POSITION PAPER

COMMITTEE- United Nation Human Right Council(UNHRC)

AGENDA- The Impacts of Unilateral coercive measures on the protection and enjoyment of human rights

COUNTRY- Canada

NAME OF DELEGATE- Taruni Bhatia

SCHOOL- Bal Bhavan Public School

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) is an international document adopted by the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA). It establishes the rights and freedoms of all members of the human race. It was accepted by the UNGA as per Resolution 217 during the session on December 10, 1948. Whereas recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world.

UCM (unilateral coercive measures), often referred to as**economic sanctions**, imposed by one or a group of States, are illegal under international law as only the United Nations Security Council under Article 41 has the right to impose such coercive measures necessary to ensure compliance with international law.

In recent years the Canadian government has adopted unilateral sanctions against a host of countries including Venezuela, China, Russia, Nicaragua and others. In a sign of Ottawa’s growing employment of sanctions as a tool of coercive statecraft, Canada adopted legislation modelled after the US Magnitsky Act, while Global Affairs Canada [created](https://www.mondaq.com/canada/Government-Public-Sector/748908/Administration-Of-Canada39s-Sanctions-Regime-Gets-A-Welcome-Makeover) a Sanctions Policy and Operations Coordination Division in 2018. In the same year, the federal budget earmarked [$22.2 million](https://policymagazine.ca/the-case-for-a-new-and-improved-magnitsky-law/) over five years toward the strengthening of Canada’s sanctions regimes .

Two years ago, in coordination with Washington, Canada [sanctioned](https://www.canada.ca/en/global-affairs/news/2019/06/canada-imposes-sanctions-on-nicaraguan-officials.html) nine Nicaraguan government officials, including ministers and the president of the country’s national assembly. A June 2019 [press release](https://www.state.gov/united-states-and-canada-announce-financial-sanctions-to-address-the-ongoing-repression-in-nicaragua/) written by officials from the US State Department declared “Canada’s sanctions actions today illustrate the international commitment to Nicaraguans’ cause, signaling clearly that President Ortega’s insufficient and self-serving measures are not nearly enough to address Nicaraguans’ demands for democracy, basic rights, and freedom from repression.”

Canada has imposed [four rounds](https://www.canada.ca/en/global-affairs/news/2019/04/canada-imposes-additional-sanctions-on-the-maduro-regime-in-venezuela.html) of sanctions against Venezuela since 2017. These moves reinforced and legitimated US sanctions that have contributed to [tens of thousands of deaths](https://cepr.net/report/economic-sanctions-as-collective-punishment-the-case-of-venezuela/). According to the [preliminary report](https://www.ohchr.org/en/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=26747&LangID=E) by the current UN Special Rapporteur on the negative impact of unilateral coercive measures, Alena Douhan, “the [Venezuelan] government’s revenue was reported to shrink by 99%, with the country currently living on 1% of its pre-sanctions income,” which has impeded “the ability of Venezuela to respond to the Covid-19 emergency.”