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Targeted or Restrictive: Impact of U.S. and EU Sanctions on Education and Healthcare of Zimbabweans

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Abstract

Since the end of the Cold War, the use of sanctions as a soft approach in international diplomacy has gained pre-eminence among states that want to influence the perception and behaviour of other states. In 2001, the United States (U.S.) through the adoption of the Zimbabwe Democracy and Economic Recovery Act (ZIDERA) imposed targeted sanctions against selected Zimbabwean officials. Similarly, in 2002, the European Union (EU) imposed sanctions that it officially referred to as restrictive measures against Robert Mugabe and some of his allies. These sanctions were meant to influence a change in the behaviour of the Mugabe regime, particularly in the area of democracy, human rights and the rule of law. Unfortunately, after more than a decade and a half, sanctions have still been unable to achieve its set goals; instead, there are daunting records of their gloomy impact on the rights and well-being of ordinary and otherwise innocent civilians. This study focuses on the impact of U.S. targeted sanctions and EU restrictive measures on the right to education and healthcare of Zimbabweans. The study concluded that the use of sanctions is not a plausible way of resolving international disagreements and conflicts, and instead advocated for the adoption of non-violent approaches to conflict resolution.

Key Words: Sanctions, Civilian Population, Economic Impact, Democracy, Human Rights.

Introduction

Zimbabwe has a long history when it comes to sanctions, both comprehensive and unilateral. The country is a significant case in sanctions episodes starting from 1966, when the United Nations (UN) imposed its first comprehensive sanctions against Rhodesia, now Zimbabwe. From that period until the present, Zimbabwe at one time or another has been under sanctions either by the United Nations the United States, the European Union or all the aforementioned. In total, Zimbabwe has been sanctioned in seven sanction-episodes: 1966, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2005, 2008 and 2009, making it one of the most sanctioned countries in the world. In a simple analysis, Zimbabwe has become a regular candidate of the “sanctions industry.” Hence, this study deems it relevant to analyse the impact of sanctions on this country with respect to their impact on the human rights and well-being of the civilian population, focusing specifically on their impact on education and healthcare. The present sanctions episode against Zimbabwe started in December 2001, when the United States passed the Zimbabwe Democracy and Economic Recovery Act (ZIDERA) (Grebe, 2010:9; Chingono, 2010: 66). The Act imposed economic sanctions on selected government officials, as well as top echelons of Zimbabwe African National Union – Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF). In addition, the act opposed the extension of loans or debt cancellations from Multilateral Financial Institutions (MFIs) such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Bank and the African Development Bank (AfDB) to Zimbabwe. Subsequently, following the expulsion of the EU head of election monitoring mission, Pierre Schori, on February 18, 2002, after being accused by the Zimbabwean government of interfering with its elections, the EU introduced sanctions it referred to as “restrictive measures” against President Robert Mugabe and other senior government officials. These punitive measures barred targeted state functionaries from travelling in and around Europe just as their personal assets and bank accounts were frozen.

In principle, the present sanctions against Zimbabwe is said to be a set of targeted sanctions. According to the U.S. and the EU, the sanctions were imposed in order to improve democracy, promote human rights and enhance the rule of law in Zimbabwe. Thus, the sanctions aim to compel a change in the behaviour of the regime. Contrarily, the government of Zimbabwe argues that the so-called targeted sanctions are in fact economic sanctions and nothing less than a political witch-hunt orchestrated by the West to subdue the regime’s political pre-eminence, as well as sabotage its land reform program. Robert Mugabe’s regime supports this claim by highlighting the fact that since the enactment of ZIDERA by the U.S. Congress, the IMF, the World Bank and the AfDB have denied Zimbabwe loan extensions, credits or guarantees, external market facilities and financial aid, thus indicating that the sanctions were a premeditated strategy utilized to collapse the economy. In view of the discrepancies surrounding the nature of the sanctions, this study explored the strategies used by the U.S. and the EU to implement their targeted sanctions against Zimbabwean officials. Additionally, it underscores the impact of sanctions on the rights and well-being of the entire population, focusing on the right to education and healthcare.

Framework of Analysis

In order to engage the sanctions discourse, the work of John Paul Lederach, *The Moral Imagination: The Art and Soul of Building Peace* becomes apt. According to Lederach, for human beings to achieve peace within ourselves and in the societies in which we

live, we must change the way we respond and react to challenges and conflicts. Thus, the society can become better and more peaceful if we can employ our moral imagination of peace in resolving conflicts, instead of using violent measures:

If we are to survive as a global community, we must understand the imperative nature of giving birth and space to the moral imagination in human affairs. We must face the fact that much of our current system for responding to deadly local and international conflict is incapable of overcoming cycles of violent patterns precisely because our imagination has been corralled and shackled by the very parameters and sources that create and perpetuate violence (Lederach, 2005, p. 46).

According to Lederach, we are stuck in our current system (global systems), which is characterized by the use of violence to resolve conflict. He pointed to the human imagination and ability to create morals as the answer to breaking out of this cycle. We need to move from “destructive” violence to a “constructive” social engagement. For Lederach, peace could be achieved through our moral imagination, thus asserting the following:

The moral imagination requires the capacity to imagine ourselves in a web of relationships that includes our enemies; the ability to sustain a paradoxical curiosity that embraces complexity without reliance on dualistic polarity; the fundamental belief in and pursuit of the creative act; and the acceptance of the inherent risk of stepping into the mystery of the unknown that lies beyond the far too familiar landscape of violence (Lederach, 2005, p. 5).

In Lederach’s view, a more peaceful community (world) is achievable by connecting the past, present and future. In this case, peace needs to be imagined, while still remaining grounded in the realities of the conflict. Thus, the moral imagination challenges the status quo model of conflict resolution promulgated today, which employs coercive measures (economic sanctions in our case), and advocates instead for a moral inclusiveness in addressing conflicts and disagreements. Michelle Maiese, while referencing John Paul Lederach, explains that conflict transformation defies a specific set of techniques; rather, it requires a multi-layer analysis that includes the understanding and perception of a conflict situation as well as encompasses all the elements and aspects of the conflict. Consequently, an understanding of social conflict requires a set of lenses (multi-lenses). When using multi-lenses, each lens concentrates on a particular aspect of the conflict and helps focus more clearly on the overall meaning of the conflict at hand. This implies that employing a single lens when addressing a conflict will produce an opaque view of the entire conflict. As such, multiple lenses are needed to envision multiple aspects of complex conflict realities and multi-dimensionality.

Taking into full consideration Lederach’s accurate assessment of the international system with respect to conflict transformation mechanisms, I seek to broaden and deepen his analysis by closely examining the power and the dominant discourses and narratives of sanctions by focusing on the U.S. and EU sanctions against Zimbabwe. If we agree on the fact that sanctions, particularly economic sanctions, do manifest heinous humanitarian consequences on the civilian population of targeted societies, and also that it contributes to human rights violations and negatively impacts the well-

being of civilians, one will only but query why it is still maintained as a tool of international diplomacy and most often used by one state(s) against another. This study believes that portraying sanctions as a soft approach in international diplomacy or as an alternative to warfare is problematic; hence such a narrative needs to be addressed and corrected.

U.S. and EU Sanctions against Zimbabwe

Perhaps the most reasonable question to ask is why did the U.S. and the EU impose sanctions against Zimbabwe? The reasons for sanctions against Zimbabwe have been marred with controversy from both the perspective of the sanctioning party and the sanctioned (Chingono, 2010, p. 67). Prior to the imposition of sanctions and even presently, the regime in Zimbabwe has been identified with internal repression of its citizens. The government of President Robert Mugabe is characterized with brutality and being hypersensitive to opposition. The regime abhors human rights values and the rule of law; also, press freedom is never considered in the regime's agenda. In addition, the regime has been in power for too long, starting from the time of independence in 1980, thus making it one of the longest serving regimes in the world. The reasons advanced by the U.S. and the EU for imposing sanctions against Zimbabwe were to establish democratic principles; to institutionalize real democracy and enhance the political emancipation of the people of Zimbabwe; and to improve human rights and restore the rule of law (Ogbonna, 2015). The U.S. and the EU believe that imposing sanctions against the government of Zimbabwe will pressure the regime to change its behaviour and restore democracy in the country, according to Western modern standards of democracy. On the contrary, the government of Zimbabwe perceives the use of sanctions as an illegal tool and a political witch-hunt orchestrated by the U.S. and the EU to create economic implosion in Zimbabwe and consequently destabilize the internal political affairs of the country.

The differences in the opinion and perception of the sanctioning party and the sanctioned on the actual reason(s) that prompted the use of sanctions have left room for diverse interpretation of their actual nature by various interest groups. Despite the fact that an array of factors has been identified as the reasons for the sanctions, the fundamental question remains: are sanctions a wise conflict management tool and do they and have they achieved their target objectives? The objective of the U.S. and the EU for imposing sanctions against Zimbabwe is to influence a positive change in the behaviour of the regime, in a manner that will be beneficial to the citizens. For example, ZIDERA states that the policy aimed "to support the people of Zimbabwe in their struggle to effect peaceful, democratic change, achieve broad-based and equitable economic growth, and restore the rule of law" (Copson, 2006, p. 21; Masaka, 2012, p. 58). Such statements contained in ZIDERA are commendable, as it apparently provides hope for Zimbabweans. The EU on its part, issued a statement in 2004 and explained the goal of its sanctions against Zimbabwe when it communicated the following: "The objective of these restricted measures is to encourage the persons targeted to reject policies that lead to the suppression of human rights, of the freedom of expression and of good governance" (Council Common Position 2004/161/CFSP: 2). In any case, the primary goal of the U.S. and the EU sanctions and/or restrictive measures is to change the politics and the behaviour of the targeted persons, not to instigate economic

implosion and enforce a clandestine regime change agenda as argued by the Mugabe government.

ZIDERA Implementation

The introduction of ZIDERA marked the beginning of a new set of sanctions against Robert Mugabe and some of his cohorts. However, the actual reason and nature of the sanctions has generated controversy between the U.S. and the Zimbabwean government and has also caused bewilderment among researchers and spectators. The Zimbabwean government argues that the U.S. sanctions are not targeted sanctions, but instead they are comprehensive and economic in nature since they have adverse economic costs both on the economy and on the welfare of the entire population. For the purpose of clarity, smart or targeted sanctions were developed as an alternative to comprehensive sanctions. This brand of sanctions imposes coercive measures on specific individuals and entities. It places restrictions on selected products or activities while minimizing unintended economic and social consequences on innocent bystanders (Cortright & Lopez, 2002, p. 2). Furthermore, they are supposed to protect innocent social groups such as children, women, the elderly and the sick from so-called collateral damage (Tostensen & Bull, 2002, p. 373). In light of the above, U.S. sanctions were supposed to target specific political elites espousing policies and committing actions deemed reprehensible by Washington.

In such a scenario of apparent contradictions as the main reason and nature of the U.S. sanctions, one way out of this paradoxical situation is to refer to ZIDERA itself. The Act states among other issues that the U.S. intends to influence change of behaviour in the government of Zimbabwe by preventing the IMF and the International Development Association (IDA), among other International Financial Institutions, from extending financial support to Zimbabwe. According to Section 4(c) of ZIDERA titled "Multilateral Financial Restrictions," until the President of the United States makes the certification described in subsection 4(d), the Secretary of the Treasury Executive to each of the International Financial Institutions must oppose or vote against: "(i) an extension by the respective institutions of any loan, credit or guarantee to the Government of Zimbabwe. (ii) Any cancellation or reduction of indebtedness owed by the Government of Zimbabwe to the United States or any International Financial Institution" (Chingono, 2010: 70). Taking into consideration these pronouncements in the Act, it is unclear as well as doubtful whether the so-called targeted sanctions were really targeted at specific individuals, institutions, and business organizations that promoted an undemocratic system of governance and violations of human rights. Rather, it seems to confirm that U.S. sanctions against Zimbabwe do have economic elements that inevitably contribute to the country's economic collapse. According to Chingono (2010), since the enactment of ZIDERA in 2001, financial applications made by Zimbabwe to International Financial Institutions (IMF, World Bank and AfDB) have been blocked and frustrated mainly on political reasons. Contrarily, the IMF presented the argument that the reason for not granting Zimbabwe's loan application is because it defaulted on repayment of previous loans. However, in October 2016, the Mugabe regime paid off 15 years' worth of loan debt that it owed to the IMF - an amount totaling 108 million USD. While the IMF acknowledged receipt of the payment, it issued a statement saying that repayment of debt by the Mugabe regime does not imply that it would consider new requests for

funding from the regime. The fund instead berates the regime to implement economic reforms and also repay its debt to other creditors including AfDB and the World Bank. Such a statement by the IMF indicates that besides default on loan repayments, there are other reasons for denying Zimbabwe loan extensions by the fund. Unarguably, Zimbabwe is required by law to repay its loan as at when due, whether the loan is from the IMF, the World Bank or the AfDB, at the same time, it is important to highlight that it is not the duty of the IMF to recall debt for other financial institutions. A more complicated issue about the U.S. sanctions is that instead of focusing on the personal finances and businesses of the targeted individuals, they target the regime's access to finances without recourse to the consequences of such action on the entire population the sanctions intend to redeem.

The Semantics of “Restrictive Measures”

On February 8, 2002, the EU imposed sanctions against Zimbabwe, which the EU officially referred to as “restrictive measures” (Eriksson, 2011, p. 193). The reasons put forward by the EU for imposing the so-called restrictive measures are to ensure political and democratic stability in Zimbabwe and to enforce human rights and the rule of law (Tungwarara, 2011, p. 112). The EU sanctions list contains 203 individuals, mainly government officials, and 40 entities. However, one major controversy surrounding the EU sanctions is their actual nature. Another problem is the euphemism used to address the sanctions. The EU refers to its sanctions against Zimbabwe as restrictive measures, while the regime in Zimbabwe calls them illegal economic sanctions employed to penalize the regime for a decent cause of fair redistribution of their land amongst the once marginalized black population (Derman, 2006).

A crucial point to note is that the EU's choice of euphemisms presents sanctions as a soft approach in international diplomacy. In comparison with the word “sanctions”, the use of “restrictive measures” seems not to sound harmful or violent. Thus, the EU's choice of words is premeditated to douse public opinion and reaction. Nonetheless, what is most important is to reflect on the practical implications of the policies on Zimbabwe and most significantly their impact on the lives and well-being of the civilian population. For example, the EU claimed that its sanctions are directed at selected government functionaries, whereas it includes a ban on the importation of Zimbabwe cocoa into the EU territory. Obviously, by banning the exportation of Zimbabwe's cocoa into the EU, the so called restrictive measures deviated from targeting a few individuals propagating obnoxious policies on the Zimbabwean masses to ordinary civilians they were meant to protect. Overall, the EU ban on Zimbabwe cocoa contributed to deteriorating the country's export performance. In addition, it automatically decreases Zimbabwe's foreign earnings and invariably leads to a decline in the national income. Furthermore, it means that the sanctions indirectly targeted cocoa farmers, who are ordinary civilians and whose names are not listed on the sanctions list. In essence, EU sanctions were not coordinated and/or implemented in line with the principles of smart or targeted sanctions, by not limiting their impact only on the targeted individuals. As Masaka (2012) noted, when targeted sanctions end up affecting the well-being of the civilian or unintended population, they cease to be targeted sanctions. Although the EU has made an effort to mitigate the impact of the sanctions by providing aid to the population through NGOs, there are still discrepancies in understanding the terms used to refer to its sanctions against Zimbabwe, bearing in

mind the ultimate nature of the sanctions. The point here is that the lack of proper definition of its actions and measures against Zimbabwe has rendered the prospects for re-engagement (dialogue and negotiation) unpromising. This is not to deny the brutality of the regime in Zimbabwe or to suggest that the regimes land reform agenda was done to bridge economic disparity between the Zimbabwean white farmers and their black counterparts. In fact, Mugabe's land reform policy was anchored on rejecting and revenging what the regime regards as undue Western interference and post-independence colonization of their lands. Whatever may be the case, the obvious truth is that EU sanctions have an economic element and they negatively impact the human rights and well-being of the larger civilian population.

Sanctions and Healthcare Service Delivery

Over the past decade, Zimbabwe has witnessed high levels of migration. In August 2007, Aljazeera's program "People and Power" referred to the trend of migration in the country as Zimbabwe's exodus. Migration became a factor that threatens service delivery in virtually every sector of the Zimbabwean economy. The ongoing migration tsunami seems to affect mostly the health sector and health service delivery (Gutsa & Choguya, 2012, p. 442). As of 2010, Zimbabwe had 1.6 physicians and 7.2 nurses for every 10,000 people (WHO, 2010). Although a number of factors may instigate migration, it can be argued that the trend in Zimbabwe is largely caused by economic difficulties facing the country and its citizens. In 2002, the Southern African Migration Project (SAMP) published a report on health professionals leaving Zimbabwe; the report reveals that 54 percent of the respondent cited economic factors as a major reason for fleeing the country. Thus, a combination of economic difficulties and bad governance are the key factors driving Zimbabweans out of their country. Evidently, the regime in Zimbabwe is responsible for one of these key factors - bad governance, whilst a combination of internal and external factors contributed to or induced the other factor, which is the collapse of the country's economy. Though one cannot allude that sanctions are the sole cause of Zimbabwe's economic retrogression, the fact is that they played a significant role in deflecting the economy.

The collapse of the Zimbabwe economy is partly caused by the government's inability to raise funds needed to check economic and structural deficits from Multilateral Financial Institutions. Consequently, the regime adopted austerity measures to mitigate economic challenges. Among the measures adopted by the government was to decrease funding for the health sector, which was captured in the countries "Short Term Emergency Recovery Programme (STERP)" published in March 2009. Some of the impacts of the policy include shortages of drugs and deterioration of infrastructures. A reduction in salaries and allowances resulted in the loss of experienced health professionals and an overall decline in the quality of public health services. For example, in the 2014 budget, the government allocated 330 million USD to the health sector; however, only 25 million USD was given to public hospitals for operations even though they had an outstanding debt of 33 million USD to suppliers. Then in May of 2014, the government decided to review doctor's service charges as a part of its strategy to revive the healthcare sector. Consultation fees for private hospitals were set at \$30, representing a 50% increase from the previous amount of \$15, while physicians and paediatricians charge \$70. At public hospitals, the consultation fee is set at \$10; however, the cost of beds for admitted patients is about \$110 per day, an amount that

is impossible for many Zimbabweans to afford. Another impact of sanctions is that it has made it difficult for Zimbabwe to access funds needed for the prevention and treatment of HIV from the Global Fund. On November 28, 2004, the Kaiser Networks' Daily Reports and AFP News Agency reported that Zimbabwe's grant application for funding its HIV/AIDS programmes were denied for political reasons. In the backdrop of the aforementioned, Zimbabweans have found it increasingly difficult to access affordable healthcare services; particularly antiretroviral drugs for HIV/AIDS patients. According to a HIV patient who identified himself simply as Garikai:

[...] initially I was getting antiretroviral drugs at the government hospital in Gokwe, but it is no longer possible. I was told there are no drugs available. I was referred to a private pharmacy here in Harare where I can buy the drugs. Imagine I paid \$34 for the drugs apart from my transportation fare. Since I have no job, it is certain that I will stop my medication in the near future unless the drugs are made available again in my district hospital [...].

Realizing that the rate of HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria has increased to peak levels, in 2014 the Global Fund approved a 555 million USD grant to fight the three diseases between 2014 and 2016. Furthermore, sanctions affected healthcare support projects and initiatives provided by donor agencies. For example, the Swedish Government health initiative founded in 1997 and funded to the tune of 50 million SEK, sought to improve water and sanitation, education, the living condition of disabled people in Zimbabwe society. In addition, it also sought to mitigate the spread of HIV and other related diseases, but it was later suspended by the Swedish government following EU sanctions. In addition, the Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA) suspended its Health Sector Support Programme to Zimbabwe valued at 235 million DKK. The programme was established in May 2000 to support healthcare services in rural areas of Zimbabwe through the Ministry of Health and Child Welfare (MOHCW). These programmes were suspended not because the governments of the donor countries (Sweden and Denmark) were no longer interested in funding the projects, but rather because they adhered to the EU sanctions directives, which urged member states to desist from making funds available to the government of Zimbabwe. Although it is not suggested here that a state owes another the obligation to provide developmental support or aid, history shows that states depend on each other's support and partnership for development and growth. Obviously, it is the responsibility of every state to provide healthcare services to its population and Zimbabwe is not an exception. Nevertheless, the point here is that sanctions have denied the population of the health benefits they initially enjoyed from healthcare programmes sponsored by donor agencies and unfortunately have done so at a time when the government is unable to provide a replacement or alternative. Conclusively, sanctions have "tied the hands" of the government in providing quality healthcare to the population and as a result their right to quality healthcare has been breached.

Sanctions and the Right to Education

Economic difficulties resulting from a number of factors including sanctions have had a huge impact on Zimbabwe's educational sector. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) recommended that primary education is compulsory and free and should be made available and accessible to every child. On

its part, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) incorporates the right to education, while the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), under Article 28, stipulates the right to education for every child. The article went on to state that wealthy countries should help poorer countries to achieve this right. In view of the above, rich developed countries of the West should be in the forefront of implementing universal basic education, whilst they desist from actions that will directly or indirectly antagonize the right to education. Contrary to the provisions of the above international legal instruments, as of January 2009, about 94 percent of public schools in the rural areas of Zimbabwe were closed (Hove, 2012, p. 80). The reason cited by the government for this unfortunate decision is the inability to fund its public schools due to financial restrictions imposed by sanctions. The government's policy to close down public primary schools in the rural parts of Zimbabwe obviously denies a segment of the population the opportunity to acquire education. In addition, it imposes restrictions on the personal mobility of the affected individuals, as well as violates their rights to education.

Another factor affecting education is massive migration. The mass exodus of teachers from public schools, caused by poor remuneration and unpaid salaries has endangered the opportunity of kids from poor homes and family backgrounds to acquire education, since they cannot afford the fees of private schools or travel abroad for education. From the look of things, education in Zimbabwe is gradually becoming something that only the rich can afford. Apart from that, Zimbabwean societies are unwittingly divided into an affluent rich population that can afford education and enjoy better opportunities in the future and a poor uneducated population whose chances and opportunities of being successful is limited and dicey. Evidently, such development is dangerous, as it is capable of causing social divisions and conflicts in Zimbabwean societies. Furthermore, the high rate of inflation that engulfed the Zimbabwean economy and currency added to the problems and challenges faced by the population in getting education. In January 2009, the government suspended the use of the Zimbabwean Dollar due to the fact that it became worthless and replaced it with the U.S. Dollar and the South African Rand (Noko, 2011, p. 349). Unfortunately, Zimbabweans that live in the rural villages do not have access to these foreign currencies. Consequently, some rural dwellers resorted to trade by barter as a means of exchange. According to Kudakwashe, who is a resident of Tofara in Gwai- Matabeleland North Province,

in some villages, students had to pay their school enrolment and fees in kind using valuables other than cash. Because we don't have U.S. dollars, we pay with things like farm produce such as cows, goats, fowl, wheat, maize and other household items.

Such a situation is unimaginable in the 21st century, particularly when the people are engaging in this practice as a result of a situation to which they never subscribed.

Furthermore, sanctions affected support programmes provided by foreign donors to Zimbabwe's educational sector. For example, the Swedish government in 1996 established the Education Sector Support Programme, which was funded to the tune of 95 million SEK (Hove, 2012: 80). The programme supplied textbooks and other educational materials to Zimbabwe schools. Also, it constructed school buildings and promoted gender equality in educational systems in Zimbabwe, breaching the gender disparity in schools. After the EU imposed sanctions against Zimbabwe, the Swedish

government withdrew funding for this project (Gono, 2007, pp.105-106). The suspension of this project by the Swedish government has a significant negative impact on the beneficiaries. Affected families are now left with the responsibility of providing school materials for their children, even under the terrible economic situations prevailing in their country. Given this scenario, it is evident that Western sanctions do affect the targeted group, however it is the civilian population that is hit hardest as their basic rights and well-being are subjected to multi-faceted danger.

Conclusion

The reasons presented by the U.S. and the EU for imposing sanctions against Zimbabwe are reasonable and will be of benefit to Zimbabweans if they are achieved. However, employing sanctions as a measure to achieve these objectives is unacceptable considering their predictable outcome on the rights and well-being of the civilian population. Reflecting on the impact of the U.S. and the EU sanctions on the rights and well-being of Zimbabweans, the following questions arise for me: is it rational to modify our moral stance, ethical standards and human rights values in order to advance democracy? More specifically, is it acceptable to relinquish the human rights and well-being of the majority (civilian population) in order to force a minority ruling group to comply with the demands of the sanctioning party or parties? Sanctions against Zimbabwe triggered inflation and aided high levels of unemployment and capital flight, which in turn caused poverty and low quality of life for the population. Thus, the Achilles heel of the U.S. and EU sanctions is not only evident in its inability to compel the so-called deviants or violators of democracy and human rights in Zimbabwe to retreat their steps and actions, but also in its inability to protect the inalienable rights, so to say, of the population.

One important issue the U.S. and the EU should consider is whether sanctions are a reasonable way to enforce a change in the behaviour of Robert Mugabe and his associates. Sanctions have lasted more-than a decade and a half without success in terms of goal attainment, therefore the U.S. and EU should forgo their present approach to the crisis that continues to destroy the country's economy as well as violate the people's rights. Instead, they should employ the moral imagination of peace as advocated by John Paul Lederach. In doing so, the U.S. and EU should reengage the government of Zimbabwe diplomatically (through dialogue) and find a lasting solution to the impasse. The conventional assumption that sanctions fill a gap in international diplomacy is problematic. The case in review has shown that such an approach is no longer appreciable, particularly, when we consider the fact that sanctions (targeted or comprehensive) end up in creating collateral damage. Therefore, the U.S. and the EU should reconsider their approach in Zimbabwe at-least in the interest and benefit of the suffering population.

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