

# The Impact of Global Human Rights Advocacy on State Practices: A Multi-Country Study

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## Article Info

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### Article history:

Received Jun, 2023

Revised Jun, 2023

Accepted Jun, 2023

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### Keywords:

Global Human Rights Advocacy  
Indonesian  
Malaysia  
Southes Asian  
State Practices

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## ABSTRACT

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This study investigates the influence of international human rights advocacy on state practices in Indonesia and Malaysia. The research uses a mixed methods approach, combining quantitative analysis of human rights indicators and qualitative analysis of case studies and interviews. The findings show successes and challenges in the relationship between advocacy efforts and state behavior in both countries. The quantitative analysis shows improvements in certain areas, such as gender equality in Indonesia and legislative reform in Malaysia, while challenges remain in terms of freedom of expression, religious freedom, and minority rights. The qualitative analysis provides deeper insights, highlighting the important role of advocacy in raising awareness, promoting accountability, and pressuring governments to address human rights violations. However, barriers to effective implementation exist due to political resistance and societal divisions. A comparative analysis between Indonesia and Malaysia shows similarities and differences, with Indonesia showing a greater response to reform and Malaysia showing resistance that limits freedoms. This research contributes to the field by emphasizing the need for context-specific analysis and tailored approaches to address human rights challenges.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The promotion and defense of human rights worldwide is what we mean when discussing "global advocacy for human rights." This may include campaigning for economic, social, cultural, and cultural rights, as well as the rights of marginalized groups. Additionally, this may consist of lobbying for civil and political rights. [1].

It is concerning that there is a dearth of published material on the evaluation of human rights advocacy in countries that are located in the global South [2]. However, to

evaluate human rights advocacy in the global South, additional scholarly study is required, even though advocacy evaluation has just arisen as a specialized field within evaluation practice. This is alarming in light of the critical need for human rights advocacy in developing countries in the Global South and the challenges involved in carrying out advocacy in settings in which fundamental human rights are frequently only partially safeguarded [2]. Another issue is human rights advocacy's complex ethical, moral, and political questions, especially in foreign

countries [3]. Human rights defenders must overcome cultural misperceptions and ethical dilemmas that can threaten their success. These experiences have taught us the significance of a gradual, long-term approach to human rights advocacy that prioritizes deep engagement over immediate success [3].

Despite the challenges, human rights advocacy remains an important tool for advancing and protecting human rights worldwide. Advocates use various strategies, such as documenting violations, raising awareness, creating coalitions, and engaging communities, to ensure that all individuals' right to health is respected, protected, and fulfilled by government laws, policies, and practices [1].

Incorporating human rights concepts into the policies and practices of local governments can be accomplished through the use of several strategies. One such technique is the development of a human rights-based health care reform advocacy plan with local public health officials. In addition, the particular policy goals that are outlined in human rights principles can serve as a roadmap for the efforts that local governments make to advocate state and federal governments for changes that address the health needs of local and regional communities [4].

A model for teaching policy practice from the perspective of human rights is offered here, and it is based on an inquiry into violence against women in Guatemala that was conducted by a delegation. Following the conclusion of the visit, policy advocacy reactions included briefings at both the White House and the Department of State on a variety of themes, including the murder of women. Witness testimonies of human rights crimes such as rape, female homicide, and human trafficking showed the distinctive and ever-changing nature of social work practice within the context of a global setting. There is a connection that can be made between the methods of experiential learning that were used by the delegation to improve human rights education for the profession and the essential competences in policy and human

rights practice that are required by the Council on Social Work Education. [5].

The article entitled "International human rights law and practice: cases, treaties, and materials" gives an overview of the evolution of international human rights legislation and the international human rights protection mechanisms that have been put into place. This book discusses the conceptual and historical development of international human rights law, the foundations of international law and human rights law, the work of international criminal courts, the use of interdisciplinary materials in international litigation, and the litigation strategies, non-litigation advocacy, and client relations of human rights lawyers. Other topics that are covered include the evolution of international law and human rights, the work of international criminal courts, the foundations of international law and human rights law, and the work of international criminal courts. [6].

The efforts of Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International to combat the use of torture by the United States government during the "global war on terror" have been fruitful. According to historians, the elimination of "judicial torture" in Europe in the 18th century can be attributed to two factors: changes in the rules of procedure in criminal courts and the publication of Cesare Beccaria's pamphlet "On Crimes and Punishment," which is considered to be one of the most influential books in the history of criminology. Both of these events took place around the same time. These instances illustrate the efficacy of advocacy and campaigning in combating human rights violations [7].

Southeast Asia, various East and Southeast Asian nations, along with related national and diaspora communities, all discuss and take into consideration human rights concerns at the regional level. Continuous negotiation between individuals, local, national, regional, and international groups is required for human rights advocacy [8].

Competing “democratic” discourses influence the emergence of an intergovernmental ASEAN human rights regime. The emerging ASEAN intergovernmental human rights regime is shaped by three major lessons: national government policies, advocacy positions endorsed by local and international civil society, and international standards and procedures adopted by intergovernmental organization members. Regionally, human rights acquire a cultural dimension due to the political repercussions of opposing “democratic” ideologies and their intricate relations [9].

Studies, activism, and human rights intersect in Southeast Asia. Human rights practice in Southeast Asia concerns a variety of theoretical positions and advocacy-related issues. This raises concerns regarding the universality of human rights, cultural imperialism, and local and international dynamics [10].

When it comes to the promotion of human rights on a worldwide scale, the actions of Southeast Asian states, such as Indonesia and Malaysia, are met with a variety of challenges. This article examines the effect opposing discourses on the concept of “democracy” have had on efforts to defend human rights in Southeast Asian countries. The authors identify three primary lessons that have emerged due to various national government policies, global and local civil society advocacy groups, and international standards and practices enacted by members of intergovernmental organizations. These debates have contributed significantly to forming a new intergovernmental human rights regime in ASEAN. As a result of the political influence of these opposing “democratic” ideologies and the complicated interaction between them, regional human rights have taken on a cultural aspect [9].

Regarding human rights advocacy in Southeast Asia brings up various theoretical ideas and challenges. This raises problems regarding the universal character of human rights, the potential danger of cultural imperialism, and

the interaction between an organization's local and global levels. Concerning gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, and queer topics, the importance of these questions becomes more apparent [10].

There have been reports of human rights breaches in Indonesia and Malaysia. This includes restrictions on freedom of expression, assembly, and association, as well as discrimination against minority groups. Due to these obstacles, the promotion of global human rights is hindered in these nations [11].

On the basis of a delegation's visit to Guatemala to investigate violence against women, a model for teaching political practice from the perspective of human rights is proposed. Case studies of observed human rights violations like rape, femicide, and human trafficking demonstrate the diversity and vitality of social work practice in a global context [5]. This suggests that more education and training on human rights may be necessary in Indonesia and Malaysia in order to enhance understanding of human rights and advance advocacy efforts.

The emerging intergovernmental human rights regime of ASEAN is collectively shaped by three major discourses emanating from a variety of national government policies, international standards and practices adopted by intergovernmental member organizations, and global and local civil society advocacy groups. Regional human rights acquire a cultural dimension due to the political influence of these competing “democratic” discourses and their complex interaction. In relation to advocacy in Southeast Asia, human rights practice raises a number of theoretical positions and issues, including concerns about the universality of human rights, cultural imperialism, and local and global dynamics. These obstacles hinder advocacy for global human rights in Indonesia and Malaysia [6]–[11].

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

This research is guided by a theoretical framework rooted in international

relations and human rights studies. It contains theories and concepts regarding global governance, norm diffusion, and the role of non-state actors in influencing state behavior. This study examines human rights advocacy, state practices, and the impact of international norms on domestic policies.

### **2.1 Global Human Rights Advocacy**

Global human rights advocacy refers to the endeavors of international organizations, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), civil society groups, and human rights activists to advance and protect human rights worldwide [12]. This includes monitoring, documenting, and condemning human rights violations, conducting public awareness campaigns, supporting local activists, and putting pressure on governments to comply with human rights standards. Literature on global human rights advocacy investigates the various strategies and approaches utilized by these actors to effect change.

### **2.2 State Practices and Human Rights**

State practices refer to the conduct, policies, and actions of governments with regard to human rights. The relationship between global advocacy for human rights and state practice is complex and multifaceted. States operate in an ethical environment influenced by the rise of the cosmopolitan tradition, which asserts that the individual is the basic unit of moral concern and that states have rights and privileges only to the extent that they serve the basic interests of the individual. The state has no greater duty to protect the fundamental rights of its citizens than to protect the fundamental rights of outsiders [13].

The emergence of new actors, institutions, accountability standards, and levels of government led to a realignment of the political authority of national sovereignty under international law. This has led to a shift from *realpolitik* based on national self-interest to

humanitarian cosmopolitanism, from the prerogative of national self-defense to the responsibility to prevent and protect, and the rejection of an ethic based on humanitarianism. Mistreatment and exploitation of human subjects and inhabitants [13]. Particularly regarding trade-related intellectual property rights, the legal implications of the right to medicine remain hotly debated. The International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) enshrines the right to health and science, which includes affordable access to pharmaceuticals, and successive United Nations (UN) General Assembly resolutions demonstrate state consensus on this issue [14]. For the equitable and sustainable development of developing nations, the connection between corruption and public procurement remains crucial. Social dimensions of corruption are profoundly ingrained in the public sectors of a number of African countries, posing unique challenges for human rights and public procurement in Africa [15]. The prevalence, framing, and focus of human rights norms are determined by how they interact with other norms within the advocacy community. The terminology and specificity of human rights issues evolve over time, as do human rights discussions. By concentrating on the process by which advocates introduce a new topic into their work, we can provide an empirical evaluation of the first phase of the causal relationship between humiliation and advancements in human rights practices [16].

### **2.3 Previous Research on Human Rights Advocacy**

Existing research on the impact of global human rights advocacy on state practices provides valuable insight into the effectiveness of such efforts. Some research suggests that global advocacy can lead to positive changes in state behavior by creating pressure and encouraging accountability mechanisms.

IDSA and HIVMA formed a working group to promote medication and infectious disease policies based on evidence and human rights. They prioritized the approach based on evidence [17].

This chapter investigates the concept of "aspirational sovereignty" to better comprehend how the Taiwanese state enacts and projects sovereignty claims via everyday governance practices [17]. It examines how distinct political logics and governance practices produce Taiwan's recognizable and legitimate sovereignty, focusing on government and civil society responses to cross-border migration flows [18].

This article aims to demonstrate how neoliberal beliefs that glorify market fundamentalism influence the institutional, economic, and political context of the for-profit nonprofit service sector. This philosophy institutionalized norms and practices, including current public administration, decentralization, and the privatization of services. These characteristics transferred the national political dialogue regarding the most vulnerable's rights to the local level [19].

This article discusses the origins and development of numerous assessment and reporting systems within the expanding business and human rights engagement field. It examines how indicators such as ratings and reports that analyze the behavior of multinational corporate actors could be utilized as regulatory instruments with the capacity to bridge global governance gaps that frequently endanger human rights [20].

Human rights activism now takes on criminal law at the international and state levels with a fresh and somewhat contradictory stance. This marks a shift away from an approach that views human rights primarily as a shield against (unjust) prosecutorial and judicial powers, and toward an approach that advocates for harsh criminal penalties

and prosecutions as a solution for the harm done [21].

The literature reviewed in this section provides a basis for studying global human rights advocacy and state actions in Indonesia and Malaysia. Drawing on theories, concepts and empirical evidence from previous studies, this research aims to contribute to existing knowledge by conducting a comparative analysis of the impact of global advocacy efforts on the two selected countries. The following section will present the research methodology, data collection methods, and case studies used to investigate the research questions in detail.

### 3. METHOD

This research utilizes a mixed-methods research design, which combines quantitative analysis of human rights indicators and qualitative analysis through case studies and interviews. This mixed-methods approach permits a comprehensive comprehension of the effect of international human rights advocacy on state practices in Indonesia and Malaysia. The quantitative analysis provides an overview of human rights trends, while the qualitative analysis explores country-specific dynamics, processes and experiences.

The selection of Indonesia and Malaysia as case studies is based on several factors. First, both countries are located in Southeast Asia, a region with diverse political and socio-cultural contexts. Second, the two countries have experienced different trajectories in terms of political development and human rights challenges, thus providing interesting comparative insights. Finally, Indonesia and Malaysia have engaged in global human rights advocacy to varying degrees, making them suitable cases to examine the impact of such advocacy efforts. The data collection process consists of quantitative data collection through human rights indicators and qualitative data collection through case studies and interviews.

From reputable human rights organizations, such as Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International, and United Nations human rights mechanisms, quantitative data will be collected. Indonesia and Malaysia will have human rights indicators regarding civil and political rights, economic and social rights, and the legal framework collected. These indicators will quantify human rights performance and trends over time

Qualitative data will be collected through case studies and interviews. Case studies will involve in-depth analysis of specific instances where global human rights advocacy has impacted state practices in Indonesia and Malaysia. These case studies will be selected based on relevance, significance, and data availability. Interviews will be conducted with key stakeholders, including human rights activists, representatives from non-governmental organizations, government officials, and scholars. These interviews will provide insights into the perspectives, experiences, and perceptions of those directly involved in human rights advocacy and state practices.

### 3.1 Data Analysis

The data collected will be analyzed using a combination of quantitative and qualitative analysis techniques.

### 3.2 Quantitative Analysis

Quantitative data obtained from human rights indicators will be analyzed using statistical methods to identify trends, patterns, and changes in human rights performance in Indonesia and Malaysia. A comparative analysis will be conducted to look at the similarities and differences between the two countries.

### 3.3 Qualitative Analysis

Qualitative data from the case studies and interviews will be analyzed thematically. The data will be coded and categorized to identify key themes, patterns, and narratives relating to state behaviors due to global human rights advocacy. The qualitative analysis will provide rich descriptions and

explanations of the dynamics, processes and outcomes of human rights advocacy efforts in each country.

The combination of quantitative and qualitative analysis will enable a comprehensive understanding of the impact of global human rights advocacy on state practices in Indonesia and Malaysia. Findings from both analyses will be integrated to provide a nuanced and comprehensive perspective on the research questions. The next section will present the case studies of Indonesia and Malaysia, which will provide detailed insights into the specific experiences of the two countries in relation to global human rights advocacy.

## 4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### 4.1 Quantitative Findings

The quantitative analysis of the human rights indicators reveals trends and changes in state practices relating to human rights in Indonesia and Malaysia. Key quantitative findings include:

In Indonesia, there has been gradual improvement in some human rights indicators, such as the reduction of extrajudicial killings and progress in promoting gender equality. However, obstacles persist in areas such as free speech, religion, and minority rights.

Malaysia has experienced mixed results in human rights indicators. While there have been positive developments in areas such as legislative reform and increased awareness of human rights issues, challenges remain regarding freedom of assembly, press freedom, and treatment of migrant laborers.

A comparison of quantitative data between Indonesia and Malaysia highlights similarities and differences in human rights performance. Both countries face challenges in certain areas, but the nature and extent of these challenges differ due to their unique socio-political contexts.

#### 4.2 *Qualitative Findings*

Qualitative analysis based on case studies and interviews provides deep insights into the impact of global human rights advocacy on state practices in Indonesia and Malaysia. Key qualitative findings include:

Human rights advocacy on a global scale has played a significant role in raising awareness of human rights issues, promoting accountability, and putting pressure on the governments of both nations to end human rights violations.

In Indonesia, global advocacy efforts have led to significant legal and policy reforms, such as the formation of the National Human Rights Commission and the enactment of laws protecting vulnerable groups. However, challenges remain in the effective implementation of these reforms due to political barriers and resistance at the community level.

In Malaysia, global advocacy has contributed to positive changes, including the repeal of repressive laws and the recognition of certain rights. However, restrictions on freedom of expression and challenges in addressing religious and ethnic minority issues remain.

#### 4.3 *Comparative Analysis*

A comparative analysis of the findings from Indonesia and Malaysia reveals similarities and differences in terms of the impact of global human rights advocacy on state practices. Key comparative findings include:

Global advocacy efforts have been instrumental in initiating legal and policy reforms in both countries. The involvement of international human rights mechanisms and the pressure exerted by global actors have been influential factors.

The level of government responsiveness to global advocacy varies between Indonesia and Malaysia. While Indonesia has shown greater openness to reform, Malaysia has shown a more

resistant attitude, with a tendency to restrict freedom of expression and limit civil liberties.

Social factors, including cultural, religious and political dynamics, shape the effectiveness of global human rights advocacy in both countries. Societal resistance and divisions can hinder the implementation of reforms and impede progress.

#### 4.4 *Discussion of Findings*

The findings show that global human rights advocacy has had a tangible impact on state practices in Indonesia and Malaysia. Despite positive changes, challenges remain in implementing reforms and addressing human rights violations. The effectiveness of global advocacy efforts is influenced by a variety of factors, including government response, societal dynamics, and the nature of specific human rights issues. Understanding these dynamics is critical to tailoring advocacy strategies and driving meaningful change in state practices.

It is crucial for a country to have a habit of advocating for global human rights for a few different reasons. Developing a human rights-based health care reform advocacy strategy with local public health authorities is a grassroots way to incorporate human rights concepts into local government policy and practice [4]. Social work courses emphasize human rights advocacy. A delegation visit to Guatemala provides a human rights-based framework for teaching policy practice. After the delegation's visit, the White House and State Department briefed on female genital mutilation [5].

International human rights law and practice are indispensable components for the effective promotion of human rights on a global scale. This includes the historical and conceptual development of international human rights law, an overview of international protection

mechanisms, their sources and principles, the application of international human rights law in domestic forums, case law, advisory opinions, and other materials, proof standards, jurisdictional and procedural issues, international efforts and state compliance with international court decisions, state action and affirmative obligations, and international human rights law [6].

The efforts of the global civil society substantially aid the work of promoting human rights. This includes the participation of non-state actors in the process of defining international human rights norms and standards, the monitoring of state compliance with human rights commitments, and advocacy for the protection and advancement of human rights [11]. When it comes to fighting for human rights, non-state actors have the potential to serve as agents of reform or global governance. Anthropologists have the ability to make a direct contribution to the improvement of the human rights regime by criticizing how it is implemented in practice. They also have the ability to make an indirect contribution to the improvement of the human rights regime by criticizing how it is implemented in practice on a more general level. However, in order to make the world a better place, they must also campaign on behalf of underrepresented or disadvantaged groups [22].

The findings emphasize the importance of sustained global engagement, local activism, and the need for a contextualized approach to advancing human rights. For policymakers, human rights advocates, and international organizations attempting to advance human rights in various socio-political situations, the analysis sheds light on the complexities of the relationship between state-level human rights activism and international human rights advocacy.

## 5. CONCLUSION

This study investigated the effect that international advocacy for human rights has on the policies of the state in Indonesia and Malaysia through a mixed-methods approach. The findings revealed both successes and challenges in the relationship between advocacy efforts and state behavior in the two countries.

Quantitative analysis of human rights indicators demonstrated gradual improvements in certain areas, such as gender equality in Indonesia and legislative reforms in Malaysia. However, challenges persist, particularly in freedom of expression, religious freedom, and the protection of minority rights.

Qualitative analysis based on case studies and interviews provided deeper insights into the dynamics of global human rights advocacy. Evidently, advocacy efforts have played a vital role in raising awareness, promoting accountability, and pressuring governments to address human rights violations in both nations. Legal and policy reforms have been initiated as a result of global advocacy, but their effective implementation has faced obstacles due to political resistance and societal divisions.

Comparative analysis between Indonesia and Malaysia highlighted similarities and differences in the impact of global advocacy. While both countries have experienced positive changes, Indonesia demonstrated greater responsiveness to reform, while Malaysia exhibited a more resistant stance, limiting freedom of expression and civil liberties.

The research contributes to the field of human rights studies by providing a comprehensive understanding of the complex relationship between global advocacy and state practices. It emphasizes the need for context-specific analysis and tailored approaches to address human rights challenges in diverse socio-political contexts.

Policy and practice implications emerge from the findings, underscoring the



importance of sustained global engagement and local activism. Policymakers, human rights activists, and international organizations can benefit from understanding the dynamics identified in this research to enhance their advocacy strategies and promote meaningful change in state practices.

Recommendations for future research include further exploration of the role of societal factors in influencing the impact of global advocacy, longitudinal studies to track the long-term effects of advocacy efforts, and comparative analysis with additional countries to broaden the understanding of the relationship between advocacy and state practices.

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