sanctions, have tried to use all their capacities, especially in the field of health and education, to support refugee women and children.

Although Afghan refugees have been living in this country for many years like Iranian citizens, unilateral sanctions have disrupted humanitarian services for them. Sanction could strongly deteriorate the living conditions of the most vulnerable, including women and children who are often the most vulnerable during times of crisis, and hamper the humanitarian response.

The economic hardship caused by sanctions have made the violation of Rights of refugee women overt and make some challenges in the process of their empowerment and access to social services. First, as the target's economy shrinks due to the sanctions, refugee women will face more violations of their economic rights such as more discrimination in hiring and promotion practices, and more frequent arbitrary firing or layoffs. Consequently, not only will there be fewer women in the workforce, but their economic status will also worsen. Second, the economic decline caused by the sanctions will reduce the welfare of the target's populace, leading to greater economic grievance that incites more social disorder and instability. This social disorder will lead to more violations rights of refugee women.

Economic sanctions indirectly hurt women's access to welfare services by reducing the government's ability to sponsor social policies because their revenues decline during an economic downturn. Because refugee women are among the groups who tend to benefit most from welfare policies, any decline in social services caused by the sanctions will contribute to the deterioration in their status. Furthermore, the COVID-19 pandemic has inflicted a devastating socio-economic impact on economies across the board. It has profoundly affected refugee populations and vulnerable segments of host communities, deepening poverty, worsening food insecurity, and stripping away livelihoods.

Due to sanctions and restrictions on bank transactions of countries and human rights organizations such as UNICEF, UNHCHR, the Red Cross cannot send humanitarian aid, including medical equipment and medicine, to the refugee population. Consequently, host countries, without adequate external resources, have struggled to attain the considerable funding needed to host refugees, which has made the provision of social services, infrastructure, livelihood opportunities, housing, and other essential services to refugee's women and host communities challenging.

Considering that the Charter of the United Nations and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights establish the principle that human beings shall enjoy fundamental rights and freedoms without discrimination;

Considering, the primacy of the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 protocol as the international legal basis for the protection of refugees.

Considering that the United Nations has, on various occasions, and most recently in General Assembly resolution 319 A (IV), manifested its profound concern for refugees and endeavoured to assure refugees the widest possible exercise of these fundamental rights and freedoms.

Recommendations

We consider that the time has come for the international community to give greater recognition to the costs incurred by those lower and middle-income States that accommodate the largest proportion of the world's refugees.

We believe that refugees must not be an unmitigated burden on the countries where they have taken up residence, especially sanctioned countries; the international community have to support them in full accordance with the principles of international solidarity, cooperation and responsibility-sharing.

The international community should take joint responsibility for refugees to lighten the burden of caring for and protecting them in the sanctioned countries.

Continuous efforts to remove unilateral sanctions as a solution to support the provision of services to refugee women and children in the host country such as Iran.

We call on create an international platform for transferring the experiences of countries hosting refugees regarding the empowerment of refugee women

Repeatedly recommended that Member States suspend or lift any unilateral coercive measures that had a detrimental effect on human rights, and which were aggravating humanitarian needs.

We emphasize the urgency of taking action now to fulfil our responsibility to achieve food security the empowerment of refugee girls for present and future generations. International solidarity and cooperation is needed now more than ever to jointly respond to these challenges.

In many instances, the outflow of refugees and displaced persons placed increased burden on the neighboring States, including high economic and social costs. In addressing the problem of refugees and displaced persons, therefore, assistance should be rendered to countries which hosted such persons.