

PREFACE

The US is expanding its often-used weapon of sanctions with devastating effects. The most extensive sanctions ever imposed, those on Russia, are impacting the international economy. Legislation for far stricter measures on China and threats of sanctions against India for continuing to trade with China and Russia will be felt globally.

US sanctions are metastasizing into a global confrontation with over 40 countries directly besieged by these unilateral measures. Almost every developing country attempting any level of social programs for its population or adopting foreign and economic policies contrary to US wishes is being targeted. But now an emerging movement by the vast majority of the world's population is determined to challenge these illegal sanctions.

SanctionsKill Campaign

The [SanctionsKill Campaign](#) was initiated in 2019 to coordinate educational efforts by grassroots solidarity groups and peace and justice organizations. We combined forces to mobilize opposition to the debilitating impact of the US-imposed measures to economically strangle more than 40 countries.

Many of the individual solidarity groups knew, in great detail, how sanctions impacted the particular country with which they were in solidarity. But they often had less awareness of the pervasive economic strangulation that has dislocated the economies of entire regions in Africa, Asia, and Latin America.

The devastating impacts of US sanctions on occupied Palestine — or on already impoverished countries such as Mali, Zimbabwe, Central African Republic, Guinea-Bissau, Kyrgyzstan, Fiji, Nicaragua and Laos — are not even on the radar screen of Washington-aligned human rights groups.

The SanctionsKill unity statement has been translated into 15 languages. Many thousands of organizations and prominent individuals signed on to this call to end US sanctions, which identifies sanctions “a crime against humanity” and focuses on the hyperinflation, shortages of essential supplies, and resulting famine and disease that have accompanied the US measures.

The SanctionsKills Campaign has also presented a series of webinars with thousands of viewers and developed a powerpoint teaching tool, graphics, and a *Special Report* aimed at the US Congress and the United Nations. These valuable teaching tools are included in this book.

This book is intended to assist the reader in understanding the impact of sanctions on individual countries and the measures that have enabled countries facing sanctions to survive, although at enormous cost.

The authors in this book reflect the growing opposition to endless US wars and help to give voice to the organizations that stand in solidarity with the rights of nations to self-determination.

Sanctions are a form of stealth warfare

As the SanctionsKill Campaign has articulated, sanctions are not an alternative to war. They are in fact a form of warfare, deliberately targeting the most defenseless civilians — youth, the elderly, sick and disabled people.

In a period of human history when the technical means to address hunger and disease are available, depriving hundreds of millions from getting basic necessities is a crime against humanity. International law and conventions, including the Geneva and Nuremberg conventions, United Nations Charter, and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, explicitly prohibit the targeting of defenseless civilians, especially in times of war.

In December 2020, the United Nations General Assembly passed resolution 75/181 on “Human rights and unilateral coercive measures.” The representatives of 131 nations approved the motion saying: “Unilateral coercive measures and legislation are contrary to international law, international humanitarian law, the Charter of the United Nations and the norms and principles governing peaceful relations among States.”

The powerful tool of US corporate media saturates the political atmosphere. Media campaigns justify harsh US economic measures to undemocratically impose policy and regime change on many countries. The USAID (Agency for International Development), for instance, funds so-called human rights organizations and other NGOs that consistently echo the talking points of the US government, while remaining silent on US wars, military bases, and orchestrated coups.

Most sanctions are intentionally hidden; they don't generate even a line of news. Some sanctions are quickly passed after a sudden news article about an alleged atrocity. The civilians who will suffer have nothing to do with whatever crime the corporate media uses as an excuse. What are rarely mentioned are the economic or political concessions the US government or corporations are seeking.

Almost all international commercial transactions go through US banks via the SWIFT network. This puts US banks in a position to block money transfers and confiscate billions of dollars held by targeted governments and individuals. The US is thus able to use its financial leverage to demand that nearly every foreign bank accept restrictions imposed by Washington or face sanctions or fines themselves.

However, this power of the US through its banking system is now being challenged. Sanctions succeed if other countries are compliant in the face of the enforced punishment of a US targeted

country. But once countries have the collective determination to continue to trade, despite threats, then sanctions lose their bite.

Sanctions and global pandemic

The US leveraged the COVID-19 pandemic to further punish sanctioned countries that were systematically denied access to vaccines and emergency medical supplies. Nicaragua, for example, was the only country in Central America denied access to CAVAX – the US and EU vaccines.

In spring 2020, SanctionsKill launched an online campaign to demand provision of emergency medical supplies, especially to sanctioned countries. The COVID-19 global pandemic had magnified essential medical equipment supply problems that these countries faced. At the same time, public meetings and popular demonstrations were shut down as countries were forcibly isolated.

China responded to the global pandemic with a massive shipment of more than 2 billion doses of COVID-19 vaccines. Even more important, rather than using patents to keep vaccine production processes inaccessible, China shared the patents, technologies, and raw materials for many other countries to make their own vaccines.

Small, sanctioned Cuba followed the same policy of sharing doctors, medical technicians, and vaccine access throughout Africa, Latin America, and the Caribbean.

The difference between the responses of the Chinese and Cubans and the US practice is the difference between handing out fish for a day and teaching nations to fish.

New US administration and harsher enforcement

Many people hoped that the incoming Biden administration would take steps promised on the campaign trail to alleviate the cruel impact of sanctions. Indeed, Biden announced as one of his first acts as president and with great publicity that a US Treasury Department review of the US sanctions policy would be launched.

Dashing all hopes of relief, Biden's review turned out to be a study on how to systematically intensify the sanctions to further tighten the screws. In response, the SanctionsKill Campaign unrolled educational programs, webinars, and fact sheets to oppose US Treasury Department plans for harsher, more systematic enforcement. (A description of this campaign is included in this book.)

The Biden administration implemented even more savage measures against Venezuela, Cuba, and Eritrea. Further, new sanctions were imposed on Nicaragua and Ethiopia. Then a congressional vote brought a new round of sanctions on China.

In fall 2021, SanctionsKill printed a special report on the impact of US sanctions on eight countries and delivered it to every congressional office and to many countries of the United Nations to be used as a teaching tool.

World hunger crisis exacerbated by US sanctions

Russia and Ukraine combined [provide](#) 30% of global wheat exports. Russia is also a major supplier of other basic cereals, oil seeds, vegetable oils and fertilizer.

The dislocation precipitated by US sanctions compounds an existing global food crisis. Western-imposed colonial inequality had already caused problems in development. Disruptions in the global supply chains from the COVID-19 pandemic have added to the crisis.

Hardest hit by the western-imposed sanctions regime are the most vulnerable countries. Located mainly in Africa or Asia, these countries have fewer defenses against the spiraling costs of grains, fertilizer, and fuel.

The violent economic undertow is dragging these countries under. The United Nations' Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) [estimates](#) that 811 million people in the world faced hunger in 2020, with an additional 118 million in 2021. Unprecedented food-price inflation worldwide will increase the number facing hunger.

World Trade Organization (WTO) Director-General Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala predicted hunger and food riots in poor countries. Food imports from the Black Sea region are crucial for the survival of 35 African countries (*The Guardian*, March 24).

Because Russia is such a large country with a massive wealth of natural resources, sanctions that cut other countries off from trade with Russia can hurt those other countries more than they do Russia itself. There is an economic crisis in Europe and growing evidence that the anti-Russian sanctions are causing serious hardship in North America.

Western economists fully understand the extent and causes of this manufactured and politically motivated food crisis. For example, World Bank President David Malpass warned of a "human catastrophe" due to record rises in food prices that will push hundreds of millions into poverty (*BBC*, April 21)

World refuses to accept sanctions

By imposing the most extensive sanctions ever on Russia, the US pushed its sanctions regime to the breaking point. But not so much for Russia, which is self-sufficient in grains, protein, and energy. What is breaking has been the international acquiescence to these deadly measures aimed at civilian populations.

To date, the BRICS countries of Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa moved to accelerate trade with each other, using a whole basket of currencies. Joining the emerging resistance has been every country in Africa, most of Latin America, and major Asian countries, including Pakistan, Afghanistan, former Soviet Republics, along with Iran, Iraq, Syria and Lebanon. These sovereign states continued their trade with Russia, sidestepping US demands.

At this juncture a new consciousness and an entirely different international campaign is needed against an escalating hybrid economic and military world war.

Will a harsher, divided and poorer world emerge from this confrontation with US corporate power? Through cooperation and planning can nations in the global south defend themselves against US orchestrated destruction? Should the US pay reparations for sanctions they have imposed? What role can international solidarity of workers movements play in this emerging struggle?

As countries around the world resist the torrent of new sanctions, the SanctionsKill invites you to join our campaign. Contact us: info@sanctionskill.org