

U.S. government urged to end use of unilateral sanctions



Washington, August 12 (RHC)-- Dozens of legal organizations and more than 200 lawyers and academics from around the world today urged the U.S. government to put an end to illegal unilateral economic sanctions, which constitute collective punishment against civilians.

"The United States imposes more unilateral economic sanctions than any other country in the world," the collective said in a letter sent Monday to President Joe Biden, citing the cases of Cuba, Venezuela, Syria, Iran, and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

The signatories warned that "collective punishment is now a standard practice of U.S. foreign policy in the form of broad unilateral economic and financial sanctions" and that while it is not conventional warfare, its effects "can be equally indiscriminate, punitive and deadly."

The letter argued that hundreds of millions of people currently live under these types of economic sanctions, which can cause severe and widespread civilian harm, including death.

It stressed that these sanctions trigger and prolong economic crises, impede access to essential goods such as food, fuel and medicine, and increase poverty, hunger, disease and even death rates, especially among children.

The UN General Assembly and the Human Rights Council have strongly condemned such measures as contrary to international law, international humanitarian law, the UN Charter and the norms and principles governing peaceful relations between States, he recalled.

"The suffering of civilians is not merely an incidental cost of such policies, but is often their very purpose," the letter warned, referring specifically to "a 1960 State Department memorandum on the embargo (blockade) of Cuba."

It suggested "denying money and supplies to Cuba, depressing wages, causing starvation, despair, and the overthrow of the government" on the island, it added.

As members of the legal community, we call on the United States to comply with existing international law by ending the use of broad unilateral coercive measures," emphasized the letter, which was initiated by the National Lawyers Guild, among others.

"Seventy-five years after the Geneva Conventions, collective punishment must end," concluded the letter to Biden. (Source: Prensa Latina)

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