

United Nations fails to condemn U.S. unilateral sanctions



United Nations, April 3 (RHC)-- The UN General Assembly has unanimously approved a resolution for the first time on the coronavirus pandemic, calling for “multilateralism” in the fight against the virus, but failed to condemn unilateral U.S. sanctions against countries.

The resolution urged for “intensified international cooperation to contain, mitigate and defeat” the COVID-19 disease.” It recognized the pandemic’s “severe disruption to societies and economies, as well as to global travel and commerce, and the devastating impact on the livelihood of people.” The resolution also stressed that “the poorest and most vulnerable are the hardest hit” and must be helped.

It was the first resolution adopted by the 193-member world body on the virus that has infected 1,015,709 people and killed 53,069 others globally, according to data collected by Johns Hopkins University. The UN resolution stresses “the need for full respect for human rights” and that “there is no place for any form of discrimination, racism and xenophobia in the response to the pandemic.”

The assembly, however, failed to approve another resolution that was calling for an end to trade wars, protectionist practices and U.S. unilateral sanctions on countries across the world. The draft text called for a general lifting of international sanctions that hamper efforts to fight the coronavirus outbreak.

The European Union, United Kingdom, United States and Ukraine objected to the draft that was sponsored by Russia, according to diplomats. The resolution was supported by the Central African Republic, Cuba, Nicaragua and Venezuela.

At a time of the pandemic, world leaders have repeatedly called for a suspension of US economic sanctions on some countries. U.S. President Donald Trump, however, insisted that his administration would continue with its policy of maximum pressure against various countries, including Iran, Iraq, Venezuela and Cuba.

UN special rapporteur on the right to food, Hilal Elver, called earlier this week for the lifting of sanctions to ensure that food supplies reach people during the fight against coronavirus in several countries. "The continued imposition of crippling economic sanctions on Syria, Venezuela, Iran, Cuba, and, to a lesser degree, Zimbabwe, to name the most prominent instances, severely undermines the ordinary citizens' fundamental right to sufficient and adequate food," said Elver. He emphasized that it was a matter of "humanitarian and practical urgency to lift unilateral economic sanctions immediately."

Last week, UN rights chief Michelle Bachelet also appealed for easing or suspending the debilitating sanctions. "It is vital to avoid the collapse of any country's medical system – given the explosive impact that will have on death, suffering and wider contagion," she said.

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