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Global politics

Higher level and standard level

Paper 1

11 November 2025

Zone A afternoon | **Zone B** afternoon | **Zone C** afternoon

1 hour 15 minutes

Instructions to candidates

- Do not open this examination paper until instructed to do so.
- Answer all the questions.
- The maximum mark for this examination paper is **[25 marks]**.

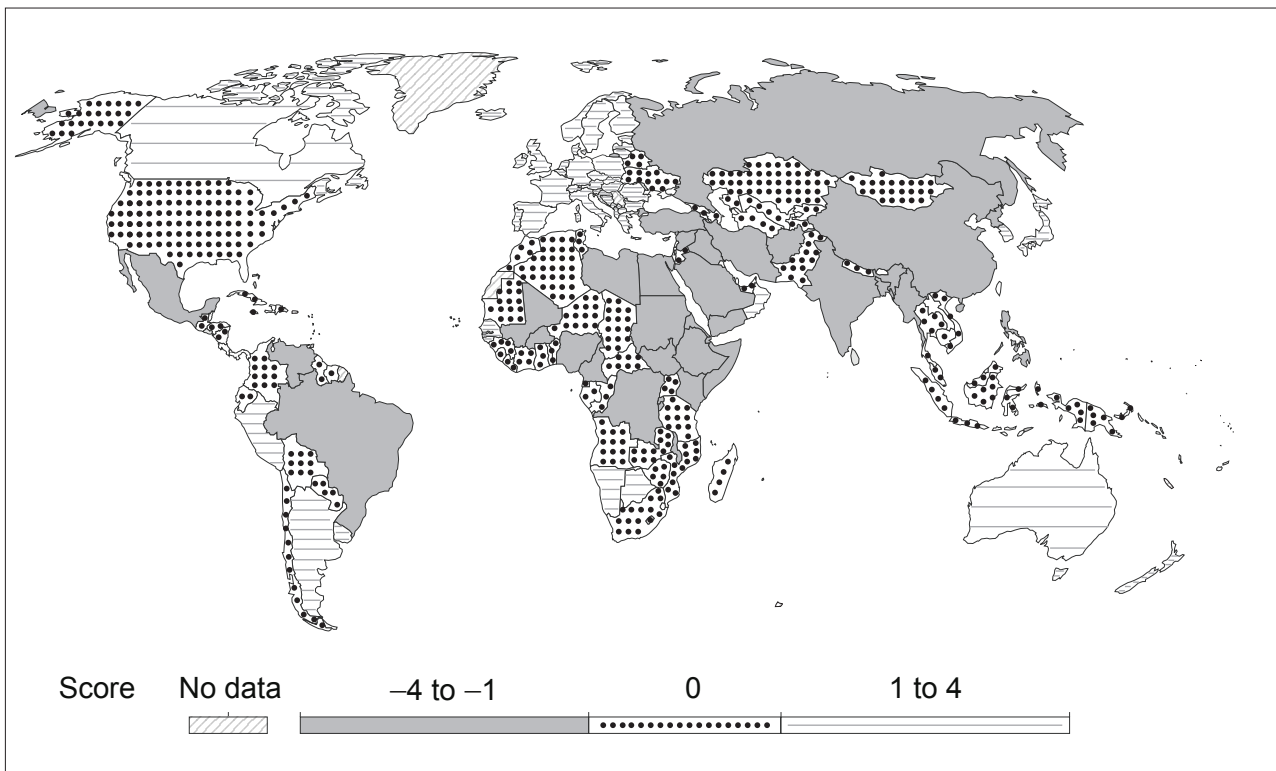
Unit 2: Human rights

Read all the sources carefully and answer all the questions that follow.

Source A Adapted from: "Human Rights, 2019", published by *Our World in Data*, a non-profit organization focused on the use of data (2016).

The map shows the extent to which citizens' human rights are protected from government violations and gives each country a score. A positive score means fewer human rights violations. A negative score means more frequent human rights violations.

Human Rights, 2019



Source B

Removed for copyright reasons

Source C Adapted from: “Bachelet calls for major re-think over impact of sanctions² on human rights”, UN News website (2021).

More sanctions are being applied to a greater number of states, often for political purposes rather than for the protection of human rights. Such an approach, that prioritizes national interests and politicizes human rights, makes it more difficult to protect human rights on a global scale.

Human rights should be considered when designing sanctions. Actors implementing sanctions are responsible for possible human rights violations in the sanctioned country. In too many cases throughout the world, the civilian population suffers long-term consequences of sanctions while dictators remain in power. In the case of Belarus, while the regime remains in power, the imposition of sanctions has undermined the already limited human rights of the people. This led the regime to act more aggressively against both domestic and international critics. In Myanmar, military leaders turned to the armed forces to impose stricter measures against civilians once sanctions had been implemented.

It is necessary to reconsider the use of sanctions, especially to restrict the use of unilateral sanctions. Regardless of the level of protection of human rights within an individual state, it is important to offer necessary humanitarian assistance and prioritize the needs and rights of vulnerable people.

² sanctions: threatened penalties for disobeying a law or rule

Source D Adapted from: “Sanctions are effective—if used correctly”, published by the *Atlantic Council*, an American non-partisan think tank (2019).

Sanctions are a critical tool of foreign policy as the international community is far too often ignoring human rights violations. They are more flexible than traditional diplomatic negotiations without the many downsides of military action. As more traditional forms of conflict are no longer useful policy tools, sanctions remain the best method of protecting human rights.

But how far do sanctions imply a politicization of human rights? The politicization of human rights is a common trait of the 21st century. If human rights were not politicized, there would be no widespread need or urgency to defend them. It is the knowledge that we have rights nobody can take away from us that has helped awareness of the importance of human rights spread globally. While there is no real universal standard of protecting human rights in place, there are very few policy tools that could help defend human rights on a global scale besides sanctions.

There are some instances where sanctions may not have been implemented ideally. The aggressive sanctions imposed against the Venezuelan regime of Nicolás Maduro certainly weakened it. However, the sanctions targeted so many sectors of society that they made the humanitarian situation worse, even though many of the problems taking place there were already present before the sanctions, including out of control increases in the price of food and other typical purchases. Ultimately, sanctions are the best peaceful option we have to punish those violating human rights.

1. Outline what Source A says about the protection of human rights. [3]
 2. With explicit reference to Source B **and one** example you have studied, explain why a state may fail to protect human rights. [4]
 3. Using Source C **and** Source D, contrast how politicization has impacted the protection of human rights. [8]
 4. Using **all** the sources **and** your own knowledge, discuss the view that the politicization of human rights promotes justice. [10]
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References:

- Source A** Our World in Data, 2016. *Human rights, 2019*. [online] Available at: <https://ourworldindata.org/human-rights> [Accessed 17 September 2022]. Source adapted.
- Source C** UN News, 2021. *Bachelet calls for major re-think over impact of sanctions on human rights*. [online] Available at: <https://news.un.org/en/story/2021/09/1100142> [Accessed 28 December 2021]. Source adapted. Reprinted with the permission of the United Nations.
- Source D** O'Toole, B., 2019. *Sanctions are effective—if used correctly*. [online] Available at: <https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/new-atlanticist/sanctions-are-effective-if-used-correctly/> [Accessed 28 December 2021]. Source adapted.