

Oral Statement

Human Rights Council 55th Session

Agenda Item 3

General Debate

Delivered by Mr. Joel Veldkamp

Christian Solidarity International wishes to draw the Council's attention to the growing use of unilateral coercive measures, particularly economic sanctions, by UN member states.

Nearly ten years ago, in resolution 27/21, the Council expressed its "alarm" at the "indiscriminate human costs of unilateral sanctions" and called upon "all States to stop adopting, maintaining or implementing unilateral coercive measures not in accordance with international law."

Sadly, the Council's words were not heeded. Today, more than 800 million people live in countries under sanctions, around 10% of the world population.

CSI is particularly familiar with the devastating effects of unilateral coercive measures on the civilian population of the Syrian Arab Republic. From 2018 on, economic sanctions against Syria have been increased, even as violence has subsided. As a result, the humanitarian situation in Syria today is worse than at any time since the beginning of the conflict. CSI's non-governmental sources in Syria tell us that many ordinary people fondly recall the so-called "war years," because at least back then they had enough food to eat.

We urge all member states to discontinue the use of any unilateral coercive measures which cause suffering to the civilian populations of targeted states. We also commend the courageous work of the special rapporteur for unilateral coercive measures, Professor Alena Douhan, and urge member states to cooperate fully with her office.

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