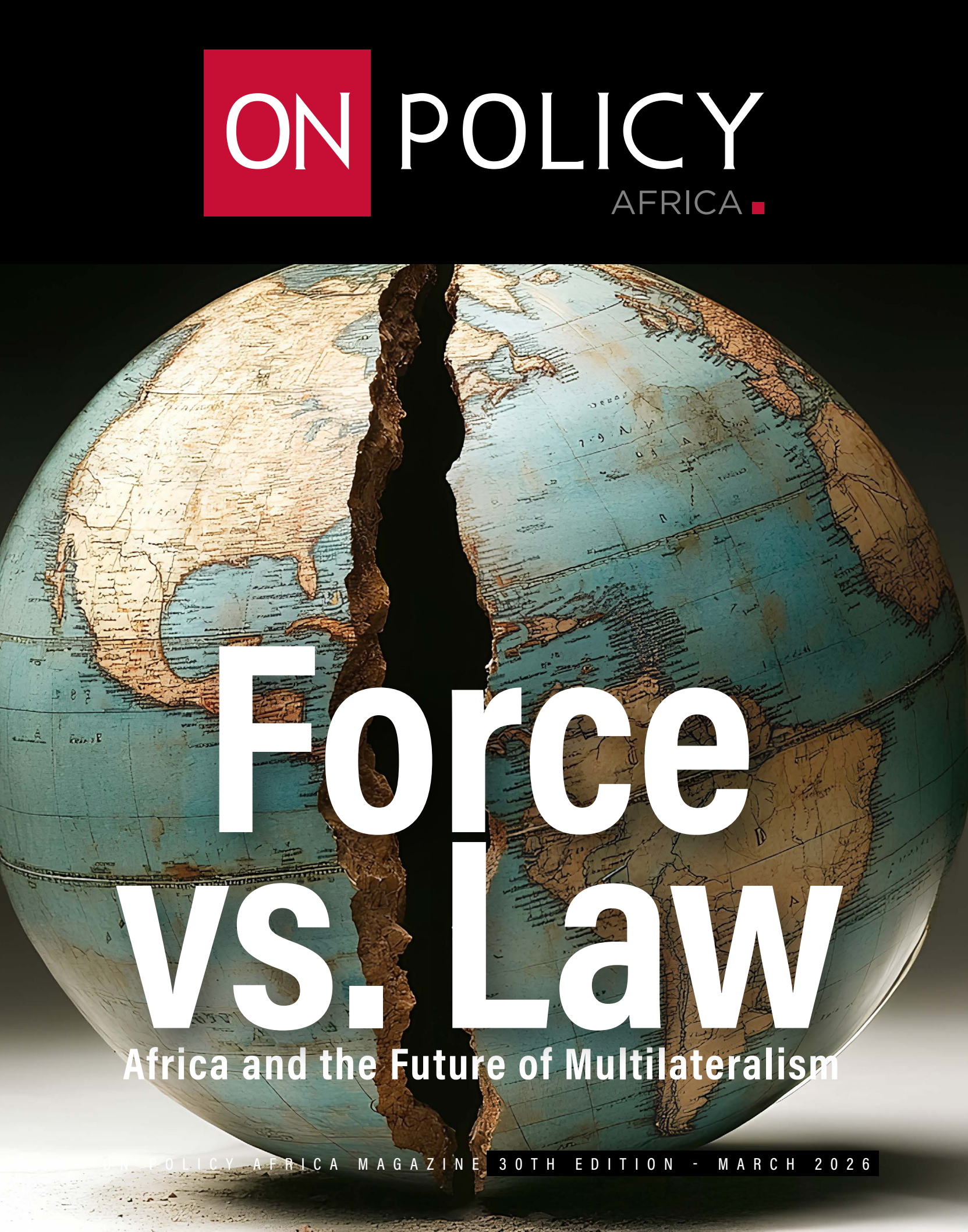




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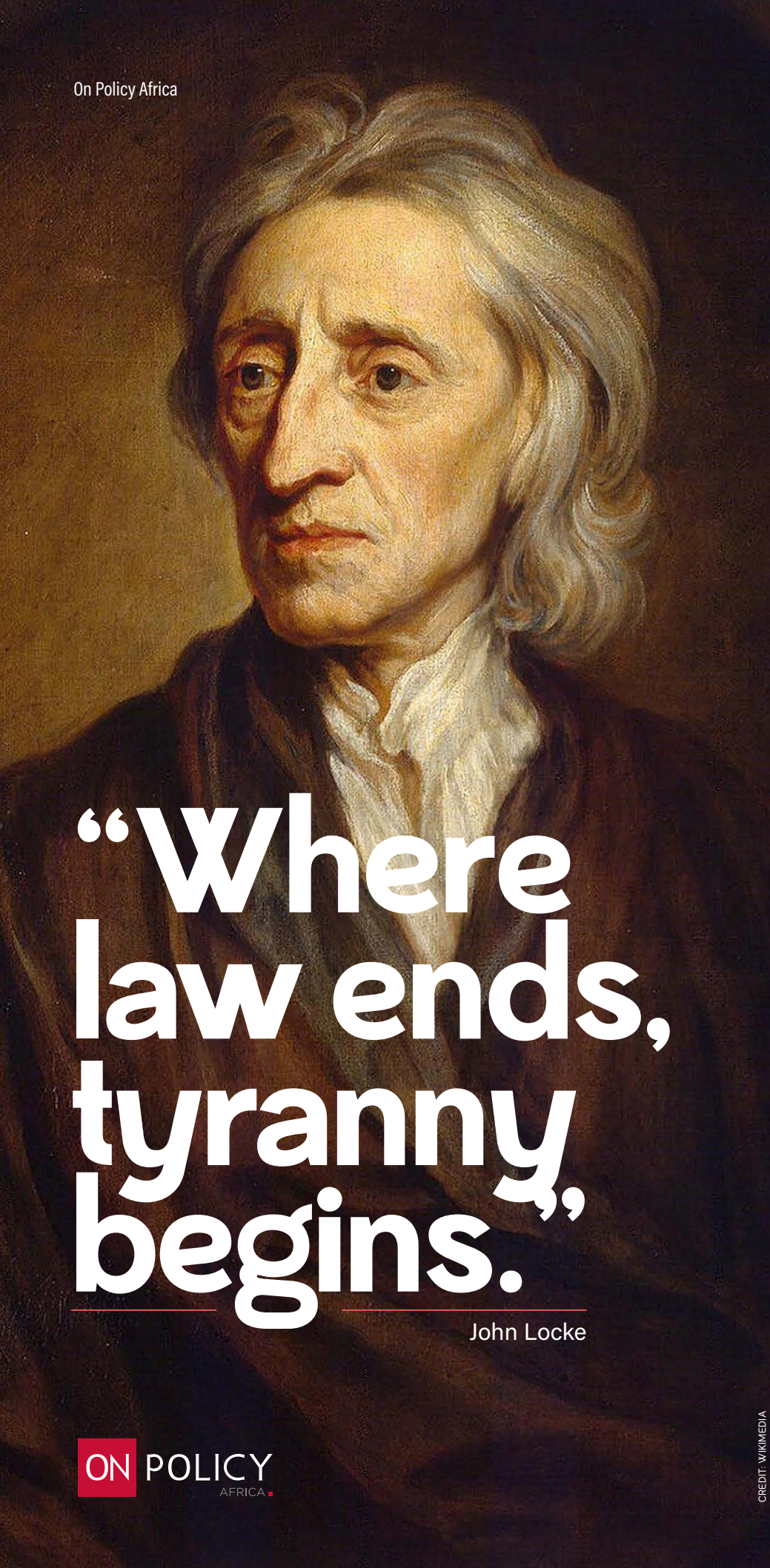
POLICY

AFRICA ■

Force vs. Law

Africa and the Future of Multilateralism

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A detailed oil painting of John Locke, showing him from the chest up, wearing a dark coat over a white cravat. He has long, wavy, light-colored hair and a serious expression, looking slightly to the left.

“Where
law ends,
tyranny
begins.”

John Locke

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Unilateral Power in a Fragmenting World

By Dr. Julienne Stéphanie Mesumbe

When the United Nations was founded in 1945, its charter carried a solemn promise: that collective security would replace unilateral force, and that law would restrain power. Eighty years later, that promise is under strain. From Ukraine to Gaza, from Venezuela to Nigeria, powerful states increasingly bypass multilateral institutions, acting alone in pursuit of their interests. For Africa, long shaped by external intervention and contested sovereignty, this trend is not abstract. It is a direct challenge to the continent's security, agency, and place in global governance.

The January 2026 U.S. raid on Caracas, which captured Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro without Security Council authorization, crystallizes this shift. Justified under the familiar language of counterterrorism and narcotics control, the

operation was in fact a profound violation of sovereignty. It revealed a system where legality is applied asymmetrically: smaller states are scrutinized, sanctioned, and constrained, while powerful states retain broad discretion in their own use of force. The precedent is dangerous. If sovereignty can be suspended when expedient, then Africa, already the most frequent subject of Security Council debates, risks becoming the next testing ground.

The Erosion of Multilateralism

The bypassing of the Security Council reflects a broader crisis of multilateralism. Veto politics has paralyzed the Council, preventing meaningful action in Ukraine and Gaza. The withdrawal of the United States from more than thirty UN bodies further hollowed out the system. For Africa, which



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has relied on multilateral institutions to balance asymmetries of power, this erosion is existential.

The parallels with the League of Nations are sobering. Founded in 1919 to prevent another world war, the League collapsed under the weight of great-power defection and institutional paralysis. When Italy invaded Ethiopia in 1935, the League proved powerless. Its failure paved the way for global catastrophe. Today, the UN risks a similar fate unless reformed.

Africa's Vulnerabilities

Africa has long been the terrain of external interventions, from Cold War proxy wars to contemporary counterterrorism campaigns. The Caracas raid underscores how fragile sovereignty becomes when legality bends to power. Nigeria's December 2025 raid, Libya's 2011 intervention, and France's Sahel campaigns all illustrate how quickly doctrines of unilateralism migrate.

The continent's vulnerabilities are compounded by resource wealth. Africa's oil-rich states, Nigeria, Angola, Libya, Algeria, South Sudan, mirror Venezuela's dependence

on rents and governance fragility. In a world where energy security drives geopolitics, these states risk becoming targets for interventions cloaked in the language of democracy or counterterrorism.

The Path Forward

For Africa, the challenge is clear. The continent must move beyond reactive diplomacy and articulate a coherent position on the use of force, legality, and multilateral reform. Strengthening the African Union's peace and security architecture, advancing common African positions on Security Council reform, and insisting on accountability in security partnerships are no longer optional.

Internal legitimacy is equally critical. Regimes that rule through coercion rather than consent invite foreign actors to pose as liberators. Democracy, transparency, and inclusive governance are not luxuries, they are shields against external coercion.

Conclusion

In a fragmenting world, unilateral power may appear efficient. For Africa, however, it revives old vulnerabilities. The choice ahead is not between security and international law, but between a global order shaped with African participation and one imposed without it.

On Policy Magazine remains committed to amplifying African perspectives, strengthening regional frameworks, and advancing progressive policies that accelerate the continent's transformation. This issue brings together voices from across Nkafu and beyond to examine how force, law, and sovereignty intersect in today's turbulent world.

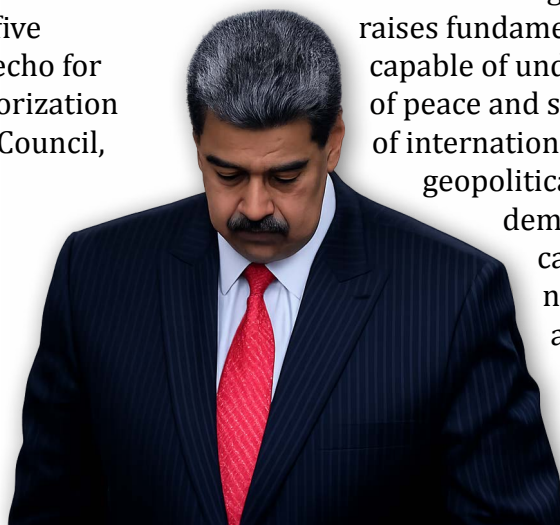
Absolute Resolve: When Force Overrides Law

The arrest of Nicolás Maduro and the unraveling of international norms

By Guy Beaudry Jengu Jengu

On January 3, 2026, U.S. forces launched a lightning [raid on Caracas](#), capturing Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro and his wife. The operation, codenamed *Absolute Resolve*, lasted less than five hours. Yet its reverberations will echo for decades. Conducted without authorization from the United Nations Security Council, it represents a direct challenge to one of the cardinal principles of international law: the prohibition of unilateral force. This action, conducted without authorization from the United Nations Security Council (UNSC), violates the prohibition against the unilateral use of force.

Secretary-General António Guterres declared during the emergency UNSC meeting: “Independently of the situation in Venezuela, these developments constitute a dangerous precedent.” This intervention raises fundamental legal and political questions capable of undermining the global architecture of peace and security. How does this violation of international law reconfigure the global geopolitical landscape? This analysis demonstrates how this operation carries the seeds of collapse for legal norms governing the use of force and affects global geopolitics.



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Law at the Breaking Point

By bypassing the Security

Council, Washington undermined the authority of the UN Charter and eroded the customary immunity granted to sitting heads of state. Arresting a leader in office is unprecedented in modern history. It signals a dangerous precedent: that sovereignty can be suspended when power deems it expedient.

As [António Guterres warned](#), “Independently of the situation in Venezuela, these developments constitute a dangerous precedent.” International law has long rested on two pillars: the prohibition of force and the sovereign equality of states.

Absolute Resolve shook both. Article 2(4) of the UN Charter obliges members to refrain from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state. Operation “Absolute Resolve” constitutes a violation of this principle because the United States acted without UNSC authorization, the sole body empowered to authorize the use of force. The American administration invoked drug trafficking accusations to justify this operation. However, according to Article 103, UN obligations take precedence over all others. Beyond violating the principle of non-unilateral use of force, this operation violates the *comitas gentium* that establishes head of state immunity. A Head of State benefits from special treatment shielding them from foreign laws and jurisdictional control. This immunity is divided into personal and functional immunity, and guarantees the free exercise of sovereign functions. This practice, rooted in [international law custom](#),

materializes the sovereign equality of states and the courtesy necessary for interstate relations.

The precedent is destabilizing. If powerful States can suspend sovereignty at will, others may follow suit. Russia’s invasion of Ukraine, Israel’s strikes in Gaza, and now Washington’s raid in Caracas all point to a world where legality is contingent on power. For purists of international law, this is manifestly illegal. For interventionists, it is justified under doctrines of preventive self-defense or counter-narcotics policing. But the deeper danger lies in the normalization of “law à la carte”, a world where rules are binding only when convenient.



*If powerful
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follow suit.*

Historical Parallels

The raid on Caracas recalls earlier moments when force trumped law. In 2003, the U.S.-led invasion of Iraq bypassed the Security Council, justified by contested claims of weapons of mass destruction. In 2011, NATO’s intervention in Libya stretched a humanitarian mandate into regime change. In both cases, legality was contested, but power prevailed. *Absolute Resolve* continues this trajectory, but with a new twist: the direct arrest of a sitting head of state.

Such actions erode the fragile consensus that has sustained the post-1945 order. They invite rival powers to adopt similar tactics, accelerating fragmentation. China and Russia, already skeptical of Western interpretations of law, may feel emboldened to pursue interventions



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For Africa, this is not an abstract concern. The UN, despite its paralysis, remains one of the few arenas where African states can assert their interests. Its erosion leaves the continent exposed to unilateral interventions cloaked in the language of counterterrorism or resource security.

Africa's Stakes

Africa has long been the terrain of external interventions, from Cold War proxy wars to contemporary counterterrorism campaigns. The Caracas raid underscores how fragile sovereignty becomes when legality bends to power. For African leaders, the lesson is urgent: strengthening continental peace mechanisms, investing in preventive diplomacy, and defending international norms appear as strategic imperatives. Without such measures, Africa risks being trapped in a cycle where sovereignty is conditional and security is outsourced.

under their own doctrines. The result is a world where coercion replaces cooperation, and multilateral institutions are sidelined.

Geopolitical Shockwaves

The geopolitical consequences are stark. By acting outside the UN framework, the United States weakened the very institutions that smaller states rely upon to balance asymmetries of power. Days later, Washington [withdrew from more than thirty UN bodies](#), further hollowing out the system of collective security.



*Africa has
long been
the terrain
of external
interventions*



Conclusion

What *Absolute Resolve* reveals is not simply the fragility of international law but the shifting balance between force and legitimacy. In a world where might increasingly makes right, sovereignty is only as strong as a nation's ability to deter or defend. For Africa, the choice is stark: either build institutions, unity, and proactive diplomacy, or risk becoming the next testing ground for unilateral power.

A close-up portrait of António Guterres, an older man with grey hair, wearing a dark suit, white shirt, and a patterned tie. He is looking slightly to the left with a serious expression. The background is blurred, showing a blue and white pattern on the left and a dark grey pattern on the right.

**“Independently of the
situation in Venezuela,
these developments
constitute a dangerous
precedent.”**

António Guterres

Could Africa's Oil-Rich States Be Next?

Lessons from Venezuela's Collapse and the U.S. Raid on Caracas

By Muriel Kinkoh

On January 3, 2026, U.S. forces stormed Caracas in a lightning raid that captured Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro and his wife. The operation, codenamed *Absolute Resolve*, was justified under the so-called “[Donroe Doctrine](#)”, a modern expansion of the Monroe Doctrine that explicitly cited Venezuela’s oil reserves as a strategic objective. For Washington, the raid was framed as a counter-narcotics mission. For much of the world, it was a stark reminder that sovereignty can be suspended when resources and geopolitics collide.

For Africa, the warning could not be clearer. The continent holds more than [125 billion barrels](#) of crude oil reserves, mostly concentrated in

Nigeria, Angola, Libya, Algeria, and South Sudan. These states, like Venezuela, are deeply dependent on oil rents, plagued by governance failures, and vulnerable to external shocks. The question is not whether Africa’s petro-states resemble Venezuela, it is whether they can avoid its fate.

The Resource Curse Revisited

Venezuela’s collapse was decades in the making. Reliance on oil revenues created a fragile economy, vulnerable to price swings and corruption. The state-run oil company, PDVSA, became both lifeline and liability. When oil prices fell, the social contract unraveled.

Africa’s petro-states face similar dynamics. Nigeria



CREDIT: VECTEEZY



The United States, emboldened by Absolute Resolve, may view African petro-states as potential targets for intervention if instability threatens energy corridors.

derives [over 90 percent](#) of its export earnings from oil, yet oil rents account for only a fraction of GDP, reflecting a failure to translate resource wealth into broad-based development. Angola's economy remains tethered to its state oil company, while Libya's post-Gaddafi vacuum has left oil fields contested by rival factions. Algeria buys social peace with hydrocarbon rents, but its rentier model is increasingly unsustainable. South Sudan, despite producing nearly 80,000 barrels per day, remains mired in poverty and civil strife.

The lesson is stark: oil wealth without institutional strength breeds fragility.

Sovereignty Under Siege

The Caracas raid highlights a troubling trend: powerful states bypassing multilateral frameworks to secure resources under the guise of counterterrorism or humanitarian intervention. For Africa, this is not hypothetical. In December 2025, [U.S. forces struck](#) militants in northwest Nigeria, citing religious persecution. Libya's 2011 NATO intervention, which toppled Muammar Gaddafi, left a vacuum that persists today.

The erosion of international

norms, particularly the prohibition on unilateral force, creates a world where sovereignty is conditional. States that lack internal legitimacy or effective governance become vulnerable to external coercion. For Africa's petro-states, the risk is acute.

Geopolitical Competition

The raid on Caracas was not only about Venezuela. It was about spheres of influence. By removing Maduro, Washington weakened Russia's foothold in the Americas and challenged China's economic lifelines. The same logic applies to Africa. As global powers vie for energy security, African oil fields could become strategic battlegrounds.

China has invested heavily in African oil infrastructure, from Angola to Sudan. Russia, through paramilitary proxies, has sought influence in resource-rich states. The United States, emboldened by *Absolute Resolve*, may view African petro-states as potential targets for intervention if instability threatens energy corridors.

Africa's Shield: Legitimacy and Unity

The Venezuelan lesson is clear: regimes that rule through coercion rather than consent



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invite foreign actors to pose as liberators. Internal legitimacy is the only reliable defense against external intervention. For Africa's petro-states, this means strengthening democratic institutions, ensuring transparent resource management, and delivering tangible benefits to citizens.

Equally important is continental unity. The African Union must articulate a coherent position on sovereignty and resource governance, defend multilateralism, and resist the normalization of unilateral force. Without such measures, Africa risks becoming the next testing ground for doctrines that subordinate law to power.

Conclusion

The capture of Nicolás Maduro was more than a Venezuelan crisis. It was a turning point in the global order, signaling that sovereignty is fragile when legality bends to power. For Africa's oil-rich states, the warning is urgent. Resource wealth without legitimacy is a liability, not a shield.

In a world where might increasingly makes right, Africa must recognize that democracy, transparency, and continental unity are not luxuries. They are the only defenses against a future where *Absolute Resolve* becomes a template for intervention on African soil.

DEMOCRACY

External Intervention and Democracy in the Global South

Lessons from Venezuela and Implications for Africa

By Dr. Pippie Hugues

The [Global South](#) has long been a theater for external interventions, often justified in the name of democracy, stability, or human rights. From U.S.-backed opposition movements in Venezuela to French military campaigns in Mali and Burkina Faso, external actors have repeatedly shaped political outcomes in countries already grappling with governance challenges. These interventions raise critical questions: Do they support democracy, or do they undermine it? And what lessons should Africa draw from Venezuela's experience?

The January 2026 U.S. raid on Caracas, which

captured President Nicolás Maduro without UN authorization, crystallizes these dilemmas. Framed as a counter-narcotics mission, the operation was in fact a profound violation of sovereignty. It revealed a system where [legality is applied selectively](#), veto power substitutes for accountability, and coercion replaces consent. For Africa, the implications are sobering.

Democracy Under Siege

External interventions often claim to promote democracy, but their record is mixed at best. In



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Venezuela, years of U.S. sanctions and support for opposition movements exacerbated economic crises and polarized politics. The raid on Caracas capped this trajectory, undermining democratic processes rather than strengthening them.

Africa has seen similar patterns. [French interventions in Mali and Burkina Faso](#), justified as counterterrorism, often deepened instability and fueled resentment. Western aid conditionality, tying development assistance to democratic reforms, has sometimes empowered elites while weakening local ownership. The result is a paradox: interventions meant to foster democracy often erode trust in governance and entrench authoritarianism.

Historical Parallels

The tension between sovereignty and intervention is not new. During the Cold War, African states were battlegrounds for ideological rivalry, with external powers backing coups, insurgencies, and proxy wars. In the post-Cold War era, democracy promotion

became the new justification. Yet the outcomes were often similar: fragile institutions, contested legitimacy, and cycles of instability.

Venezuela's trajectory illustrates how external pressure can interact with internal decay. Under Hugo Chávez and Nicolás Maduro, democratic institutions were hollowed out through "autocratic legalism", using legal frameworks to dismantle checks and balances. External sanctions compounded the crisis, creating fertile ground for intervention. The lesson for Africa is clear: weak institutions invite external manipulation, and interventions rarely restore democracy.

The Role of Think Tanks and Civil Society

In this landscape, [think tanks and civil society organizations \(CSOs\)](#) play pivotal roles. They frame narratives, influence policy, and shape public debate. Yet their independence is often compromised. External funding can align them with foreign agendas, while domestic elites may use them to



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legitimize authoritarian practices.

The challenge is to reclaim agency. African think tanks and CSOs must resist becoming conduits for external interests and instead champion African-led solutions. They can bridge research and policymaking, enhance public awareness, and build solidarity networks across regions. The rise of platforms like the T20 and BRICS Academic Forums shows the potential of collective intelligence to shape global norms.

Africa's Geopolitical Stakes

The U.S. raid on Caracas reverberates far beyond Latin America. It signals that sovereignty is fragile when legality bends to power. For Africa, where resource wealth and governance challenges mirror Venezuela's, the risk is acute. External actors may justify interventions



The U.S. raid on Caracas reverberates far beyond Latin America. It signals that sovereignty is fragile when legality bends to power.

under the guise of democracy, counterterrorism, or resource security.

African states must therefore diversify partnerships, reduce dependency on single external actors, and strengthen regional mechanisms. [The African Union](#) and regional bodies like ECOWAS must articulate coherent positions on sovereignty and democracy, resisting the normalization of unilateral interventions.

Conclusion

The Venezuelan crisis is both a cautionary tale and a mirror. It shows how external interventions, even when framed as democracy promotion, can undermine sovereignty and destabilize governance. For Africa, the lesson is urgent: democracy cannot be outsourced. It must be built from within, through legitimate institutions, inclusive dialogue, and regional solidarity.

External actors will continue to intervene, but their influence need not be decisive. By reclaiming agency, strengthening civil society, and insisting on legality, Africa can ensure that democracy is not hollowed out by foreign agendas. The choice is stark:

either shape the narrative, or be shaped by it.

“When great powers violate sovereignty, they weaken the moral basis to condemn similar actions elsewhere.”

Great
powers
and rules?

PEACE AND SECURITY

When Great Powers Bypass the Rules

Foreign Military Raids and Africa's Sovereignty at Risk

By Anthony Antem

The January 2026 U.S. raid on Caracas, which captured Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro without UN authorization, was more than a regional crisis. It was a global signal: powerful states are increasingly willing to bypass international law and multilateral institutions in pursuit of their interests. For Africa, long a terrain of external interventions, the implications are profound. Sovereignty, already fragile, risks becoming conditional.

The raid was justified under the familiar language of counterterrorism and narcotics control. Yet its deeper meaning lies in the erosion of norms. [Article 2\(4\) of the UN Charter](#) prohibits the use of force except in self-defense or with Security Council authorization. By acting unilaterally, Washington undermined this principle. The precedent is dangerous: if great powers can override legality, smaller states lose one of their few shields against coercion.

The Normative Framework

International law has always struggled to constrain power. The prohibition of force is a *jus cogens* norm, binding on all states. Yet its application has been contested. In Iraq in 2003, the U.S.-led invasion bypassed the Security Council. In Libya in 2011, NATO stretched a humanitarian mandate into regime change. In both cases, legality was debated, but power prevailed. *Absolute Resolve* continues this trajectory, but with a new twist: the direct arrest of a sitting head of state.

For Africa, the stakes are higher. The continent has relied on international law and multilateral institutions to deter external aggression. Weakening these norms leaves African states exposed to unilateral interventions cloaked in the language of counterterrorism or humanitarianism.



Yet the AU's
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The African Union's Position

The African Union (AU) has sought to balance sovereignty with responsibility. Its [Constitutive Act](#) permits intervention in cases of genocide, war crimes, or crimes against humanity. The Peace and Security Council can authorize missions to restore constitutional order. These provisions reflect a commitment to protect populations while respecting sovereignty.

Yet the AU's capacity remains limited. Its interventions often depend on external funding and logistical support. When great powers bypass multilateral frameworks, the AU's authority is undermined. The raid on Caracas illustrates how quickly norms can be eroded, leaving regional organizations sidelined.

Patterns of External Raids

Africa has long been a theater of external military operations. France's Operation Barkhane in the Sahel, the U.K.'s Operation Barras in Sierra Leone, Russia's Wagner Group deployments, and U.S. raids in Somalia and Nigeria all reflect a pattern: interventions justified as counterterrorism but often driven by strategic interests.

These operations have mixed outcomes. Some have weakened extremist networks. Others have



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CREDIT: UN PHOTO/KIM HAUGHTON

fueled resentment, caused civilian casualties, and entrenched instability. The common thread is the bypassing of multilateral oversight. Consent is often ambiguous, accountability limited, and legality contested.

Sovereignty at Risk

The raid on Caracas reinforces a troubling precedent: powerful states may bypass international law to pursue unilateral objectives. For Africa, this raises three risks.

First, **weak adherence to multilateralism**. If great powers act outside the UN, African states may lose faith in institutions that already marginalize them. Calls for Security Council reform will intensify, but without reform, adherence may weaken.

Second, **future unilateral attacks**. The precedent of Venezuela may embolden interventions in Africa, particularly in resource-rich or unstable states. Nigeria's December 2025 raid illustrates how quickly such logic can migrate.

Third, **conflict escalation**. Unilateral actions risk

exacerbating conflicts rather than containing them. In Somalia, U.S. raids sometimes bypassed national authorities, fueling controversy and undermining legitimacy.

Conclusion

Bypassing rules may offer tactical gains for great powers, but it undermines the foundations of global governance. For Africa, the consequences are existential. Sovereignty becomes conditional, security outsourced, and legitimacy eroded.

The path forward requires reform. The UN Security Council must be restructured to reflect Africa's role, with permanent seats and veto power. The AU must move from observation to action, articulating clear guidelines for external interventions and strengthening early warning systems. Transparency and consent must be documented to ensure accountability.

In a fragmenting world, Africa cannot afford to be passive. The choice is stark: either shape the rules, or be shaped by those who bypass them.

Supply Chain Reconfiguration in a Fragmenting World

Africa's Industrial Future at a Strategic Crossroads

By Dr. Salim Ahmed Vessah

For decades, globalization promised efficiency. Firms fragmented production across borders, locating activities wherever labor was cheapest or resources most abundant. By 2015, global value chains accounted for nearly half of world trade, fueling rapid industrialization in East Asia and integrating emerging economies into global manufacturing. Africa, however, remained largely on the margins.

Today, the foundations of cost-driven globalization are weakening. Geopolitical rivalry, industrial policy activism, and pandemic-induced disruptions have reshaped global supply chains. Trade interventions have multiplied fivefold since 2018. Advanced economies have committed more than a trillion

dollars to strategic sectors such as semiconductors, clean energy, and critical minerals. [The COVID-19 pandemic exposed vulnerabilities](#), with shipping costs surging 300 percent in 2021 and production delays affecting more than 60 percent of firms.

[For Africa](#), these shifts present both risks and opportunities. The continent contributes less than 2 percent of global manufacturing value added and only 15 percent of intra-regional trade. Yet the reconfiguration of supply chains creates openings in agro-processing, pharmaceuticals, renewable energy components, and mineral beneficiation. The question is whether Africa can seize them, or whether it will remain excluded from emerging “trusted” production networks.

Structural Constraints

Africa's industrial position is constrained by five structural challenges.

First, **low manufacturing intensity**. Manufacturing contributes less than 11 percent of GDP in Sub-Saharan Africa, compared to over 20 percent in East Asia. Supplier networks are underdeveloped, clusters sparse, and technological upgrading limited.

Second, **fragmented trade and integration**. Intra-African trade represents only 15–18 percent of total trade, restricting economies of scale. Tariffs, inconsistent customs procedures, and non-harmonized standards hinder cross-border production.

Third, **high logistics costs**. Transport costs average 30–40 percent of product value, compared to 10–15 percent in East Asia. Weak infrastructure, inefficient ports, and unreliable electricity raise the cost of doing business.

Fourth, **limited finance**. Development finance mechanisms are fragmented, and private investors perceive high risks. The absence of blended finance platforms and risk guarantees constrains capital deployment.

Fifth, **skills and technology gaps**. Africa's workforce often lacks the technical and managerial skills required for sophisticated manufacturing. Weak



Africa's industrial position is constrained by five structural challenges.

links between universities and industry reduce innovation potential.

Together, these constraints create a mismatch between Africa's industrial capacity and the requirements of modern supply chains.

Strategic Opportunities

Despite these challenges, global supply chain reconfiguration creates openings.

Agro-processing offers immediate potential. West Africa produces over 70 percent of global cocoa but exports it largely raw. Expanding grinding and food processing in Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire could significantly raise value addition. East Africa's horticulture and grain processing could reduce post-harvest losses and serve regional markets.

Pharmaceuticals have emerged as a strategic priority after COVID-19. South Africa already hosts vaccine formulation capacity, while Rwanda, Senegal, and Ghana are investing in fill-and-finish facilities. Regional production could reduce import dependence and strengthen resilience.

Renewable energy components are another frontier. Southern Africa's lithium and manganese, Central Africa's cobalt, and East Africa's geothermal potential provide a basis for regional value chains in batteries and power equipment.



Mineral beneficiation remains critical. Zambia's copper, Guinea's bauxite, and Mozambique's graphite illustrate opportunities to move beyond raw exports toward intermediate processing.

Historical Parallels

Africa's current dilemma recalls earlier waves of industrialization. In the 1960s, East Asia leveraged export-oriented manufacturing to climb the value chain. Africa, by contrast, remained tied to commodity exports. In the 1980s, structural adjustment programs further weakened industrial capacity. Today, the risk is repetition: exclusion from emerging supply chains could entrench dependence on raw commodities.

Yet history also offers hope. Just as East Asia seized opportunities during global shifts, Africa can leverage the current reconfiguration. The African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) provides a framework for regional value chains. Early movers who modernize infrastructure and harmonize standards can establish reputations as trusted partners.

Policy Reflections

Africa's path forward requires decisive action. Short-term priorities include operationalizing AfCFTA, targeting priority sectors, and expanding

investment facilitation. Medium-term goals involve infrastructure modernization, standards harmonization, and industrial cluster development. Long-term strategies must focus on skills upgrading, technology transfer, and integration into trusted supply chains.

The challenge is coordination. Fragmented policies, uneven implementation, and limited financing have hampered progress. Without strategic interventions, Africa risks exclusion from emerging networks. With them, the continent can position itself as a competitive participant in global manufacturing.

Conclusion

Global supply chains are fragmenting, with firms prioritizing resilience and reliability over efficiency. For Africa, this is both a threat and an opportunity. The continent remains marginally integrated, but shifts toward diversification create openings in agro-processing, pharmaceuticals, renewable energy, and mineral beneficiation.

The choice is stark. Either Africa acts decisively to integrate into reconfigured supply chains, or it risks being locked into commodity dependence for another generation. Industrialization is not optional, it is existential.

Closing Insight

Policy Takeaways Across the Issue

Across the issue, one theme emerges with clarity: the erosion of multilateralism and the rise of unilateral power. For Africa, the stakes are existential. Sovereignty, democracy, and economic resilience cannot be outsourced; they must be defended through continental unity, institutional strength, and proactive diplomacy.

Defend International Norms

Africa must insist on legality in global forums. The normalization of unilateral force undermines one of the continent's few shields against arbitrary intervention. Reform of the UN Security Council is essential, with Africa demanding permanent representation and veto power. Without reform, adherence to multilateralism will weaken, leaving African states exposed.

Strengthen Continental Security

The African Union must move from observation to action. Its peace and security architecture must be reinforced, with greater investment in early warning systems, preventive diplomacy, and rapid deployment capacity. Regional dialogue should be prioritized to avoid crises that invite external intervention.

Reclaim Democratic Agency

Democracy cannot be outsourced. African states must build legitimacy through inclusive governance, transparent institutions, and respect for constitutional order. Think tanks and civil society organizations should resist external agendas and champion African-led solutions, ensuring that democracy promotion does not become a pretext for coercion.

Economic Resilience

Industrialization is existential. Africa must seize opportunities in agro-processing, pharmaceuticals, renewable energy, and mineral beneficiation. Infrastructure modernization, standards harmonization, and skills upgrading are critical to integration into trusted supply chains. Without decisive action, Africa risks exclusion from reconfigured global production networks.

Unity and Legitimacy as Shields

Internal legitimacy is the only reliable defense against external coercion. Regimes that rule through repression rather than consent invite foreign actors to pose as liberators. Continental unity is equally essential. The African Union must articulate coherent positions on sovereignty, democracy, and resource governance, resisting the normalization of unilateral interventions.

Final Note

This thirtieth issue of *On Policy Magazine* demonstrates that Africa's future cannot be left to the discretion of external powers. The raid on Caracas, the paralysis of the UN, and the fragility of resource-dependent states all point to a world where legality bends to power. For Africa, the lesson is urgent: sovereignty, democracy, and economic resilience must be defended from within.

*The path forward
is not easy.
Reforming global
governance will
require sustained
diplomacy,
coalition-building,
and insistence on
accountability.
Strengthening
continental*

*institutions will
demand resources,
political will, and
unity of purpose.
Building legitimacy
will require leaders
to deliver tangible
benefits to citizens,
not merely rhetoric.*

Yet the alternative is clear. A global order shaped without Africa's participation will entrench marginalization and vulnerability. A global order shaped with Africa's voice will reflect the continent's aspirations for peace, justice, and development.

In a fragmenting world, unilateral power may appear efficient. For Africa, however, it revives old vulnerabilities. The choice ahead is stark: either shape the rules of global governance, or be shaped by those who bypass them.



“The Venezuelan crisis teaches Africa that sovereignty without democracy is fragile, and democracy without sovereignty is illusion.”

