



Alena Douhan met President Mnangagwa, 79, on a ten-day visit to Zimbabwe

End Mugabe-era sanctions on Zimbabwe, UN envoy tells West

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A UN rapporteur has urged the West to lift its 20-year-old sanctions in Zimbabwe, saying that they restrict public access to healthcare, food and sanitation.

Britain, the European Union and the United States maintain targeted sanctions from the Mugabe era that punish Zimbabwe's human rights record, including persecution of journalists and failure to punish the security forces for abuses. In February Britain sanctioned four security officials, adding to an arms embargo on the state-owned Zimbabwe Defence Industries that it imposes along with the EU.

Alena Douhan, a Belarusian academic who specialises in the impact of western sanctions, said after a ten-day visit to Zimbabwe: "Sanctions and various forms of over-compliance

with sanctions have had an insidious ripple effect on the economy of Zimbabwe and on the enjoyment of fundamental human rights, including access to health, food, safe drinking water, sanitation, education and employment.



Zimbabweans protest outside the US embassy in Harare on Monday, marking Anti-Sanctions Day
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“The time is ripe for sanctioning states and key national stakeholders to engage in meaningful structured dialogue on political reforms, human rights and the rule of law and abandon the rhetoric on sanctions as an advocacy tool.”

President Mnangagwa, who ousted Robert Mugabe in 2017, has embraced his predecessor’s use of sanctions as a [rallying cry](#).

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The United States has sanctions on more than 100 Zimbabwean officials, many of them dating to 2002 and 2003. The EU initially matched those measures but suspended its sanctions against individuals in 2013. There are no nationwide sanctions.

Douhan was appointed by the UN Human Rights Council in March last year as its second “special rapporteur on the negative impact of the unilateral coercive measures”. The Cuban-backed and Iranian-sponsored post was formed in a 2014 resolution and was designed to define western sanctions against regimes over violations of human rights.

In Zimbabwe she met Mnangagwa, ministers, the Speaker of the national assembly and opposition figures. Her full report will be delayed until the Human Rights Council meets in September next year.

Douhan has a history of blaming problems in countries such as Iran, Syria, Venezuela and Cuba on western sanctions, according to the monitoring group UN Watch. In February she visited Venezuela and portrayed the Maduro regime as a victim of US sanctions. Maduro name-checked Douhan in his speech to the UN general assembly last month, pointing to her report which argued that western sanctions had worsened pre-existing economic problems in Venezuela.

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