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Editorial Office
Institute of International Studies
Departemen Ilmu Hubungan Internasional, FISIPOL UGM
Gedung Bulaksumur Lt. 5, Jl. Socio-Justica 01 Bulaksumur,
Yogyakarta 55281, Indonesia
Tel. +62 274 563362 ext. 115
Email: gsr.fisipol@ugm.ac.id
Website: <http://iis.fisipol.ugm.ac.id>

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Editor's Note

Mohtar Mas'eed

Suci Lestari Yuana

The current conjuncture in global politics is marked by immense turbulence and fragmentation. The genocide in Gaza continues to unfold, painfully illustrating the limits of global governance and the selective application of international law. In Indonesia and other Asian countries, we are witnessing democratic backsliding and the consolidation of authoritarian practices, reminding us that the struggle for freedom is never guaranteed. Meanwhile, the escalation of trade wars and strategic rivalries—between the United States and China, or within new multipolar blocs—underscores the vulnerability of Global South nations to external shocks and great power competition.

At this crossroads, the meaning of “Global South solidarity” becomes a pressing question. Is it an aspiration, a rhetorical device, or a living practice? And how do we confront the contradictions, hierarchies, and ambivalences within the South itself? The articles in this issue each provide a critical entry point into this debate, offering fresh perspectives on marginality, resistance, diplomacy, and postcolonial justice.

Hemalia Kusumadewi’s article on the Bangsamoro and Rohingya reminds us that solidarity within the South is never simple. By framing these communities as the “subaltern of the subaltern,” she shows how certain groups within the Global South experience double marginalization—excluded both by dominant global hierarchies and by more powerful actors within their own regions. This contribution challenges us to interrogate the internal fractures that weaken South–South solidarity and to consider how genuine solidarity must address intra-South hierarchies rather than simply opposing the North.

Muhammad Reza Suleiman and Kayode Omojuwa’s study of the One Plus-Africa Summits situates Africa at the center of renewed great-power competition. Through a postcolonial lens, they argue that summits such as Russia–Africa, China–Africa, and France–Africa risk reproducing patterns of dependency and exploitation, even as they claim to offer partnership. The analysis forces us to ask whether the rhetoric of South–South cooperation is sufficient, or whether African agency is once again subordinated to external designs. Their work highlights the urgent need for more equitable models of international engagement that recognize Africa not as a passive recipient but as a sovereign actor with developmental priorities of its own.

Yosua Saut Marulitua Gultom and colleagues’ article on the Zapatistas returns us to Latin America’s radical traditions of resistance. By examining the Zapatistas’ decentralized governance model and critique of neoliberal globalization, the authors reveal how indigenous

movements can articulate alternative visions of democracy, autonomy, and dignity. The Zapatista slogan—“a world where many worlds fit”—resonates far beyond Mexico, offering inspiration to global movements that seek pluralism and inclusivity in an era dominated by homogenizing capitalist logics. This piece reminds us that solidarity is not only a diplomatic or institutional project, but also a grassroots practice of building alternative worlds from below.

Danial Darwis and Aria Aditya Setiawan’s analysis of Indonesia’s membership in BRICS brings the discussion closer to home. Their article illustrates how Indonesia is navigating the opportunities and risks of a multipolar global order. On one hand, BRICS offers access to alternative development financing and platforms for South–South cooperation. On the other, Indonesia faces the danger of being overshadowed by larger powers within the bloc, or of alienating its ASEAN partners. By framing Indonesia’s policy as a form of “hedging,” the authors shed light on the dilemmas faced by middle powers in the Global South as they seek to balance autonomy, economic opportunity, and geopolitical pressure.

Fitri Fatharani and Shofwan Al Banna Choiruzzad’s article on Vietnam’s hedging strategy in the US–China trade war further elaborates the theme of small and middle powers navigating structural pressures. Through their analysis of Vietnam’s geo-economic response during the Trump administration, they show how Global South states attempt to minimize vulnerability while maximizing opportunity in contexts of great-power rivalry. Vietnam’s case demonstrates both the possibilities and limitations of hedging as a strategy, raising broader questions about how Global South economies can protect their sovereignty in the face of volatile global politics.

Nurul Indrarini and Ardhitya Eduard Yeremia Lalisang’s study on Dutch cultural object repatriation takes us into the cultural and symbolic dimensions of postcolonial justice. Their content analysis of Dutch policies (2020–2024) reveals the persistence of paternalistic attitudes even as the Netherlands adopts rhetoric of partnership. By showing how repatriation is framed as “cultural cooperation” rather than restitution, the article exposes how power asymmetries are reinscribed in the very process meant to address historical injustices. This contribution highlights that solidarity also requires confronting the politics of memory, heritage, and narrative authority.

Finally, the book review by Md. Masudur Rahman and Khadiza Khatun offers an intellectual bridge by highlighting South Asian perspectives on society and sociology. By engaging with the edited volume *Society and Sociology in Bangladesh*, the review underscores the importance of locally grounded scholarship that enriches our understanding of social realities in the Global South. In a journal dedicated to amplifying Southern voices, such reflections are vital for building epistemic solidarity.

Together, these contributions remind us that Global South solidarity is not an abstract ideal but a complex, fragile, and constantly negotiated project. Yet at a time of genocide, authoritarian resurgence, and geopolitical fragmentation, reflection alone is not enough. Solidarity must be reclaimed as action: to resist oppression, to dismantle hierarchies both external and internal, and to create spaces of care, justice, and emancipation.

The Global South has always been more than a geographical marker; it is a political project, born of struggle. This issue calls on us to carry that spirit forward—to connect our resistances, to amplify our voices, and to imagine alternative futures where dignity, justice, and freedom are not privileges, but rights. The time for solidarity is now.

Sincerely,

Mohtar Mas'oed – Editor in Chief

Suci Lestari Yuana – Managing Editor

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