

ARTICLE

Conflict Resolution of Authoritarianism: Measuring the Stability of Human Rights Settlement Hegemony in Rohingya

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Abstract

The Southeast Asian region has witnessed severe human rights violations in recent years with the Rohingya ethnic conflict in Myanmar. This has led to tensions between countries in the region, which has an important influence on hegemonic stability in attempting conflict resolution or peace. This study aims to explore the role of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) in addressing human rights violations, specifically in the context of the Rohingya conflict, through the lens of Galtung's theory of conflict and peace. It examines the potential of ASEAN's hegemonic influence in shaping regional peace and stability, focusing on cooperation, conflict management, and legal frameworks. Methodologically, this research is qualitative, utilising case study analysis to investigate ASEAN's response to the Rohingya crisis and its impact on regional peacebuilding efforts. The study examines various conflict management strategies, including military, economic, political, ideological, and institutional mechanisms employed by ASEAN countries. The findings suggest that while ASEAN has faced significant challenges in addressing the Rohingya conflict, its collective diplomatic efforts and commitment to international law have contributed to some degree of stability. However, the study also identifies key gaps in ASEAN's approach, particularly in terms of cohesive, unified action. The Rohingya conflict has caused many refugees to transmigrate to neighboring countries. This condition is a security concern in the unstable Southeast Asia region. Therefore, a hegemonic power is needed to create stability in the ASEAN region. On that basis, ASEAN needs to address several issues among its member countries and strengthen cooperation and the rule of law in the international world related to human rights. So that ASEAN countries can act as a mediator towards peace and diplomacy in resolving conflicts over human rights violations through cooperation and reducing humanitarian tensions in order to create equality and togetherness between humans.

Keywords: ASEAN; Facilitator; Conflict; Hegemony; Rohingya.

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INTRODUCTION

The issue of power in Myanmar is the main stage that is shown by various factors, namely socio-political, cultural, historical, and economic, in a complex manner.¹ Debates about statehood are inseparable from conflicts and dynamics involving various elements, groups, and ethnicities, even from within the government itself.² However, the attention of the international public is mainly focused on the case of human rights violations in Myanmar,³ especially related to the Rohingya ethnicity. The international community, including the United Nations, accused Myanmar of ethnic cleansing of Rohingya Muslims, with reports of violent acts such as the burning of houses and mass evictions.⁴ Ironically, cases of human rights violations against the Rohingya are not new but have been occurring since 1962. At that time, Rohingya Muslims began to experience restrictions on basic rights, including the right to education, use of language, and freedom of religion. Thus, the complexity of power issues in Myanmar has a serious impact on the human rights and welfare of the Rohingya.⁵

To date, countries in the ASEAN region have been united in their efforts to create peaceful measures, with the aim of creatively transforming conflicts without resorting to violence. This commitment, as outlined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, underscores the legal and practical significance of nationality in the realization of human rights. The formulation found in Article 1 of the 1954 Convention establishes that de facto stateless persons are entitled to protection under international human rights law, specifically under the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, and should be treated in accordance with international law.⁶ This is an integral part of the aspiration to create a just world order, albeit a long and challenging journey. At the individual level, it takes tremendous perseverance to realize justice and peace for all. The world fundamentally needs peace, not conflict. Furthermore, true peace does not simply mean the absence of violence but is integral to achieving justice in human civilization.⁷ This reality illustrates that preventing conflict is no easy task. While ethnicity can be a limited component of an individual's identity and knowledge, it is generally reinforced by the common language spoken by the group.

Several previous studies by scholars have highlighted the difficulties of resolving ethnic conflicts internationally,⁸ of which require a relatively long time to process towards peace. Conflicts are further complicated when the cultural dimension is involved, where ethnic groups have distinct cultural

¹ Sukawarsini Djelantik, *Asia Pasifik: Konflik, Kerjasama, Dan Relasi Dan Antar Kawasan* (Jakarta: Yayasan Pustaka Obor Indonesia, 2015).

² Ardli Johan Kusuma, "The Issue of Human Rights Violation Towards Rohingya Ethnic Group and the Role of International Community," in *The Golden Triangle (Indonesia-India-Tiongkok) Inter Relations in Religion, Science, Culture, and Economic*, vol. 12, 2015.

³ Aviantina Susanti, "Penyelesaian Kasus Pelanggaran Ham Berat Terhadap Etnis Rohingya Di Myanmar Berdasarkan Hukum Internasional", *Jurnal Ilmiah*, 2014.

⁴ Allard K. Lowenstein, "PBB: Myanmar Berusaha Lakukan Pembersihan Etnis Muslim Rohingya," *30 Desember 2016*, 2016.

⁵ Annual Report UNHCR., "Situation of Human Rights of Rohingya Muslims and Other Minorities in Myanmar," *2 Juni 2016*, 2016.

⁶ Hilman Mahmud Akmal Ma'arif and Ali Maksum, "The Role of UNHCR in the Stagnation of International Intervention towards Victims of the Coup Conflict in Myanmar as an Effort to Maintain Peace," *Jurnal Global & Strategis* 16, no. 2 (2022), <https://doi.org/10.20473/jgs.16.2.2022.307-328>.

⁷ Sefriani Faculty and Islam Indonesia E-mail, "The Efforts To Terminate the Situation With No-Citizenship and Human Rights Violation of Rohingya Ethnic," *Jurnal Dinamika Hukum*, no. 107 (2014).

⁸ Shixiong Cao, Xinyi Zheng, and Junze Zhang, "Challenge of Political Globalization," *Time and Society* 28, no. 2 (2019), <https://doi.org/10.1177/0961463X17716550>.

identities.⁹ The difficulty of bringing these groups together without concrete efforts to understand each other as peaceful human beings with their respective civilizations is a major challenge.¹⁰ Modern human history records several world conflicts involving ethnic and cultural issues, such as the conflict between the Tuareg People and the Government of Mali,¹¹ the Russia and Ukraine conflict that triggered global inflation,¹² the Apartheid conflict in South Africa¹³ and the conflict between Israel¹⁴ and Palestine.¹⁵ More recent identity conflicts, such as the conflict between Madura and Kalimantan,¹⁶ the Chinese-Javanese conflict in Pekalongan City,¹⁷ and conflicts in Indonesia, such as Ambon, Poso, and Sambas, have also surfaced,¹⁸ As for the Uighur Muslims, they are also discriminated against their rights.¹⁹

However, in the history of global conflict, the case of the Rohingya community is in the spotlight today,²⁰ not only because of the ongoing violence but also because of the systematically organized genocide attempt.²¹ The Rohingya community, as an ethnic minority, is seen as highly marginalized in their own land, which is what David Camroux's "Asian Roma Figures" or "Palestinian Figures in Southeast Asia"²² reveal. Not only is it the world's most horrific inter-regional problem in Southeast Asia,²³ where citizens are stateless, rights are denied, and the population continues to suffer through ordeals that include detention, trafficking, poaching, murder, rape, and disappearance.²⁴ Whether they

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- ⁹ Meghna Kajla, "Democracy and Nationalism in Southeast Asia: From Secessionist Mobilization to Conflict Resolution," *Journal of Contemporary Asia* 53, no. 1 (2023), <https://doi.org/10.1080/00472336.2022.2058592>.
- ¹⁰ Cao, Zheng, and Zhang, "Challenge."
- ¹¹ Gabriela Natalia Primi Bagas Gati, "Dinamika Dan Faktor Pendorong Keberlanjutan Konflik Antara Masyarakat Tuareg Dengan Pemerintahan Mali (1962-2012)," *Jurnal Analisis Hubungan Internasional* 3, no. 3 (2014).
- ¹² 'DIME' Analysis of the Conflict in Eastern Ukraine," *Journal of Applied Business and Economics* 24, no. 2 (2022), <https://doi.org/10.33423/jabe.v24i2.5151>.
- ¹³ Paul Sunday Omoyefa, "Post-Apartheid South Africa: A Need for Genuine Conflict Transformation," *Journal of Conflictology* 5, no. 1 (2014), <https://doi.org/10.7238/joc.v5i1.1510>.
- ¹⁴ C. M. McClellan, "The Israeli-Palestinian Conflict: An Ethnographic Study on Conflict Perception and Its Implications for Peace in the Middle East" (University of Oregon, 2015).
- ¹⁵ N. Motala, "The Intractability of the Israeli/Palestinian Conflict with a Focus on the Construction of Identity" (University of Cape Town, 2016).
- ¹⁶ Huub de Jonge and Gerben Nooteboom, "Why the Madurese? Ethnic Conflicts in West and East Kalimantan Compared," *Asian Journal of Social Science* 34, no. 3 (2006), <https://doi.org/10.1163/156853106778048597>.
- ¹⁷ Konflik Cina-jawa et al., "Konflik Cina-Jawa Di Kota Pekalongan Tahun 1995," *Journal of Indonesian History* 5, no. 1 (2016).
- ¹⁸ K. E. Schulze, "The 'Ethnic' in Indonesia's Communal Conflicts: Violence in Ambon, Poso, and Sambas," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 40, no. 12 (2017): 2096–2114, <https://doi.org/10.1080/01419870.2017.1277030>.
- ¹⁹ Nurul Indah Dalillah, "The Role of OIC to Tackle Discrimination against Uighur Muslims by the Chinese Government in Xinjiang," *Insignia: Journal of International Relations* 8, no. 2 (2021), <https://doi.org/10.20884/1.ins.2021.8.2.4284>.
- ²⁰ K F Dewi, I G Sumertha, and E Radityawara, "Constructive Indonesia's Conflict Resolution on Rohingya Refugees in Accordance With Myanmar's Case," *International Journal of Arts and Social Science* 5, no. 1 (2022).
- ²¹ Niklas Swanström and Emma Björnehed, "Conflict Resolution of Terrorists Conflicts in Southeast Asia," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 16, no. 2 (2004), <https://doi.org/10.1080/09546550490483990>.
- ²² B. (2018) Singh, *Tantangan Orang Rohingya Myanmar – Menghadapi Satu Minoritas Teraniaya Dan Implikasi Untuk Keamanan Nasional Dan Regional (Cet.2)* (Yogyakarta: Gadjah Mada University Press, 2018).
- ²³ M. De Silva Kingsley, "Conflict Resolution in South Asia," *International Journal on Minority and Group Rights* 1, no. 4 (1994), <https://doi.org/10.1163/157181194X00210>.
- ²⁴ Muntasir Murshed et al., "Determinants of Financial Inclusion in South Asia: The Moderating and Mediating Roles of Internal Conflict Settlement," *Research in International Business and Finance* 64 (2023), <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ribaf.2023.101880>.

live in their homelands or in refugee camps, their lives feel like they are trapped in a large prison.²⁵ Attempts to seek refuge often lead to the risk of death on the road, in rivers, on boats, from drowning at sea, shootings, enslavement, or even direct imprisonment.²⁶ This situation reflects an inhumane array of suffering, where affected people continue to struggle to survive in gripping uncertainty.²⁷ The roots of this problem indicate that the legitimacy of this issue does not stop at one point but rather creates a great tragedy for humanity and peace as a result of negative perceptions in the collective consciousness.

Furthermore, the issue of the Rohingya conflict encompasses multidimensional²⁸ aspects that integrate economic, social, religious, and political dimensions.²⁹ This perspective not only highlights the human rights violations experienced by the Rohingya ethnic group but also links resource exploitation, cultural discrimination, and geopolitical dynamics in Southeast Asia. A critical analysis of ASEAN's failure to address severe human rights violations due to the application of the principle of non-intervention and its impact on ASEAN's international reputation is also explored.³⁰ This study examined the causes and consequences of the Rohingya conflict³¹ from various perspectives while evaluating the roles of ASEAN member states,³² such as Indonesia and Singapore, in responding to this crisis. Key research questions include what factors can be considered as the main driving force behind the Rohingya conflict.³³ How does discrimination against the Rohingya affect their citizenship status and human rights, and why has ASEAN failed to resolve this conflict? Additionally, the study investigates how Indonesia's and Singapore's involvement reflects ASEAN's internal dynamics and examines the impact of the Rohingya conflict on regional stability in Southeast Asia and ASEAN's global reputation.³⁴ Through this approach, the research aspires to provide a comprehensive understanding of the complexity of the Rohingya conflict, identify the roles of regional and international actors, and offer recommendations to address challenges in maintaining regional stability and protecting human rights.

²⁵ Zerrin Torun, "Democracy and Nationalism in Southeast Asia. From Secessionist Mobilization to Conflict Resolution," *Democratization* 30, no. 4 (2023), <https://doi.org/10.1080/13510347.2023.2185881>.

²⁶ Fitria Martanti and Gadis Herningtyasari, "Rohingya and The Concept of Conflict Resolution," 2019, <https://doi.org/10.2991/iscogi-17.2019.33>.

²⁷ A. H. Bashori, *Rohingya: Sejarah & Bukti Kesultanan Arakan Yang Terjajah* (Yayasan Bina Al-Mujtama, 2017).

²⁸ Deutsche Welle, "Myanmar's Rohingya Conflict 'More Economic than Religious,'" Deutsche Welle (www.dw.com), 2015.

²⁹ Agus Suntoro, "Genosida Etnis Rohingya," 6 Februari 2016, n.d.

³⁰ Saru Arifin, "Abuse of Human Rights in Myanmar: An Urgent Appeal to Reinterpret the ASEAN Non-Interference Principle," *Human Rights in the Global South (HRGS)* 1, no. 2 (2022), <https://doi.org/10.56784/hrgs.v1i2.12>.

³¹ BBC News, "Why Is There Communal Violence in Myanmar? Why Is There Communal Violence in Myanmar?," 2014.

³² Siegfried O Wolf, "Genocide, Exodus and Exploitation for Jihad: The Urgent Need to Address the Rohingya Crisis," *South Asia Democratic Forum (SADF)*, 2017.

³³ Leonard Hutabarat, "Diplomasi Indonesia Pada Indo-Pacific Economic Framework," *Jurnal Asia Pacific Studies* 6, no. 2 (2022), <https://doi.org/10.33541/japs.v6i2.4557>.

³⁴ Sulaiman Rasyid et al., "The Role of Indonesian Diplomacy in Managing the Conflict between The Myanmar Government and The Rohingya Muslim Ethnic," *Unnes Law Journal* 8, no. 1 (2022), <https://doi.org/10.15294/ulj.v7i1.53704>.

METHODOLOGY

This article analyses the opportunity for ASEAN countries to become a hegemonic power in an effort to resolve the Rohingya conflict in Myanmar. The method used is qualitative research, which is descriptive-analytic research. ASEAN needs a hegemonic power to control the international situation. Likewise, this article uses conflict theory, a classic theory regarding peace studies proposed by Galtung, which outlines the concept of “positive peace and negative peace”. The negative type of peace still dominates the existing state of peace.³⁵ Galtung explains that peace is a state of non-violence that is not only related to direct personal interactions but also indirectly related to the structure of society. Galtung highlights that peace must be free from violence and social injustice in society.³⁶ On the other hand, Huntington emphasises the values embraced by a particular society and issues related to race, ethnicity, cultural identity, and other social groupings.³⁷ Although conflict is often perceived as a negative and detrimental thing that disrupts stability, on the other hand, conflict has positive potential as a process towards better change.³⁸ Therefore, conflict needs to be recognised, elaborated, managed, and transformed into a beneficial force for society by resolving conflict resolution.³⁹ Thus, this hegemonic power can create stability for the international system. A country that has great power and can position itself as a leader in ASEAN can have the opportunity to become a hegemon state. This country can control and force the implementation of rules in international institutions. It can even intervene to create regional security stability.

MEASURING THE EXISTENCE OF INTERNATIONAL WORLD STABILITY HEGEMONY POWER IN ASEAN

The issue of hegemony in ASEAN,⁴⁰ of course, is inseparable from the term hegemony described by a Marxist philosopher, Antonio Gramsci, which Lenin previously coined in the form of basic concepts of domination. Gramsci then distinguished between domination and hegemony, which has moral and intellectual leadership. According to Gramsci, hegemonic power requires combining different social forces into a grand alliance.⁴¹ A strong force of domination must gain support from society to enable each social entity to maintain its independence. This linkage of alliance with society is the main foundation of the power of domination.⁴² Gramsci defines domination as a state in which the dominant power physically has supremacy and recognition from others. In the international world, actors that have dominance will appear more prominent and dominate the interconnectedness. The concept of dominance stability is used to evaluate stability or instability in international politics.

³⁵ Johan Galtung, “Institutionalized Conflict Resolution,” *Journal of Peace Research* 2, no. 4 (1965): 348–97, <https://doi.org/10.1177/002234336500200404>.

³⁶ Maria Teresa G. Africa, “Peace Education: A Pathway to a Culture of Peace,” *Journal of Peace Education* 8, no. 3 (2011), <https://doi.org/10.1080/17400201.2011.589504>.

³⁷ Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations. Remaking of the World Order* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1997).

³⁸ Ho-Won Jeong, Eleftherios Michael, and Kurtz Lester, “Theories of Conflict,” *Foreign Affairs*, 1973, 1969–71.

³⁹ Kevin Avruch, *Culture and Conflict Resolution* (Washington: United States Institute of Peace Press, 1988).

⁴⁰ A. R. M. Nandyatama, R. W., Prabandari, A., & Umar, “Challenging State Hegemony: ASEAN, Human Rights Advocacy, and Non-Government Organisations in Indonesia. Nandyatama, R. W., Prabandari, A., & Umar, A. R. M. (2014). Challenging State Hegemony: ASEAN, Human Rights Advocacy, and Non-Government Organisations,” *Working Papers*, 2014.

⁴¹ Antonio Gramsci, “Gramsci on Theatre,” *New Theatre Quarterly*, 1996, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0266464X00010253>.

⁴² Roger Simon, *Gagasan-Gagasan Politik Gramsci, Pustaka Pelajar Dan Insict*, 1999.

The power of dominance plays a crucial role in creating this stability. Stability arises because a dominating country can utilise its resources to force others to comply with international standards and regulations.⁴³ Without the presence of strong dominance, stability in the international sphere will not be realised. The international system requires the power of domination to ensure the creation of security stability. The power of domination is the main pillar in the formation of international regulations which are then followed by other countries. Robert Kohane argues “domination by a state acting as a hegemony is the most favourable condition for the development of an international regime that regulates the actions of the actors involved.”⁴⁴ The consequences for states that violate these rules are realised in the form of punishment, which aims to avoid threats from the dominant power. This ensures that each rule can be applied effectively. This punishment can also be interpreted as a symbol of the dominant power. Through these punishments, the dominant can assert its position as a power in the international system.

The power of dominance is a stabiliser and the strongest entity in the international system. Principally, the dominant state has significant economic, political, and military power. The dominating state plays a pioneering role in the international order. The power of domination is encouraged to provide public facilities, both in the form of values that benefit their environment and in creating safe and stable conditions in the international system. The presence of the dominating power is crucial because, without an entity that provides public facilities, the international system will tend to be unstable.

In the context of the international system, international institutions will not operate effectively without the power of domination. The power of domination has sufficient resources to influence international institutions. This allows the implementation of regulations made by these institutions to be carried out effectively by member states. ASEAN was formed at the initiative of Southeast Asian countries to improve relations and avoid potential conflicts.⁴⁵ This initiative did not come from one country with a dominant power among others. Thus, the dominant power cannot dominate other countries. For example, America dominates the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) with its power.

The weakness of international institutions arises when they cannot resolve persistent cases of human rights violations. ASEAN has not shown a firm response to the issue of the citizenship status of the Rohingya, which the Myanmar government does not recognise.⁴⁶ On 15 December 2008, all members formally accepted the ASEAN Charter and pledged to protect human rights. However, in reality, ASEAN was unable to take much action when human rights violations occurred in Myanmar. The efforts made by the Asia Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights (AICHR) are not very meaningful in dealing with the Rohingya issue. AICHR tends to function more as a political negotiating body than an institution protecting human rights.⁴⁷ In addition, ASEAN has no authority to impose sanctions against human rights violations in Myanmar. Thus, the world’s attention is focused on the legitimacy of ASEAN as the only regional organization in Southeast Asia. As a result

⁴³ Bob Sugeng. Hadiwinata, *Politik Bisnis Internasional* (Yogyakarta: Kanisius, 2002).

⁴⁴ Djelantik, *Asia Pasifik: Konflik, Kerjasama, Dan Relasi Dan Antar Kawasan*.

⁴⁵ Bama Andika Putra, Darwis, and Burhanuddin, “ASEAN Political-Security Community: Challenges of Establishing Regional Security in the Southeast Asia,” *Journal of International Studies* 12, no. 1 (2019), <https://doi.org/10.14254/2071-8330.2019/12-1/2>.

⁴⁶ Allard K. Lowenstein, “PKPU-ACT: Etnis Rohingya Tak Diakui Sebagai Warga Myanmar,” *30 Desember 2016*, n.d.

⁴⁷ Social Council, “Situation of Human Rights of Rohingya Muslims and Other Minorities in Myanmar,” *United Nations*, no. June (2011).

of the conflict, many Rohingya have fled Myanmar. The refugees try to seek refuge in other countries, but they face great obstacles in getting asylum or political protection in the destination country. The large number of refugees is destabilising the security of other ASEAN countries.

According to the hegemonic stability theory, the forces of domination can control the stability of security in ASEAN. The absence of a dominating power in ASEAN can affect regional security stability. Since no power has a stabilising role, this becomes an obstacle in resolving the Rohingya issue. The absence of the power of domination is the reason for the unresolved conflict, which in turn disrupts the security stability of ASEAN countries.

HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS IN ROHINGYA

The Rohingya Muslim population reaches 13% or around 7 million people.⁴⁸ Of course, this number is more than what the Myanmar government mentions, which is only 3%. Geographically, the Arakan region inhabited by Rohingya Muslims was once an independent country until 1784. A President of the Rohingya Solidarity Organization (RSO), described by Mohammed Yunus, Arakan comes from Arabic, the plural form of *rūkn*, meaning pillar or pole, which illustrates the principle of the five pillars of Islam. On the other hand, Rohingya itself comes from the word *Rohai* or *Roshangee*, which then experienced a fusion of words into Rohingya, a designation for the Muslim residents of Arakan. From this explanation, it can be interpreted that the Rohingya ethnicity has inherited Islam for generations. In 1948, Myanmar's efforts to eliminate its Rohingya people were marked after independence. The Union Citizenship Act, defining the people of Myanmar, identified specific ethnicities that were allowed to obtain citizenship. However, the Union Citizenship Act did not register these ethnicities as citizens of Myanmar.

Meanwhile, the conflict in Rakhine has escalated since its inception in 1978, when the Myanmar military conducted the *Naga Min* (Dragon King) operation. This led to actions taken by a number of illegal immigrants for the Rohingya community in Rakhine. Moreover, it is considered that military soldiers tortured, raped, and even killed many Rohingya people.⁴⁹ After this incident, in 2001, a group of people attacked approximately 28 mosques and Islamic schools. This action was not even security by the authorities but participated in the attack. In addition, Human Rights Watch reported that in 2002, the Myanmar government ordered the military to demolish unauthorised mosques and close Islamic schools, then turn them into government administrative offices.⁵⁰ In mid-2012, Rohingya Muslims were involved in a conflict with Buddhist communities in Rakhine state. These riots resulted in dozens of deaths, hundreds of injuries, and several houses and mosques were damaged and even burned down. The conflict escalated again in 2016. Hundreds of Rohingya houses were burned, and the Myanmar army shot at dozens of residents.

⁴⁸ Ridwan Bustamam, "Jejak Komunitas Muslim Di Burma: Fakta Sejarah Yang Terabaikan," *Jurnal Lektur Keagamaan* 11, no. 2 (2013).

⁴⁹ Fisa Faurika, "Faktor Penghambat ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights (AICHR) Untuk Menegakkan HAM Dalam Konflik Etnis Rohingya-Pemerintah Myanmar," *Jurnal Universitas Pertamina* 147, no. 3 (2020).

⁵⁰ Lance Compa, "Human Rights Watch," in *Unfair Advantage*, 2019, <https://doi.org/10.7591/9781501722639-011>.

THE POWER OF HEGEMONY AS FACILITATOR IN ASEAN COUNTRIES

A country that will become a hegemonic power in military, economic, political, institutional, and ideological stability.⁵¹ The existence of ASEAN countries is one of the major forces in controlling the international system in geopolitical aspects. Moreover, Singapore has the most economic power compared to other ASEAN countries. At the same time, Indonesia has the largest population in ASEAN, and it is even the country with the fourth largest number of citizens globally. This hegemonic power requires not only these aspects but also the five aspects of being a hegemonic power in ASEAN.

A. Military

Armed force is one of the vital aspects of building a country's power. To become a country that holds hegemony, having superior military power compared to other countries is a must. This power has a crucial role in maintaining regional stability through defence efforts and the ability to carry out attacks. According to Morgenthau,⁵² strong military power reflects political prestige in the international sphere and provides privileges that allow control over the international system. In the context of the National Power Index compiled by Global Fire Power, countries such as Indonesia, Vietnam, Thailand, Myanmar, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Cambodia and Laos rank highest based on a number of factors, including the number and variety of weapons, geographical factors, logistical flexibility, natural resources and manpower availability. This data shows that countries with large populations have a dominant position.

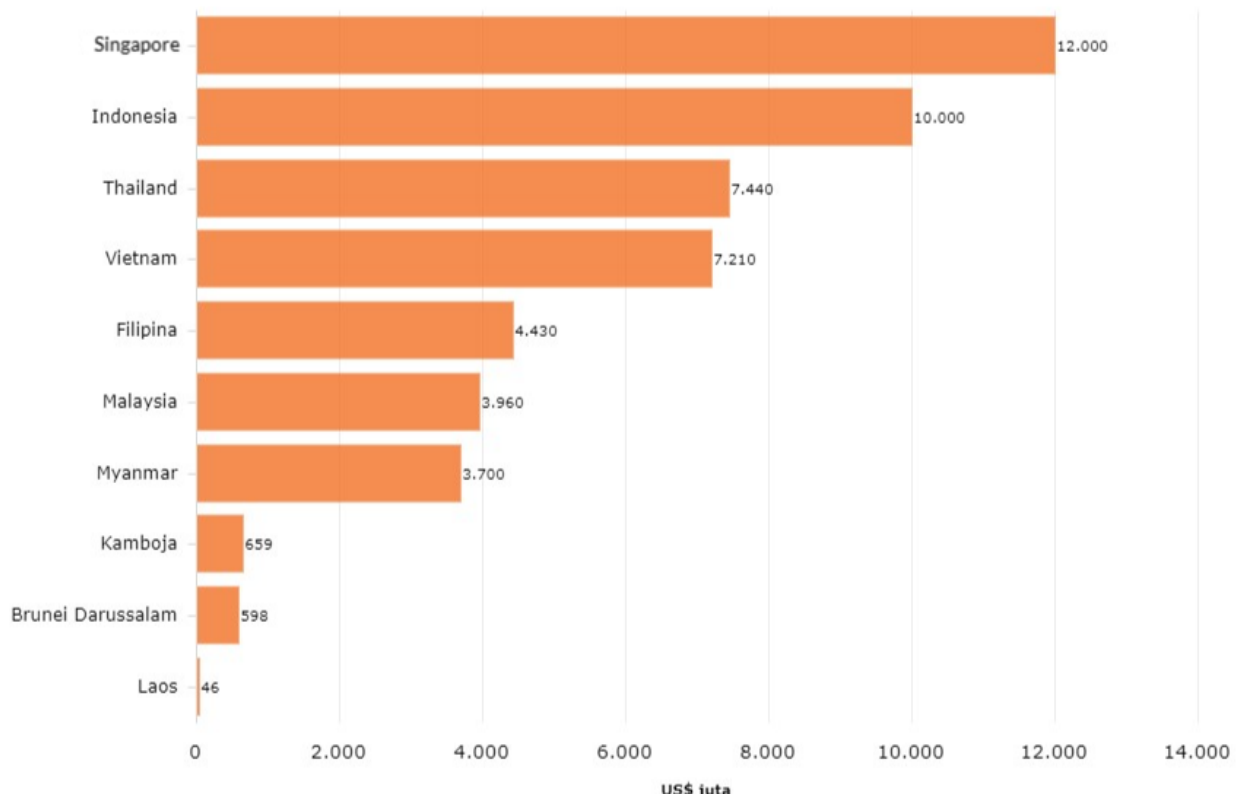
Global Fire Power ranks Indonesia as the largest military power in Southeast Asia. Nevertheless, Anton Aliabbas, a military observer from Digimed Karya Imaji, revealed that Indonesia has a large military force in quantity with the largest number of major weaponry systems (*alutsista*) and personnel in Southeast Asia. Yet, Singapore's military expenditure is much larger than Indonesia's. The *alutsista* system refers to weapons, military vehicles, support equipment like radar and communication systems, and advanced technology for operations across the land, sea, air, and cyberspace domains. As a crucial element of national defence, *alutsista* is designed to address threats, uphold sovereignty, and facilitate military and non-military operations, including disaster response and peacekeeping missions. The management of this system involves the integration of modern technologies to ensure the effectiveness and preparedness of national defence.

The military expenditure data for ASEAN shows Singapore as the highest, followed by Indonesia, Thailand, Malaysia, Vietnam, the Philippines, Myanmar, Brunei and Cambodia. Data on military spending in ASEAN shows Singapore as the highest, followed by Indonesia, Thailand, Malaysia, Vietnam, the Philippines, Myanmar, Brunei and Cambodia.

⁵¹ Hutabarat, "Diplomasi Indonesia Pada Indo-Pacific Economic Framework."

⁵² Chandler David, "Empire in Denial: The Politics of State-Building," *Development & Change* 39, no. 1 (2008).

Image 1. Data on The Military Defence of Countries in ASEAN (2022)














Despite having a large military budget, Singapore focuses on purchasing high-quality defence equipment from countries such as America, Israel and Kuwait. However, according to Global Fire Power, Indonesia has no military alliance as strong as Singapore and Malaysia despite having the largest military force in ASEAN. Singapore and Malaysia formed the FPDA military alliance in 1971 with the UK, Australia and New Zealand, which ensures military assistance if either side is attacked. Singapore also maintains close military cooperation with the United States through the USSFA, evidenced by the presence of the United States Pacific Command at Changi Naval Base and American aircraft facilities at Paya Lebar Air Base in Singapore. This cooperation includes a series of military exercises in the South China Sea, demonstrating a significant closeness in the military alliance between Singapore and America.

B. Economics

The economy plays a crucial role in supporting a country's national strength. The state can provide financial resources through economic power for various hard and soft needs. Economic development is inseparable from technological development, an important foundation for hegemonic countries. Some countries in ASEAN, such as Singapore, Malaysia, and Indonesia, show technological advances, especially in the field of information technology. A country's economic development is often measured through indicators such as GDP per capita. However, according to Kohane, the mere measurement of GDP per capita does not fully reflect a country's hegemonic power. More important is the level of economic competitiveness, which provides a more comprehensive picture of a country's

economic strength. Nevertheless, the measurement of GDP per capita remains one way to assess a country's public welfare level. The following data illustrates GDP per capita in ASEAN countries.

Table 1. The GDP and GDP Per Capita Data According to The IMF for 2022.

Rank	Country	Population in million	GDP Nominal millions of USD	GDP Nominal per capita USD	GDP (PPP) millions of USD	GDP (PPP) per capita USD
—	 ASEAN	672.397	3,657,636	5,439	10,316,112	15,342
1	 Indonesia	274.859	1,318,807	4,798	4,036,878	14,687
2	 Thailand	70.078	536,160	7,650	1,482,347	21,152
3	 Singapore	5.637	466,789	82,807	719,080	127,563
4	 Malaysia	32.993	407,923	12,364	1,134,671	34,391
5	 Vietnam	99.462	406,452	4,086	1,321,249	13,284
6	 Philippines	111.570	404,261	3,623	1,171,162	10,497
7	 Myanmar	53.886	56,757	1,053	261,170	4,846
8	 Cambodia	16.767	29,912	1,784	89,570	5,600
9	 Brunei	0.442	16,639	37,667	31,142	70,500
10	 Laos	7.477	15,304	2,046	69,843	9,207

The data shows that Indonesia is experiencing rapid change and increasing in the calculation of the largest GDP per capita in ASEAN. Even lift continues to rise and outperform other developed countries such as Thailand and Singapore, and GDP is a factor in a country's economic growth. Of course, economic competitiveness is the most important factor in increasing the country's economic productivity. According to Porter, the level of productivity of a country can be determined from 12 pillars, namely institutions, infrastructure, microeconomic environment, health, and higher education and training, efficient goods markets, effective labour markets, stable financial markets, technological readiness, market size, satisfactory business and innovation. A competitive country will increase productivity, which will encourage wage increases to realise development.

C. Political

Political power plays an important role in determining the hegemony of a country. A country that becomes a hegemony must have political power that is able to enforce its influence on other countries. Indicators of a country's political power can be seen from its interactions with other countries, especially in relation to major powers. In the context of ASEAN, conflicts between countries tend to be minimal, although history records some prominent incidents.

In 1963, Indonesia became embroiled in tensions with British-backed Malaysia in its bid to incorporate colonial territories in Borneo. This event sparked a “*ganyang Malaysia*” call from President Soekarno. That was a slogan proclaimed in 1963 by President Soekarno as a call to oppose the establishment of the Federation of Malaysia, which was seen as a threat to Indonesia’s sovereignty and an embodiment of neocolonialism. This movement symbolised the political and military tensions between Indonesia and Malaysia during the Indonesia-Malaysia Confrontation (1963–1966). However, after the Bangkok Conference in 1966, relations between the two countries improved. A similar situation occurred 11 years later when Cambodia and Vietnam engaged in a 14-year conflict before finally reaching a peace agreement in 1977. However, apart from these incidents, ASEAN member states have generally maintained harmonious relations.

Outside the ASEAN region, good relations are also seen between member states and major world powers, such as Thailand and the Philippines’ relationship with the United States. Both countries have had a formal military alliance with the United States since the Cold War. However, relations between Thailand and the United States were strained after the military coup in Thailand in May 2014, which led to the United States halting security and defence assistance to Thailand. The Philippines also saw a change in its relationship with the United States when Rodrigo Duterte took office as President, announcing the severing of its alliance with the United States. This led to the two countries no longer cooperating as they had in the past.

C. Ideological

The Cold War created two dominant ideologies at the global level, namely liberal-democratic and Communist. Vietnam is famously identified with its leader, Ho Chi Minh, a leading figure in Communist ideology. Apart from Vietnam, countries such as Cambodia, Laos and Myanmar tend to go in a direction that is in line with Communist ideology. In contrast, Indonesia, the Philippines and Malaysia lean more towards a democratic system. In its government regulation, Brunei implements an Islamic shari’ah-based legal system without completely abandoning the secular legal framework inherited from the British. Meanwhile, Singapore and Thailand show a tendency towards liberal-democratic ideology. However, Singapore implements an authoritarian government system that prohibits criticism of the government. At the same time, Thailand is dominated by military forces that make its government system far from the impression of a liberal democratic state.

D. Institutional

Power in the military, economic and political realms can assert a country's position in the structure of international institutions. A hegemonic state has the capability to control the dynamics of international institutions. With its dominant position, the hegemonic state has the ability to influence other member states in the institution. The provisions and regulations that the members have mutually agreed upon can be implemented efficiently with the supervision carried out by the hegemonic state. The country that acts as a hegemony has the authority to impose sanctions on other members who violate the rules or regulations that have been mutually agreed upon. Countries with greater national power, such as Indonesia, Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand and the Philippines, play a significant role in initiating various forms of cooperation in ASEAN.

On the other hand, Singapore was an initiator in forming the open sky agreement at the 2002 ASEAN Summit and has been active in influencing the outcome of the agreement. Indonesia has also been the initiator and mediator in handling the conflict between the Moro National Front Liberation and the Philippine government in the southern Philippines. Indonesia's role in this mediation was crucial until a peace agreement was finally reached in Manila in 1996.

The openness practised by ASEAN countries has led to effective growth, known as the Washington Consensus in economics. Meanwhile, this openness is seen as a liberalisation in trade and foreign direct investment.⁵³ The efforts of the elements make a significant rapid relationship in ASEAN countries. Contributions and a series of policies certainly make valuable assets for the welfare of society.⁵⁴ Although access to economic openness opens up access to strengthen development and reduce obstacles that may arise during development. This theory is supported by Pernia & Quising's research,⁵⁵ which investigated economic openness and regional development in the Philippines. They used panel data from 14 regions in the Philippines for five years. The results showed that economic openness through trade can impact economic growth and development in 14 regions in the Philippines. The hegemony that becomes the power of togetherness in which experiencing international relations ties becomes a diplomatic series of problems that occur.

Due to the number of conflicts and disputes among ASEAN countries, it is important to adopt a special approach to dealing with this issue. The previous section discussed the legal framework relating to conflicts, including conflict management, inter-state cooperation, the principle of non-intervention, and peaceful conflict resolution within ASEAN structures. This legal framework gives ASEAN an edge in its role as a facilitator in resolving conflicts. It also reflects ASEAN's distinctive approach, which is known as the ASEAN Way. Given its diverse membership, ASEAN combines formal approaches to conflict management and diplomacy with informal approaches to achieve a highly diverse regional framework.⁵⁶

⁵³ Stephen S. Golub, "Openness to Foreign Direct Investment in Services: An International Comparative Analysis," *World Economy* 32, no. 8 (2009), <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9701.2009.01201.x>.

⁵⁴ César Calderón and Megumi Kubota, "Does Higher Openness Cause More Real Exchange Rate Volatility?," *Journal of International Economics* 110 (2018), <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jinteco.2017.08.002>.

⁵⁵ P. F. Pernia, E. M., & Quising, "Trade Openness and Regional Development in a Developing Country," *Springer*, 2005, 79–94, https://doi.org/10.1007/3-540-28351-X_6.

⁵⁶ Kamarulzaman Askandar, Jacob Bercowtch, and Mikio Oishi, "The ASEAN Way of Conflict Management: Old Patterns and New Trends," *Asian Journal of Political Science* 10, no. 2 (2002), <https://doi.org/10.1080/02185370208434209>.

The establishment of the ASEAN Community also allows ASEAN to act as a mediator in conflicts. The common goal must be supported by a shared commitment to maintain stability at the regional level.⁵⁷ Furthermore, ASEAN is supported by various legal documents that can enhance its capacity as a mediator. These advantages allow ASEAN to play a role in resolving conflicts. This role can also enhance ASEAN's credibility as a major organisation. By acting as a mediator, ASEAN can resolve conflicts that occur in its territory. In normative terms, ASEAN has strong strengths with various documents and other informal approaches. However, several weaknesses hinder ASEAN's role as a conflict mediator.

First, ASEAN's organisational form is sometimes too rigid regarding norms, especially in the principle of non-intervention. For example, the conflict in Rakhine, Myanmar, has yet to find a satisfactory solution.⁵⁸ Although it has affected stability in Southeast Asia, ASEAN is reluctant to get involved as it views the issue as a domestic matter and applies the principle of non-intervention.⁵⁹ The presence of this principle is largely understood as the majority of ASEAN member states are former colonies that refuse to intervene in domestic politics. However, this principle becomes an obstacle, especially in conditions where each country is interdependent. Therefore, when conflicts or problems occur that destabilise the region, ASEAN struggles to play a role.

The efforts of some ASEAN countries are considered entities below the state level. ASEAN countries see ASEAN as not a major player in international politics, although in certain literatures, the organisation is considered an actor in international relations. In addition, ASEAN's difficulty in handling conflicts also allows the entry of other parties who will take on the role of mediator in the conflict. For example, in the Sipadan-Ligitan conflict between Indonesia and Malaysia, both countries allowed the involvement of external parties such as the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in The Hague, Netherlands. The involvement of these external organisations could undermine ASEAN's authority as an established organisation. Therefore, ASEAN needs to take a more proactive role. Being a mediator is considered an appropriate role for an organisation like ASEAN.

CONFLICT RESOLUTION EMBODYING ASEAN'S HEGEMONIC POWER

The power of a country that includes these five aspects has the potential to make it a hegemonic power. The role of hegemonic power is crucial in ensuring stability and security in the ASEAN region. With its dominance and influence, hegemonic power is able to influence conflict resolution, including the Rohingya issue. From the analysis of the five aspects of hegemonic power, Singapore is one of the ten countries in ASEAN that has the potential to become a hegemonic power. However, Yazid's writing does not include area and population as criteria for hegemonic power.

Area and population are part of the national power, allowing a country to exert influence. Singapore stands out with its reliable weaponry, strong economic power, and political stability, which indicates

⁵⁷ Astiwi Inayah and Gita Karisma, "Respon ASEAN Terhadap Permasalahan Etnis Rohingya Di Myanmar," *Jurnal Hubungan Internasional Indonesia* 4, no. 1 (2022).

⁵⁸ Virly Meidina Nurfakhriyyah, "Peran Asean Dalam Penyelesaian Konflik Rohingya Di Myanmar," *Molecules* 2, no. 1 (2022).

⁵⁹ Hoang Thi Ha and Ye Htut, "Rakhine Crisis Challenges ASEAN's Non-Interference Principle," *ISEAS Perspective* 2016, no. 70 (2016).

dominance over other countries.⁶⁰ However, ideologically, Singapore does not adopt liberal-democratic principles like other hegemonic countries, such as Britain and America. However, based on a population of about 4.4 million and an area of 719 km, Singapore appears to have limitations compared to Indonesia which has a population of about 240 million with an area of 1.9 million km. The Rohingya conflict has destabilised international security due to the large influx of refugees, but not all ASEAN countries are willing to accept a significant number of refugees. Security reasons and budgetary considerations have been a factor in refusing to accept refugees, as Malaysia has done.

Oh Ei Sun, from the Rajaratnam School of International Studies, stated the difference between Malaysia's handling of Rohingya refugees and Bosnian refugees, where the number of Rohingya refugees is considered too large, and there are concerns about the potential for new conflicts between Malaysia and Myanmar which are geographically close.⁶¹ Myanmar itself has committed violations of international law against the Rohingya, including racial discrimination, denial of citizenship, and crimes against humanity. The refugees have also been victims of human trafficking, with most being killed because their families failed to pay ransom. These abuses have been a reason for ASEAN countries to act. However, to date, the resolution of the Rohingya conflict has been limited to mediation efforts and ASEAN countries have not been more deeply involved in the resolution of the issue.⁶²

Within ASEAN, no country has enough influence to pressure the Myanmar government to act or even intervene in its internal affairs. From the perspective of influence within international institutions, no one country has a particularly dominant influence over the others. Each country has equal power in ASEAN. In maintaining the stability of hegemony, ASEAN countries take bilateral and multilateral measures with the support of the conflict management mechanism established by ASEAN as a strategy to deal with potential conflicts that arise among its member countries. The six documents that have been drafted are the most suitable mechanism to handle any potential conflict in ASEAN. These documents have become the legal basis agreed upon by ASEAN member states in accordance with the principle contained in Article 3 of the ASEAN Charter, which states ASEAN is a legitimate actor in the international system. The challenge now lies in the implementation and effectiveness of these mechanisms in resolving conflicts in the region.

As a facilitator, ASEAN can build trust with the countries involved early on. ASEAN will engage mediate to achieve peace between the countries involved in the conflict. These facilitation efforts include providing a neutral venue for the negotiations, preparing all the necessities, providing international law experts, and providing humanitarian assistance for the people affected by the conflict.⁶³ One form of world peace through cooperation, as expressed by Uri Svir with his theory that peace can be achieved through cooperation between countries in conflict. As an organisation focused on regional cooperation, ASEAN, as a conflict facilitator, is the right platform to resolve

⁶⁰ Agung Wicaksono, "Think ASEAN!: Rethinking Marketing toward ASEAN Community 2015," *Asean Economic Bulletin* 24, no. 2 (2007), <https://doi.org/10.1355/ae24-2h>.

⁶¹ Dr Oh Ei Sun and Mr David, "Malaysia 's Relations with the Major Powers: China and the United States," *S.Rajaratnam School of International Studies* 236, no. 1 March 2016 (2016).

⁶² "Handbook of Peace and Conflict Studies," *Choice Reviews Online* 47, no. 08 (2010), <https://doi.org/10.5860/choice.47-4683>.

⁶³ Tety Rachmawati, "Menakar Stabilitas Hegemoni Bagi Penyelesaian Konflik Rohingya," *Dauliyah Journal of Islamic and International Affairs* 2, no. 1 (2017), <https://doi.org/10.21111/dauliyah.v2i1.810>.

issues involving its member countries.⁶⁴ ASEAN's role as a cooperation organisation can extend beyond merely drafting and passing documents. These documents must be implemented without violating the non-intervention principle and applicable to all parties.⁶⁵

Having a conflict management mechanism through these documents is very important to maintain stability, security and peace in Southeast Asia.⁶⁶ Therefore, member states must proactively resolve emerging or potential problems that may arise between them. Failure in this case will impact regional stability, even threatening the existence of ASEAN. Member countries need to realise that using ASEAN, especially its documents, as a dispute resolution mechanism is the best step to maintain safe and peaceful conditions in the Southeast Asia region.

CONCLUSION

From the following description, it is known that ASEAN, as a region in Southeast Asia without the presence of the community, the dominating country faces various difficulties in maintaining economic stability, politics, military, and so on. Therefore, the issue of conflict in Rohingya, Myanmar, is still unresolved. The presence of countries that dominate the ASEAN region can help create international security stability by encouraging compliance with global rules and standards. The conflict in Rohingya has triggered a large influx of refugees that has disrupted ASEAN security stability and attracted international attention. Some ASEAN countries have refused to accept refugees, citing security and budgetary considerations. Myanmar itself has violated international law through racial discrimination against the Rohingya, denial of citizenship and crimes against humanity. On the other hand, the influence of outside parties intervening in the resolution of the conflict in Rohingya causes ASEAN countries to be hampered in addressing the problem in conflict resolution efforts.

In addition to the influence of involvement outside ASEAN, the alignment of formal forums such as the High Assembly, another option, can be considered. ASEAN can act as a facilitator, not a formal mediator, in resolving the conflict. With a facilitator role, ASEAN builds trust upfront with the countries involved, only stepping in to facilitate peaceful efforts between them. Facilitation efforts include providing a neutral venue for negotiations and providing consultation on ongoing disputes or conflicts if requested. ASEAN needs to take on the role of facilitator in addressing regional conflicts to realise the vision of a peaceful and stable region. As the only regional organisation in the region, ASEAN is responsible for playing a role in peaceful conflict resolution.

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⁶⁴ Yusuf Hanafi and Titis Thoriquttyas, "The Resolution Of Social Conflict In The National Constitution And Islamic Perspectives: Integrating Formal and Non-Formal Approaches," *Al-Tabrir: Jurnal Pemikiran Islam* 18, no. 2 (2019), <https://doi.org/10.21154/altahrir.v18i2.1336>.

⁶⁵ Jerry Indrawan, "Mekanisme Resolusi Konflik Di ASEAN: ASEAN Sebagai Fasilitator Konflik," *Jurnal Ilmiah Hubungan Internasional* 17, no. 2 (2021), <https://doi.org/10.26593/jihi.v17i2.3830.172-185>.

⁶⁶ I Nyoman Sudira, "Resolusi Konflik Dalam Perubahan Dunia," *Global: Jurnal Politik Internasional* 19, no. 2 (2017), <https://doi.org/10.7454/global.v19i2.301>.

COMPETING INTEREST

The author declared that he does not have a conflict of interest.

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