

Indonesian Accession to BRICS: Serving Colonial Interests

News:

Indonesia officially became a full member of BRICS on January 6, 2025, marking a significant step in its global economic diplomacy. Foreign Minister Sugiono highlighted that the accession, driven by President Prabowo Subianto's active diplomacy, reflects Indonesia's consistent efforts over decades. The decision aligns with Indonesia's active and free foreign policy, aiming to bridge the interests of developing countries and the Indo-Pacific region. Indonesia's membership complements its roles in other international forums such as G20, APEC, and CPTPP. The announcement, made by Brazil, underscores Indonesia's growing influence on the global stage. (Source: [Tempo.co](https://www.tempo.co))

Comment:

Indonesia's longstanding pragmatic foreign policy has done little to elevate the country's standing in global politics. Successive governments have pursued diplomatic maneuvers primarily to secure political support whether from Western blocs like the United States or opposing powers such as China and Russia. This pragmatism has rendered Indonesia ineffective in shaping international politics, leaving it vulnerable to exploitation by major powers seeking to benefit from the country's abundant natural resources.

Historically, the United States has reaped significant profits from Indonesia's strategic mineral reserves, including copper, gold, oil, and natural gas. Similarly, China has leveraged its investments in mining and infrastructure to extract wealth from Indonesia's natural resources. These dynamics reflect a troubling pattern: while major powers benefit from Indonesia's resources, the nation itself gains little beyond superficial political accolades. Indonesian leaders often prioritize image-building, earning international recognition and positions in global forums, while neglecting the welfare of their own citizens.

This reality has left Indonesians impoverished and burdened by government policies that fail to address their needs. Rising taxes and fees for essential services such as education and healthcare exacerbate economic inequality. Meanwhile, Indonesia's political pragmatism ensures that the country remains subservient to the interests of powerful nations, enabling modern colonial exploitation by both Western and Eastern powers.

Indonesia's recent inclusion in BRICS is unlikely to alter this trajectory. While it may serve as a diplomatic tool to attract further investment from both the West and China, it is unlikely to deliver meaningful benefits for the Indonesian people. Instead, it represents another chapter in Indonesia's practice of oscillating between major powers to secure short-term gains.

This approach mirrors the foreign policies of many other Muslim-majority countries, which often rely on aid and protection from global powers. Such pragmatism has left the Muslim world powerless to address atrocities against their brethren in places like Palestine, Xinjiang, India, and Myanmar's Rohingya communities—many of which are perpetuated or supported by coalitions of major nations.

As long as pragmatic politics dominate, rather than an ideology rooted in Islamic principles, Indonesia and other Muslim nations will remain passive actors in global affairs. They will continue to serve as objects of competition and exploitation by stronger nations, perpetuating a cycle of dependency and vulnerability that undermines their sovereignty and the welfare of their people.

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