

High- Level Side Event on the margins of the High-Level Segment of the
78th Session of the General Assembly of the United Nations

“LAUNCH OF THE GEOPOLITICAL MAP OF SANCTIONS”

*New York, 21 September 2023
01:15-02:30 PM (Conference Room 6 – UNHQ)*

Unilateral Coercive Measures (UCMs), often – and mistakenly – referred to as “sanctions”, are illegal¹. They are contrary to international law, including international human rights law and international humanitarian law, the norms and principles governing peaceful relations among States, and all the tenets enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations.

Nevertheless, there is a continued, systematic, relentless, unprecedented and ever-increasing promulgation, implementation and expansion of unilateral coercive measures, including of a new generation of such measures, which, today, are crueler and more destructive than ever before. So-called sanctions, as a matter of fact, despite their illegality and devastating impacts, including on the full enjoyment of human rights and the attainment of internationally-agreed development goals, have become the preferred tool of certain governments from the developed world for exerting pressure, particularly on developing countries, and for forcing the sovereign will of another State, in order to obtain from it advantages of any kind.

According to public data, corroborated in many instances by the UN Special Rapporteur on the Negative Impact of Unilateral Coercive Measures on the Enjoyment of Human Rights, today, over one third of humanity, in at least thirty (30) countries around the world, are facing the struggles caused by the criminal application of UCMs, which are mainly promulgated by the government of the United States and the European Union, among others. Their impact, though, goes far beyond, in light of their extraterritorial implications and the over-compliance phenomena.

The Venezuelan Anti-Blockade Observatory, established in 2020, on the basis of the provisions of the Venezuelan Constitutional Anti-Blockade Act for National Development and Ensuring Human Rights, has been working since at least 2022 in the

¹ The only lawful “sanctions”, by virtue of international law, are those imposed by the UN Security Council.

design of a digital and comprehensive platform that may contribute towards ongoing efforts at the global level for ensuring registration and systematization of existing UCMs, while serving also as a platform for both raising awareness and supporting research efforts to track their negative impact on the daily lives of hundreds of millions of people. As a result, the “Geopolitical Map of Sanctions”, officially launched in July 2023, is an interactive and online tool that collects and compiles data from official, public and/or independent sources on this subject, with the purpose of facilitating a wider understanding over the scope and impact of unilateral coercive measures worldwide. This user-friendly platform, which is open to receiving contributions from any party interested in collaborating in this common endeavor, also includes bibliography, publications from the academia, and relevant news related to this important subject. It aims to complement the “Sanctions Research Platform” that was recently launched by the Special Rapporteur on the Negative Impact UCMs on the Enjoyment of Human Rights.

The first phase of this project includes data from countries subjected to unilateral coercive measures (sanctioned), distributed across regions: Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean, and the Middle East. The interactive map provides individual fact sheets for each targeted country, whereby data related to UCMs can be seen on a case-by-case basis. For the second phase of this project, this project looks forward to complementing this tool with relevant information from official sources in sanctioned countries, including on their respective national efforts to tackle the negative impact of UCMs.

The ultimate goal is for this tool to enable the international community, including the United Nations System, as well as civil society, the academia and other relevant stakeholders, to measure the overall impact of UCMs at the global level – including as a push factor that, at present time, continues to deliberately exacerbate the different dimensions of the ongoing global multifaceted crisis –, on the world economy and humanity as a whole, particularly on the peoples from those 30 nations currently subjected to such cruel and inhumane measures.

The High-Level Side Event convened for the afternoon of Thursday, 21 September 2023, on the margins of the High-Level Segment of the 78th Session of the General Assembly of the United Nations, will provide an opportunity to both launch the “Geopolitical Map of Sanctions” and to also continue raising awareness, this time within the context of the most prominent multilateral gathering of world leaders, on the negative impact of unilateral coercive measures, while insisting on the need for their complete, immediate and unconditional lifting.