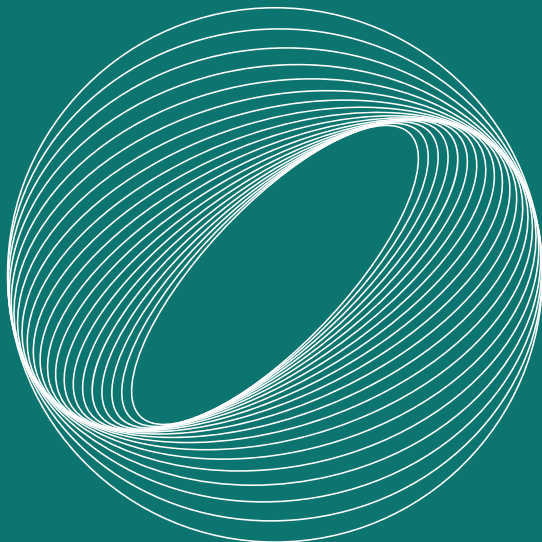




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# ***FORTNIGHTLY REVIEW #79***

**16 SEPTEMBER – 30 SEPTEMBER 2024**

# **DEMOCRATIC INTEGRITY AT RISK WITH THE RISE OF AUTHORITARIANISM IN INDONESIA**

The rise of democratic authoritarianism in Indonesia is increasingly apparent, as exemplified by the "Peringatan Darurat" movement. This movement reflects growing concerns about the erosion of democratic norms under President Joko Widodo, highlighting how democratic institutions are being manipulated to consolidate authoritarian power through institutional and ideational capture (Bajpai & Kureshi, 2022).

While institutional and ideational capture are crucial, institutional capture is more prominent in Indonesia's political landscape. President Widodo has strategically placed loyalists in key positions across the judiciary, executive, and legislature—such as appointing his brother-in-law as Chief Justice of the Constitutional Court and enacting a sudden cabinet reshuffle in August 2024—facilitating the passage of laws that strengthen his power (Tempo, 2024). This is evident in his efforts to lower the vice-presidential age requirement to facilitate his son's candidacy and similar adjustments for gubernatorial positions. Concurrently, opposition forces have faced severe suppression through legal challenges and criminalization. In addition, the formation of the KIM Plus coalition, with parties like NasDem, PKS, and PKB joining under substantial pressure and legal threats, illustrates the institutional capture. As a result, 43 regions in Indonesia are experiencing the "empty box" phenomenon in the 2024 regional elections (Ridwan, 2024), where only one candidate appears on the ballot, signalling a dangerous decline in democratic competition.

In this critical juncture, civil society must remain vigilant, bolster legal protections, and actively resist efforts to undermine democratic discourse. Such measures are crucial to countering authoritarian drift and preserving the integrity of Indonesia's democratic institutions. (Raisa Mutiara Diani, IR UGM 2021)

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# **HOW EV BATTERY RECYCLING POLICY CAN SUSTAIN INDONESIA'S NICKEL DOMINANCE AMIDST LITHIUM'S RISE**

As the world shifts towards Lithium Ferro Phosphate (LFP) batteries for electric vehicles (International Energy Agency, 2024), Indonesia—a global leader in nickel production—finds itself at a crucial juncture. While LFP batteries are gaining traction due to their cost-effectiveness and safety, they come with a significant drawback: recycling them is far more expensive and complicated than nickel-based batteries (Media Nikel Indonesia, 2024). This challenge allows Indonesia to maintain its competitive edge in the global electric vehicle (EV) market. To fully capitalize on this advantage, Indonesia must adopt measures that solidify its role in the evolving battery supply chain.

One such approach is introducing a battery recycling law, mandating battery recycling across the EV industry. This policy would allow Indonesia to capitalize on nickel-based batteries' lower costs and simpler recycling processes. Such initiative could also incentivize the continued use of nickel, positioning these batteries as more appealing in a market increasingly focused on sustainability. Moreover, although nickel extraction has environmental concerns, the ability to recycle and reuse this material effectively can mitigate some of these issues, making the case for nickel even stronger (Muller et al, 2021).

Investing in and developing a robust recycling infrastructure alongside mining operations would enable Indonesia to reclaim valuable materials from used batteries, turning what was once waste into a strategic resource (RMI, 2024). This approach is not just about maintaining relevance; it can position Indonesia as a critical player in a circular economy for batteries. By leveraging its nickel resources and aligning with global sustainability trends, Indonesia can secure its place in the evolving EV industry, ensuring its economy continues to benefit as LFP batteries gain popularity. (Tora Pandito, University of Brawijaya)

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## **GLOBAL SECURITY INITIATIVE SUBSTANTIVELY NOT FOR ASEAN**

Among its important global security proposals, China has proposed the Global Security Initiative (GSI), a comprehensive global security initiative required in governance emphasizing cooperation and implementing broad-spectrum collaboration over bilateral and multilateral security with all countries (Xu et al., 2024). China is dedicated to openness and inclusivity, particularly with developing countries in the Global South, which it views as vital to a shared future of global peace and prosperity. However, China's commitment to global security through the GSI has faced criticism, as Alvin Camba (2023) noted that the GSI's plans for Southeast Asia are unlikely to benefit most ASEAN countries.

The key reason is that China has become a major source of non-traditional security threats for many countries in the region. For instance, in Vietnam, Chinese militias have been fishing in its exclusive economic zones. Vietnam has ramped up its military spending to protect its maritime territories. Between 2019 and 2021, Vietnam acquired a Boeing Insitu ScanEagle UAV, a Beechcraft T-6 Texan II trainer aircraft, and a U.S. Coast Guard Hamilton-class cutter (Camba, 2023).

Many observers argue that it could worsen ASEAN tensions and weaken cohesion, with Henrick (2023) and Arase (2022) suggesting China might leverage ASEAN's support for the GSI to deter Western partnerships while taking a more confrontational approach through military exercises and obstructing foreign vessels in the South China Sea. ASEAN member states should work on reinforcing internal solidarity by prioritizing regular consultations, enhancing consensus-building mechanisms, and promoting joint initiatives that reflect shared goals. (Intan Annisa Putri, MAIR UGM 2024)

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