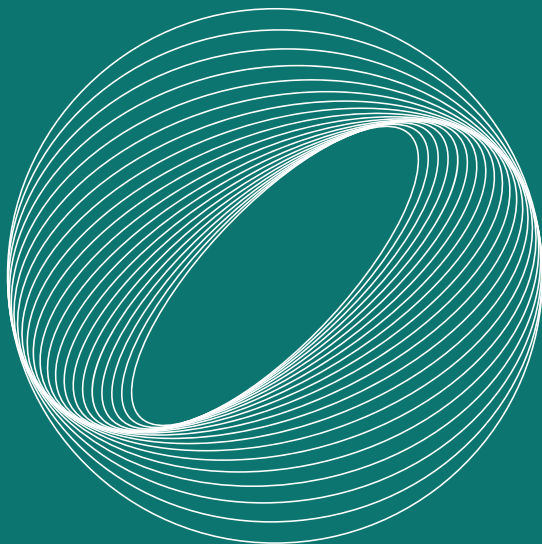




Institute of  
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DEPT. OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS  
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, BERKELEY



# ***FORTNIGHTLY REVIEW #81***

**16 OCTOBER – 31 OCTOBER 2024**

## THE QUEST FOR ECOCIDE RECOGNITION: VOICES FROM THE GLOBAL SOUTH

In early September 2024, the Pacific islands of Vanuatu, Fiji, and Samoa submitted a proposal for formally recognising ecocide as a crime to the International Criminal Court. They advocated for a revision of the legal framework to classify "ecocide" alongside genocide and war crimes (Harvey, 2024). Ecocide refers to unlawful or wanton acts committed with the knowledge that there is a substantial likelihood of causing severe, widespread or long-term environmental damage (*International Expert Panel for the Legal Definition of Ecocide*, 2021).

The proposal by Vanuatu, Fiji, and Samoa is considered a significant movement, representing the first time countries have united to address ecocide as a crime before the International Criminal Court (ICC) since Vanuatu initiated this effort in 2019. It is commonly assumed that the Global South is especially vulnerable to climate change impacts and their effects on human mobility due to limited adaptive capacities, greater geographical risks, and socio-economic inequalities (Boas et al., 2024). Ecocide, exacerbated by climate change, poses significant threats to island nations in the Global South. Rising sea levels jeopardize their territorial integrity while increasing extreme weather events like hurricanes and flooding threaten vital infrastructure, agriculture, and freshwater supplies.

However, challenges persist as the proposal seeks to have the ICC recognize ecocide as a crime, given that the ICC's jurisdiction is limited. Notably, major greenhouse gas emitters such as the United States, China, India, and Russia are not parties to the ICC (Harvey, 2024), which complicates the potential effectiveness and enforcement of such a recognition. Notably, other countries in the Global South should support the Pacific nations' proposal to recognize ecocide. Collaboration in this initiative can strengthen their influence and promote better environmental safeguards globally, essential for addressing urgent ecological challenges in developing countries. (Karunya Saka Listianto, Universitas Pembangunan Nasional "Veteran" Yogyakarta)

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## FIGHTING FOR A CHANCE TO SLEEP: THE DAWN OF SEVERE HOUSING CRISES IN ITALY

Almost a year ago, students across Italy, including those in Rome, Milan, Florence, Bologna, and many other major cities, organized a protest against the excruciatingly high rents. On average, the rate of a monthly stay in the capital floats around 300–400 euros, and these prices significantly increase if the accommodations are located around major tourist destinations, such as Prati and Aventino, which are located in proximity to the Vatican and the Colosseum (Statista Research Department, 2023). Overtourism, which destroys the environment and socio-economic threads due to uncontrolled tourist influx, was an easily identified culprit. As the international tourist influx rate rapidly surges, business owners adapt by inflating consumer prices and shifting the commodity to match tourism-focused services (Mikulić, 2021). The main objective is to cater to tourists' higher spending ability, making it hard for the lower-spending part of society to live with necessities. The writer thinks it is time to realize that the Italian dream—or, on many occasions, the La Dolce Vita as popularly coined by Federico Fellini's 1960 iconic film—is no longer attainable for most of the population.

Tourism set the stage for a new practice, labeled by Lee (2016) as conversion, where affordable long-term housing decreases while short-term housing with high prices increases. While this trend benefits landlords, it simultaneously creates a barrier for the middle-lower class, marginalizing and silencing them in policy-making (Esposito, 2024). The Italian government has done little to none to remedy this situation, which could be attributed to its questionable political willingness (Giuffrida, 2023). This similar pattern could also be identified in the Global South context, where governments that rely on tourism as their sole economic engine have done little to none to axe tourism's destructive effect. Sadly, the injustice that prevailed in the eternal city is a fate shared by many more across the globe. (Oktavianus Bima Saputra, HI UGM 2021)

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## TOWARDS AN ECONOMY JUSTICE: CONFRONTING MIDDLE-CLASS UNCERTAINTY

Indonesia's middle class is shrinking, as the average savings of the group with less than IDR 100 million fell from IDR 3.4 million in December 2017 to IDR 1.9 million in April 2024 (Fajar, 2024). The Indonesian middle class is defined as people whose monthly expenses are IDR 1.2 million-6 million. This trend shows that the middle class struggles to maintain financial stability. In fact, the middle class serves as the foundation of a market economy and democracy, essential for maintaining social and political stability and reducing tensions between rich and poor (Barro, 1996; Birdsall et al., 2000).

This decline is partly caused by government policies, such as Perppu Number 2 of 2022 on Job Creation, which exacerbates job insecurity with the practice of contract workers and outsourcing. The discourse on the increase in Value Added Tax (VAT) from 11 percent to 12 percent that will take effect on January 1, 2025, and the Public Housing Savings (Tapera) policy that will be deducted from workers' salaries, and is planned to take effect in 2027, further complicates the fate of the middle class. If the decline in middle-class numbers is allowed to continue, it will create political instability and emphasize inequality.

Thus, it is necessary to challenge conservative economic models focusing on growth without regard to the public interest. Stronger economic policies and decent access are needed to enhance welfare and reduce inequality. The government should focus on the public's interests by limiting the power of corporations that ignore the public interest in favor of capital owners (Mubyarto, 1989), providing adequate public services, increasing job opportunities, ensuring social protection for workers, and raising the regional minimum wage (UMR). (Firda Ainun Ula, MAIR 2024)

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