International Relations · GS - II

Examine the effectiveness and limitations of economic sanctions as an instrument for countering transnational armed networks and influencing regional security dynamics.

EXAM YEAR	PAPER	SUBJECT
DAILY PRACTICE 19/11/2026	GS - II	International Relations

MARKS	WORD LIMIT
15	~250 words

Answer Hint

Economic statecraft, targeted sanctions, financial networks, secondary sanctions, non-state armed actors, proxy networks, sovereignty, humanitarian consequences, enforcement challenges, multilateral legitimacy, diplomatic engagement.

Model Answer

Introduction

Economic sanctions are an instrument of foreign policy through which states restrict financial, commercial or economic activities to influence the behaviour of individuals, organisations or governments. They are increasingly used against transnational armed networks and their alleged financial supporters.

Effectiveness of Sanctions

- **Financial disruption:** Asset freezes and transaction restrictions can limit access to funds and international financial systems.
- **Network isolation:** Sanctions targeting charities, intermediaries and smuggling networks can disrupt alternative funding channels.
- **Deterrence:** Restrictions may discourage financial institutions and businesses from engaging with designated entities.

- **Diplomatic signalling:** Sanctions communicate opposition to activities considered threats to regional security.

Limitations and Concerns

- **Evasion:** Informal financial channels, cash transfers and smuggling networks can undermine enforcement.
- **Sovereignty concerns:** Unilateral and secondary sanctions may generate diplomatic tensions with third countries.
- **Humanitarian impact:** Broad restrictions can unintentionally affect civilian populations and legitimate charitable activities.
- **Limited political outcomes:** Financial pressure does not necessarily change the strategic objectives of armed groups.

Way Forward

Sanctions should be evidence-based, precisely targeted and periodically reviewed. International cooperation, financial intelligence sharing and transparent designation procedures are essential. Diplomatic engagement and multilateral mechanisms should complement financial restrictions.

Conclusion

Economic sanctions can constrain the financial capacity of transnational armed networks, but they cannot independently resolve complex regional conflicts. Their effectiveness depends on coordinated enforcement, legal legitimacy and a broader diplomatic strategy.

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