

MASS DECEPTION OR REALITY: REFLECTIONS ON THE POLITICS OF SANCTIONS IN ZIMBABWE, 2000-2012

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ABSTRACT:

Discourses on the politics of sanctions continue to be lauded in Zimbabwe and even beyond, largely because of the contentious land reform programme which has sent diplomatic shockwaves across the globe. The 'Zimbabwe crisis' that ensued after 2000, and that manifested itself through economic meltdown, social misery and political instability, has also made the quintessential thrust and goals of sanctions prickly to understand to many people of different political and ideological across the divide inside Zimbabwe. This study examines the ZANU (PF) and MDC perceptions on the politics of sanctions in the light of the international (western) responses to the Fast-Track Land Reform programme in Zimbabwe. In essence, the study is addressing whether the issue of sanctions is real or is a matter of mass deception. Accordingly, the study posits that the subject of sanctions warrants serious examination as it may offer practical insights for the prospects of political reconciliation and economic reconstruction in Zimbabwe. In our conviction, the study recommends that the government, in full faith, must engage the international community in effort to restore durable peace and justice which will sustain integral development for Zimbabweans.

INTRODUCTION

Critical discourses on the politics of sanctions continue to grow both in Zimbabwe and internationally. Beginning from the time of chaotic land seizures in February 2000, Zimbabwe has been subjected to the imposition of sanctions, whether they are targeted individuals or the

country as a whole. The study posits that the subject of sanctions deserves serious interrogation as it may provide some useful insights for strategic short-term and long-term planning for the re-construction of Zimbabwe. In many ways, sanctions on contemporary Zimbabwe are unique. That uniqueness has been enunciated by Michael Register and Judy Larkin in their book *Risk Issues and Crisis* (2004) in which they posited that every national crisis or tragedy, whether it is real or simply based on mass deception, costs real value for humanity. Accordingly, it must be noted that over the ensuing years after 2000, sanctions have negatively affected the reputation of Zimbabwe in the eyes of the international community. It was mainly the Anglo-Saxon countries which agitated for the sanctions and eventually persuaded other Western nations to join and apply the embargo against Zimbabwe (Mahoso, 2011).

An understanding of the historical context is critical in order for one to appreciate the predicament in which Zimbabwe finds itself. It must be mentioned that Zimbabwe has been slapped with stringent sanctions twice in the last fifty years of its history. First and foremost, sanctions were applied against Ian Smith's White Rhodesia after he enacted the Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI) on 11 November 1965. The purpose of the UDI was to sever political and constitutional relations with the United Kingdom, the colonial mother at that time. The international community imposed sanctions on Rhodesia to force Ian Smith to grant majority rule to the Africans. This action isolated Rhodesia from the international world for the next fifteen years until 1980 when independence was attained under the black Zimbabwe African National Union, Patriotic Front (ZANU PF) government of Robert Mugabe. During the UDI era, the sanctions were maliciously crafted and applied to cripple the Rhodesian economy. The perception then was that if sanctions were properly done, white Rhodesia would be brought back to legality as a British colony (Ellert, 1993:161). However, the sanctions seemed to be very

'soft' for they were unable to stop white Rhodesia from becoming the second most industrialized nation in sub-Saharan Africa after Apartheid South Africa by the mid-1970s (Mamdani V30/n23/mahmood - mamdani / lessons -of-Zimbabwe). In fact, the Ian Smith regime was able to withstand the western onslaught through sanctions busting and import substitution to sustain white minority rule for fifteen years until 1980.

Secondly, sanctions were also imposed on Zimbabwe by Britain and United States and their allies towards the end of the 1990s as a response to the Zimbabwean involvement in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) war in August 1998. Zimbabwe's involvement in the DRC war was not well received by the West. It is interesting to note that although Zimbabwe's intervention was under the Southern African Development Community (SADC) operations, which also included Angola and Namibia, only Zimbabwe was punished for having played a leading role. However, a critical analysis of the circumstances leading to the imposition of sanctions on Zimbabwe will reveal that the issue at stake was that Zimbabwe was blocking the USA's proxies, that is, Uganda and Rwanda, from deposing Laurent Kabila and thus opening the Congolese resources to western exploitation. The Western countries like the US had vested interests in the civil war and they supported the rebels fighting against the Kabila regime in Kinshasa. Zimbabwe's involvement in the DRC war was part of the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC)'s endeavour to bring about stability in the sub-Saharan region.

It is important to note that the involvement also offered economic opportunities to several Zimbabweans who wanted to be entrepreneurs. The presence of Zimbabwe in the DRC was seen as a threat to the European economic objective especially given the fact that the Zimbabwean government encouraged its people to penetrate

the DRC market, which was believed to have been established by the Zimbabwe Defense Forces (Raftopoulos, 2009). The operation in the DRC was financially expensive and fraught with many difficulties. The distance from Harare to Kinshasa was more than 1,500km across the northern country of Zambia. War supplies had to be transported by air. In that regard, parastatals such as Air Zimbabwe and the Forestry Commission were used to ferry war materials and expertise at the expense of the taxpayers' money at home. Yet, when the DRC war was over, the proceeds of that external operation did not seem to benefit the taxpayers in Zimbabwe. Neither could such proceeds be indicated in the national fiscal records. In January 2000 Zimbabwe's then Finance Minister, Simba Makoni, admitted to Parliament that the country's military cost in the DRC had exceeded Z\$10 billion dollars, equal to US\$240 million dollars. This was being done at a time when Zimbabwe's health budget had been slashed to a point where hospitals had run out of basic drugs (Hill, 2003). Thus, the cost of being involved in this war compounded the failures of ESAP. It is against such a background that the Zimbabwean government, led by ZANU (PF)'s Robert Mugabe, was criticized of economic mismanagement. Accordingly, the study posits that sanctions in Zimbabwe have roots in such developments where the West also joined discourses on the alleged economic mismanagement and human rights abuses by the government of President Mugabe. In addition, serious opposition politics began to emerge by the end of the 1990s. In order to deal with the situation, the ZANU (PF) government crafted pieces of legislations such as the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act (2002) and Public Order and Security Act (2002), amended in 2007. These legal instruments became very repressive and confrontational to stakeholders in the democratisation processes such as students, civil servants, intellectuals and human rights organizations. Thus, the repressive and dictatorial tendencies of Mugabe's government played a part in inviting sanctions in the late 1990s. Yet, if the truth be plainly told, the contemporary sanctions

nagging Zimbabwe must be understood in light of the controversial historical land question.

As a number of historians, social scientists and politicians have concurred, the land question is of critical significance to the political history of Zimbabwe. According to Kanyekanye (2011), redressing the imbalances in the land ownership systems and its distribution patterns was a key objective of the Second *Chimurenga* (war of liberation). In order to facilitate the Lancaster House Conference agreement reached in London in December 1979, the negotiators eventually agreed to maintain a willing-seller and willing-buyer approach to land re-distribution. The approach was to occur step by step during the first ten years of Zimbabwe's independence. It must be noted that Mugabe's government adhered to the principles of the Lancaster House Conference Agreement on the nature of redistributing land, especially the former white commercial farm lands. Subsequently, at the expiry of the 10-year clause, the ZANU(PF) government further agreed with then Secretary-General of the Commonwealth of Nations, Chief Emeka Anyaoku, to postpone any radical land reform programme in order to avoid derailment of the transition to democracy in South Africa (New African, 2007).

Therefore, it is clear that the Zimbabwean government exercised enormous political and constitutional patience on the contentious land question. However, it must be noted that the Zimbabwean government was disappointed by the new stance taken by the British government in 1997, which stated that the U.K believed that it had no special responsibility to meet the costs of purchasing prime land from white commercial farmers in Zimbabwe (New African, 2007) By disavowing special responsibility, the U.K failed to fulfill its historical contractual obligations as agreed to at the Lancaster House Conference Agreement. Therefore, Zimbabwe had, what some scholars would argue, a genuine historical grievance with

the U.K regarding the land reform programme. It can be argued that this was the first form of sanctions imposed on Zimbabwe. The sanctions were further re-enforced in 1999 when the International Monetary Fund stopped budgetary support to Zimbabwe. This was in response to Zimbabwe's intervention in the DRC war and the introduction of the Fast-Track Land Reform programme in 2000, which resulted in the compulsory nationwide acquisition of white commercial farm lands.

Whether one approves or disapproves of the way the land reform programme was finally conducted in Zimbabwe, what is clear is that the situation was far more complex than the simplistic view that was taken by the Western media and some local independent newspapers. Therefore, in the light of the above historical context, a widespread perception is created that, in fact, sanctions are usually perceived as punishment for undertaking the land reform programme. This impression, that sanctions were unfairly imposed on Zimbabwe, is not only held within certain quarters in Zimbabwe but is also widespread in Africa and beyond. This impression is re-enforced by the fact that certain countries, even objectively less democratic than Zimbabwe and with objectively poorer human rights records, do not have similar sanctions imposed on them by the West. The impression created is that the West is particularly against the ZANU (PF) government and that even if ZANU-PF's Robert Mugabe achieves a fair victory in the polls, his government would remain unacceptable to the West.

The incessant discourses on the sanctions regime led by the US and Britain were quite elaborate. The Zimbabwe Democracy and Economic Recovery Act (ZIDERA) became law in December 2001. Part of the Act was a formal injunction on US officials in the international financial institutions to 'oppose and vote against any extension by the respective institution of any loan, credit or guarantee

to the government of Zimbabwe'. In autumn 2001 the IMF had declared Zimbabwe 'ineligible to use the general resources of the IMF' and removed it from the list of countries that could borrow from its Poverty and Growth Facility. In 2002, the IMF again issued a formal declaration of non-cooperation with the government of Zimbabwe and suspended all technical assistance. The US legislation also authorized then President of the USA, George W. Bush, to fund 'an independent and free press and electronic media in Zimbabwe' and to allocate US\$6 million for promoting 'democracy and good governance programmes'. A close analysis of the post-2000 sanctions politics will reveal that there was a paradigm shift in sanctions application from the isolation mode of the UDI period to a new interventionist model which was meant to punish the ZANU (PF) regime and at the same time provide assistance for the opposition political formations in Zimbabwe. Section 2 of the ZIDERA reads, 'It is the policy of the United States 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' (ZIDERA, 2001). One may question whether the US government was genuine or if was mere rhetoric and deception of the people of Zimbabwe and the rest of the international community.

Contested Perspectives

The sanctions issue has generated an emotive debate among Zimbabweans of all walks of life, different political persuasions and the international community at large. The debate hinges on the circumstances that led to the imposition of sanctions, whether sanctions affect the rank and file in general or whether they are targeted at specific individuals or institutions in Zimbabwe. In fact, so intense has been the debate that sanctions have deeply divided people both inside and outside Zimbabwe. In certain extreme cases, the sanctions issue has resulted in *jambanja* (excessive violence) among

people of different political persuasions in Zimbabwe. It is interesting to note that in the Zimbabwean context, a person's political affiliation determines one's perspective on the discourses concerning the imposition of sanctions. Broadly speaking, it will be noted that perspectives on sanctions are broadly represented by the ZANU (PF) and MDC, the two main political parties which have scrambled for political power for the last twelve years in Zimbabwe.

The ZANU (PF) Perspective

ZANU PF's perspective has been that sanctions were imposed by Britain, America and their allies as a reaction to the 2000 Fast-Track Land Reform programme which targeted and embattled the former white commercial farmers in Zimbabwe. So many sordid events took place in the process of the acquisitions of the prime land which Africans had been deprived of owning on account of colonial imbalances (Moyana, 2002). For instance, properties were burnt to render the resisting white farmers powerless and destitute. Some white farmers and black farm workers were maimed, tortured and even burnt to death by the black invaders, popularly known as *mwana vevhu* (son of the soil) in the Zimbabwean political discourses. The new invaders were the war veterans of the Second Chimurenga of the 1970s and the landless peasants from the arid rural communities. These new invaders suddenly were transformed to become ZANU (PF) political functionaries who openly asserted that the war on land was 'an unfinished business' since the days of colonial occupation in 1890. Thus, the Fast-Track Land reform programme was politicized from February 2000 to date. ZANU (PF) protagonists have argued that the sanctions were imposed to bring about 'regime change', that is, to see that President Robert Mugabe could be ousted out of office in Zimbabwe. ZANU (PF) politicians have perceived that the sanctions are illegal and constitute an act of white racist war upon Zimbabwe to perpetuate white supremacy in a country which has been sovereign

since 1980. The effects of the diabolic sanctions have not left anyone destitute in the country. As posited by Dr Tafataona Mahoso, the ZANU (PF) ideologist and strategist:

'The illegal sanctions are a cowardly substitute for illegal military invasion and they must be understood as a heightened form of comprehensive devaluation of the entire economy intended to facilitate foreign corporate cannibalism, foreign corporate takeover of the assets of the nation devalued by sanctions. The milder forms of devaluation attempted through structural adjustment failed to produce the desired economic and political results, as happened in Zambia in 1991. So sanctions followed Zimbabwe's abandonment of structural adjustment in 2001'. (Sunday Mail, March 20-26, 2011).

Thus, according to ZANU (PF) rhetoric, the 2000 Fast-Track Land Reform programme, was necessitated by the fact that Britain had reneged on the promises it had made during the Lancaster House Agreement of 1979. That there was now need for a constitutional review on the issue was unquestionable. The social realities of independent Zimbabwe remained embedded in an earlier historical period in which some 6 000 white farmers owned 15.5 million hectares of prime land, 39 per cent of the land in the country, while about 4.5 million farmers (a million households) in 'communal areas' were left to subsist on 16.4 million hectares of the most arid land, to which they had been removed or confined by a century of colonial rule. In the middle, were 8 500 small- scale black farmers on about 1.4 million hectares of land (Mamdani, pg. 2) According to ZANU (PF) thinking, this was not a sustainable arrangement in a country which had been won through a protracted armed struggle supported by a large peasantry in which the land issue occupied a centre stage. The Lancaster House Conference provisions' inadequacies on the de-

colonization of land meant that the land issue remained the focus of politics almost twenty years later in independent Zimbabwe.

The politics of land relations and land reform in independent Zimbabwe has been well articulated by historians and social scientists like Henry Moyana (2002), Lloyd Sachikonye (2005) and Sam Moyo (2007). The British and Americans, so the argument goes, were not happy that their kith and kin had lost prime commercial farmlands as a result of the Land Reform Programme which started in from February 2000 in Zimbabwe. The ZANU (PF) functionaries further argued that the Fast-Track Land Reform programme was necessitated by the fact that the former white commercial farmers had failed to relinquish land to the landless blacks in post-independent Zimbabwe under the willing-buyer and willing-seller basis as stipulated in the Lancaster House Conference Agreement (1979). Therefore, ZANU (PF) politicians have consistently believed that the sanctions were meant to force the ZANU (PF) government to reverse the Fast-Track Land Reform Programme which was designed and undertaken to empower the landless black people through forceful acquisition and re-settlement. Thus, the ZANU (PF) argument was that the British and Americans wanted to remove a legitimate government from power to protect white interests by keeping their white kith and kin on prime farmlands and other investments in the country. The ZANU (PF) party viewed the imposition of sanctions as an attempt to re-colonise Zimbabwe through an arduous process leading to regime change. It was believed that the sanctions were invited by the MDC party as a tool to expedite regime change in Zimbabwe.

It must be noted that calling sanctions as ‘targeted sanctions’ was viewed by ZANU (PF) functionaries just as a way of camouflaging. ZANU PF party believes that the sanctions are targeted at all Zimbabweans, the living and also the unborn. Finally, there is a strong conviction among ZANU (PF) politicians that the sanctions are

being bankrolled out in response to Zimbabwe's independent foreign policy and its land redistribution with the aim of crippling the economy so that the ensuing economic chaos could be attributed to land reform itself. In this regard, President Mugabe further sees the sanctions as a British agenda to challenge Zimbabwe's sovereignty. Accordingly, Mugabe sought to use the sanctions as a strong political weapon to canvas for support in preparation for the 28 March 2008 Presidential and Parliamentary elections. In this consideration, ZANU (PF) asserted that sanctions are neither targeted nor smart; instead they are punitive and illegal because they were deliberately crafted in Britain, America, Europe and Eurasia. For example, it was the USA government which crafted the abhorrent Zimbabwe Democracy and Economic Recovery Act (ZIDERA) which was signed in December 2001 by George W. Bush. ZIDERA specifically directs the Secretary of Treasury to instruct the US Executive Director to each international financial institution to oppose and vote against any loan credit or guarantee to Zimbabwe or cancellation or reduction of indebtedness. ZIDERA says ' Until the President makes the certification described in sub-section(d) and except as may be required to meet basic human needs or for good governance, the Secretary of the Treasury shall instruct the US executive director to each international institution to oppose or vote against any extension by the respective institutions of any loan, credit or guarantee to the Government of Zimbabwe or any cancellation or reduction indebtedness owed by the Government of Zimbabwe to the United States or any international financial institution'. This targeted all Zimbabweans including the inclusive Government obtaining now. ZIDERA has also interfered with the RTGS transaction payments for diamonds dug in the rich Marange diamonds field in the eastern Zimbabwean province of Manicaland meant to pay civil servants and boost Government revenues. The argument is that the operations of diamonds are not transparent and so the EU has imposed sanctions on the Zimbabwean diamond companies.

For President Mugabe, the sanctions are meant to topple the indigenous Zimbabweans from the pedestal of freedom and independence won through the armed struggle. In fact, during the heat of the armed struggle in the 1970s, Robert Mugabe as a guerilla leader was on record in claiming that 'the justice of our cause is the justice of our gun'. The MDC party further went as far as South Africa, Mozambique accosting to impose fuel, electricity and trade sanctions against Zimbabwe all on behalf of Britain and her allies. Since then these extensive sanctions by Europe and America have been renewed yearly all in a bid to break the back of Zimbabweans by crippling their economy and destabilizing their independence. Sanctions have been a vehicle by the hostile Western nations to cause unprecedented misery in the country hoping to build people disaffection with ZANU (PF) and then to mobilise for the MDC party. In fact, President Mugabe saw Tony Blair, the former British Labour Prime Minister, as the creator of the MDC party. On the 4th of June 2004, Tony Blair openly told the House of Commons that the British government 'works closely with the opposition MDC on measures that (the British Government) takes in respect of Zimbabwe.' The British position is also affirmed by the US President, Barack Obama, who maintained that the internal policies of Zimbabwe 'pose a continuing unusual and extraordinary threat to the foreign policy of the United States'. Nevertheless, Mugabe's government has not been cowed. Instead, Mugabe used this as a weapon to canvass support the world including SADC and called for the immediate removal of the obnoxious sanctions (ZANU PF: The Peoples' Manifesto, 2008 :31) For instance, on 2 March 2011, President Mugabe launched the ant-sanction petition which had been signed by more than two million ordinary people across the country.

The MDC Perspective

The sanctions have been viewed by the MDC party as a way of trying to facilitate political change in the form of 'regime change' in Zimbabwe. The MDC politicians have widely accused the ZANU (PF) party of mismanagement of the national economy, breakdown of the rule of law, abuse of human rights and deepening of social alienation in Zimbabwe. The MDC politicians have argued that sanctions constitute the best approach to bringing about good governance and democratic space in Zimbabwe. The MDC party and different other civic organizations are of the opinion that the sanctions were a result of the breakdown of law that accompanied the land invasions of early 2000. Initially, the business community took an indifferent attitude towards the imposition of sanctions on Zimbabwe. The business leaders initially thought that the sanctions were purely political in nature and as such there was no way they were going to harm business. The propaganda among Western governments, journalists and scholars is that there have been no broad-based, economic sanctions imposed upon Zimbabwe.

The MDC's logic of argument was based on the reckless modalities in which ZANU PF had carried out the land reform programme since 2000. For instance, the land invasions through *jambanja* (coercive force) caused several white farmers to lose their farming properties without compensation and forced some of them to live as *émigrés* abroad despite the fact that they are Zimbabwean citizens by birth. In addition, MDC politicians singled out the manner in which ZANU (PF) manipulated the constitutional reform process and referendum in 2000 and later violently conducted the 2002, 2005 and 2008 parliamentary and presidential elections. Notably, the June 2008 Presidential "re-run" elections sent diplomatic shock waves across the globe due to the unprecedented extent of *jambanja* that was caused by ZANU (PF) militias and which came to engulf the whole country. Whilst ZANU PF was blaming Zimbabwean social, economic

and political ills on the sanctions, the MDC party was of the view that the challenges confronted by the country were a result of President Mugabe's aggressive policies which were undertaken to justify the land reform programme at any price.

It must also be mentioned that the MDC party perceived sanctions as targeted at specific and selected individuals and firms which propped up the ZANU (PF) regime in Zimbabwe. The sanctions were perceived to have originated from land reform exercise which came to solely benefit the top ZANU (PF) politicians, top military officers, top police officers, top civil servants, ambassadors and selected war veterans. Those ordinary landless peasants, who got land, were lucky to be parceled with mere pieces of less fertile land in order to justify the whole reform gimmick. Thus, the perception of the MDC politicians was that sanctions did not affect the rank and file because sanctions were believed to be specific and well-calculated against certain individuals and institutions aligned to President Mugabe's regime. Given that the sanctions were only targeted, the MDC politicians posited that sanctions had very limited impact on ordinary people because they were aimed at only punishing or pushing for regime change in Zimbabwe. The MDC politicians further argued that the sanctions were being manipulated by the ZANU (PF) politicians to divert the people's attention from the fundamental bread and butter issues and from causes of the economic meltdown which hinged on re-distribution of land grabbed from the white commercial farmers were parceled out to thousands of indigenous Zimbabweans. In fact, the MDC party has been very sympathetic to the former white commercial farmers in Zimbabwe, so logically its perspective was in tandem with the Western position on sanctions in Zimbabwe. It must be noted, that in principle, the British and Americans imposed arms, financial and other forms of economic embargoes on Zimbabwe to cripple its participation in the DRC war. Zimbabwe was perceived to be following an aggressive foreign policy

to undo a neighbor's sovereignty, that of the DRC. The US position was aptly summarised in Section 4 of ZIDERA which noted that

'Through economic mismanagement, undemocratic practices, the costly deployment of troops to the Democratic Republic of Congo, the government of Zimbabwe has rendered itself ineligible to participate in International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (World Bank) and International Monetary Fund [IMF] which would otherwise be providing substantial resources to assist in the recovery and modernization of Zimbabwe's economy. The people of Zimbabwe have thus been denied the economic and democratic benefit envisioned by the donors to such programmes, including the United States'.

However, there were some US Congressmen who were opposed to the Bill even before it was signed into law in December 2001 to effect regime change in Zimbabwe. For example, Cynthia McKinney, one of the few African-American politicians in the US Congress at the time, spoke against the Bill. In fact, McKinney noted 'Can anyone explain how the people in question who now have the land in question in Zimbabwe got title to the land? These sanctions are against land reform, nothing more. This is an act in defense of white privilege, by white supremacists.' (http://maravi.blogspot.com/2007/05/zimbabwe-democracy-and-economic_24.html.)

The impact of sanctions: Some reflections

It is instructive to state that Zimbabwe has been under sanctions by the West since the late 1990s to the present. While there has been a slight relaxation of sanctions in the post-GNU since February 2009, the bulk of the sanctions remain in place and it is worthwhile to examine their impact on the country. Though people of different political

persuasions hold different views on the legality and or illegality of sanctions in Zimbabwe, it is indisputable that they have had a negative impact on the economy. There is no doubt that the sanctions are hurting every Zimbabwean but of course not in the manner ZANU (PF) politicians have propagated in the last decade.

As observed by Huni (Sunday Mail 5-11, June, 2011) the sanctions have widely been condemned from many quarters including SADC and the African Union(AU) for causing untold suffering among Zimbabweans and for undermining economic recovery efforts while crippling the private sector by denying it access to international credit. Sanctions have broken the economy and made the ordinary people to endure a lot of unprecedented hardships countrywide. When, for instance, the Zimbabwe electricity Supply Authority (ZESA) fails to fund viable power projects and people have been under load-shedding: who is affected? Everybody suffers. Specifically, the rank and files who cannot afford to buy coal or electricity generators bear the brunt of the ZESA's failure to distribute electricity. In addition, business is acutely affected as well. It should be noted that most parastatals were actually incapacitated due to electrical outages and so have not rendered the desired services to make the economy tick. Therefore, one can argue that the generality of the Zimbabwean population has been severely affected by these sanctions.

In that context it should be noted that President Robert Mugabe appealed to Britain and her western allies to remove the sanctions citing and emphasizing the fact that they had caused untold suffering to the people of Zimbabwe. In this regard, at one time President Mugabe embarked on an Anti-Sanctions campaign which was meant to lobby for the removal of sanctions by the international community. People were made to sign the Anti-Sanction forms which were distributed countrywide. Those anti-sanction forms were availed

to civil servants in their offices, schools, colleges and universities. In addition, the forms were sent to embassies across the globe for people in the diaspora to sign as a patriotic gesture for the survival of Zimbabwe as a sovereign country. Nevertheless, many people inside and outside Zimbabwe perceived the strategy as a very desperate move aimed at canvassing political support for the beleaguered ZANU (PF) party in Zimbabwe.

It should also be noted that the sanctions have polarized the political situation, resulting in the creation of a highly unstable macroeconomic environment in Zimbabwe. This has ultimately caused a social and economic meltdown. It is this economic decline and the collapse of the democratic process, among other factors, greatly affected the way people had to vote particularly in the 2005 and 2008 Presidential elections and later during the one-candidate Presidential re-run election in June 2008. Those elections became a vote of no confidence for the ZANU (PF) party. Those elections came at a time when the relationship between Zimbabwe and the West were at their lowest ebb (Eustinah, 2011). In fact, ZIDERA talks of targeting sanctions on individuals, but the truth is that the business firms that deal with the commercial life line of Zimbabwe are targeted too. The result has been the mass retrenchment of workers, that is, job losses due to the effects of sanctions that are hurting Zimbabwe. In a situation where jobs are lost through this way, or where jobs are simply scarce because the economic environment is unsecured for foreign firms to operate, there is social frustration and political instability in society. It is only safe for someone who has never worked in life who has no idea how valuable employment is. The stark reality is that no industry or sector, private or public, has been spared from the scourge of sanctions. The social safety-nets that used to cushion the society's vulnerable groups have consequential fallen off, leaving them precariously exposed to harsh economic environment in Zimbabwe. A convincing outcome of the sub-human

conditions brought about by sanctions has been the consequent air-lifting of white pensioners of the British origin at the peak of the inflationary era during the infamous 2008 fiscal year.

In addition, the World Bank used to offer subsidized housing materials for housing construction. Nevertheless, it has stopped as a result of the politics of sanctions. The World Bank has funded maternity, sanitation, power projects, womens' rights to almost everything in Zimbabwe and most developing countries. Our criticism of the World Bank is that it has generated odious debt while the IMF is often cited as popping up with finance to prop up poor economies in the developing world. The IMF is meant to supply emergency funding to countries in need of such assistance. The World Bank and IMF have also afforded debt relief to several countries such as Tanzania and Burkina Faso. A 2004 World Bank Report shows that poverty reduction doubled with debt relief. But, ZIDERA prevents this debt relief and even stifles IFC interventions in the Zimbabwean private sector. More often than not, academics argue that there is no debt that is not payable on the basis that any country, except Zimbabwe under ZIDERA, can re-define its debt through the IMF and World Bank. ZIDERA thus acts as frontal machinery for championing sanctions to all Zimbabweans living and those to be born! The use of a unilateral sanctions list heightens country risk and invariably increases the costs of borrowing, beyond targeted companies and individuals. Market price risk and having your country on the US and EU sanctions list certainly increases risk beyond internal security risk, thus scaring both multilateral and private equity funds from Zimbabwe. The queue to borrow at rates over 20 per cent per annum in Zimbabwe points to a dangerous lack of competitiveness that is being foisted on business, invariably forcing them to seek a large margin in excess of normal global margins of 5 per cent seen in the West. Only in the last year some businesses in Zimbabwe can secure letters of credit with an EU country. This remains a difficulty with

banks such as HSBC refusing currently to accept Zimbabwean traveler's cheques as per instruction from the head office in London. The CZI President experienced this directly in Beijing.

AGOA did not benefit Zimbabwe. In fact, there are such countries such as Botswana which did not have features that qualified them but negotiated entry and accessed the benefits of AGOA, while Zimbabwe failed largely due to the extension of sanctions imposed by the US (Sunday Mail, 20 March 2011). The ZEDERA Bill of 2001 sought to deny the government of Zimbabwe any financial assistance by international organizations. IMF and the World Bank were asked not to extend loans, credit or guarantees for 'Reconstruction and Development'. The major reason was that Zimbabwe had restored people's sacred birthright through land reform.

Moreover, it must be noted that the pangs of the reality of the sanctions are much noticeable in the rural areas in Zimbabwe. Rural peasants became the most vulnerable class of people who have borne the brunt of the sanctions. This is true when evaluated in the light of the status and position of women, children and widows living with HIV and AIDS disease in society. Clearly, these groups form a trinity of the most marginalised people in Zimbabwe. For instance, these people suffered most in the sense that they were deprived of the right to proper education, the right to a sound health delivery system and the right to decent shelter. They literally experienced the conditions of destitution and homelessness due to an ailing economy which was and continues to be sanction-induced. It can therefore be asserted that the United States legislators aimed at creating an economically-deprived population which could be manipulated to remove ZANU PF off from political power through its much-touted policy of 'regime change'.

It is important to note that while the Western world and the United States of America have declared that the sanctions do not affect ordinary Zimbabweans but few individuals and companies aligned to ZANU (PF), the wording of ZIDERA (2001), Canada's Special Economic Measures (Zimbabwe) Regulations or the European Union (Zimbabwe) (Financial Sanctions) Regulations is very specific on the objectives of sanctions on Zimbabwe. Section 6 of ZIDERA specifies that sanctions are targeted at individuals responsible for the deliberate breakdown of the rule of law, political motivated violence and intimidation in Zimbabwe. These individuals are subjected to travel bans and economic sanctions. The EU and Canada regulations are even more specific about military trade with Zimbabwe. That the government fails to have access to privileges at the IMF and Multilateral Development Banks is because of the deleterious sanctions which are being used as a form of punishment or, perhaps, a form of neo-colonialism by the western nations. Section 49(a) of ZIDERA articulates the circumstances that led to the enactment of this law. Yet, our critical assessment would question the reason why the US government has maintained ZIDERA if it has no intention to stifle efforts by Zimbabwe to deal with its debt and secure funding for development.

According to Kanyekanye (2011) of the Zimbabwe Confederation of Industries, Zimbabwe has failed to access the international debt market largely because of the sanctions. Zimbabwe only gets funding from the Africa Development Bank, South African Development Bank and China Development Bank. Industry needs a lot of money to be revived but since ZIDERA formalized the sanctions which have effectively blocked access to debt relief and balance of payment support from international financial institutions, nothing is good for Zimbabwe. Furthermore, the EU and other Western nations have also imposed their own forms of sanctions (Kanyekanye, 2011) Several international financiers have always maintained that the

Zimbabwean government in Harare should sort out the political issues first in order to get funding. Even the MDC's leader, Morgan Tsvangirai, acknowledged this at an opening speech on 8 March 2011 at the European Investment Conference. Tsvangirai conceded the need to remove sanctions while pointing out the difficulties faced in this endeavor. The Zimbabwean Minister of Finance, Tendai Biti, echoed the same sentiments at the same conference when he indicated the stark reality that Zimbabwe is one of the few countries that are driving growth exclusively on domestic resources, that is, without overseas development assistance (The Herald, 2011). That sanctions are harming everyone is also tainted by the fact that Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) abandoned projects they were setting up in most rural areas before their completion at the height of the Zimbabwe crisis in 2008. It is reality that the 'targeted' sanctions are harming the ordinary people since the so-called 'targeted' individuals themselves in society do own very big companies and other properties in Zimbabwe today. ZANU (PF) party has used some of its own parastatals and companies, state enterprises, such as ZISCOSTEEL, and ZUPCO, to fund activities which advance President Mugabe's hold onto power in Zimbabwe.

It has been argued that it is not the intention of those who imposed the sanctions on Zimbabwe 'to see innocent Zimbabweans suffer, rather the pain we go through is the same pain that we go through when a syringe enters your buttocks to enable medicine to target disease-causing organisms residing within the body!' ([File://G:\Sanctions on Zimbabwe](#), 2011) Thus, the problem with sanctions is that the ordinary people are victims who suffer problems similar to under the proverbial fight of elephants. With the advent of the Government of National Unity (GNU) in February 2009, it was hoped that the sanctions were going to be removed once and for all. However, the sanctions have remained in place lock, stock and barrel because their Western sponsors argue that the circumstances that

necessitated them in the first place have not changed significantly and that there is little improvement on the ground in Zimbabwe. In the Western view, the continued violence, breakdown of rule of law, harassment of opposition political supporters, treason trials, shrinking of democratic space do not seem to warrant the scrapping off of the sanctions in Zimbabwe. On the question of the effectiveness of the so-called targeted sanctions, one is compelled to argue that even if ZANU (PF)'s behavior has not significantly changed, there are indications that sanctions have done enough to limit the economic activity of ZANU PF-linked enterprises, eventually forcing them to enter into a GNU with the two MDC formations. This is critical in that it has limited the ability of ZANU PF to fund its activities, which have at times translated into bloody efforts meant to exterminate political opponents, especially of the two MDC formations.

This brings us to the issue of whether sanctions are evil or otherwise. Again, the answer is circumstantial and reflects, in a way, the nature of the contested perspectives on sanctions on the ZANU (PF) and MDC political divide in Zimbabwe. On one hand, one major website source for the study had the audacity to declare, 'So to ZANU PF plunderers sanctions are evil, but those of us who wish to see the country's wealth exploited transparently and to the benefit of everyone we say that they are helping to reduce plunder. In the face of rogue elements going about killing people and maiming defenseless people simply to cling onto power there are only two options; either to do something or to do nothing. In doing something there are two options; either to confront the regime militarily or use other means to weaken it' ([File://G:\Sanctions on Zimbabwe](#), 2011). Nevertheless, as happened during the Ian Smith regime, ZANU PF has put in place elaborate sanctions-bursting mechanisms that involve China. Though ZANU PF-linked enterprises have failed to benefit from transactions with the Western block, they have been able to use Chinese banks to access financial assistance and also to clear money

acquired from diamond sales. For that reason, the debilitating effects of sanctions have been limited to some extent and the ZANU party has been able to soldier on, sailing through the turbulent political terrain in Zimbabwe.

In order to deceive the world, the Western countries and their US counterparts have deliberately employed massive propaganda everywhere. Benito Mussolini, the Fascist Italian leader, would often say, if you have to lie, you should tell repeated lies, and not only repeated lies, but tell very big lies in order to convince the masses. The Western agenda is to try to minimize the impact of sanctions in order to convince the world that all the challenges Zimbabwe is facing are interrelated due to mismanagement, bad governance, lawlessness and the folly of the land reform programme since 2000. Whilst the ZANU (PF) government was to blame for Zimbabwe's predicament, the sanctions, which, according to their western sponsors and supporters were meant to stop the rot by instigating regime change through the establishment of a democratic regime, they have had no small part in exacerbating the Zimbabwean meltdown. This, then, heightens the suspicion held in some quarters that to say that sanctions are targeted is nothing but fallacious as the impact reverberates across the economy and the different sociological profiles of the Zimbabwean society at large. As noted by Mahoso (2011), 'Supporters of the view that sanctions are minor inconveniences that punish a few powerful leaders expect us to believe that the leaders of major powers are simpletons who devise ineffective sanctions policies and that they persist despite their sanctions playing into the hands of the sanctions targets.' That there was a lot of deception in the sanctions world view, particularly that the sanctions have not torpedoed the Zimbabwean economy 'to the deep end,' was reflected in the legislation proposed by US Senator James Inhofe. The title of the Bill, the 'Zimbabwe Sanctions Repeal Act' of 2010, clearly acknowledges that, indeed, Zimbabwe was under sanctions which adversely affected the

economy. The Bill noted that there was need to repeal the sanctions in order to restore fully the economy of Zimbabwe since the MDC party was now part of the Zimbabwe's GNU, an Inclusive Government which is currently running Zimbabwe. The implication of Inhofe's Bill is that sanctions have negatively affected the Zimbabwean economy hence economic recovery necessitated their repeal. However, the US maintains that the sanctions must remain in place in order to force President Mugabe to embrace the SADC election roadmap and to commit him to relinquish power to a successor (The Sunday Mail, 5-11 June 2011).

In the Sunday Mail of March 20-26, 2011, Mahoso posited that sanctions worsened the de-valuation of African lives through war and sanctions. In particular, sanctions have led to the devaluation of the things Africans need to sustain a normal life. Their job skills and labour power are devalued especially when they try to go to other countries in order to run away from hyperinflation, economic depression, the collapse of wages and diminishing livelihoods. But even those who stay put and remain loyal and patriotic have their skills and labour drastically devalued. Today, some three years after the formation of the Inclusive Government and the glowing promises of a quick improvement in wages and work conditions, civil servants are still grossly underpaid in Zimbabwe. The fact that their wages and salaries are still so low is a lingering reflection of the devaluation that emanates from the ugly effects of the illegal sanctions in Zimbabwe. The fact is that the low paid civil servants continue to soldier on, working patriotically together with some officials in that Inclusive Government lobbying at the IMF and World Bank to scrap sanctions reflect the long-term impact of the sanctions that are nagging Zimbabwe. But one may ask: why is the business corporate world almost silent about the condemnation of illegal sanctions inside Zimbabwe? It would seem that the business fraternity is taking a liberal position. In the minds of some of the people in business, it was

up to politicians to fight against sanctions because sanctions are political in terms of their origins. So, in the past twelve years, most business organizations have viewed sanctions as an exclusively political matter and thus ought to be tackled by politicians. It is a paradox that almost all the Anglo-Saxon countries still have huge investment while keeping the illegal sanctions regime intact in Zimbabwe. The devaluation of the Zimbabwe currency, which escalated with the structural adjustment, helped to enrich those with foreign currency. So also the devaluation of all the remaining assets of Zimbabwe by maintaining sanctions helps foreigners to weaken the resolve to insist on full control of Zimbabwe's economy. As one eminent politician in the Zimbabwe government has conceded, 'If we are made desperate for credit, for machinery, for skills which left the country due to sanctions, we become easier to manipulate. We settle for less than our real value for small investment being offered. In fact, we lose the proper sense of what we are worth and even the method of determining our real value' (The Herald, 2011). As a result, the sanctions have affected almost every aspect of Zimbabwean life, that is, cultural, legal, social, political and economic (mining, industry, manufacturing, commerce, agriculture and tourism).

Nevertheless, it must be noted that in the post GNU period after February 2009, there has been a gradual relaxation of sanctions. A number of supermarkets and individual shops whose shelves were empty or stocked with chunks and tissue paper, especially in African dominated areas, are now fully stocked and the shortage of commodities is now a thing of the past. The NGOs are once more on the ground doing relief, advocacy and developmental work in the country. Industry, agriculture and mining are beginning to tick and slowly showing signs of recovery from the sanctions-related debilitating economic crunch. Perhaps, it is only in the post-GNU era that sustained debate may be conceded on whether the sanctions are targeted or not. What is real for sure is that a number of the assets of

highly placed officials who are linked to ZANU (PF)'s Robert Mugabe continue to be frozen abroad, and with travel restrictions remain intact, among others. This, in our view, does not affect the ordinary men in the streets and rural communities at large. Ordinary citizens do not have assets abroad, they do not even go for shopping trips or sprees overseas; they get medication at home and their children attend ordinary schools inside Zimbabwe. Nevertheless, a few ordinary Zimbabweans can now afford to drive *sikorokoros* (second hand cars), which was unheard of at the height of the Zimbabwe crisis around 2008. Today, the existential landscape has dramatically shifted, with the chiefs crying the most for a variety of reasons and ordinary people able to access basic commodities in the open market hitherto unknown at the zenith of the Zimbabwe crisis.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Zimbabwe's current economic woes are sanctions-related, irrespective of the initial circumstances that led to their instigation. In our trajectory, the country underwent stringent sanctions at critical phases of her existence after 1965. First and foremost, the study noted that sanctions were applied when Ian Smith enacted UDI between 1965 and 1980. Secondly, independent Zimbabwe under President Mugabe has been slapped with sanctions due to a number of factors. It should also be noted that sanctions were first imposed on post-independent Zimbabwe towards the end of the end of the 1990s. This was a result of Zimbabwe's participation in the Democratic Republic of Congo's civil war. Secondly, sanctions were vigorously imposed on a country due to ZANU (PF) which had embarked on a Fast-Track Land Reform after February 2000. At any rate, the dynamics of the resettlement patterns which caused sanctions to be heavily contested in terms of their essence, thrust, goals and overall impact inside Zimbabwe.

A significant number of scholars perceive sanctions as a manifestation of neo-colonial abuse by the western nations, particularly Great Britain and the US, who tend to dominate the Third World countries. When this is viewed against the western indifference about the much more catastrophic Rwanda genocide, when western NGOs pulled out and no one intervened, the justification that this land reform in Zimbabwe has to do with human rights is often doubted in a pan African lens. This heightens the suspicion that Zimbabweans are being punished for undertaking the gigantic land reform programme which was meant to correct the past historical imbalances brought by account of colonialism. This may appear to be an erroneous perception but it is a reality with a large following in the contemporary Zimbabwean discourses. Nevertheless, this study established that the West, together with the internal civic groups, have viewed sanctions as an attempt to force the ZANU(PF) party to respect the rule of law, respect human rights and uphold democratic values. They argued that President Mugabe's leadership was becoming too repressive and intolerant towards its citizens.

The European Union's concern that its sanctions against Zimbabwe have been motivated by a sincere concern for the human rights of the Zimbabweans is thus questionable. Sanctions have been used as a threat for economic collapse and socio-economic deprivation to make ordinary Zimbabweans not support President Robert Mugabe's government. The ulterior motive has been to bring about the much-touted notions of 'regime change' in Zimbabwe. Therefore, sanctions are carefully calculated string of measures meant to continue neo-colonialism and sustain globalisation. In the light of this assessment, sanctions are meant to intimidate and thereby stopping Zimbabwe, as a sovereign nation, from pursuing Article 2 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and Article 29 of the African Charter on Human Rights and People's Rights (The Herald, 2011).

While a number of conclusions can be drawn from the foregoing, there is one point which is indisputable: that the sanctions are there for real. That they were targeted at specific individuals and firms is mere rhetoric, fallacious and a mirage. Even ordinary Zimbabwean citizens have been caught in the crossfire. The commonly held view that the sanctions are smart and do not affect the rank and file of Zimbabweans is pre-meditated propaganda being deliberately churned by the Western nations together with some liberal-minded and independent local media, the purpose is to deceive the local and international community by minimizing the damage the sanctions have caused to the Zimbabwean society. Of course, this is notwithstanding the post-GNU developments after 2009 which have resulted in a softening of attitudes by the West, especially in issues that involve humanitarian assistance.

The study, however, indicated that the 'Zimbabwe crisis' cannot be explained in the context of sanctions alone. Other factors will need to be removed from under the carpet as well. It is also a truism that if the sanctions were meant to resolve a political dispute emanating from governance issues, there is no doubt that Zimbabwe is slowly but painstakingly moving towards democratic reforms which may result in free and fair election in the near-foreseeable future. The United Nations' Committee on Economic Social and Cultural Rights has been quite clear in showing that sanctions have violated human rights. Sanctions have severely interfered with the functioning of basic health and education systems and have undermined the right to proper work. Despite all that has been articulated, it should be asserted that sanctions have violated Zimbabwe's human rights record. In fact, sanctions are real, not a myth, as is witnessed by the consequent trail of economic ruin and social disengagement in Zimbabwe. Against this background, there is an irony concerning ZIDERA. It claims to be legally constituted to assist Zimbabweans in achieving equitable economic growth, yet at

the same time, this sanction law denies the Government of Zimbabwe access to the financial assistance to enhance and sustain economic growth that has the potential to benefit the majority of Zimbabweans. By barring the Government of Zimbabwe access to such financial institutions, ZIDERA is impeding the road to economic recovery. It is prudent that the study concludes by suggesting some recommendations, thus:

- Zimbabwean political parties are called upon to work together to restore the rule of law and agree on a roadmap for a transition to democratic governance.
- The Zimbabwean Government needs to properly constitute a broad-based organ for national healing and reconciliation as the basis of durable peace and justice.
- The Zimbabwean government should engage the International Community in the process of its economic reconstruction.

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