



# General Assembly

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## Human Rights Council

Thirty-fourth session

Agenda item 3

**Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil,  
political, economic, social and cultural rights,  
including the right to development**

### **Written statement\* submitted by the Child Foundation, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status**

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[02 February 2017]

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\* This written statement is issued, unedited, in the language(s) received from the submitting non-governmental organization(s).

GE.17-02136(E)



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## The Adverse Consequences of Sanctions

Now, almost 6 years into the conflict in the Syrian Arab Republic, more than 13 million people are in serious need of humanitarian aid. While there are numerous organizations out there that are ready and willing to help by providing necessary supplies and funds, the majority of them have experienced a flood of problems stemming from EU, United States of America and other export sanctions. Designed with the safety of their countries in mind, these sanctions protect to a fault, so much so that those who have the means to provide required relief are unable to do so because of the amount of time and money lost to borderline unnecessary restrictions.

The United States has classified Syria as a state sponsor of terrorism since 1979. This designation along with more recent sanctions has created a labyrinth of requirements that are next to impossible to manoeuvre around. Wide reaching, in plain words, U.S. sanctions broadly prohibit the involvement of any U.S. person or organization in Syria. This means that banks in the United States are unable to facilitate the movement of funds from any individual, business, or the majority of charitable organizations to banks or other agencies in Syria. There are few cases in which this type of transfer is allowed, all of which require a variety of licenses. Unfortunately, despite the clear qualifications and proper paperwork held by many charities and NGOs, a variety of organizations have had never ending problems while using this system. Plagued with simple questions, sluggish response times, and a lack of clear guidelines to follow, some organizations have no choice but to rescind their contributions in order to avoid a lengthy wait time and piles of paper work. It is time for this unorganized system to receive the attention necessary to reorganize and streamline the donation process.

Additionally, United State's sanctions apply not only to donations that leave its shores, but also products that have U.S origins, no matter where they come from. All supplies that contain more than 10% U.S. content are included in this law, and even after retaining a license for exceptions, many INGOs report additional problems. After the months it takes to receive one of these special licenses, it is almost certain that the efforts and legal fees required getting through state sanctions will come close to equalling the value of the product that is to be shipped.

Similarly, the prohibition of "dual use" goods as a part of EU sanctions creates massive problems when it comes to medical facilities and even preparing proper office spaces on-the- ground. Currently, computer programs that are quite important for providing on the ground assistance in spaces like NGO headquarters are extremely difficult to get past enforcers. While this problem may currently seem insignificant, further down the line, these sanctions could create massive problems. Though the conflict is still fierce in Syria, at some point the violence will end and rebuilding must begin. This type of intense restructuring is going to require large numbers of "dual use" goods, all of which will be next to impossible to procure at an appropriate speed. While this time has yet to come, it is necessary for this conversation to begin now. Intense sanctions such as these do not get overturned in a short period of time, as is shown in the current process with permitted exceptions.

The Syrian people and those who are trying to aid them currently face a big dilemma. With wide reaching sanctions creating complications at every turn, it can become tough for many to decide whether or not the process is worth it. The unfortunate truth is that this decision may not lean in favour of those who have the Syrian's best interest in mind. When it comes to necessities like food and fuel, who's to say that organizations like ISIL won't be there to provide when the larger powers cannot? These possibilities are why it is important for the UN, EU, and U.S. to focus on streamlining their communication and finding a balance between protection and unnecessary prevention.

Though similar violent atrocities are occurring in other parts of the world like Sudan, it is important that the Syrian conflict receives the most attention in the area of humanitarian sanctions because of Syria's status in places like the United States. Classified and widely known as a state sponsor of terror, much more harsh restrictions currently plague the Syrian people.

We would like to call upon the international community to work as partners in order to clarify the sanctions that affect those trying to provide humanitarian aid. The current process is extremely difficult, time consuming, and often repetitive when taking into consideration the different countries and organizations that apply them. It is time to begin the necessary change with urgency in order to provide more streamlined assistance and prepare for the conflict-free future of Syria that we hope to see soon.

Among the first steps along this lengthy road must be a governmental organization that is dedicated to handling questions, exceptions, and other aspects of projects that deal with high profile sanctions. By creating this sort of department, assistance can be given to those individuals and organizations that are looking to make a difference in the lives of people in areas of the world where sanctions hamper those efforts. As a community we must encourage and support these efforts by doing everything we can to ensure that they continue. Money, medication, and a variety of supplies are much needed and could make a huge difference in a refugee's life. If there are people who are willing to provide what we are unable to, doesn't it make sense to pave the way for them to provide that help?

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