# Azerbaijan challenges Harari’s critique of liberal international order with call for genuine global solidarity



Yuval Noah Harari, the Israeli philosopher and author renowned worldwide, recently sparked global discussion with his op-ed published on 18 April in the Financial Times. In this piece, Harari analysed the worldview of former U.S. President Donald Trump, describing it as zero-sum, where “the strong trample the weak,” a stark contrast to the liberal international order, which ideally promotes “a network of potential win-win collaborations.”

Harari’s critique centres on Trump’s approach to international negotiations, which he contends always involve clear winners and losers. According to Harari, in Trump’s perspective, international institutions, agreements, and laws inherently benefit some nations at the expense of others, ultimately rendering international law obsolete. Harari explains that such a viewpoint assigns the responsibility for conflict to weaker nations who “refuse to accept reality,” as seen through the lens of Trump’s stance on the situation in Ukraine. He warns that should this mindset prevail, a return to an era of “high walls” encompassing financial, military, cultural, and physical barriers is likely, potentially igniting continuous cycles of imperial conquest and warfare, rather than fostering cooperation on global challenges like climate change and artificial intelligence.

However, from Azerbaijan’s standpoint, as expressed in a detailed reflection published by News.Az and authored by Azerbaijani publicist Teymur Atayev, Harari’s critique omits a significant perspective — the perceived shortcomings of the so-called liberal international order in delivering justice and equitable cooperation. The article raises pointed questions about the efficacy of this order, especially given Azerbaijan’s own historical experiences, involving decades of territorial occupation and the displacement of over a million people. Despite appealing repeatedly to international law, United Nations resolutions, and principles of justice, these appeals went largely unheeded. Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev has been quoted noting that countries proclaiming themselves as guardians of international law have often been among the first to violate it, subsequently justifying their actions post facto.

The article highlights the perceived double standards evident in global politics, questioning the absence of sustained commitment to initiatives such as COP29, the United Nations climate conference, and calls by Chinese President Xi Jinping to build a “community of shared future for mankind.” It also notes tendencies within the liberal bloc to categorise nations into “friends” and “foes” based on shifting geopolitical interests rather than consistent principles.

Furthermore, Azerbaijan’s recent experiences during the Biden administration, as indicated by President Aliyev’s statements, are cited to illustrate the erosion of international law and norms, with a growing scepticism about relying on international legal frameworks and resolutions. Nevertheless, despite these challenges, Azerbaijan maintains its support for justice and the rule of law in the international arena.

In contrast to Harari’s somewhat pessimistic forecast of perpetual cycles of domination and conflict, the Azerbaijani perspective offered in the article suggests a more nuanced view. It highlights the rise of “middle powers” which, including Azerbaijan itself, contribute to regional security, infrastructure development, and integration. Following the restoration of its territorial integrity in line with international law, Azerbaijan is portrayed as playing a constructive role in fostering regional stability and connectivity.

The Azerbaijani leadership emphasises strength not as a tool for domination but as a means for defending sovereignty, national identity, and the right to self-determination. The article draws a comparison with Harari’s previous 2020 Financial Times essay “The World After Coronavirus,” which posited that humanity must choose between disunity and global solidarity — the latter being essential to overcoming future crises. In response, Azerbaijan asserts its practical commitment to bridging divides between the Global North and South, and between richer and poorer nations. President Aliyev has noted Baku’s success in facilitating dialogue within the Non-Aligned Movement, and in providing humanitarian and financial support, including education and health programmes, to over 80 countries. Additionally, Azerbaijan was among the first countries to oppose “vaccine nationalism,” even initiating a special UN General Assembly session on the matter.

The article advocates for learning from Azerbaijan’s model of multiculturalism and cooperation. President Aliyev has stressed that “the alternative to multiculturalism is self-isolation,” and emphasised the importance of fostering understanding rather than confrontation among peoples worldwide. The piece concludes by inviting scholars and policymakers seeking examples of genuine global solidarity to look to Azerbaijan, describing it as an emerging responsible middle power aspiring to build a more inclusive, equitable, and stable global order.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

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2. <https://www.ynharari.com> - Yuval Noah Harari's official website provides insight into his work and quotes, though it does not contain specific op-eds.
3. <https://www.ynharari.com/category/articles/> - This page archives Yuval Noah Harari's articles, offering a collection of his written work on various topics.
4. <https://www.theguardian.com/profile/yuval-noah-harari> - This page showcases Yuval Noah Harari's articles in The Guardian, including discussions on global issues.
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6. <https://www.un.org/en/development/desa/pd/content/non-aligned-movement> - This is the Non-Aligned Movement's page on the UN website, reflecting Azerbaijan's role in fostering dialogue and global cooperation within this framework.
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