

## ECONOMIC SANCTIONS UNDER INTERNATIONAL LAW: AN OVERVIEW

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### ABSTRACT

Since long ago, economic sanctions were used as one of the major foreign policy tools around the globe, although many analysts are doubtful about their success. States that apply economic sanctions, generally, claim that this policy measure will bring significant changes in the behaviours of the decision-makers of the victim states, and administrative reforms, but such claims are refutable. Besides, despite having immense global implications, it is still unclear which rules of international law apply to regulate economic sanctions. This atmosphere poses several questions, especially, regarding the success of economic sanctions; their implications on national and international affairs, and the regulatory measures. Keeping these in view, this article aims to clarify the notion ‘economic sanctions’; their aims and purposes; implications, and especially, the legality of unilateral economic sanctions by analysing key international instruments, international conventions, and the provisions of international law. The findings reveal that though not well organised as a set of laws, and not properly followed, there are diverse provisions of international law that can be used to regulate economic sanctions. Hence, countries attempting to impose economic sanctions should follow those legal rules, otherwise, the legality of such economic embargoes will always be questioned.

### 1. INTRODUCTION

From the historical past, the economic sanction is often used worldwide as one of the major foreign policy tools, although many experts in the field have hardly found any success thereof.<sup>1</sup> There are substantial criticisms against economic sanctions for being used as coercive instruments and

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<sup>1</sup> Eland ‘Economic Sanctions as Tools of Foreign Policy’ in Cortright D. (ed), *Economic Sanctions* (Routledge 2018).