



University for Peace



Vision géopolitique

Editorial – Inaugural issue

In a global context marked by the rapid reconfiguration of power and the multiplication of tensions, it has become imperative to renew our understanding of the fractures shaping our societies. This first issue of *Vision Géopolitique* offers a decentred approach by giving voice to African researchers and practitioners. By challenging the West's claim to universality, examining the complexities of radicalization, highlighting the strategic role of energy sovereignty in Africa, and questioning the security governance imposed in the name of human rights, this editorial opens avenues for rethinking the post-crisis order.

This text inaugurates an essential intellectual project for twenty-first-century geopolitics—one that calls for a conjunction of critical memory, ethical commitment, and territorial foresight. *Vision Géopolitique* affirms itself as a privileged space for autonomous, critical, and inclusive reflection, indispensable in the face of today's challenges. This inaugural dossier seeks to promote a truly decentred geopolitics, grounded in rigorous, multidisciplinary analysis.

We warmly thank our scientific committee, contributors, and partners for their commitment and support. We wish our readers an enriching and thought-provoking experience.

Happy reading,

Fr. Dibacor Philippe NGOM

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THE COLLECTIVE WEST VERSUS THE GLOBAL SOUTH: HOW THE "CIVILIZED" BECOME BARBARIANS IN CONTEMPORARY INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

THE CASE OF THE MIDDLE EASTERN WARS

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Abstract : This article examines the growing opposition between the collective West and certain targeted states through an analysis of the controversial "garden" and "jungle" metaphor formulated by Josep Borrell (2022). Drawing on the critiques of contemporary thinkers and an analysis of current geopolitical dynamics, it questions the paradox of a West that, while claiming to embody universal values of civilization, sometimes descends into its own forms of barbarism.

Keywords : International relations, civilization, barbarism, geopolitics, Middle East, international law

Résumé : Cet article analyse l'opposition croissante entre l'Occident collectif et certains États agressés, à travers l'examen de la métaphore controversée du « jardin » et de la « jungle » formulée par Josep Borrell (2022). En s'appuyant sur les critiques de penseurs contemporains et l'analyse des dynamiques géopolitiques actuelles, nous interrogeons le paradoxe d'un Occident qui, en prétendant incarner des valeurs universelles de civilisation, sombre parfois dans ses propres formes de barbarie.

Mots-clés : Relations internationales, civilisation, barbarie, géopolitique, Moyen-Orient, droit international

1. Introduction

The aim of this article is to analyze the growing opposition between the Collective West and certain targeted states, through a critical examination of Josep Borrell's controversial "garden" and "jungle" metaphor (2022). Drawing on critiques from contemporary thinkers such as Rony Brauman (2024) and an analysis of current geopolitical dynamics, we are entitled to question the paradox of a West that, while claiming to embody universal civilizational values, sometimes descends into its own forms of barbarism.

This study examines how supremacism and the neologism « limitlessness », combined with the West's diplomacy of indifference, transform the duality of civilization/barbarism into an instrument of savage domination, one that ultimately turns against its own moral claims. The situation in the Middle East is symptomatic of the current state of the world and its dark future prospects.

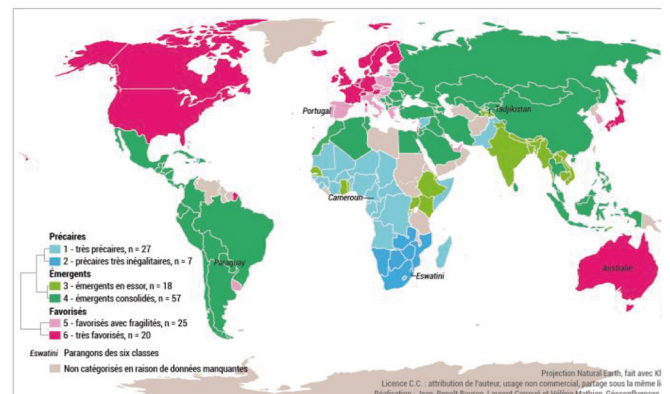


Figure 1. Representing and Dividing the World: Moving Beyond the North-South Divide to Understand Wealth Inequality and Development

by Jean-Benoît Bouron, Senior Lecturer in Geography, Editorial Manager of Géoconfluences - DGESCO, ENS de Lyon. Published on 12/02/2022

<https://geoconfluences.ens-lyon.fr>

2. Mapping the Regional Actors and Their Motivations in the Middle East

2.1 Regional Actors

Israel considers the elimination of Hamas following the October 7, 2023 attacks, as well as the dismantling of its military infrastructure, as an existential imperative for Zionism. The perception of a long-term threat from Iran and its « proxies », such as Hezbollah and Hamas, is deeply entrenched in Israeli government policy.

Hamas, which controls the Gaza Strip, pursues a political agenda centered on the destruction of Israel and the reconquest of all of historic Palestine. It fights for its organizational survival by maintaining control over Gaza, despite its growing military weakening.

The Palestinian Authority, based in the West Bank, claims political legitimacy vis-à-vis Hamas. It advocates for a negotiated two-state solution.

Iran leads the « Axis of Resistance, » a network spanning Lebanon, Gaza, Iraq, Yemen, and Syria. This alliance is fundamentally anti-Israeli and challenges the legitimacy of Israel's existence, calling for its dissolution. However, the Axis has recently suffered significant setbacks between 2024 and 2025, including the fall of Bashar al-Assad's government in Syria and the weakening of both Hamas and Hezbollah.

2.2 Moderate Arab Actors

Egypt, aligned with the Western camp since the Camp David Accords, has taken on a key mediating role between Israel and Hamas in Gaza. Yet, it refuses to host Palestinians fleeing the territory amid Israel's intense bombardment.

Jordan, whose population is over 60% of Palestinian origin, strives to maintain stability through cautious balancing diplomacy and strict security measures, aiming to avoid direct involvement in the conflict.

Saudi Arabia and the Gulf states, locked in rivalry with Iran, officially support the two-state solution. Nevertheless, they remain largely aligned with the Western camp due to longstanding oil agreements with the United States, agreements that are currently set to last until 2065.

2.3 International Powers

The United States and the European Union provide unconditional support to Israel, driven by strategic interests rooted in a logic of « preventive » intervention. This approach contributes to the erosion of international law and fosters a form of « jungle law, » in which force prevails over legal principles, and narrow self-interest becomes a primary determinant of geopolitical action.

This attempt at regional reconfiguration reveals « the birth pangs of a new Middle East, » illustrating the profound transformations underway. The childbirth metaphor suggests that a new regional order is emerging, but that this process is accompanied by intense suffering: conflict, instability, and deep social and political upheaval.

3. Supremacism: The Hierarchization of Human Lives

Supremacism is characterized by a structural inequality in the value assigned to human lives, resulting in the dehumanization of some and the hyper-humanization of others. This absolute injustice is obscured by Israel's communication strategy and its Western media relays. This hierarchization of humanity is so deeply entrenched that it is ultimately internalized, even by the victims themselves.

According to the Gaza Ministry of Health, one Israeli life is equivalent to 68.5 Palestinian lives, a disparity reflected even in prisoner exchange agreements. In 1985, Israel released 1,150 Palestinian detainees in exchange for three Israeli soldiers.

In October 2022, Josep Borrell, the European Union's High Representative for Foreign Affairs, sparked widespread controversy by stating that « Europe is a garden, » while « much of the rest of the world is a jungle, and the jungle could invade the garden » (Borrell, 2022).

This metaphor, far from being insignificant, crystallises a worldview that structures contemporary international relations: the opposition between a « civilised » West and a global South perceived as barbaric and threatening.

This vision echoes the racist metaphor put forward in 2002 by former Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak, when he described Israel as « a villa in the jungle », or more recently the statements by Yoav Gallant, then Israel's Minister of Defence: « We are imposing a total siege on the city of Gaza. There is no electricity, no food, no water, no fuel. Everything is closed. We are fighting human animals and we are acting accordingly » (Human Rights Watch).

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu stated in a tweet on 16 October (since deleted): « This is a struggle between the children of light and the children of darkness, between humanity and the law of the jungle, » not hesitating to proclaim that Israel is « the outpost of civilisation and freedom in a jungle surrounded by wild beasts. »

4. « Limitlessness »: The Absence of Civilizational Restraint

« Limitlessness » characterizes a contemporary Western mindset that considers itself entitled to do anything, in all spheres of life, particularly in the conduct of war, in open disregard for international law. This logic of boundless action, driven by an unchecked pursuit of self-interest, stands in stark opposition to Camus' ethical insight that « a man stops himself » (*Camus, 1957*), a phrase that expresses the very essence of civilization: the capacity for self-restraint.

This absence of restraint manifests concretely through:

- The waging of « wars without limits », a genocide that goes unnamed, carried out not with machetes as in Rwanda, nor industrially as under the Nazis, but through indiscriminate bombardment of civilians, including children in hospitals, the systematic destruction of infrastructure, and the razing of places of worship and housing, all aimed at forcing populations to flee their territories.

- The selective instrumentalization and biased interpretation of international law according to geopolitical interests, or those of its allies and protégés.
- The unrestrained imposition of collective economic sanctions targeting civilian populations, women, and children.

To taunt the world, Israel applies the adage of not merely "urinating quietly in the pool, but doing so from the diving board"—openly and defiantly, before the eyes of the entire international community—thanks to total impunity and protection guaranteed by the world's foremost military power: the United States.

5. The Diplomacy of Indifference: Western Hypocrisy

Western hypocrisy is starkly revealed in what Bertrand Badie calls the « diplomacy of indifference » (Badie, 2023). This approach represents a specific strategic posture in international relations, wherein a state deliberately maintains a calculated distance or self-interested neutrality toward certain international actors.

5.1 The Double Standards of International Institutions

In November 2024, the International Criminal Court (ICC) issued arrest warrants for Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and his former Defense Minister Yoav Gallant, charging them with war crimes and crimes against humanity in Gaza. This decision triggered aggressive reactions from Israel's allies, some of whom went as far as threatening the ICC as an international institution.

The United States provided unequivocal support to Israel, with a spokesperson for the National Security Council stating: « The United States categorically rejects the International Criminal Court's decision to issue arrest warrants against senior Israeli officials. » President Biden labeled the warrants « scandalous, » declaring: « There is no equivalence—none—between Israel and Hamas. »

This Western defense of Israel sharply contrasts with the treatment reserved for Russia. The Biden administration expressed full support for the ICC's investigation in Ukraine and for the arrest warrants issued against Vladimir Putin. The very same international legal institutions are upheld when they serve Western interests (Ukraine) and attacked when they challenge them (Palestine).

5.2 Forgotten Conflicts: The Geography of Indifference

While media spotlights focus intensely on certain conflicts, others are tearing entire populations apart in the deafening silence of the self-proclaimed « global policemen » of the West.

In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, more than six million people have died since 1998, according to Amnesty International. Yet this complex conflict—fueled by multiple armed groups and the systematic looting of natural resources, remains largely « ignored » by Western chancelleries.

In Sudan, the civil war raging since 2023 has displaced millions and triggered a major humanitarian crisis. Despite repeated appeals from humanitarian organizations, international conflict-resolution mechanisms remain paralyzed.

In Libya, the 2011 intervention led by France and the United States left the country fragmented among rival militias, transforming a once-prosperous nation into a playground for regional powers.

6. The Rise of the Global South: Toward a Multipolar World

Faced with this normalized and routine injustice, the states of the Global South, long reduced to stunned and powerless spectators, when they are not the primary victims themselves, are beginning to radicalize and express an intercontinental solidarity that transcends borders and cultures.

Signs of a geopolitical awakening of the Global South as a conceptual reality are now emerging. This collective entity is becoming a tangible force, extending the legacy of the 1955 Bandung Conference and the 1964 G77 group. These manifestations include:

- Palestinian flags waved in the stands during the Qatar World Cup by fans from countries geographically and culturally distant from Palestine,
- Significant abstentions during the UN vote condemning « Russian aggression » against Ukraine, revealing growing frustration with a West whose imperialist interventions in Iraq (2003) and Libya (2011) have not been forgotten.

As Ghassan Salamé observes: « The countries of the 'Global South' seem to me to share a common sentiment: that the West does not apply the same rules everywhere, and clearly displays a certain hypocrisy » (Salamé, cited).



Conclusion: Toward an Ethics of Civilizational Diversity

The central paradox lies in this inversion: in claiming to embody universal civilization, the West produces its own forms of barbarism by abandoning any self-imposed limits. Supremacism, « limitlessness, » and indifference exemplify this conceptual dead end, one that transforms the West, the self-proclaimed « civilizer, » into precisely what it claims to oppose: the Barbarian.

As Montaigne already suggested in the 16th century: « Everyone calls barbarian whatever is not part of their own custom. » It is time for the West to recognize that its claim to universality often masks a disguised particularism, and that true civilization begins with the acknowledgment of the equal dignity of all human cultures.

Franz Fanon, in *The Wretched of the Earth* (1961), his final book published just days before his death, issued a prescient cry from the heart: « Let us leave this Europe which never stops talking about man while massacring him everywhere it encounters him, at every corner of its own streets, at every corner of the world. »

The challenge is not to relativize all values, but to distinguish between authentic universalism and cultural imperialism, between genuine human rights advocacy and political instrumentalization, between civilization and civilized barbarism, to borrow Cheikh Anta Diop's powerful concept. For as recent history has shown, the gravest crimes against humanity are often committed in the name of civilization itself.

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FROM HISTORICAL DIVISIONS WITHIN ISLAM TO CONTEMPORARY TERRORIST MOVEMENTS: AN ANALYSIS OF RADICALIZATION FACTORS

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Abstract : This article examines the link between historical Islamic divisions and 21st-century violent radicalization. It explores how ancient religious fractures have been politically exploited to justify terrorism. Recent data show that most victims of Islamist terrorism are Muslims themselves, challenging a strictly religious interpretation. The study calls for clear differentiation between Islamic beliefs and violent political agendas to improve understanding of contemporary issues.

Keywords : Islam, Sunni-Shiite schism, radicalization, terrorism, geopolitics, religious history

Résumé : Cet article examine le lien entre les divisions historiques de l'Islam et la radicalisation violente au XXI^e siècle. Il analyse comment des fractures religieuses anciennes ont été exploitées politiquement pour justifier le terrorisme. Des données récentes montrent que la majorité des victimes du terrorisme islamiste sont des musulmans, remettant en question une interprétation strictement religieuse. L'étude appelle à une distinction claire entre les croyances islamiques et les agendas politiques violents afin de mieux comprendre les enjeux contemporains.

Mots-clés : Islam – Schisme sunnite-chiite – Radicalisation – Terrorisme – Géopolitique – Histoire religieuse

1. Introduction

The emergence of Islam in the 7th century on the Arabian Peninsula marked a major upheaval in the religious, social, and political order of a region dominated by polytheistic tribal structures and an established Christian presence.

The proclamation of monotheism by the Prophet Muhammad inaugurated a new spiritual era, accompanied by rapid territorial expansion driven by preaching, diplomacy, and often, military force. This dynamic enabled Islam to prevail over local resistance, but also laid the foundations for a complex religious and political order whose tensions persist to this day.

The death of the Prophet Muhammad in 632 triggered a major succession crisis that permanently divided the Muslim community (umma). The schism between Sunnis and Shiites, born from this crisis, goes beyond mere political rivalry, becoming rooted in divergent visions of religious legitimacy, temporal power, and collective memory. These divisions, far from being purely historical, continue to shape intra-Muslim relations and contemporary conflicts across the globe.

In the 21st century, terrorism carried out in the name of Islam constitutes a major global security challenge. According to Reynié's study (2021), between 1979 and 2024, more than 66,000 Islamist attacks caused nearly 250,000 deaths, of which 86% occurred in Muslim-majority countries. These striking statistics call for moving beyond a simplistic narrative centered on a supposed « clash of civilizations, » and instead call for an in-depth analysis of radicalization mechanisms and the underlying factors fueling these acts of violence.

I. The Founding Schism: Origins and Development (632–680)

A. The Succession Crisis and Its Stakes

The death of the Prophet Muhammad on June 8, 632, triggered an unprecedented crisis of legitimacy within the nascent Muslim community. This crisis revealed divergent political ambitions that transcended purely religious considerations, reflecting fundamentally different conceptions of spiritual and temporal authority.

Two camps emerged immediately, holding irreconcilable visions of leadership. On one side were the *muhājirūn* (the companions who accompanied the Prophet in his migration from Mecca to Medina), supported by the *ansār* (the Medinan inhabitants who welcomed the Prophet), led by Abū Bakr—close companion of the Prophet and father of ‘Ā’isha, one of his wives. On the other side stood the Prophet’s direct family, embodied by Fāṭima, his only surviving daughter, and ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib, the Prophet’s cousin and son-in-law.

The supporters of Abū Bakr based their claim to legitimacy on several grounds: their shared experience with the Prophet during the trials of exile, their pivotal role in the expansion of Islam, and above all, the support of ‘Ā’isha, regarded as a privileged custodian of the *sunnah* (prophetic tradition) and *ḥadīth* (sayings and actions attributed to the Prophet). Their conception of leadership emphasized spiritual merit and election by consensus (*shūrā*), rather than hereditary succession.

Abū Bakr and the *muhājirūn* could claim an exemplary record: present at every decisive battle, they had invested their energy, time, and wealth in the Islamic cause, forming a close circle of solidarity and trust around the Prophet. They saw themselves as the true architects of Islam’s expansion and believed they rightfully deserved to continue the Prophet’s legacy. The adage that « the Prophet leaves no material inheritance, all belongs to the community » seemed to reinforce their position.

B. The Dynastic Conception of Power

In contrast, the supporters of ‘Alī (*Shī‘at ‘Alī*, literally « the party of ‘Alī ») assert a dynastic legitimacy based on blood ties and a charismatic conception of religious authority. This hereditary model stands in direct opposition to the elective model upheld by the first caliphs.

‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib possesses a unique profile: born around 600, he was raised in the Prophet’s household after being informally adopted. Described by Henry Tincq as « the child of the Qur’an » and « the second Muslim » after Khadīja, the Prophet’s first wife, ‘Alī enjoyed an exceptional spiritual closeness to the founder of Islam. His marriage to Fāṭima, the Prophet’s only surviving daughter, further strengthens this familial legitimacy.

Fāṭima claimed inheritance of the estate of Fadak, a vast agricultural territory near Medina allegedly granted to her by the Prophet. Its confiscation by Abū Bakr, under the influence of ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb, constitutes a foundational trauma. This episode, perceived as a double injustice, exclusion from succession and material dispossession, fuels a deep-seated grievance that is transmitted across generations.

This dynastic conception of religious authority will have lasting consequences: it establishes the principle of hereditary *imāmah*, in which spiritual and temporal authority is passed through divine lineage, giving rise to a distinct Shia theocracy separate from the Sunni caliphate.

C. The Escalation toward Violence: From the *Fitna* to Karbala

Fāṭima’s death in 633, officially from illness, but attributed by Shī‘as to mistreatment, marks the beginning of an escalation that culminates in the tragedy of Karbala. This period, known as the *fitna* (discord), reveals the irreconcilable nature of the two competing visions of leadership.

Under the caliphate of ‘Uthmān ibn ‘Affān (644–656), tensions intensified. ‘Alī, politically marginalized, developed a doctrinal opposition that garnered growing support. The assassination of ‘Uthmān in 656 by rebels finally allowed ‘Alī to assume the caliphate—but within a context of widespread civil war.

The Battle of the Camel (656) pitted ‘Alī against the partisans of ‘Ā’isha, supported by Ṭalhā and al-Zubayr. Although ‘Alī emerged victorious, this fratricidal clash between companions of the Prophet deeply traumatized the Muslim community. It also established the precedent of armed opposition between proto-Sunnis and proto-Shi‘as.

‘Alī’s reign (656–661) was marked by persistent instability. The opposition of Mu‘āwiya, governor of Syria and future founder of the Umayyad dynasty, culminated in the Battle of Siffin (657). The arbitration that followed significantly weakened ‘Alī’s position and favored the emergence of the Kharijite movement—the first Islamic sect to advocate religious violence.

‘Alī’s assassination in 661 by a Kharijite, coupled with his son al-Ḥasan’s renunciation of the caliphate, appeared to temporarily close the crisis. Yet Ḥusayn, ‘Alī’s second son, refused to recognize the legitimacy of the Umayyad caliph Yazīd I. This refusal led directly to the tragedy of Karbala.

On October 10, 680, Ḥusayn and his companions—72 men—were massacred by the Umayyad army near Karbala, in present-day Iraq. This unequal battle, in which the Prophet’s family was annihilated, constitutes the foundational trauma of Shia identity. It definitively introduced the concept of martyrdom (shahāda) into the Shia imagination and sanctified resistance against illegitimate authority.

Karbala thus became the enduring symbol of the oppression endured by Shi‘as and the source of a victimhood memory perpetuated through the annual rituals of ‘Ashūrā. These commemorations—marked by processions of self-flagellation and dramatic reenactments—sustain a sense of moral reckoning that reverberates across centuries.

II. The Evolution of Divisions: Doctrinal Consolidation and Geographical Expansion

A. The Crystallization of Theological Differences

Beyond the initial political disputes, the divisions between Sunnis and Shi‘as gradually crystallized around fundamental theological differences that shaped two distinct visions of Islam.

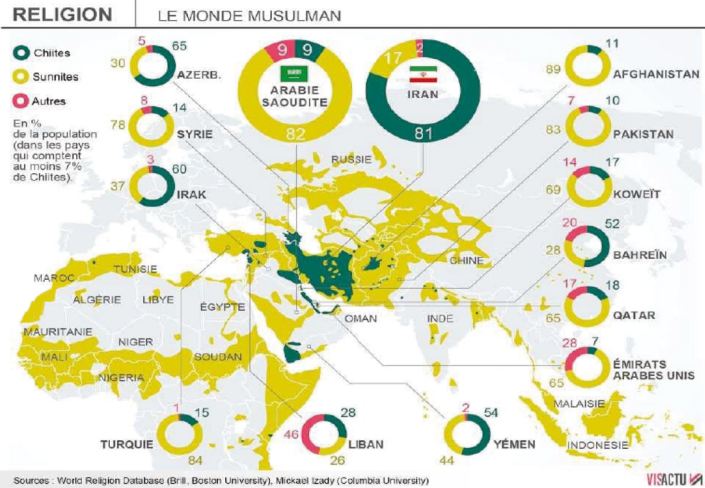
Sunnis, who today represent approximately 85% of Muslims, developed a collective conception of religious authority. They recognize the legitimacy of the first four caliphs (al-khulafā’ al-rāshidūn, « the Rightly Guided Caliphs ») and base their practice on the Qur’an and the sunnah (prophetic tradition). Their religious organization rests on four major legal schools (madhabs), which offer varied but complementary interpretations of Islamic law (sharī‘a).

The Ḥanafī school, dominant in the former Ottoman Empire, is characterized by relative flexibility in interpreting sacred texts and the extensive use of analogical reasoning (qiyās).

The Mālikī school, predominant in North and West Africa, emphasizes the established practices of Medina and accords special importance to the consensus (ijmā’) of the community. The Shāfi‘ī school, influential in East Africa and Southeast Asia, seeks a balance between textual tradition and juristic reasoning.

Finally, the Ḥanbalī school, dominant in Saudi Arabia, advocates a literalist and rigorist reading of the texts, providing doctrinal foundations for certain contemporary fundamentalist currents.

Shi‘as, though a minority, are geographically concentrated and have developed a hierarchical and charismatic conception of religious authority. They recognize only the legitimacy of ‘Alī and his direct descendants, the Imams, whom they regard as infallible spiritual guides of the community. This theocratic vision of religious authority stands in radical opposition to the Sunni elective model.



B. The Fragmentation of Shiism

Shiism itself rapidly fragmented into several branches, each defending a distinct vision of the imamate succession. This internal diversity reveals the political and theological tensions that continue to shape the Shia world.

The Zaydīs, primarily present in Yemen, recognize only the first five Imams and adopt a relatively moderate conception of religious authority. They allow for the possibility of multiple, contemporary Imams, bringing them closer to certain Sunni conceptions of leadership.

The Ismā'īlīs, who recognize seven Imams, further subdivide into several communities: the Druze (in Lebanon, Syria, and Israel), the Alawites (in Syria and Turkey), and the followers of the Aga Khan (in Central Asia, Pakistan, and Afghanistan). These communities developed esoteric practices and mystical interpretations of Islam that clearly distinguish them from mainstream Twelver Shiism.

The Twelvers (Ithnā'ashariyya), the largest Shia branch and dominant in Iran and Iraq, recognize twelve Imams, the last of whom is the Hidden Imam (al-Mahdī al-Muntadhar), believed to have entered occultation and destined to return at the end of time to establish divine justice. This messianic belief fosters an apocalyptic vision of history that profoundly influences contemporary Iranian politics.

C. Geographical Expansion and Political Consolidation

The expansion of Islam was accompanied by a geographical distribution of Sunni and Shia communities that continues to shape regional geopolitical balances today.

Sunnis dominate Saudi Arabia, the Gulf states (except Bahrain), Jordan, Egypt, the Maghreb, Turkey, Central Asia, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Indonesia. This geographical spread grants them a significant demographic and economic advantage, particularly through control of the Gulf's oil resources.

Shī'as are concentrated primarily in Iran (95% of the population), Iraq (60–65%), Bahrain (70%), and constitute significant minorities in Lebanon (35%), Syria (12%), Yemen (35%), and Saudi Arabia (15%, mainly in the oil-rich Eastern Province). This geographical distribution, often in border regions or resource-rich zones, fosters external interventions and fuels proxy conflicts.

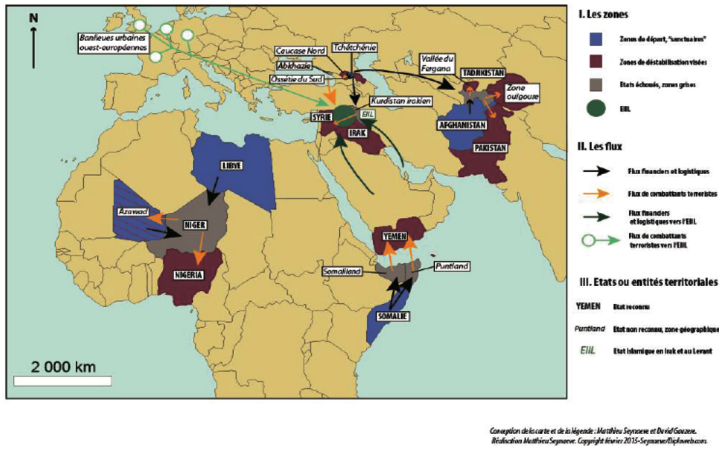
The establishment of the Islamic Republic of Iran in 1979 marked a decisive turning point. For the first time since the Safavid dynasty (16th century), a modern state officially proclaimed itself Shia and claimed spiritual leadership over the global Shia community. This hegemonic claim alarmed the Sunni monarchies of the Gulf and reignited sectarian competition at the regional level.

III. Modern Instrumentalization: From Religion to Geopolitics

A. The Emergence of Contemporary Islamist Terrorism

The emergence of contemporary terrorism carried out in the name of Islam results from a confluence of historical, geopolitical, and ideological factors that extend far beyond traditional sectarian divisions.

Le triptyque globalisé des organisations terroristes islamistes



Map of Islamist Terrorist Organizations (ITO)

Map produced by M. Seynaeve. Click on the thumbnail to view the full-size version.

Source: <https://www.diploweb.com/>

III. Modern Instrumentalization: From Religion to Geopolitics

A. The Emergence of Contemporary Islamist Terrorism

The emergence of contemporary terrorism carried out in the name of Islam results from a confluence of historical, geopolitical, and ideological factors that extend far beyond traditional sectarian divisions.

The Afghan War (1979–1989) served as a decisive laboratory for militant Islamism. The influx of Arab fighters (*mujāhidīn*) who came to support the Afghan resistance against Soviet occupation created transnational networks and developed military expertise that would later be redeployed in other contexts. U.S., Saudi, and Pakistani support for these fighters, within the framework of the Cold War, paradoxically fostered the emergence of an Islamist network that would eventually turn against its former sponsors.

The first attacks claimed by groups identifying as Islamic (Lockerbie, 1988; UTA, 1989) were driven more by geopolitical retaliation than by purely religious motives. The Lockerbie bombing, attributed to Libya with Iranian support, constituted a reprisal for the downing of Iran Air Flight 655 by a U.S. warship. This cycle of violence reveals the instrumentalization of Islamist rhetoric for strategic and retaliatory purposes.

Armed Islamist groups (notably the GIA) use religious rhetoric to legitimize violence primarily aimed at seizing political and economic power.

B. Contemporary Geopolitical Stakes

An analysis of contemporary conflicts reveals that the real motivations of the actors involved go far beyond religious considerations, instead rooted in complex geopolitical stakes. In the Middle East, the rivalry between Saudi Arabia and Iran has structured regional relations since the Islamic Revolution of 1979. This rivalry, framed in sectarian rhetoric, follows classic geopolitical logics: control of energy resources, regional influence, and strategic positioning vis-à-vis external powers.

The Yemeni conflict (2014–present) perfectly illustrates this instrumentalization. The Saudi-led intervention against the Houthi rebels is justified as a struggle against the expansion of Shia influence, but primarily aims to maintain Saudi dominance over this strategic country, which controls the southern access to the Red Sea. Likewise, Iran's support for the Houthis is part of a strategy of encircling Saudi Arabia rather than one of sectarian solidarity.

In Syria, Iran's support for the Assad regime (Alawite, and thus Shia) against a predominantly Sunni rebellion reveals the limits of sectarian analysis. Iran is primarily defending its geostrategic corridor to Lebanon and the Mediterranean, while Saudi Arabia and Turkey pursue their own regional objectives.

The Abraham Accords (2020), normalizing relations between Israel and several Sunni Arab states, demonstrate the primacy of geopolitical interests over religious solidarity. These agreements, unthinkable within a purely sectarian logic, are best explained by a shared perception of an Iranian threat.

C. The Sahel Case: Terrorism and Economic Predation

The expansion of terrorist movements in the Sahel reveals a particularly cynical instrumentalization of religious references in service of economic and criminal objectives.

The Sahelian region is rich in valuable resources: gold, uranium, phosphates, iron, bauxite, rare earth elements essential for the energy transition, as well as offshore oil and gas reserves. The control of vast territories by groups such as the Islamic State in the Greater Sahara (ISGS) or Jama'at Nasr al-Islam wal Muslimin (JNIM) enables the illegal exploitation of these resources.

This economic predation is accompanied by the development of transnational trafficking networks, arms, drugs, cigarettes, and human organs, that generate substantial illicit revenues. The pressure exerted on the Beninese military clearly aims to secure access to the sea, facilitating the smuggling of illicit goods to international markets.

The proclaimed project of a « Sahelian caliphate » or « West African caliphate » by these groups masks a strategy of territorial reconfiguration driven by economic interests. This instrumentalization of religion reveals the fundamentally criminal nature of these movements, which exploit social and religious grievances among populations to legitimize their predatory activities.

IV. Factors of Radicalization and Recruitment Mechanisms

A. The Role of Transnational Networks

Since the 1960s, the creation of organizations such as the Muslim Student Association (MSA) has facilitated the formation of transnational intellectual and financial networks that play a crucial role in the diffusion of radical ideologies. These organizations, often funded by the Gulf petromonarchies, pursue a soft power strategy centered on education, religious training, and social assistance. Islamic universities, mosques, cultural centers, and charitable associations all serve as vectors for the dissemination of rigorist interpretations of Islam.

The emergence of the internet has dramatically amplified these groups' capacities for coordination and financing. Social media enables terrorist organizations to develop global communication strategies, coordinate their activities, and recruit sympathizers worldwide. Online propaganda, increasingly sophisticated, exploits individual and collective grievances to legitimize violence.

B. Socio-Economic Factors

An analysis of radicalization profiles reveals that purely religious motivations are often secondary to socio-economic and psychological factors. Key recruitment zones typically correspond to regions marked by poverty, social exclusion, elite corruption, and a lack of prospects. The Sahel, Afghanistan, European suburbs, and refugee camps all serve as fertile breeding grounds for radical movements.

Terrorist organizations exploit these vulnerabilities by promoting a victimhood narrative that identifies scapegoats, such as the West, Israel, or « corrupt » governments, and promises social and spiritual revenge. This rhetoric of reconquest and purification resonates strongly with marginalized populations. Furthermore, the war economies developed by these groups, through ransom, trafficking, and looting, offer economic opportunities in contexts of extreme poverty. Terrorism thus becomes a « business model » that attracts individuals motivated as much by financial gain as by ideology.

C. The Proliferation of Organizations

Since 1979, there has been an exponential increase in organizations claiming to act in the name of Islam: the Iranian Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC), the Muslim Brotherhood, Hezbollah, Hamas, the Armed Islamic Group (GIA), Jama'a al-Islamiyya, the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan, Al-Qaeda, Al-Shabaab, Boko Haram, the Islamic State (IS), and others.

This proliferation reflects less a religious expansion than a political and criminal fragmentation. Each group pursues specific objectives within distinct geopolitical contexts, using religious rhetoric to legitimize actions driven by political or economic interests.

A comparative analysis of these organizations reveals recurring patterns: the instrumentalization of social grievances, the exploitation of sectarian divisions, the development of criminal activities, the pursuit of state or quasi-state sponsorship, and the use of modern communication and military technologies.

V. Critical Analysis: Beyond Religious Appearances

A. Challenging Religious Legitimacy

A statistical analysis of Islamist terrorism victims reveals a major paradox that fundamentally questions the religious legitimacy of these movements. According to Reynié's study (2021), 86% of victims of Islamist attacks are Muslims, primarily in Muslim-majority countries.

This reality fundamentally contradicts the rhetoric of groups that claim to defend Islam and Muslims. If these organizations were genuinely motivated by religious considerations, how can one explain that they primarily massacre their own coreligionists?

A geographical analysis of attacks reveals a concentration in strategic areas rich in natural resources or located along major trade routes. Iraq, Syria, Afghanistan, Nigeria, Somalia, and Mali are all operational theaters where economic and geopolitical stakes clearly outweigh religious considerations.

B. The Instrumentalization of Sectarian Divisions

Contemporary conflicts reveal a systematic instrumentalization of historical sectarian divisions in service of modern geopolitical objectives. This instrumentalization follows recurring patterns that transcend local specificities.

Regional powers, Saudi Arabia, Iran, and Turkey, leverage confessional solidarities to extend their influence, finance proxy groups, and justify military interventions. This logic of a regional cold war transforms religious divisions into instruments of foreign policy.

The case of Lebanon perfectly illustrates this dynamic. Hezbollah, officially a Shia resistance movement, functions as an armed extension of Iran in the Levant. Its military arsenal, operational capabilities, and financial resources far exceed the needs of a community-based militia, instead aligning with a broader regional geopolitical strategy.

C. The True Contemporary Stakes

An analysis of current conflicts reveals that the real stakes go far beyond religious considerations, rooted instead in classic geopolitical logics.

Control of energy resources: The Middle East holds 60% of the world's proven oil reserves and 40% of its natural gas reserves. Conflicts in Iraq, Syria, and Yemen are fundamentally shaped by the struggle to control these strategic resources.

Redrawing of borders: The borders established by the Sykes-Picot Agreement (1916) are increasingly contested by actors seeking to reshape the regional geopolitical map. The Islamic State's caliphate project, although ultimately defeated, exemplified this ambition for territorial reconfiguration.

Geopolitical Rivalries

External powers (United States, Russia, China) pursue their own strategic objectives by instrumentalizing local divisions. Syria thus becomes a theater for indirect confrontation between major powers.

Energy Transition

The emergence of new technologies, lithium, rare earth elements, redefines geopolitical stakes. The Sahel, rich in these critical resources, is becoming a new arena for international competition.

Conclusion

The study of the relationship between historical divisions within Islam and contemporary terrorism reveals a complex process of political instrumentalization of millennia-old religious fractures. The Sunni-Shia schism of the 7th century, born from a succession crisis within the early Muslim community, created enduring divisions that continue to structure intra-Islamic relations today. However, a thorough analysis of contemporary conflicts demonstrates that these historical divisions are systematically reactivated and instrumentalized by actors pursuing fundamentally political and economic objectives.

Terrorist movements, despite their religious rhetoric, are driven by logics of territorial control, resource accumulation, and power conquest that far exceed theological considerations.

This instrumentalization relies on contemporary vulnerabilities: poverty, social exclusion, elite corruption, and lack of prospects. Radical organizations exploit these grievances by promoting a victimhood narrative that identifies scapegoats and promises social and spiritual revenge.

Statistical analysis reveals a major paradox: 86% of victims of Islamist terrorism are Muslims, primarily in Muslim-majority countries. This reality fundamentally challenges the religious legitimacy of these movements and confirms their essentially political and criminal nature.

The contemporary rivalry between Saudi Arabia and Iran perfectly illustrates the instrumentalization of sectarian divisions in service of geopolitical objectives. Conflicts in Yemen, Syria, Iraq, and Lebanon reveal the dynamics of a regional cold war, where confessional solidarities serve as a pretext for interventions driven by strategic interests.

This distinction between religious dogma and political strategy is crucial for understanding the true drivers of these conflicts and developing appropriate responses. The conflation of Islam with terrorism not only unjustly stigmatizes 1.8 billion Muslims, but also diverts attention from the real root causes: socio-economic inequalities, failed governance, foreign interference, and the exploitation of natural resources.

The future of peace in the affected regions will depend largely on the ability to move beyond confessional frameworks and address the underlying political, economic, and social issues. This requires a fundamental reform of political systems, based on social justice, democratic transparency, and respect for communal diversity, the only approach capable of drying up the sources of radicalization and reconciling divided societies.

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URAL ELECTRIFICATION IN AFRICA: CHALLENGES AND PROSPECTS, WITH A FOCUS ON SENEGAL

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Abstract : Rural electrification in sub-Saharan Africa remains a major challenge, with over 570 million people lacking access to electricity. Senegal, with about 60% rural electrification, is still far from achieving universal access by 2029. Technological innovations like solar mini-grids and off-grid systems provide tailored and affordable alternatives. Success depends on improved governance, increased financing, and coordinated infrastructure development, positioning rural electrification as a key driver for sustainable development across Africa.

Keywords : Rural electrification, AfricaSenegalSolar, mini-gridsDecentralized, nergyElectricity, accessEnergy, policySustainable,

Résumé : L'électrification rurale en Afrique subsaharienne reste un défi majeur, avec plus de 570 millions de personnes sans accès à l'électricité. Le Sénégal, malgré un taux d'électrification rurale d'environ 60%, est encore loin de son objectif d'accès universel à l'électricité d'ici 2029. Les innovations technologiques, telles que les mini-réseaux solaires et les systèmes hors réseau, offrent des alternatives adaptées et abordables. La réussite de cette transition dépendra d'une meilleure gouvernance, d'un financement accru et d'une coordination efficace des infrastructures, faisant de l'électrification rurale un levier essentiel pour le développement durable du continent africain.

Mots-clés : Électrification rurale, Sénégal, Mini-réseaux solaires, Énergie décentralisée, Accès à l'électricité, Politiques énergétiques,

Introduction

Introduction

Sub-Saharan Africa accounts for approximately 80% of the global population without access to electricity, nearly 570 million people in 2022, out of a worldwide total of about 1.2 billion (IEA, 2023). This deficit places rural electrification at the heart of the continent's development priorities.

With a rural electrification rate estimated at only 25%, compared to 69% in urban areas (IEA, 2023), the lag in rural regions hinders economic, health, and educational progress. Senegal illustrates this challenge: with a rural electrification rate of approximately 60% (ASER, 2025), it is relatively advanced in West Africa, yet still far from achieving its target of universal access set for 2029 (MEPM, 2023).

I. The Scale of the Energy Challenge in Africa

In 2021, 567 million people in sub-Saharan Africa lacked access to electricity, representing over 80% of the global population without electricity (IEA, 2023). Worse, this number continues to grow: between 2010 and 2022, it increased by approximately 4 million people (IEA, 2023).

Structural Factors

Rapid population growth, with an average fertility rate exceeding 5 children per woman in West Africa (World Bank, 2023), drives rising electricity demand that is difficult to meet. Moreover, the dispersed nature of rural lifestyles makes grid connections costly, requiring high investments often beyond economic reach (AFSEC, 2016). Finally, persistent poverty, 70% of rural populations live on less than \$2 per day, limits the purchasing power for electricity, even where networks exist (World Bank, 2023).

Multidimensional Consequences

The lack of electricity negatively affects society across multiple dimensions: only 39% of rural primary schools are electrified (UNESCO, 2018), undermining the quality of education. Health centers, deprived of reliable power, cannot ensure vaccine refrigeration or operate essential medical equipment. Finally, the economic potential of rural areas, particularly in off-season agriculture and agro-processing, remains largely untapped (IEA, 2023).

II. The Case of Senegal: Progress and Persistent Challenges

A Relatively Favorable Position

Senegal has maintained a rural electrification rate above 60% since 2023, according to official data (ASER, 2025). This rate is among the highest in West Africa, reflecting significant efforts made. However, it remains insufficient to achieve the national target of universal access set for 2029 (MEPM, 2023).

Ambitions and Strategies

The country plans to electrify over 5,000 currently unserved localities using off-grid technologies, particularly solar home systems and hybrid mini-grids (MEPM, 2023).

Major Investments Underway

Significant investments are underway, such as the \$29 million allocated to the Kaolack region by Senelec, with an additional \$58 million announced (Senelec, 2024).

Persistent Obstacles

Several challenges continue to hinder progress: contractual issues related to the management of start-up advances for the electrification of 1,600 villages across several regions, and the need to renegotiate contracts to extend access to 1,740 villages instead of the initially planned 1,500 (ASER, 2025). The regulatory framework is evolving with Decree No. 2023-285 on Decentralized Rural Electrification (DRE), aimed at ensuring reliable and affordable access (Decree 2023-285, 2023).

III. Emerging Technological Solutions

Solar Mini-Grids

Mini-grids, defined as local power generation units ranging from 10 kW to 10 MW, primarily solar-powered and optionally supplemented by diesel generators, offer a tailored local solution (World Bank, 2023a). They enable remote management and flexible payment models through smart meters, significantly improving accessibility (World Bank, 2023a).



Off-Grid Solar Energy

Solar Home Systems (SHS) represent an immediate, clean, and cost-effective solution for remote areas where grid connection is either too expensive or technically unfeasible. The widespread adoption of mobile payment systems facilitates credit-based purchases for low-income households, significantly improving uptake (Energy for Humanity Foundation, 2021). The capacity of these systems has evolved: beyond lighting and phone charging, households can now power televisions, refrigerators, and other essential appliances.

Decentralized and Hybrid Approach

Africa's energy future lies in decentralization, where communities and businesses generate their own power locally, thereby reducing dependence on fragile central grids (IEA, 2023). This model enhances energy resilience and accelerates access in underserved regions.

IV. Economic and Financial Challenges

Connecting remote villages costs between \$30,000 and \$50,000 per kilometer of transmission line, amounting to up to \$1 million for a village located 30 km from the existing grid (World Bank, 2023b). These high costs severely limit the rapid expansion of conventional grid infrastructure.

Business Models for Mini-Grids

The profitability of mini-grids depends on a precise balance between energy supply and demand, with priority given to revenue-generating activities (e.g., agro-processing, refrigerated storage). Operators must manage variability: consumption peaks (evenings), low demand (early mornings), and the mismatch between solar generation (daytime) and peak demand (evening) (IEA, 2023).

Massive Financing Needs

To connect approximately 490 million people through mini-grids by 2030, over 217,000 units must be built, requiring a total investment of \$127 billion (World Bank, 2023b). The goal is to reduce the cost to approximately \$0.20/kWh, making electricity economically viable (Mission 300, 2025).

V. International Initiatives and Financing

Mission 300

The World Bank Group and the African Development Bank Group have joined forces to provide electricity to 300 million people in Africa by 2030 (AfDB, 2023). The World Bank targets 250 million through decentralized systems and grid extensions, while the AfDB supports an additional 50 million.

DARES Initiative

This platform coordinates governments, private investors, and development actors to accelerate decentralized renewable energy solutions. The World Bank's portfolio for this sector exceeds \$2.7 billion, covering approximately 40 million beneficiaries (DARES, 2024).

Pivotal Role of the Private Sector

The private sector must significantly increase its investments, particularly in distribution, transmission, and cross-border trade of renewable energy. Connecting 250 million people represents a market opportunity estimated at \$9 billion for private enterprises in this sector (DARES, 2024).

VI. Structural Obstacles to Overcome

Institutional Challenges

New rural electrification agencies often struggle to coexist with established national utilities. Their operations frequently depend on public funding or donor support, undermining their long-term sustainability (AFSEC, 2016).

Governance Challenges

Improving sector regulation and the management of electricity utilities appears essential. Adapted tariff structures and the removal of regulatory barriers are recommended to attract private investors (Gret, 2021).

Demand-Side Constraints

Approximately 40% of the electricity access deficit stems from demand-side factors. A better understanding and integration of these constraints into public policies is crucial to ensure the sustainability of progress achieved (IEA, 2023).

VII. Outlook and Recommendations

An Integrated Approach is Essential

Rural electrification should be accompanied by investments in complementary infrastructure to support local socio-economic development, particularly through productive uses of electricity that generate income (IEA, 2023).

Prioritize Productive Uses

Maximizing economic and financial impact by promoting electricity use for agricultural, artisanal, or small-scale industrial activities in rural areas enhances the long-term sustainability of energy services (World Bank, 2023).

Ongoing Technological Revolution

The rapid decline in costs of off-grid solar systems and batteries is redefining rural energy models, often resulting in a lower total cost of ownership compared to diesel generators (Energy for Humanity Foundation, 2021).

Conclusion

Rural electrification in sub-Saharan Africa, and in Senegal in particular, remains a colossal yet crucial challenge. Over 570 million people still lack access to electricity, severely hindering sustainable development.

More than 570 million people remain without access to electricity, severely hindering sustainable development. Technological advances, particularly solar mini-grids and decentralized systems, now offer promising solutions.

Senegal, with a 60% rural electrification rate, is an advanced model in the region, but still faces significant contractual, financial, and regulatory challenges. The Mission 300 initiative represents a major continental momentum to accelerate the energy transition.

Success will depend on improved governance, innovative financing, the development of productive uses of electricity, and an integrated approach—transforming electrification from a mere utility service into a powerful driver of economic, social, and environmental transformation for a continent at a pivotal moment in global energy history.

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DEBATE ON THE RESPECT OF HUMAN RIGHTS: DEFINING EVALUATION CRITERIA FOR JUDICIAL POLICE

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Abstract : This article examines Human Rights compliance in judicial police forces by focusing on two main evaluation criteria: the advancement of penal evidence administration, including scientific and technological proofs, and the quality of initial and ongoing training of security agents. It also addresses geopolitical challenges related to governance and their impact on political stability and investment. The conclusion emphasizes the need for improved institutional organization to effectively uphold fundamental rights.

Keywords : Human Rights, Police, Evidence, Training, Governance

Résumé : Cet article étudie le respect des Droits de l'Homme dans la Police judiciaire, en identifiant deux axes clés pour l'évaluation : les méthodes d'administration de la preuve pénale, incluant les preuves scientifiques et technologiques, et la qualité de la formation initiale et continue des agents. Il souligne également les enjeux géopolitiques liés à la gouvernance sécuritaire et à l'impact sur la stabilité et les investissements. La conclusion insiste sur la nécessité d'une meilleure structuration institutionnelle pour garantir le respect effectif des droits fondamentaux.

Mots-clés : Droits de l'Homme, Police, Preuve, Formation, Gouvernance

Introduction

At a time when human rights must be discussed, it is essential to state that, despite the practical difficulties in their implementation in many states, they are nonetheless recognized by both international and national communities.

Indeed, by adopting the formal concept of *fundamentality*, certain Rights and Freedoms are qualified as *fundamental*, meaning they are affirmed at the highest levels of a legal system's normative hierarchy, or even serve as its very foundation. From this perspective, fundamental rights aim to prevent the denial of a person's very humanity. This is exemplified by a provision of the *African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights*:

« The human being is inviolable. Every human being shall be entitled to respect for his life and the integrity of his person. No one may be arbitrarily deprived of this right. »
(*African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights*, 1981, Art. 4)

However, the debate over the respect of human rights by various countries is increasingly intensifying—particularly in the Global South. A certain contradiction is emerging between international bodies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and states, in their daily assessment of human dignity. Thus, while international institutions accuse certain governments of failing to uphold fundamental rights and freedoms, the latter often respond with denials of the facts, while reaffirming their unwavering commitment to the protection of the human person.

By focusing on the judicial aspect, as the guarantor of these rights, it is essential to recall that the forces most directly involved in this mission are the Gendarmerie and the Police. Bertrand HOMA MOUSSAVOU therefore acknowledges that:

« In a democracy, the Police (or Gendarmerie) must protect the liberties and rights of the citizen, of persons, and of property. »

She must ensure this daily, and every time she performs an act in the line of duty or in execution of superior orders.” (Homa Moussavou, 2022, p. 19). From this perspective, our task is to examine how to assess a state’s commitment to respecting human rights. To this end, what should be done when leaders persist in producing counter-truths regarding the dignity of the human person? To address this, we will examine the requirements for respecting human rights in judicial policing (I), and criteria for evaluating a state’s tendency to uphold human rights (II).

I. REQUIREMENTS FOR RESPECTING HUMAN RIGHTS

In practice, the assessment of human rights compliance involves multiple dimensions. However, in judicial matters, certain requirements are paramount. In our view, these are the methods of administering criminal evidence (1) and the quality of training (2).

1. Methods of Administering Criminal Evidence

It must be acknowledged that the expression and guarantee of human rights are fundamentally rooted in criminal procedure. It is within the delicate balance between the enjoyment of fundamental rights and freedoms and the maintenance of public order that the role of the judicial police becomes particularly sensitive. This is precisely what Hervé VLAMYNCK highlights: « The core issue underlying judicial policing is framed in terms of encroachment on individual liberties. Unlike Anglo-Saxon countries, police and gendarmerie activities are perceived, under French law, as a potential threat to citizens, even though they operate under the close supervision of the judiciary. » (Vlamynck, 2017, p. 5)

While judicial policing varies from country to country, it nonetheless follows an almost universal approach. The Gabonese Code of Criminal Procedure stipulates that: « Judicial police are responsible for recording criminal offenses, gathering evidence, identifying perpetrators, and bringing them before the competent judicial authorities. » (Law No. 043/2018, 2019, Art. 19)

From this point on, the role of evidence administration in judicial proceedings becomes apparent. It is therefore a crucial stage in the deprivation of liberty, given that « the judicial police has a repressive function and aims to restore public order. » (Vlamynck, 2017, p. 3)

Evidence, indeed, the administration of evidence, becomes the central element in guaranteeing human rights. It is clear that, in order to convict, a judge relies on both personal conviction and evidence; the former must not operate independently of the latter. This is precisely what Geneviève GIUDICELLI-DELAGE acknowledges when she states: « A judge’s conviction cannot stand on its own; it must be based on tangible evidentiary elements. » (Giudicelli-Delage, 2006, p. 70)

Regarding evidence, there is in fact a wide variety, and we will therefore focus on some key forms.

First, testimonial evidence. On this subject, Olivier BACHELET and Mikaël BENILLOUCHE have conducted detailed research. Like other specialists, these two scholars have adopted the fundamental principles of testimonial evidence, defining this means of establishing truth through two essential pillars: « reliability control of the testimony » and « the right to confrontation. » On this point, they specify: « Since testimony can greatly influence the decision of the court, it must be subject to strict admissibility conditions designed to prevent any subsequent challenge. This is why, on the one hand, several mechanisms exist to verify the reliability of testimony (1), and on the other hand, the accused has the right to confront their accuser (2). » (Bachelet & Benillouche, 2006, p. 322)

Second, biological evidence. On this matter, Hervé ANCEL explains: « The use of DNA-based techniques has evolved significantly since their initial application in criminal investigations. Today, even minute biological samples are sufficient for analysis. In the context of a judicial investigation, DNA has become a crucial piece of evidence. » (Ancel, 2006, p. 141)

Also, digital evidence. The uncontrolled, and nearly uncontrollable, rise of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) has led to a surge in cybercrimes, accompanied by a significant increase in the complexity of related judicial procedures. Maud OLINET and Kathia MARTIN-CHENUT have highlighted the delicate nature of criminal proceedings conducted in virtual environments. Indeed, they argue that: « The prosecution and repression of cybercrime face numerous obstacles: the extraterritoriality and speed of networks, as well as the fleeting and volatile nature of data, pose serious challenges to effective law enforcement. » (Olinet & Martin-Chenut, 2006, p. 322)

Finally, technological evidence. Given the diverse and multidimensional forms of contemporary crime, judicial authorities are increasingly relying on technological science. Within this framework, Dimitri GIANNALOPOULOS and Raphaëlle PARIZOT state:

« Telecommunications interceptions and related electronic surveillance methods are considered effective investigative tools, capable of meeting the demands posed by hidden crimes, those without victims and without temporal or territorial boundaries, as well as crimes that increasingly threaten the very foundations of our liberal societies. » (Giannalopoulos & Parizot, 2006, p. 245)

1. Quality of the Training System

« If it is accepted that wisdom begins with the fear of the gendarme, it is not an exaggeration to say that it is through knowledge of the law and respect for human rights that one recognizes the good gendarme (or police officer). » (Homa Moussavou, 2022, p. 15)

This statement almost systematically links the respect for human rights to the training of security force personnel.

In general, like school and university systems, all training programs are based on the principles of a common core curriculum and specialization, followed by practical application. A comprehensive overview of the process of acquiring skills and experience appears necessary to better understand the technical level expected of a gendarme or police officer tasked with upholding human rights.

First, initial training. At the outset, DIOP and SARR define the functions of a police academy, using Senegal's as a reference, starting with initial training: « The National Police and Continuing Training School is the institution responsible for providing newly recruited police officers with the foundational knowledge required to carry out their future duties. » (Diop & Sarr, 2022, p. 216)

Indeed, every training process begins with a common core curriculum, which provides the learner with general knowledge and, above all, the foundational framework upon which more technical and specialized knowledge will be built. This pedagogical stage can thus qualify an individual for professional employment as a generalist.

Second, continuing training. After the initial learning phase comes continuing training, a stage comprising multiple components, as DIOP and SARR emphasize: « To fulfill their mission, career police officers must be maintained at the highest level of professional qualification and physical fitness. To this end, they benefit from training, physical conditioning, refresher courses, advanced training, and specialization programs. Training and professional development are both a right and a duty for the police officer. »

(Ordinance No. 013/PR/2010, 2010, Art. 199, para. 1)

I. CRITERIA FOR EVALUATING HUMAN RIGHTS COMPLIANCE AND GEOPOLITICAL IMPLICATIONS

For this study, two main requirements have been selected as particularly revealing of states' posture toward the respect of human rights. It therefore appears appropriate, at this stage of our analysis, to derive criteria for assessing a state's commitment to human rights (1) and to examine the geopolitical implications surrounding these human rights (2).

1. Key Criteria for Assessing Human Rights Compliance

Indeed, human rights are universal, but their protection must be evaluated on a case-by-case basis. In other words, the respect for human dignity varies according to each government's actions, meaning that debates on human rights compliance are almost always contentious, whether internally or externally. Nevertheless, in all cases, certain evaluative criteria can now help us assess a state's commitment in this domain.

First, the level of development in methods of administering evidence. History shows that judicial practice has long relied on extracting confessions from suspects and collecting witness statements. This is precisely what Hervé ANCEL notes:

« Traditionally, police investigations were centered on obtaining confessions and gathering testimonies. »

(Ancel, 2006, p. 139)

While these elements of truth-finding are not negligible, they remain basic within judicial policing, particularly in complex procedures.

However, with the growing awareness of fundamental rights and freedoms, the pursuit of truth has led to significant advances in evidentiary methods. Essentially, to avoid relying solely on statements from suspects and witnesses, law enforcement now incorporates scientific and technological tools that enable judges to better substantiate their personal conviction.

This leads us to the first criterion for assessing a state's commitment to human rights: the verification of progress beyond traditional forms of evidence, confessions and testimony, toward more advanced means of establishing truth, such as access to biological evidence, technological evidence, and digital evidence, to name only a few.

Second, the quality of the training system. In this regard, the performance of police duties in general, and judicial policing in particular, requires, without exception, a robust training framework. This includes acquiring foundational knowledge during initial training, on the one hand, and continuously updating the operational capabilities of personnel in response to evolving challenges, on the other in response to emerging security threats and established operational protocols.

It is therefore through the combination of knowledge acquired during initial and continuing training, combined with field experience, that additional needs emerge: the need for updated training programs (reassessment of knowledge), opportunities for theoretical development (through scientific productivity), the formulation of more effective operational concepts based on identified challenges, and, potentially, the reorganization of services. For an observer seeking to assess a state's commitment to fundamental rights and freedoms, it becomes essential to determine whether the existing training system equips security personnel with substantial technical capabilities.

1. Geopolitical Issues Surrounding Human Rights

« Geopolitics is a toolbox comprising principles, doctrines, and theories—a science capable of providing a partial or definitive explanation of a phenomenon. » (Hameni Bieleu, 2012, p. 17)

Viewed in this light, geopolitics encompasses both the internal and external dimensions of a state. From an internal perspective, a tendency to disregard human rights creates a deeply negative atmosphere within the security sphere.

Under these conditions, the Gendarmerie and Police are frequently the subject of numerous complaints, plunging populations into profound distress, a distress that also affects the officers themselves. More strikingly, national authorities and institutional hierarchies often seize opportunities to distance themselves from frontline personnel, particularly lower-ranking agents, who, in reality, are the very foundation of any possible policing or gendarmerie dynamic.

This results in widespread grievances among operational staff, who are, in fact, mere victims of the public security policies adopted and of the limited understanding of a country's security challenges among institutional actors.



In any case, and unless evidence to the contrary emerges, it is evident that personnel of the Gendarmerie and Police, particularly at lower ranks, are invariably caught between the public and the authorities of the Republic, who are directly supported by their respective command hierarchies. This dynamic fuels a significant crisis, undermining national security stability and the guarantee of fundamental rights and freedoms.

From an international perspective, the organization and functioning of the Gendarmerie and Police constitute a vital issue for many countries, as they form the foundation of internal security and are essential to fostering peaceful coexistence among citizens. This, in turn, is a key factor in attracting foreign investment and promoting national economic and social development.

Yet, as we must recall, many countries, particularly African states, lack the advanced technological capacity to exploit their abundant natural resources, despite being economically dependent on them. Consequently, numerous governments actively seek foreign investors to develop their flora, fauna, and subsoil. However, just as investors assess economic potential, multinational corporations also carefully evaluate the security climate and the level of human rights respect in a given country. In cases where these conditions are not met, investment opportunities quickly evaporate.

On the other hand, addressing the geopolitical implications surrounding human rights requires acknowledging the role of international organizations. Indeed, in the aftermath of the two World Wars, the horrors of international relations became evident to the world. In response, the international community sought to build a more coordinated global order, committed to fostering peace and shared prosperity for all.

However, this analysis fails to account for the strategic maneuvering of powerful states in their claim to objectivity. Within this framework of international geopolitics, Michel NAZET argues that:

« Not only have the United States not truly renounced shaping the United Nations according to their interest, frequently bypassing its decisions, as in their 2003 intervention in Iraq—but Western conceptions of human rights, democracy, and even international civil society (with the majority of NGOs being Western-based) are often perceived by peoples of the Global South, not because they deny their universal value, as instruments to perpetuate Western supremacy and interference. » (Nazet, 2010, p. 176)

Among these international institutions stands the United Nations (UN), whose original mandate is to uphold global peace and security. Today, it is undeniable that the UN remains, in practice, a tool used by major powers to exert global influence through interventionist policies. In other words, the human rights discourse has become a gateway for powerful states to conduct interventions under the guise of humanitarian or democratic legitimacy.

Conclusion

This reflection has allowed us to identify two key criteria for assessing a state's commitment to fundamental rights: the level of development in methods of administering criminal evidence, and the quality of training provided to law enforcement personnel. While not exhaustive, these evaluation criteria appear both relevant and feasible for assessing a state's genuine commitment to elevating inalienable rights to the highest level of national priorities.

However, the issue of human dignity is inseparable from broader geopolitical dynamics. A tendency to deny human rights often reflects a flawed security structure, marked by deeply strained relations between senior government authorities, police and gendarmerie leadership, and frontline officers. The same applies to investment prospects and the vulnerability of states to destabilization operations.

In sum, when evaluating a state's commitment to human rights, the observer should seek to understand the scope of public security policies implemented by state authorities at the strategic level and enacted by respective command hierarchies at the operational level. Indeed, it is beyond doubt that any Gendarmerie or Police force is, above all and fundamentally, what it is made to be, what it is institutionally shaped to be, under the authority of governing powers.

This is precisely the perspective adopted by Fabien JOBARD and Jacques de MAILLARD, who argue that:

« This dimension calls for a political sociology approach, one that emphasizes the analysis of policing governance logics and the political nature of police activity, whether defined from above (the political uses of the police) or from below (the political significance of police interventions). » (Jobard & de Maillard, 2015, p. 17)

Thus, the nature of a state's public security policies already reveals its tendency toward respecting human rights. In other words, no state can claim a positive commitment to human rights if it has not developed, on the one hand, scientific and technological methods for administering criminal evidence, and on the other, a comprehensive training system for its security personnel.

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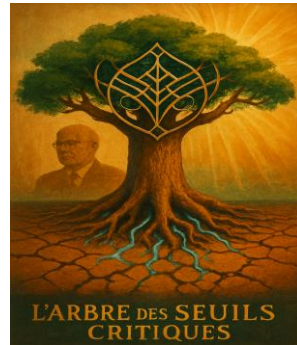
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CHRONICLE VISION: REINVENTING SOVEREIGNTY AT THE HEART OF GEOPOLITICAL FRACTURES



The year 2025 marks a decisive turning point for Africa, as the continent faces major geopolitical fractures at the intersection of security, economic, and social crises. While global rivalries intensify, particularly between Sino-American powers, and new actors emerge, Africa is asserting its strategic autonomy, redefining its alliances and governance models. The gradual withdrawal of foreign forces, regional realignments such as the Alliance of Sahel States (AES), and key electoral milestones reflect a profound political and security transformation. In this context, African states must reinvent their institutional frameworks to meet the aspirations of a dynamic youth population and the challenges of sustainable development.

Access to energy, a fundamental lever of sovereignty, has become a top priority: decentralized solar mini-grids exemplify a promising path toward energy independence and economic inclusion. However, these technological advances require transparent governance, innovative financing mechanisms, and active community participation. At the same time, political stability depends on a human rights-based security governance model, particularly through a judicial police force trained in rigorous procedures and equipped with modern technologies for evidence administration. This foundation is essential to restore social trust and foster an investment-friendly climate.

Furthermore, this dynamic challenges the Global South's perception of Western discourses, often imbued with a contested universalism, sometimes perceived as a tool of interference. A rigorous understanding of radicalization, beyond religious stereotypes, is crucial to building lasting peace.

In sum, 2025 must be the year of an African renaissance, built on regional integration, respect for identities and rights, and balanced partnerships. The geopolitics of the Global South combines critical engagement, scientific rigor, and a determination for emancipation, offering Vision Géopolitique a space for reflection where fractures are analyzed not as endpoints, but as foundations for shaping the future.

Fr Dibacor Philippe NGOM

BOOK REVIEW



Maurice Vaïsse

Les relations internationales depuis 1945,

Published by Armand Colin, 2023, 374 pages

Maurice Vaïsse, Emeritus Professor at the University of Paris, offers in his book *International Relations since 1945*, published by Armand Colin in 2023 and spanning 374 pages, a clear and comprehensive synthesis of the history of international relations from the post-war era to the present day. This textbook, now a standard reference, stands out for its ability to make intelligible a complex and event-rich period.

The book is structured both chronologically and thematically, allowing the reader to follow the evolution of global dynamics. It begins with an analysis of the emergence and confrontation of a bipolar world (Chapter 1), exploring the origins of the Cold War, the formation of opposing blocs, and the early crises. Vaïsse details the « missed peace » of the post-war period, the return of peace in the Middle East and Far East, the Cold War itself, and decolonization.

Peaceful coexistence (Chapter 2) is then examined, covering the period from 1955 to 1962, marked by the continuation of decolonization in Africa and Asia and the evolving role of the United Nations. The author also addresses détente (Chapter 3), from 1962 to 1973, focusing on the US-Soviet duopoly, arms limitation agreements, and internal bloc crises. He devotes significant attention to shifts in international relations within the Third World, with case studies such as the Vietnam War and the Arab-Israeli conflict.

The book proceeds with an analysis of a destabilized world (Chapter 4) between 1973 and 1985, a period characterized by economic shocks, the deterioration of Soviet-American relations, the arms race, and regional tensions in Southeast Asia and Latin America.

The end of the bipolar world (Chapter 5), from 1985 to 1992, is a pivotal moment in the work, where Vaïsse describes the fall of the Berlin Wall, the dissolution of the Soviet Empire, and German reunification, events that marked a new era for Europe and the world.

The following chapters focus on the new world order and its challenges. Chapter 6, *In Search of a New World Order* (1992–2001), addresses the end of the East-West divide and the persistence of violent conflicts. *Imperial Disorder* (Chapter 7), covering 2001 to 2008, analyzes the war on terrorism, American interventions, and post-colonial conflicts.

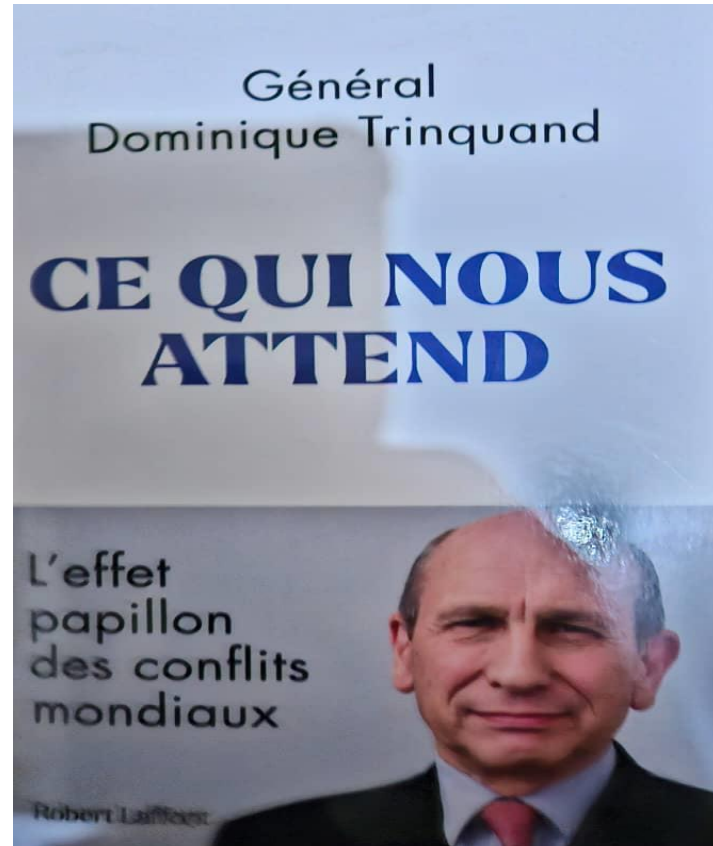
Finally, the concluding chapters examine the most recent developments: the redistribution of power (Chapter 8) from 2008 to 2014, marked by the financial crisis and the rise of new powers; a unipolar world (Chapter 9) from 2014 to 2020, with multilateralism in crisis, the Russian and Chinese challenges, and the Arab Spring. The book concludes with The Fragmentation of the World (Chapter 10), covering 2019 to 2023, addressing the health crisis, the war in Ukraine, and the emergence of new « cold wars. »

Maurice Vaïsse provides a balanced and nuanced analysis, avoiding hasty judgments. He highlights the interconnections between political, economic, and social events, and underscores the complexity of actors and issues. The work is enriched with an extensive bibliography and a detailed index, making it a valuable resource for students and researchers. Maps, charts, and sidebars (375 pages total, including these elements) complement the text, offering essential visual support for understanding.

In sum, *International Relations since 1945* by Maurice Vaïsse is an indispensable work for anyone seeking to understand the major currents of contemporary world history. Its clarity, rigor, and regular updates make it an essential reference for studies in international relations, contemporary history, and political science.

Dr. Abdoul Latif Aidara

Director General, CISPAIX



Général Dominique Trinquand,

Ce qui nous attend. L'effet papillon des conflits mondiaux.

Édition Robert Laffont, Paris, 2023, 225 pages

In his book *What Lies Ahead: The Butterfly Effect of Global Conflicts*, published by Éditions Robert Laffont in 2023 and spanning 225 pages (including annexes), General Dominique Trinquand, an expert in defense and geopolitics, provides a compelling analysis of the threats and challenges undermining global stability.

His approach differs from that of Maurice Vaïsse by being fundamentally prospective, seeking to identify the dynamics and « butterfly effects » that could trigger worldwide conflicts.

The book is structured into three main parts, each exploring a key dimension of contemporary tensions:

Part I: The New Balance of Power

This opening section lays the foundation for the author's analysis. General Trinquand first describes a « World That Is Disappearing » (Chapter 1), marking the end of the post-Cold War international order. He then examines the « Possibility of War in Europe » (Chapter 2), a scenario that has become increasingly plausible. The section concludes with the concept of the « Butterfly Effect » (Chapter 3), which serves as the central thread of the entire work, illustrating how local events can trigger global repercussions.

Part II: The Race of the Powers

In this second part, the author analyzes the key actors on the international stage. He begins with the « Mustangs That Are Faltering » (Chapter 4), a metaphor for the Western powers. He then examines the rapid rise of « China at Full Gallop » (Chapter 5), an indispensable player in contemporary geopolitics. Chapter 6, « The Gulf Sounds the Charge, » highlights the growing importance of this region. The author then addresses the struggles of « Africa Losing Its Grip » (Chapter 7) and the disarray of the « European Carousel » (Chapter 8). France is discussed in Chapter 9 under the title « France at a Gentle Trot, » underscoring its position and challenges in this rapidly shifting global landscape.

Part III: Perils at Home

The final part focuses on the direct threats facing the world. General Trinquand identifies three major perils. He begins with the « Authoritarian Threat » (Chapter 10), a trend gaining ground in many regions. He proceeds with the « Jihadist Threat » (Chapter 11), an asymmetric and persistent danger. Finally, he concludes with the « Individualist Threat » (Chapter 12), a more subtle yet equally corrosive force undermining social cohesion and political stability. The book ends with an epilogue and cartographic annexes, which enrich the analysis.

In conclusion, General Trinquand's work offers a distinct and complementary perspective to that of Maurice Vaïsse. While Vaïsse retraces history, Trinquand projects into the future, sounding the alarm on emerging dangers. The book is essential reading for understanding today's geopolitical challenges and the threats that lie ahead.

Dr. Abdoul Latif Aidara

Director General, CISPAIX

Vision Géopolitique in Brief...

- To be a decentralized and inclusive intellectual space.
- To support the emergence of a sovereign Southern thought.
- To build sustainable trajectories of justice, security, and development.
- To address the challenges of a world in transformation.

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- To provide critical and rigorous analysis of global geopolitical challenges.
- To amplify the voices and perspectives of the Global South, particularly Africa.
- To clarify contemporary strategic dynamics and fractures.
- To foster an autonomous and engaged debate.

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