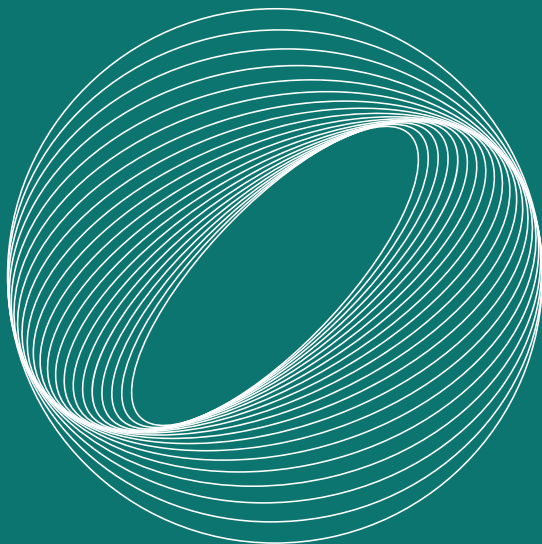




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PERMANENT BRICS MEMBERSHIP: NEW CHALLENGE FOR INDONESIA

Indonesia formally joined BRICS as a full member on January 6, 2025 (Marc, 2025). After the announcement, Indonesia ensured there would be no relational disruption with the US, even though Indonesia has slowly replaced dollars with local currencies in transactions with China (Voice of Indonesia, 2025). However, countries in the Global North feel uneasy about BRICS getting more powerful economically. For instance, Donald J. Trump threatened BRICS member countries that he would impose a whopping 100% tariff on whichever countries try to replace the US Dollar (Honderich, 2024). The European Parliament responded similarly in their briefing document titled, “Expansion of BRICS: A quest for greater global influence?” highlighting the need for Europe to have further political dialogue with the BRICS countries (Deutsche Welle, 2025).

Reflecting on that, can Indonesia benefit from BRICS while diplomatically soothing its bilateral relations with Global North countries? BRICS gained a strong momentum in the last several years. Since the Johannesburg summit in August 2023, BRICS has opened its door to new membership. At least 40 countries are interested in joining BRICS (Acharya et al., 2023), offering an alternative global framework for countries to join. The formation of BRICS was not intended to oppose or antagonize existing international groups (Megre & Ribeiro, 2024). However, BRICS members consist of Global South countries, which challenges the existing hegemony (Mahler, 2015). Hence, to ensure the world accurately grasps the voice of Indonesia, Indonesia must strategically enhance its diplomatic prowess across all tracks of diplomacy. (Rifqie Zullian, International Relations Department, Universitas Gadjah Mada)

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THAILAND LEADS SOUTHEAST ASIA WITH SAME-SEX MARRIAGE REFORM

Thailand has joined Taiwan as one of only two Asian countries to legalize same-sex marriage. The historic moment on January 23, 2025, when hundreds of LGBTQ+ couples received their marriage certificates, marks a pivotal point in the global struggle for equality (Sasipornkarn, 2025). This groundbreaking legislation grants same-sex couples full legal recognition, encompassing financial, medical, and adoption rights (Reuters, 2025). It stands as a testament to decades of relentless advocacy and symbolizes a significant victory for LGBTQ+ rights.

While this achievement has been widely celebrated internationally, it also brings to light ongoing tensions in global norms regarding marriage equality. Thailand's progressive move challenges deeply ingrained cultural and religious narratives in the region, where LGBTQ+ rights often encounter resistance. For instance, neighboring countries such as Malaysia and Indonesia continue to oppose similar reforms, citing religious conservatism as a significant barrier (Sinthuphan & Ruendhawil, 2022).

Thailand's Prime Minister, Paetongtarn Shinawatra, praised the legislation as an affirmation of universal dignity and equal rights, positioning Thailand as a leader in Southeast Asia's human rights landscape (Lau, 2025). However, activists emphasize that enacting the law is just the beginning. They warn that robust measures are necessary to address residual discrimination within administrative systems to ensure the law's practical effectiveness.

This milestone underscores the power of localized activism to shape global norms while highlighting the persistent divides in regional attitudes toward LGBTQ+ rights. As celebrations continue, Thailand's reform serves not only as a historic achievement but also as a call to action for greater inclusivity and equality worldwide. **(Gabriel Jovan Adidharma, Publication Staff)**

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RESISTANCE BEYOND THE CEASEFIRE IN GAZA

A ceasefire agreement between Hamas and Israel began on Sunday, January 19, following 15 months of war in Gaza. While the truce may provide temporary relief, it is unlikely to mark the end of the Palestinians' struggle against Israel's systemic oppression. For Palestinians, the ceasefire offers a brief pause to their suffering but does not resolve their fight for justice (Maarouf, 2025). Their struggle endured as Israel's ongoing settler-colonial project continues downplayed in diplomatic and public discourse, as seen by its relationship with the Trump administration (Widakuswara, 2025) and the German government (Mackert, 2025). Without sustained international pressure on the Israeli state, coupled with economic and political isolation, Israel's ongoing settler-colonial project will continue to thrive (Ayyash, 2025).

This fact highlights the importance of maintaining resistance efforts, even as humanitarian aid and recovery become critical priorities. While a step forward, the ceasefire should not detract from the need to confront the structural issues fueling the conflict. Solidarity from the international community is essential in opposing settler colonialism and supporting Palestinian self-determination. These efforts include monitoring the implementation of the ceasefire, holding Israel accountable for its actions, and fostering resistance from the grassroots level. Massive international actions such as boycotts, divestments, and sanctions must grow to remain powerful tools for challenging the status quo (Awad, 2024).

Along with the ceasefire agreement, it is crucial to recognize that lasting peace in Gaza depends on addressing the systemic injustices underpinning the conflict. The international community must continue to stand in solidarity with Palestinians, ensuring that efforts toward justice and equality remain a priority. (Tria Nadila Desanti Margono, Publication Staff)

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