



I Betrayal Gen-Z Factor

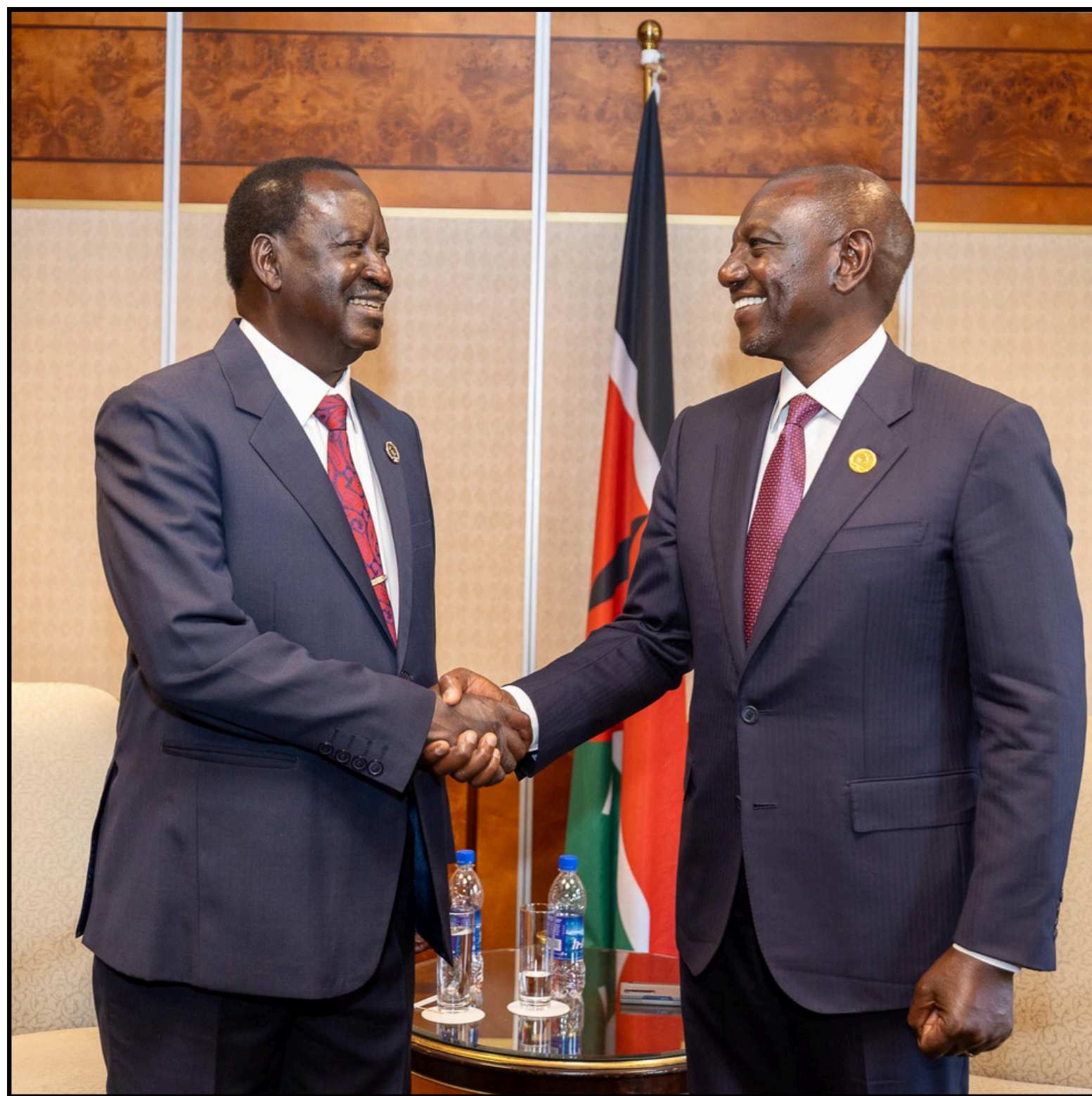
Raila Odinga's bid for the African Union Commission (AUC) chairmanship ended in defeat, and while the loss was largely attributed to regional political dynamics, a significant force behind his failure was the backlash from Kenya's youth. Many young Kenyans, particularly Generation Z, actively rooted against his candidacy, seeing it as undeserved after what they viewed as his betrayal of their movement. Their opposition was vocal, especially on social media, where hashtags and campaigns against his bid gained traction.



In 2024, Kenya experienced a wave of youth-led protests against proposed tax increases and government corruption. These demonstrations were met with violent crackdowns, leading to the deaths of over 50 protesters. The protests, which brought together young people from diverse backgrounds, were driven by a demand for accountability and justice.



Many in this movement saw Odinga as a potential ally, given his long history as an opposition leader, but his subsequent actions shattered that perception.

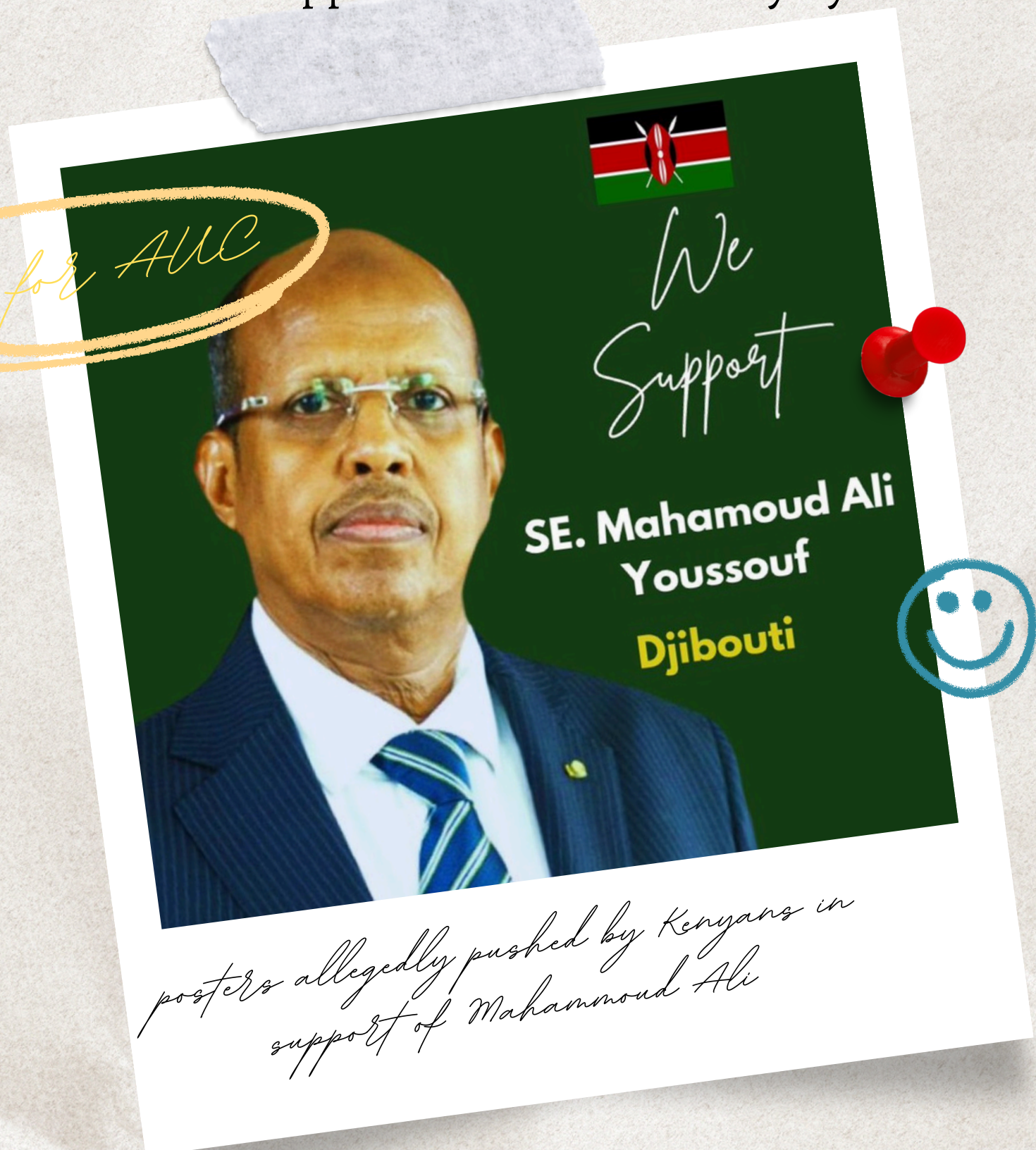


Odinga, long seen as an opposition leader fighting for democratic reforms, shocked many of his supporters by making political deals with President William Ruto, whose government was blamed for the violent response to the protests. Many young activists felt that Odinga had abandoned them, choosing personal political gain over their struggle. This feeling of betrayal intensified when Odinga appeared to downplay the impact of the protests, further alienating a generation that once looked up to him.

#MahamoudAli

SOCIAL MEDIA CAMPAIGNS AGAINST "BABA"

On social media, Kenyans openly rejected Odinga's bid for the AUC role questioning how he could represent African interests when he had, in their view, failed to stand up for young Kenyans facing government repression. Online campaigns urging African leaders to reject Odinga's candidacy gained traction, making it clear that he lacked the full support of his own country's youth.



II Francophonie

Region & Religion



French Speakers



Muslim Majority

There are around 26 to 29 French-speaking countries in Africa and 27 countries where more than fifty percent of the population practice Islam



Beyond Kenya, other factors contributed to Odinga's loss. Regional politics played a crucial role, with Djibouti's candidate, Mahmoud Ali Youssouf, receiving strong backing from Francophone countries. There are around 26-29 Francophone nations in Africa, and their historical alignment often plays a crucial role in AU politics. The AU has long been shaped by linguistic and regional alliances, and Youssouf benefited from the solidarity of French-speaking nations, which helped him secure a significant bloc of votes. Without a comparable base of support, Odinga's candidacy was always at a disadvantage.

Djibouti

Religious affiliation may have also played a role. Djibouti, a Muslim-majority country, likely gained support from other Muslim-majority nations on the continent. Out of 54 African nations, at least 27 have significant Muslim populations, including heavyweights such as Egypt, Algeria, Nigeria, and Sudan. This factor, combined with the backing of Francophone states, gave Youssouf an advantage over Odinga, who lacked a similarly cohesive regional or religious bloc behind him. In a race where every vote mattered, this bloc may have been decisive.



III “Macron Call”

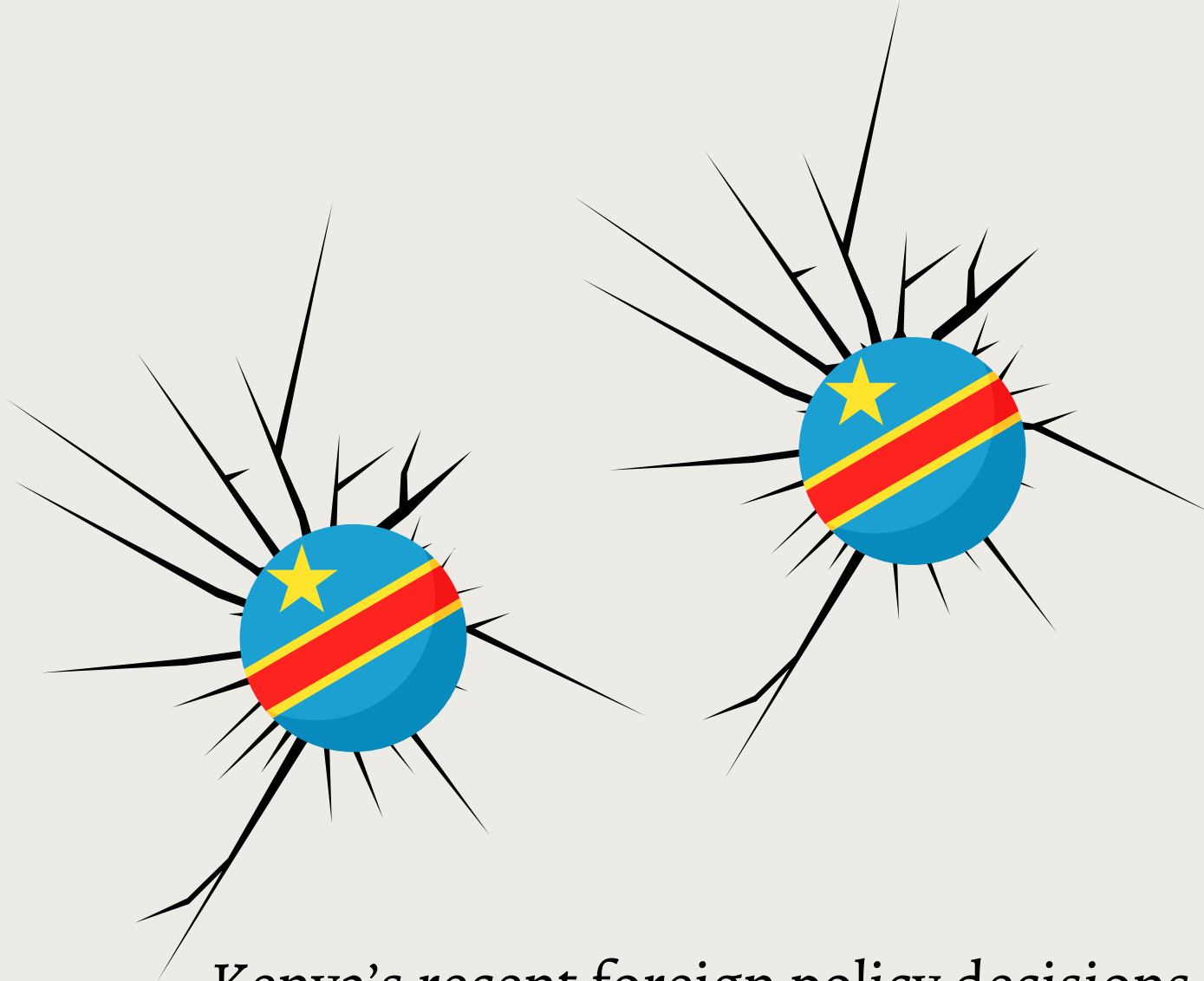
Foreign policy



William Samoei Ruto, PhD  @Will... · 3d  

I have spoken to President [@EmmanuelMacron](#) of France on the situation in the Eastern Democratic Republic of Congo. He has expressed support for the regional efforts to deal with the challenge.

President Macron also committed his country's support for the interventions being carried out, and for Kenya's participation in other peace initiatives in Somalia, Sudan and South Sudan.



Kenya's recent foreign policy decisions further weakened Odinga's chances. President Ruto's alignment with French President Emmanuel Macron on the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) crisis drew criticism from Pan-Africanists who argue that African issues should be resolved by Africans without Western involvement. The perception that Kenya was acting in coordination with Western interests may have cost Odinga support among AU member states that prioritize African-led solutions. Given Africa's long history of external interference, any sign of Western alignment is met with suspicion by many nations, especially those with histories of colonial resistance.



MOBILIZED GENERATION.

Odinga's defeat in the AUC race is a reflection of both domestic and continental dynamics. The opposition from Kenyan youth, combined with regional alliances and geopolitical considerations, made it difficult for him to gain the necessary support. But beyond his loss, the most significant takeaway from this election may be the power of Kenya's youth in shaping national and international politics. Their ability to mobilize, influence public discourse, and challenge long-standing political figures signals a shift that cannot be ignored. As Kenya heads toward its next elections, political leaders will have to contend with a generation that is more politically engaged, more vocal, and increasingly unwilling to accept politics as usual.

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