

# Prevention Association of Social Harms

## Executive Summary:

1. The right to health is a human right which has been recognized in the statute of the World Health Organization. According to article 12 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights: The States Parties to the present Covenant recognize the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health. And paragraph 2c of the same article states: The prevention, treatment and control of epidemic, endemic, occupational and other diseases.

2. This report reviews the negative effects of economic sanctions on Iran in the treatment of people infected with HIV/AIDS, which have directly targeted the health of the citizens of the country, Because of Iran and Iranian banks being in the list of sanctions and therefore the inability to transfer funds through the banking system, international drugs manufacturers refrain from dealing with Iranian buyers, and in view of the efforts of nongovernmental organizations and the cooperation of governmental organizations for education and prevention and treatment of HIV/AIDS, the import of drugs for this disease has been disrupted over the last four years, and the patients are put in danger, and the conditions are even getting worse. Although Iran tries to plan towards the realization of the sixth MDG in fighting this disease, but imposed sanctions are preventing the realization of these plans, but the imposed sanctions are an obstacle in their realization. This Institute recommends the following:

- Separation of human issues particularly the right to medical treatment from diplomatic and political issues.
- Appointment of a Special Rapporteur to investigate the human damages caused by economic sanctions imposed by others.
- Creation of cooperation conditions with international financial institutions by exempting the sales of drugs to Iranians from the sanctions and easing of the transfer of money
- Reconsideration of the sanctions by the international community.

## Improvements:

3, Over the last 4 years, the Health Ministry and the National Welfare Organization have had good cooperation for the education and treatment of HIV/AIDS patients. The increase in the number of triangular centres (behavioral disorders counseling centres), setting up of free HIV test centres and cooperation with NGOs in education and information provision have all been some of these cooperations. Furthermore individuals infected with HIV/AIDS are fully covered by medical services insurance, and the drugs that they need are provided to them for free. Although the number of NGOs related to the subject have increased over the recent years, and these organizations have managed to help many patients in receiving proper and timely medical care, and also necessary education for prevention of getting infected by the virus.

## Challenges and problems:

4. In spite of these efforts in this regard, sanctions against Iran have threatened the rightful access of the patients to treatment. Regardless of diplomatic disputes, every

human being has a right to the enjoyment of good health, and measures taken in the prevention of this right is unjustifiable. The lack of sales of drugs to Iran by producers due to the sanctions, and the impossibility of the transfer of money, are the main reasons in the disruption of the access of the patients to the drugs that they need. Creation of a disruption in the treatment and or inaccessibility to timely treatment, not only threatens the life of the patient, but also for example the infants of HIV+ women are put at risk.

**Recommendations:**

5. The Prevention Association for Social Harms recommends the following for solving the problems:

- a) The distinction of human problems (particularly the right to medical treatment) from political and diplomatic challenges.
- b) Appointment of a special rapporteur on sanctions by the UN for the investigation of the human costs of economic sanctions in all countries.
- c) Sharing of gained experiences with all NGOs at the international level.
- d) Raising the number of counseling and treatment centres for HIV/AIDS patients.
- e) Setting education and information dissemination programmes throughout Iran by governmental organizations and invitation of NGOs to cooperate.
- f) Bringing about conditions for the cooperation of international financial institutions to put an exemption on the sales of medicines and drugs to Iran, and facilitation of the transfer of money for the purchase of medicines.
- g) International community's reconsideration of the current sanctions.
- h) Holding of international conferences with the participation of countries affected by sanctions related human suffering.

**About us:**

6. The Prevention Association of Social Harms is a nongovernmental and nonprofit organization which has been active since 2008 with a concentration on the subject of awareness raising, culture building and education on social harms, with the use of the great influence of the media tool and with the cooperation of UN bodies in Iran (UNICEF, UNAIDS, UNDP and UNFPA), and national and international organizations. The Association received consultative status from ECOSOC in 2013.

7. The objective of this Association is the protection of the vulnerable groups of society and planning to increase the awareness levels of individuals and their empowerment to reduce social harms.

8. The holding of investigative journalism and human rights workshops with the participation of Media Support International Association and Arab Investigative Journalists Union in Istanbul, production of two films on HIV/AIDS, production of two educational animation on families with the subject of HIV/AIDS, the publication of two special issue newsletters on International AIDS Day (two concurrent years), and the holding of commemoration ceremony for International AIDS Day with the aim of education of children and juveniles, have all been some of the activities of this Association to-date. The Association also took part in the 24<sup>th</sup> Session of the Human Rights Council and read 4 oral statements.

**Pivotal Recommendations:**

9. Continuation of programmes regarding the realisation of economic, social and cultural rights and fight against problems caused by unfair and unjust economic sanctions. (Zimbabwe)

**The situation of recommendations in the past, present and future:**

10. Although it's been 28 years since the registration of the first HIV/AIDS case in Iran, but in view of the young population of this country and the spread of this disease through sexual relations and also the lack of correct management to provide necessary education in this regard, the number of people infected by the virus and thus an increase in medicines demand. Sanctions imposed on Iran, particularly in the last four years have prevented the transfer of projects funds to the NGOs of the country, and has become the main reason for the disruption in HIV/AIDS treatment projects. From the Association's perspective it would be satisfactory that the medical needs and the right patients' access to medical services are not jeopardized by the imposition of economic and social sanctions.

**Data Collection Method:**

12. The report is based on eyewitnessing, individual investigation, media monitoring and study of existing statistics regarding social harms which is the main activity of the Institute.