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Understanding and improving sanctions today

Why and how many sanctions
fail, and what to do about it

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Chatham House, the Royal Institute of International Affairs, is a world-leading policy institute based in London. Our mission is to help governments and societies build a sustainably secure, prosperous and just world.

Summary

- Sanctions have become a key instrument of foreign policy and economic statecraft, applied with increasing frequency by the United States, the United Kingdom and the European Union. Types of sanctions encompass a growing set of tools including asset freezes, travel bans and trade sanctions, such as arms embargoes and controls on imports and exports. While increasingly viewed as an attractive foreign policy tool, there are mounting concerns about the efficacy, enforcement and unintended consequences of sanctions and their impact on international norms and geopolitics.
- These unilateral sanctions are fundamentally different from sanctions applied through the United Nations. The growing body of sanctions levied by individual countries and institutions, such as the EU, occur outside the international procedures and norms established under the UN. This paper concerns itself with these unilateral, non-UN sanctions, including their growth, range, objectives and impact on diplomacy and geopolitical fragmentation.
- The proliferation of sanctions with different policy goals raises a range of questions, challenges and risks for policymakers, businesses, multilateral organizations and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Significant challenges in enforcement – arising from the raft of sanctions imposed by different jurisdictions and the difficulties facing policymakers and businesses in coordinating across countries and departments – affect the success of sanctions, public perceptions of their efficacy and their legacy in relation to geopolitical fragmentation and a country's long-term political and economic trajectory. Their justifications have also raised concerns among scholars and policymakers, over multiple or competing goals and hyperbolic language that place unrealistic expectations on their outcome and undermine long-term effectiveness.
- The impacts of sanctions on local populations, economies and geopolitical alliances have also triggered concern. Their potential adverse effects on principled humanitarian action, particularly in areas of armed conflict, intensify the challenges faced by NGOs attempting to provide humanitarian relief to local populations. In some cases, sanctions have led to the concentration of economic power by the government they were designed to target, furthering the regime's power and contributing to economic crises. Western sanctions have also driven increased cooperation, alliances and partnerships between countries including China, Russia, North Korea and Iran. The US's use of secondary sanctions – or extra-territorial sanctions – has also prevented Western allied governments and businesses from investing in countries and blocked trading of debt. As a result, investors from companies opposed to the US and the goals of the sanctions – from Russia, China and Iran – have scooped up those assets, including distressed debt bonds, ensuring their economic (possible political) influence even after sanction goals have been met.

- Despite these concerns, the use of unilateral sanctions is unlikely to fade any time soon. This paper outlines recommendations for policymakers, particularly in sanction-applying governments in the West (the overwhelming majority of which are in the Global North) to guide future sanctions policies. These include:
 - **Sanctions should be justified by a clear objective:** Governments imposing sanctions need to have specific reasoning, be clear on their objectives and communicate these transparently with allies as well as their targets. Having a limited policy goal that is publicly stated from the beginning of the process, and communicating this to all parties, is essential for developing trust and legitimacy.
 - **Coordination with allies is essential:** Sanctions are more effective when coordinated across multiple actors – among allies or within political and economic forums such as the G7 or the EU. Coordination on strategy, targets and third-country engagement to build support for sanctions regimes is essential, along with synchronization on implementation, enforcement and litigation.
 - **The vetting of sanctions and dialogue across affected stakeholders can be improved:** While channels to allow for input from the private sector and government partners on sanctions have improved, there are still gaps in coordination among sanction-issuing entities and with the private sector. Developing a regular, potentially annual multi-stakeholder arrangement to review sanctions processes and their intended and unintended consequences is essential. The first priority should be communication and coordination not only with other sanctioning governments but also with non-sanctioning governments that share the same goals to review their impact. A central part of this process should be the development of a metric to measure both the success of sanctions in meeting their (reduced, clear) objectives and their unintended consequences.
 - **Sanctions should be part of a broader strategy:** Sanctions work best when they are employed as part of a broader strategy that includes diplomatic, economic and humanitarian levers. Even in their initiation, sanctions development should articulate and include a ‘plan B’ for what happens if they do not achieve their intended ends, including the potential for escalation or the adjustment of goals and steps for their liberalization. Too often sanctions remain inflexibly locked in place, a result of insufficient early planning.
 - **Countering the axis of the sanctioned and addressing accusations of hypocrisy:** Given the shifting geopolitical dynamics that have occurred in recent years and continue to evolve, policymakers are confronted with the need to counter the ‘axis of the sanctioned’ as well as accusations of hypocrisy and double standards in foreign policy decisions. Sanctioning countries should adopt a more collaborative approach towards working with partners in the ‘Global South’, who are at the sharp end of the results of economic coercion by the US, when it comes to sanctions. Secondary sanctions in particular should be considered and applied with caution.

- **Developing a checklist of best practices in sanctions development and enforcement:** When beginning to develop and design sanctions, policymakers must consider how they will implement them in the long term. Where multiple government entities are involved in sanctions enforcement, there should be a common vision and a ‘whole-of-government approach’ to enforcement efforts.

Introduction and context: Why it’s important to understand and review US, EU and UK sanctions policies now

Sanctions as a diplomatic, economic, security and human rights/democracy tool have proliferated in the past three decades. By the end of 2023, excluding Magnitsky-type sanctions, there were a total of 596 active commercial, military and financial sanctions globally. The US, UK, EU and UN jointly accounted for 74 per cent of those. The bulk of those sanctions were unilateral: of the active sanctions cited above, the UN only accounted for 6 per cent of those sanctions. The US was the lead sanctioning country/entity, with 47 per cent of the total (282). EU member countries were second – 11 per cent (65) – and the UK was third with 9 per cent of sanctions (56).¹ Increasingly, as well, the G7 and smaller countries are imposing their own sanctions or joining others in sanctions.²

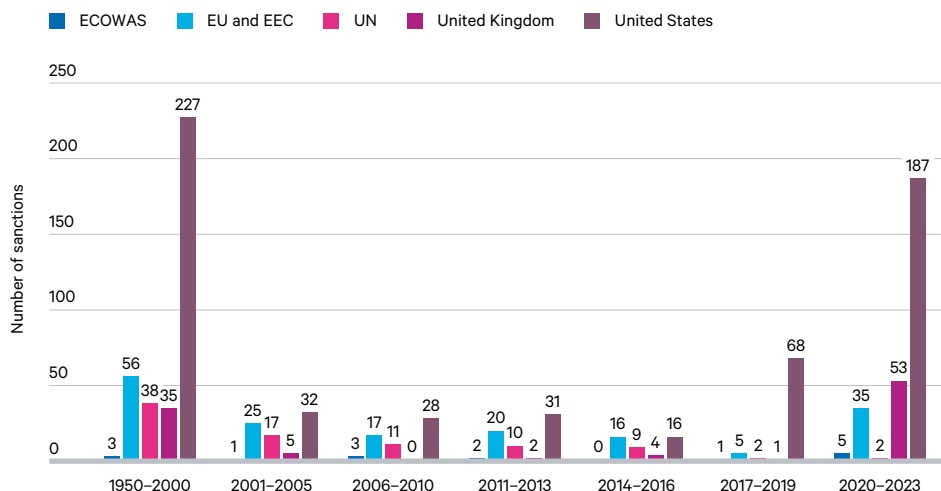
By the end of 2023 there were a total of 596 active commercial, military and financial sanctions globally.

These unilateral sanctions are fundamentally different from those applied through the UN. The growing number of sanctions from individual countries and institutions such as the EU occur outside the international procedures and norms established under the UN and do not enjoy the endorsement of international organizations. As such it is unclear where they fit in the body of international law. Nevertheless, unilateral sanctions are having an unprecedented – and often underappreciated – impact on global governance, international diplomacy, negotiations and Western economic tools, including the US dollar and international banking systems such as SWIFT.

¹ In some cases, the EU, US and EU non-member countries applied sanctions jointly. For reasons of clarity, these sanctions are only counted once, with the lead sanctioning country given credit for the sanction (see Annex 1 below compiled by the authors detailing those sanctions by year, sanctioning entity, sanctioned target and the stated objectives).

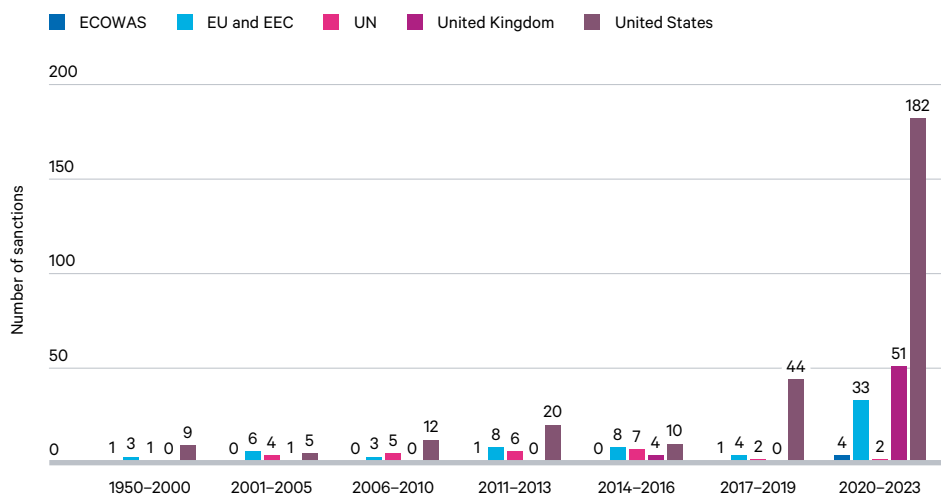
² A recent series of articles by the *Washington Post* based on its own calculations on a summary review of sanctions estimated that, as of 19 April 2024, the US, Switzerland, the EU, the UK, Canada and Australia had a combined total of 36,918 sanctions in place on countries, economic sectors, entities and individuals (public and private). The United Nations adds another 875 sanctions to the mix. But the *Washington Post*’s totals include the broadest possible range of sanctions: from specific sanctions on products over commercial, trade disputes, to targeted personal sanctions to broader commercial and financial sanctions on governments and entities. The numbers used here and in the later table in the annex focus only on sectoral and government sanctions. Stein, J. and Cocco, F. (2024), ‘How Four Presidents Unleashed Economic Warfare Across the Globe’, *Washington Post*, 25 July 2024, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/interactive/2024/us-sanction-countries-work/>.

Figure 1. All sanctions (1950–2023)



Source: Authors' data analysis draws from Syropoulos, C. et al. (2023), 'The global sanctions data base – Release 3: COVID-19, Russia, and multilateral sanctions', *Review of International Economics*, 32(1), pp. 12–48, <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/roie.12691>; Felbermayr, G. et al. (2020), 'The global sanctions data base', *European Economic Review*, Vol. 129, <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0014292120301914>; Kirikakha, A. et al. (2021), 'Chapter 4: The Global Sanctions Data Base (GSDB): an update that includes the years of the Trump presidency', in van Bergeijk, P. (2021), *Research Handbook on Economic Sanctions*, <https://www.elgaronline.com/edcollchap/edcoll/9781839102714/9781839102714.00010.xml>.

Figure 2. Current sanctions still in effect (1950–2023)



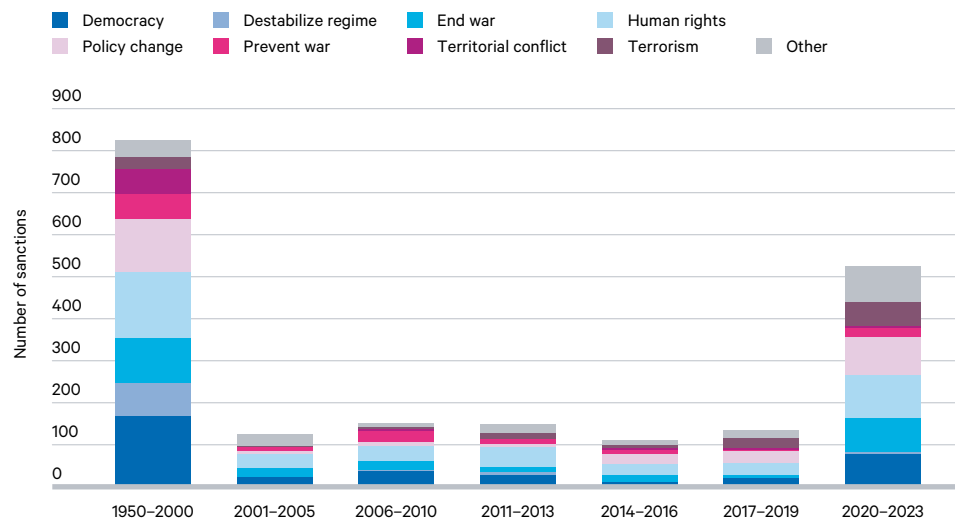
Source: Authors' data analysis draws from Syropoulos et al. (2023), 'The global sanctions data base – Release 3: COVID-19, Russia, and multilateral sanctions'; Felbermayr et al. (2020), 'The global sanctions data base'; Kirikakha et al. (2021), 'Chapter 4: The Global Sanctions Data Base (GSDB): an update that includes the years of the Trump presidency'.

This paper, which is drawn from a 2024 Chatham House conference on sanctions and the authors' own research, focuses on unilateral sanctions, including their growth, range, objectives and impact on diplomacy, economic integration and geopolitical fragmentation. There is a body of rigorous work developed on multilateral and UN sanctions, their success, and the rules and tools for

monitoring and measuring their impact. However, geopolitical fragmentation and rivalries, reflected in the UN Security Council, increasingly preclude the UN's role in defining and applying sanctions. As a result, individual countries have taken up their own sanction agendas, including enforcing them and potentially negotiating their application on or removal from – though more in theory than in practice – target regimes or sectors, outside of UN procedures and institutional consensus. The expansion in countries' application of sanctions for different goals has led to greater complexity in their enforcement and evaluation.

The West's unilateral use of sanctions has created a labyrinth of rules, separate and overlapping justifications, and sanctioning authorities, across countries/entities and even within sanctioning governments. It has also led to a dizzying array of justifications and objectives for the sanctions and may well have launched a 'sanctions arms race' between the West and 'the rest', namely many of those targeted by sanctions, including China, Iran and Russia. The growth of these sanctions has added another dimension to the fragmentation of the international system and power dynamics within it. By 2023, the US had targeted sanctions on countries and entities representing one-fifth of the world's GDP.³ As a result, there has emerged nascent alliances seeking to skirt US and, in some cases, Western sanctions, which have led to surreptitious trade between sanctions-targeted countries such as Cuba, Iran, North Korea, Russia and Venezuela, often with the complicity and support of China.

Figure 3. The escalating public objectives of sanctions



Source: Authors' data analysis draws from Syropoulos et al. (2023), 'The global sanctions data base – Release 3: COVID-19, Russia, and multilateral sanctions'; Felbermayr et al. (2020), 'The global sanctions data base'; Kirikakha et al. (2021), 'Chapter 4: The Global Sanctions Data Base (GSDB): an update that includes the years of the Trump presidency'.

³ Sabatini, C. (2023), 'America's Love of Sanctions Will Be Its Downfall', *Foreign Policy*, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2023/07/24/united-states-sanctions-debt-china-venezuela>.

At the same time, many countries, particularly in the Global South, strive to remain neutral in the growing geopolitical competition but are critical of sanctions. This includes Brazil, India and South Africa,⁴ which are ostensibly supportive of the liberal international order in general but also both wary of the unilateral weaponization of sanctions and committed to maintaining a strategic neutrality in rising global tensions.

The growing categories of sanctions include: targeted bans on exports and imports, including military and dual-use products and increasingly products that are used exclusively or primarily in commercial/civilian contexts; restrictions on the provision of certain types of technical, financial and other professional services to restricted jurisdictions; broad prohibitions on direct and indirect dealings with designated persons and entities; prohibitions on investments; and Global Magnitsky-type sanctions that target individuals or entities for corruption or human rights abuses.⁵ The EU alone has 54 categories of sanctions, for example.

Of the ‘sanctioners’ mentioned above, the US has historically been the most aggressive, imposing three times more sanctions than any other country or international body. The reasons vary, but the following goals are often used as primary, secondary or tertiary justifications for sanctions: global terrorism, illicit commerce, narcotics trafficking, corruption, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, cybercrime, efforts by states or organizations to destabilize the international order, violation of human rights or democratic norms, and foreign interference in US elections. Sanctions-applying entities also often cite deterring or reversing conflict or war as a justification for sanctions.

The 2024 election of US president Donald Trump has raised new challenges in understanding and managing sanctions cooperation and their application for policy change. Despite re-applying ‘maximum pressure’ sanctions to Iran, Cuba and Venezuela, which were among the 5,000 sanctions he levied in his first term,⁶ President Trump has in his second term focused more on tariffs than sanctions, such as shifting US sanctions on Venezuelan oil and gas production and sales to a 25 per cent tariff rate on countries that buy Venezuelan oil and gas exports.⁷ Nevertheless, bilateral negotiations with Iran over its nuclear programme and Trump’s promises to unilaterally lift sanctions on Russia to eventually ease the path to a peace deal with Ukraine raise problems of unpredictability and coordination with other sanctioning countries on their liberalization and collective policy objectives.

⁴ Bhatt, A. (2024), ‘The BRICS countries’ inability to define its identity limits action’, Washington, DC: Peterson Institute for International Economics, <https://www.piie.com/blogs/realtime-economics/2024/brics-countries-inability-define-its-identity-limits-action>.

⁵ Magnitsky sanctions are named after Russian tax lawyer Sergei Magnitsky, who exposed \$230 million of corruption in the Russian government and died in prison after being tortured. These sanctions were originally established in 2012 in the US and signed into law in 2016. Magnitsky-style sanctions have since been used by other countries or multilateral groups, including the UK, the EU and Australia. More countries are considering similar measures. The Magnitsky sanctions are an example of ‘asset-freezing’ or ‘property-blocking’ sanctions and grant a government the authority to freeze the assets of a foreign national deemed to have been engaged in human rights violations and/or significant corruption. Sometimes included as a component in broader sanctions programmes, Magnitsky sanctions in effect prohibit most types of business activities with the sanctioned party and also can extend to non-sanctioned entities that a sanctioned party owns or controls. Such measures grant a government the authority to prohibit individuals subject to such sanctions from travelling to the sanction-imposing country.

⁶ Stein and Cocco (2024), ‘How Four Presidents Unleashed Economic Warfare Across the Globe’.

⁷ Gilroy, T., Lamy, A. and Logsdon, W. (2025), ‘President Trump Announces “Secondary” Tariffs on Countries Importing Venezuelan Oil; OFAC Amends Venezuelan General License No. 41A’, Baker McKenzie, <https://sanctionsnews.bakermckenzie.com/president-trump-announces-secondary-tariffs-on-countries-importing-venezuelan-oil-ofac-amends-venezuelan-general-license-no-41a>.

The Trump administration's unilateral embrace of tariffs as a new economic weapon has extended also to sanctions, raising further questions about coordination and policy goals. On 24 March 2025, the US Office of Foreign Assets Control announced that the Trump administration was placing a 25 per cent tariff on imports from any country that imported Venezuelan oil.⁸ The policy was intended to complement a wind-down of licences that the administration of President Joe Biden had granted to Chevron, Repsol and other US, UK and European oil and gas companies to operate in Venezuela. Trump's use of this new policy of 'secondary tariffs' will mostly affect China, Turkey and India. Secondary tariffs raise questions regarding their relationship with the broader reciprocal tariffs imposed by Trump on 2 April 2025 – and later increased against China – in the interest of US exports. Could the Venezuela-related tariffs be negotiated away in return for greater market access of US exports to Chinese or Indian markets? How would they be coordinated with other tariffs and existing targeted sanctions that had been previously imposed on Venezuela by the EU, UK and Canada?

The wide-ranging sanctions imposed in response to Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in early 2022 are an important recent example of coordination between the UK, EU and US on imposing and enforcing broad sanctions to deter and later punish Moscow for its invasion of Ukraine – though since January 2025 the Trump administration has stalled updating sanctions enforcement on third parties.

At the same time, other jurisdictions – including the EU, UK and other countries – are also using sanctions measures as a primary foreign policy tool to further government objectives such as deterring conflict, promoting and protecting human rights and democracy, or encouraging policy change in areas such as trade, often in close coordination with the US.⁹ The wide-ranging sanctions imposed in response to Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in early 2022 are an important recent example of coordination between the UK, EU and US on imposing and enforcing broad sanctions to deter and later punish Moscow for its invasion of Ukraine – though since January 2025 the Trump administration has stalled updating sanctions enforcement on third parties.¹⁰

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ UK Government (2024), *Deter, Disrupt and Demonstrate – UK sanctions in a contested world: UK Sanctions Strategy*, <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/65d720cd188d770011038890/Deter-disrupt-and-demonstrate-UK-sanctions-in-a-contested-world.pdf>.

¹⁰ Krolik, A. (2025), 'Lack of New U.S. Sanctions Allows Restricted Goods and Funds Into Russia', *New York Times*, 2 July 2025, <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/07/02/us/politics/trump-russia-sanctions.html>.

While some sanctions regimes target specific countries and sectors, some sanctions apply across countries and jurisdictions in relation to identified categories, for example terrorism, narcotics trafficking and corruption.

Geopolitical fragmentation has also led to sanctions being imposed by non-Western countries. Belarus, China and Russia have started imposing their own sanctions on trade, individuals and entities – an indication that sanctions are no longer just the domain of liberal democratic governments. In some of these cases, these new-sanctioning countries use existing laws on health and safety standards – in what has been termed ‘conversion’ – to limit trade and punish specific economic sectors or countries.¹¹

The risk is an escalation of sanctions for different reasons, with their use sometimes outside the boundaries of violations of international law or norms. This was the case when China applied limited sanctions on Norwegian salmon imports after the Norway-based Nobel committee awarded the Nobel Prize for peace to a Chinese dissident, or when Moscow sanctioned Ukraine before the Russian invasion.¹² As the UN Security Council becomes divided with China and Russia holding veto power over broad UN sanctions, the era of UN sanctions on countries like Iran or North Korea may have become a thing of the past. The result is that unilateral sanctions are likely to become more prevalent in the future, not just by developed countries in the West and/or Global North, but also by China, Russia and others in a fragmenting global environment.

Even excluding these new sanctioning governments, the stated reasons for sanctions vary, as do the countries or entities targeted. The most common stated objective is protecting against threats to democracy and human rights; this was cited among the primary, secondary or tertiary reasons for more than 367 of the sanctions. Preventing or ending war accounted for more than 153 of the measures.¹³

Some of the real and imagined concerns about sanctions

The increasing number of sanctions and sanctions-imposing states raises a series of enforcement, compliance, policy and broader geopolitical issues.

Enforcement

Businesses, legal experts, governments and government bureaucracies, NGOs, and multilateral organizations confront a welter of sanctions from different entities when attempting to comply with current rules. In the UK, the government

¹¹ Ferguson, A. (2022), ‘Economic Lawfare: The Logic and Dynamics of Using Law to Exercise Economic Power’, *International Studies Review*, 24(3), Oxford: Oxford University Press, <https://doi.org/10.1093/isr/viac032>.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Authors’ data analysis draws from Syropoulos, C. et al. (2023), ‘The global sanctions data base – Release 3: COVID-19, Russia, and multilateral sanctions’, *Review of International Economics*, 32(1), pp. 12–48, <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/roie.12691>; Felbermayr, G. et al. (2020), ‘The global sanctions data base’, *European Economic Review*, Vol. 129, <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0014292120301914>; Kirikakha, A. et al. (2021), ‘Chapter 4: The Global Sanctions Data Base (GSDB): an update that includes the years of the Trump presidency’, in van Bergeijk, P. (2021), *Research Handbook on Economic Sanctions*, <https://www.elgaronline.com/edcollchap/edcoll/9781839102714/9781839102714.00010.xml>.

departments involved in sanctions encompass the Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO), HM Treasury, the Department for Business and Trade, and the Department for Transport. In the US, sanctions responsibilities stretch across the Justice Department, Treasury Department and the Office of Foreign Assets Control, the Commerce Department and the State Department, to name a few. In the EU enforcement is carried out by the 27 member states. Larger member states with greater international economic activity are better set up for national sanctions implementation and have efficient systems to enforce those sanctions, while for other governments managing sanctions is more fragmented and therefore complicated for both sanctioning authorities and businesses.

Though there are current efforts underway particularly between the US and UK to streamline sanctions enforcement, the diversity, difficulty and complexity of coordinating across countries and even within national bureaucracies often creates a lack of clarity over the rules for businesses – especially financial institutions – and risks becoming a particular hindrance for small and medium-sized businesses in navigating compliance. On a positive note, though, the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs has taken steps to consolidate and make more transparent its sanctions policies and regime.¹⁴

Public justification and goals of sanctions

There are often competing goals of sanctions regimes, and in some cases those publicly stated goals can become hyperbolic, as policymakers, caught up in the initial excitement of announcing sanctions, make ambitious claims about regime change, defending human rights or reversing the course of a war.

Even when sanctions have demonstrated impact this is difficult to measure and such impacts often do not live up to the bold original claims, undermining perceptions of their effectiveness.

The risks of this are severalfold. First, there tend to be unrealistic expectations about the impact of sanctions, at a time when a growing body of research literature has demonstrated sanctions' historical lack of efficacy on broad objectives like regime change.¹⁵ Second, even when sanctions have demonstrated impact – as in, say, the case of Russia in weakening and slowing down the government's war machine – this is difficult to measure and such impacts often do not live up to the bold original

¹⁴ For a summary of these initiatives see: International Comparative Legal Guide (ICLG) (2024), 'Sanctions Netherlands, 2025', in ICLG (2024), *Sanctions 2025*, <https://iclg.com/practice-areas/sanctions/netherlands>; Kneppelhout (undated), 'Dutch government plans to modernize its sanctions laws', <https://kneppelhout.com/news/dutch-government-plans-to-modernize-its-sanctions-laws>.

¹⁵ Oechslin, M. (2014), 'Targeting autocrats: Economic sanctions and regime change', *European Journal of Political Economy*, 35, pp. 24–40, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ejpoleco.2014.07.003>.

claims, undermining perceptions of their effectiveness.¹⁶ Third, multiple justifications or goals for sanctions – as in the case of US sanctions on Iran, which have included in their objectives: combating terrorism, ending the country’s nuclear programme, as well as punishing regional interference and human rights abuses – complicate incentives and pathways for negotiating sanctions relief to further policy goals. Last, the layering of different objectives on sanctions also complicates the policy options for sanctioning countries regarding which goals to prioritize in negotiations, how to potentially unwind sanctions in the face of evidence showing their ineffectiveness or when and how to engage in other forms of statecraft beyond punishment and isolation. In those cases, there is a tendency towards policy and diplomatic stasis of sanctions remaining in place.

Concerns about transparency and due process (especially with individual and targeted sanctions)

As a Chatham House 2023 research paper, *Human rights diplomacy: Navigating an era of polarization*,¹⁷ argued, the increasing use of Magnitsky-type sanctions by the EU, UK, US and Canada, among others, has sparked a raft of sanctions targeting individuals. These sanctions raise concerns over the transparency of the decision-making process and the accountability of the sanctioning entity to contest sanctions. For example, the EU system relies heavily on intelligence to impose sanctions. As a result, it often cannot provide broad public evidence for its reasoning or decisions. At the same time, the bureaucratic complexity of the sanctioning decisions and their enforcement can unnecessarily complicate the process for affected individuals or entities to seek clarity or reversal if wrongly implicated. The lack of transparency ties directly into a wider issue of sanctions being seen as reactive rather than proactive.

This lack of clarity over the justification for the imposition of targeted sanctions can undermine their imputed moral authority as a punitive tool to combat human rights abuses and corruption.

In the case of targeted personal sanctions, given the opaqueness of their intended goal – beyond punishment – and the decision to impose them, there is the risk of further ambiguity related to when, why and how they can be reversed. ‘Sanctions stasis’ risks becoming the norm without clear, public declarations of their rationale or the steps for their removal or reversal. The danger is that sanctions remain in place indefinitely, causing unwarranted disruption to the target individual even if the behaviour that originally prompted the imposition of sanctions has ceased or been remedied, especially when courts and bureaucracies can be slow in evaluating cases.

It is worth underscoring a key point here. While the rationale and pathways for reversing targeted sanctions may be obscure for Western sanctioning countries or entities, in many of the targets of Western sanctions, as in say, Myanmar, North Korea, Russia or Venezuela accountability for punitive measures, national or international, is non-existent. In other words, as imperfect, slow and opaque

¹⁶ Bergman, M. (2023), ‘Tell Russia Putin Has to Go’, *Foreign Affairs*, 18 July 2023, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/russian-federation/biden-call-oust-putin-end-isolation>.

¹⁷ Griffiths, D. (2023), *Human rights diplomacy: Navigating an era of polarization*, Research Paper, London: Royal Institute of International Affairs, <https://doi.org/10.55317/9781784135614>.

as understanding and resolving targeted sanctions may be when applied by democratic regimes, in many of the autocratic regimes that are the target of those sanctions (and the public officials within them), similar rights or state accountability do not exist for the victims of their repression and abuse.

The collateral effects of sanctions on local populations and local economies

The impact of sanctions on civilians and local markets is well documented and has become an increasingly recognized risk of imposing sanctions. In some cases (Russia), it is a calculated risk. In others, the impact of sanctions on the domestic economy is often conflated with the economic failures of the target regime (Venezuela). But in cases such as the long-standing sanctions on Cuba, these so-called unintended consequences are exactly that: unintentional in ways that can undermine their efficacy and original intent. The question is what sanctioning entities can do to reduce the unintended impacts of these sanctions and provide a more rigorous way to evaluate their efficacy. This raises the question of how to address the growing narrative against sanctions, especially in the Global South.

Broad countrywide economic and financial sanctions of the sort currently on Cuba, Iran, Myanmar, North Korea, Syria and Venezuela will, by their nature and even at times by design, have negative consequences on the broader population's economic wellbeing. By limiting government and citizens' access to imported goods and overseas bank accounts and restricting the capacity of the targeted regime to generate export revenue and raise capital on international markets, sanctions often affect citizens' well-being and reduce government spending. This can include on social programmes and infrastructure.

In many cases too, despite intended carveouts, non-UN, unilateral sanctions have had the effect of restricting the funding and delivery of humanitarian assistance and access to food and medicine to supposedly ameliorate the poverty-generating effects of sanctions. Often those effects are combined, or even secondary to the dysfunctional, venal economic policies of the target government. In those cases, humanitarian assistance remains essential for alleviating suffering regardless of the source. The clear humanitarian carveouts established under UN Resolution 2664 do not apply to unilateral sanctions.

Increasingly, as concerns over the effects of sanctions on economic collapse and the exodus of citizens in sanctioned countries grow, scholars, humanitarian organizations and governments have attempted to measure and take sanctions' effects into account. How to measure those impacts on local economies, though, remains a hotly debated academic topic; one example of this is the heated, statistically driven debate over the impact of US sanctions on Venezuela.¹⁸

¹⁸ For the back and forth over the difficulties of untangling sanctions' impacts on domestic economic collapse and its effects, see the exchange between Ricardo Hausmann and Francisco Rodriguez: Hausmann, R. (2025), 'Sanctions on Venezuela Are Not Driving Migration to the US Southwest Border: An Empirical Assessment', <https://www.hks.harvard.edu/centers/mrcbg/programs/growthpolicy/sanctions-venezuela-are-not-driving-migration-us-southwest>; Rodriguez, F. (2024), 'Sanctions and Venezuelan Migration', https://mpira.uni-muenchen.de/123104/1/MPRA_paper_123104.pdf.

There are examples of the failed anticipation of these consequences and their fallout. In one of the longest-standing, comprehensive sanctions regimes, the US embargo on Cuba (initiated in 1962 and codified into law in 1992 and again in 1997), has not only created a scapegoat for the Cuban regime, allowing it to blame sanctions for the failures of its communist economic system, but has also closed down economic space for independent local entrepreneurs and consolidated the economic power of the state and its allies. After more than 60 years in place, this has instilled a sense of apathy on the island, 90 miles off the coast of the US. Given the Cuban regime's policy of repression of dissent, Cuban citizens are impotent to change their government to alleviate sanctions, and the Cuban regime remains inflexible in its commitment to a failed economic model. Rather than a citizen uprising or defection within the regime that would lead to political change, the result has been stasis and massive outward migration. In the case of Iran, the impact of sanctions has not been borne by the political establishment, but by the people suffering the impacts of inflation.¹⁹

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In the case of Russia for US, EU and UK sanctions there is an implicit effort to impose costs on civilians. Citizens in Russia are being conscripted to fight and kill Ukrainians on the front lines. Will broad sanctions provoke reconsideration by citizens? Can sanctions spark a popular uprising that could force a reconsideration of the war? The history of the sanctions in Cuba, Iran and Venezuela is not encouraging.

The political economy of sanctioned countries – concentration of political and economic power, growth and consolidation of illicit economies and/or war economies

In many cases, broad sectoral sanctions have led to the concentration of economic power within the sanctioned government and among its allies, further strengthening the regime in power and reducing or even eliminating independent economic space.

In Russia, Iran and Venezuela the imposition of broad, economic sanctions has led to the re-allocation of economic assets to reward domestic supporters or in some cases to foreign governments allied with the regime. In countries such as Cuba or North Korea – collectivist regimes in which the state controls the means of production – long-standing sanctions have allowed leaders to sustain economic control, in particular, through loyalists connected to the government. In many

¹⁹ Barjoghli, N. et al. (2024), *How Sanctions Work: Iran and the Impact of Economic Warfare*, Stanford: Stanford University Press.

cases, this has been through the sons and daughters of a privileged ‘communist’ elite, potentially smoothing the pathway for the governing regimes to extend power across generations.

In a fractured global system, restrictions that prevent Western companies and investors from owning or trading the assets of sanctioned countries risk allowing targeted regimes and their allies, which are opposed to Western interests and values, to acquire those assets. In the case of secondary sanctions, these can create an open field for investors – often state-linked enterprises – in Russia and Iran to scoop up assets in energy production and exploration rights, as well as retail activities and services, in countries targeted by sanctions. The same is true for sovereign and private sector debt, which non-Western banks and governments can acquire but Western banks and hedge funds are prohibited from trading or pursuing payment of. The consolidation of power of either domestic or international economic interests in favour of the regime, raises the problem of expanding the influence of non-democratic regimes and their investors in ways that build closer economic cooperation and path dependency among sanctioned countries away from the West. In the case of debt, with sanctioned regimes – often already in default – it poses the danger that in any future debt and restructuring negotiations, regimes and debt holders opposed to Western interests will have a seat at the table and a significant stake in the terms of any potential settlement.

Creating a coalition of the sanctioned

In recent years, there has emerged a global ‘coalition of the sanctioned’. Those regimes and their companies are actively seeking to counter the impact of sanctions, not just by providing the means to break Western sanctions – financial and commercial – but also attempting to erode the West’s broader and long-term economic influence. This has included immediate responses to provide export trade markets, imported goods and diplomatic support among sanctioned countries, and creating parallel currency options to the US dollar and the Western SWIFT banking system. Those efforts to take advantage of sanctions to build new markets and allies have undermined the intent and impact of Western sanctions.²⁰ In a recent example of this collaboration, while in Moscow for the Second World War victory celebration in May 2025, Venezuelan president Nicolás Maduro signed a cooperation agreement with Putin’s government agreeing to cooperate in oil and gas exploration and development, within the UN and in matters of arms control, joining similar post 2022 ‘strategic agreement partnership pacts’ with China, North Korea and Iran.²¹

At the same time, while economic, diplomatic and personal sanctions have traditionally been a tool of the West, regimes such as those in Russia and China are increasingly turning to their use, often, though, using other laws as justification. This approach risks becoming a broader trend while also complicating the coordination of sanctions among Western countries, especially among EU member countries.

²⁰ Demarais, A. (2022), *Backfire: How Sanctions Reshape the World Against US Interests*, New York: Columbia University Press.

²¹ Reuters (2025), ‘Putin and Venezuela’s Maduro sign strategic partnership agreement in Moscow’, 7 May 2025, <https://www.reuters.com/business/energy/putin-maduro-sign-strategic-partnership-agreement-2025-05-07/>.

With China and other non-democratic regimes positioning themselves to lead the global economy, the challenge is not just short-term advantages and surreptitious links to evade Western sanctions. There is a longer-term challenge of how to calibrate and evaluate sanctions, to ensure that in any post-sanctions scenario, the domestic and international consolidation of political-economic power by targeted regimes and sanctioned countries can be minimized and eventually reduced.

Efficacy of sanctions: Do they match their goals?

How do we measure success or failure?

There is a large and growing body of academic and policy literature on when and whether sanctions accomplish their goals.²² As sanctions become a mainstay of the West's diplomatic/economic toolbox, that question looms even greater. Often, though, rigorous efforts to measure sanctions' impact have been clouded by the growing type, scope and use of sanctions. Research on the efficacy of unilateral sectoral economic sanctions, targeted personal sanctions and multilateral sanctions – as well as on the utility of combining sanctions within a broader diplomatic strategy, the impact of a shifting global order, and still nascent efforts to leverage sanctions liberalization for specific policy goals – has not kept up with the rapid rise of targeted and comprehensive unilateral sanctions.

At the same time, the growing and often changing objectives of sanction goals (described above) have complicated any intended effort to inject policy analysis into the discussion. A plan by former US treasury secretary Janet Yellen to systematically and regularly review US sanctions and their impact has fallen by the wayside given the proliferation of sanction types, targets and coordination with allies – not to mention the complexity of bureaucratic coordination, not just across departments but also across other governments in Europe that have joined the sanctions bandwagon.²³ Staffing cuts and the dismissal of sanctions as a policy tool by the Trump administration may further cloud the channels of cooperation and limit nuanced policy collaboration among sanctioning countries in implementation, removal and evaluation.

Analysis conducted by Chatham House reveals that sanctions on autocratic regimes intended to defend human rights, destabilize the target regime and promote democracy have a mixed track record, at best. Examining sanctions from 1950 to 2023 that had the stated objectives of human rights, the destabilization of a regime/regime change and/or the promotion of democracy (a total of 858) revealed that while the majority of those sanctions were successful (436) – as determined by the sanctioning countries – 113 were determined to have failed and 309 were ongoing, including US sanctions on Cuba originally imposed in 1962.

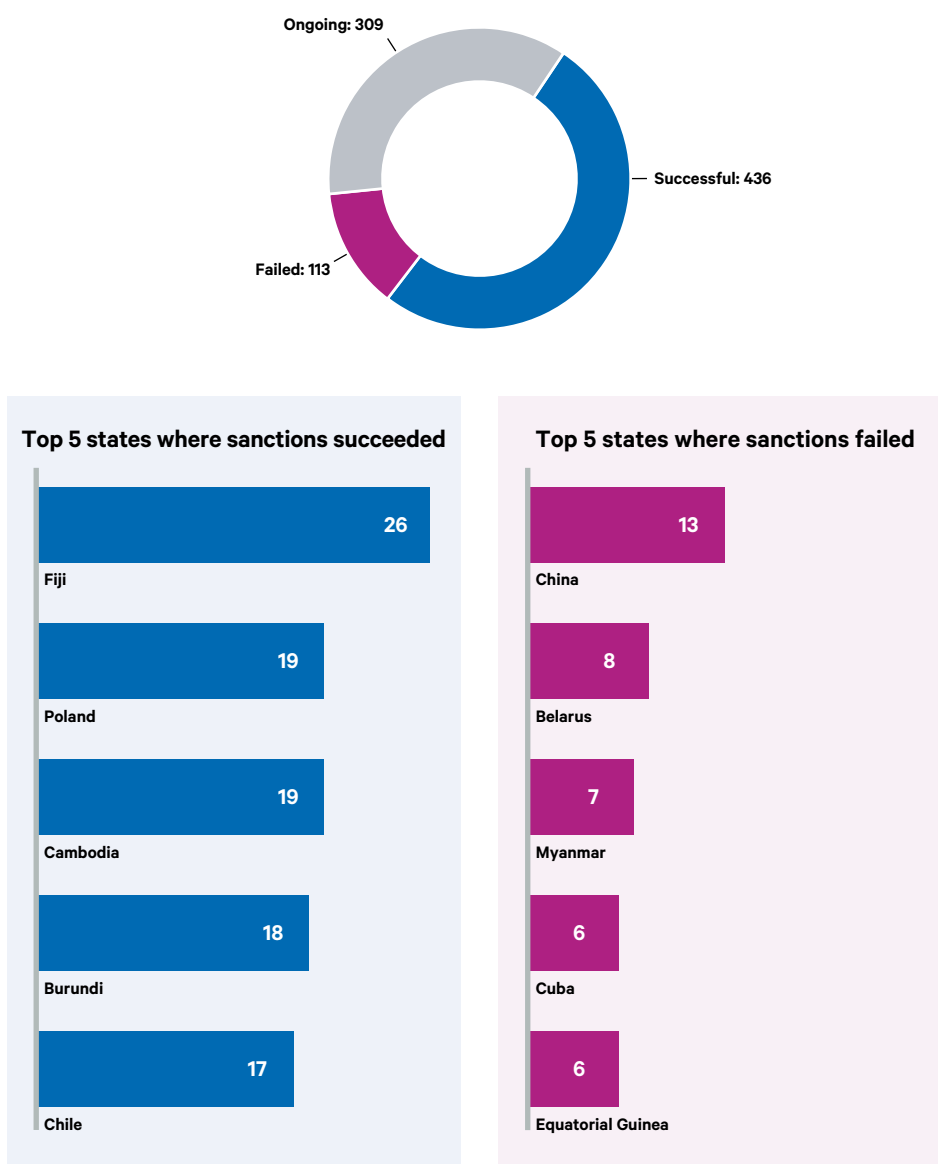
Most revealing was the impact different regime types had on the success or failure of sanctions. Sanctions intended to further human rights and democracy were more likely to succeed in countries under semi-democratic or democratic regimes where

²² For an updated summary see Dan Drezner's article, Drezner, D. (2024), 'Global Review of Sanctions' in *Annual Review of Political Science*, volume 27, <https://www.annualreviews.org/content/journals/10.1146/annurev-polisci-041322-032240>. For more on this vein of research please see, Drezner, D. (1999), *The Sanctions Paradox: Economic Statecraft and International Relations*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

²³ The Department of the Treasury (2021), 'The Treasury 2021 Sanctions Review', <https://home.treasury.gov/system/files/136/Treasury-2021-sanctions-review.pdf>.

there existed mechanisms for accountability and at least a modicum of protected political space – for example, Fiji, Poland, Burundi, Cambodia and Chile (post transition). Sanctions against autocratic or even totalitarian regimes (China, Belarus, Myanmar and Cuba) were more likely to fail. The results of this analysis, while still preliminary, reinforce and add a new aspect to what scholar Dan Drezner has called the ‘sanctions paradox’: that all sanctions (not just those dedicated to democracy and human rights) are more likely to be effective against allies.²⁴

Figure 4. Success/failure rate for sanctions from 1950–2023 with the objectives of human rights, democracy and/or destabilizing the regime



Source: Authors’ data analysis draws from Syropoulos et al. (2023), ‘The global sanctions data base – Release 3: COVID-19, Russia, and multilateral sanctions’; Felbermayr et al. (2020), ‘The global sanctions data base’; Kirikakha et al. (2021), ‘Chapter 4: The Global Sanctions Data Base (GSDB): an update that includes the years of the Trump presidency’.

²⁴ Drezner (1999), *The Sanctions Paradox*.

The emergence and growth of domestic constituencies in favour of sanctions

In a 1977 *Foreign Affairs* article Bayless Manning coined the term ‘intermestic’ to describe the intersection of domestic politics and foreign policy.²⁵ Originally used to describe US tariff and energy policy, unilateral sanctions have become ‘intermestic’ as well, as constituencies in democratic countries have organized and mobilized around policies intended to punish specific regimes, in many cases with the intention of provoking regime change. In the US, domestic pressure has been particularly intense around the US embargo on Cuba, since 1962, and is also the case in relation to Iran and Venezuela.

The pathway towards sanctions proliferation is particularly true in presidential systems. In the cases cited above, congresses have an incentive to impose sanctions on specific countries, individuals or entities. Doing so allows legislative representations to show that they are ‘doing something’ about a specific problem and virtue signal, complicating an executive’s foreign policy, with little responsibility for the policy trade offs or ensuring the success of the policy.

These instances can represent a classic case of the collective action problem in policymaking: a narrow segment of the population organized around and dedicated to a specific policy while broader, potentially important constituents remain diffuse and under-mobilized, complicating objective, effective policy evaluation and adjustment.

Recommendations

In light of the issues described above, this paper makes the following recommendations for policymakers and those monitoring sanctions policy, intended to enhance the effectiveness of sanctions, mitigate unintended consequences and address enforcement challenges. The recommendations and the above analysis are drawn from a 2024 Chatham House conference on sanctions and the authors’ own research.

Sanctions should be justified by a clear objective

US, European and other Western governments (largely from the Global North) imposing sanctions need to have specific reasoning, be clear on their objectives, and communicate these transparently with allies as well as their targets. Having a limited policy goal tied to proposed sanctions that is publicly stated from the beginning of the process, and communicating this to all parties, is essential for developing trust and legitimacy. Moreover, it provides a clear path for negotiating (or not) an exit ramp for sanctions.

Ensuring that sanctions are justified in measurable and specific ways with a clearly articulated policy objective requires states to resist using sanctions as a limitless instrument for multiple, potentially unrealistic foreign policy problems. Such an approach would change the emphasis in the design and justification of sanctions

²⁵ Manning, B. (1977), ‘The Congress, the Executive and Intermestic Affairs: Three Proposals’, *Foreign Affairs*, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/congress-executive-and-intermestic-affairs-three-proposals>.

to be more specific and shift the use of sanctions to be *proactive* rather than *reactive*. Throughout the process, it is also essential for sanctioning entities to maintain clarity of purpose to assess their effectiveness. This effort, however, has become complicated by the ‘intermestic’ nature of sanctions, particularly in the US, in which well-organized constituencies can remain vigilantly inflexible on sanctions policies, and congress is becoming increasingly active in sanctions policy.

Coordination with allies is essential

Sanctions are more effective when coordinated across multiple actors – among allies or within political and economic forums such as the G7 or the EU. Coordination on strategy, targets and third-country engagement to build support for sanctions regimes is essential, along with synchronization on implementation, enforcement and litigation. Clearer objectives and coordination require a more united front among concerned countries – even non-sanctioning ones – and can increase pressure on the targeted regime while providing opportunities to mitigate negative economic consequences for global markets. One of the difficulties that has cropped up is coordinating and enforcing sanctions on Russia and Venezuela through third countries and cracking down on the fleets of shadow tankers shipping embargoed oil.²⁶

While there are challenges in agreeing to and coordinating sanctions through multilateral forums in today’s geopolitical climate, it is still possible to widen sanctions coalitions and deepen cooperation among allies. Effective examples of this include simultaneous UK and US sanctions on the trade of Russian metals in 2024, and joint UK and EU third-country visits that have helped to identify and address the frequent use of third countries to maintain exports to sanctioned countries. Similarly, the Dutch foreign ministry’s effort to consolidate sanctions information and improve communication is an important public step. Similar efforts can be replicated by and across individual governments.

The vetting of sanctions, and dialogue across affected stakeholders, can be improved

Developing a regular, potentially annual multi-stakeholder system to review sanctions processes and their intended and unintended consequences is essential. The first priority should be communication and coordination with governments that have close ties to sanctioning governments – including those who have supported sanctions and those who have not – to review the impact of sanctions. This is also true for secondary sanctions, described above.

A central part of this process should be the development of a metric to measure both the success of sanctions in meeting their (reduced and clear) objectives and their unintended consequences. The latter should include both deepening poverty and humanitarian suffering among local populations, as well as the consolidation

²⁶ See, for example, Caprile, A. and Leclerc, G. (2024), *Russia’s ‘shadow fleet’: Bringing the threat to light*, European Parliament report, [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2024/766242/EPRS_BRI\(2024\)766242_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2024/766242/EPRS_BRI(2024)766242_EN.pdf); Hellenic Shipping News (2024), ‘Global shadow fleet moves growing volumes of sanctioned oil’, 18 November 2024, <https://www.hellenicshippingnews.com/global-shadow-tanker-fleet-moves-growing-volumes-of-sanctioned-oil>.

of power among regime allies in the sanctioned country, reduced independent economic space and, internationally, cooperation among regimes opposed to Western objectives and norms. Guiding such a discussion will require a more detailed and rigorous framework for evaluating those effects.

While such research can be fraught with political, ideological and methodological concerns, there are a few areas in which it could and should start. The first step should be the collection and publication of comprehensive sanctions details at the moment when such measures are imposed. Pre-sanctions data collection should include poverty rates, inequality – disaggregated by gender, age and race/ethnicity – and access to healthcare and a basic minimum basket of food and nutrition. Doing so will establish a baseline that can be compared to later conditions post-sanctions and, if detailed over time, can help identify the different effects of international sanctions on the target regime’s economic and social policies and corruption. Such an effort should also measure extant state social programmes as a percentage of the national state budget dedicated to public goods – such as education and healthcare – and social safety-net programmes. Those baseline data can be used to understand pre- and post-sanctions impacts, specifically target governments’ responses, and provide a window into how effectively targeted governments attempt – or not – to cushion the impact of sanctions on their citizens.

Such a process should also include baseline data, as well as longitudinal analysis of the flow, distribution and access to humanitarian support. Through local surveys and interviews with non-partisan humanitarian organizations, the research can begin to detail the effectiveness of humanitarian carveouts. A refrain often heard from multilateral organizations (such as the UN World Food Programme) and NGOs is that despite supposed carveouts for food and medicine, sanctions suppress donations and support for such efforts often trails off out of overcompliance with sanctions. Discussion and development of sanctions policies and the measurement of their impact should include representatives of relief organizations that seek to deliver assistance to affected populations in sanctioned countries and consider the risk of overcompliance. Effective communication between policymakers, humanitarian NGOs and multilateral organizations would help to tackle challenges that arise because of sanctions.

Separately, there should also be regular vetting sessions – as has already started – among policymakers and affected businesses, in the design, implementation and enforcement of sanctions. Improving dialogue with both the private sector and NGOs, as well as considering business and humanitarian concerns in relation to sanctions regimes, will help to address issues of flawed design and enforcement, alleviating some of the key concerns that arise due to sanctions’ impacts on citizens.

Sanctions should be part of a broader strategy

Sanctions work best when they are employed as part of a broader strategy that includes diplomatic, economic and humanitarian levers. Applying sanctions in conjunction with activities such as wider external pressure campaigns, using UN institutions and diplomatic tools, can further isolate target regimes diplomatically as well as economically. Sanctioning states should also apply internal

pressure through supporting civil society and humanitarian organizations, helping independent organizations and voices have the resources to sustain civic space and anti-poverty assistance within the target country where possible.

Coordination between multilateral and unilateral sanctioning entities and stakeholders attempting to mediate should be a central component of that strategy. A 2022 article by Thomas Biersteker, Rebecca Brubaker and David Lanz examined the relationship between UN sanctions and international mediation. Their conclusion that UN sanctions can both ‘complicate and complement UN mediation efforts’²⁷ demonstrates the risks of even consensus-based multilateral UN sanctions. In the cases they examined, multilateral sanctions can close mediation space and undermine genuine consent. While not included in their analyses, their concerns are especially relevant to unilateral sanctions by individual countries, which often have their own policy objectives, targeted individuals and organizations – including parties that should be at the table in any mediation effort – and their own domestically driven factors.

Too often, sanctions remain inflexibly locked in place, a result of insufficient early planning, or lack thereof. The imposition of sanctions should require a broader process of review and policy steps if they fail within a defined time to achieve their objectives.

Even in their initiation, sanctions development should articulate and prepare a ‘plan B’ for what happens if the sanctions do not achieve their intended ends. Too often, sanctions remain inflexibly locked in place, a result of insufficient early planning, or lack thereof. The imposition of sanctions should require a broader process of review and policy steps if they fail within a defined time to achieve their objectives. Such an effort should not be a binary choice of either/or sanctions, but rather a multi-pronged definition of sanctions policy. It should define alternative or ramped up diplomatic strategies, military assistance and attempts to create an enabling environment for change, engaging local populations on issues of common interest where possible.

Untangling the impacts of sanctions on local populations

Implementing carveouts for humanitarian assistance can help to untangle the impact of sanctions on local populations and ensure principled humanitarian action. While there is a tension between sanctions and humanitarian actions, the last couple of decades have brought about progress on designing and shaping sanctions regimes that are much more targeted and avoid sweeping impacts on sanctioned populations.

²⁷ Biersteker, T. J., Brubaker, R. and Lanz, D. (2022), ‘Exploring the Relationships between UN Sanctions and Mediation’, *Global Governance: A Review of Multilateralism and International Organizations*, 72(6), Academic Council of the United Nations System, pp. 180–202, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/19426720-02802002>.

For example, the US's Office of Foreign Assets Control has made strides in meeting with affected NGOs and multilateral organizations to explain the limits and intent of US sanctions in specific countries.

The impacts of sanctions on humanitarian action are best reduced by the inclusion of different kinds of safeguards. The humanitarian sector considers these to be most effective when they take the form of specific, publicly detailed exceptions or exemptions, which act as carveouts for as broad a range of humanitarian actions as possible. Assigning sanctions officials from the relevant government agencies to meet with and explain the limits and – when they occur – carveouts and liberation of sanctions to affected investors, governments, donors and multilateral organizations – as the US has started to do – is an important step.

Countering the axis of the sanctioned and addressing accusations of hypocrisy

Given the shifting geopolitical dynamics that have occurred in recent years and continue to evolve, policymakers are also confronted with the need to counter the 'axis of the sanctioned' as well as accusations of hypocrisy and double standards in their foreign policy decisions. Claims of the hypocrisy of sanctions not only undermine their legitimacy and require states to address such criticism, they also raise the risk of an escalation of sanctions globally among competing blocs and countries, as we have seen with Russia and China. As such, governments in the US, EU and UK – the most prolific sanctioners – should adopt a more collaborative approach towards working with partners in the 'Global South', which are at the sharp end of the results of economic coercion by the US. A particular focus should be on secondary sanctions, which should be applied with caution for their often-unintended effects of rewarding rogue regimes and their economic interests.

Developing a checklist of best practices in sanctions development and enforcement

When beginning to develop and design sanctions, policymakers must consider how they will implement them in the long term. Where multiple government entities are involved in sanctions enforcement, there should be a common vision and a 'whole-of-government approach' to enforcement efforts.

Having a strong compliance culture is also key. This depends on the ability of states to credibly threaten potential punishments to increase the deterrent effects of sanctions, as well as engage with industry and the public to foster compliance. Lacking that long-term vision (and defence) raises the risk of sanctions fatigue that can undermine the intended goals and, in the end, strengthen the intended target. Non-public actions are equally important to compliance efforts. Measures such as cautionary letters can provide policymakers involved in enforcement and compliance with a means to collaborate with affected economic stakeholders. The messaging around enforcement should highlight the activity that has prompted such action, detail how compliance failures occurred and share lessons for the future.

Ensuring that enforcement actions articulate compliance expectations and communicating these to affected stakeholders – especially small and medium-sized enterprises – will ensure broader compliance and cooperation – and help make sure that sanctions do not overly penalize small and medium-sized enterprises in sanctioned or sanctioning countries.

Annex and bibliographic note

Annex

Table 1. Active sanctions as of 2023

Sanctioned country	Sanctioning country	Year sanctions implemented	In force	Objectives of sanctions
Cuba	United States	1962	ongoing	destabilize regime
Cyprus (Northern)	Cyprus	1974	ongoing	territorial conflict
League of Arab States	United States	1976	ongoing	policy change
Cyprus	Turkey	1987	ongoing	territorial conflict
Armenia	Azerbaijan	1989	ongoing	territorial conflict
China	United States	1989	ongoing	human rights
Sudan	United States	1989	ongoing	democracy
Sudan	United States	1990	ongoing	human rights
China	EU	1992	ongoing	human rights
Cuba	United States	1992	ongoing	destabilize regime
Somalia	UN	1992	ongoing	end war, human rights
Armenia	Turkey	1993	ongoing	end war
Azerbaijan	Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE)	1995	ongoing	end war
Cuba	United States	1996	ongoing	destabilize regime
Iran	United States	1996	ongoing	terrorism
Libya	United States	1996	ongoing	terrorism
Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)	ECOWAS	1998	ongoing	prevent war
Balkans	United States	2001	ongoing	prevent war
Afghanistan	EU, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia, Bulgaria, Romania, Turkey, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway	2002	ongoing	terrorism, end war
Afghanistan	UN	2002	ongoing	terrorism, end war
Philippines	EU, United States	2002	ongoing	terrorism
Zimbabwe	Australia	2002	ongoing	democracy

Understanding and improving sanctions today
Why and how many sanctions fail, and what to do about it

Sanctioned country	Sanctioning country	Year sanctions implemented	In force	Objectives of sanctions
Zimbabwe	EU, Turkey, Croatia, Macedonia, Montenegro, Iceland, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Liechtenstein, Norway, Ukraine, Moldova, Armenia, Georgia, Serbia	2002	ongoing	democracy, human rights
Zimbabwe	Switzerland	2002	ongoing	democracy, human rights
Zimbabwe	United Kingdom	2002	ongoing	democracy, human rights
Moldova	EU, Turkey, Croatia, Macedonia, Montenegro, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Liechtenstein, Norway, Armenia, Georgia, Azerbaijan	2003	ongoing	policy change
Nigeria	United States	2003	ongoing	other
Zimbabwe	United States	2003	ongoing	democracy, human rights
Sudan	UN	2004	ongoing	human rights, end war
Syria	United States	2004	ongoing	terrorism, end war, prevent war
Democratic Republic of the Congo	EU	2005	ongoing	end war
Democratic Republic of the Congo	UN	2005	ongoing	end war
Sudan	EU, Turkey, Croatia, Macedonia, Montenegro, Iceland, Albania, Serbia, Liechtenstein, Norway, Armenia	2005	ongoing	end war, human rights
Sudan	UN	2005	ongoing	human rights, end war
Belarus	United States	2006	ongoing	democracy, human rights
Democratic Republic of the Congo	United States	2006	ongoing	end war, democracy, human rights
North Korea	Australia	2006	ongoing	prevent war
North Korea	EU	2006	ongoing	prevent war
North Korea	Japan	2006	ongoing	prevent war
North Korea	UN	2006	ongoing	prevent war
Lebanon	EU	2006	ongoing	end war
Lebanon	UN	2006	ongoing	end war
Sudan	United States	2006	ongoing	human rights, end war

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Sanctioned country	Sanctioning country	Year sanctions implemented	In force	Objectives of sanctions
Syria	United States	2006	ongoing	terrorism
Venezuela	United States	2006	ongoing	policy change
Afghanistan	New Zealand	2007	ongoing	terrorism, end war
Eritrea	United States	2007	ongoing	policy change
Lebanon	United States	2007	ongoing	democracy
North Korea	United States	2008	ongoing	prevent war
Somalia	UN	2008	ongoing	end war, human rights, prevent war
Venezuela	United States	2008	ongoing	terrorism
Zimbabwe	Canada	2008	ongoing	democracy
North Korea	Japan	2009	ongoing	prevent war
Somalia	EU, Turkey, Croatia, Macedonia, Montenegro, Iceland, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Liechtenstein, Norway, Ukraine, Moldova, Armenia	2009	ongoing	end war, human rights
Somalia	Switzerland	2009	ongoing	end war, human rights
Colombia	United States	2010	ongoing	other
Iraq	UN	2010	ongoing	prevent war
North Korea	South Korea	2010	ongoing	end war, human rights, democracy
North Korea	United States	2010	ongoing	prevent war
Somalia	United States	2010	ongoing	end war, prevent war
Sudan	UN	2010	ongoing	human rights, end war
Afghanistan	EU, Turkey, Croatia, Macedonia, Montenegro, Iceland, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Liechtenstein, Norway, Ukraine, Moldova, Armenia, Georgia	2011	ongoing	terrorism
Afghanistan	United States	2011	ongoing	terrorism
Belize	United States	2011	ongoing	other
Bolivia	United States	2011	ongoing	other
Bosnia and Herzegovina	EU, Turkey, Montenegro, Albania, Liechtenstein, Armenia, Georgia, Iceland, Norway	2011	ongoing	prevent war
Costa Rica	United States	2011	ongoing	other

Understanding and improving sanctions today
Why and how many sanctions fail, and what to do about it

Sanctioned country	Sanctioning country	Year sanctions implemented	In force	Objectives of sanctions
Dominican Republic	United States	2011	ongoing	other
Guatemala	United States	2011	ongoing	other
Indonesia	United States	2011	ongoing	terrorism
Jamaica	United States	2011	ongoing	other
North Korea	Canada	2011	ongoing	prevent war
North Korea	United States	2011	ongoing	prevent war
Libya	Australia	2011	ongoing	human rights
Libya	Canada	2011	ongoing	human rights, destabilize regime
Libya	EU, Croatia, Macedonia, Montenegro, Iceland, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Liechtenstein, Norway, Moldova, Armenia, Georgia	2011	ongoing	human rights
Libya	Switzerland	2011	ongoing	human rights
Libya	UN	2011	ongoing	human rights
Libya	United States	2011	ongoing	human rights
Panama	United States	2011	ongoing	other
South Sudan	EU, Turkey, Croatia, Macedonia, Montenegro, Iceland, Albania, Serbia, Liechtenstein, Norway, Armenia	2011	ongoing	human rights, end war
Syria	Australia	2011	ongoing	human rights
Syria	Canada	2011	ongoing	human rights
Syria	League of Arab States	2011	ongoing	human rights
Syria	United States	2011	ongoing	human rights, destabilize regime
Terrorist organization (Al-Qaeda)	UN	2011	ongoing	terrorism
Terrorist organization (Taliban)	UN	2011	ongoing	terrorism
Tunisia	Canada	2011	ongoing	other
Tunisia	EU, Croatia, Macedonia, Montenegro, Iceland, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Liechtenstein, Norway, Moldova, Armenia	2011	ongoing	other
Tunisia	Switzerland	2011	ongoing	other

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Why and how many sanctions fail, and what to do about it

Sanctioned country	Sanctioning country	Year sanctions implemented	In force	Objectives of sanctions
Belize	United States	2012	ongoing	other
Democratic Republic of the Congo	United States	2012	ongoing	end war
Guinea-Bissau	ECOWAS	2012	ongoing	democracy
Guinea-Bissau	Switzerland	2012	ongoing	democracy
Guinea-Bissau	UN	2012	ongoing	democracy
Iran	United States	2012	ongoing	prevent war
Myanmar	Australia	2012	ongoing	human rights
Myanmar	Canada	2012	ongoing	human rights
Myanmar	Switzerland	2012	ongoing	human rights
Somalia	EU, Turkey, Croatia, Macedonia, Montenegro, Iceland, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Liechtenstein, Norway, Ukraine, Moldova, Armenia	2012	ongoing	end war, human rights, terrorism
Somalia	UN	2012	ongoing	end war, human rights, terrorism
Somalia	United States	2012	ongoing	territorial conflict, democracy, human rights
Syria	Canada	2012	ongoing	human rights, destabilize regime
Syria	Organization of Islamic Cooperation	2012	ongoing	human rights
Syria	Switzerland	2012	ongoing	human rights, end war
Yemen	United States	2012	ongoing	prevent war
Belize	United States	2013	ongoing	other
Egypt	EU, Croatia, Macedonia, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Liechtenstein, Norway, Moldova, Georgia	2013	ongoing	human rights, democracy
Greece	United States	2013	ongoing	policy change
North Korea	UN	2013	ongoing	prevent war
Nigeria	United States	2013	ongoing	territorial conflict, terrorism, democracy, human rights
Somalia	Switzerland	2013	ongoing	end war, human rights, terrorism

Sanctioned country	Sanctioning country	Year sanctions implemented	In force	Objectives of sanctions
Syria	Canada	2013	ongoing	human rights
Syria	EU, Croatia, Macedonia, Montenegro, Iceland, Albania, Serbia, Liechtenstein, Norway, Moldova	2013	ongoing	human rights, end war
Armenia	United Kingdom	2014	ongoing	end war
Australia	Russia	2014	ongoing	policy change
Azerbaijan	United Kingdom	2014	ongoing	end war
Canada	Russia	2014	ongoing	policy change
Central African Republic	EU	2014	ongoing	end war, human rights
Central African Republic	UN	2014	ongoing	end war, human rights
Central African Republic	United States	2014	ongoing	end war, human rights
EU	Russia	2014	ongoing	policy change
Guinea	EU, Turkey, Croatia, Macedonia, Montenegro, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Liechtenstein, Norway, Ukraine, Moldova, Armenia, Georgia, Iceland	2014	ongoing	human rights
Guinea	Switzerland	2014	ongoing	human rights
Israel	Spain, United Kingdom	2014	ongoing	prevent war
Malawi	United Kingdom	2014	ongoing	other
Nigeria	UN	2014	ongoing	territorial conflict, terrorism
Norway	Russia	2014	ongoing	policy change
Russia	Australia	2014	ongoing	policy change
Russia	Canada	2014	ongoing	policy change
Russia	EU	2014	ongoing	policy change
Russia	EU, Montenegro, Iceland, Albania, Liechtenstein, Norway, Ukraine	2014	ongoing	policy change
Russia	Japan	2014	ongoing	policy change
Russia	New Zealand	2014	ongoing	policy change
Russia	Switzerland	2014	ongoing	policy change
Russia	United States	2014	ongoing	policy change, prevent war
South Sudan	Canada	2014	ongoing	human rights, end war

Sanctioned country	Sanctioning country	Year sanctions implemented	In force	Objectives of sanctions
South Sudan	EU	2014	ongoing	territorial conflict, end war
South Sudan	United States	2014	ongoing	human rights, prevent war, end war
Terrorist organization (Islamic State)	UN	2014	ongoing	terrorism
Ukraine	Australia	2014	ongoing	policy change
Ukraine	Canada	2014	ongoing	policy change
Ukraine	EU	2014	ongoing	other
Ukraine	EU, Montenegro, Iceland, Albania, Liechtenstein, Norway, Moldova	2014	ongoing	policy change
Ukraine	Japan	2014	ongoing	policy change
Ukraine	Switzerland	2014	ongoing	policy change
Ukraine	United States	2014	ongoing	policy change
United States	Russia	2014	ongoing	policy change
Yemen	UN	2014	ongoing	end war, terrorism, human rights
Albania, Montenegro, Liechtenstein, Iceland	Russia	2015	ongoing	policy change
North Korea	United States	2015	ongoing	prevent war
South Sudan	UN	2015	ongoing	territorial conflict, end war
Venezuela	United States	2015	ongoing	human rights, democracy
Yemen	EU	2015	ongoing	end war, terrorism, human rights
Yemen	UN	2015	ongoing	end war, terrorism, human rights
Democratic Republic of the Congo	United States	2016	ongoing	democracy, human rights
Iran	Australia	2016	ongoing	prevent war
Iran	Canada	2016	ongoing	prevent war
Iran	UN	2016	ongoing	prevent war
North Korea	United States	2016	ongoing	prevent war
Lebanon	Saudi Arabia	2016	ongoing	terrorism

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Sanctioned country	Sanctioning country	Year sanctions implemented	In force	Objectives of sanctions
Libya	United States	2016	ongoing	human rights
Panama	United States	2016	2017	other
Cambodia	United States	2017	ongoing	policy change
China	United States	2017	ongoing	policy change
Eritrea	United States	2017	ongoing	policy change
The Gambia	United States	2017	ongoing	human rights
Kenya	United States	2017	ongoing	other
North Korea	Burkina Faso	2017	ongoing	policy change
North Korea	United States	2017	ongoing	prevent war
Libya	United States	2017	ongoing	terrorism
Mali	UN	2017	ongoing	democracy, human rights
Russia	United States	2017	ongoing	policy change
Somalia	United States	2017	ongoing	terrorism
Syria	United States	2017	ongoing	terrorism
Venezuela	Canada	2017	ongoing	democracy, human rights
Venezuela	EU, Macedonia, Montenegro, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, Moldova, Georgia	2017	ongoing	democracy, human rights
Venezuela	Peru	2017	ongoing	democracy, human rights
Venezuela	United States	2017	ongoing	democracy, human rights, terrorism
Yemen	United States	2017	ongoing	terrorism
Belize	United States	2018	ongoing	human rights, other
Burkina Faso	United States	2018	ongoing	terrorism
Cambodia	Australia	2018	ongoing	democracy, human rights
Cambodia	United States	2018	ongoing	democracy, human rights
China	United States	2018	ongoing	policy change
Colombia	United States	2018	ongoing	other
Dominican Republic	United States	2018	ongoing	other

Sanctioned country	Sanctioning country	Year sanctions implemented	In force	Objectives of sanctions
Ghana	United States	2018	ongoing	terrorism
Guinea-Bissau	ECOWAS	2018	ongoing	policy change
Indonesia	Australia	2018	ongoing	democracy, human rights
Iran	South Korea	2018	ongoing	prevent war
Iran	United States	2018	ongoing	terrorism
North Korea	United States	2018	ongoing	prevent war
Lebanon	United States	2018	ongoing	terrorism
Myanmar	Switzerland	2018	ongoing	human rights, democracy
Myanmar	United States	2018	ongoing	other
Nicaragua	United States	2018	ongoing	human rights, democracy, other
Saudi Arabia	United States, France, Germany, Canada	2018	ongoing	democracy, human rights
Sierra Leone	United States	2018	ongoing	terrorism
South Sudan	EU	2018	ongoing	human rights, end war
South Sudan	UN	2018	ongoing	territorial conflict, end war
South Sudan	United States	2018	ongoing	territorial conflict, end war
Tanzania	Denmark	2018	ongoing	human rights
Tanzania	EU	2018	ongoing	human rights
Venezuela	Switzerland	2018	ongoing	democracy, human rights
Argentina	United States	2019	ongoing	other
Cambodia	United States	2019	ongoing	democracy, human rights
Cameroon	United States	2019	ongoing	democracy
China	United States	2019	ongoing	human rights
Dominican Republic	United States	2019	ongoing	other
Iran	United States	2019	ongoing	terrorism
Iraq	United States	2019	ongoing	democracy, human rights, other
Kenya	United States	2019	ongoing	other

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Sanctioned country	Sanctioning country	Year sanctions implemented	In force	Objectives of sanctions
Latvia	United States	2019	ongoing	other
Lebanon	Argentina	2019	ongoing	terrorism
Mali	United States	2019	ongoing	democracy, human rights, terrorism
Myanmar	United States	2019	ongoing	human rights
Nicaragua	Canada	2019	ongoing	human rights
Nigeria	United States	2019	ongoing	democracy, human rights
Pakistan	United States	2019	ongoing	policy change
South Africa	United States	2019	ongoing	other
South Sudan	United States	2019	ongoing	territorial conflict, end war
Syria, Russia, Iran	United States	2019	ongoing	end war, human rights
Turkey	EU	2019	ongoing	policy change
Venezuela	United States	2019	ongoing	human rights, democracy
Afghanistan	United Kingdom	2020	ongoing	terrorism, end war
Belarus	Canada	2020	ongoing	democracy, human rights
Belarus	EU	2020	ongoing	democracy, human rights
Belarus	Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia	2020	ongoing	democracy, human rights
Burundi	United States	2020	ongoing	policy change
Central African Republic	United States	2020	ongoing	human rights
Sri Lanka	United States	2020	ongoing	human rights
China	United States	2020	ongoing	human rights, other
El Salvador	United States	2020	ongoing	human rights
Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania	Belarus	2020	ongoing	policy change
Ethiopia (excludes Eritrea)	EU	2020	ongoing	end war
Ethiopia (excludes Eritrea)	United States	2020	ongoing	end war
The Gambia	United States	2020	ongoing	other
The Gambia, Russia, Venezuela, Pakistan	United Kingdom	2020	ongoing	human rights

Sanctioned country	Sanctioning country	Year sanctions implemented	In force	Objectives of sanctions
Guyana	United States	2020	ongoing	democracy
Haiti	United States	2020	ongoing	human rights
Hong Kong	United States	2020	ongoing	policy change
Iran	United States	2020	ongoing	terrorism, policy change
Jamaica	United States	2020	ongoing	human rights
Kyrgyzstan	United States	2020	ongoing	other
Lebanon	EU	2020	ongoing	terrorism
Lebanon	Lithuania	2020	ongoing	terrorism
Lebanon	United States	2020	ongoing	terrorism
Liberia	United States	2020	ongoing	other
Libya	EU	2020	ongoing	policy change, human rights
Libya	United States	2020	ongoing	other, destabilize regime
Mali	United States	2020	ongoing	end war, democracy
Malta	United States	2020	ongoing	other, destabilize regime
Moldova	United States	2020	ongoing	other
Nicaragua	EU	2020	ongoing	human rights
Nicaragua	United Kingdom	2020	ongoing	human rights
Nigeria	United States	2020	ongoing	other
Russia	United States	2020	ongoing	human rights
Vietnam	United States	2020	ongoing	policy change
Syria	United States	2020	ongoing	end war
Tanzania	United States	2020	ongoing	human rights
Turkey	United States	2020	ongoing	policy change
United Kingdom	Russia	2020	ongoing	policy change
Venezuela	United States	2020	ongoing	democracy
Yemen	United States	2020	ongoing	human rights
Afghanistan	Czech Republic	2021	ongoing	terrorism
Afghanistan	Finland	2021	ongoing	terrorism

Sanctioned country	Sanctioning country	Year sanctions implemented	In force	Objectives of sanctions
Afghanistan	Germany	2021	ongoing	terrorism
Afghanistan	United Kingdom	2021	ongoing	terrorism
Afghanistan	United States	2021	ongoing	terrorism
Albania	United States	2021	ongoing	other
Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Kosovo, Montenegro, Macedonia, Serbia, Slovenia	United States	2021	ongoing	human rights, democracy, other
Angola	United States	2021	ongoing	other
Bangladesh	United States	2021	ongoing	human rights, other
Belarus	Canada	2021	ongoing	human rights
Belarus	EU	2021	ongoing	democracy, human rights
Belarus	EU, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, Albania	2021	ongoing	democracy, human rights
Belarus	New Zealand	2021	ongoing	democracy, human rights
Belarus	United Kingdom	2021	ongoing	democracy, human rights
Belarus	United Kingdom	2021	ongoing	human rights
Belarus	United States	2021	ongoing	democracy, human rights
Brazil	United States	2021	ongoing	other
Bulgaria	United States	2021	ongoing	other
Cambodia	United States	2021	ongoing	human rights, other
Cambodia	United States	2021	ongoing	policy change, human rights, other
Cameroon	United Kingdom	2021	ongoing	other
Cameroon	United States	2021	ongoing	end war, human rights
Central African Republic	EU	2021	ongoing	policy change, prevent war
Central African Republic	United Kingdom	2021	ongoing	end war, human rights, other
Central African Republic	United States	2021	ongoing	human rights
Sri Lanka	United States	2021	ongoing	human rights
China	Canada	2021	ongoing	human rights

Sanctioned country	Sanctioning country	Year sanctions implemented	In force	Objectives of sanctions
China	EU	2021	ongoing	policy change, human rights
China	United Kingdom	2021	ongoing	human rights
China	United States	2021	ongoing	human rights
China	United States	2021	ongoing	democracy
Democratic Republic of the Congo	United Kingdom	2021	ongoing	end war, human rights, democracy
Democratic Republic of the Congo	United States	2021	ongoing	terrorism, other
EU	China	2021	ongoing	policy change
EU	Russia	2021	ongoing	policy change
Egypt	United Kingdom	2021	ongoing	human rights, democracy
Egypt	United States	2021	ongoing	human rights
El Salvador	United States	2021	ongoing	policy change, democracy, other
Equatorial Guinea	United Kingdom	2021	ongoing	other
Eritrea	United States	2021	ongoing	human rights
The Gambia	EU	2021	ongoing	policy change
Guatemala	United States	2021	ongoing	democracy, other
Guatemala	United States, United Kingdom	2021	ongoing	human rights, other
Guinea	African Union	2021	ongoing	end war, democracy
Guinea	ECOWAS	2021	ongoing	end war, democracy
Guinea	United Kingdom	2021	ongoing	human rights
Guinea	United States	2021	ongoing	end war, democracy
Honduras	United States	2021	ongoing	democracy, other
Iran	United States	2021	ongoing	terrorism, policy change
Iran	United States	2021	ongoing	policy change
Iraq	United Kingdom	2021	ongoing	terrorism, end war, prevent war, other
Iraq	United States	2021	ongoing	human rights, other
Kuwait	United States	2021	ongoing	terrorism
Lebanon	Australia	2021	ongoing	terrorism

Sanctioned country	Sanctioning country	Year sanctions implemented	In force	Objectives of sanctions
Lebanon	Saudi Arabia	2021	ongoing	terrorism
Lebanon	United Kingdom	2021	ongoing	terrorism, end war, other
Lebanon	United States	2021	ongoing	terrorism
Liberia	United States	2021	ongoing	other
Libya	United Kingdom	2021	ongoing	human rights, other
Libya	United States	2021	ongoing	human rights
Lithuania	China	2021	ongoing	policy change
Mali	ECOWAS	2021	ongoing	end war, democracy
Mali	United Kingdom	2021	ongoing	other
Moldova	United Kingdom	2021	ongoing	policy change
Morocco	Algeria	2021	ongoing	terrorism
Mozambique	United States	2021	ongoing	terrorism
Myanmar	EU	2021	ongoing	human rights, democracy, end war
Myanmar	Switzerland	2021	ongoing	human rights, democracy
Myanmar	United Kingdom	2021	ongoing	human rights, democracy, end war
Myanmar	United States	2021	ongoing	human rights, democracy, end war
Nicaragua	Ukraine	2021	ongoing	policy change
Nicaragua	United Kingdom	2021	ongoing	human rights, democracy, other
Nicaragua	United States	2021	ongoing	human rights, democracy, other
Palestine	United Kingdom	2021	ongoing	terrorism
Paraguay	United States	2021	ongoing	human rights, other
Philippines	United Kingdom	2021	ongoing	terrorism
Russia	United Kingdom	2021	ongoing	policy change
Rwanda	UN	2021	ongoing	other
Saudi Arabia	United States	2021	ongoing	democracy, human rights
Somalia	United Kingdom	2021	ongoing	end war, human rights, terrorism

Sanctioned country	Sanctioning country	Year sanctions implemented	In force	Objectives of sanctions
South Sudan	United Kingdom	2021	ongoing	human rights, end war, territorial conflict
South Sudan	United States	2021	ongoing	other
Sudan	United Kingdom	2021	ongoing	end war, human rights
Syria	United Kingdom	2021	ongoing	human rights, end war
Taiwan	China	2021	ongoing	policy change
Taiwan	Hong Kong	2021	ongoing	policy change
Tanzania	United States	2021	ongoing	terrorism, democracy
Jordan	United Kingdom	2021	ongoing	other
Tunisia	United Kingdom	2021	ongoing	other
Turkey	United Kingdom	2021	ongoing	policy change
Uganda	United States	2021	ongoing	human rights
Ukraine	United Kingdom	2021	ongoing	policy change, other
Ukraine	United States	2021	ongoing	other
United States	China	2021	ongoing	policy change
United States	Hong Kong	2021	ongoing	policy change
Venezuela	United Kingdom	2021	ongoing	democracy, human rights
Yemen	United Kingdom	2021	ongoing	end war, terrorism, human rights
Zimbabwe	United Kingdom	2021	ongoing	democracy, human rights
Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Macedonia, Montenegro	United States	2022	ongoing	other
Australia	Russia	2022	ongoing	policy change
Belarus	Australia	2022	ongoing	policy change, end war
Belarus	Canada	2022	ongoing	policy change, end war
Belarus	EU	2022	ongoing	policy change, end war
Belarus	Japan	2022	ongoing	policy change, end war
Belarus	South Korea	2022	ongoing	policy change, end war
Belarus	New Zealand	2022	ongoing	policy change, end war
Belarus	Switzerland	2022	ongoing	policy change, end war

Sanctioned country	Sanctioning country	Year sanctions implemented	In force	Objectives of sanctions
Belarus	United Kingdom	2022	ongoing	policy change, end war
Belarus	United States	2022	ongoing	policy change, end war
Belarus, Russia	Poland	2022	ongoing	policy change, end war
Belize	United States	2022	ongoing	other
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Germany	2022	ongoing	policy change
Bosnia and Herzegovina	United Kingdom	2022	ongoing	prevent war
Bosnia and Herzegovina	United States	2022	ongoing	other
Bosnia and Herzegovina	United States	2022	ongoing	democracy
Bulgaria	Russia	2022	ongoing	policy change
Burkina Faso	African Union	2022	ongoing	democracy
Burkina Faso	Denmark	2022	ongoing	democracy, end war
Burkina Faso	ECOWAS	2022	ongoing	democracy
Burkina Faso	United States	2022	ongoing	democracy
Burkina Faso	United States	2022	ongoing	end war
Canada	Iran	2022	ongoing	policy change, terrorism
China	United States	2022	ongoing	policy change
China	United States	2022	ongoing	policy change
China	United States	2022	ongoing	human rights, other
China	United States	2022	ongoing	human rights
Democratic Republic of the Congo	United States	2022	ongoing	prevent war, other
Dominican Republic	United States	2022	ongoing	other
EEU	Russia	2022	ongoing	policy change
EU	Russia	2022	ongoing	policy change
Ecuador	United States	2022	ongoing	other
El Salvador	United States	2022	ongoing	other
Ethiopia (excludes Eritrea)	United States	2022	ongoing	human rights, end war, other
Guatemala	United States	2022	ongoing	other
Guatemala	United States	2022	ongoing	other
Guinea	United States	2022	ongoing	human rights

Sanctioned country	Sanctioning country	Year sanctions implemented	In force	Objectives of sanctions
Guinea	United States	2022	ongoing	terrorism, other
Haiti	Canada	2022	ongoing	policy change
Haiti	UN	2022	ongoing	human rights
Haiti	United States	2022	ongoing	other
Honduras	United States	2022	ongoing	democracy, other
Indonesia	United States	2022	ongoing	terrorism
Iran	Canada	2022	ongoing	human rights, terrorism
Iran	EU	2022	ongoing	human rights
Iran	EU	2022	ongoing	end war
Iran	New Zealand	2022	ongoing	policy change
Iran	United States	2022	ongoing	human rights
Iran	United States	2022	ongoing	prevent war, terrorism
Iraq	United States	2022	ongoing	terrorism
North Korea	Japan	2022	ongoing	prevent war
North Korea	United States	2022	ongoing	prevent war
North Korea	United States	2022	ongoing	human rights
North Korea	United States	2022	ongoing	prevent war
North Korea, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Mali, Ukraine, Azerbaijan, Burundi, Guinea, Indonesia, Iran, China, Peru, Philippines, Russia, Sri Lanka, Vietnam	United States	2022	ongoing	human rights, other
North Korea, Singapore, Taiwan	South Korea	2022	ongoing	prevent war
Kosovo, Serbia, Moldova, Iran, Russia, Pakistan, Uganda, Nicaragua, South Sudan, Mali, Myanmar	United Kingdom	2022	ongoing	human rights
Lebanon	United States	2022	ongoing	terrorism
Liberia	United States	2022	ongoing	other
Mali	Denmark	2022	ongoing	policy change
Mali	EU	2022	ongoing	democracy
Mali	France	2022	ongoing	democracy
Mali	United States	2022	ongoing	other

Sanctioned country	Sanctioning country	Year sanctions implemented	In force	Objectives of sanctions
Mexico	United States	2022	ongoing	other
Moldova	United States	2022	ongoing	other
Mozambique	United States	2022	ongoing	terrorism
New Zealand	Russia	2022	ongoing	policy change
Nicaragua	EU	2022	ongoing	human rights, democracy
Nicaragua	United States	2022	ongoing	human rights, democracy
Nicaragua	United States	2022	ongoing	human rights, democracy
Nigeria	United States	2022	ongoing	terrorism
Palestine	Israel	2022	ongoing	terrorism
Paraguay	United States	2022	ongoing	other
Philippines	United States	2022	ongoing	human rights
Poland	Russia	2022	ongoing	policy change
Poland, Hungary	EU	2022	ongoing	democracy
Russia	Australia	2022	ongoing	policy change, prevent war, end war, democracy
Russia	Canada	2022	ongoing	end war
Russia	EU, Macedonia, Albania, Kosovo	2022	ongoing	policy change, prevent war, end war
Russia	G7, EU	2022	ongoing	end war
Russia	Germany	2022	ongoing	policy change, prevent war
Russia	Iceland	2022	ongoing	end war
Russia	Japan	2022	ongoing	policy change, prevent war, end war
Russia	South Korea	2022	ongoing	end war
Russia	Liechtenstein	2022	ongoing	end war
Russia	Monaco	2022	ongoing	end war
Russia	New Zealand	2022	ongoing	end war
Russia	Norway	2022	ongoing	end war
Russia	Poland	2022	ongoing	end war

Sanctioned country	Sanctioning country	Year sanctions implemented	In force	Objectives of sanctions
Russia	Singapore	2022	ongoing	end war
Russia	Switzerland	2022	ongoing	end war
Russia	Taiwan	2022	ongoing	end war
Russia	United Kingdom	2022	ongoing	policy change, prevent war, end war, democracy
Russia	United States	2022	ongoing	human rights
Russia	United States	2022	ongoing	policy change, prevent war, end war
Russia	United States, EU, United Kingdom, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan	2022	ongoing	end war
Russia	United States, United Kingdom, Canada	2022	ongoing	end war
Russia	United States, United Kingdom, Japan, Canada	2022	ongoing	end war
Somalia	United States	2022	ongoing	terrorism
Somalia	United States	2022	ongoing	democracy
South Africa	United States	2022	ongoing	terrorism
Spain	Algeria	2022	ongoing	policy change
Sudan	United States	2022	ongoing	human rights, democracy
Syria	United States	2022	ongoing	terrorism
Syria, Iraq, Mozambique	United States	2022	ongoing	terrorism
Taiwan	China, Hong Kong	2022	ongoing	policy change
Tanzania	United States	2022	ongoing	terrorism
Uganda	United States	2022	ongoing	policy change
Ukraine	Canada	2022	ongoing	territorial conflict
Ukraine	United Kingdom	2022	ongoing	end war
United Arab Emirates	United States	2022	ongoing	terrorism
United Kingdom	Russia	2022	ongoing	policy change
United States	China	2022	ongoing	policy change
United States	Iran	2022	ongoing	policy change, terrorism
United States	Russia	2022	ongoing	policy change

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Sanctioned country	Sanctioning country	Year sanctions implemented	In force	Objectives of sanctions
Uzbekistan	United States	2022	ongoing	policy change
Afghanistan	EU	2023	ongoing	human rights
Afghanistan	United States	2023	ongoing	other
Argentina	China	2023	ongoing	policy change
Azerbaijan	United States	2023	ongoing	terrorism
Belarus	Poland	2023	ongoing	democracy, human rights
Belgium, Mexico	United States	2023	ongoing	other
Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia	United States	2023	ongoing	policy change
Bulgaria	United States, United Kingdom	2023	ongoing	other
Burkina Faso	France	2023	ongoing	democracy
Cambodia	United States	2023	ongoing	policy change, human rights, democracy
Cambodia	United States	2023	ongoing	democracy
Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Belarus, Haiti, Iran, Syria	United Kingdom, United States, Canada	2023	ongoing	human rights
Cameroon	EU	2023	ongoing	other
Central African Republic	United States	2023	ongoing	policy change
Sri Lanka	Canada	2023	ongoing	human rights
Sri Lanka	United States	2023	ongoing	human rights
China	United States	2023	ongoing	human rights
Colombia	Israel	2023	ongoing	policy change
Democratic Republic of the Congo	EU	2023	ongoing	human rights
Democratic Republic of the Congo	United States	2023	ongoing	human rights
Costa Rica	United States	2023	ongoing	other
EU	Iran	2023	ongoing	policy change, terrorism
El Salvador, Guatemala, Nicaragua, Honduras	United States	2023	ongoing	democracy, other
Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania	Russia	2023	ongoing	policy change
Gabon	African Union	2023	ongoing	democracy
Gabon	United States	2023	ongoing	democracy

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Sanctioned country	Sanctioning country	Year sanctions implemented	In force	Objectives of sanctions
Guatemala	United States	2023	ongoing	other
Guatemala	United States	2023	ongoing	democracy, other
Haiti	United States	2023	ongoing	other
Iran	Australia	2023	ongoing	human rights, policy change
Iran	Canada	2023	ongoing	human rights
Iran	EU, Macedonia, Montenegro, Albania, Ukraine, Moldova, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway	2023	ongoing	policy change
Iran	United Kingdom	2023	ongoing	policy change
Iran	United States	2023	ongoing	policy change
Iran, Malaysia, Indonesia, Hong Kong	United States	2023	ongoing	policy change
Iraq	United States	2023	ongoing	other
Israel	Bahrain	2023	ongoing	end war
Israel	Belize	2023	ongoing	end war
Israel	Bolivia	2023	ongoing	end war
Israel	Chile	2023	ongoing	end war
Israel	Colombia	2023	ongoing	end war
Israel	Honduras	2023	ongoing	end war
Israel	Jordan	2023	ongoing	end war
Israel	South Africa	2023	ongoing	end war
Israel	Turkey	2023	ongoing	end war
Israel	Ukraine	2023	ongoing	end war
Israel	United States	2023	ongoing	end war, human rights
Israel	United States	2023	ongoing	terrorism
North Korea	Japan	2023	ongoing	prevent war
North Korea	South Korea	2023	ongoing	prevent war
North Korea	South Korea, United States, Japan, Australia	2023	ongoing	prevent war
South Korea, Tajikistan, Turkey, United Arab Emirates, China, Switzerland, Singapore, Kyrgyzstan, Maldives, Russia	United States	2023	ongoing	policy change

Sanctioned country	Sanctioning country	Year sanctions implemented	In force	Objectives of sanctions
Kyrgyzstan	United States	2023	ongoing	policy change
Laos, Cambodia, Myanmar	United States, Canada, United Kingdom	2023	ongoing	human rights, other
Lebanon	United States	2023	ongoing	terrorism
Lebanon	United States	2023	ongoing	terrorism
Lebanon	United States, United Kingdom, Canada	2023	ongoing	other
Liberia	United States	2023	ongoing	democracy
Liberia	United States	2023	ongoing	human rights, other
Malaysia, Indonesia	United States	2023	ongoing	policy change
Malaysia, Singapore	United States	2023	ongoing	policy change
Mali	United States	2023	ongoing	policy change
Marshall Islands	United States	2023	ongoing	other
Mexico	United States	2023	ongoing	other
Moldova	Canada	2023	ongoing	human rights, other
Moldova	EU	2023	ongoing	policy change, end war
Mozambique	United States	2023	ongoing	terrorism, human rights
Myanmar	EU	2023	ongoing	human rights, democracy
Myanmar	United States	2023	ongoing	human rights, democracy
Nicaragua	United States	2023	ongoing	human rights, democracy
Niger	African Union	2023	ongoing	democracy
Niger	Canada	2023	ongoing	democracy
Niger	ECOWAS	2023	ongoing	democracy
Niger	EU	2023	ongoing	democracy
Niger	France	2023	ongoing	democracy
Niger	Netherlands	2023	ongoing	democracy
Niger	United States	2023	ongoing	democracy
Nigeria	United States	2023	ongoing	democracy, other
Palestine	Canada	2023	ongoing	terrorism

Sanctioned country	Sanctioning country	Year sanctions implemented	In force	Objectives of sanctions
Palestine	Sweden	2023	ongoing	terrorism
Palestine	Switzerland	2023	ongoing	terrorism
Palestine	United States, United Kingdom	2023	ongoing	terrorism
Panama	United States	2023	ongoing	other
Paraguay	United States	2023	ongoing	democracy, other
Paraguay	United States	2023	ongoing	terrorism, other
Russia	Czech Republic	2023	ongoing	end war
Russia	Kazakhstan	2023	ongoing	end war
Russia	Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia	2023	ongoing	end war
Russia	Ukraine	2023	ongoing	territorial conflict
Russia	United States, United Kingdom	2023	ongoing	other
Russia, Belarus	EU, Macedonia, Montenegro, Albania, Ukraine, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, Switzerland	2023	ongoing	end war
Russia, Belarus	Ukraine	2023	ongoing	territorial conflict
Rwanda	EU	2023	ongoing	human rights
Rwanda	United States	2023	ongoing	policy change
Rwanda	United States	2023	ongoing	policy change
Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Macedonia	United States	2023	ongoing	policy change
Sierra Leone	United States	2023	ongoing	democracy
Somalia	EU	2023	ongoing	other
Somalia	United States	2023	ongoing	terrorism
South Sudan	EU	2023	ongoing	end war
South Sudan	United States	2023	ongoing	human rights
Sudan	United Kingdom	2023	ongoing	end war
Sudan	United States	2023	ongoing	end war, democracy
Sudan	United States	2023	ongoing	democracy, prevent war
Sweden	Morocco	2023	ongoing	policy change
Syria	United States	2023	ongoing	human rights

Sanctioned country	Sanctioning country	Year sanctions implemented	In force	Objectives of sanctions
Taiwan	China, Hong Kong	2023	ongoing	policy change
Tanzania	EU	2023	ongoing	human rights
Uganda	United States	2023	ongoing	human rights
Uganda	United States	2023	ongoing	democracy, prevent war
Ukraine	Slovakia	2023	ongoing	end war
United Arab Emirates	United States	2023	ongoing	policy change
United Kingdom	Russia	2023	ongoing	policy change
Zimbabwe	EU	2023	ongoing	democracy
Zimbabwe	United States	2023	ongoing	democracy, prevent war

Source: Authors' data analysis draws from Syropoulos, C. et al. (2023), 'The global sanctions data base – Release 3: COVID-19, Russia, and multilateral sanctions', *Review of International Economics*, 32(1), pp. 12–48, <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/roie.12691>; Felbermayr, G. et al. (2020), 'The global sanctions data base', *European Economic Review*, Vol. 129, <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0014292120301914>; Kirikakha, A. et al. (2021), 'Chapter 4: The Global Sanctions Data Base (GSDB): an update that includes the years of the Trump presidency', in van Bergeijk, P. (2021), *Research Handbook on Economic Sanctions*, <https://www.elgaronline.com/edcollchap/edcoll/9781839102714/9781839102714.00010.xml>.

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Cover image: People queue at ATM machines in the run-up to Syria being reconnected to the international SWIFT payment system, following the removal of sanctions, 17 June 2025, Damascus, Syria.

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