

PARADOXES IN THE 'SANCTIONS DISCOURSE' IN ZIMBABWE: A CRITICAL REFLECTION

Dennis MASAHA

Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies, Great Zimbabwe University

ABSTRACT Partners in Zimbabwe's Global Political Agreement (GPA), a legal instrument regarding the formation of a government of national unity (GNU) between Zimbabwe's political contestants, MDC-T, ZANU (PF), and MDC-M, after the internationally condemned June 27, 2008 presidential run-off elections between the MDC-T and ZANU (PF) presidential candidates, have openly disagreed on their perception of the targeted sanctions that were imposed on some members, institutions, and business organizations owned by or associated with the pre-GNU government by the USA and EU in 2001 and 2002, respectively, as a direct response to the incumbent government's alleged slide into, among other things, authoritarian rule, lawlessness, misgovernance, and violations of human and people's rights. ZANU (PF) has always blamed MDC for calling on Western governments and the USA to impose sanctions on the pre-GNU government to weaken it and effect regime change. This paper seeks to examine the seemingly paradoxical sanctions discourse within Zimbabwe's political establishment where targeted sanctions are seen both as an impediment not only to economic growth but also to political stability and, at the same time, as a convenient tool to garner political mileage by both ZANU (PF) and MDC formations.

Key Words: Targeted sanctions; Zimbabwe; MDC; ZANU (PF).

INTRODUCTION

Paradoxical interpretations, controversies, and misrepresentations surround the concept of targeted sanctions in the context of the shaky inclusive government between Zimbabwe's political parties, namely the Movement for Democratic Change-Tsvangirai (MDC-T), Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front ZANU (PF), and the smaller faction of MDC, the Movement for Democratic Change-Ncube (MDC-N).⁽¹⁾ While the MDC factions see sanctions on Zimbabwe as precisely targeted sanctions that are meant to keep in check members and sympathizers of the former ruling party, ZANU (PF), as well as institutions, and business organizations that are perceived to be, among other things, encouraging the violation of human and property rights, promotion of undemocratic tendencies, lack of rule of law, and suppression of the press and freedom of speech and association, ZANU (PF) tends to see them as a Western strategy to effect regime change by weakening ZANU (PF) and, at the same time, strengthening the Western-backed MDC via such unorthodox means.

In light of this, there is no consensus between the political parties in Zimbabwe's inclusive government on the authenticity or the exact nature of the targeted sanctions that were imposed on members of the former Zimbabwean government, institutions, and business organizations that were seen as supporting the then gov-

ernment's unacceptable behavior. What has perhaps surprised ZANU (PF) and confirmed their fears that the former opposition factions of the MDC have called for sanctions from their alleged Western backers to weaken ZANU (PF) and, thus, to effect regime change, is the unanimity of their understanding of the sanctions as solely targeted at those individuals, institutions, and business organizations that have been identified as alleged promoters of human and people's rights violations and undemocratic tendencies since the turn of the millennium.

Thus, this supposed agreement in terms of the perception of targeted sanctions between the USA and EU nations that imposed sanctions on Zimbabwe on the one hand, and the MDC on the other, generates a number of possibilities for the role of the former opposition party in the imposition of sanctions on some members of the former ZANU (PF) government, their business interests, and associates. For the USA and EU, the targeted sanctions are simply meant to stop those people who can use their resources and influence to undermine human and people's rights and democratic rule and bring about state fragility. In this regard, targeted sanctions are seen as a means to a good end. On the other hand, the pre-GNU government blamed, and continues to blame, the economic meltdown that characterized the pre-GNU period on external meddling in the internal affairs of Zimbabwe through, among other causes, the targeted sanctions regime.

However, it is rather too simplistic to blame Zimbabwe's economic meltdown on external meddling (Sachikonye, 2002; Clemens & Moss, 2005), not least because the government has, over the past decade, made a number of economic and political policy errors that largely account for the present state of Zimbabwe's economy and political crisis. Such self-serving explanations for Zimbabwe's poor economic condition have blighted rational dissection and discussion of the real causes of the poor economic and political situation in the country. In light of this, it is simply not possible to blame Zimbabwe's poor economic showing and political crisis (Bond, 2001; Raftopoulos, 2009) solely on targeted sanctions, because the targeted sanctions did not impose a total trade embargo on all forms of trade between Zimbabwe and the USA and EU but only targeted those individuals, institutions, and business organizations that were, and still are, perceived to be directly or indirectly involved in creating and fostering undemocratic governance, the lack of the rule of law, violations of human and property rights, and violent repression of various human freedoms.

While the pre-GNU government would want to lay blame for Zimbabwe's unprecedented economic situation since 2000 on sanctions, the USA and EU countries blame it on economic and political misgovernance. Interestingly, perceptions of the causes of the pre-GNU economic and political situation of the former opposition political parties (that is, the MDC) are in agreement with the USA and EU regarding their understanding of Zimbabwe's economic and political situation.

Hondora (2009) argued that even though Zimbabwe's economic crisis during the pre-GNU period can be blamed, in part, on the government's questionable economic and political policies, quite significantly, the USA and EU's blockade of Zimbabwe from accessing international capital markets, primarily because of their firm decision power in world economics, has severely damaged a once-

promising economy in Southern Africa. The failure of Zimbabwe to obtain finance or credit facilities from international lenders to inject into the developing economy did worsen the economic challenges.

The imposition of targeted sanctions on Zimbabwe brought with it bad publicity, a record low credit rating, and a pariah state tag. Investors willingly pulled out of the country, avoided making new investments, or were commanded by their countries not to make new or further investments in Zimbabwe. Targeted sanctions led to sustained disinvestment and de-industrialization in Zimbabwe (*Herald*, 7 July 2011) that severely weakened the economy with negative consequences for the citizens' welfare and well-being. This was meant to make the targeted sanctions more effective in weakening the economy and thus exert significant pressure on the incumbent Zimbabwe government to change its behavior. In consequence, the economic collapse worsened. Thus, "Far from the claim that sanctions in Zimbabwe are ring-fenced and targeted at a few individuals, the reality on the ground is that the tight grip of the declared and undeclared sanctions is being felt throughout the entire economy" (RBZ, 2007: 2). With an unhealthy balance of payments (BOP) that predated the imposition of targeted sanctions, the global supremacy of the USA and EU forced multilateral financial institutions (MFIs), such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank, to stop advancing bridging finance (RBZ, 2007) to revitalize Zimbabwe's BOP and economy. Thus, "Sanctions are more likely to be effective if the target state suffers large costs and if these costs are predictable" (Dorussen & Mo, 2001: 396). The USA and EU's positions on Zimbabwe, as contained in the Zimbabwe Democracy and Economic Recovery Act of 2001 (115 STAT. 963; 115 STAT. 965), also known as "ZIDERA," and the Council Common Position (2002/145/CFSP) of 2002, respectively, are quite clear on their intent to exert economic pressure on Zimbabwe to pressure her to return to democracy, the rule of law, to respect human and property rights, and hold non-violent, free, and fair elections. In this regard, the targeted sanctions severely worsened Zimbabwe's already depressed economy and the effects of the economic meltdown on ordinary people were unprecedented, putting further to the test the myth that targeted sanctions only focused on those targeted and, at the same time, protected vulnerable groups and ordinary citizens from their negative effects.

This study, therefore, is grounded on the theoretical framework of utilitarianism, in that it tries to reflect on the utility of targeted sanctions on Zimbabwe aimed at influencing positive change among the intended targets. Second, the study defines the concept of targeted sanctions. Third, it discusses the paradoxical nature of the sanctions discourse in Zimbabwe. Fourth, it critically assesses the effectiveness of targeted sanctions, using utilitarianism. Finally, the study discusses the extent to which targeted sanctions on Zimbabwe have affected the functionality of the GNU. For the purposes of this study, the concepts of "targeted sanctions" and "restrictive measures" will be understood to be synonymous.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This research is informed by utilitarian ethical theory in its attempt to reflect on the effectiveness of targeted sanctions that were imposed against the former ZANU (PF) government in 2001 by the USA and in 2002 by the EU after Zimbabwe's chaotic land reform program, the relatively violent national elections since 2000, general lawlessness, and heightened suppression and disregard of human and property rights. Utilitarianism is one of the major positions in normative ethics, stemming from the late 18th and 19th century philosophers Jeremy Bentham and John Stuart Mill (Masaka, 2011). Although Bentham and Mill are credited with coming up with a systematic presentation of the utilitarian ethical theory, Hume (Ghillyer, 2010) is recognized as the first philosopher to use the term "utility" in moral parlance. Utilitarianism is a term derived from "utility," generally referring to something that is useful. Thus, Hume's moral theory is regarded as the immediate forerunner of the classic utilitarian ethical theory that was systematically presented by Bentham and Mill. Utilitarianism is a normative ethical theory that argues that an action has moral worth if it brings about the greatest net happiness among available alternative courses of action to the greatest number of people affected by the given action. Mill popularized utilitarianism and, like his predecessor Bentham, the basis of his version of utilitarianism is the Greatest Happiness Principle, which states: "Actions are right in proportion as they tend to promote happiness, wrong as they tend to produce the reverse of happiness" (Mill, 1993: 51). Human actions ought to be disposed towards promotion of the total balance of good over wrong for all the people affected by a given action.

Utilitarianism is opposed to deontological ethical theory in that while the ethics of deontology conceive of morality as a duty or a moral rule that has to be followed, utilitarianism is a result-oriented ethical theory (Velasquez, 1997), in that results of a given action are the sole basis for judging the morality of given action. Thus, an action is considered 'right' if it tends to produce happiness and 'wrong' if it brings about unhappiness to the greatest number of those people affected by a given action. In the context of this understanding of utilitarianism, the targeted sanctions that have been imposed on some members of the pre-GNU government of Zimbabwe by the EU and USA ought to be analyzed on the basis of their utility to the people affected by them, namely the intended direct targets of the sanctions, and the generality of the people of Zimbabwe. Although this study agrees with the Zimbabwe Democracy and Economic Recovery Act of 2001 (115 STAT. 963; 115 STAT. 965) and the Council Common Position (2002/145/CFSP) of 2002 that the targeted sanctions imposed on certain people in Zimbabwe, as well as institutions and business organizations that were seen as promoting repressive rule and the violation of human and property rights, lawlessness, and violence, were targeted and not really general sanctions, the impact of these targeted sanctions could have serious effects on the welfare and well-being of the whole economy and nation if those individuals and companies targeted are, in fact, key to the well-being of the economy. In this regard, if sanctions are targeted at certain people, institutions, and business organizations that represent a

large proportion of the economy, then such targeted sanctions will tend to have severe national implications.

Thus, there appears to be credibility in the argument that the targeted sanctions on Zimbabwe are targeted at the whole country and not individuals in that the whole economy of Zimbabwe suffers if sanctions are imposed on key individuals who control the levers of the economy and politics. Thus, targeted sanctions so conceived can be evaluated on utilitarian grounds as immoral because they bring about net unhappiness to a great number of people affected by them, compared with alternative courses of action that may be taken to influence change of behavior within the given political establishment. For example, the offending nation could be pressured into behaving in a certain generally agreed way by using less damaging ways of influencing this change than by methods that could bring about a worse scenario, whereby the offending nation's innocent citizens bear the bad effects of the targeted sanctions. Additionally, political leaders can take advantage of the existence of targeted sanctions to galvanize support around themselves in condemning the targeted sanctions as well as universalizing them, thereby destroying the divide between the targets of the sanctions and the innocent citizenry. Thus, targeted sanctions are useful if they can cause a positive change in behavior on the part of the sanction targets without affecting the generality of the population; otherwise, they are wrong. Given the apparent lack of utility of the targeted sanctions in Zimbabwe, because ultimately they have tended to negatively affect the generality of the people of Zimbabwe, such a method of influencing behavior on the part of the targets is thus morally condemned. In this regard, Weiss et al. (1997: 4) were quoted by Major & McGann (2005: 339) as arguing that:

Conventional wisdom assumes that the imposition of economic coercion will exercise sufficient 'bite' that citizens in the target country will exert political pressure to force either a change in the behavior of the authorities or their removal altogether. Although analysts have long characterized this underlying assumption as naïve ... [it] remains the modus operandi of a sanctions policy.

Thus, on the basis of the theory of utility, one can morally disapprove of the targeted sanctions that were imposed on Zimbabwe on the grounds that they have been blamed for bringing about severe hardships to the general populace of Zimbabwe. However, the economic meltdown in Zimbabwe cannot be blamed solely on targeted economic sanctions because poor economic and political decisions by the pre-GNU Zimbabwean government also largely contributed to the country's unprecedented economic meltdown.

TARGETED SANCTIONS: A CONCEPTUAL DISCUSSION

Targeted or smart sanctions are tools in international diplomacy that have been used throughout history to influence behavior in a target state that the imposer

of sanctions perceive to be against the imposer's own acceptable principles of governance and behavior. They are used by their senders to achieve the senders' political and economic objectives (Hoffmann, 1967; Drury, 1998; Drezner, 2003; Davis & Engermann, 2003; Hovi & Bull, 2005; RBZ, 2007; Grebe, 2010) on the target state. Such political and economic objectives are, thus, not only of benefit to senders of the targeted sanctions but are also intended to be of benefit to the generality of the population that is at the mercy of misbehaving individuals, institutions, or business organizations within the target state. For Tostensen et al. (2002: 373), targeted or smart sanctions "... more effectively target and penalize—via arms embargoes, financial sanctions, and travel restrictions—the political elites espousing policies and committing actions deemed reprehensible by the international community" while at the same time trying to safeguard vulnerable people from the severity of the sanctions by exempting basic human needs from the embargo. From the standpoint of the imposers of sanctions on Zimbabwe, that is, the USA and EU, these sanctions were targeted at certain members of the former government of Zimbabwe, as well as institutions, and business organizations that they saw as a threat to the security, democratic ethos, and economic well-being of Zimbabwe. Thus, they opted for targeted sanctions as a strategy to influence orderly democratic transition in the country, and to avert Zimbabwe's catastrophic slide into lawlessness, authoritarianism, repression, and the violation of human and property rights.

Targeted sanctions differ from comprehensive sanctions. While targeted sanctions involve "... the selective use of sanction measures with the intention to minimize unintended negative humanitarian impact by specifically targeting single persons ..." (Grebe, 2010: 4), institutions and business organizations that are specified as contributing to certain kinds of behavior that are disliked by the senders of sanctions, leaving out innocent people, comprehensive sanctions are defined "... as the application of the full arsenal of sanction measures, including trade and financial sanctions ..." (Grebe, 2010: 4) plus the senders of targeted sanctions' intentional withdrawal, or threat of withdrawal, of customary trade or financial relations to force the offending state to toe the line, as prescribed by the senders of the comprehensive sanctions. Targeted sanctions are thought to be useful in specifically identifying the culprits for punishment without necessarily dragging the innocent citizenry into bearing the unpleasant consequences of the sanctions regime. Thus, for targeted sanctions to be more effective, they ought not to bundle offenders and non-offenders together but should clinically identify the culprits for punishment while at the same time making sure that innocent people are not made to pay a heavy price for the crimes and misdeeds of selected individuals, institutions, and business organizations in a given state. However, the unfortunate feature of targeted sanctions is that they may cause the deterioration of a situation they were designed to alleviate (see Strack in Minter & Schmit, 1988) and are, therefore, largely an ineffective tool to effect policy changes with regard to their target.

Exposing offenders and non-offenders to the negative effects of a sanctions regime renders it ineffective in that the culprits and innocent people unite in condemning the senders of the targeted sanctions, rendering them relatively ineffec-

tual. However, in reality, the clinical application of targeted sanctions against a select few people, institutions, and business organizations within a state, such as Zimbabwe, and avoiding harm to the rest has proved to be a grossly superficial strategy because there is an intricate interconnectedness between the political leadership and the people, institutions, and business organizations. Targeting the political elite and their business interests may, in fact, prove suicidal because the targeted individuals may hold the economic levers of the country. Weakening these individuals would effectively mean the weakening of a significant chunk of the national economy. Political leaders preside over the affairs of the country in their various aspects, including the economy. Restricting them in any way brings about negative effects that have national implications.

It is in the context of such an understanding of the effects of targeted sanctions on Zimbabwe that this study argues that there is some credibility in ZANU (PF)'s assertion that the targeted sanctions have seriously injured Zimbabwe's whole economy. Despite ZANU (PF)'s apparently double-edged use of targeted sanctions to drum up political support on the one hand, and to exonerate themselves from any wrongdoing with respect to the unprecedented economic meltdown and state fragility that characterized the pre-GNU period on the other, there is a sense in which their questionable economic and political policies before and after the formation of the GNU have contributed to Zimbabwe's economic and political crisis as well as worsening ZANU (PF)'s appeal to the electorate.

In this regard, targeted sanctions are perceived by ZANU (PF) as one of the strategies within the broader agenda of the senders of targeted sanctions to effect regime change by creating an uneven playing field, where ZANU (PF) are seen as bad governors while the opposition is seen as a panacea to state fragility and the unprecedented economic crisis, supposedly invented by the Western countries through crippling sanctions. This may explain ZANU (PF)'s apparent dislike of the MDC because, after its formation in September 1999, and its alleged siding with the West on the perception of the pre-GNU economic and political situation in Zimbabwe, ZANU (PF) has always seen the MDC as a project of the Western world to effect regime change in Zimbabwe.

In the world view of ZANU (PF), MDC is a puppet of the West (Chitando, 2005), bent on frustrating its people-oriented programs, such as the land reform program and the indigenization of the economy. In this regard, targeted sanctions are seen as one of strategies for realizing the Western world's agenda of replacing a strong, Afro-centric, and pan-Africanist regime with one that is malleable to the Western world's wishes. ZANU (PF) has, thus, consistently referred to the USA and EU targeted sanctions on Zimbabwe as illegal, primarily because of the perceived regime change agenda and also because they are expressly against UN tenets, while the MDC has been silent on their legality.

On the other hand, the MDC and other opposition forces have seen the targeted sanctions as an indictment of the pre-GNU government's rule of terror, as shown by, for example, the disorderly and violence-ridden land reform program (Berry, 2002), the institutionalization of violence as an electoral tool, disregard of the rule of law, and rampant violations of human and people's rights. In the eyes of those aligned with the former opposition forces that are now part of the

GNU, targeted sanctions are just that and are not the major cause of the economic challenges that Zimbabwe has suffered since the turn of the millennium. For them, the economic crisis and state fragility that has characterized Zimbabwe's economy and politics during the past decade are a result of failed leadership by the pre-GNU government.

In this regard, talk of targeted economic sanctions as the legitimate cause of Zimbabwe's pre-GNU poor economic and political situation is not only fictitious but also politically expedient for those who subscribe to this opinion. Thus, there has not been convergence of views within Zimbabwe's political establishment on the meaning, nature, and scope of the controversial targeted sanctions imposed on certain members of the pre-GNU government, institutions, and business organizations that were accused of supporting undemocratic rule, lawlessness, violence, repression, suppression, and disregard of human and property rights. These targeted sanctions are still in force today.

The existing literature on sanctions testifies to their general ineffectiveness in causing fundamental policy shifts and changes in behavior on the part of the targets of sanctions, regardless of their severity (Tostensen & Bull, 2002; Lacy & Niou, 2004; Marinov, 2005; Andreas, 2005; Major & McGann, 2005; Grebe 2010), although some would like to see them as effective in influencing behavioral change in the target state. There is, thus, a lack of consensus on the effectiveness of sanctions as an international tool to influence the change in behavior that the imposer wants. This has led to serious questioning of their relevance in providing checks and balances on defaulting regimes across the world. Even though "economic sanctions are an increasingly common tool of coercion in international disputes" (Lacy & Niou, 2004: 25; see also Austin, 1966), their implementation may not cause the desired outcome envisaged by the imposer. For example, sanctions that may be targeted at specific individuals may end up negatively affecting the very people that the sanctions were intended to protect from the actions of the alleged rogue regimes. According to Lacy & Niou (2004: 27), "When sanctions are likely to be successful, it is the threat, not the imposition, of sanctions that changes a target state's behavior." Thus, sanctions appear more effective if they are in the form of threats in that the offending state might immediately rectify its perceived mistakes before sanctions are actually implemented.

The problem comes when a target of sanctions does not take the threat of sanctions seriously and the sanctions are then put into effect. When Zimbabwe's otherwise well-intentioned but controversially conducted land reform program started on a violent fast track in 2000, lawlessness crept in, property rights were violated, and violence erupted (Berry, 2002; Kinloch, 2003), including that in the disputed national elections since 2000. The international community reacted by threatening the imposition of targeted sanctions on those they identified as being at the forefront of inciting lawlessness, disputable election results, and the violation of human and property rights.

When the threat of sanctions failed to influence changes in behavior in Zimbabwe's political leadership, targeted sanctions were imposed on Zimbabwe by the USA, EU, and their allies. For Tostensen & Bull (2002: 374), smart or targeted sanctions are "...designed to hit the real perpetrators harder and to spare

potential innocent victims, leading to speedier change of sanctionee behavior.” However, evidence on the ground confirms the general belief in the sanction literature, which is that sanctions may end up affecting unintended targets. In the case of Zimbabwe, the general populace unfortunately became the major victim of targeted sanctions, given that the country was denied lending rights from international institutions, and political leaders and their sympathizers were slapped with travel restrictions, thereby crippling their ability to deal with pressing national issues in a globalizing world. Leaders may always find ingenious ways of lessening the severity of sanctions on them while the ordinary citizenry bear the negative impact of targeted sanctions. Thus, targeted sanctions generally fail to achieve their objectives and may have devastating effects on unintended victims.

THE SANCTIONS DISCOURSE IN ZIMBABWE: A PARADOX

In Zimbabwe, targeted sanctions were imposed on selected individuals within the political establishment, institutions, and business organizations that were suspected of creating and/or supporting a culture of autocratic rule, lawlessness, violence, and the violation of human and property rights. In the wording of the Zimbabwe Democracy and Economic Recovery Act of 2001 (115 STAT. 963; 115 STAT. 965) and the Council Common Position (2002/145/CFSP) of 2002, the punishment that was slapped on Zimbabwe is interchangeably referred to as sanctions or restrictive measures. While ZANU (PF) prefers to call them illegal sanctions, MDC ordinarily calls them restrictive measures. Thus, a dispute of a semantic nature has ensued between these rival political parties in the GNU.

Perhaps ZANU (PF) feels that calling these sanctions “restrictive measures” would lessen their severity on the country. For them, the targeted sanctions are tantamount to a declaration of war (*Herald*, 7 July 2011) and are a form of external interference in Zimbabwe’s internal affairs. Earlier, White (2003) argued that “Sanctions are war without guns and bloodshed, and have limited, if any, effectiveness for changing behavior or governments of target countries.” Thus, sanctions may be regarded as an implicit declaration of war by the sanctioner on the sanctionee. However, for Hoffmann (1967: 144), “Sanctions were and still are conceived as a realistic alternative to military power and, consequently, to many are consistent with the ideal of a peaceful world.” In this regard, although sanctions may lead to a war situation in the targeted country, they cannot legitimately be equated with a declaration of war. For Weiss (1999: 500), one reason why there has been increased use of sanctions in the post-Cold War era is that “... there is the new-found willingness by the community of states to intrude in issues that were once off-limits. Sanctions are another indicator that sovereignty is no longer sacrosanct.” Whether one calls the sanctions that were imposed on Zimbabwe restrictive measures or targeted sanctions is inconsequential because the terms “restrictive measures” and “sanctions” can be used interchangeably. What is important is to reflect on the practical implications of the policies of the USA, EU, and their allies for Zimbabwe, as spelt out in the Zimbabwe Democracy and Economic Recovery Act of 2001 (115 STAT. 963; 115 STAT. 965) and the Council

Common Position (2002/145/CFSP) of 2002. These semantic disputes, though at a critical level they appear naïve, are indispensable for exposing the level of polarization in Zimbabwe's GNU with respect to the nature, scope, and impact of targeted sanctions on Zimbabwe.

The Zimbabwe Democracy and Economic Recovery Act of 2001 was enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress "...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" (115 STAT. 962). What is not clear in this policy statement of the Act is what it means by "the people of Zimbabwe," that is, whether it also included the sitting government of the day.

The role of the USA, EU, and their allies in the making and/or unmaking of Zimbabwe's economic and political crisis is one of the most controversial issues in the current Zimbabwe discourse on targeted sanctions. The then ZANU (PF) government could have justifiably interpreted this clause to mean that the USA and EU were intent on supporting opposition forces in Zimbabwe to influence regime change—a change that would bring in political forces that the Western world would support, to 'recolonize' the country. Thus, ZANU (PF)'s reaction to the MDC, formed in 1999, with the intent of democratizing Zimbabwe and returning the country to the rule of law, was seen as confirming their suspicion that ZIDERA was promulgated to cripple the ZANU (PF) government and give MDC unfair leverage in Zimbabwe's political arena. Thus, the close similarities between MDC's objectives of entering a political arena that prioritized the democratization of the country, and the key targets of ZIDERA, further raised suspicions about the roles of the USA and EU in Zimbabwe's unfolding political drama. The MDC, which in full refers to the "Movement for Democratic Change" would seem to concur with one of the key objectives of the Act, that is, "to ... effect peaceful, democratic change..." (115 STAT. 962). Thus, ZANU (PF) perceives the MDC as a Western-formed and -backed party that seeks primarily not to meet or address the agenda of the Zimbabwean citizenry per se but, rather, the priorities of its backers in the Western world.

In a similar vein, the EU's Council Common Position (2002/145/CFSP) of 2002 stipulates that, in the context of the government of Zimbabwe's continued serious violations of human rights, freedom of opinion, association, and peaceful assembly, it was imperative to introduce restrictive or targeted measures "... against the Government of Zimbabwe and those who bear a wide responsibility for such violations" (Council Common Position 2002/145/CFSP: L 50/1). The EU sanctions initially targeted 20 key government members and prevented them from travelling to EU countries or passing through EU territories because of their "... activities that seriously undermine democracy, respect for human rights, and the rule of law in Zimbabwe" (Council Common Position 2002/145/CFSP: L 50/1). It also prescribes an arms embargo and cessation of technical training or assistance with respect to the provision, manufacture, maintenance, or use of military equipment. More specifically, no equipment that could be used for internal repression was to be supplied to Zimbabwe (Council Common Position 2002/145/CFSP). The key government officials and their sympathizers on the EU sanctions

list increased from 20 in 2002 to 95 in 2004 (Council Common Position 2004/161/CFSP), and to 203 (Council Common Position 2009/68/CFSP) in 2009 as Zimbabwe's political tensions worsened prior to the consummation of the GNU in February 2009. With marginal improvements in Zimbabwe's political situation since the formation of the GNU, the EU has removed nine entities from the sanctions lists in appreciation of the progress made so far in returning the country to democracy and economic stability.

Interestingly, the Council Common Position 2009/68/CFSP (L 23/57), for the first time since the imposition of EU targeted sanctions, placed 40 business entities that were government-owned or owned by its sympathizers, and business organizations that were thought to be encouraging the undermining of democracy, respect for human rights, and the rule of law in Zimbabwe under targeted sanctions. This was perhaps a sure sign that the EU wanted to cripple the operations of the ZANU (PF) government after the controversial June 27, 2008 presidential runoff elections. However, the EU's targeted sanctions lacked the necessary clarity, in terms of their objectives, beyond simply sanctioning the government of Zimbabwe. A similar deficiency is not found in ZIDERA in that ZIDERA tries to specify the key objectives of its sanctions regime against Zimbabwe by setting out the conditions under which targeted sanctions could be lifted. However, neither policy document on Zimbabwe clearly states what it would do in the event that the targeted sanctions fail to achieve their set objectives. Thus, the effectiveness of the EU and USA's targeted sanctions on Zimbabwe has been compromised, primarily by their relative deficiencies in spelling out what they would do if the economic and political objectives of the targeted sanctions are not achieved. Both sanctions regimes have a similar provision for exemption from travel bans on grounds of humanitarian need, religious obligation, attending meetings of international bodies, or conducting political dialog that promotes democracy, human rights, and the rule of law in Zimbabwe. However, these exemptions have lessened the effectiveness of the targeted sanctions in that the targeted individuals have managed to use these windows of opportunity not only to attack their EU and USA political opponents for imposing targeted sanctions on Zimbabwe but also to expose the ineffectual nature of the targeted sanctions regime in totally blocking sanctions targets from actively participating in select international meetings.

History has shown that no opposition party has survived long or mounted a formidable challenge to ZANU (PF)'s political hegemony, mainly because of lack of financial support from within or outside the country. Surprisingly, MDC has managed to defy the odds and has now been in existence for more than a decade; it handed ZANU (PF) its first electoral scare in national elections in 2000 when it garnered more than half of contested parliamentary seats. In harmonized council, parliamentary, and presidential elections of March 29, 2008, the MDC-T numerically beat ZANU (PF) in the presidential elections, although the percentage was not enough to claim outright victory. The supposed healthy funding of the MDC that has ensured its continued survival in turbulent political and economic times where other opposition political parties have faltered has often been credited to its supposed strong connections with its Western imperialist financiers.

However, MDC has denied its alleged association with the USA and the EU in calling for targeted sanctions on selected individuals in Zimbabwe's pre-GNU government, institutions, and business organizations that the USA and the EU saw as stifling democratic space and violating human and people's rights. For the MDC, the pre-GNU government of Zimbabwe was punished with targeted sanctions not because MDC had called for them but simply because of the then incumbent government's poor political and economic policies and actions that posed a threat to the well-being of the economy and the Zimbabwean citizenry. For example, the manner in which the emotive land question was addressed seemed to have influenced the USA and Western world's perceptions of Zimbabwe because white farmers owned the largest proportion of Zimbabwe's arable land and conservancies. Because Zimbabwe's economy is largely agro-based, disturbances in the farmlands (Moyana, 2002; Moore, 2005) obviously had a serious impact on the state of Zimbabwe's economy. Additionally, violent repression of human and press freedom, undemocratic rule, and contested elections further alienated the country from the wider family of nations.

The Zimbabwe Democracy and Economic Recovery Act of 2001 (115 STAT. 964) clearly states that the President of the USA is authorized to provide financial backing under part 1 and chapter 4 of part 11 of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 to the land reform in Zimbabwe, provided certain conditions are met. These conditions include a return to the rule of law, democratic governance, holding of credible elections, and a commitment to equitable, legal, and transparent land reform. However, the pre-GNU government of Zimbabwe rejected these conditions because they saw them as ploys to reverse the irreversible land reform program. Although the land reform program sought to address the colonially entrenched and morally questionable resource distribution disequilibria between the white and black populations of Zimbabwe (Roder, 1964), it came at a heavy economic price because it disturbed the backbone of the country's economy. Thus, in short, the pre-GNU economic and political crisis has been blamed primarily on the pursuit of poor economic and political policies that led to one of the worst economic crises outside a war zone. Thus, the MDC has tended to distance itself from any contribution to Zimbabwe's economic and political crisis prior to the formation of the GNU.

In justifying its resolve to support democratic transition and economic recovery in Zimbabwe, the Zimbabwe Democracy and Economic Recovery Act of 2001 clearly puts blame on the then incumbent government's poor economic and political policies that gave rise to the economic and political challenges, which led to the need for intervention to address the situation by backing democratic movements and the creation of a free media. According to the Zimbabwe Democracy and Economic Recovery Act of 2001 (115 STAT. 962):

Through economic mismanagement, undemocratic practices, and the costly deployment of troops to the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Government of Zimbabwe has rendered itself ineligible to participate in International Bank for Reconstruction and Development and International Monetary Fund programs, 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 benefits envisioned by the donors to such programs, including the United States.

Thus, the USA and EU blamed the pre-GNU government for running down the economy by pursuing unwise economic and political policies. However, the pre-GNU government has always blamed sanctions for causing Zimbabwe's economic and political crisis because the Zimbabwe Democracy and Economic Recovery Act of 2001 (115 STAT. 963) categorically states that it intended to influence change of behavior in the pre-GNU government of Zimbabwe by instructing the IMF and International Development Association, among other international financial institutions, to suspend their support for Zimbabwe. According to the Zimbabwe Democracy and Economic Recovery Act of 2001 (115 STAT. 963), in September, the IMF suspended its support for ESAP and in October 1999, the International Development Association (IDA) also "...suspended all structural adjustment loans, credits, and guarantees to the Government of Zimbabwe... In May 2000, the IDA suspended all other new lending to the Government of Zimbabwe" and "in September 2000, the IDA suspended disbursement of funds for ongoing projects under previously-approved loans, credits, and guarantees to the government of Zimbabwe." In light of these pronouncements in the Act, the actuality of sanctions on the pre-GNU government cannot be doubted. Additionally, in the context of such aspects of the Act, one can doubt whether the so-called targeted sanctions were really targeted at specific individuals, institutions, and business organizations that promoted an undemocratic system of governance, the muzzling of press freedom, and violations of human and people's rights.

Suspension of support for Zimbabwe's economic blueprint, ESAP, new lending, and the suspension of disbursements of funds for ongoing projects under previously approved loans, credits, and guarantees to Zimbabwe by the IMF and IDA, amongst others, had serious effects on the country's economy, which had begun the process of coming to terms with a free market system. Thus, if the financial restrictions against Zimbabwe were directed at such national economic policies as ESAP and other government programs, it is not only impossible to absolve targeted sanctions from contributing to Zimbabwe's economic meltdown but also to legitimately perceive them as merely targeted sanctions. In this regard, ZANU (PF)'s consistent claim that these targeted sanctions were targeted at the whole of Zimbabwe and not necessarily at specific individuals seems largely valid. A critical reading of the Zimbabwe Democracy and Economic Recovery Act of 2001 (115 STAT. 963) and the Council Common Position (2002/145/CFSP) of 2002 show that they were aimed at crippling Zimbabwe's economy by cutting support to key national economic programs. However, it is fallacious for the pre-GNU government to wholly blame Zimbabwe's unprecedented economic meltdown on targeted sanctions because Zimbabwe's economic challenges predate the imposition of targeted sanctions on Zimbabwe in 1999 (115 STAT. 963) and their legal force through the USA Act, the Zimbabwe Democracy and Economic Recovery Act of 2001.

The sanctions discourse in Zimbabwe has, therefore, been crippled by polarized views whereby the former opposition party, MDC, denies calling for targeted sanctions on the former ZANU (PF) government and, in fact, sees them as targeted sanctions or restrictive measures on those who have created and nurtured undemocratic governance, the dearth of a free press, and violations of human rights. This also explains their refusal to sign the anti-sanctions petition forms that ZANU (PF) expected every patriotic Zimbabwean to sign throughout the country. However, MDC saw these anti-sanction petition forms as a ZANU (PF) party project (*Herald*, 16 June 2011), not a national one. For that reason, they felt that they should not be coerced into abiding by another party's program because the MDC is a party with its own programs that cannot be legitimately or constitutionally forced to go along with other parties' agendas. Madzivo (2011) notes that "What ZANU (PF) has failed to do... is to educate the people of Zimbabwe about the nature of the real thing called a sanction, its cause and solution to avoid public misinterpretation... [and] it is not surprising... that three-quarters of Zimbabweans who signed the petition did not know the true cause of the sanctions and the solution to the problem." Thus, critical reflection on the sanctions issue within the context of the GNU has often ensued in paradoxical dialogue, where one constituency within this 'marriage of inconvenience,' the GNU, deny the reality of sanctions while the other party carries out an ambitious project to solicit more than two million signatures through an anti-sanctions petition with a view to lobbying the USA and EU to remove the sanctions.

TARGETED SANCTIONS AND THE GNU

The sanctions discourse has been made more complex in the context of the inclusive government between the two factions of the MDC and ZANU (PF), whereby the USA, EU, and their allies continue to impose travel restrictions on ZANU (PF) members only, while members of both factions of MDC are free to visit the USA and EU countries as well as to access financial help from these countries. Thus, while the MDC factions deny the reality of targeted sanctions against Zimbabwe as such, ZANU (PF) regards them as a key issue that the GNU has to consider seriously in that they regard sanctions as a major contributor to Zimbabwe's continuing economic crisis and the 'bad boy' tag that they have been given by the international community for the past decade. These sanctions are said to have been 'called for' by Morgan Tsvangirai's MDC, and some in ZANU (PF) refer to them, accordingly, as 'Tsvanctions' (*Herald*, 3 February 2010), ridiculing Prime Minister Tsvangirai. Furthermore, they see Tsvangirai's MDC as obliged to call for the removal of the targeted sanctions because his party is said to have contributed to their imposition. For Madzivo (2011), "The fact that the issue of economic sanctions was tabled in London before the formation of the MDC is an indication that neither Tsvangirai nor any MDC official called for the sanctions." The MDC has, therefore, denied any hand in the imposition of targeted sanctions on some members of the pre-GNU government, institutions, and business organizations that were accused of creating and supporting

unorthodox styles of governance and the repression of human rights and press freedom. In fact, they maintain that the sanctions that were imposed on the pre-GNU government are, in fact, targeted or smart sanctions.

In such a scenario of apparent contradictions within Zimbabwe's political establishment, a dilemma as to whether the targeted sanctions on Zimbabwe are, in fact, targeted or have a national effect remains. One way out of this paradoxical situation is to refer to the USA's Zimbabwe Democracy and Economic Recovery Act of 2001 (115 STAT. 963; 115 STAT. 965) and the Council Common Position (2002/145/CFSP) of 2002, which are legal documents that spell out the targeted sanctions against Zimbabwe. For example, the Zimbabwe Democracy and Economic Recovery Act of 2001 (115 STAT. 963; 115 STAT. 965) clearly states that the USA is going to cause the suspension of financial assistance by international financial institutions and consult its partners in the EU and Canada to:

Identify and share information regarding individuals responsible for the deliberate breakdown of the rule of law, politically motivated violence, and intimidation in Zimbabwe; ... identify assets of those individuals held outside Zimbabwe; ... implement travel and economic sanctions against those individuals and their associates and families; and ... provide for the eventual removal or amendment of those sanctions.

Thus, in the context of such a reading of the USA's sanctions on Zimbabwe, the reality of sanctions on Zimbabwe is undoubted, even though there may be doubts about their scope, nature, and impact. However, even though the USA and its partners in the EU have used targeted sanctions as a strategy for weakening ZANU (PF)'s grip on power and, therefore, expose it to severe criticism from Zimbabwe's citizenry for running down the economy and bringing about state fragility, ZANU (PF) has used this position of weakness as campaign tool and scapegoat, because almost all economic mishaps that the country has experienced since the imposition of targeted sanctions on selected individuals, institutions, and business organizations, have been blamed on the targeted sanctions. Thus, for ZANU (PF), targeted sanctions have become a rallying point to gather support and for shaming alleged detractors said to be locally fronted by the MDC, who are said, in turn, to have sought the imposition of sanctions on Zimbabwe because they did not want ZANU (PF) to repossess land that was taken from the indigenous people of Zimbabwe by colonial settlers. Thus, the pre-GNU government of Zimbabwe has found it easy to repel criticism of its monumental failure in nurturing a successful economy and a peaceful political environment by laying the blame on targeted sanctions.

Even though the MDC may be aware that some of the targeted sanctions that were imposed on Zimbabwe by the USA and its allies were not really targeted at individuals alone but also targeted national institutions, the continued existence of these targeted sanctions is also likely to negatively affect the functions of the GNU in which they are 'equal' partners and, therefore, they will suffer from public condemnation as did the pre-GNU government. In this regard, although the MDC may want the targeted sanctions to remain in place because they disadvan-

tage their political rivals, ZANU (PF), and, therefore, give MDC some leverage both locally and internationally, the MDC may also feel that the targeted sanctions ought to be removed so that the GNU can achieve the political and economic objectives that it was formed to achieve. On the part of the MDC, the continued presence of targeted sanctions create a paradoxical scenario, where they may want them to be removed but at the same time they want them to stay because they offer them a political advantage over their political competitor, ZANU (PF). Thus, there is a sense in which both MDC and ZANU (PF) have manipulated the emotive sanctions discourse to advance their respective and self-interested political agendas.

While ZANU (PF) has gained some political mileage "... by trying to convince the electorate that the MDC are the ones causing untold suffering of the people of Zimbabwe by supporting sanctions and labelling themselves as the only party that is capable of liberating people from the bondage of sanctions" (Madzivo, 2011), the MDC argues that the targeted sanctions are a response to ZANU (PF)'s misrule, repression, and suppression of human rights, press freedom, and freedom of opinion. In this regard, the sorry state of affairs during the pre-GNU period is largely blamed on ZANU (PF) and not targeted sanctions. Thus, for MDC, targeted sanctions are self-inflicted and testify to the pre-GNU government's failure to govern the country properly. The MDC coincidentally benefits politically from a ZANU (PF) party that is weakened by travel bans, asset freezes, and targeted sanctions in general, because they themselves are not subject to these targeted sanctions. In this light, therefore, both political parties in Zimbabwe's fractious unity government appear to be politically benefiting from the existing sanctions regime. This, therefore, reduces the call for their removal, a paradoxical circus.

THE UTILITY OF TARGETED SANCTIONS

Wherever sanctions have been imposed by international or regional bodies, such as the EU, or individual nations, such as the USA, their major objective has always been to influence a 'positive' change in the behavior of the leaders of the target state. A state may be engaging in actions that violate certain generally agreed international norms or what the sender of sanctions considers to be acceptable political or economic behavior. Therefore, coercive power can be used to cause changes in behavior in the target state. The belief is that the change in behavior would be of benefit not only to citizens of the target state but also to the senders of sanctions. In this regard, targeted sanctions are perceived as a means to some good end in that even though they may be ruthless, they are aimed at forcing the offending nation to conform to acceptable standards of behavior that the sender of sanctions perceives to be useful. Thus, in the context of sanctions, the end justifies the means.

Sanctions on their own cannot, however, really bring about the desired outcomes (Tostensen & Bull, 2002) because the target state can always find ways of circumventing their negative effects through, for example, smuggling and con-

nivance with friendly nations to bust the targeted sanctions. On the contrary, Marinov (2005) argued that economic sanctions, contrary to common perceptions about their ineffectiveness, are at least effective in destabilizing the leaders they target. For him (Marinov, 2005: 564), "The leader of a government who comes under economic pressure ... is more likely to lose office than a leader who does not." This is, to some extent, true of Zimbabwe because after 8 years of USA and EU targeted sanctions, incumbent President Mugabe lost the presidential vote on March 29, 2008, to the MDC-T candidate, Morgan Tsvangirai, although not by enough votes to guarantee the MDC-T leader outright victory. Thus, to a certain degree, targeted sanctions did assist in applying effective pressure on the sanction targets to comply with the demands of the senders of sanctions. Because the main objective of targeted sanctions is to effectively cripple the targets, while at the same time (Andreas, 2005: 339) limiting humanitarian damage, they can be morally approved on utilitarian grounds.

While the targeted sanctions that were imposed on Zimbabwe by the USA, EU, and their allies were multilateral sanctions in that they were imposed "... by a broad front of states against the target state" (Tostensen & Bull, 2002: 375), the sanctions that were imposed by the UN Security Council on apartheid South Africa (Gershenson, 2002), were mandatory and international in their scope. This may also explain the failure of the targeted sanctions in Zimbabwe in that sanctioning was an obligation on the part of individual states and not the UN. Thus, some countries may decide to sympathize with the country targeted by sanctions financially and politically, rendering the targeted sanctions ineffectual. In the case of Zimbabwe, countries such as China and Russia have continued to support those targeted by sanctions in Zimbabwe financially and politically, neutralizing the effectiveness of the targeted sanctions. However, whether sanctions are multilateral or mandatory, there is always room for some country to violate them and support the sanctions target. This was true of apartheid South Africa and postcolonial Zimbabwe. The effectiveness of these different sanctions regimes to achieve their intended goals was greatly hampered by neighbouring countries' lack of political will to help enforce these sanctions regimes primarily because they were vulnerable to the spill-over effects of these sanctions.

In a similar way, Grebe (2010) doubted the visible success of targeted sanctions on Zimbabwe's pre-GNU government because of numerous violations of the travel and financial restrictions and the unwillingness of other key financial and political powerhouses to join together in enforcing the targeted sanctions. Similarly Galtung (1967: 380) argued that:

Punishment may have other effects, as when criminals are kept off the streets and isolated in prisons where their deviant actions are hidden from the general view and thus less consequential to the outside world, but this is not the same as making them comply.

Thus, the USA and EU targeted sanctions have largely failed to achieve their main political objectives of influencing political events in Zimbabwe. Additionally, targeted sanctions as a form of reformatory punishment may actually harden,

rather than reform, the political stance of the targeted individuals. In the context of the targeted sanctions regime in Zimbabwe, the targeted individuals have actually hardened, rather than softened, their stance with respect to the fundamental issues that led to the imposition of targeted sanctions, such as the land reform program, the rule of law, press freedom, free and fair elections, and democratic political transitions. The innocent citizens have also felt the unpleasant consequences of the targeted sanctions (Major & McGann, 2005) although they were supposed to be protected from them. The targeted individuals have manipulated the sanctions into a broad national problem that requires everyone's attention. This complicates the effectiveness of targeted sanctions as a deterrent and reformative measure on those who are targeted by them. Thus, targeted sanctions often fail to change the behavior of the targeted individuals to the specifications of the senders (Galtung, 1967), and this is also true in the case of the targeted sanctions regime on Zimbabwe.

In a way, excessive pressure exerted by sanctions on the targeted individuals may actually bring about unintended consequences, such as a high level of smuggling of various commodities, such as military equipment and minerals (diamonds and gold for example) by those who are well-connected with the sanctions targets, so as to sustain the fortunes of the sanctions targets at the expense of the ordinary citizenry. Thus, a scenario of uneven wealth distribution between the ruling elite who are targeted by sanctions and their sympathizers on the one hand, and the ordinary citizens on the other, becomes more visible. In this regard, sanctions may "...create an economic opportunity structure that privileges those best positioned in the under-ground economy, enhancing the value of their smuggling skills and connections" and such criminal endeavours "...may even be celebrated as patriotic" (Andreas, 2005: 336–337). Corrupt and immoral economic policies and practices can be legitimized as acceptable and appropriate in so far as they help in busting the sanctions and giving an economic lifeline to the targeted individuals and the country in general. For Andreas (2005: 337):

The result can be a general legal demoralization as society becomes accustomed to practices that do not conform to modern legal standards. Reestablishing societal acceptance of legal norms can be one of the most challenging tasks after sanctions are lifted, as old habits can be difficult to break.

For example, in the context of Zimbabwe's isolation by the wider international community and the resulting economic meltdown, the Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe engaged in excessive money printing to meet critical national commitments. Although sound economic policy forbids such actions, the situation in which Zimbabwe found itself in during those trying economic and political times justified such actions. Thus, the perceived good end of such unorthodox economic actions justifies the means. However, such money printing antics worsened Zimbabwe's economic collapse, as was reflected in the highest inflation figures outside a war zone, fomenting an already existing humanitarian crisis.

On utilitarian grounds, the targeted sanctions on Zimbabwe have, to a certain

extent, failed to bring about the desired outcomes to the generality of the Zimbabwean populace as envisaged by their senders. The key objectives of the targeted sanctions, as envisaged in the Zimbabwe Democracy and Economic Recovery Act of 2001 and Council Common Position (2002/145/CFSP) of 2002, were that there should be restoration of the rule of law, non-violent electoral processes, an equitable, legal, and transparent land reform program, the cessation of violations of human rights, and freedom of speech and the press; these have not been fully met by the Zimbabwean government to date. In fact, for example, electoral periods have been characterized by violent political contests, leading to disputed results. Sadly, the targeted sanctions have also not spared innocent Zimbabweans, not only because they have primarily damaged the economy by stopping the release of credit lines to Zimbabwe but also because they have negatively affected the operations and activities of some key government officials, institutions, and business organizations that are crucial for the economic well-being of the country. In a way, therefore, the targeted sanctions have ceased to be targeted as such, if at all, in that they have tended, unfortunately, to drag the whole Zimbabwean populace into the targeted sanctions jigsaw. Such unfortunate realities undermine the utility of targeted sanctions. A targeted sanctions regime that ends up affecting unintended victims ceases to be a targeted sanctions regime. Ultimately, the general populace that the targeted sanction regime intends to protect would not feel its protective nature but would, rather, see it as an immoral move by its senders to punish both the political leadership and the ordinary citizens of a given country. Consequently, the guilty and the innocent all suffer the negative effects of the so-called targeted sanctions.

CONCLUDING REMARKS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The sanctions discourse in Zimbabwe has attained the infamy of controversy and assumed a number of paradoxical dimensions. While the ZANU (PF) see them as an EU- and USA-engineered illegal move to weaken them and give their opponents, the MDC and other political movements, unfair political leverage, they have also apparently manipulated them to rally political support by claiming that they are a victim of a Western agenda to stop the repossession of the land resource from white farmers—a resource that was forcibly taken from the indigenous black people of Zimbabwe. In this regard, ZANU (PF) expediently cites its bold decision to carry out a comprehensive land reform program as the sole motivator for the USA and EU’s targeted sanctions while the USA and EU try to avoid directly linking the imposition of targeted sanctions to Zimbabwe’s violent and chaotic land reform program but, instead, cite widespread human rights abuses, violation of people’s various freedoms, economic mismanagement, a slide into authoritarian rule, the lack of the rule of law, and state fragility as primary reasons for the imposition of targeted sanctions.

The pre-GNU government sees itself as a martyr for carrying out a land reform program that angered the USA and EU, leading to the imposition of targeted sanctions. Thus, there is a lack of unanimity between the senders and targets of

the sanctions with regard to what caused their imposition. In this respect, the pre-GNU government has seen the targeted sanctions both as a barrier to their political objectives and, paradoxically, as an escape route from the accusations that this government presided over the unprecedented collapse of Zimbabwe's economy. ZANU (PF) has conveniently blamed targeted sanctions for all the economic and political problems that have afflicted Zimbabwe since the turn of this millennium, even though the economic and political crises predated the imposition of the sanctions. Thus, there is a sense in which targeted sanctions have been perceived as both good and bad by ZANU (PF), and they have tended to manipulate them to their relative advantage. In a similar way, the MDC perceives sanctions as both good and bad in that they have negatively affected ZANU (PF)'s appeal to the electorate while, at the same time, they have also negatively affected the functions of the GNU in which the MDC is supposedly an 'equal' partner.

In light of the apparently paradoxical sanctions discourse within Zimbabwe's political establishment and how it has threatened to reduce the GNU to a dysfunctional body, this study recommends that the sanctions discourse ought to be de-politicized to allow an honest reflection of the causes, nature, and impact of the targeted sanctions on Zimbabwe's economic well-being and political space. Political parties in and outside the GNU, Zimbabwe's general citizenry, and the imposers of the targeted sanctions ought to be involved in debating and suggesting credible ways of removing the targeted sanctions for the GNU to fully achieve its key political and economic objectives. It is crucial to consider the circumstances that initially led to the imposition of the targeted sanctions and for the targets and senders of the targeted sanctions to find a common position in relation to the conditions that led to the imposition of sanctions in the first place so that they can be removed. Even though the targets of the sanctions have consistently condemned the targeted sanctions as illegal, solely because they fall outside the UN mandate, accusations and counter-accusations would not bring a quick end to them because the crucial issue is that they are in existence and the critical issues that led to their imposition have, generally, not been addressed. Crucially, the question of their legality falls away if the parties to the sanctions jigsaw agree on the way out of this targeted sanctions regime.

Although it might appear logically impossible for ZANU (PF) to meet the strict conditions that would eventually lead to the lifting of the targeted sanctions, it is important for parties to the sanctions jigsaw to make some meaningful compromises so that they can be removed. In this respect, both the major parties in the GNU, the MDC-T and ZANU (PF), ought to speak with one voice and one vision on the way out of the targeted sanctions. Unfortunately, the emotive debate on the removal of targeted sanctions is one such discourse both the MDC and ZANU (PF) have embarked on, perhaps with the intent, though not openly expressed, of not reaching an agreement (see Matthews, 1979/1980), because it appears that both parties are benefitting from the status quo of the continued existence of targeted sanctions. Targeted sanctions ought not to be seen as a ZANU (PF) or MDC issue but as a GNU issue. Discord within political parties in the GNU only helps to worsen the paradoxical sanctions discourse to the detriment of Zimbabwe's economic and political stability. The continued existence

of targeted sanctions on one key part of the GNU, ZANU (PF), does not help matters at all because failure to address such a critical issue makes the GNU a government of national disunity that is bound to fail in meeting the important economic and political objectives that it seeks to achieve.

NOTES

- (1) The MDC-N (MDC-Ncube) was formerly MDC-M (MDC-Mutambara). It changed from MDC-M to MDC-N after its founding president, Arthur Mutambara was defeated by Welshman Ncube at its party congress in 2011.

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Author’s Name and Address: Dennis MASAHA, *Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies, Great Zimbabwe University, P.O.Box 1235, Masvingo, ZIMBABWE.*

E-mail: dennis.masaka [at] gmail.com