

Problems of Sanctions under International Human Rights Law

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I- Introduction

In the legal context, sanction is strong action taken in order to make people obey a law or states obey a law or rule, any other regulations, or the punishment used when it is against the laws. According to sociology, sanctions are ways of enforcing compliance with social norms. Sanctions are positive when they are used to celebrate conformity and negative when they are used to punish or discourage nonconformity.

Sanctions could be international sanctions. The categories of international sanctions are economic, political, and military ones. These are the efforts by countries, multilateral, or regional organizations against states or organizations either to protect national security interests, or to protect international law, and defend against threat to international peace and security. Economic sanctions are commercial and financial applied by one or more countries against states, groups, or individual. Military sanctions are the intervention of states by using armed forces.

Nowadays, there are fourteen ongoing sanctions regimes which focus on supporting political settlement of conflicts, nuclear non-proliferation, and counter-terrorism. Each regime is administered by a sanctions committee chaired by a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council. There are 10 monitoring groups, teams and panels that support the work of 11 of the 14 sanctions committees.[1]

Moreover, it can be legitimately targeted by the inter-state body such as Security Council. In compare and contrast, sanctions have an obvious purpose to guarantee the international peace and security; yet it also has side-effect on human rights.[2] The effects of sanctions based on the operations in the regime, whereas comprehensive affects an entire population and targeted sanctions affect specific individual or groups.[3]

This paper focuses on purposes of sanctions and how they start by detailing each procedure. It also argues how sanctions affect to human rights under legal instruments that based on types of sanction in operations, whether it is comprehensive or targeted sanctions. It also mentions about the obligations of the UN Security Council or other international organizations to overlook and monitoring for human rights. This council must look through the mechanism which be aware of the violation human rights obligations, ensure all sanctions not much abuse on humanities.

II. Purposes of Sanctions

In adherence to the principles of United Nation (UN), it has to encourage respect for human rights and for fundamental freedoms.[4] In other words, the limitations on the powers of the Security Council also relates to Jus Cogen, which is a Latin term that means bidding law. It is the principle of law that considered as universal and superior. Moreover, it is *a peremptory norm of general international law that accepted and recognized by the international community of States as a whole as a norm from which no derogation is permitted*. In accordance to Vienna Convention which obvious stipulate that a treaty is void if, it against with the peremptory norms of general of international law (jus cogen).[5] International organizations are based on constitutions of limited powers derived from the agreement of member states and are thus bound by international law standards. Therefore, jus cogen is a fundamental limitation on organizations' power.

The term of sanctions not obvious mention in the UN charter, however, by Article. 39 it reflects to this term and the powers are given to the Security Council. Moreover, as an organ of an international organization, the Council has granted the powers and take measures.

The UN uses sanction to seek peace and to react to a country's actions; for instance, North Korea nuclear chemical biological warfare. In this case, fifteen members of UN Security

Council have passed the dozens of resolutions and decided to impose sanction on this country. [6] Recently, United States of America also imposed new sanction on Iran. Sanctions can be open ended until a country fixes concern. They are typically made by several countries from the UN Security Council such as Russia, France, China, United Kingdom and including the United States of America and other international organizations. The 22 UN sanctions since 1991, it found that for coercing a change in behavior sanctions worked about 10 percent at the time. The constraining certain activities though were more effective and worked about 28 percent of the time. For communicating concern to countries, there were 27 percent work effectively. [7]

In the US, the Treasury Department's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) imposes the economic sanctions against foreign countries. [8] Particularly, they are not always meant to punish governments. They also used to encourage and support countries toward stability.

III. Procedures of Sanctions

In order to put pressure on one state or individual, it prior to come across some procedures. First and foremost, it is the stage of political negotiation, when the political parties come to table to impose their objections and threatened. Then, it comes to economic sanction, which have the significant to the financial and commercial of states, groups, or individuals. Following this, if conflicts do not have the resolutions, the arm forced would be happened.

A. Diplomatic Negotiations

Negotiation is a tool before entering to sanction. It also has been as a key of UN before step in sanction stage in the conflict. It is also a complementary to influence peacemaking to all stakeholders. It is an essential option to choose between words and wars,[9] as a tool of diplomatic negotiation or sanctions or the use of force.

Accordingly, sanctions have never been imposed in isolation, there are 97% of sanctions that imposed by formal negotiations. The only cases in which negotiations were not underway are the third and fourth episodes of sanctions against Al-Qaida, from September 2001 and June 2011 respectively.[10] In fact, it is obvious that negotiations are almost present, however, the data from UN not directly tell how targeted sanctions interact with negotiations. As it can see, there are different objectives of sanctions that in some cases it intended to end by armed conflict, to counter proliferation, or to support democracy or non-proliferation goals – some interesting patterns emerge.[11]

Once a comprehensive peace agreement has been negotiated and a transitional government put in place, the UN uses individual targeted sanctions such as asset freezes and travel bans, along with arms imports embargoes and commodity sanctions, to enforce and further build the peace.[12]

B. Economic Sanction

In order to impose their will on others by being aware of military violence, apparently economic sanctions have been used as the methods. Briefly, it is in the case that one state tends to influence another's policy, as many states did with South Africa when it was under apartheid regime.[13] The economic sanctions may involve a total boycott of all goods and services or a partial one involving as military weapons. In general, boycott except for medical supplies.

Even though economic sanctions are the tools for escaping from horrible war, but it less effective as coercive tools. There are three main reasons to argue why it less effective.[14] First and foremost, it is effective unless the significant states agree to be sanctions. If one state refuses to apply it, it will soon provide the profit to the defector state. Moreover, a government faced with intensive policy to follow another policy. Secondly, economies are often much more flexible than what supposed to. It depends on how well the economy is

managed and how flexible people within the society are. It also depends on one single export and alternatively depends one or a small group of imports for which it is hard to find a domestic substitute. For instance, as the Cuban economy had been in difficulty time when the United States refused to buy sugar from it, when sugar was the leading export.[15] The last reason is that when sanctions are effective in seriously damaging an economy, but it does not affect the elites who are making the decisions. It means that sanctions could be effective unless the targeted states are concerned about the suffering especially to citizens. In contrast, if the government tends not to be concerned of its impacts, this method has just a little influence.

C. Military Sanctions

In some cases, sanctions may extend into times of armed conflict. It is when the context of non-military measures such as economic sanctions have not worked effectively. Due to this, it really violates the human rights under rights to life. In terms of armed conflicts, it is the rule of international humanitarian law in special principle as *lex specialis*. Generally, this law operates against the military target that may cause injury, death, etc. However, armed conflicts are not totally subject of peacetime international relations to international humanitarian law.[16]

The Security Council has imposed military sanctions as many times, as the instance of Iraq. It was to guarantee the peace, and give the sovereignty to Kuwait. This sanction took a long time and caused many effects especially to children.

IV. Sanctions and Human Rights: The consequences of Sanctions under International Organizations and Legal Instruments

When discussing about the measure and power for imposing sanctions, it refers to the limitations of the power of the Security Council.[17] In accordance to article 39 of UN charter, it extends of concerning of power, it is disputed in political and justiciable. In the prospect of maintain or reinstate international peace and security, the Security Council has the power to make recommendations, or decide what to do that the enforcement measures stipulate in Article. 40, 41 and 42. These articles obviously mention the allowance for using variety of measures to enforce the decisions.

Initially, the stipulation of Article. 40 is an objective for the prevention an aggravation of the circumstances. It is the footprint of peacekeeping measures primarily in the experience of the League of Nations and identifies the primary legal basis for, and the legal restraints upon, the exercise of the peacekeeping power. According to this, the concerned parties could be called to abide by the provisions measures as necessary and desirable. It means that the concerned parties are invited to discuss about the issues and prevent the arm-conflict. It suggests that the legal accountability of the Security Council in directing peacekeeping measures will be enhanced by utilizing procedural mechanisms for self-regulation.[18]

Likewise, as it states in Article.41, the Council may have acted *ultra vires* in order to establishing sanctions by not involving the military measures. These may be the interruption of economic relations and of rail, sea, air, postal, telegraphic, radio, and other means of communication, and the severance of diplomatic relations.

There are many arguments about the acts of sanctions especially the impacts to human sufferings. Notwithstanding, under Article. 50, it states on responsibility of the Security Council for protection and finding the resolutions for the states who faced the crisis. This article also guarantees that human rights should not be affected by sanctions. Principally, it implies for injuring innocent states and should be more respected diplomatic immunities. However, it has not been possible yet for escaping the consequences to humanities. More or less, sanctions usually include with the side-effect.

The potential evidences of abusing human rights are depended on types of sanction in operations.[19] Due to this, it will refer to comprehensive sanctions and targeted sanctions. The comprehensive sanctions included all terms, except for medical supplies and

foodstuffs.[20] The examples of comprehensive sanctions include the US sanctions against Iraq and Cuba.[21] Beside this, targeted sanctions are terms of individuals for a travel ban or a freezing order.[22] For instance, the U.S. sanctions program related to Somalia targets persons engaging in acts threatening the peace, security, or stability of Somalia. Another example are North-Korea and Iranian individual in nuclear or ballistic missile activities.[23] Sectoral sanctions are a form of targeted sanctions directed at a specified sector, or sectors, of a target's economy.[24] There are currently 20 country-based or country-related sanctions programs, according to lists of sanctions programs published by Treasury 4 Comprehensive sanctions can contain exceptions for humanitarian assistance.[25]

A. Comprehensive Sanctions

As it known that, comprehensive sanctions are including maritime and air blockades, arms embargoes, and a ban on all imports and exports, there is also an example of sanctions adopted by the Security Council of Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in 1990 after the Gulf War.[26]

It was the plan of Security Council to bring the invasion and occupation of Kuwait by Iraq to an end and to restore the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of Kuwait.[27] The enforcements of sanctions were by economic and military methods. The sanctions blocked virtually all commercial imports and exports in Iraq, banned travel on Iraqi transport, froze funds, and precluded every hope of the country's reconstruction in the post war rubble. Details of the sanctions declared medical supplies and food stuffs to be exempt from the embargo. The sanctions hit Iraq especially hard due to the fact that about 97% of the country's income had previously stemmed from international trade, and 70% of the country's prewar calories originated from external sources. Prior to the embargo, Iraq produced about 3 million barrels of oil a day, exporting 2.5 million. This trade fell by approximately 90%. The estimation of the lost Iraqi around US\$120 billion in foreign exchange earnings during the first eight years of the sanctions, funds once allocated to public health projects.[28]

The impact of that sanction is not only to the economic sectors but also on the livelihood, welfare and health as well as mortality rates, etc. By this sanction, children were highly affected. Public health professionals and epidemiologists report that mortality, low infant birth weight and malnutrition rates were higher than other countries. The effects of this sanctions were contradicted to International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights that it protects to mothers during reasonable period before and after childbirth.[29] But by this sanction, it revealed the public health crisis of the Iraq.

Beside this, motherhood and childhood are entitled to special care and assistance.[30] During that period, people especially mothers and children were not in acceptable conditions at all. In the period of 1991 until 1996, the malnutrition in under-five-year-olds rates from 3% to 11%. Chronic malnutrition jumped from 19% to 31%. Low birth weights increased from 5 to 22 per 100 live births.[31]

In additions, based on the Human Rights Committee in 1997, the effect of sanctions and blockades has been caused suffering and death in Iraq, especially in children.[32] Subsequently, the Committee on the Rights of the Child recognized that the embargo affected the economy and many aspects of daily life. As we can see, rights for Iraqis were absolutely abused by this case. According to, Article. 3 of UDHR[33] stipulates that everyone has the rights for life, liberty, and security of person. Moreover, as everyone has the right to a standard of living sufficient for the health and well-being, and also rights to security. Furthermore, rights to life shall be protected by law and shall not deprived the life.[34] In compare and contrast, people in Iraq were not exactly enjoy all the rights that they shall to have.

This sanction was continued until 2003, after the fifth president, Saddam Hussien was being force from the power. As the result, Iraq was withdrawn from Kuwait, pay the reparation and eliminate weapons. Even though, this sanction was successfully archived the

goals, but it impacted on human rights. The government were not putting much attention on how citizens suffered as well.

B. Targeted Sanctions

The growing number of arguments over sanctions against Iraq, it led the options of imposing into “targeted.”[35] Targeted sanctions also as “Smart Sanctions”[36], it aimed at persons and entities for a breach or threat to the peace. There are particularly three types of restrictions or deprivations on such persons as travel restrictions, financial restrictions, and criminal responsibility.[37] These sanctions provide for travel bans, asset freezes, arm embargoes and trade restrictions, nevertheless; it also has given human rights problems. In forms of part of human rights treaties; Article. 8 and 10 of the UDHR, 6 and 13 ECHR, and 14 of ICCPR, the way of enforcement certainly effects individuals.[38]

In general, there are two common types of travel sanctions as limiting travel by individual such as visa bans, and broader restrictions, such as flight bans. Visa bans more likely to be deal with specific political leaders or wrongdoer by name.[39] It cost political or military regarding inconvenience of policy and state practice.[40] In other words, aviation bans target an airline or a nation’s airline industry. For instance, the sanctions that imposed against Libya in order to react to the Lockerbie bombing. In the period of 1988o flight from Frankfurt to Detroit by London and New York, but at that time N739PA, aircraft operating and destroyed by a bomb, killing around 200 hundred people, in this case it known as “Lockerbie bombing”.[41] When the Security Council enforce travel bans on individuals, its autonomy of movement and freedom to choose a residence.[42] However, these rights are not violated by the Security Council actions, because they do now work in a cross-border way.[43] The rights for choosing residence are granted by the country of nationality or residence. Moreover, the Security Council does not require states to deny into their territory to their own nationals.[44]

On the other hand, the financial sanctions also interfere to human rights. Accordingly, there are three types of financial sanctions such as blacklist particular person or companies; the blacklist certain categories of person such as military officers; the measures targeting a state or broad group. It violates the rights of property[45], even financial remain frozen are transferred to be a fund. In this case, it means that natural person or legal person has the rights to enjoy their possessions. No one can divest his/her property except for public interest or the general principles that provided by the laws. Along with this, the proceedings can be impaired if it is the enforcement of state, or any other essential to control the property that abide by general interests, payments of taxes, and even the penalties.[46]

There were many times of issues with asset freezes. One of the examples, that the United States imposed the individual sanctions in September 11, 2001 was against a Saudi Arabi businessman, Yasin Abdullah Kadi.[47] He is a Sweden dweller. At that time, he proclaimed that his assets were illegally freeze. The UN Security Council established it under the power of Chapter VII to freeze assets of people who associate with Osama Bin Laden and Taliban.[48] In December, he brought his case to European Court of Justice (ECJ). In 2008, ECJ ruled the case and list on the ground of EU’s regulations that bound the fundamental of human rights, even implementing the resolutions of the Security Council under chapter VII. Kadi’s name was delisted when the European Commission, the Council of the UK, and the UK were pursuing an appeal against the General Court’s Decision.[49] As it can see, the level between the Security Council and European Commission has become a major point of legal controversy. The results of this may reveal the questions for international law regarding the limits of global governance.[50]

All through 1990s, the sanctions of the Security Council against Iraq were in effect and ended in 2003, yet it still continued a threat to international peace and security.[51] In order to proceed to this threat, the Council ordered all states to freeze funds, other financial assets and economic resources of individuals and entities and transfer them to the newly created Development Fund for Iraq.[52] Based on the update in June 2004, there were 82 of

individuals and 206 entities.[53] In order to impose the Resolution, Switzerland has amended its regulation of economic vis-a-vis Iraq.

The significant of sanctions also resulted from sanctions against Somalia during 1992. It was imposed by the Security Council for react the heavy conflict in this country. At that time, it restricted for all supplies such as weapons, military equipment, charcoal, especially dealing with the designated persons.[54] In this circumstance, Australia government also incorporated and implemented this sanction by complying with Australian Laws.

In additions, the targeted sanctions also happened to Iran. There were numbers of sanctions to Iranian, especially by the United States. The first sanctions were imposed by during 1979. By the sanctions, Iran faced much trouble on public health. It was not enforced under sanctions, but it caused by the sanctions. There were many reports on numbers of dead and cancer rates in that countries. It contrasts to UDHR that state that everyone shall have rights for health and standard living.[55]

Recently, there is also unilateral sanctions to Iran, it is by US itself. Donald Trump, President of the US also establishes another sanction on Iran, according to the Trump administration on January 10, 2020. This latest round of penalties by the US is set to target multiple sectors such as construction, manufacturing, textiles and mining.[56] The restrictions are a reaction to Iran's missile attack on Ain al-Assad air base in Iraq, where U.S. and coalition service members are stationed. There were no injuries in the attack, but some of its facilities were damaged.[57]

V. Conclusion and Reflections

Sanctions can be defined in many terms such as law, sociology, etc. It is the order for making people to obey the laws. Sanctions could be in term of international ones. The categories of international sanctions are economic, political, and military. Before putting the pressure to states or individuals, it usually come with diplomatic negotiations. If the negotiations are not successfully effective, there will be an establishment of economic sanctions. After that, it may extend to military conflicts. When discussing to the form of sanctions, it usually refers to the limitation powers of the Security Council. It obviously stipulates in Article. 39, 40, 41 and 42, that allowing to use sanctions. Moreover, under Article. 50, it states on responsibility of the Security Council for protection and finding the resolutions for the states who faced the crisis. This article also guarantee that human rights should not affected by sanctions. The potential evidences of abusing human rights are depended on types of sanction in operations, whether it is comprehensive or targeted sanctions.

As it clearly describes that sanctions effect on human sufferings, states must not threat or breach to the peace and have to maintain international peace and securities. There are also controversy questions for the level European Union and the Security Council. As such, the UN Security Council must include a mechanism to guarantee the safeguard of human issues. All member states should go to the stage of diplomatic negotiations as much as possible, before putting the pressure to the others. Additionally, the UN Security Council also have obligations to overlooking and monitoring for human rights, and ensure all sanctions not much abuse on humanities.

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