



# Facts & figures: sanctions



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## 61 years

Number of years Cuba has been under a U.S. trade embargo. Sanctions have failed to achieve stated U.S. foreign policy goals, while at the same time exacerbating poverty.

U.S. sanctions impacted:

5 countries in 2001

21 countries in 2021

## 27% of countries

Sanctioned in 2023\*

## 29% of global GDP

Sanctioned in 2023\*



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## SANCTIONS IN IRAN

(2006-2015)

Household income  
↓ 38%

Education spending per child  
↓ 74%

THE EFFECT OF



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\*Countries impacted by sanctions imposed by the United States, the United Nations, and/or the European Union.

Sources: Center for Economic and Policy Research, World Economics Association, "Hunger Politics: Sanctions as Siege Warfare," in Sanctions as War (2021).



# Policy Principles

## U.S. policy on sanctions should . . .



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### Resources for learning more

#### Center for Economic and Policy Research

*The human consequences of economic sanctions*

[cepr.net/report/the-human](https://cepr.net/report/the-human-consequences-of-economic-sanctions)

[-consequences-of-economic-sanctions](#)

#### Sanctions as war (book)

Stuart Davis, Haymarket, 2021

#### The history and future of U.S. sanctions policy (video)

[usip.org/events/history-and-future](https://usip.org/events/history-and-future-us-sanctions-policy)

[-us-sanctions-policy](#)

### Study the impacts

**Study the humanitarian and policy impacts of economic sanctions** and refrain from using them where they cause significant harm to ordinary people.

### Prioritize diplomacy

**Prioritize diplomacy, engaging in good-faith negotiation** rather than immediately escalating a situation through increasingly strict sanctions.

### Consider the global impact

Recognize the interconnection of global financial systems and **consider how U.S. sanctions can have significant economic impacts on non-sanctioned countries.** Work in broad coalitions of countries when imposing sanctions, rather than acting alone.

### Use sanctions as a last resort

Use sanctions as a last resort, as one drastic tool in a toolbox that includes more peaceful alternatives. **Fully fund localized, preventative peacebuilding programs** such as: community violence prevention; youth programming; protection for civil society and human rights defenders; and programs incentivizing transparency and good governance.

### Ensure sanctions are narrow

When sanctions are used, ensure they are **narrow, targeted, and have appropriate humanitarian exemptions.** Ensure humanitarian exemptions are broad enough to cover the activities and necessary services that humanitarian organizations rely on to do their work. Consider who is calling for sanctions: Is the request coming from vulnerable/affected groups? In limited cases, sanctions against individual human rights violators can reduce their legitimacy and power. Care should be taken, however, to consider how even narrow sanctions might affect opportunities for diplomacy or have broader effects as political power shifts—and whether sanctions will actually meet their stated goal.

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*For more than 100 years, MCC has provided humanitarian relief in complex locations, including in countries sanctioned by the U.S. government.*



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