

# Double Standards and Hypocrisy: Where are the Sanctions against the West?

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*As the US and the European Union impose sanctions on 21 officials from Russia and Ukraine for helping the people of Crimea to make a democratic choice to become a part of the Russian Federation, one specific question arises – where were all the sanctions when the West was carrying out genuinely illegal wars and interventions that resulted in destruction and thousands of innocent civilians being killed?*

*Unlike Russia, which has not fired one single shot in Crimea, nor has been seen as an invader by the people of Crimea, the West, primarily the United States and NATO countries, have caused havoc and destruction all over the world with little or no repercussions. Below are just three examples which warrant toughest sanctions to be imposed on Western powers.*

## The Iraq War

The Lancet journal in 2006 [published](#) an estimate of 654,965 excess Iraqi deaths related to the war of which 601,027 were caused by violence. In terms of financial costs, the non-partisan Congressional Research Service estimates that the US will have [spent almost](#) \$802bn (£512.8bn) on funding the war by the end of fiscal year 2011, with \$747.6bn (£478bn) already appropriated. The dire consequences of Western invasion continued way beyond 2003. Sectarian violence in the conflict began to grow from early 2005. But the destruction of an important Shia shrine in February 2006 saw attacks between Sunni and Shia militias [increase dramatically](#). This caused many Iraqi families to abandon their homes and move to other areas within the country or to flee abroad. The International Organization for Migration, IOM, which monitors numbers of [displaced](#) families, estimates that in the four years 2006-2010, as many as 1.6 million Iraqis were internally displaced, representing 5.5% of the population.

## Libyan Bloody intervention

The intervention in Libya was supposed to be about saving lives and protecting civilians from the murdered Colonel Gaddafi. Instead it quickly became a catastrophe. Firstly, it is important to note that NATO acted completely [outside its mandate](#). Secondly, just as currently in Syria, the West supported vile and blood thirsty rebels who took it upon themselves to create massacre after massacre. Amnesty International has produced compendious [evidence](#) of mass abduction and detention, beating and routine torture, killings and atrocities by the rebel militias Britain, France and the US have backed. Throughout that time African migrants and black Libyans have been subject to a relentless

[racist campaign of mass detention](#), lynchings and atrocities on the usually unfounded basis that they have been loyalist mercenaries. What is now known, is that while the death toll in Libya when NATO intervened was perhaps around 1,000-2,000 (judging by UN estimates), eight months later it became more than ten times that figure. Estimates of the numbers of dead range from 10,000 up to 50,000. The National Transitional Council puts the losses at 30,000 dead and 50,000 wounded. Currently, Libya continues to be in a [state of anarchy](#) with frequent assassinations, complete lack of security and towns controlled by aggressive militia.

### US Drone Strikes

The impact of President Barack Obama's drone strikes has been devastating to many communities in Pakistan, Yemen and Afghanistan. In Pakistan alone, The Bureau of Investigative Journalism (TBIJ) [reports](#) that from June 2004 through mid-September 2012, available data indicate that drone strikes killed 2,562-3,325 people in Pakistan, of whom 474-881 were civilians, including 176 children. TBIJ reports that these strikes also injured an additional 1,228-1,362 individuals. Where media accounts do report civilian casualties, rarely is any information provided about the victims or the communities they leave behind. Furthermore, current US targeted killings and drone strike practices undermine respect for the rule of law and international legal protections and may set dangerous precedents. There is clear doubt on the legality of strikes on individuals or groups not linked to the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, and who do not pose imminent threats to the US. The US government's failure to ensure basic transparency and accountability in its targeted killing policies, to provide necessary details about its targeted killing program, or adequately to set out the legal factors involved in decisions to strike hinders necessary democratic debate about a key aspect of US foreign and national security policy.

### Typical double standards and hypocrisy

The above three examples clearly illustrate that the West, and especially the United States, has engaged in actions which undoubtedly warrant severe sanctions and even trials in the International Criminal Court. However those involved, such as George Bush, Tony Blair and current British Prime Minister David Cameron have been left untouched. Meanwhile these leaders have been the first to condemn and criticise the actions of Russia that cannot be compared to the atrocities committed by the West. The hypocrisy and double standards are perhaps cliché terms regularly attributed to the West, nevertheless, it is crucial to point out once again the lack of moral ground that the West can stand on when condemning Russia. Until sanctions are imposed on the Western countries that have engaged in atrocious and illegal activities over the last decade, Western powers have no right to speak out against the current crisis in Ukraine.

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