In this pioneering study, Daniel Strandow is the first to explicitly study whether United Nations targeted sanctions have a positive effect on the chances of ending a civil war, when controlling for the impact of battlefield outcomes. This work selects three types of sanctions, imposed during ongoing internal armed conflicts, which target: arms, individuals (travel bans and asset freezes), and commodities (diamonds and timber). A conclusion with significant statistical support is that implemented arms embargos have a substantial influence: such sanctions increase the likelihood that the parties move towards conflict resolution. The results are based on an in-depth analysis of more than a hundred conflict-months in the civil conflicts in Liberia and Cote d’Ivoire during the first part of this decade.

This is a report from the Special Program on the Implementation of Targeted Sanctions (SPITS) at Uppsala University’s Department of Peace and Conflict Research. A parallel report by the full SPITS team assesses recent developments in UN sanction policy on Liberia and Cote d’Ivoire.