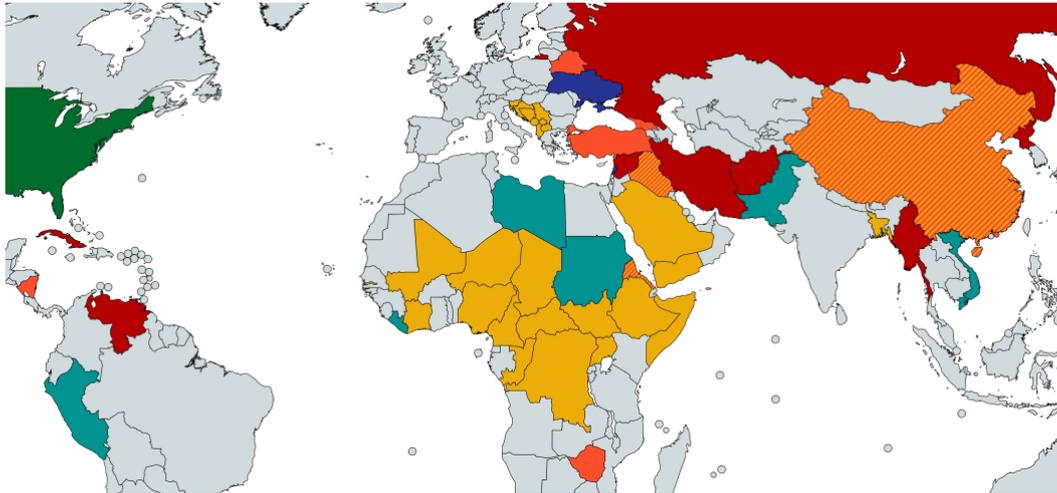




Call for End to Imperialist Sanctions!

Trade and financial sanctions have been put in place to cripple the advancement of over twenty countries. In most cases these are unilateral sanctions put in place by a single government, the United States. Other western capitalist countries like France and England have also played a part in these illegitimate sanctions.



All Countries in color are under sanctions by United States government.

The stated aim of sanctions is generally to punish a government for actions counter to the principles and interest of the sanctioning country. In all cases the sanctions punish the people. The poorer and most disadvantaged generally suffer the most. The governments sponsoring sanctions make claims like, they are protecting democracy, opposing human rights violations, and acting in the interest of their national security. The inconsistent application of sanctions exposes this as a lie.

Some historians trace the first case of sanctions to the 1919 blockade of the Soviet republics of Russia and Hungary by western cases. This was a clear effort on the part of capitalism to stop the advance of socialism. African scholars acknowledge a much earlier effort of sanctions on the part of France and a young United States of America (US) to stifle the growth of a young independent Haiti. The US feared that the end of slavery in Haiti would spread to North America. France sought to punish Haiti by forcing the payment of 112 million francs (about \$560 million in 2022) over a period of about seventy years. This forced payment to compensate France for its loss of slaves and its slave colony was clearly an act of financial sanction and sabotage. It made economic development impossible and accounts for much of the country's impoverishment that remains today.

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) is one of the most sanctioned nations in the world. Strict sanctions were put in place in 2006 by the UN Security Council. Since then, they have passed nearly a dozen resolutions sanctioning North Korea for developing nuclear weapons and related activities. US sanctions started much earlier. They date back to June 28, 1950, when the US invoked a total embargo of DPRK exports.

The unilateral sanctions against Cuba started soon after the Cuban people overthrew the neo-colonial dictatorship of Batista. The sanctions imposed by the US government were designed to punish the small island nation for choosing the path of socialism. The US hoped by refusing to buy Cuban sugar and restricting Cuba's access to imports and finances that the suffering would lead to regime change. Instead, the people came to understand the criminal nature of capitalism and their imperialist tactic of sanctions. The Cuban people responded with tenacity, disciplined organization and a fearlessness of the enemy that serves as an example to other nations struggling against imperialism. In the face of

sanctions, Cuba has the best medical system in the hemisphere and a lower child mortality rate than the US.

England, the European Union (EU), and the US combined to place sanctions on Zimbabwe immediately after the country initiated a massive land reclamation project to return land to over 300,000 families. This return of land should be recognized as an important step toward socialism and Pan-Africanism. Instead, imperialist forces demonized the project. They feared it would spread. The response of severe financial sanctions led to hyperinflation and billions of dollars in economic damage.

The US is responsible for the hyperinflation in Venezuela with trade restrictions and a financial blockade that has resulted in greatly reducing Venezuela's ability to produce and export oil. Venezuela holds the world's largest reserve of oil but ranks 12th in the world in terms of oil production. This is due largely to restricted access to credit and US dollars and trade restrictions that make it impossible for the country to produce oil at a higher level.

Central to US sanctions on Palestine, is the US refusal to recognize the legally elected Gaza government of Hamas. Israeli sanctions on both Gaza and the West Bank are long standing the harshest of any sanctions. It is no wonder that much of the world realizes that Israel has put in place an Apartheid system restricting not only trade, but Palestine's access to their airspace and seaports. The situation in Palestine goes far beyond sanctions. Palestine is occupied and controlled by foreign forces. It is basically a European settler colony with a clear agenda to expand and seize more territory. It operates Israel on the same principles of Apartheid that existed in South Africa before 1992.

In November 2021, the United States imposed unilateral financial sanctions on Eritrea, its ruling political party, the People's Front for Democracy and Justice (PFDJ), its affiliate companies the Hidri Trust and the Red Sea Trading Corporation, the Eritrean Defense Forces, and senior Eritrean officials. At the time the Information Ministry of Eritrea condemned the sanctions and indicated that they were clearly designed to spur political unrest, while inflicting suffering and starvation on the Eritrean people.

Economic sanctions and restrictions have been imposed on Syria in 2011, by the European Union, the United States, Canada, Australia, and Switzerland, mainly due to their opposition to the government of President Bashar al-Assad, who is also secretary-general of the Arab Socialist Ba'ath Party. The US had placed unilateral sanctions on Syria earlier in 1984 and again in 2006. With 2643 active sanctions, Syria ranks third behind Russia and Iran. On 7 February 2023, in the wake of the Turkey–Syria earthquakes, the Syrian Arab Red Crescent urged Western countries to lift sanctions. This was followed by a request from China for all unilateral sanctions on Syria to be lifted for humanitarian reasons. The limited responses by US and western allies meant most of the sanctions remained. This contributed to unnecessary death across Syria.

US led unilateral sanctions on Russia were instituted at a record pace starting in February 2022. Sanctions included cutting off major Russian banks from [SWIFT](#), the global electronic network for international payments. Sanctions also included asset freezes on the [Russian Central Bank](#), which holds \$630 billion in [foreign-exchange reserves](#). By 1st March 2022, the total amount of Russian assets frozen by sanctions amounted to \$1 trillion.

“Russia is now the most-sanctioned country in the world, with 14,081 sanctions on Russian individuals and entities currently in place, five times the amount compared to before it recognized the Luhansk and Donetsk regions as independent states on February 22, 2022. ... Before the invasion of Ukraine, Iran was by far the most-sanctioned state in history, with 3,616 active sanctions by the United States, the United Nations, the EU and countries like Australia, Canada, India and Israel. ... Leading the current round of sanctions against Russia are the US, Switzerland and Canada with 1,948, 1,782 and 1,590 restrictions, respectively.”

(from The World's Most-Sanctioned Countries by Florian Zandt, Feb 22, 2023

<https://www.statista.com/chart/amp/27015/number-of-currently-active-sanctions-by-target-country/>)

Sanctions on China are primarily unilateral trade sanctions. The US insists the sanctions are for national security reasons. The most visible assault on Chinese companies are restrictions directed to Huawei and TikTok. The combination of tariffs, sanctions and export controls are a form of economic warfare. The US ban on equipment sales and some components caused Huawei's consumer business revenue to drop by almost 50% between 2020 and 2021. The US has engaged European and Asian allies in efforts to hamper China's technology supply chain. China has responded by investing more in chip development and building state of the art factories to produce design tools and manufacturing equipment.

There is a constant threat that US unilateral sanctions may be imposed on other countries. Talk of land expropriation in South Africa (SA) leads imperialist media outlets in SA and the west to claim such a move will lead to disaster. They point to Zimbabwe's difficulties from hyperinflation to lack of investors. The financial sector responds immediately to any effort to reclaim land or resources. The Rand is devalued. The US uses their Africa Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) as a carrot and stick. The threat to end a country's access to AGOA is a clear case of an economic threat. Individual trade arrangements under AGOA play a small part in the US economy. These same trades represent significant parts of the economy of African and other global south countries that are allowed to trade under AGOA. Ending these arrangements have little impact on the US economy but can be very disruptive to the smaller economies of the Global South countries that lose the privileges of AGOA.

Inside of the United States the government sanctions its African (black), brown and poor citizens with restrictive credit ratings, redlining, limited access to education and medical care, poor and crumbling infrastructure, and the general militarization of the social ills of society. These institutional economic and political sanctions cause massive unemployment, poverty, homelessness, and hunger. They make a lie of the constitutional claim that "all people are created equal and endowed with inalienable rights of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness." Instead, people are constantly faced with death, imprisonment and a life of misery, exploitation, and oppression.

The use of sanctions against the people is not limited to capitalist countries. Neo-colonial agents in Africa are doing the bidding of imperialism, as in the recent application of sanctions on Niger by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). This is an attempt to overturn the mass movement to get the French Out of Niger, a movement ignited when the military seized power from a known French neo-colonial puppet. The hunger, death and suffering caused by these sanctions, at a time of mass awakening, brings the harsh realities of sanctions into sharp relief.

Not all sanctions campaigns are imperialist. The Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement directed against Israel is justified. Israel is a settler colony that illegally and inhumanely occupied Palestine. This must be exposed, and the people must organize every way possible to push back on the very existence of Israel. Sanctions aimed at South Africa during Apartheid were clearly justified. Across Europe and the US there is a call to divest in fossil fuels. The damage done by fossil fuels to the environment and the resulting impact on climate change is evident. This justifies the call to sanction multinational corporations engaged in fossil fuel exploration and development.

Solutions to imperialist sanctions

There have been a range of proposals on how to combat sanctions. Different countries have engaged in a wide range of tactics. To blunt the impact of any sanctions countries must end their dependence of the US dollar (USD) and other imperialist currencies. Countries under the yoke of imperialist sanctions must work together to increase trade using their local currencies. In the longer term we must end US hegemony by creating alternatives to the Swift system, petrol-dollars, IMF, the World Bank, and other imperialist financial institutions.

Solutions will only come once we educate a broader population on - the real reasons capitalism imposes sanctions, the real impact of sanctions, and how sanctions hurt the people, particularly the poorest. Unilateral sanctions by capitalist countries that clearly seek to cause economic suffering are imperialist actions. The governments enforce trade and financial restrictions that direct multinational corporations, banks, and international financial institutions to act against the interest of the sanctioned country. Sanctioned countries are denied access to needed equipment, food, medicines, and money. These countries may be required to pay higher tariffs or shipping costs. Sanctions may deny these countries access to export markets. It is important to investigate the particulars of sanctions on each country. This understanding of the complexities of imperialist sanctions must be shared with a wider audience. This political education is a necessary precursor to mobilizing and organizing more people to oppose capitalism, imperialism, and neo-colonialism.

Education on sanctions is a responsibility of our universities. All conscious academics must address sanctions as part of the needed decolonization of higher education. We must educate ourselves and our students on the truth behind sanctions. However, we cannot wait for a capitalist dominated educational system to be transformed. The most conscious among us must take on the responsibility to engage in revolutionary political education now.

Political education is a priority of A-APRP. We reach out with seminars and other programs to provide our communities with the truth on capitalism and imperialism and how Pan-Africanism is the just alternative. We have an ongoing program of political education work-study circles that not only educate members but also provides strategic and tactical training on how to become a Pan-African organizer. We operate this program across Africa and the diaspora for any African desiring to learn how to struggle for our people more effectively. **Contact us for more information at www.aaprp-intl.org.**

Zimbabwe declared October 25 anti-sanctions day a national holiday in 2019. The Southern African Development Community (SADC) followed suit, acknowledging October 25 as anti-sanctions day in 2021. These are significant efforts in institutionalizing the work around exposing the inhumane and illegal nature of so many unilateral sanctions. The A-APRP is calling on all conscious, justice loving people to support the extension of these efforts. We are concerned with sanctions beyond southern Africa. All countries punished by imperialist sanctions must unite. All organizations opposing these unjust sanctions must work together. Let us extend anti-sanctions day to anti-sanctions month and use the whole of October to educate ourselves and others. This education must serve as motivation to organize. Organized as a broad base of forces, we can confront and defeat imperialist sanctions.