

**“Protect the life God loves so much”<sup>1</sup>**

**Call for the immediate and full lifting of those U.S. sanctions that increase the difficulty for nations to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic in Iran, Venezuela, Cuba and other countries.**

Church World Service (CWS), a global humanitarian agency with programs in development, humanitarian aid, and refugee assistance, adds its voice to the increasing number of U.S. humanitarian and religious organizations calling an immediate lifting of those U.S. sanctions that increase the difficulty for countries to protect their populations from the COVID-19 pandemic and prevent further global transmissions.

Such sanctioned countries include Iran, Venezuela, Cuba and other nations impacted by the Coronavirus and currently responding to the COVID-19 pandemic in coordination and communication with the World Health Organization

Our call is inspired by our Christian faith and CWS’ adherence to the humanitarian imperative to save lives and advance human dignity.

Timing is critical. The urgency to act intensifies each day, and every life that can be saved must be saved. All persons matter equally to God, whether American, Iranian or Venezuelan. While the United States government has serious differences with the governments of sanctioned countries, their people are not our enemies.

Both moral imperative and the U.S.’s enlightened self-interest urge immediate action to lift – at least temporarily – these sanctions.

Accordingly, we urge the immediate lifting of those U.S. sanctions that increase the difficulty for Iran, Venezuela, Cuba and other countries to protect their populations from the COVID-19 pandemic and prevent further global transmissions.

*“And now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; and the greatest of these is love.” (1 Cor 13:13.)*



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March 24, 2020

<sup>1</sup> World Council of Churches, Pastoral Letter March 18 2020 available at <https://www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/general-secretary/messages-and-letters/pasoral-letter-18-march-2020/view>