BETWEEN A ROCK AND A HARD PLACE:

Women, Power, and Change in Southeast Asia

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Building Women's Collective Power for Justice

Between a Rock and a Hard Place:
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INTRODUCTION

A vital part of this report of the current context in Southeast Asia involves showing the ways that ordinary people, activists, human rights defenders, and social movements are organizing to protect their communities from destruction and injustice, even in extremely precarious and dangerous situations. Some of the most vocal and active participants in progressive movements for change and transformation are women from the most affected communities in the region. Although separated by language, culture, and religion, as well as by oceans and physical distances, these activists have forged sturdy relationships. By working together across identities, issues, and organizations—from Cambodia, Myanmar and Thailand on the Asian continent, to the island nations of Indonesia and Philippines, and to Malaysia, spanning a southern peninsula on the continent and Sabah and Sarawakin on the island of Borneo—they are further strengthening their connections and capacity to lead change.

In recent years, increasing political volatility, repression and a vicious scramble for natural resources in resource-rich Southeast Asia, has had a devastating impact on families, communities, livelihoods, and the environment. In prioritizing large-scale extractive industries and neoliberal economic development, governments are putting the economic interests of transnational and national corporations and elites above of the rights and security of citizens. In this context, activists and communities organizing against corruption and on issues of land, water, health, and violence are facing greater restrictions on freedom of expression, threats, and violent attacks by both state and private security forces.

Since 2006, JASS Southeast Asia has provided sustained leadership training and political accompaniment for grassroots women activists at the forefront of critical justice efforts in the region. Our work addresses women's central role in sustaining and organizing communities and supports their strategies and resilience to withstand backlash, including from within their families, communities, and organizations for stepping out of traditional gender roles. Understanding context and power are central to JASS' approach to movement building. Our signature power analysis[1]* framework has supported young, grassroots, LBT, indigenous, and rural women organizers in Indonesia, Myanmar, Cambodia, Thailand, Malaysia, Timor Leste, and the Philippines to connect the dots between the problems they and their communities face, and the political and power dynamics driving them. A shared understanding of the forces at play allows for smarter strategies, stronger alliances, and the prioritization and development of collective approaches to activists' safety in difficult and hostile contexts.

In the present moment, with the dynamics among political actors and interests shifting and intersecting in complex and intense ways, our allies and partners find themselves needing to regroup, retool, and rebuild. For this reason, JASS Southeast Asia commissioned a contextual mapping informed by a feminist power analysis. Drawing from, among other sources, a series of power and risk assessment workshops with women activists in the region from 2016-2017, the following report maps the challenges and risks affecting women, as well as the ways women are organizing to leverage the opportunities and "cracks" to mobilize for rights and justice.

The report serves three overall purposes. Firstly, it presents **a feminist analysis of historical and current political, economic, and social power relations in the region**. It demonstrates how these relations underpin inequality and poverty within and across nations and affect the most vulnerable: women in rural and urban areas; immigrant and migrant workers; refugees and displaced people; ethnic minorities; lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, gender non-conforming, intersex (LGBTI); and indigenous, landless, and poor people. Secondly, the report describes how the **dominant actors in**

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1. *For more on JASS power analysis: www.justassociates.org and our report Making Change Happen 3

and outside the region are consolidating their power, using violence and the threat of violence, to suppress dissent and advance their agendas. Thirdly, the report details the organized efforts to change these power relations and the conditions they create through grassroots women's activism and movement-building. We offer this analysis to anyone concerned with women's rights and organizing in the region.

While Southeast Asian countries differ historically, culturally, economically, and politically, the struggle for power, particularly the race to control resources – oil, copper, gold, tin, land, water and forests – is playing out in similar ways. Across the region, we see the convergence of several dominant political and economic trends and global factors that are driving poverty, violence, exploitation, and inequity, and environmental destruction:

- A rise in authoritarian rule and the suppression of rights and freedoms: government leaders are consolidating their power and using state institutions and public discourse to shut down democratic space, polarize populations, and silence activists.
- Regional governments are working hand in glove with national and transnational corporations to extract natural resources, either complicit or unconcerned with human rights abuses and the extreme exploitation of the earth and human labor involved, as they reap enormous wealth for themselves and other national and global elites.
- The mobilization of military and armed forces to protect corporate interests, silence the dissent of communities, activists, and human rights and land defenders who are challenging policies, projects, and corruption.
- The influence of nationalist and fundamentalist religious movements over public opinion – and policy – is carried out in targeted criminalization, hate speech and violence, creating a climate of fear and risk for women and LGBTI activists, and human rights and land defenders.

All of these dynamics have roots in long histories of colonialism and imperialistic conquest in the region. The trends play out differently in each country, but the common thread is the interplay and collusion between state and private actors/interests at national and transnational levels, and their manipulation of prejudice and fear to divide and control.

The sweeping impacts of authoritarianism and violence, and the resulting anger and suffering, are generating resistance and organizing – courageous, creative, and persistent. In Southeast Asia, those at the forefront of the defense of communities, water, and land are mobilizing to hold the line against powerful and corrupt political and economic interests. Among the emerging networks and movements, the particular leadership of women stands out, with young women's networks showing great promise in their ability to work across issues and connect across generations and borders. Whether serving as visible leaders of critical land and resource movements, like Tep Vanny in Cambodia, or organizing below the radar to keep members safe and strategically supported, like the young women of FAMM Indonesia, women are building and leveraging their collective power to solve problems, protect communities and the environment, and challenge harmful political narratives. They do this in the face of tremendous risk, for both challenging powerful interests and stepping out of traditional gender roles, but together women activists are finding resilience, solidarity, and a shared vision for the future through their movement organizing and networks.

In Part I of the report, we present stories and examples of women's activism and women's movements to show how they work to transform the conditions they face. We showcase activists' courage and creativity, and recognize their commitment to creating positive change and inspiring others to act. In Part II, we provide a brief economic and political history and review the related forces that shape the region today. In Part III, we discuss governance and the nature of the state in each of the six countries covered in this report. Part IV focuses on the activities and impacts of extractive industries in these nations, followed by Part V with an analysis of militarism and armed conflict—the servants of extractive industries. Part VI concerns the prospects for progressive change in the region through the perspectives and activities of women's activism and women human rights defenders.

Acronyms

AMAN	*Aliansi Masyarakat Adat Nusantara*, the Indigenous Peoples' Alliance of the Archipelago
APWLD	Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women
EBA	Everything But Arms (trade agreement)
FTA	free trade agreement
IFC	International Finance Corporation
ISDS	investor state dispute settlement
LGBTI	lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, questioning, gender non-conforming, intersex
NCPO	National Council for Peace and Order (Thailand)
NGO	non-governmental organization
RCP	Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership
RTA	regional trade agreement
SEA	Southeast Asia
SEZs	Special Economic Zones
TNC	transnational corporation
TPP	Trans Pacific Partnership Agreement
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNDRIP	UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People
WHRDs	women human rights defenders
WTO	World Trade Organization

"WE ARE THE ONES WE HAVE BEEN WAITING FOR"[1]

The words of frontline women activists—of many faiths and backgrounds—from indigenous rural and urban communities and LGBTI groups, bring to life the impact of the economic, social, and political dynamics and conditions in Southeast Asia. More importantly, they show the power and potential of women's organizing to create progressive change and inspire others. This report showcases women's activism first rather than starting with the analysis of problems, in order to draw attention to this often unrecognized and overlooked dimension of political dynamics and to increase awareness of the vital role of women's movements in the region.

Women Organizing in Indigenous, Rural, and Land-based Communities

Identity, culture, tradition, and religion can be divisive, and potential sources of violence and stigma. Indigenous and land-based movements and organizations, however, often draw on their history, tradition, and communal cultures as the basis for organizing in their communities and fostering an understanding of the power of the collective. At the same time, there is a growing, if not uncontested, recognition of the critical importance of women's leadership and gender equality as part of holistic change strategies.

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Bai Bibyaon Bigkay, a Manobo leader in Mindanao, Philippines embraces defending ancestral land and protecting the future of her people – and of all people – as a very personal responsibility.

> **"**The struggle of the Lumad (indigenous people) here, especially us, the Manobo in the Pantaron Range, is to defend our ancestral domain, the longest mountain range in Mindanao. It is where the different bodies of water come from; it goes through all of the regions in Mindanao. If we the Manobo don't defend our ancestral domain, it is not only the Manobo tribe, it is not only the Lumad indigenous peoples who will be affected, but the entire population of Mindanao. So, this is my struggle, this is our struggle—to defend our ancestral land, to defend the Pantaron Range, to defend the very source of livelihood of the peoples in Mindanao.**"**

An indigenous woman formed the Highlanders Association–Ratanakiri in the remote province of Ratanakiri, Cambodia in 2001, the first ethnic minority indigenous peoples' network of its kind within civil society. "It seeks to increase the capacity of indigenous men and women to preserve land, forest, natural resources, and water sources on which their livelihood depends and gives voice to the people to influence the decisions affecting them. The organization conducts outreach to people in the community on land issues, domestic violence, hygiene, women's rights, and children's right to go to school.[2]

In Indonesia, indigenous peoples work to strengthen and unite their action, particularly through *Aliansi Masyarakat Adat Nusantara* (AMAN), the Indigenous Peoples Alliance of the Archipelago, a national alliance formed in 1999. The world's largest indigenous people's organization representing 2,332 indigenous communities equaling approximately 17 million people, AMAN works at local, national, and international levels to advocate for indigenous people.[3] In 2016, they submitted a

1. Jordan, June. 1978. "A Poem for South African Women." The African-American feminist poet presented this at the UN on 9 August 1978 in commemoration of the 40,000 women and children, who used their bodies to protest against the Pass Law, passed by the Apartheid government over 20 years before. http://www.junejordan.net/poem-for-south-african-women.html.

2. Just Associates. 2014. *Indigenous Women Workshop: An Analysis Report on the State of Indigenous Women in Southeast Asia.* https://justassociates.org/en/resources/indigenous-women-workshop-analysis-report-state-indigenous-women-southeast-asia.

3. *Aliansi Masyarakat Adat Nusantara* (AMAN): Indigenous Peoples Alliance of the Archipelago. https://www.forestpeoples.org/partner/aliansi-masyarakat-adat-nusantara-aman-indigenous-peoples-alliance-archipelago.

report documenting human rights violations against indigenous people to the UN Human Rights Council's Universal Periodic Review of the human rights situation in Indonesia, co-authored with Asia Indigenous People's Pact (AIPP) and, in March 2017, they elected a woman, Rukka Sombolinggi, as their secretary general.[4] A women's rights organization, *Koalisi Perempuan Indonesia*, the Indonesian Women's Coalition for Justice and Democracy, established itself in 1998 to achieve gender equality and justice. As of 2013, it consists of more than 38,000 members in 18 interest groups working at the grassroots level in 900 villages/communities in 24 provinces.[5]

In the East Malaysian state of Sarawak on the island of Borneo, the SAVE Rivers Network, a coalition of grassroots activists and NGOs, including Baram Protection Action Committee, Borneo Resources Institute (BRIMAS), and *Jaringan Orang Asal SeMalaysia* (JOAS), utilized various tactics including long-term blockades and the slogan "Stop Baram Dam," to successfully block the construction of the massive hydroelectric Baram dam and return the land to the area's indigenous people. Had the plan gone forward, "the power (generated by the dam) would only have benefitted mainland Malaysia's industrialists and corrupt politicians" along with foreign investors, while indigenous people's biodiverse forests would have been flooded and destroyed.[6]

EMPOWER (*Persatuan Kesedaran Komuniti Selangor*) was formed in the aftermath of the 2005 tsunami with affected people in Kota Kuala Muda, northern Malaysia. Maria Chin Adbullah recalls:

> **❝**We saw particularly how the women were discriminated against when it came to compensation that the government was giving to the victims. As far as women's needs and their economic survival were concerned, that was like a non-equation for compensation. So, we brought out the issue in workshops, with the youth, and with the community.**❞**

This observation inspired her and Yok Lin, Mary Sinnapan, and Maria's late husband Yunus to establish the organization Pusat Janadaya to formalize their work. Later, they converted it to a "society" (NGO). Maria and Thency Gunasekaran, who was first a volunteer supporting the relief effort and then a staff member, later noted the lack of political representation among the community leadership, so they organized a political participation program:

> **❝**Our experience showed that these women can be very vocal, but they are not even appointed as leaders in their communities. That I guess made some of us feel that we needed to really focus on women's political participation. We actually didn't have any training on how to run the women's political participation programme so we developed our own module, touching on CEDAW and the whole rights framework and linking it to women, depending on which communities we were working with.**❞**[7]

In Myanmar, women's groups generally and women indigenous leaders and ethnic groups working for change are multiplying as the political landscape of the country shifts.[8] Although the 2008 constitution includes some general statement about equality, for example equal pay for equal work, it offers no protection for women. Moreover, it fundamentally excludes women from top leadership of the country since presidential candidates are required to have "military vision," and women are absent from the armed forces' senior leadership.[9] At the local level, however, women

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4. Jackson, Philip. 2017. "Indonesia: First Woman to Lead World's Largest Indigenous People's Alliance." (22 March). https://aippnet.org/indonesia-first-woman-to-lead-worlds-largest-indigenous-peoples-alliance/.

5. For more information, see http://www.mampu.or.id/en/partner/koalisi-perempuan-indonesia.

6. Mirante, Edith. 2016. "A Tale of Two Mega-Dams: Burma and Borneo." (3 May). https://www.irrawaddy.com/news/burma/a-tale-of-two-mega-dams-burma-and-borneo.html. For more information about the situation and SAVE Rivers Network, go to http://www.sarawakreport.org/campaign/joas-press-statement-ip-leaders-commend-the-steadfast-actions-of-save-rivers-resulting-in-the-scrapping-of-the-baram-dam/.

7. EMPOWER. https://empowermalaysia.org/herstory/

8. Just Associates. 2014. *Indigenous Women Workshop: An Analysis Report on the State of Indigenous Women in Southeast Asia*. https://justassociates.org/en/resources/indigenous-women-workshop-analysis-report-state-indigenous-women-southeast-asia.

9. Moe, Wai. 2015. "Burma's Women Are Still Fighting for Their Rights: The country's most famous politician may be a woman, but Burma remains firmly in the grip of patriarchy." (July 2). *Foreign Policy*. http://foreignpolicy.com/2015/07/02/burmas-women-are-still-fighting-for-their-rights-myanmar/

activists like Khin Lay champion women's rights. In 2012, she and four other women co-founded the Triangle Women's Support Group that addresses reproductive health services, parenting and child psychology, human trafficking, human rights, and sexual and gender-based violence, including raising awareness on international and existing laws. Triangle also offers vocational training to young women, including training on digital literacy, English, leadership, and organizational management.[10]

May Sabe Phyu is a long-time activist for peace and gender equality in Myanmar and an advocate for people forced to flee their homes due to conflict. She and her family have faced criminal charges and harassment for her advocacy. She directs the Gender Equality Network, a coalition of more than 130 organizations, which has advocated for an end to discrimination against women and ethnic and religious minorities since 2011.[11]

From the ethnic Mon community of southeast Myanmar, Mi Kun Chan Non has advocated for women's participation in peace processes for over a decade. She directs the Women Empowerment and Community Development Programme in the Mon Women's Organization (MWO), which provides information and leadership training to marginalized Mon women in villages and on the Thai-Burma border.

A woman indigenous leader, Naw Ei Ei Min, founded and directs POINT (Promotion of Indigenous and Nature Together), established in March 2012 to organize indigenous people by indigenous leaders in Myanmar. Before then, only religious organizations provided humanitarian and development assistance for the country's indigenous people, and then in very limited ways. POINT was formed to promote the rights of indigenous peoples and increase their awareness of the ecological environment. This was particularly crucial when, in 2010, the new government announced its development plan. Predictably, the plan required removing indigenous people from their land to establish extractivist industries to mine coal and gold, create special economic zones, engage in monoculture production, and build infrastructure to support the projects such as sea ports and highways. POINT, together with indigenous communities, is working rapidly to educate indigenous communities and leaders about United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), Free and Prior Informed Consent (FPIC) and other rights-based approaches to development and to advocate for sustainable development and natural-resource management created to protect indigenous people and their land and rights.[12]

In Malaysia, Muslim women—academics, activists, journalists, and lawyers among them—committed to ensuring Muslim women's rights "began their search for solutions to the problem of discrimination against Muslim women in the name of Islam." Their initial quest led to the formation of Sisters in Islam (SIS), now active in Malaysia and beyond:

> **"**From just one letter written by eight women who made the effort to study their religion for themselves, SIS is now one of the main advocates of justice and equality in Islam not only in Malaysia but throughout the world. For Muslims and citizens affected by unjust Muslim laws and the rise of conservatism and extremism in their societies, SIS has successfully created a public voice and a public space that enable Muslims to engage with their faith in the struggle for justice, human rights, and democracy in the twenty-first century.**"**[13]

Growing the Movement: Inspiring New Generations

Movements cannot be sustained without intergenerational knowledge-sharing and the emergence of new generations of leadership. Supporting and training young leaders is essential for a vibrant movement and for ensuring that older generations pass on history and skills while staying tuned to changing realities around them through the eyes and ears of the youth. Such cross-generational synergy relies on older generations' willingness to share what they have learned over their years as activists and human rights defenders, and to accept new leadership from younger activists. Nani Zulminarni, Indonesian Muslim

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10.   Eisenhower Fellowship. n.d. "Khin Lay." https://www.efworld.org/our-programs/international/khin-lay.

11.   May Sabe Phyu. **https://consortium.gws.wisc.edu/conference/speakers/may-sabe-phyu/**

12.   POINT. https://www.pointmyanmar.org/.

13.   Sisters in Islam. "The SIS Story." http://www.sistersinislam.org.my/page.php?35.

feminist activist and founder of PEKKA, the Women-Headed Households Empowerment Program, and JASS SEA, says:

> **"** We knew that in Southeast Asia, strengthening young women activists' leadership and organizing capacity required a dual strategy. On one side, it was necessary to develop individual capacity and confidence, and, on the other, to build collective strength and organization. We would identify and engage with young women already active in community organizing, whether in women's rights or within other social justice groups. We believed that by investing in individual young activist leaders, they could play a larger role within their organizations and widen the scope and understanding of their work. Our ultimate aim was to bring a feminist perspective to the organizing and strategizing that these young women were already doing. **"**

Throughout the region there are rich traditions of women's activism and women's movements born of anti-colonial, revolutionary, and liberation struggles over many decades. They are documented in cases of early and contemporary women's movements in the Philippines, Indonesia, Timor-Leste, Malaysia, and Vietnam. One much cited example is the *Gerakan Wanita Indonesia* (Indonesian Women's Movement). GERWANI, was established in 1950 as part of nationalist struggles and, during the 1960s, reportedly had over a million members. During the 1965 right-wing army revolt against President Sukarno, many GERWANI members were imprisoned, raped, and killed as part of the purge of communists and "communist sympathizers."[14] GERWANI was eventually banned but the courage of its members has inspired subsequent women's activism.

Forum Aktivis Perempuan Muda, the Young Indonesian Women Activists' Forum (FAMM), is one of the emerging young women activist networks. Catalyzed and supported by JASS SEA's movement building program, FAMM focuses on capacity building. A diverse network of around 350 members—young, LGBTI, Muslim, farm-worker, factory-worker, and indigenous activists—FAMM builds and sustains grassroots women's movement leadership and fosters cross-movement solidarity. Over 80 percent of FAMM members are under 30 years of age, and the organization is active in 30 provinces across the country. FAMM's vision is to "build critical awareness and young feminist leadership to create a gender equitable, strong, and independent movement" by strengthening capacity in organizing and in documenting women's experiences as collective knowledge. FAMM is designed as a safe space for reflection and urgent action.[15]

Other young women-led organizations are working to develop leadership as they engage in local struggles. One is the Cambodian Young Women's Empowerment Network (CYWEN), established in 2010, following JASS Southeast Asia's first national-level workshop in Phnom Penh in November 2009. Their vision is to "to strengthen young women's voice and political participation in Cambodia through leadership training and awareness-building activities and action." CYWEN targets high school and university students in Phnom Penh and the provinces by holding roundtable discussions on key issues for Cambodian women, including rape, migration, access to education, and maternal mortality. Beginning with open discussions to build women's confidence and information, CYWEN members support students to engage in joint action to educate others about these issues (e.g. through school campaigns), and to use social media tools like Facebook for greater reach.[16]

Two from Myanmar are Nat Pha Yar Ma and Colorful Girls. Nat Pha Yar Ma, founded in 2015, focuses on "developing a society of young women in Myanmar who are actively engaged in community peace building and civic leadership…to build intentional and positive community between women of different faiths and ethnicities." This goal stems from their belief that "women play an important role in disrupting the transmission of ethno and religious nationalism to younger generations." The group also raises awareness and shares training invitations, resources, and news in their online

14. International People's Tribunal on Crimes against Humanity in Indonesia. 2015. "The Truth about GERWANI: The Gender Aspect of the Suharto Regime." http://www.tribunal1965.org/en/the-truth-about-gerwani-the-gender-aspect-of-the-suharto-regime/

15. https://justassociates.org/en/resources/solidarity-safety-and-power-young-women-organizing-indonesia

16. https://justassociates.org/en/blog/cywen-raising-profile-young-women-cambodia.

community.[17] Colorful Girls[18] is a grassroots organization that supports adolescent girls and young women to gain confidence and leadership skills to help prevent violence and trafficking and to advocate for their rights.

The *Movementu Feto Foin Sae-Timor-Leste* (MOFE-TL) or Young Women's Movement-Timor-Leste emerged out of JASS SEA trainings in the country. Yasinta Lujina, former director of Rede Feto Timor-Leste who initiated the founding of MOFE-TL, commented, "*The young feminists in the rural areas – they are the potential for our movement.*" Like FAMM-Indonesia and CYWEN, MOFE-TL is actively engaged in campaigns on violence against women and regularly holds dialogues and workshops aimed at equipping young women with knowledge of women's rights.

And in the Philippines, Young Women Initiatives (YouWin) helps young women to "create their own collective voice, participate in local and community politics, achieve leadership positions at all levels accessible, and contribute to the broader women's movement for genuine economic and political justice and gender fair communities." Their vision of society is one "where women are valued as an important part of humanity; where every young woman enjoys equal rights, participates, and has a voice in production and reproduction; and where women, young women, and girls are free from exploitation and all forms of violence and oppression."[19] And GABRIELA Youth[20] a national organization of women students is the youth arm and part of GABRIELA, a national alliance of women's organizations in the Philippines. GABRIELA Youth launches campaigns and other activities to galvanize support for the democratic rights of women in and outside the campus.

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Summary

Individual, organizational, and movement stories demonstrate how generations of women are deeply engaged in movements for social change, some stretching back to earlier struggles for independence. Although most women leading and engaging in these daily struggles are not known outside their own locations, they play key roles in holding families and communities together in the direst of circumstances.

- Women activists are at the forefront of the defense of communities, water, and land.
- Women activists draw on important aspects of identity, culture, tradition, and religion as foundations for organizing, while simultaneously challenging conservative and repressive influences and interpretations.
- Both older and younger activists recognize the critical importance of intergenerational organizing and movement-building for learning and long-term sustainability of movement work.

The courage, tenacity, and creativity of women activists and human rights defenders can be more fully understood and appreciated in light of the catastrophic problems affecting human and natural life and communities, formidable power relations, and deepening inequalities in the region.

17. https://youngfeministfund.org/grantees/nat-pha-yar-ma-goddess-institute/.
18. https://afsee.atlanticfellows.org/blog/2018/how-girls-are-finding-their-voices-in-myanmar
19. FRIDA. "Young Women Initiatives." https://youngfeministfund.org/grantees/young-women-initiatives-youwin/.
20. http://gabrielayouthphilippines.blogspot.com/

II. REGIONAL POWER RELATIONS

To appreciate fully the extreme challenges that women activists face, it is necessary to understand the power dynamics and relations currently operating in the region, with their roots in European, US, and Japanese imperialism and colonization, religious beliefs, and nationalist ideologies, together with existing economic systems rooted in the past.

Imperialism and Colonization

The 19th and 20th century imperialism and colonialism set in motion today's conditions in some fundamental ways, before the establishment of nation-states in the region as we know them.

> Imperialism in Southeast Asia has involved the economic, military, and political domination of the region initially by European nations and later by the United States and Japan.

In modern history, imperialism refers to the economic, military, and political domination of a region, originally by European nations starting in the 15th century. Colonization is the process through which they settled their citizens in place—military and government personnel first—to impose governance structures and laws to subjugate indigenous people and secure the colonizing nation's interests. Imperialism in Southeast Asia has involved the economic, military, and political domination of the region, initially by European nations and later by the United States and Japan. Although none of the earlier imperialist countries created settler colonies in the region, like they did in Australia, New Zealand, and the US for example, the influence of imperialism was imprinted on and continues to influence:

- systems of governance and politics;
- social relations including the reinforcement and manipulation of historical tensions and separations between ethnic and religious groups; and
- local and indigenous cultures, for example suppressing pre-colonial acceptance of a broader range of gender roles and identities.[21]

Throughout the 1600s and 1700s, the Dutch, French, and British claimed Indonesia, Indochina (now Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos), and Burma respectively. European colonization intensified during the 19th and early 20th centuries, when Europeans were systematically transferred to the region for administration and settlement, confiscating land to extract natural resources, and exploiting the labor of local people. After the Spanish were forced out through local resistance and the Spanish–American war, the United States "acquired" the Philippines in 1898. In "Indochina", the French maintained power until the mid-20th century with US support, a key factor leading to the US war in Vietnam.[22] Siam, now Thailand, was able to maintain its relative independence because, among other reasons, it played the role of the "buffer state" between Britain and France. That is, Siam enabled the two European states to maintain a balance of power to avoid direct confrontation in the region.[23]

The colonial history of Southeast Asia also includes colonization by an imperial neighbor. From the early 1940s until 1945, Japan invaded and occupied most of the former European colonies and the Commonwealth of the Philippines, which was under US rule. During this time, "the whole economy of Southeast Asia was subordinated to the principal aim of the imperialist state, which was to win the war at all costs."[24] Soldiers of the Imperial Army implemented systems of forced labor, such as that involving an estimated four to ten million *rōmusha* in Java.[25] Forced labor also included the sexual slavery of local women—the Japanese word "*ianfu*" translates as "comfort women"—in Myanmar,

21. For more details see, for example, Reid, Anthony. 2015. *A History of Southeast Asia: Critical Crossroads.* Chichester, UK: John Wiley and Sons.

22. Baten, Jörg. 2016. *A History of the Global Economy: From 1500 to the Present.* Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, p. 286.

23. For more information see, for example, Conserva, Henry T. 2001. *Earth Tales: New Perspectives on Geography and History.* First Book Library.

24. Melber, Takuma. 2016. The Labour Recruitment of Local Inhabitants as Rōmusha in Japanese-Occupied South East Asia. *IRSH* 61, Special Issue, p. 167.

25. "Rōmusha." https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/R%C5%8Dmusha.

Vietnam, East Timor, Indonesia, Malaysia, and the Philippines. Ianfu included an estimated two to four hundred Dutch women in Indonesia and tens of thousands more Korean and Chinese women.[26]

Japan was an imperial power in the region during the first half of 20th century and remains a powerful economic presence now. Prime Minister Shinzo Abe is seeking to change Japan's pacifist constitution by 2020 to allow Japan to re-build a standing military in light of reported Chinese and North Korean military activities in its region, even though the existing constitution has provisions for national self-defense.[27] His re-election, timed to capitalize on Japanese people's fear of North Korea, resulted in a landslide victory in October 2017, emboldening him to press ahead.[28]

European, US, and Japanese colonizers and their militaries killed, raped, and sexually assaulted Southeast Asians with impunity; exploited labor; extracted valuable natural resources; and grabbed land. European colonial regimes also reshaped gender relations in the region, especially at the village level, where they "strengthened the male position as head of the household and 'reformed' customary laws that had given women considerable autonomy."[29] Both the scale of violence and alteration of social relations in Southeast Asia are consistent with the processes of imperialism and impacts of colonial systems and institutions that many nations have experienced.

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Ethnic Chinese people have also been an important presence in the region. Most came to Southeast Asia in the mid-19th century, primarily as a result of famine, floods, and armed conflicts in China. The British transported Chinese laborers to Southeast Asia and to various other parts of the world that were under British control. The British and later French (in Indochina) conferred an honorary status on Chinese people, treating them as a "buffer" group between colonial administrators and local people. This allowed them to open small businesses, including money-lending, which enabled them to become an entrepreneur class and wield considerable power despite their relatively small numbers in the region.[30]

Three additional catastrophic events have had serious long-term consequences in the region:

1. World War II and the events leading up to and following it.
2. The Cold War, beginning in 1945, the political and economic division between the state-socialist Soviet Union and the capitalist US in competition for military and economic control of the world.
3. Other wars, including French and US wars and related internal armed struggles in Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos, which lasted more than 20 years and led to massive destruction of life and land and deep divisions within those countries.

Although a full discussion is beyond the scope of this report, these three historical episodes must be considered in order to understand the current geopolitics of Southeast Asia, including the emergence of China as the challenger to US political and economic dominance.

Globalization of Neoliberal Capitalism

Globalization has been described as the flows across vast geographical regions of people, consumer products, natural resources, and ideas (among others), facilitated by networks of economic, political, and social relations and the exercise of power.[31] There is no consensus on a more specific definition of the term. Politicians, transnational corporate investors, human rights defenders, and scholars offer overlapping and contradictory definitions, but all agree that globalization is multidimensional and influences many aspects of most societies in the world. As the modern-day

26. The legacies and lasting impacts of the sexual slavery system are not completely measurable but are still felt in many parts of Asia including Korea and China. "Documents detail how Imperial military forced Dutch females to be 'comfort women'" *Japan Times.* 7 October 2013. https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2013/10/07/national/documents-detail-how-imperial-military-forced-dutch-females-to-be-comfort-women/#.Wdr4m4Zrzb4.

27. Rich, Motoko. 2017. "Shinzo Abe Announces Plan to Revise Japan's Pacifist Constitution." *New York Times*, 3 May 2017. https://www.nytimes.com/2017/05/03/world/asia/japan-constitution-shinzo-abe-military.html.

28. *The Guardian. 2017.* "Shinzo Abe secures strong mandate in Japan's general election." *The Guardian, 22 October 2017.* https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/oct/22/shinzo-abe-secures-strong-mandate-in-japans-general-election.

29. Center for Global Education Asia Society. 2017. "Women in Southeast Asia." http://asiasociety.org/education/women-southeast-asia.

30. Chua, Amy. 2003. *World on Fire: How Exporting Free Market Democracy Breeds Ethnic Hatred and Global Instability.* Doubleday.

31. Held, David. 1999. Held, David. 1999. *Global Transformations: Politics, Economics and Culture.* Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, p. 16.

extension of colonialism and imperialism, globalization in its various forms—economic, political, and cultural—has been imposed on all regions and countries of the world in some way. "Globalization in this regard is the successor (to imperialism)" through which "the age-long [purposefully created] dependence of the South on the North has been reinvigorated."[32] This dependence is evident in the globalization of neoliberal capitalism.

Feminist analyses of the globalization of neoliberal capitalism have exposed how its processes and impacts are deeply gendered and intersect with the complexities of power relationships among countries. Southeast Asian women are concentrated in low-skilled, low-wage, and irregular positions, typically in the light-manufacturing and service sectors. Women workers earn less than men working in the same sector and often face discrimination and gender violence in workplaces. A continuation of "women's work" in the home, paid domestic work outside their homes and countries is performed by migrant and immigrant women, who make up a large proportion of the 'serving classes' in global cities.[33] This is particularly the case for Filipino women worldwide and for Indonesian women in Middle Eastern countries, such as Jordan and the United Arab Emirates, who are employed in the homes of well-off families.
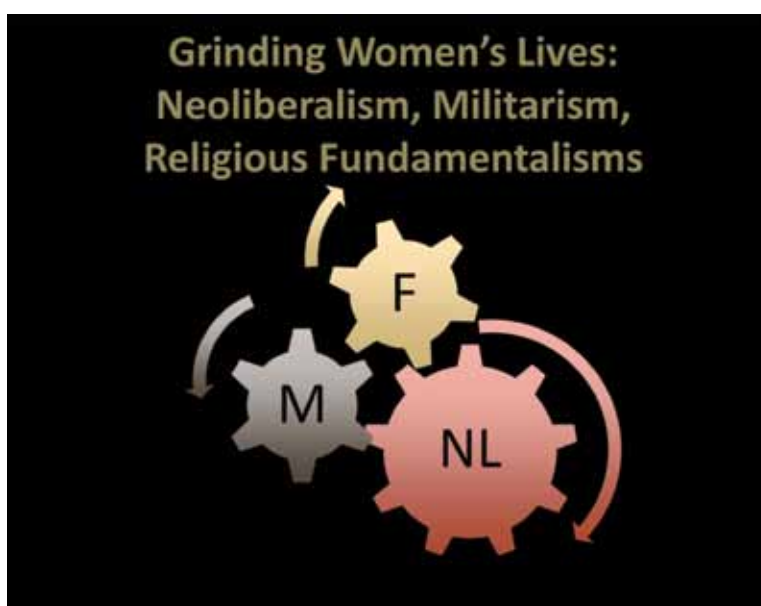
The cornerstone of neoliberalism is "free trade;" that is, importing and exporting of goods and services without governmental intervention. This involves the deregulation of industries and environmental controls, privatization of natural resources and public services such as education, and reductions in government spending, usually money directed toward addressing people's needs, such as health care and societal infrastructure. The underlying purpose of organizing the global economy in these ways is to expand the role, influence, and profitability of the private sector.

Advocates claim that "a largely unregulated capitalist economy embodies the ideal of free individual choice and maximizes economic efficiency and growth, technological progress, and distributive justice."[34] However, in practice this system has reinforced and deepened the inequalities between Southeast Asian countries and countries of the Global North. In doing so, it has reinforced existing divisions and systems of inequality—and created new ones—across the region and within countries. Powerful elites in each location benefit, while poor, rural, and indigenous people and communities, especially women with dependent children, pay the heavy cost of "free" trade with natural resources and their bodies. As families, communities, and the nation as a whole are pushed deeper into

32. Osunyikanmi, Adebukola F. 2011. "Globalisation and the Deepening of Gender Imbalance in Nigeria." *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, 1, no. 20 (December): 306-310.

33. Sassen, Saskia. 2010. "Women's Burden: Counter-Geographies of Globalization and the Feminization of Survival." *Journal of International Affairs*, 53, no. 2 (Spring) p. 510.

34. "Feminist Perspectives on Globalization," *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. Retrieved from https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/feminism-globalization/

poverty, their survival increasingly depends on women's earnings and remittances, wherever they may be produced, leading to what Saskia Sassen calls the "feminization of survival."[35]

Religious Fundamentalist Movements

Although all major religions in Southeast Asia today initially arrived from other places—Islam spread to Indonesia, Malaysia, Southern Thailand, and Southern Philippines; Buddhism to Cambodia, Myanmar, and Thailand; and Catholicism to the Philippines—they have played important roles in shaping local and national politics and power relations, along with cultures, in the region. Over time, all three religions have been utilized to support the privilege of men and subordination of women, while those wielding power have conflated religion with ethnic and national identities for political gain. In this era of neoliberal capitalism and of marginalized people's quest for full recognition, rights, and freedom, religious fundamentalisms and religious political parties have emerged as key power players.

Religious fundamentalists in Southeast Asia (and other places where they have become a formidable political force) should be regarded as "political movements of the extreme right, which, in a context of globalization—the forceful international economic exploitation and free-for-all capitalism—manipulate religion, culture, or ethnicity, in order to achieve their political aims."[36] Women Living under Muslim Laws, a worldwide feminist network, adds gender to that list, stating that religious fundamentalism "consists of an ideology that does not give attention to principles of human rights, is often anti-woman, and is dogmatic about the acceptance of 'the Other'."[37] In some places, however, where neoliberal states have stopped providing social and economic support to poor and marginalized communities, fundamentalists have taken on this role as patriarchal caretakers gaining popular political support in the process.

Since no country discussed in this report is officially a religious state, the most important consideration is not whether a nation is "secular" or "religious" but rather the visible emergence of fundamentalists as politically organized bodies and their role in expanding conservatism and reactionary politics. Their presence and influence can be seen in the following ways:

> The most important consideration is not whether a nation is "secular" or "religious" but rather the visible emergence of fundamentalists as politically organized bodies and their role in expanding conservatism and reactionary politics.

- Increase in the public role that fundamentalist religion plays, both in politics and in civic life, as a force to roll back previous gains, especially those made by women and LGBTI people to participate in public life.

- The use of religion to embrace nationalistic politics and as an active force in building the "authentic nation" through the reinterpretation of traditional folk myths, representations of national heroic figures, and reinforcement of state structures and institutions. In this instance, for example, women face restrictions on contraception and family planning for "the good of the nation."

- Encouragement of marginal civil society actors, such as poor and working-class men, to welcome the influence of religious groups as a vehicle to pursue their own interests and to gain state and social recognition.[38]

Fundamentalist religious leaders and believers insist that their treatment of women and LGBTI people is based on "true" readings and teachings of holy texts and that such treatment is essential to preserving the traditional patriarchal family and culture as the foundation of the nation. They deploy religion not only to critique modern developments, such as capitalism, globalization, the rights of women and LGBTI people, feminism, and so on, as "Western" and inherently evil, but also to reach people, especially those feeling alienated from and "disrespected" by such developments.

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35. Sassen, op cit., p. 503.

36. Hélie-Lucas, Marieme. 2004. Quoted in Cowden, Stephen and Gita Sahgal. "Why Fundamentalism?" *Feminist Dissent*, 2 (2017): 7-38.

37. Women Living Under Muslim Laws quoted in Derichs, Claudia, and Andrea Fleschenberg (eds.). 2010. *Religious Fundamentalisms and Their Gendered Impacts in Asia.* Berlin: Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, p. 8.

38. Chong, Terence. 2010. "Religion in Southeast Asian Politics: Resistance, Negotiation and Transcendence." *Sojourn: Journal of Social Issues in Southeast Asia*, 25 (1): vii-viii.

Across religions, feminists argue, patriarchal interpretations of religious texts keep women in the home and the private sphere and out of public life, thus excluding them from exercising their rights and responsibilities as full participants in the community and society.

From a feminist perspective, fundamentalist claims are an attempt to justify the subjugation of women, based on a combination of patriarchal values and practices embedded in religion and long-standing misogynist cultural practices that predate the establishment of organized religions. In some cases, the combination of religion and European influences has changed traditional cultural practices such as the pre-colonial recognition of five genders in parts of Indonesia. Across religions, feminists argue, patriarchal interpretations of religious texts keep women in the home and the private sphere and out of public life, thus excluding them from exercising their rights and responsibilities as full participants in the community and society.

In all cases, Buddhist, Christian, and Islamic fundamentalist religious leaders, political parties, and movements are exerting a strong influence on Southeast Asian governments. These entities are shaping social policies and laws, including the creation of "victimless" crimes related to dress code, sexuality, and presence in public spaces beyond designated hours. Their influence extends to those using extreme violence to instill fear and shrink democratic spaces. Among the most impacted are women and LGBTI people.

Some fundamentalist groups mobilize nationalism, "tradition," and a critique of neo-liberalism (understood as US and EU interventions) to advance their own agendas. They generally include a critique of women's rights and LGBTI and human rights as further forms of Western influence and interference. Paradoxically, these fundamentalist groups are also often resourced and ideologically informed by globalized movements of other fundamentalisms.

Summary

The existing power relations in the region are marked by three entwined factors: 1) centuries-old history of colonialism and imperialism, first by the European countries and subsequently the US and Japan, and the Cold War between the US and Soviet Union for world domination, that installed key global and nation-state actors as power players; 2) globalization of neoliberal capitalism, the new form of the old-style colonialism and imperialism, through which foreign entities dominate regions for their own benefit; and 3) religious fundamentalist movements, often presenting themselves as protectors of nation, tradition, and "God-given" social and moral imperatives, which have gained power with governments and with people drawn to their rhetoric of stability and service.

These dynamics separately and together have:

- shaped the political geography of the region by creating new nation-states and "Southeast Asia" as a distinct region of the world;
- reinforced old tensions and created new ones among various ethnic and religious groups;
- created structures and mechanisms for the intense exploitation of entire swaths of territory and people; and
- actively and systematically undermined the basic principles of self-determination and human rights, with most severe impact on women and other marginalized people.

These interrelated forces are among the root causes of the ecological and economic devastation in the region. They also underscore the perniciousness of the challenges that frontline activists and human rights defenders are currently facing.

III. GOVERNANCE, STATES, AND POLITICAL REPRESSION

In a globalized world order, control of the nation-state has shifted beyond formal government structures and institutions and beyond national borders to corporate boardrooms and elites often located thousands of miles away. Corporate, government, and military actors form the nexus of power. This section discusses the roles of formal and informal governing bodies in the region and asks:

- Who's in charge and in what ways?
- Where are they headed?

Who is in Charge?

Two types of governments rule the countries in this report. Cambodia, Malaysia, and Thailand are constitutional monarchies of varying kinds, where the head of the royal family is the head of the nation and works with the head of state, usually a prime minister or president. They govern together according to a set of laws, such as a constitution or its equivalent. Indonesia, Myanmar, and the Philippines function as republics with governing functions separated by various branches of government.

Irrespective of the form of governance, neoliberal imperatives have compelled the state to abandon its expected duties to protect its sovereignty, territory, and people and to yield considerable power and authority to corporations. In many cases, the interests of senior government officials, royal families, and other national elites overlap with the interests of corporate entities. The concept of "corporate capture" aptly describes "the means by which an economic elite undermines the realization of human rights and the environment by exerting undue influence over domestic and international decision makers and public institutions."[39] Key actors in government and civil society participate in corrupt practices. In some cases, they occupy both government and corporate arenas simultaneously; in others, corporations move employees from the corporate sector to public regulatory offices and other agencies. Government officials are connected to corporations, while corporate and business leaders hold positions in governments, and the two move back and forth in a "revolving door" fashion. By doing so, corporations are able to exert great influence on democratic processes, shape laws and elections, and undercut human rights and labor and environmental regulations, to maintain political dominance and maximize their economic gain. With the necessary support and facilitation by national governments, transnational corporations (TNCs) have amassed so much unimaginable wealth that, as of 2015, "69 of the world's top economic entities are corporations rather than countries" and the combined revenue of the world's top 10 corporations—among them Walmart (US), Royal Dutch Shell (Netherlands), Sinopec (China), and Toyota Motor (Japan) – is greater than the combined economies of the over 180 "poorest" countries combined.[40]

As a result of corporate capture, corporations exert great influence on government to the detriment of ordinary people, especially women, small farmers, and indigenous people.

Where are They Headed?

Worldwide, many governments and political parties are moving to the right. Patriarchal, autocratic, and despotic heads of state make increasing use of state mechanisms and state power to crush dissent and movements for people's dignity, equality, and human rights. This is the case in all the countries under discussion here. This repression—reinforced by conservative and fundamentalist religious

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39. Anumo, Felogene. 2017. "Young Feminists: The Future Belongs to Us." OpenDemocracy 24 October 2017. https://www.opendemocracy.net/5050/felogene-anumo/young-feminists-corporate-impunity-treaty.

40. Global Justice Now. 2016. "10 biggest corporations make more money than most countries in the world combined." 12 September 2016. http://www.globaljustice.org.uk/news/2016/sep/12/10-biggest-corporations-make-more-money-most-countries-world-combined.

movements—generates fear among the general population and closes down democratic spaces. In fact, "closing space for civil society" is now a widely recognized global and gendered phenomenon.[41]

Cambodia

The recent general crackdown on fundamental freedoms has led LICADHO, a Cambodian human rights group, to conclude that "democracy and human rights in Cambodia are edg[ing] closer to the precipice."[42] In addition to the assassination in the middle of Phnom Penh in July 2016 of the prominent political commentator and founder of the grassroots group Khmer for Khmer, Kem Ley, dozens of other activist leaders have been harassed, killed, arbitrarily arrested, detained, and tried on bogus charges. A notable development is the systematic attack of opposition activists and human rights workers through the judicial system. For example, in 2016, the government's Anti-Corruption Unit (ACU) arrested five activists on "bribery" charges. In another prominent case, land rights activist Tep Vanny was arrested in August 2016 during a peaceful demonstration and later found guilty based on accusations of "insult" under Article 502 of the Cambodia Criminal Code. There are numerous other examples.

> The government has curtailed freedom of expression in various ways, which has contributed to people self-censoring and has blocked organizations and groups from operating freely.

A trend associated with indirect repression in Cambodia is self-censorship, a sign of heavy restrictions imposed on civil society. The first report of the Fundamental Freedoms Monitoring Project published in August 2017 states that the government has curtailed freedom of expression in various ways, which has contributed to people self-censoring and has blocked organizations and groups from operating freely. According to the report, "ordinary protesters and activists have been silenced by being ordered not to wear certain colors, not to use loudspeakers and to remove banners on private property," and 82% of civil society organizations and trade unions surveyed reported self-censoring.[43]

Another important trend is the legislative strategy used by the government, creating many new laws that make it illegal to dissent, protest, or defend human rights in the country. Three in particular are the Law on Associations and Non-Governmental Organizations (LANGO) that threatens the heads of civil society organizations; the Law on Telecommunications, which disrupts and criminalizes general uses of the internet and other online formats; and the Law on Unions of Enterprise (TUL) that restricts workers and labor unions.

Indonesia

The Indonesian government is currently led by President Joko "Jokowi" Widodo. Raised in a slum, he is the first Indonesian head of state to be elected from outside the traditional political and military elite. His electoral platform, based on the concept of "unity in diversity," and his stated commitment to human rights were especially popular among younger Indonesians, and contributed to his election. Once in office, however, he has not followed through. According to Human Rights Watch, his promises have "yet to translate into meaningful policy initiatives to address the country's serious rights problems"[44] and he has not countered discriminatory speeches made by senior government and military officials or policies aimed at minority religious groups and LGBTI people and communities.

As a result, religious minorities face persecution by both the state and local mobs. For example, in 2016, security forces attacked dissenters in Papua and West Papua. Government officials and security forces stood by as more than 7,000 members of the Gerakan Fajar Nusantara religious community, known as Gafatar, were violently evicted from their homes in East and West Kalimantan and moved to detention centers. Similarly, Buddhists have been attacked and their temples destroyed by mobs in northern Sumatra, with no intervention by officials.

41.   Bishop, Kate. 2017. *Standing Firm: Women- and Trans-Led Organisations Respond to Closing Space for Civil Society.* Amsterdam: Mama Cash and Oakland, CA: Urgent Action Fund. https://urgentactionfund.org/wp-content/uploads/downloads/2017/07/MC_Closing_Space_Report_DEF-1.pdf.

42.   LICHADO, *Human Rights 2016 The Year in Review*, p. 2.

43.   Fundamental Freedoms Project, First Annual Report, March 2016-April 2017.Retrieved from http://cchrcambodia.org/admin/media/report/report/english/2017-08-10-CCHR-FFMP-Annual-Report-Eng.pdf

44.   Human Rights Watch. 2017. "Indonesia Events of 2016." *World Report 2017*. https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2017/country-chapters/indonesia.

45   Allard, Tom and Stefanno Reinard. 2017. "New police taskforce to target Indonesian gays." *Reuters* 24 May 2017. https://www.reuters.com/article/us-indonesia-lgbt-police/new-police-taskforce-to-target-indonesian-gays-idUSKBN18K10A.

Although homosexuality is legal everywhere in Indonesia except Aceh, LGBTI individuals and the LGBTI community are being humiliated and harassed through mechanisms such as forced testing for HIV and calls for criminalization. In May 2017, West Java police chief announced a plan to "deploy a taskforce to investigate lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) activity, a move likely to fuel concerns of a widening crackdown on the community,"[45] and part of increasing police violence against LGBTI people. The officials' positions reinforced the negative representation of LGBTI people promoted by Islamic extremists in local and social media. According to Human Rights Watch, "State institutions, including the National Broadcasting Commission and the National Child Protection Commission, issued censorship directives banning information and broadcasts that portrayed the lives of LGBT people as 'normal' as well as so-called propaganda about LGBT lives."[46] Between October 2015 and October 2017, more than 530 women and men in Aceh province were publicly flogged under a new Islamic criminal and same-sex relations.[47]

> LGBTI individuals and the LGBTI community are being humiliated and harassed through mechanisms such as forced testing for HIV and calls for criminalization

The Islamists' influence on the country has resulted in severe consequences for women. For example, the Commission on Violence against Women reported an increase in the number of local and national regulations aimed at reversing progress made by the women's movements. Minister of Home Affairs Tjahjo Kumolo reneged on his promise to rid the country of local and regional Shari'a laws that violate women's rights, stating, "We do not interfere with regulations based on Islamic Shari'a."[48] A local bylaw in Sumedang, West Java, prohibits anyone—though clearly targeting women— "with an eye-catching appearance" from going out alone at night, justified on the premise that the prohibition would curtail sexual activity.[49]

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Other groups face human rights violations in Indonesia as well. Repeated allegations of torture and other abuse of detainees by security forces, particularly of peaceful political activists in areas with a history of independence movements such as Papua and Maluku, are reported but rarely investigated. In Papua, Indonesian police detained more than 1,500 supporters of Papuan independence for "lacking a permit to hold a rally" on May 2, 2016. Police released the detainees after several hours without charge, but their detention underlines the official lack of tolerance for peaceful expression of political aspirations. At the end of August 2016, 37 Papuan activists remained imprisoned after being convicted of rebellion or treason ("makar"), many for nonviolent "crimes" such as public display of the pro-independence Morning Star flag.[50]

In 2016, the Indonesian National Commission on Human Rights (Komnas HAM), the government's human rights agency, released a series of reports which marked the first official process to examine the human rights impacts of land rights conflicts on indigenous peoples throughout Indonesia's forest areas. The state-led "Inquiry", which examined 40 reports of land conflicts across the country, included a year of public hearings, ethnographic studies, and discussions on the non-recognition of local communities' customary land rights.[51] According to testimony from AMAN (Indigenous Peoples' Alliance of the Archipelago): "Indigenous peoples are very easy to criminalize. They often do not have legal protections, or they don't know their rights. This is an unacceptable situation."[52]

Malaysia

Malaysia presents itself at the UN as a moderate Muslim country ready to stand up to the Islamic State (ISIS). However, the human rights situation in the country continues to deteriorate. Under

46. Ibid

47. Harsono, Andreas. 2017. "Public Floggings in Indonesia Top 500: Sharia Punishment, Including for Same-Sex Relations, Imposed in Aceh." *Human Rights Watch* 24 October 2017. https://www.hrw.org/news/2017/10/24/public-floggings-indonesia-top-500.

48. Kine, Phelim. 2016. "Dispatches: Indonesia's Blind Eye to Abusive Sharia Bylaws." (June 21). https://www.hrw.org/news/2016/06/21/dispatches-indonesias-blind-eye-abusive-sharia-bylaws

49. Human Rights Watch. *World Report Indonesia*, Op cit.

50. Human Rights Watch. 2017. "Indonesia Events of 2016". World Report 2017. **https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2017/country-chapters/indonesia**. Human Rights Watch 2017.

51. Rights + Resources (RRI). 2016. "Landmark Report Investigates Human Rights Abuses Suffered by Indigenous Communities Affected by Land Conflicts in Indonesia." **https://rightsandresources.org/en/blog/landmark-report-investigates-human-rights-abuses-suffered-indigenous-communities-affected-land-conflicts-indonesia/.**

52. Rights + Resources (RRI). 2015. "Mongabay: Indonesia's indigenous people still suffer human rights violations, says report". **https://rightsandresources.org/en/blog/mongabay-indonesias-indigenous-people-still-suffer-human rights-violations-says-report/.**

the leadership of former Prime Minister Najib Razak, activists, human rights defenders, journalists, and others opposing his leadership faced harassment and politically motivated violence. While Mr. Najib was ousted in the May 2018 elections, the new government of 92-year old Mahathir Mohamda has sent conflicting signals, allowing – and then later criticizing – the caning and fining of a lesbian couple for attempting to have sex in a car park[53]. Discrimination against and harassment of LGBTI people are pervasive in Malaysia, where the penal code and other laws based on Shari'a prohibit sexual acts between people of the same gender and "a man posing as a woman." Offenders face imprisonment and flogging.

> The Sedition Act, the Communications and Multimedia Act, the Official Secrets Act, and the National Security Act are used to silence, falsely accuse, criminalize, and imprison individuals under the banners of "decency" and "national security".

Discrimination and threats also affect women and girls. "Child marriage," often a euphemism for forced marriage, is allowed in Malaysia. Although the law sets the marriage age at 18, exceptions make it possible for girls to be married with permission from their state's chief minister or the Shari'a court. Men can escape criminal charges in rape cases if they marry their victim because marital rape is not a crime. This happened recently when a 40-year-old man raped a 12-year-old girl.[54]

The government uses its legislative powers and the criminal justice system to suppress political opposition. For example, the Sedition Act, the Communications and Multimedia Act, the Official Secrets Act, and the National Security Act are used to silence, falsely accuse, criminalize, and imprison individuals under the banners of "decency" and "national security."

Myanmar

In March 2016, the democratically elected civilian government of National League for Democracy party, led by Aung San Suu Kyi, State Counsellor, and President Htin Kyaw, took office in Myanmar after sweeping the national elections in November 2015. The transition to a democratic nation after more than 50 years of military dictatorship seemed promising, as demonstrated by the release of 200 political prisoners and detainees shortly afterwards. However, the government has failed to build on the momentum of its electoral victory.

Fighting between state armed forces and minority groups is reported as a common occurrence. In late 2017, international news media and human rights organizations began reporting genocidal attacks on the Rohingya Muslim people in Rakhine state, near the border of Myanmar and Bangladesh. Tatmadaw, the government military forces, aided by Buddhist paramilitaries, are mounting the attacks in the name of "clearance operations." Women, children, and men are reported being killed, raped, and otherwise brutalized, and villages burned to the ground. According to Oxfam, of the hundreds of thousands of refugees, 53 percent are women and girls, 58 percent minors, and 10 percent pregnant and lactating mothers, with all at extremely high risk of abuse, trafficking, and exploitation.[55] United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres has described the crisis as "the world's fastest developing refugee emergency and a humanitarian and human rights nightmare" and referred to "bone-chilling accounts from those who fled."[56]

Conditions in Myanmar since the new government took office show signs of the country's historical repression. According to Human Rights Watch:

> "Government forces have been responsible for serious abuses, including extrajudicial killings, torture, sexual violence, and destruction of property. Government shelling and airstrikes have been conducted against ethnic areas, in violation of the laws of war. Both government and non-state groups have

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53. Free Press Journal, "Malaysian PM Mahathir Mohamad denounces canning of 2 women for lesbian sex after criticism", http://www.freepressjournal.in/world/malaysian-pm-mahathir-mohamad-denounces-canning-of-2-women-for-lesbian-sex-after-criticism/1350602.

54. Human Rights Watch. 2017. "Malaysia Events of 2016." *World Report 2017*. https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2017/country-chapters/Malaysia.

55. Lubrano, Paolo. 2017. "Women and Girls: The Hardest Hit Rohingya Refugees," *Inter Press Service News Agency,* 3 October 2017. http://www.ipsnews.net/2017/10/women-girls-hardest-hit-rohingya-refugees/.

56. UN Secretary General. 2017. "Secretary-General's remarks at open debate of the Se Security Council on Myanmar [as delivered]." 28 September 2017. https://www.un.org/sg/en/content/sg/statement/2017-09-28/secretary-generals-remarks-open-debate-security-council-myanma

been implicated in the use of anti-personnel landmines and forced recruitment (into military service), including of children."[57]

Another disturbing aspect of these attacks is the near silence of Aung San Suu Kyi, a Nobel Peace Laureate and former dissident who suffered for decades under the old military regime. Perhaps this silence can be partially explained by the fact that, despite the formal transition to civilian government, the military effectively controls the country, with their power guaranteed in the constitution:

> "Under the deeply flawed 2008 constitution, the military retains autonomy from civilian oversight and extensive power over the government and national security, with control of the Defense, Home Affairs, and Border Affairs Ministries. It is guaranteed 25 per cent of parliamentary seats, which constitutes an effective veto over any constitutional amendments, and is authorized to assume power in a national state of emergency."[58]

> Despite the formal transition to civilian government, the military effectively controls the country, with their power guaranteed in the constitution.

Like the other countries described here, the state uses its legislative power and the criminal justice system to make false accusations and to imprison any who oppose the government. The accused include activists struggling for minority rights, labor union organizers, indigenous people struggling for self-determination and control of land and other natural resources, and women's rights activists.

For instance, women's rights leaders have received death threats and have been called "enemies of religion" by Buddhist fundamentalists for speaking out against the persecution of religious and ethnic minorities. In 2014, women's groups in Myanmar opposed the proposed Interfaith Marriage Law, which restricts Buddhist women from marrying people of other religions and in practice, ethnicities. Not only would the legislation limit women's freedoms, but the groups argued that it would further sanction ethnic discrimination against the Muslim minority who face increased violence and hate since the country's transition from military rule in 2011.[59] The Myanmar Parliament approved the said law[60] in 2015.

Philippines

President Rodrigo Duterte of the Philippines is perhaps the most vocal Southeast Asian head of state. He campaigned on an anti-imperialist, anti-US, pro-poor platform and threatened to "kill all of you who make the lives of Filipinos miserable." Duterte also promised to "solve drugs, criminality, and corruption in three to six months" with the assurance that his administration would "be sensitive to the state's obligations to promote, and protect, fulfill the human rights of our citizens … as the rule of law shall at all times prevail."[61] Contrary to his campaign promises, Duterte has publicly praised the extrajudicial killing of suspected "dealers" and "users." Philippine human rights organizations have connected the President's rhetoric to a dramatic increase in killings by police and unidentified gunmen. So far, only six cases of extrajudicial killings have been brought to court.[62] While police reports claim that there were only 4,000 killed due to Duterte's war against illegal drugs, reports from media and human rights organizations reveal that the toll might be as high as 23,000.[63]

> Philippine human rights organizations have connected the President's rhetoric to a dramatic increase in killings by police and unidentified gunmen.

57. Human Rights Watch. 2017. "Burma Events 2016." *World Report 2017*. https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2017/country-chapters/burma#f3ec3e.

58. Ibid, p.1.

59. JASS Southeast Asia. 2014. "Women Unite Against Ethnic Discrimination in Myanmar." 28 July 2014. https://justassociates.org/en/article/women-unite-against-ethnic-and-gender-discrimination-myanmar.

60. Radio Free Asia. 2015. "Myanmar Approves Controversial Interfaith Marriage Law." 7 July 2015. **https://www.rfa.org/english/news/myanmar/parliament-approves-controversial-interfaith-marriage-law-07072015152051.html**

61. Human Rights Watch. 2017. "Philippines Events 2016." *World Report 2017*. https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2017/country-chapters/Philippines.

62. Ramos, Marlon. 2017. "Only 6 drug killing cases brought in courts, DOJ records show." Philippine Daily Inquirer, 8 September 2017. http://newsinfo.inquirer.net/929032/philippine-news-updates-war-on-drugs-extrajudicial-killings-doj#ixzz4uwhzQfDv

63. Janness Ann J. Ellao. 2018. "Duterte's admission of responsibility is factual evidence, lawyer says," 29 September 2018. **http://bulatlat.com/main/2018/09/29/dutertes-admission-responsibility-factual-evidence-lawyer-says/**

Although the Philippines is theoretically a secular state, Catholicism and the Catholic Church play a critical role. This is evident in policies related to reproductive health rights, gender identity and sexual orientation, and the HIV epidemic in certain parts of the country. Despite public presidential support for the Responsible Parenthood and Reproductive Health Law, passed after the government eliminated federal funding for contraception in 2015, local governments have implemented polices and unwritten practices to undermine national law. For example, Mayor Sally Lee issued an executive order in 2015 that declared Sorsogon City in Bicol region a "pro-life city," which has meant government workers can dispense only Catholic Church-approved information and services regarding family planning information, such as the "natural" or "rhythm method." In Balanga City, the government prohibited health officials and clinics from getting and dispensing contraceptives. These policies have affected poor women especially who are forced to buy from expensive pharmacies or illegally from government-employed midwives who have access to the government's supply of contraceptives.[64]

On May 23, 2017, following a firefight between Philippine government soldiers and the Maute Group in Marawi City, Duterte ordered martial law in the entire Mindanao. The ensuing five-month battle over the city displaced about 400,000 families and killed more than 1,000 people.[65] Since the declaration of martial law, Philippine human rights organization Karapatan documented at least 49 victims of extrajudicial killings in Mindanao, with an average of one victim killed every week. Most of the victims are indigenous peoples and members of local peasant organizations campaigning for genuine agrarian reform and against militarization.[66]

Karapatan also documented 22 cases of torture, 116 victims of frustrated extrajudicial killings, 89 victims of illegal arrest and detention, and 336,124 victims of indiscriminate gunfire and aerial bombings. At least 404,654 individuals have been displaced largely because of these bombings. There were also 979 civilians who were forcibly portrayed as surrendering rebels and whose "surrenders" were staged by the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP).[67]

Mounting cases of harassments and cases of violence against women and other forms of human rights violations were among the findings and issues raised during a National Fact-Finding Mission conducted by various groups in Mindanao. Women and young girls experienced harassment as the Philippine army launched massive military operations in the province. "The Duterte regime uses martial law and orders its armed forces to kill and destroy communities as it scampers to allow DMCI and big mining and plantation interests to take over Lumad lands," according to fact-finding mission delegate and progressive lawmaker Arlene Brosas. DMCI is a mining and logging company controlled by the powerful Consunji family that operates in Sultan Kudarat and the nearby provinces in Mindanao.[68]

> President Duterte's aggressively anti-human rights stance and a renewed military presence in resource-rich regions are fueling the violence. Almost half of the killings in the Philippines were linked to struggles against agribusiness.

Finally, one of the biggest conflicts in the Philippines concerns land rights and land ownership related to agribusiness and mining projects. Dozens of activists have been killed during the past decade trying to defend their land and natural resources, with women leading the struggle. In Asia, the most alarming developments took place in the Philippines, which saw 48 killings – almost a 71% rise on 2016 and the most murders ever recorded in Asia in a single year. President Duterte's aggressively anti-human rights stance and a renewed military presence in resource-rich regions are fueling the violence. Almost half of the killings in the Philippines were linked to struggles against agribusiness.[69]

Thailand

The past several years have been marked by political turmoil in Thailand, starting with the coup in May 2014 (the 19th coup since 1932) when a junta, calling itself the National Council for Peace and

64. Ibid

65. UCA News. 2018. "Probe finds evidence of martial law abuses in Mindanao", 11 April 2018.
   https://www.ucanews.com/news/probe-finds-evidence-of-martial-law-abuses-in-mindanao/82027.

66. Karapatan. 2018. "Martial Law in Mindanao: Year One," 28 May 2018.
   http://www.karapatan.org/MARTIAL+LAW+IN+MINDANAO%3A+YEAR+ONE.

67. Ibid.

68. Bulatlat.com. 2018. "Violence against women among the pitfalls of Duterte's martial law in Mindanao", 5 July 2018. http://davaotoday.com/main/human rights/violence-against-women-among-the-pitfalls-of-dutertes-martial-law-in-mindanao/.

69. https://www.globalwitness.org/en/campaigns/environmental-activists/at-what-cost/

Order (NCPO), overthrew the democratically elected government and seized power. The NCPO then institutionalized a system through which the all-male junta directly appoints members to the executive and legislative bodies of government, with appointees being mostly men. Under the system of constitutional monarchy, the king is the Head of State in an inviolable position of revered worship while the Prime Minister leads the government. King Maha Vajiralongkorn is the successor to the late King Bhumibhol Adulyadej, who died in October 2016 after his 70-year reign, and the Prime Minister is Prayut Chan-ocha, a retired Army general and junta chief.

In April 2015, nearly one year after taking control of the government, the NCPO announced a new constitution, but the National Reform Council itself rejected this deeply flawed draft in September 2015. In August 2016, a new draft was passed by a public referendum marked by tactics aimed at silencing critics. Finally, on 6 April 2017, the new constitution went into effect. It entrenches the government's lack of accountability and provides constitutional authority to support the recent actions of the military junta that are rapidly closing democratic spaces. These actions include restricting freedom of expression, association, and peaceful assembly through repressive laws such as the Referendum Act and the Computer Crime Act. Violations of laws such as Article 116 of the penal code on sedition and laws against lèse-majesté, insulting the monarchy, are punishable as national security offenses. The NCPO enforces media censorship and prevents more than five people from gathering in public. The autocratic governance of Thailand and the government's use of military courts as a key mechanism for suppressing civilian dissent mirrors the situation in other countries discussed in this report.

> Laws and policies most needed to protect people and the environment, such as environmental and climate change policies, food labeling, cost of and access to life-saving medicines, and public health laws, could all be challenged as infringements.

In Thailand, women human rights defenders (WHRDs) and women in rural areas, especially those with dependent children, are some of the most affected. WHRDs lead opposition to land confiscation and forced evictions, the development of extractive industries, unequal distribution of land and other resources, and degradation of the environment. Rural women, immigrants, and refugees experience significant discrimination due to poverty and lack of access to necessary services and rights. In the case of refugee and immigrant women, this includes discrimination based on lack of citizenship.

Summary

Women activists and human rights defenders agree that safety is becoming an even more urgent concern than before. Governments and militaries and other armed actors, such as paramilitaries, corporate security personnel, and vigilantes, are shutting down safe and democratic spaces. One way is through criminalizing and imprisoning activists. Another is stigmatizing activism in general and especially that of women by painting them as "bad" women and accusing them of betraying their children and families by working in public spaces rather than at home. Violence against activists, especially human rights defenders, has been escalating and intensifying in specific ways, including not only rape and sexual assaults, but also threats to their families and their communities.

The analysis of governance structures and practices in this report reveals a disturbingly similar pattern across countries. Key factors include:

- The impact and extension of power dynamics rooted in 19th and 20th century colonization, imperialism, and the Cold War are ongoing, alongside newly emerging issues such as the increasing economic dominance of China.
- States are major tools of suppression and repression through institutions such as legislative and criminal justice systems that stigmatize and criminalize the opposition, generate fear, and close down democratic spaces.
- Corruption and leaders' self-interest are deeply embedded in all levels of government.
- There is an increased presence of military and paramilitary forces and escalating use of direct militarized violence including extrajudicial killings.
- State actors operate with impunity and are rarely held accountable for the destruction they wreak.
- The influence of Buddhist, Catholic, and Islamic fundamentalist movements continues to increase.
  - Human rights frameworks exert a relatively weak influence on governments, public policy, and general discourse.
  - Women, LGBTI people, environmentalists, human rights defenders, and other affected people are consistently targeted, in gender-specific ways, in attempts to destroy opposition and dissent.

From outside the region, the US-defined "war on terror" and the US National Security Agency have profoundly destructive impact as well. Since late 2001, after the September 11th terrorist attacks in New York and Washington, DC, the US and other international actors, such as Britain, and their forces have been supporting local repression under the banner of "fighting terror," including deploying military personnel and selling weapons. Other states followed their lead and have deployed "war on terror" discourse as the justification for various forms of repression.

From outside the region, the US-defined "war on terror" and the US National Security Agency have a profoundly destructive impact as well.

EXTRACTIVE CAPITALISM

Colonial histories and the functioning of current governments and their leaders shape neoliberal economic policies and extractive capitalism ("extractivism"), supporting the interests of transnational, national, and local elites. Countries in Southeast Asia, like those elsewhere, face new demands from former colonial powers. Contemporary national elites are often linked to, or are, the de facto representatives of old elites, who gained power by collaborating with colonial administrations. Today, the same process—transferring wealth from the colony to the colonizing country—continues, using both established and new methods.

> Countries in Southeast Asia, like those elsewhere, face new demands from former colonial powers.

Governments and transnational corporations work together to establish and maintain extractive industries in the region, which transfer wealth in the following ways:

● land grabs;

● monoculture cash crops; and

● forced migration and labor exploitation.

As in former times, women bear a disproportionate burden of social, economic, and environmental risks and negative impacts of extractive industries.

Neoliberal Strategies

Powerful corporate actors utilize three interrelated strategies to facilitate and structure the globalization of neoliberalism capitalism generally and extractivist industries specifically: changing national policies, implementing regional trade agreements, and establishing special economic zones. Neoliberal global capitalism operates and relies on partnerships and mutual reinforcement among TNCs, international financial institutions such as the International Finance Corporation, the profit sector of the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, and the Asian Development Bank, along with financial intermediaries such as large, usually transnational, banks and investment firms, which both directly and indirectly finance and profit from these processes. These entities, in turn, work with governments under the cover of "private-public partnerships," for example, that benefit TNCs and elites within countries, usually senior government officials, high-ranking military officers, and old-wealth families.

> Today, the same process—transferring wealth from the colony to the colonizing country—continues, using both established and new methods.

Changing National Policies

The corporate and financial partners, as terms of "development" loans, demand from states three important policy changes, often in accordance with conditions and agreements dictated by TNC actors:

● Divest from infrastructure that benefits ordinary people, especially those living precariously, and privatize public services such as health care and education.

● Deregulate trade, labor, and environmental protection.

● Privatize land; natural resources such as water, minerals, oil, and gas; and industries that may have been national such as mining, energy, and public transportation.

Implementing these policies, sometimes called *structural adjustment policies*, requires the state to intervene in designing, implementing, and enforcing the changes.

Implementing Trade Agreements

The TNC, government, and financial partners negotiate trade agreements that play a central role in directing the flows of natural resources, labor, exports and imports. The agreements replicate the giant mold set by the World Trade Organization (WTO), formed in 1995:

> **"**(WTO) is the only global international organization dealing with the rules of trade between nations. At its heart are the WTO agreements, negotiated and

signed by the bulk of the world's trading nations and ratified in their parliaments. The goal is to ensure that trade flows as smoothly, predictably and freely as possible (emphasis added). [70]

Of the 195 countries in the world, 164 are WTO members and, since 2016, all have implemented regional trade agreements. [71]

Regional trade agreements (RTAs) —the binding global agreements negotiated by the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), member states, and major corporations behind closed doors—have serious long-term consequences. One such agreement currently under negotiation is the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), a China-led challenge to the US-dominated Trans Pacific Partnership Agreement (TPP). The RCEP includes China, Japan, Australia, New Zealand, South Korea, India, and ten ASEAN states, but excludes the United States. If concluded, RCEP will cover 50 percent of the world's population and 29 percent of current global GDP. Although seen as separate right now, critics predict that the RCEP and TPP will eventually be amalgamated to form the "economic blueprint for the 'Free Trade Area of the Asia Pacific,'" an entity similar to the European Union. [72] According to ASEAN, "The objective of launching RCEP negotiations is to achieve a modern, comprehensive, high-quality, and mutually beneficial economic partnership agreement among the ASEAN Member States and ASEAN's FTA partners." [73]

The Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development (APWLD), a leading network in the region, along with many other groups working to ensure women's rights and human rights and the overall wellbeing of Southeast Asian communities, strongly opposes the RCEP. Rather than improving the lives of ordinary people (as most regional economic agreements promise), APWLD argues that RECP will "institutionalise inequalities, it will severely curtail people's human rights and freedoms and cement corporate rights over national public interest law and the rights of governments to govern in the interests of their constituents." [74] The majority of the agreement, which is unrelated to trade issues, will enable richer countries and big corporations to move across borders to impact labor, the environment, telecommunications, and the movement of people across borders, among other things. The reach of RCEP's influence "in terms of issues faced and in the number of people whose lives and livelihood will be impacted is unprecedented." [75]

> "Doing well by doing good," looking for "win-win solutions," and being a "good corporate citizen" can be heard in many corporate boardrooms, shareholder meetings, and advertisements but these corporate mottos cover up the failures of such initiatives; they "accomplish little in the bigger scheme of things."

One element of the agreement especially harmful to both states and their people is the "investor state dispute settlement" (ISDS) that is designed to allow corporations to sue governments in secret tribunals for infringement of "investors' rights." This means that laws and policies most needed to protect people and the environment, such as environmental and climate change policies, food labeling, cost of and access to life-saving medicines, and public health laws, could all be challenged as infringements. [76]

In general, trade agreements do not benefit ordinary people but are particularly bad for poor people worldwide. These include additional cuts in and privatization of public services such as health, water, and energy, due to a decrease in corporate tariffs and diversion of government money to fight ISDS cases. For example, in mid-2000, the Philippines government spent nearly US$60 million for legal fees to fight two ISDS cases filed by a German company, [77] money that could have been spent on much needed services. RCEP will also negatively affect the provision of health care through, for example, challenges by international pharmaceutical companies against China and India whose pharmaceutical companies offer less expensive generic medicines, and through privatization by foreign

70. World Trade Organization. "About WTO." https://www.wto.org/english/thewto_e/thewto_e.htm.

71. Ibid., https://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/region_e/region_e.htm.

72. Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development. 2016. "Briefer on RCEP: Robbing Communities to Extract Profit." July. http://apwld.org/briefer-on-the-rcep-robbing-communities-to-extract-profit/.

73. ASEAN. n.d. "Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership." Retrieved from http://asean.org/?static_post=rcep-regional-comprehensive-economic-partnership.

74. Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development, op cit., p. 1.

75. Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development, op cit.

76. Full discussion of these issues is beyond this report but for more information, go www.apwld.org.

77. Rosert, Diana. 2014. "The Stakes Are High: A Review of The Financial Costs of Investment Treaty Arbitration." Institute for Sustainable Development, Manitoba, Canada.
http://www.iisd.org/sites/default/files/publications/stakes-are-high-review-financial-costs-investment-treaty-arbitration.pdf.

companies who will be given free rein to pursue business options most favorable to them. The RCEP will decrease minimum wages, as well as removing labor and workplace protections. Last, RCEP will have severe consequences for women, who make up 70 percent of the world population living in poverty. Corporate land grabs and large-scale "development" projects along with weak environmental regulation, contribute to climate change, and negatively affect the already precarious livelihood of women, who make up the largest proportion of subsistence farmers worldwide.

Another trade agreement, an European Union initiative, Everything but Arms (EBA), gives the world's "25 least developed" nations, including Cambodia and Myanmar, duty-free access to the European market and guarantees a minimum price for commodities that is usually set much higher than world market prices. Although the EBA scheme is supposed to benefit poor people by creating jobs, the outcomes are quite the opposite. An example is Myanmar's rapidly growing export-oriented garment industry. According to a recent study, eight of the 12 companies studied were foreign-owned (Chinese and South Korean); 90 percent of workers are women and girls younger than 15 years old; most have migrated from rural areas, live in appalling conditions, and work up to 11 hours per day to earn meager wages; and are easily exploitable.[78] In another example, the Cambodian government confiscated land and evicted residents in order for Thai companies and a Cambodian business tycoon to build the fast-growing sugar industry for sugar export. This has impacted women in several ways. They have found it more difficult to care for their children after losing their land because they were forced either to migrate to Thailand or work on the sugar plantations for nine hours a day. Some, whose husbands migrated to Thailand to look for work, reported being abandoned, and other women have reported increased domestic violence after these evictions.[79]

> According to a recent study, eight of the 12 companies studied were foreign-owned (Chinese and South Korean); 90 percent of workers are women and girls younger than 15 years old; most have migrated from rural areas, live in appalling conditions, and work up to 11 hours per day to earn meager wages; and are easily exploitable.

Creating Special Economic Zones

Another important mechanism of economic globalization organized by the partners is the construction of Special Economic Zones (SEZs). Since the 1960s, SEZs "have been built worldwide … to facilitate global free trade and integrate developing countries into global production and distribution networks."[80] These can be found in every region of the "developing" world, from Bangladesh to India, Egypt, Ethiopia, or the Democratic Republic of Congo. Perhaps the most well-known is the Shenzhen SEZ between Mainland China and Hong Kong. Supporters of SEZs claim great benefits for local people, including jobs. Those who oppose them say the negatives outstrip the positives, including detrimental impacts on communities, workers, and the environment.[81]

According to Focus on the Global South, SEZs "have been mushrooming in Southeast Asia in recent years" and have resulted in mostly negative impacts in the region. For example, the Greater Mekong Subregion Economic Cooperation Scheme (GMS-ECP), in operation since the mid-1990s, is a "regional integration" and "development" model financed by the Asian Development Bank[82] that is now being integrated into China's "One Belt, One Road" or "Belt and Road" initiative, the proposed construction of land and sea connections between China and countries in Southeast Asia and Central Asia, through to Europe.[83] This SEZ affects not only the countries directly involved— Cambodia, Myanmar, Thailand, and Vietnam—but also the entire Mekong region, known as Asia's "rice bowl" and "fish basket." This area is noted for its cultural, ethnic, linguistic, and biological diversity; 80 percent of people there depend on forestry, fishing, and agriculture and live at a subsistence or near-subsistence level.[84]

78. The Centre for Research on Multinational Corporations. 2017. "Garment Industry in Myanmar Far from Fair." 5 February 2017. https://www.somo.nl/garment-industry-myanmar-far-fair.

79. Equitable Cambodia and Inclusive Development International, *Bittersweet Harvest: A Human Rights Impact Assessment of the European Union's Everything But Arms Initiative in Cambodia*, 2013. http://www.inclusivedevelopment.net/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/Bittersweet_Harvest_web-version.pdf

80. Thames, Charlie. 2017. *SEZs and Value Extraction from the Mekong.* Bangkok, Thailand: Focus on the Global South, p. 1. https://focusweb.org/system/files/sezs_and_value_extraction_in_the_mekong_english.pdf

81. Ibid.

82. Meltzer, Joshua P. 2017. "One Belt, One Road Initiative: A View from the United States." Washington, DC: Brookings Institution. https://www.brookings.edu/research/chinas-one-belt-one-road-initiative-a-view-from-the-united-states.

83. Ibid.

84. Ibid.

The ultimate goal of these strategies is, in the most expedient ways possible, to maximize profits for elites and TNC shareholders. Although the so-called "corporate social responsibility" initiatives are in place ostensibly to make corporations accountable for their actions, the devastating impacts of TNCs are a testament to the emptiness of corporate attempts to self-regulate. "Doing well by doing good," looking for "win-win solutions," and being a "good corporate citizen" can be heard in many corporate boardrooms, shareholder meetings, and advertisements but these corporate mottos cover up the failures of such initiatives; they "accomplish little in the bigger scheme of things. In fact, these platitudes sometimes encourage corporate social *irresponsibility*."[85]

In Southeast Asia, as well as other resource-rich regions of the world, the predominant ways corporations and elites generate wealth are through extractive industries, land-grabbing, monoculture cash crops, and forced migration and labor exploitation.

Extractive Industries

The processes and impacts of extractive industries are so systematically and consistently destructive across locations and contexts that a new term has been coined: "extractivism." The word describes "an economic and political model based on the unbridled commodification and exploitation of nature"[86] with four defining features:

> In Southeast Asia, as well as other resource-rich regions of the world, the predominant ways corporations and elites generate wealth are through extractive industries, land-grabbing, monoculture cash crops, and forced migration and labor exploitation.

1. Intensive extraction of natural resources;
2. Emphasis on large quantities, often focusing on a single product or crop;
3. Low requirement for processing; and
4. Intention that extracted materials is for export.[87]

Corporate power is exerted in many ways but the extreme impacts of extractive industries "are particularly bold" and involve "conflict (often bloody) with affected communities, environmental degradation and stark power imbalance between corporations and local communities that hinders people's access to justice."[88] This is the case in Southeast Asia, as well as in Africa and Latin America. The "excesses" have appalling impacts on women from indigenous communities, many of whom are movement leaders and human rights defenders.

> "Extractivism" describes "an economic and political model based on the unbridled commodification and exploitation of nature."

Extractivism is also directly related to what is referred to in some circles as the "financialization of nature" whereby global financial markets, instruments, and actors gain ever more influence over nature in general and food, crop production, and mining in particular."[89] Since the 1990s, national governments, regional development banks, and transnational corporations have adopted this economic model as the answer to "development" in the resource-rich Global South. It is important to note that the process is not new to the 21st century but was foundational to the colonialism and imperialism of earlier centuries.[90] It is also essential to differentiate the globalized neoliberal capitalist process from responsible extraction of natural resources by indigenous communities for their own use.

Land-grabbing

Land-grabbing refers to the large-scale, cheap acquisition of farmland and mineral-rich land in rural areas of poor countries by wealthier countries, transnational corporations, and private investors

85. Marques, José Carlos, and Henry Mintzberg. 2015. "Why Corporate Social Responsibility Isn't a Piece of Cake." *MIT/Sloane Business Review*. (Summer). http://sloanreview.mit.edu/article/why-corporate-social-responsibility-isnt-a-piece-of-cake/.

86. Association for Women in Development. 2017. "Women Human Rights Defenders Confronting Extractive Industries: An Overview of Critical Risks and Human Rights." 5.
https://www.awid.org/sites/default/files/atoms/files/whrdsconfronting_extractive_industries_report-eng.pdf.

87. Laboratorio de Paz. 2015. "The Relation between Militarisation and Extractive Industries: Antimilitarism and the Right to Peace from a Latin American Standpoint." 15 December 2015. *https://www.wri-irg.org/en/story/2015/relation-between-militarisation-and-extractive-industries-antimilitarism-and-right-peace*.

88. Association for Women's Rights in Development, op. cit., 5.

89. Engels, Bettina, and Kristina Dietz, 2017. *Contested Extractivism, Society, and the State: Struggles over Mining and Land.* Boulder CO: Lynne Rienner

90. For another example, see Hochschild, Adam. 1999. *King Leopold's Ghost: A Story of Greed, Terror, and Heroism in Colonial Africa.* New York: Mariner Books.

through "deals" made among themselves. The 2011 Tirana Declaration, which coined the term, states that land grabs are based on one or more of the following criteria:

- In violation of human rights, particularly the equal rights of women;
- Not based on free, prior and informed consent of the affected land-users;
- Not based on a thorough assessment, or are in disregard of social, economic and environmental impacts, including the way they are gendered;
- Not based on transparent contracts that specify clear and binding commitments about activities, employment and benefits sharing, and;
- Not based on effective democratic planning, independent oversight and meaningful participation.[91]

With 75-80 percent of the world's poorest people living in rural areas, global land grabs have become a very serious threat to ensuring sustainable livelihoods and food security worldwide, and a particular threat to women who constitute the majority of agricultural labor in small-scale and subsistence farming in Southeast Asia, along with Africa and are the primary caretakers of children and elderly people.[92]

One of the most widespread examples is the massive and systematic land-grabbing across the SEA region on behalf of mining companies and to the detriment of land-based people, especially indigenous communities. Land grabs also negatively impact urban dwellers who do not own land in modern-day terms but who may be living on ancestral and communal land. These projects also exemplify "public-private partnerships," a signature neoliberal mechanism. The following examples in three countries are instructive.

- Mayflower Mining in Myanmar secured permission from the government to set up the 2,100-acre Bau Chaung coal mine and related infrastructure on land of the Karen people, one of the ethnic minorities in the area, who had negotiated a cease-fire with the government after a 70-year struggle. Thailand's Energy Earth financed most of the project, with backing by IFC, supported by Western banks. Energy Earth will receive 70 percent of the coal profits. From early on, local residents began experiencing health problems related to polluted rivers and other water sources, and the constantly burning fires that emit noxious fumes. The mine is expected to impoverish an estimated 16,000 people from 23 villages in surrounding areas by the time it becomes fully functioning, due to the destruction of their livelihoods.[93]

- As of 2012 the Philippines ranked fifth worldwide in gold, nickel, copper, and chromite deposits and had the largest deposit of copper-gold.[94] These minerals have been a major source of armed conflict in the Philippines including in Mindanao, Luzon, and other areas. The government implemented the Philippine Mining Act in 1995 and then the National Mineral Policy Agenda and the Mineral Action Plan for profit-driven development, giving preferential treatment to foreign corporations resulting in devastating impacts. The nearly 44,000 acre mining venture, Didipio Gold and Copper mine, in Nueva Vizcaya, Philippines, is 100% owned by Australian OceanaGold Corporation with the majority of the affected indigenous people. The project is highly contested because of human rights violations and environmental destruction and is an example of government complicity and local corruption. The company has been alleged to have gained consent of affected communities "by creating a 'council of elders' comprised by people that either did not belong to

> Extractivism is also directly related to what is referred to in some circles as the "financialization of nature" whereby global financial markets, instruments, and actors gain ever more influence over nature in general and food, crop production, and mining in particular.

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91. For more information, see http://www.landcoalition.org/sites/default/files/documents/resources/tiranadeclaration.pdf.
92. Global Agriculture. n.d. "Women in Agriculture." http://www.globalagriculture.org/report-topics/women-in-agriculture.html.
93. Inclusive Development International. 2017. "Reckless Development: The IFC's Dodgy Deals in Southeast Asia." (March): 4-8. http://www.inclusivedevelopment.net/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/Outsourcing-Development-Part-3.pdf.
94. Chavez, Leilani. 2017. "Fast Facts: Mining in the Philippines." *Rapper* 22 April 2017. https://www.rappler.com/business/special-report/whymining/whymining-latest-stories/11983-fast-facts-mining-philippines.

the affected communities, or received rewards in exchange for their consent." Although the Philippines Commission for Human Rights urged the government to withdraw permission to mine due to overwhelming documentation of rights abuses, the government took the side of the company, which claimed to do "ethical, responsible, and sustainable mining."[95]

- Three examples in Cambodia show the inextricable links among corporate interests, government complicity, and life-threatening impacts on local people. Gold extraction in the northeast Cambodia is one.[96] Boeung Kak Lake development of high-end residential, commercial, and tourism complex in the middle of Phnom Penh[97] and Rehabilitation of Railway in Cambodia Project[98] both required alignments and partnerships between foreign financial institutions, international donors, and local and national governments, which gave Economic Land Concessions and a 99-year lease for these initiatives. The actors included Senator Lao Meng Khin, close to Prime Minister Hun Sen; Cambodian and Indian banks; the Asian Development Bank and the Australian Agency for International Development; and the Chinese financial firm Erdos Hong Jun Investment Co. The projects have destroyed villages and communities; they displaced thousands of indigenous people and farmers and stripped residents of their land, with no legal recourse since the majority of Cambodian citizens have no formal land titles.[99]

For women in many rural communities in Southeast Asia, land means identity and is their economic and cultural foundation. Land is their sole source of livelihood and their way of fulfilling their responsibilities as women, wives, and mothers.

Monoculture Cash Crops

> Monoculture is an agribusiness practiced worldwide, including in North America, but in the Global South it involves the production of agricultural commodities in and by structurally less powerful countries for consumption by more powerful countries.

Another devastating form of global extractivism utilizing land-grabbing is the monoculture production of cash crops, which focuses on one crop grown for export. Monoculture is an agribusiness practiced worldwide, including in North America, but in the Global South it involves the production of agricultural commodities in and by structurally less powerful countries for consumption by more powerful countries. A consistent factor is the exploitation of land and labor, with resulting environmental degradation. In Indonesia, the fast-growing timber (for paper production) and palm oil (food processing) industries have resulted in both. Wealthy Indonesian families, corrupt government officials, and transnational corporations and banks work together to ensure "success" as they exploit indigenous communities and small farmers. The following is an example:

> ❝Sudarmin Paliba stands on a hillside, looking down through row upon row of oil palm trees. 'This is where we had our fruit trees, and at the bottom we grew paddy rice,' he says. One morning in 1994, Sudarmin and other farmers from the Buol District of Central Sulawesi, Indonesia, were walking to their farms when they came upon a team of workers, guarded by soldiers, chopping down trees in the surrounding forests. They were told that a road was being built. But soon they came to understand that this was just the beginning of a much larger operation. All of their customary lands and forests had been signed

95. Environmental Justice Atlas. 2017. "Didipio Gold and Copper mine, Nueva Vizcaya, Philippines." 23 January 2017. https://ejatlas.org/conflict/didipio-gold-and-copper-mine-nueva-vizcaya-philippines.

96. Inclusive Development International, *Reckless Development: The IFC's Dodgy Deals in Southeast Asia*, March 2017, p. 4-8. Retrieved from http://www.inclusivedevelopment.net/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/Outsourcing-Development-Part-3.pdf.

97. Inclusive Development International, "Cambodia: Boeung Kak Lake Evictions," n.d. Retrieved from https://www.inclusivedevelopment.net/campaign/cambodia-boeung-kak-lake-evictions/

98. Inclusive Development International, "Cambodia: ADB and Australia-financed Railway Project," n.d. Retrieved from https://www.inclusivedevelopment.net/campaign/cambodia-adb-and-australia-financed-railway-project/

99. Inclusive Development International, *Reckless Development: The IFC's Dodgy Deals in Southeast Asia*, March 2017, p. 4-8. Retrieved from http://www.inclusivedevelopment.net/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/Outsourcing-Development-Part-3.pdf.

away without their knowledge or consent to one of Indonesia's richest and most powerful families for the creation of a massive 22,000 hectare palm oil plantation. Over the next three years, the farmlands and forests used by over 6,500 families were destroyed. Sudarmin and his fellow villagers stood in front of trucks and attached themselves to trees, but with the military backing the operation, there was little that they could do. Today, their former farms and forests are blanketed by an endless monoculture of oil palms belonging to the PT Hardaya Inti Plantations company, owned by business magnate and political insider Murdaya Widyawimarta and his wife Siti Hartati Cakra Murdaya through their holding company, the Cipta Cakra Murdaya Group. Sulawesi is one of the main targets of the breathtaking expansion of oil palm plantations in Indonesia. Since 2005, the area under oil palm in the country has nearly doubled, and now covers 8.2 million hectares, about a third of all of Indonesia's arable land. With little land left for expansion on the island of Sumatra, where production was traditionally concentrated, companies are turning to the islands of Kalimantan, Sulawesi, and Papua. Several of Indonesia's largest palm oil producers are even expanding to the Philippines and West Africa."[100]

This "breathtaking expansion"[101] is a corporate response to the growing global, notably Northern, demand for inexpensive vegetable oil for food-processing and biofuel, with palm oil being the most widely used. The main players in the country's palm oil industry, cronies of former President Muhammad Suharto, the military dictator who ruled Indonesia for 31 years, are now leveraging their accumulated wealth and political connections to grab the lands of the country's most marginalized communities, often in collusion with foreign agribusiness (US PepsiCo, Swiss Nestlé, and Dutch-British Unilever, for example) and banks, including Australian, British, Dutch, Japanese, Malaysian, and Indonesian banks. The palm oil industry has been a major source of environmental destruction

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100. GRAIN. 2014. "The Long Struggle against Indonesia Oil Palm Land Grab." 21 January 2014. https://www.grain.org/article/entries/4868-long-struggle-against-indonesia-oil-palm-land-grab

101. Ibid.

and climate change, damage to biodiversity, involuntary adult and child labor, militarization, with use of state and paramilitaries to control protest, and human rights abuses committed by both.

Forced Migration and Labor Exploitation

The third example of extractivism in the region is the forced migration and trafficking of persons for exploitation, increasingly referred to as "modern-day slavery." These persons include domestic, construction, agricultural, manufacturing, and sex workers, as well as girls and women forced into marriage. This discussion of extractivism extends its conventional meaning beyond the natural world to include people because women's, men's, and children's bodies are removed without regard and respect for their connection to their home places; they are exploited in large numbers, and "exported," often without consent.[102]
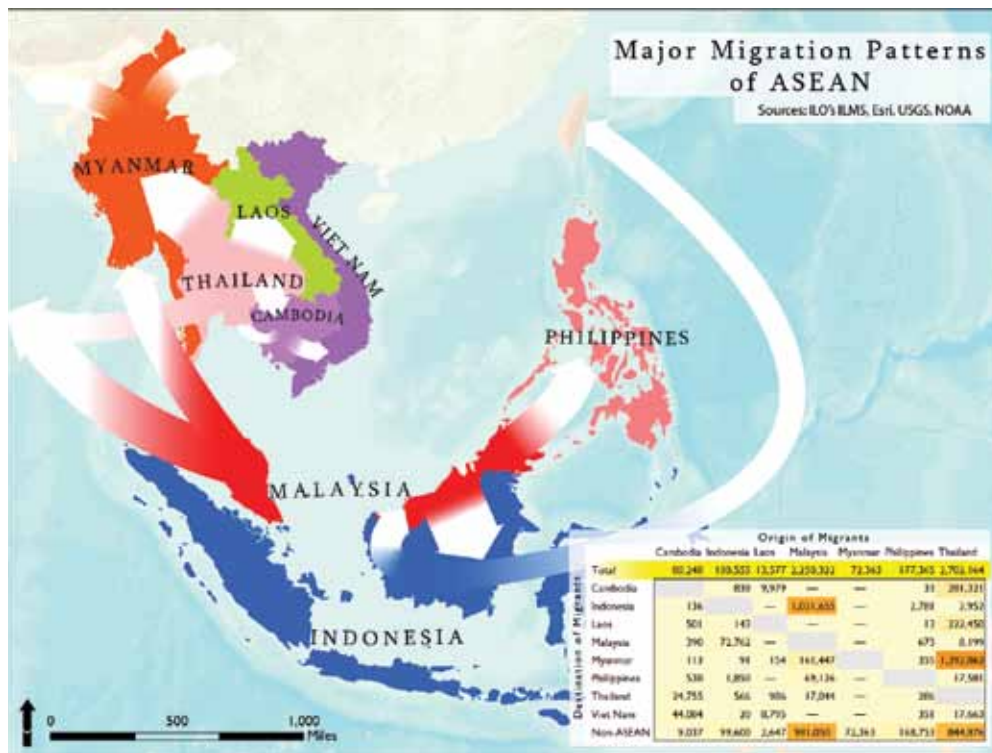
Major Migration Patterns of ASEAN
Sources: ILO's ILMS, Esri, USGS, NOAA

> This discussion of extractivism extends its conventional meaning beyond the natural world to include people because women's, men's, and children's bodies are removed without regard and respect for their connection to their home places; they are exploited in large numbers, and "exported," often without consent.

As of 2016, the Asia-Pacific region ranked second after Africa in the number of persons trafficked and forced to migrate. Although exact figures are impossible to generate due to the nature of reporting and data collection, the following estimates reveal the gender patterns. Women and girls make up 71 percent of all those affected worldwide. One in four were children. In 84 percent of the cases of forced marriages, women and girls were the victims, not men or boys. Most forced laborers suffered multiple forms of coercion, such as sexual violence, threats of violence against their families, withholding of wages, and threats of deportation for undocumented people.[103] The International Organization for Migration (IOM) provides the following migration patterns in Southeast Asia:

● As an origin, transit, and destination country, Thailand is a hub for exploitation in the Great Mekong Sub-region. Most of the migrants entering the country are from Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, and Vietnam, and include those fleeing poverty and conflict, and women trafficked for sexual slavery. In addition to being trafficked internally, Thai people are trafficked to East Asia, the Middle East and Europe.

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102. The concept of consent in common usage implies individual autonomy and real options. Given the conditions facing women, children, and men in this report, we use the term advisedly.

103. International Labour Office and Walk Free Foundation. 2017. *Global Estimates of Modern Slavery: Forced Labour and Forced Marriage Executive Summary*. (September). http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/documents/publication/wcms_575540.pdf.

- An estimated two million undocumented foreign low-skilled workers in Malaysia and Thailand are working in sectors shunned by locals, such as construction, plantations, agriculture, and fishing. Many come from Cambodia and Myanmar.[104]

- Indonesia is a main source country for low-skilled labor migrants, 83 percent of them women, working in the (underground) economy. Legal and illegal recruitment companies are big players in the trafficking industry.

- Men from Cambodia, Laos, and Myanmar working in the Thai fishing industry are passed from boat to boat and can spend many years at sea. Fishermen have been assisted and returned home by IOM from Indonesia, Malaysia, Mauritius, Fiji, South Africa, Timor-Leste, and Senegal.[105]

- Philippines is a major origination point for global migration of workers. Currently, approximately 10 percent of Filipino people work or live abroad, and they are among the more highly educated in the international labor market. More than half of Philippine Overseas Foreign Workers are women as part of the "serving classes." They remit the third highest amount of any workers worldwide by nation, behind Chinese and Indian workers, with total remittances expected by the World Bank to reach nearly US$33 billion in 2017.[106]

- In its 2016 *Migration and Remittances Factbook*, the World Bank identified Cambodia–Thailand, Myanmar–Thailand, and Laos–Thailand as three of the top ten migration corridors of the world.[107]

Role of Financial Intermediaries and International Donors

Financial intermediaries are large commercial banks and private groups that invest in "development" projects in Southeast Asia and other regions of the Global South. While helping to fund or support particular elements of extractive industries, financial intermediaries may simultaneously provide much needed infrastructure and services. The IFC transfers funds to intermediaries that finance major development projects, thus enabling the foreign banks to partner with local wealthy investors. Together, they reap most of the benefits. IFC-backed projects have resulted in what Oxfam calls "the suffering of others," especially women and their dependent children.[108]

The role of international donors (the development branches of national governments) is double-edged. On the one hand, they provide monetary support needed to build infrastructure, sustain public services, and so on; on the other hand, the economic and political interests of the specific donor country guide the general direction and areas for specific intervention. The line between development and humanitarian aid, and national self-interest is quite blurry. In the current economic and political climate, the donor presence in specific locations appears to be related to the contest between China and the US, with other economic powers such as Japan vying for influence. In January 2017, Japanese Prime Minister Abe visited Philippine President Duterte and offered a development package[109] while, in October 2016, China pledged US$24 billion in aid to the Philippines.[110] Japan is seeking cheap land and labor for its auto and electronics industries; China needs energy and food, and seeks Philippine cooperation to extend its military presence.

> The line between development and humanitarian aid, and national self-interest is quite blurry.

104. World Bank. 2017. "Migration and Development Brief 38." (October). http://www.knomad.org/publication/migration-and-development-brief-28.

105. International Organisation of Migration. 2013. "Increasing Evidence of Forced Labour Across Asia Says New IOM Report." https://www.iom.int/news/increasing-evidence-forced-labour-across-asia-says-new-iom-report.

106. World Bank, October 2017, op. cit.

107. World Bank, *Migration and Remittances Factbook*, 3rd ed. https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/bitstream/handle/10986/23743/9781464803192.pdf.

108. Oxfam Issue Briefing. 2015. "The Suffering of Others: The Human Cost of the International Finance Corporation's Lending through Financial Intermediaries." (April). https://www.oxfam.org/sites/www.oxfam.org/files/file_attachments/ib-suffering-of-others-international-finance-corporation-020415-en.pdf

109. Kyodo. 2017. "Abe pledges ¥1 trillion aid package to Philippines for infrastructure development." *Japan Times*, 12 January 2017.

110. Romero, Alexis, and Richmond Mercurio. 2016. "Philippines, China sign $24-B deals." *The Philippine Star*, October 22, 2016. http://www.philstar.com/headlines/2016/10/22/1636102/philippines-china-sign-24-b-deals. For a fuller discussion of international aid in the region see, for example, J. Hutchison, W. Hout, C. Hughes, and R. Robison. 2014. *Political Economy and the Aid Industry in Asia*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Summary

Neoliberalism and extractive industries, dominated by transnational corporations and powerful international and national elites, are having profoundly negative impacts in Southeast Asia while causing untold human suffering, including hunger, starvation, and severe environmental damage. These predatory economic forces have fundamentally reconfigured the relationship between the state and society in the region, to the extent that "the national is the facilitator of transnational priorities."[111] They have altered relations within families and communities and between the social and natural worlds of the Southeast Asian people in the following ways:

- States facilitate the processes of extractivism, which undermines their capacity and willingness to protect their people, resources, and sovereignty.
- Power players and power relations have shifted and been realigned; inequalities across nations and within nations have intensified.
- International and global financial institutions and national and local elites support and benefit from extractivism, while civilian and military elites consolidate wealth and power among themselves.
- Women—particularly poor women in rural and indigenous communities—are hardest hit as they constitute the majority of subsistence farmers, migrants, low-wage workers, and single heads of households, and have the least influence in matters that affect them the most.
- Human rights defenders, environmental activists, labor organizers, and community leaders face extreme violence at the hands of government forces and paramilitary groups. Women especially experience gender-based violence, including sexual violence and threats to their families.
- The killing of activists who protect land and the environment has been rising sharply in recent years.
- Indigenous people are among the most vulnerable and are affected disproportionately.
- The mining industry is the most dangerous for environmental defenders.[112]

Extractivism begins with the promise of "a better life" for the affected people, but that promise is realized by only a few and the extraction processes almost always destroy the land. In the case of forced migration, countries are drained of one of their most precious "resources:" their people. Most people will be forced to leave lands that have been passed down to them from one generation to the next, in villages they call home and in places where they have been able to secure their livelihoods, however humble. Few farmers, indigenous people, and women activists leave without extremely serious cause, nor do they leave easily or quietly. Most times, they are forcibly evicted, too often violently, in ways that threaten families and communities, livelihoods, and human rights. Military force is often used to "clear the way" for the land grabbing extractivism requires. The next section discusses the role of militarism in the extractivist industries.

> These predatory economic forces have fundamentally reconfigured the relationship between the state and society in the region, to the extent that "the national is the facilitator of transnational priorities."[111]

111. Langdon, Jonathan. 2015. "Grounded Social Movements and the Defense of Communal Natural Resource in Ghana." In *Beyond Colonialism, Development and Globalization Social Movements and Critical Perspectives*, edited by Dominique Caouette and Dip Kapoor. London: Zed Books, p. 49.

112. Global Witness. 2017. *Defenders of the Earth: Global Killings of Land and Environmental Defenders in 2016*. (July 13). https://www.globalwitness.org/en/campaigns/environmental-activists/defenders-earth/

V. MILITARISM, MILITARIZATION, ARMED CONFLICT, AND WAR

In her book, *Homefront: A Military City and the American 20th Century*, Catherine Lutz defines militarism as:

> [T]he contradictory and tense social process in which civil society organizes itself for the production of violence. This process involves an intensification of the labor and resources allocated to military purposes, including the shaping of other institutions in synchrony with military goals. Militarization is simultaneously a discursive process, involving a shift in general societal beliefs and values in ways necessary to legitimate the use of force, the organization of large standing armies and their leaders, and the higher taxes or tribute used to pay for them.[113]

A specifically feminist understanding of militarism defines it as an "extreme variant of patriarchy, a gendered regime characterised by discourses and practices that subordinate and oppress women, as well as non-dominant men, reinforcing hierarchies of class, gender, race and ethnicity, and in some contexts caste, religion and location."[114] For such a system to be sustained, it must become embedded and normalized in a society. To understand systems of militarism and the process of militarization fully, it is important to examine how they are shaped by and influence gender and gender relations, ethnicity, religion, and class, and other social and political categories and to note that these categories and the relations they shape are long-term factors, present before the visible emergence of military regimes and conflicts, and that they persist long after cease-fires and "peace" initiatives have been officially declared. Many examples of post-conflict, post-military rule nations—Myanmar being a prime example—suggest that they continue to exhibit the political, cultural, and economic features of militarism.[115]

> A specifically feminist understanding of militarism defines it as an "extreme variant of patriarchy, a gendered regime characterised by discourses and practices that subordinate and oppress women, as well as non-dominant men, reinforcing hierarchies of class, gender, race and ethnicity, and in some contexts caste, religion and location."[114]

One other aspect of militarism to consider is "disaster militarism," defined by Fukishima et al. as "a pattern of rhetoric, beliefs, and practices that the military should be the primary responder to large-scale disasters."[116] Militaries are often the only organized force equipped to respond and capable of responding in an emergency or disaster situation such as an earthquake or tsunami; however, accepting the military as a humanitarian agent in such cases poses three main dangers. One is the implicit suggestion that "military training, values, and norms are inherently superior, therefore worthy of unquestioning support." Another is the blurring of lines between military and civilian sectors of society.[117] The third danger is that states may use catastrophes as opportunities to advance their economic or political interests. US military help to Philippine communities devastated by typhoons increased the Filipino people's acceptance of the US military presence in the country and softened the image of the US military in their eyes.

In Southeast Asia, militarism currently manifests in several ways.

Militarism Becomes the Servant of Extractivism

As part of the nation-state apparatus, the military is on hand whenever necessary to intimidate and repress popular resistance to extractivism and exploitative working conditions, to structural

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113. Lutz, Catherine. 2001. *Homefront: A Military City and the American 20th Century*. Boston, MA: Beacon Press, p. 5.

114. Mama, Amina, and Margo Okazawa-Rey. 2012. "Militarism, Conflict and Women's Activism in the Global Era: Challenges and Prospects for Women in Three West African Contexts." *Feminist Review* 101: 97-123.

115. For a more detailed report of women and militarism in Southeast Asia, see *Women in Southeast Asia: Resisting Militarism, Asserting Sovereignty*. 2016. Available through Center for Women's Resources, www.cwrweb.org.

116. Fukushima, Annie I., Ayano Ginoza, Michiko Hase, Gwyn Kirk, Deborah Lee, and Taeva Sheffler. 2014. "Disaster Militarism: Rethinking U.S. Relief in the Asia-Pacific." *Foreign Policy in Focus*, 11 March 2014. Retrieved from http://fpif.org/disaster-militarism-rethinking-u-s-relief-asia-pacific/.

117. Ware, Vron. 2014. "Disaster Militarism," *openDemocracy*, (3 March). https://www.opendemocracy.net/opensecurity/vron-ware/disaster-militarism.

adjustment programs, or to the privatization of resources in support of profit accumulation. Globalization and militarism, however, should be viewed as two interrelated, mutually reinforcing processes. Globalization promotes the conditions that lead to unrest, inequality, conflict, and war; and it sustains armed conflicts through the promotion and protection of industries needed to produce weaponry, from guns and heavy armaments to chemical and electronic weapons such as tear gas and drones. Militarization is considered essential to "protect national security," "maintain public order," and end "terrorism" or the "drug trade." Ensuring national security usually means safeguarding the elites, their wealth, and power as well as corporate investments. Militarization involves state and non-state actors and forces, from para-military groups and vigilantes to corporate security forces and armed citizen groups intent on protecting their land, natural resources, homes, and families.

Military Apparatus and Force are Used to Quell Dissent

In militaristic societies, many unarmed activists, grassroots organizations, communities, religious organizations, educational institutions, and social movements that are openly critical and actively oppose government corruption or policies that favor foreign companies and national and local elites are demonized and discredited as "extremists" and "terrorists" in state propaganda. They become victims of violent and extrajudicial tactics of state forces such as surveillance, harassment, false arrest, torture, assassinations, abductions, forced evictions, and even massacres. State militaries sometimes form and train paramilitary groups or even pseudo-revolutionary groups to do this dirty work. "Counterinsurgency" therefore becomes another violent way to silence dissenters and suppress people's resistance.

In some cases, the heightened militarism is linked to the US-led "war on terror"—now 15 years old and frequently referred to as the "never-ending war." It is a war that targets non-state actors whom the US military defines as "violent extremist organizations" or simply "terrorists," such as the militant extremist Islamist groups Abu Sayyaf and Jemaah Islamiyah in Southeast Asia. Under the banner of the war on terror, government troops in the region also seek to destroy movements and groups fighting for national liberation, self-determination, or socialism such as the Communist-led New People's Army in the Philippines. As Paul Quintos notes:

> "This is where the militarist agenda of imperialist powers and local ruling elites in the Third World align. According to the 2009 counterinsurgency (COIN) doctrine of the U.S. security establishment, fighting insurgent groups requires an 'enemy-centric approach as well as a 'population-centric approach.' This means defeating insurgent groups militarily but also robbing them of popular support. In practice, state forces also target individuals or groups that they perceive as directly or indirectly supporting the insurgency through their activities and advocacies."[118]

Militarism Inflates Subnational Conflicts

Subnational conflicts take place between the state and the opposition movement over control of a territory within a sovereign state in which the opposition is struggling for greater self-rule for the local people, including control over natural resources. Prominent subnational conflicts in Southeast Asia are taking place in Mindanao (Philippines), in southern Thailand, and in Aceh and Papua (Indonesia). In Myanmar alone, six major subnational conflicts have lasted for more than 50 years.[119] As mentioned earlier, in Rakhine state, one such conflict is raging full-blown as this report is being written. In another example, according to an Asia Foundation report, "Malay-Muslim insurgents against the Thai state have received little international attention and very low levels of aid, yet result in significant cumulative impacts."[120] In all cases, militarized violence negatively affects people in local communities. They are

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118. Quintos, Paul op cit.

119. Parks, Thomas, Nick Colletta, and Ben Oppenheim. 2013. *The Contested Corners of Asia: Subnational Conflicts and International Development Assitance*, San Francisco: Asia Foundation, p. 2.

120. Morel, Adrian. 2016. "Local Data Sheds New Light on Violence in Southeast Asia." (13 November). San Francisco: Asia Foundation. https://asiafoundation.org/2016/11/16/local-data-sheds-new-light-violence-southeast-asia/

the ones who are uprooted; theirs is the land that is devastated; and theirs are the livelihoods lost. Women with dependent family members are disproportionately affected.

The violence typically does not end after the formal cessation of wars and conflicts, as seen, for example, in Aceh. There, due to the widespread presence of weapons and the combatants' inability to reintegrate into their communities "post-conflict," women are particularly vulnerable. In addition to sexual assaults and rapes, they face higher death rates than men, who died at higher rates during open conflict. In Aceh, the murder rate of women during wartime was under 5 percent, but it rose to 35 percent in 2014, after the war's end, because women are more likely to be targeted for the types of violence that are more common during peacetime such as crime and domestic violence.[121]

> The violence typically does not end after the formal cessation of wars and conflicts.

Militarism Leads to International Wars and Military Tensions

The history of international wars in Southeast Asia dates back to the Spanish–American War (1898) and includes World War II and Cold War antagonisms that were key factors of the Korean War and the US war in Vietnam. The US established bases in the Philippines at the turn of the 20th century. The era of the US war in Vietnam was also a time of US military build-up in the region. The US used airfields in Udorn, Korat, Nakhon Phanom, U-Tapao, Takli, and Bangkok in Thailand for air attacks on Vietnam.

Currently, the US and its allies (Japan and South Korea, for example) are determined to "contain" China's growing dominance and further isolate North Korea. To extend its military reach in Southeast Asia, the US has negotiated new military access agreements with Indonesia and Vietnam.
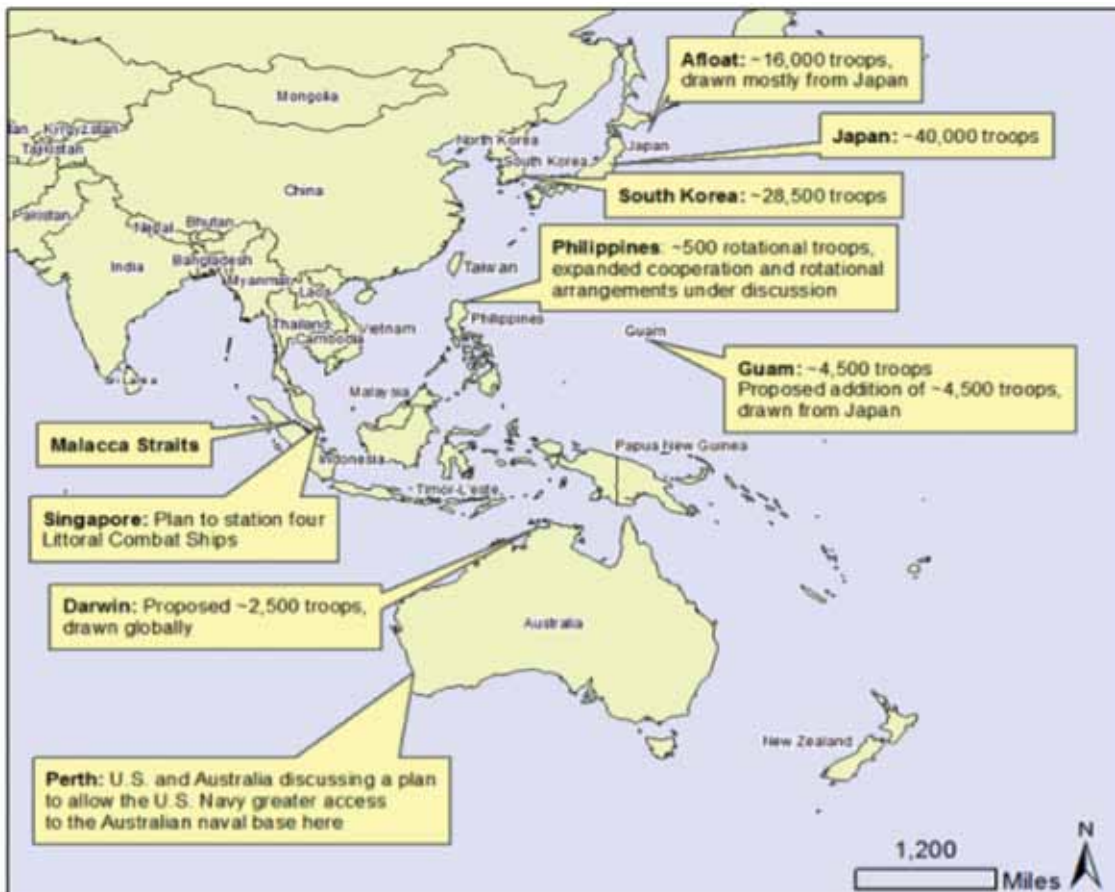
Circle of U.S military bases: Asia Pacific

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121. Ibid.

The Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement (EDCA) between the US and the Philippines, confirmed as constitutional by the Philippine Supreme Court in 2016 despite enormous public protest and legal challenges, allows the US to rotate troops into that smaller nation, and the two countries participate in joint military exercises. It also allows the US to build and operate military facilities on Philippine bases. To counter US military build-up in the region, one aspect of China's modernization program entails investing in naval capacity and related infrastructure on disputed islands in the South China Sea. The growing tension between the US and China thus is magnified among the Southeast Asian nations, which are increasingly under pressure to align themselves with one or the other of these major powers to the detriment of, or at the expense of, their political and military independence.

Militarism Deploys Women's Bodies as Collateral

> Rape, sexual assault, and sexual exploitation of women have been used consistently and routinely as weapons of war, in Southeast Asia and elsewhere.

Military institutions and fighters have used women's labor and women's bodies during armed conflicts and wars throughout history and continue to do so. Women have nursed injured fighters, performed domestic services on the battlefront, and served in state militaries and internal security (police) forces. But their gender is always in the forefront. Currently, for example, women applicants to the armed forced in Indonesia must submit to virginity testing, "'officially classified as 'psychological' examinations, for 'mental health and morality reasons.'"[122] Southeast Asian women have been armed participants in liberation struggles in the Philippines, Cambodia, Vietnam, and elsewhere in the region. As wars and conflicts break out around them, women take primary responsibility for protecting and providing for their homes and families.

Rape, sexual assault, and sexual exploitation of women have been used consistently and routinely as weapons of war, in Southeast Asia and elsewhere. For example, the US military presence in East Asia since World War II led to the establishment of a system of "militarized prostitution" in the Philippines, South Korea, and Okinawa (Japan). The US war in Vietnam directly contributed to the establishment of the modern sex industry in Thailand. In 1967, the Thai government signed an agreement with the US government to provide R&R (rest and relaxation) leave for US soldiers. Under the umbrella of the Industrial Finance Corporation (not to be confused with the World Bank's International Finance Corporation), a consortium of international investors—among them Chase Manhattan Bank, Bank of America, Deutsche Bank, and the IFC—loaned Thailand $US4 million to build hotels, restaurants, bars, nightclubs, and other infrastructure to accommodate military tourism.[123]

Women activists and human rights defenders face many types of militarized violence. Some of it is rooted in the enforcement of repressive gender roles, identities, and cultural norms; other forms of violence are inflicted on activists and defenders of human rights who speak up, organize, and otherwise violate conventional norms and expectations around what it means to be women, wives, and mothers.

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122. Human Rights Watch. 2017. "Indonesia: No End to Abusive 'Virginity Tests' Military, Police Claim Discriminatory Practice is for 'Morality Reasons'". (November 22). https://www.hrw.org/news/2017/11/22/indonesia-no-end-abusive-virginity-tests

123. See Sturdevant, Saundra, and Brenda Stultzfus. 1992. *Let the Good Times Roll: Prostitution and the US Military in Asia.* New York: New Press; Nakashima Brock, Rita, and Susan Brooks Thistlethwaite. 1996. *Casting Stones: Prostitution and Liberation in Asia and the United States.* Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press.

Summary

Extractivism specifically, and globalization of neoliberal capitalism generally, would not be possible without militarization and armed conflicts. Wars, armed conflicts, and militarized violence are fundamentally struggles over access to and control of resources, from land and nature to bodies, particularly women's. Women are rarely included as meaningful participants in peace negotiations, even though they are community leaders and bear the heaviest burdens of militarism and armed conflicts.

- Military values, ideologies, institutions, and operations rely on patriarchal, racist, ethnocentric, and class-based inequalities and they are woven into the fabric of virtually all societies.
- Militarism, militarization, and armed conflicts are inextricably linked to and inevitable causes and consequences of neoliberalism and extractivism.
- War and armed conflicts are profitable; companies and individuals involved in both formal and informal economies gain material benefits from them.
- "National security" can be assumed to mean militarized security.
- Militarization involves state forces and non-state actors, from para-military groups, vigilantes, and corporate security forces, to armed citizen groups intent on protecting their land, homes, and families. Some women participate in military institutions, liberation forces, and guerrilla formations as fighters or active supporters.
- Communities suffer from loss of livelihoods and impoverishment not only as the result of wars and armed conflicts, but also from state budgets that prioritize military spending over socially useful services.
- Hundreds of thousands of people are displaced, experience starvation, and face increased violence within their own families during times of war and political unrest; those most severely affected are women, children, and the elderly.
- Those that challenge the power, policies, and practices of corrupt governments and extractivist corporations, face militarized violence.
- Women activists and human rights defenders face intersecting consequences for standing up against injustice and for stepping out of expected gender roles and norms as women, wives, and mothers.

Existing power relations dating back to colonial times; the collusion between important state actors, transnational and local corporate leaders, and national elites; and the various interrelated processes of the globalization of neoliberal capitalism, including militarism, all work together to produce devastating results in Southeast Asia. The Southeast Asian people, however, are not silent in the face of these daunting realities.

> Wars, armed conflicts, and militarized violence are fundamentally struggles over access to and control of resources, from land and nature to bodies, particularly women's.

Women activists and human rights defenders are organizing to create progressive change in Southeast Asia in various ways. They are doing so despite the seemingly insurmountable obstacles and severe hardships they face due to the political, economic, and social power relations and trends outlined in this report. Women and human rights defenders are involved in struggles to regain land and to oppose mining companies and other forms of extractivist exploitation, as well as working to end violence against women in its many forms. They are educating their communities about the economic and political forces that are destroying or confiscating their land, resources, and means of livelihood. They also are documenting human rights violations with photos and written evidence. Seasoned organizers and movement leaders are working with young people, and learning to use the tools of social media strategically. Younger activists are emerging and forming their own networks and organizations that nurture their leadership capacities. They are working together in national networks and regional alliances. Their shared activities provide valuable insights for leveraging the collective strength of women activists across the region.

> Women activists and human rights defenders are organizing to create progressive change in Southeast Asia despite the seemingly insurmountable obstacles and severe hardships they face.

A diverse collection of NGOs,[124] other civil society organizations, coalitions, and networks of human rights defenders and organizers, many led by women, is actively working in the region to resist oppression and create positive change. Some provide direct services to people who lack necessary life supports and to survivors of violence. Others organize at local levels to protect their communities, create economic alternatives, and gain a voice in decisions that affect their lives. Still others advocate at national and international levels to create changes in policy and institutional practices.

One example is a grassroots civil society organization in Manila, the Baigani Community. It was recently founded to support the loved ones, many women and children, left behind by extrajudicial killings related to President Duterte's "war on drugs" and to advocate for the protection of their human rights. Beyond that, the Baigani Community is organizing to end the practice of extrajudicial killings altogether.[125] In Southern Mindanao, another site of intense struggle, networks of indigenous women like the Confederation of Lumad Women in Southern Mindanao (SABOKAHAN) are leading the anti-mining struggles.[126]

Internal Challenges

Of course, movements also have challenges and internal struggles. In recent years, concern has emerged among activists about the "NGO-ization" of the women's and human rights movement because of the proliferation of NGOs in SEA and in global "hotspots." Although this self-criticism is important in understanding the current situation, the point must be contextualized. The history of the emergence of NGOs is specific to each location and its political conditions and dynamics of the times, thus must be understood accordingly. One example is Malaysia in the 1980s and 1990s, as described by Susanna George, longtime Malaysian feminist activist:

> "Establishing ourselves as legal entities was a way to support the legitimacy of our work in an anti-activist and hostile environment of the Mahathir era. In the inflamed ethno-religious environment in Peninsular Malaysia of the 1980's and 1990's, the vice grip the ruling party UMNO and its crony parties maintained through policy and economic measures over the rural populations made it nearly impossible for urban based women's rights organizations to do organizing work in rural areas. Even so there were strong alliances built between

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124. NGO in this report refers to both local and international especially since the international-local designation is somewhat misleading because international NGOs have local presence and local ones take international stage such as at the UN and other international and transnational sites.

125. The Baigani Community. https://www.facebook.com/BaiganiCommunity/.

126. Simbulan, Roland G. 2015. "Indigenous Communities' Resistance to Corporate Mining in the Philippines." *Peace Review: A Journal of Social Justice* 28:29–37.

In more recent years, NGOs heavily funded by international donors and foundations have been required, for example, to meet eligibility criteria and reporting standards, such as staff with English speaking and writing ability and highly technical administrative skills, resulting in a certain kind of professionalization. Critics argue that overly professionalized activist work has sidelined the work of being a critical voice and conscience.

Another concern expressed by activists relates to shifts in funder approaches. An example is the decreasing funding for "sensitive issues in order to protect other aspects of their work by avoiding negative state scrutiny, or funding only well-established groups more likely to survive crackdown… leaving the most marginalised sections of society without resources or allies."[128]

Differences in the history of women's movements and grassroots activism have also created tensions in the region. For example, a women's rights agenda is a relatively new development in Myanmar, whereas contemporary Philippine women's activism and movements date back to the struggle against the Ferdinand Marcos dictatorship in the 1980s, and as far back as the early 1900s.[129] Movement histories, like other histories, influence current practices. Thus, organizations in the region represent a range, sometimes opposing and contradictory, of political and ideological perspectives. Competition for funding and resources has exacerbated the tensions.

Activists recognize that pitting one group against another is a mechanism to create fear and close down democratic spaces. For example, activists organizing against extraction are pitted against LGBTI rights activists. Divisive methods like these have at times resulted in discord and mistrust among progressives.

Nonetheless, overall, these organizations play important positive roles in the region. Principled and courageous movement work draws on activist women's deep convictions that indigenous people and other marginalized groups all deserve to live with dignity and respect. Their actions confirm their belief that their countries' wealth—generated from the land, natural resources, and the labor and knowledge of indigenous people—can and should sustain local communities and that violence against the people and the land should be countered and stopped.

Seeking Fundamental Change

Those participating in the Southeast Asian women's movement are seeking deep societal and interpersonal changes as they imagine a future that is economically, environmentally, and culturally sustainable; free of violence in all its forms; and filled with genuine opportunities for people and communities to direct their lives according to their beliefs and values.

The imperialist and colonialist practices of Western states have constructed a false division between the so-called "developed" and "underdeveloped" nations. Those in the West have described people in underdeveloped areas as "primitive" or, at best, on their way to becoming developed or more Westernized. So, while the primary intention of colonialism was the extraction of natural resources and land to benefit the elites in dominant nations, the ideological underpinning was that the West—and thereby Western political, economic, social, and cultural ways—is superior. Western standards are to be emulated while non-Western standards are deemed inferior. The way to achieve Western standards, the colonialists insist, was and remains primarily through economic development. Thus, international development in underdeveloped nations must be viewed as economically driven from the start or, as Caouette and Kapoor maintain: "Local institutions, local knowledge, cultural diversity, ecologies, and identities were set aside since economic growth and urbanization held the promise of positive and unequal transformation."[130]

> Those participating in the Southeast Asian women's movement are seeking deep societal and interpersonal changes as they imagine a future that is economically, environmentally, and culturally sustainable; free of violence in all its forms; and filled with genuine opportunities for people and communities to direct their lives according to their beliefs and values.

127. Personal communication, December 2017.

128. Bishop, Kate op cit., p. 16.

129. Roces, Mina. 2012. *Women's Movements and the Filipina 1986-2008*. Honolulu, HI: University of Hawai'i Press.

130. Caouette, Dominique, and Dip Kapoor. 2016. *Beyond Colonialism, Development, and Globalization: Social Movements and Critical Perspectives*. London: Zed Press, p. 3.

Southeast Asian activists today are questioning and challenging the value of the prevailing systems in their region—namely, neoliberal globalization, development, and militarized national security. They are also committed to sustaining localized practices, collective actions, and liberatory education rooted in local knowledge. Simultaneously, they have interwoven knowledge and practices from other progressive and counter-hegemonic traditions, such as the work of Brazilian educator Paulo Freire who introduced the practice of popular education to develop critical consciousness, which he called *conscientização* or *conscientization*, as the basis for collective progressive action.[131] In short, like many other activists around the world, activists in this region are working in the local context but informed by a vast palette of political ideas and knowledge systems. Feminist activists are pushing further to resist ethnocentrism, racism, patriarchy, and the exploitation of women's labor and bodies by developing inclusive identities that go far beyond critiques centered solely on economics.

Confronting Increasing Danger and Closing Democratic Space

Sharing information about the conditions they face, women activists and human rights defenders have come to realize that "the states are getting smart." State actors are coopting the language of activists while undermining the implementation of actual change: "We fought for laws…and we got these laws but these are like ornaments. They may have language on human rights and women's rights but are not being realized or implemented on the ground."

Despite the targeted attacks to silence oppositional voices and suppress dissent throughout the region, women activists and human rights defenders persist. Their courage is inspiring as they oppose the cultures of fear created by corporate interests and autocratic government elites, and their armed forces. Undoubtedly, their families and communities worry about activists' safety as well their own. Nonetheless, by their work and their presence, they seek to keep open some democratic spaces, however small and fragile.

Even when women's activism produces victories, the struggle continues as backlash and ongoing power inequities keep women from reaping the full benefits of these gains. For instance, when advances in land struggles are achieved, patriarchal beliefs, conventions, and customary laws around land ownership entitle the men in families and communities to control and own land, rather than the women themselves. Activists therefore insist that material struggles and women's rights struggles are inseparable. Successes of pro-democracy movements may result in new policies and laws geared toward gender equality and ensuring women's rights, but they are unevenly applied or unenforced.

A Promising Conversation among Southeast Asian Women Activists

The JASS SEA Regional Convening of women activists and human rights defenders, policy advocates, and academics from the six countries named in this report in October 2016 was a golden opportunity to reflect on personal experiences, share local and national updates, and theorize about the major forces impacting their respective contexts and region. Early in the discussions, an Indonesian activist observed:

> "Although they take different forms in different countries, the problems are fundamentally the same. The problem is still there because we have not yet achieved a structural or systemic change in our countries. However, the change that we have achieved is the thinking of the people and how they see the problem. Our political consciousness has been raised. We see that we cannot win this struggle or we cannot change the system … if we are not united. (And) we need to raise the level of our struggle.."[132]

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131. For fuller understanding of Freire's work, see Freire, Paulo. 2000. *Pedagogy of the Oppressed 30th Anniversary Edition.* Bloomsbury Academic Press.

132. JASS Southeast Asia. 2016. "*Southeast Regional Convening: Bodies, Resources, Safety, Power.*" p. 4.

Raising the level of their struggle is the next phase of creating progressive change in the region. They reflected that the problems they face are structural, part of a global phenomenon, and that change will require new levels of strategy and collaboration in the region. These strategies will have to be able to get at the roots of the problems in creative ways that over time transform them. They will need to inspire and mobilize more women and affected people to join the collective struggle. One Thai activist suggested that movements must "fill people's stomachs…and stir their love for their community. People then will do anything to save their home."

In the final session of the convening, participants agreed about the basics for moving forward— shared analysis and collectively generated vision. As one participant noted:

> "One of the things that we learned is that shared analysis really helps people feel connected and collected and build strategy. When we go back to the stories and move these stories into analysis then our issues become common or similar. We come back to the need for dignity. Then we create a vision of what dignity means. What does it actually mean to live in dignity? We need to define it as a group."

At the end, the participants generated Shared Principles for their budding alliance:

- Keep everyone informed.
- Share vision and common analysis.
- Respect each other.
- Value a collective mindset.
- Recognise that alliances don't have to be forever.
- Respect different experiences.
- Build collective and alternative feminist leadership.
- Create space to share and learn from personal experiences as part of "the work."
- Ensure the credibility of those we choose as allies.
- Honor the principles of freedom and self-determination.
- Make time for meaningful processes that engage whole self.
- Agree on a process to deal with tension, conflict, and difficult conversations.

The wisdom, insights, and practical experiences gleaned from the JASS regional convening demonstrate the power of sharing experiences and thus generating knowledge, and of collective strategizing among those who are most affected and with their allies. The gathering also highlighted the urgency of three methods:

- **Thinking and building alliances across movements.** For example, bridging women defending land and resources with women defending labor rights and creating networks, in order to generate the deep trust, solidarity, and connection that make it possible to generate more power, more safety, and ability to cope.
- **Mobilizing communities in resistance efforts.** This starts with the question: what mobilizes ordinary people to be involved? It also includes information-sharing in communities and engaging communities to build people power. For example, among indigenous and rural people, land means life and identity. Thus, the mobilizing must be connected to those deep meanings.
- **Building economic alternatives to the prevailing economic system.** For example, a community in Central Java Indonesia responded to rising food prices by building their food independence and launching a campaign, "No Debt, Don't Buy, Make Your Own," that encouraged community members to produce and prepare their own food and to buy raw and prepared food from each other.

International Solidarity and Transnational Feminist Organizing

To confront and resist the globalization of neoliberal capitalism, women frontline activists, human rights defenders, feminist policy advocates and academics, and survivors are actively meeting, networking, and organizing across borders. Transnational feminist movements and activists are creating gathering places for women from very local and sometimes isolated spaces to cross-border, regionally, internationally, and transnationally organized political events, capacity building workshops, and advocacy work. The formation of feminist organizations such as APWLD, AWID, JASS and Urgent Action Fund, whose work is cited in this report; the 1995 NGO Forum of the Fourth World Conference on Women, a landmark event in the global women's movement; and the creation and implementation of international laws, conventions, and agreements, such as CEDAW and UN Security Council Resolution 1325—all were facilitated by the globalization of women's movements and women's activism.

> Women can collectively organize strategies of resistance in locations very far and different from their own and generate interest in and possibilities for alliance-building and extended movement work.

International solidarity and transnational feminist movements also facilitate the development of progressive social change strategies. Included among these are efforts aimed at creating movements within countries of the Global South to challenge and organize against the entire cluster of power relationships between and among corporations, financial institutions, states, militaries, and elites. Movements resisting extractivist mining in Southeast Asia and Latin America are important examples. Women survivors and leaders from affected communities in the Global South can speak directly about the conditions and struggles they face to women of relative privilege in the Global North in South–North working meetings. In so doing, women can collectively organize strategies of resistance in locations very far and different from their own and generate interest in and possibilities for alliance-building and extended movement work. For example, organizers in Southeast Asia could work with their counterparts in the US and UK to identify the major suppliers of weapons and military equipment in their regions, then organize international boycotts, disrupt corporate shareholders' meetings, and conduct similar campaigns to challenge those suppliers' actions. Such South–North gatherings could also become important forums for addressing structural inequalities and power relations, breaking down stereotypes, and dispelling myths about women in both locations.

In June 2017, an international coalition was formed to support the 150 men who were being heavily persecuted because of their gender and sexual orientation and the rights of LGBTI communities generally in Indonesia. A group of 35 organizations and individuals across the globe called for people in Indonesia and elsewhere to "join our efforts to ensure these men and all LGBT Indonesians are afforded the legal rights and health services to which they are entitled as citizens, and the compassion and dignity to which they are entitled as human beings."[133]

Although not without contradictions and problems, international and transnational solidarity and organizing have supported and strengthened women's activism and movements in many ways. To face current challenges and to increase the possibilities for true transformational change, building collective power and international and transnational feminist solidarity must be grounded in and informed by the women who are most affected and marginalized by the dynamics named in this report. The power and solidarity must be utilized to support THEIR organizing and movement-building for creating change in THEIR lives and communities, and to fortify THEIR leadership.

The longer-term questions regarding women's activism and movements are: What is the broader vision guiding women's activism and movement-building? What kinds of societal structures and institutions and social, economic, and political relations will best serve the interests of all people, especially the most marginalized therefore most affected by the current conditions?

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133. AWID. 2017. "International Coalition calls for public support to end persecution of LGBT people in Indonesia." (17 June). https://www.awid.org/news-and-analysis/international-coalition-calls-public-support-end-increasing-persecution-lgbt.

Creating Genuine Security and Cultures of Peace for All

As discussed earlier, "security" is typically thought of, expressed, and practiced as "national security" and is militarized. These mean the creation of an "Other"—minority ethnic and indigenous groups, women activists and human rights defenders as "terrorist" for example—as the enemy and the most serious threats to communities and countries. This kind of security undermines the everyday security for many people and for the environment. Instead there is profound need for genuine security that arises from the following principles:

● The physical environment must be able to sustain human and natural life;
● People's basic needs for food, clothing, shelter, health care, and education must be guaranteed;
● People's fundamental human dignity should be honored and cultural identities respected; and
● People and the natural environment should be protected from avoidable harm.[134]

A culture of peace is the necessary complement to genuine security. Creating a true culture of peace extends beyond the principles proposed by UNESCO. It requires justice, the equitable distribution of resources, and collective and individual self-determination; and it requires this not only with reference to structural changes, but also regarding the fundamental shift from the prevailing patriarchal Eurocentric paradigm of development and progress. That paradigm—rooted as it is in neoliberal capitalism; materialism; social relationships of domination and subordination based on gender and sexuality, race and ethnicity, class, nationality; and domination of the natural world—must cease to exist if a culture of peace and social and ecological justice is to be created in Southeast Asia and elsewhere.

> **"The culture of peace and non-violence is a commitment to peace-building, mediation, conflict prevention and resolution, peace education, education for non-violence, tolerance, acceptance, mutual respect, intercultural and interfaith dialogue and reconciliation."** UNESCO[135]

> *Creating a true culture of peace extends beyond the principles proposed by UNESCO. It requires justice, the equitable distribution of resources, and collective and individual self-determination; and it requires this not only with reference to structural changes, but also regarding the fundamental shift from the prevailing patriarchal Eurocentric paradigm of development and progress.*

The reconfiguration of power relations and conditions will also require fundamental shifts in understandings and practices of "development" and "progress" and the related concept of citizenship. This massive shifting of the current, prevailing values and processes of development will require a fundamental reconceptualization of world economic systems.

Vandana Shiva's ideas about economic systems—of a "nature's economy" and "sustenance economy"—can inform an alternative development model and visions of a just world.[136] Combining elements of the former—reproduced through ecological processes such as the water cycle, oxygen cycle, and nitrogen cycle that sustain forests, grasslands, wetlands, and all forms of life—with elements of the latter—that is, everything people do to maintain their lives including farming and gardening to live, maintaining a home, biological reproduction, socializing and educating children, training workers, and caring for all members of society—might be the essential ingredients of a truly sustainable solidarity economy. Such an economy would be based on efforts that seek to increase the quality of life of a region or community through not-for-profit endeavors designed and intended to sustain all life.

> *Genuine security and a culture of peace and justice also demand re-conceptualizing citizenship to recognize fully the identities, voices, agency, authority, entitlement, and protection of communities, groups, and individuals within and across national borders.*

Genuine security and a culture of peace and justice also demand re-conceptualizing citizenship. In a legal sense of the word, citizenship is about who is determined to belong to a particular place and who is determined not to belong. While this definition is currently understood in relationship to the nation-state and specifies a formal attachment to a state or states, a broader definition is needed. That definition must respond not only to the challenges caused by the globalization of neoliberal capitalism but also to the need to recognize fully the identities, voices, agency, authority, entitlement, and protection of communities, groups, and individuals within and across national borders.

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134. Women for Genuine Security. n.d. "What Is Genuine Security?" http://www.genuinesecurity.org/aboutus/whatisGS.html
135. UNESCO. n.d. "Culture of Peace and Non-Violence." Retrieved from https://en.unesco.org/cultureofpeace/
136. Shiva, Vandana. 2016. *Earth Democracy: Sustainability, Justice and Peace.* London: Zed Books.

Summary

Women in Southeast Asia are working in networks, community organizations, NGOs, and other civil society groups and are organizing and building progressive movements based on feminist, anti-imperialist, and anti-capitalist principles in the face of brutal, life-threatening challenges created by the forces and actors discussed in this report. They are engaged in rural areas, villages, and urban areas locally as well as at national and regional levels, and many are part of global women's movements. Individuals, groups, and organizations—those named in the report along with countless others—draw on their strength of mind and heart, ability to persevere despite setbacks, and determination to advance the notion that violations of women's rights and human rights and state impunity should not become normalized; and that corporations should not determine their own and their communities' futures.

- Younger and older women activists and human rights defenders are organizing within and across specific issues and problems in various locations throughout SEA.
- They recognize the critical importance of activists and organizers generating and using a shared analysis of the root causes of problems, how the problems are institutionally sustained, and how the most vulnerable people in a given location—women and girls, rural and indigenous people, LGBTI people, and migrant workers, for example—are systematically affected across the region.
- NGOs and movements are not synonymous. NGOs can provide certain kinds of infrastructure and function as one part of movements; movements can exert a countervailing force against professionalization of NGOs.
- Although problematic in some ways, identities, cultures, traditions, and religions can be important sources of inspiration and power when harnessed in aid of transformative change. Therefore, people are encouraged to embrace and honor local institutions, local knowledge, and diversity of cultures and identities.
- Activists and movements are challenging the dominant Western, patriarchal, racist and ethnocentric, capitalist development paradigm and state-centered formulation of citizenship. They are also envisioning and working to establish those that are life-affirming and take seriously human and environment-centered security.
- International and transnational feminist solidarity and movement work are necessary to confronting and resisting the globalization of neoliberal capitalism. The long-term problems and challenges addressed in this report require long-term feminist alliances and solidarities within and outside the region.
- Recognizing the power of collective understanding and activism and organizing identifiable international movements comprising affected people and their allies, with shared analyses and complementary strategies are possible and absolutely necessary.
- Working locally, national, regionally, and internationally to pay more attention on self and collective well being, create genuine security and a culture of peace is the way forward.

JASS is a multi-regional movement-support network in 26 countries. We strengthen the voice, visibility and collective power of women for a just and sustainable world for all. Anchored by three regional hubs in Mesoamerica, Southeast Asia and Southern Africa, JASS is locally led by teams from the countries and regions they work, many from the movements and formations that JASS accompanies. We work primarily with leaders and organizations focused on freedom of expression, health and sexual rights, defense of natural resources, and the protection of women human rights defenders. Our strategies train diverse local leaders, strengthen community organizing, build broad alliances, and link grassroots solutions to global advocacy. Using creative communications and documentation strategies, we publicize the innovative ways women are building inclusive communities and deepening democracy.

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