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## Zambia's relations with Western Sahara and the dilemma of its recognition / Отношения Замбии с Западной Сахарой и дилемма ее признания

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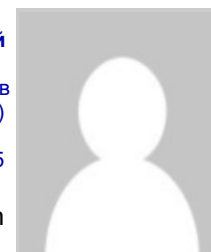


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**Abstract:** Abstract: The Republic of Zambia was among the first African nations to recognize the Saharawi Arab Democratic Republic (SADR) on October 12, 1979, supporting the Saharawi people's struggle against Morocco's occupation of Western Sahara. However, over the years, Zambia has shifted its position, aligning with Morocco's sovereignty over the disputed region and even inaugurating a consulate in Laayoune, a move that sparked controversy in Zambia, the Southern African Development Community (SADC), and the African Union (AU). The study focuses on the evolution of Zambia's diplomatic relations with Western Sahara, from its recognition of the Saharawi Arab Democratic Republic (SADR) in 1979 to its shift toward supporting Moroccan sovereignty. The aim of the work is to analyze the historical context, international and domestic political factors influencing Zambia's foreign policy shift, as well as to examine the consequences of this change for the region and the international community. The research methodology includes qualitative analysis based on the study of diplomatic documents, official statements, and analytical publications, which allows for identifying the dynamics of Zambia's position development. The results indicate that Zambia's policy shift is linked to Morocco's intensified economic diplomacy, the influence of global actors, and the weakening position of traditional SADR supporters, such as Algeria. These changes have led to a decline in regional solidarity, particularly within SADC and the AU. The scientific novelty of the study lies in identifying the relationship between Zambia's foreign policy changes and the broader geopolitical transformation of the African continent. The authors conclude that pragmatism and economic interests increasingly prevail over historical solidarity, highlighting the challenges for anti-colonial ideals. The study's conclusion emphasizes how Morocco's economic and diplomatic strategy is shaping a new field of interaction in Africa, underscoring the need for a balanced approach to resolving the Western Sahara conflict.

**Keywords:**

Western Sahara, Polisario Front, Morocco, SADR, Zambia, AU, SADC, Algeria, Economic Diplomacy, Solidarity

**Аннотация:** Республика Замбия была одной из первых африканских стран, признавших 12 октября 1979 года Сахарскую Арабскую Демократическую Республику (САДР), поддержав борьбу сахарского народа против оккупации Западной Сахары Марокко. Однако с течением времени Замбия изменила свою позицию, поддержав суверенитет Марокко над спорным регионом и даже открыв консульство в Эль-Аюне, что вызвало споры в Замбии, Сообществе по развитию Юга Африки (САДК) и Африканском Союзе (АС). Исследование посвящено эволюции дипломатических отношений Замбии с Западной Сахарой, начиная с признания Сахарской Арабской Демократической Республики (САДР) в 1979 году до перехода на сторону поддержки марокканского суверенитета. Цель работы – анализ исторического контекста, международных и внутривполитических факторов, повлиявших на изменение внешнеполитического курса Замбии, а также изучение последствий данного изменения для региона и международного сообщества. Методология исследования включает качественный анализ, основанный на изучении дипломатических документов, официальных заявлений и аналитических публикаций, что позволяет выявить динамику развития позиций Замбии. Результаты показывают, что изменение курса Замбии связано с усилением экономической дипломатии Марокко, влиянием глобальных акторов и ослаблением позиций традиционных сторонников САДР, таких как Алжир. Эти изменения привели к

снижению региональной солидарности, особенно в рамках САДК и АС. Научная новизна работы заключается в выявлении взаимосвязи между изменением внешней политики Замбии и широкой геополитической трансформацией африканского континента. Авторы приходят к выводу, что прагматизм и экономические интересы все чаще преобладают над исторической солидарностью, что подчеркивает вызовы для антиколониальных идеалов. Итог исследования подчеркивает, как экономическая и дипломатическая стратегия Марокко формирует новое поле взаимодействия в Африке, подчеркивая необходимость сбалансированного подхода к решению конфликта в Западной Сахаре.

**Ключевые слова:**

Западная Сахара, Фронт Полисарио, Марокко, САДР, Замбия, АС, САДК, Алжир, экономическая дипломатия, солидарность

**Introduction**

The Republic of Zambia has long held a significant role in Africa's post-colonial diplomatic landscape, notably through its early recognition of the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic (SADR) in 1979. Zambia's recognition of the SADR was rooted in its firm anti-colonial stance, aligned with the broader Pan-African movement that advocated for the self-determination of oppressed peoples. The Sahrawi people's struggle for independence in Western Sahara, a territory claimed by Morocco since Spain's withdrawal in 1975, has remained one of the most protracted conflicts in Africa, attracting international attention and African solidarity.

Over the years, however, Zambia's position on Western Sahara has shifted dramatically. Once a staunch supporter of the Polisario Front and the SADR, Zambia has more recently aligned itself with Morocco's claims of sovereignty over the disputed territory. This alignment has been marked by diplomatic moves, such as Zambia's decision to open a consulate in Laayoune, a city in Moroccan-occupied Western Sahara, which sparked significant controversy within the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and the African Union (AU). This article explores Zambia's evolving stance on Western Sahara, examining the interplay between historical solidarity, economic interests, and international pressures. By analyzing Zambia's foreign policy shifts, the article aims to shed light on the broader geopolitical trends shaping Africa's response to the Western Sahara conflict and the regional dilemma between maintaining solidarity with the Sahrawi cause and pursuing strategic alliances with Morocco.

**The Western Sahara Dispute: Historical Context and International Perspectives**

The Western Sahara conflict dates back to 1975 when Spain withdrew from its former colony, Spanish Sahara. Following Spain's departure, Morocco laid claim to the territory, leading to a conflict with the Polisario Front, a movement advocating for an independent nation for the indigenous Sahrawi people [\[1\]](#). Moroccan forces now control most of the region, and the kingdom has worked to establish Moroccan settlements while developing industries such as phosphate mining and fishing [\[2\]](#).

For over two decades, the conflict between Morocco and the Polisario Front over Western Sahara's sovereignty has been at a deadlock. Since the late 1970s, the United Nations (UN) has sought to broker an internationally accepted solution to the dispute. Notable

milestones include the 1991 ceasefire and the establishment of the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO), tasked with organizing a referendum to allow the Sahrawi people to choose between independence or full integration with Morocco. In 2007, Morocco unilaterally proposed a third option: autonomy for Western Sahara under Moroccan sovereignty. Rabat insisted that this was the only acceptable outcome, complicating further negotiations [\[3\]](#).

Despite international efforts, a resolution remains elusive. The closest the process came to a breakthrough was during the tenure of James Baker, the UN Secretary-General's Personal Envoy for Western Sahara from 1997 to 2004. Baker proposed several plans, but they were eventually abandoned, and since then, the peace process has stalled with little prospect of resolution [\[4\]](#).

Both Morocco and the Polisario Front have, to some extent, adapted to the ongoing stalemate. The Polisario leadership, based in exile, established the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic (SADR) in the late 1970s in Algeria, where they have received significant political and military support. Initially backed by both Algeria and Libya, the Polisario's influence waned in the 1990s, especially after the fall of Muammar Gaddafi's regime in 2011. However, Algeria remains their main diplomatic supporter, hosting both the SADR government and refugee camps in Tindouf [\[5\]](#). Life in these camps has become harsh, with many refugees living in subsistence conditions without access to adequate services.

On the other side, Morocco has firmly entrenched its presence in Western Sahara. During the conflict, especially in the 1980s, Moroccan forces gained control over most of the territory, securing the area with the construction of a defensive wall, or berm. This berm now separates Moroccan-controlled areas from the lands accessible to Polisario forces [\[6\]](#). Over the years, Morocco has accelerated its development of the region, attracting diverse groups including Sahrawis, Moroccan military personnel, and economic migrants seeking opportunities in the growing urban centers. The Moroccan government has also pursued a strategy of gaining international recognition of its sovereignty over Western Sahara.

Morocco's diplomatic approach has been successful in bypassing the stalled UN process by securing bilateral recognition of its claims. A pivotal moment came in 2020 when the United States, under President Donald Trump, formally recognized Morocco's sovereignty over Western Sahara. This move was part of the Abraham Accords, a US-brokered agreement aimed at normalizing relations between Israel and several Arab states [\[7\]](#). The US recognition significantly strengthened Morocco's position and put additional pressure on the Polisario and its ally, Algeria. Following this, in November 2020, the ceasefire broke down, deepening the diplomatic impasse.

In 2022, Spain also shifted its stance, backing Morocco's claim to the territory [\[8\]](#). France has traditionally supported Morocco's autonomy proposal, while the UK remains committed to a "just, lasting, and mutually acceptable political solution based on compromise, which will provide for the self-determination of the people of Western Sahara." Although the Biden administration has not reversed Trump's recognition of Moroccan sovereignty, Secretary of State Antony Blinken has indicated a more cautious and nuanced approach to the issue [\[9\]](#).

The Western Sahara dispute remains one of the most intractable conflicts in North Africa. Morocco has effectively solidified its control over the region, while the Polisario Front continues to seek international support for Sahrawi self-determination. As both sides maintain their positions and the international community remains divided, a lasting solution

seems increasingly distant.

### **Zambia's Changing Diplomatic Stance: From Recognition to Alignment with Morocco**

Zambia's changing diplomatic stance on the Western Sahara issue from supporting the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic (SADR) to aligning with Morocco reflects a broader geopolitical shift in African diplomacy, where economic interests and international pressure increasingly influence foreign policy. Morocco's assertive strategy to strengthen its presence on the African stage has significantly reshaped the continent's dynamics, especially in the Western Sahara dispute [\[10\]](#).

In the 1980s and 1990s, Morocco's influence in sub-Saharan Africa and the Maghreb-Sahel region was limited, overshadowed by regional heavyweights like Algeria and Libya. Both countries were strong proponents of anti-colonialism and the Sahrawi cause, with Algeria providing military, political, and diplomatic support to the Polisario Front, which represents the Sahrawi people. Libya, under Muammar Gaddafi, was also a major player, using its petrodollars to support liberation movements across Africa, including the Sahrawi struggle for independence. Algeria's influence, combined with Gaddafi's strong stance on anti-colonial issues, cemented the African Union's (AU) position in favor of the SADR's right to self-determination. The AU was founded on principles of anti-colonialism, and its member states were united in their support for the Polisario Front [\[11\]](#). This situation marginalized Morocco, which withdrew from the AU in 1984 in protest against the body's recognition of the SADR.

However, the geopolitical landscape began to shift following the death of Gaddafi in 2011 and the eventual decline of Algeria's diplomatic power under President Abdelaziz Bouteflika, whose long illness and withdrawal from active leadership weakened the country's influence on the continent. Gaddafi's fall removed a major player from the regional scene, reducing support for anti-colonial causes like the Western Sahara, and Algeria's internal focus meant Morocco faced less regional opposition [\[12\]](#). With the weakening of its rivals, Morocco seized the opportunity to reassert its influence across Africa, launching an aggressive diplomatic and economic outreach campaign. This created a favorable environment for Morocco to push for its sovereignty over Western Sahara and erode the influence of Algeria and other SADR supporters.

Morocco's strategy involved pursuing partnerships with African countries that had historically supported the SADR but had been neglected diplomatically and economically. By focusing on bilateral relationships, Morocco was able to reshape opinions on the Western Sahara conflict. Many African countries that had previously recognized the SADR or supported the Sahrawi cause began to shift their positions. They either recognized Morocco's sovereignty over Western Sahara outright or, at the very least, distanced themselves from active support for the Polisario Front. This shift was driven by Morocco's economic diplomacy, which focused on fostering trade, investment, and cooperation with these nations. Countries like Zambia, São Tomé and Príncipe, and Burundi, which once supported the SADR, have since moved towards closer alignment with Morocco, thanks to Morocco's expanding influence [\[13\]](#).

Zambia's evolving position on the Western Sahara conflict has been particularly notable. Under its founding president, Kenneth Kaunda, Zambia was one of the first African nations to recognize the SADR in 1979, solidifying its support for the Sahrawi people's right to self-determination. For decades, Zambia remained a strong ally of the Polisario Front and a vocal supporter of the Sahrawi cause. However, as regional and global dynamics shifted, Zambia began to recalibrate its position. One of the first signs of this change came in 2011, when President Rupiah Banda revoked Zambia's recognition of the SADR following intense lobbying by Morocco [\[14\]](#). This marked a major departure from Zambia's historical stance, signaling that economic and diplomatic considerations were becoming more important than ideological commitments.

Zambia's policy shift was not without its reversals. In 2016, President Edgar Lungu restored Zambia's recognition of the SADR and condemned Morocco's control over Western Sahara, calling it a form of colonization. Lungu's administration even appointed a Western Saharan ambassador in a formal ceremony. Yet, just five months later, Zambia once again withdrew its recognition of the SADR. This rapid policy change underscored the internal tensions and external pressures influencing Zambia's foreign policy on this issue. Foreign Minister Harry Kalaba announced Zambia's decision to withdraw recognition of the SADR during a visit to Morocco, further solidifying Zambia's evolving alignment with Rabat.

Under Zambia's current president, Hakainde Hichilema, this alignment with Morocco has only deepened. Hichilema has expressed strong support for Morocco's autonomy plan for Western Sahara, which proposes limited self-government for the Sahrawis under Moroccan sovereignty. Zambia has praised Morocco's efforts to promote peace and stability in the region, signaling its endorsement of Morocco's territorial integrity. For Zambia, this alignment represents a pragmatic shift, where economic and strategic interests have come to outweigh the ideological commitment to Sahrawi independence that once characterized its foreign policy.

Several factors explain Zambia's decision to align more closely with Morocco. One of the most significant drivers of this shift has been economic interests. Morocco has strategically deepened its economic engagement with Zambia, offering incentives that have proven difficult to ignore. Trade between the two countries has grown significantly, with a 25% increase in bilateral trade between 2020 and 2024. Additionally, the economic partnership between Zambia and Morocco has brought significant, tangible benefits to Zambia, fostering a range of new opportunities in trade, investment, and humanitarian aid. A prime example of this cooperation was Morocco's provision of critical aid to Zambia during the COVID-19 pandemic, which demonstrated a strong commitment to supporting the Zambian people in times of crisis. Additionally, Morocco has invested in Zambian human capital development by offering educational scholarships to Zambian students. These scholarships play a key role in strengthening bilateral ties, deepening the connection between the two nations by fostering mutual growth and understanding.

In this spirit of collaboration, applications are where open for qualified Zambian nationals to apply for one hundred (100) scholarships under the Moroccan Government Scholarship Scheme for the 2023/2024 academic year. These scholarships provide an incredible opportunity for Zambian students to pursue undergraduate studies in a diverse range of fields at Moroccan institutions. This initiative aims to empower young Zambians, equipping them with knowledge and skills that will benefit both their personal growth and the broader development of Zambia.

Another key factor has been international pressure, particularly from Morocco, which has

mounted a sustained diplomatic campaign to shift African nations' support away from the SADR. By strengthening bilateral relationships, offering economic incentives, and leveraging diplomatic channels, Morocco has succeeded in persuading several African countries, including Zambia, to either recognize its sovereignty over Western Sahara or at least refrain from actively supporting the Sahrawi cause (Hecht, 2024). This diplomatic pressure has also been effective in limiting the role of the African Union in the Western Sahara dispute. Morocco prefers to handle the issue within the United Nations framework, where it faces more favorable conditions, and has worked to minimize the AU's influence, given the organization's historical support for the SADR and Algeria's continued backing of the Sahrawi cause [\[15\]](#).

In addition to economic interests and diplomatic pressure, Zambia's alignment with the United States has also played a pivotal role in its shift towards supporting Morocco [\[16\]](#). The U.S., especially under the Trump administration, dramatically changed the landscape of the Western Sahara conflict by officially recognizing Morocco's sovereignty over the region in December 2020. This recognition was part of the broader Abraham Accords, a diplomatic initiative aimed at normalizing relations between Israel and several Arab states, including Morocco. The U.S.'s decision carried significant weight for countries like Zambia, which relies heavily on U.S. financial support. The U.S. provides Zambia with approximately \$500 million in annual aid, which is crucial for the country's development. Zambia's desire to maintain favorable relations with Washington, particularly in light of its economic dependence on U.S. aid, has undoubtedly influenced its decision to align with Morocco on the Western Sahara issue. In this sense, Zambia's foreign policy is shaped not only by its relationship with Morocco but also by its broader geopolitical ties to global powers like the U.S.

Finally, Zambia's changing stance on Western Sahara reflects the shifting geopolitical alliances across Africa. In recent years, African diplomacy has become increasingly pragmatic, with economic considerations often taking precedence over traditional ideological commitments. For Zambia, historical solidarity with anti-colonial movements, once a cornerstone of its foreign policy, has given way to more pragmatic concerns about economic development and strategic partnerships. Morocco's proactive diplomacy has capitalized on these changing dynamics, offering economic incentives and fostering alliances with African countries that are more concerned with economic growth than with ideological consistency. At the same time, Algeria, the primary supporter of the SADR, has seen its influence wane. The decline of Algerian diplomacy, particularly after the illness and resignation of President Bouteflika, has provided Morocco with an opening to expand its influence across Africa, including in Southern Africa, where it previously had little presence [\[17\]](#).

Zambia's realignment with Morocco on the Western Sahara issue illustrates a broader trend in African diplomacy, where economic interests and shifting alliances are increasingly driving foreign policy decisions. While Zambia was once a staunch supporter of the Sahrawi cause, it has now embraced a more pragmatic approach, prioritizing the economic and strategic benefits of its relationship with Morocco over its historical commitment to the SADR's independence. This shift reflects the growing importance of economic pragmatism in shaping the foreign policy of African nations and underscores the evolving geopolitical landscape of the continent.

### **The SADC, AU, and Zambia's Dilemma: Regional Solidarity Versus Geopolitical Interests**

Zambia's changing stance on Western Sahara presents a compelling case of a nation caught



between regional solidarity and the pursuit of economic and geopolitical interests. This dilemma is set against the backdrop of longstanding support for the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic (SADR) by the African Union (AU) and the Southern African Development Community (SADC). Both organizations have remained steadfast in defending the Sahrawi people's right to self-determination, opposing Morocco's claims over the disputed territory of Western Sahara [\[18\]](#). However, Zambia's recent shift away from this position and its alignment with Morocco reveal the complexities that African nations face when navigating the evolving diplomatic landscape of the continent.

The Western Sahara conflict has long been a focal point for regional solidarity in Africa, particularly within the AU and SADC. These organizations, rooted in principles of anti-colonialism and territorial integrity, have consistently supported the Sahrawi people's right to self-determination and decolonization [\[19\]](#). The African Union, of which the SADR is a founding member, remains committed to its mandate of ensuring that colonial borders are respected, and that former colonies achieve full independence. This commitment is enshrined in the AU's Constitutive Act, which reflects the continent's historical struggles against imperialism. The AU has maintained a firm stance on Western Sahara, viewing the conflict as the last unresolved colonial issue in Africa.

The African Union's response to the evolving geopolitical situation—particularly following the controversial U.S. recognition of Moroccan sovereignty over Western Sahara in 2020—has been one of renewed activism. In the wake of the Trump administration's decision, the AU Peace and Security Council (PSC) emphasized the importance of a political solution based on the principle of Sahrawi self-determination. This reflects the AU's dedication to upholding international law and the right of colonized peoples to determine their own futures. The AU has also taken practical steps to assert its position, including reopening its office in Laayoune, Western Sahara's capital, and organizing field visits to assess the situation on the ground. These actions are significant, as they demonstrate the AU's proactive stance in ensuring that the Sahrawi people's claims are not ignored, despite the mounting international pressure from Morocco and its allies [\[20\]](#).

Similarly, the Southern African Development Community (SADC) has been a strong advocate for the Sahrawi cause, with key members such as South Africa and Zimbabwe championing the right to self-determination for the Sahrawi people. For many SADC members, the struggle of Western Sahara mirrors their own histories of liberation from settler colonialism, particularly in countries like South Africa and Zimbabwe, where the fight against apartheid and colonialism left a deep legacy of solidarity with other oppressed peoples. In 2019, SADC hosted a "Solidarity Conference with Western Sahara" in Pretoria, where regional leaders reaffirmed their unwavering support for the Sahrawi people and urged African nations to resist Morocco's occupation. This conference was not only a display of political support but also a reminder of the deep ideological and historical roots that underpin the region's solidarity with the Polisario Front, the liberation movement representing the Sahrawi people.

However, despite the firm positions of the AU and SADC, Morocco has made significant diplomatic inroads across Africa, reshaping the continent's approach to the Western Sahara conflict. In recent years, Morocco has employed a strategy of economic diplomacy, using trade, investment, and diplomatic incentives to persuade African nations to de-recognize the SADR or adopt a more neutral stance on the issue. A key element of Morocco's strategy has been encouraging countries to open consulates in the disputed cities of Laayoune and Dakhla, which effectively signals recognition of Moroccan sovereignty over Western Sahara.



This tactic has proven successful, with several African nations—both inside and outside of SADC—shifting their positions in favor of Morocco. These diplomatic moves highlight a broader geopolitical shift, where economic benefits and strategic alliances are increasingly outweighing ideological commitments to anti-colonial solidarity [\[21\]](#).

Zambia's changing position on Western Sahara is emblematic of this broader shift. Historically, Zambia was a staunch supporter of the Sahrawi people, with former president Kenneth Kaunda recognizing the SADR as early as 1979. This support was in line with Zambia's broader foreign policy, which was grounded in anti-colonialism and Pan-African solidarity. For decades, Zambia aligned itself with liberation movements across the continent, from South Africa's African National Congress (ANC) to Zimbabwe's ZANU-PF, and supported the cause of self-determination for oppressed peoples. However, Zambia's stance has increasingly shifted towards pragmatism, prioritizing economic and geopolitical interests over its historical commitments to the Sahrawi cause.

This shift has been most clearly reflected in Zambia's decision to de-recognize the SADR and align itself more closely with Morocco. In 2011, Zambia withdrew its recognition of the SADR after intense lobbying by Morocco, a decision that was reversed under President Edgar Lungu in 2016, only to be changed again shortly thereafter. Under President Hakainde Hichilema, Zambia has further entrenched its alignment with Morocco, even opening a consulate in Laayoune, signaling its support for Moroccan sovereignty over Western Sahara. This move has been deeply disappointing to SADC members like South Africa and Zimbabwe, who had long viewed Zambia as a reliable ally in the fight for self-determination for oppressed peoples. Zambia's decision to shift its position on Western Sahara underscores the growing influence of Morocco's economic diplomacy within the region.

The primary driver of Zambia's realignment appears to be economic incentives. These economic and developmental benefits have proven to be highly persuasive for Zambia, particularly as it seeks to bolster its own economic growth and development. In this light, Zambia's decision to align with Morocco can be seen as a pragmatic choice, driven by a desire to secure tangible economic gains for its citizens.

However, this pragmatic approach comes at a cost. By aligning with Morocco, Zambia risks alienating its traditional allies within SADC and undermining its reputation as a champion of anti-colonialism. The ideological inconsistency of Zambia's position is particularly stark when compared to the country's historical legacy. Zambia was once seen as a stronghold of support for liberation movements across Africa, and its foreign policy was closely aligned with the principles of Pan-Africanism and solidarity with oppressed peoples. Zambia's shift away from this position, driven by economic and geopolitical interests, has therefore raised concerns about its commitment to these principles.

Critics of Zambia's foreign policy argue that its decision to align with Morocco reflects a short-term prioritization of economic benefits over long-term ideological and diplomatic commitments. By prioritizing economic partnerships with Morocco and strengthening ties with global powers like the United States, Zambia risks undermining the principles of self-determination and decolonization that it once championed. This shift raises important questions about the future of Zambia's foreign policy and its role within regional organizations like SADC. Can Zambia maintain its credibility as a defender of African liberation while simultaneously supporting Morocco's occupation of Western Sahara? And what are the broader implications of this shift for regional solidarity within SADC?

Zambia's realignment with Morocco also reflects a broader trend in African diplomacy, where

economic pragmatism is increasingly shaping foreign policy decisions. While regional organizations like the AU and SADC remain committed to the principles of decolonization and self-determination, individual member states are finding it harder to resist the economic and diplomatic pressures exerted by Morocco and its allies. Zambia's decision to align with Morocco represents a calculated move to secure economic and geopolitical advantages, even if it means compromising on long-standing ideological commitments.

In general Zambia's changing position on Western Sahara illustrates the growing tension between regional solidarity and economic pragmatism in African diplomacy. While Zambia was once a vocal supporter of the Sahrawi people's right to self-determination, it has increasingly aligned itself with Morocco, prioritizing economic and geopolitical interests over its historical commitments. This shift not only reflects the influence of Morocco's economic diplomacy but also highlights the broader challenges facing African nations as they navigate the complex interplay between regional commitments and national interests [\[22\]](#). Zambia's decision has created tension within SADC and raises important questions about the future of the Western Sahara conflict in the context of shifting alliances and evolving geopolitical interests across Africa.

### **Conclusion**

Zambia's shifting diplomatic stance on Western Sahara highlights a broader trend in African foreign policy, where economic and geopolitical interests are increasingly shaping decisions. Historically, Zambia was a strong advocate for the Sahrawi people's right to self-determination, but in recent years, it has shifted its position to align more closely with Morocco. This realignment is driven by a combination of factors, including Morocco's active economic diplomacy, the influence of powerful international partners such as the United States, and the changing dynamics of regional alliances across Africa. By strengthening ties with Morocco, Zambia is seeking to benefit from trade, investment, and strategic partnerships, despite compromising on its earlier ideological stance.

This shift, however, has created tensions within regional organizations such as the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and the African Union (AU). Both of these bodies remain firm in their support for the Sahrawi people's right to self-determination, a key principle rooted in anti-colonialism. Zambia's move toward Morocco has disappointed some of its regional allies, particularly countries like South Africa and Zimbabwe, which continue to see the Western Sahara issue as part of Africa's broader struggle for liberation and decolonization. This divergence in perspectives underscores a growing divide within Africa, where nations are increasingly torn between economic pragmatism and historical solidarity with liberation movements.

Despite Morocco's diplomatic efforts and its growing influence, the Western Sahara conflict remains unresolved. Western Sahara is still regarded as Africa's last colony, and the international community, including the African Union, continues to support the Sahrawi people's right to self-determination. The ongoing impasse over Western Sahara represents a significant risk to stability in North Africa, with potential implications for Europe's southern borders. A resolution to the conflict, ideally brokered under the framework of the United Nations, is critical. Any violations of international law in Western Sahara could have far-reaching global consequences, making a just and fair resolution essential not only for North Africa but for international peace and security as a whole.

Ultimately, Zambia's diplomatic pivot on Western Sahara reflects the complex balancing act

that many African countries now face. They must navigate between upholding historical commitments to liberation struggles and addressing contemporary economic and geopolitical realities. As African nations seek to assert themselves on the global stage, the challenge of balancing these competing priorities is likely to shape the continent's foreign policy landscape for years to come.

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## Результаты процедуры рецензирования статьи

Рецензия выполнена специалистами [Национального Института Научного Рецензирования](#) по заказу ООО "НБ-Медиа".

В связи с политикой двойного слепого рецензирования личность рецензента не раскрывается.

Со списком рецензентов можно ознакомиться [здесь](#).

Африканский континент отличается этническим и конфессиональным разнообразием, границами, которые были проведены еще в колониальный период, экономическими трудностями, связанными как с наследием колониализма, так и неоколониализмом. Все вышесказанное заставляет обратиться к изучению этнополитических конфликтов в Африке.

Указанные обстоятельства определяют актуальность представленной на рецензирование статьи, предметом которой является взаимоотношения Замбии с Западной Сахарой. Автор ставит своими задачами проанализировать положение вокруг Западной Сахары, а также проследить меняющуюся позиции Замбии по вопросу признания Западной Сахары. Работа основана на принципах анализа и синтеза, достоверности, объективности, методологической базой исследования выступает системный подход, в основе которого находится рассмотрение объекта как целостного комплекса взаимосвязанных элементов. Научная новизна статьи заключается в самой постановке темы: автор ставит своими задачами охарактеризовать вопрос признания Западной Сахарой Республикой Замбия. Рассматривая библиографический список статьи, как позитивный момент следует отметить его масштабность и разносторонность: всего список литературы включает в себя свыше 20 различных источников и исследований. Несомненным достоинством рецензируемой статьи является привлечение зарубежной англоязычной литературы, что определяется самой постановкой темы. Из привлекаемых автором трудов отметим работы Е.Г. Черкасовой, М. Володиной, Д. Джетта, Дж. Смита, в центре внимания которых находятся различные аспекты признания Западной Сахары африканскими государствами. Заметим, что библиография обладает важностью как с научной, так и с просветительской точки зрения: после прочтения текста рецензируемой статьи читатель может обратиться к другим материалам по её теме. В целом, на наш взгляд, комплексное использование различных источников и исследований способствовало решению стоящих перед автором задач.

Стиль написания статьи можно отнести к научному, вместе с тем доступному для понимания не только специалистам, но и широкой читательской аудитории, всем, кто интересуется как вопросом признания Западной Сахары, в целом, так и позицией к ней Республики Замбии, в частности. Апелляция к оппонентам представлена на уровне собранной информации, полученной автором в ходе работы над темой статьи.

Структура работы отличается определенной логичностью и последовательностью, в ней можно выделить введение, основную часть, заключение. В начале автор определяет актуальность темы, показывает, что относительно Западной Сахары

"в настоящее время марокканские силы контролируют большую часть региона, и королевство работало над созданием марокканских поселений, одновременно развивая такие отрасли, как добыча фосфатов и рыболовство". В работе показано, что в настоящее время как Марокко, так и фронт ПОЛИСАРИО примирились с тупиковой

ситуацией. Автор отмечает, что изменение взглядов "Замбии на Марокко по вопросу Западной Сахары иллюстрирует более широкую тенденцию в африканской дипломатии, где экономические интересы и меняющиеся альянсы все больше определяют решения внешней политики". В связи с этим наблюдатели спрашивают, "сможет ли Замбия сохранить свой авторитет защитника освобождения Африки, одновременно поддерживая оккупацию Марокко Западной Сахары?"

Примечательно, что во многом перемены на Африканском континенте были обусловлены падением режима М. Каддафи, который стабильно поддерживал антиколониальные движения. Обозначает также автор и отдельные аспекты марокканско-замбийского сотрудничества, в том числе в сфере образования.

Главным выводом статьи является то, что африканские страны сегодня лавируют "между сохранением исторических обязательств в борьбе за освобождение и решением современных экономических и геополитических реалий".

Представленная на рецензирование статья посвящена актуальной теме, написана на английском языке, что увеличивает читательскую аудиторию, вызовет читательский интерес, а ее материалы могут быть использованы как в учебных курсах, так и в рамках изучения стратегий африканских государств.

В целом, на наш взгляд, статья может быть рекомендована для публикации в журнале "Международные отношения".