

Forum: Economic and Financial Committee (ECOFIN)

Question Of: Balancing sanctions regimes with their humanitarian impact

Submitted by: Azerbaijan

Co-Submitters: United Kingdom, State of Israel, United States, South Korea

Signatories: Italy, Denmark, Brazil, Ukraine, Canada, Pakistan, Colombia, Hellenic Republic, Afghanistan

The General Assembly,

Guided by the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, particularly the maintenance of international peace and security and the protection of human dignity,

Reaffirming that sanctions are a legitimate and necessary instrument of international diplomacy to deter aggression, uphold international law, and promote accountability for violations of human rights,

Recognizing that sanctions regimes, when insufficiently calibrated or poorly implemented, may result in unintended humanitarian consequences affecting civilian access to essential goods and services,

Alarmed that despite the existing legal exemptions for banks and humanitarian organizations included in UN Security Council Resolution 2664 (2022), many private institutions continue to "de-risk" (over comply) by blocking essential financial transactions and aid,

Emphasizing the importance of proportionality and precision in sanctions design to ensure that pressure targets responsible actors rather than civilian populations,

1. Affirms the necessity of United Nations Security Council Resolution 2664 and calls upon all Member States and regional organizations to ensure its full and uniform implementation by:

- a. Incorporating the aid exemptions explicitly into all national and regional sanctions legislation,
- b. Ensuring that humanitarian exemptions apply automatically to authorized humanitarian actors without additional political approval,

c. Issuing clear domestic guidance to enforcement authorities, financial regulators, and customs agencies on the scope of the exemption;

2. Urges Member States to adopt and expand the use of General Licenses for humanitarian activities by:

- a. Authorizing the provision, financing, transport, insurance, and facilitation of humanitarian goods and services, including food, medicine, medical equipment, and public-health supplies,
- b. Removing the requirement for repetitive, case-by-case authorization for standard humanitarian transactions,
- c. Ensuring that General Licenses are publicly accessible, clearly drafted, and regularly updated to reflect evolving humanitarian needs;

3. Encourages sanction-imposing authorities to establish “Safe Harbor” mechanisms to counter over-compliance and de-risking through:

- a. The issuance of official comfort letters to financial institutions, insurers, and service providers confirming the legality of legitimate humanitarian transactions,
- b. Providing guidance outlining acceptable practices for humanitarian actors;

4. Strongly encourages the balancing of sanctions to impose precise measures and minimize the effect of general measures:

- a. Focusing measures on specific individuals, entities, and networks responsible for violations of international law,
- b. Limiting the use of broad sectoral or economy-wide sanctions that risk indirect harm to civilian populations,
- c. Regularly reviewing listings to ensure accuracy, proportionality, and continued relevance;

5. Recommends enhanced coordination and information-sharing among Member States by:

- a. Facilitating dialogue between Member States, financial regulators, humanitarian actors, and private-sector institutions,
- b. Supporting capacity-building initiatives to help banks and NGOs better understand humanitarian exemptions and compliance requirements,
- c. Harmonizing national unilateral sanctions with those of the UN for easier adaptation,
- d. Promoting transparency and predictability in sanctions implementation to restore confidence in lawful humanitarian engagement;

6. Demands exploitation of previously mentioned measures to be punished by the offending organization to be placed on a blacklist and be unable to utilise the humanitarian measures to the discretion of the enforcing body,

a. The enforcing body will constitute the co submitters;

7. Decides to remain actively seized of the matter to ensure that sanctions regimes continue to function as effective tools of international accountability while safeguarding humanitarian access and upholding human dignity,

a. Through the scheduling of an annual conference of ECOFIN specifically charged with updating sanctions responses and approaches.