

The Relationship between International Law and National Law in Wartime: The Indonesian Context

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Article	Abstract
<p>Keywords: International Law; National Law; Wartime; Indonesia Perspective.</p> <p>Article History Received: Feb 16, 2026; Reviewed: Mar 26, 2026; Accepted: Apr 29, 2026; Published: May 21, 2026.</p>	<p>This study examines the limitations of Indonesia's strategy in regulating the interaction between international law and national law during wartime conditions. It focuses on three central issues: (1) the development of international and national law in both peacetime and wartime contexts; (2) the nature of their relationship within Indonesia's legal system; and (3) Indonesian strategies for managing this relationship in situations of armed conflict. Employing a socio-legal approach integrated with a geopolitical perspective, the study conducts a comparative analysis of practices in the United States, the United Kingdom, Russia, Libya, Yemen, and Indonesia. The findings demonstrate that while the relationship between international law and national law is generally coherent and cooperative in peacetime, it becomes markedly ambivalent in wartime. Moreover, Indonesia is found to lack a comprehensive legal framework and adequate practical experience to address such conditions. The study argues that Indonesia's capabilities and geopolitical position can function as strategic instruments to navigate and recalibrate the interaction</p>

between international law and national law in a way that is more aligned with its national interests.



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Introduction

The interface between international law and national legal systems can be traced, at the very least, to 1945, marked by the establishment of the United Nations (UN).¹ Since that formative moment, a vast number of international treaties have been concluded across diverse sectors, with widespread participation by states.² Accession to such treaties entails significant legal consequences, most notably the obligation of states to internalize and implement treaty provisions within their respective domestic legal orders.³

Between 1945 and 2025, UN records indicate the registration of approximately 560 international treaties.⁴ While not all treaties are cumulatively binding upon each state, this figure reflects the extensive normative development and implementation of international law by UN member states. Over nearly eight decades, the interaction between international and national law has generally evolved in a relatively stable manner, facilitated by conditions of peace, the availability of structured legal instruments, and the functioning of dispute settlement mechanisms.⁵

As a member of the UN,⁶ Indonesia has acceded to numerous international agreements spanning areas such as human rights, maritime affairs, economic cooperation, anti-corruption, diplomatic and consular relations, the eradication of discrimination and violence, and environmental protection. These commitments have been

¹ United Nations Charter, June 26, 1945, 1 UNTS XVI, accessed January 25, 2026 <https://www.un.org/en/about-us/un-charter/full-text>.

² United Nations Treaty Collection, "Multilateral Treaties Deposited with the Secretary-General," accessed January 25, 2026, https://treaties.un.org/Pages/ParticipationStatus.aspx?clang=_en.

³ Vienna Convention of the Law of Treaties (VCLT) 1969, Accessed January 25, 2026, https://legal.un.org/ilc/texts/instruments/english/conventions/1_1_1969.pdf.

⁴ Depository of Treaties, Accessed January 25, 2026, <https://treaties.un.org/>.

⁵ United Nations Charter Art. 2 Sec. 3.

⁶ United Nations General Assembly, "Admission of the Republic of Indonesia to Membership in the United Nations," A/RES/491(V), September 28, 1950, Accessed January 25, 2026, [https://undocs.org/A/RES/491\(V\)](https://undocs.org/A/RES/491(V)).

formalized through processes of ratification within the national legal framework and continue to operate effectively to this day.⁷

It is important to note, however, that the effective implementation of these treaties in Indonesia has been largely underpinned by conditions of peace. Unlike states such as the United States, the United Kingdom, Russia, Yemen, and Libya, Indonesia has not experienced wartime conditions during its period of treaty adherence. This divergence gives rise to a fundamental inquiry: how would the relationship between international law and national law be managed within the Indonesian legal system in the event of war?

This question is particularly significant given the limited practical experience Indonesia possesses in navigating the interaction between international and domestic legal obligations under wartime conditions. In an increasingly fluid geopolitical landscape, the possibility—however undesirable—of Indonesia becoming involved in armed conflict cannot be entirely discounted. In such circumstances, certain international treaty obligations may conflict with urgent national interests, thereby necessitating a careful consideration of legal mechanisms for their suspension, modification, or termination.

Indonesia's legal posture thus differs markedly from that of states such as the United States, the United Kingdom, Russia, Yemen, and Libya, all of which have accumulated experience in managing the interplay between international and national law during periods of armed conflict. This relative lack of experience underscores the importance of undertaking a systematic inquiry into appropriate legal strategies for Indonesia in such contexts.

According to this study, it is structured into three principal parts. The first part elaborates the theoretical framework governing the relationship between international law and national law in both peacetime and wartime contexts, including a comparative examination of state practices. The second part analyzes the dynamics of this relationship within Indonesia under conditions of peace, with particular emphasis on the domestic implementation of key international treaties. The third and final part proposes strategic approaches for Indonesia in managing the interface between

⁷ "Daftar Perjanjian," Treaty Room, Directorate General of Law and International Agreements, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia, accessed January 25, 2026, <https://treaty-room.kemlu.go.id/daftar-perjanjian>.

international and national law during wartime, drawing upon comparative models to determine which categories of treaties should remain fully operative, be partially suspended, wholly suspended, or terminated.

Method

This study adopts a socio-legal, or non-doctrinal, methodological approach. Through this framework, the research aims to elucidate the dynamics underlying the management of the relationship between international law and national law in Indonesia, including the external variables that shape such interactions and their corresponding implications. In addition, the socio-legal inquiry extends to a comparative examination of the policies of the United States, the United Kingdom, Russia, Yemen, and Libya in regulating the interface between international and domestic legal obligations under wartime conditions, together with the underlying considerations informing such policies and their practical consequences. The findings derived from these two analytical strands are intended to provide a robust academic foundation for formulating an appropriate model for managing the relationship between international law and national law in Indonesia within the context of armed conflict.⁸

Result and Discussion

A. International Law and National Law in Global Dynamics: Peace and War Situations

Global developments have encouraged states to progressively incorporate international law into their domestic legal systems. This integration is primarily intended to reflect the universality of legal principles while fostering cooperation across multiple sectors. In essence, the interaction between international law and national law is not a recent phenomenon, but one that has evolved continuously over time.⁹

Historically, even in the classical period, the concept of *jus gentium* functioned as a form of universal law recognized among

⁸ Sally Wheeler, "Socio-Legal Studies in 2020," *Journal of Law and Society* 47, no. S2 (2020): S209, <https://doi.org/10.1111/jols.12267>.

⁹ Gerry Simpson. 'The Globalization of International Law', in Tim Dunne, and Christian Reus-Smit (eds), *The Globalization of International Society* (Oxford, 2017; online edn, Oxford Academic, 16 Feb. 2017), accessed 27 Jan. 2026, <https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780198793427.003.0014>.

European states and applied within their respective jurisdictions, notwithstanding its lack of formal codification.¹⁰ Entering the modern era, the Treaty of Westphalia represents a foundational moment in which European states collectively affirmed the principle of sovereignty as a norm of customary international law, subsequently internalized within their domestic legal systems.¹¹ During this period, the consolidation of international legal order was further advanced through formal agreements such as the Treaty of Versailles and the Covenant of the League of Nations, both of which were incorporated into the legal frameworks of participating states.¹²

In the postmodern period, the relationship between international and national law has become increasingly institutionalized and effective. Beginning with the adoption of the United Nations Charter in 1945, states have intensified their engagement in treaty-making across diverse domains, subsequently integrating these obligations into domestic law through ratification and accession.¹³ This era has also been characterized by relatively harmonious interaction between international and national legal orders, largely due to the presence of structured dispute settlement mechanisms that enhance the enforceability of international norms.¹⁴

The consolidation of this relationship has enabled states to strengthen both bilateral and multilateral cooperation through international agreements, while simultaneously aligning their legal perspectives at the global level. Such cooperation and harmonization are perceived as generating cumulative benefits, including advances in economic development, education, technology, security, diplomatic relations, and overall national stability.¹⁵

In practice, states engage with a wide range of international treaties, broadly categorized into those oriented toward cooperation

¹⁰ Gordon E. Sherman “Jus Gentium and International Law.” *The American Journal of International Law* 12, no. 1 (1918): 56–63. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2187613>.

¹¹ Leo Gross. “The Peace of Westphalia, 1648-1948.” *The American Journal of International Law* 42, no. 1 (1948): 20–41. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2193560>.

¹² Manley O. Hudson. “Amendment of the Covenant of the League of Nations.” *Harvard Law Review* 38, no. 7 (1925): 903–53. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1329538>.

¹³ VCLT, art. 11.

¹⁴ Eric De Brabandere. “International Dispute Settlement – from Practice to Legal Discipline.” *Leiden Journal of International Law* 31, no. 3 (2018): 459–68. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0922156518000250>.

¹⁵ Gabriella Blum. Bilateralism, Multilateralism, and the Architecture of International Law. 49 Harv. Int'l L.J. 323 (2008). <http://nrs.harvard.edu/urn-3:HUL.InstRepos:10880577>.

and those aimed at ensuring legal equality. In the first category, a prominent example is the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) 1947, which was later complemented by a comprehensive legal framework under the World Trade Organization (WTO), consisting of approximately 20 agreements. While GATT initially involved 23 member states, the WTO currently encompasses 154 members. These regimes have facilitated extensive global economic cooperation, including trade in goods and services, agricultural commodities, and foreign investment.¹⁶ Under the WTO framework, states have also developed more specialized multilateral trade agreements, such as the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA),¹⁷ the Indonesia–European Union Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement, and¹⁸ the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership.¹⁹

Empirically, such economic cooperation has produced substantial benefits. The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) reports that global economic cooperation has generated approximately \$33 trillion in turnover,²⁰ representing around 30% of the global Gross Domestic Product (GDP), projected at \$111.3 trillion in 2024. These figures underscore the extent to

¹⁶ Marrakesh Agreement Establishing the World Trade Organization, April 15, 1994, 1867 UNTS 154, Accessed January 25, 2026, https://www.wto.org/english/docs_e/legal_e/04-wto_e.htm. For further reading, see Understanding the WTO, https://www.wto.org/english/thewto_e/whatis_e/tif_e/understanding_e.pdf.

¹⁷ A. Maniriho, J. Barayandema, & P. Kayisire. Effects of the African Continental Free Trade Area on Enhancing Exports and Welfare in Selected East African Community Countries. *The International Trade Journal* 39, no. 5 (2025): 445–470. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08853908.2025.2511040>.

¹⁸ European Union and Republic of Indonesia, Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement between the Republic of Indonesia and the European Union, 2025, Accessed January 25, 2026, https://policy.trade.ec.europa.eu/eu-trade-relationships-country-and-region/countries-and-regions/indonesia/eu-indonesia-agreements/text-agreements_en.

¹⁹ Y. Jiang & H. Husin. Assessing the economic impact and welfare effects of RCEP: A case study of Malaysia's progress in the ASEAN-China Free Trade Agreement. *The Journal of International Trade & Economic Development* 33, no. 8 (2024): 1600–1625. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09638199.2023.2285861>.

²⁰ Accumulation of Global Trade Values, Accessed January 25, 2026 <https://unctad.org/news/global-trade-hits-record-33-trillion-2024-driven-services-and-developing-economics>.

which global economic development is grounded in interdependence among states.²¹

In the second category, the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea serves as a paradigmatic example. This convention played a decisive role in redefining the boundaries of state sovereignty and reconciling previously divergent legal doctrines.²² Prior to its adoption, the international law of the sea was characterized by fragmentation, largely due to unresolved tensions between *mare liberum* and *mare clausum*,²³ as well as disagreements over the breadth of the territorial sea, typically ranging from 3 to 6 miles from baselines. Following World War II, debates expanded to include the legal status of archipelagic states.²⁴

Entering force in 1994, UNCLOS 1982 had, by 2026, been ratified by 170 states.²⁵ Its widespread acceptance reflects a global commitment to a unified maritime legal order. The convention has significantly consolidated state sovereignty, particularly by affirming the rights of archipelagic states,²⁶ and has generated considerable economic benefits, especially in the exploration and exploitation of marine natural resources. Countries such as Indonesia, Malaysia, and Japan have notably benefited from this regime, underscoring the

²¹ International Monetary Fund, World Economic Outlook Database, April 2024, accessed January 25, 2026, https://www.imf.org/external/datamapper/NGDPD@WEO/WEO_WORLD.World's_GDP_In_2024

²² David Letts. "The Development of the 1982 UN Convention on the Law of the Sea: An Australian Perspective." *Indonesian Journal of International Law* 17, no. 4 (2020): 455-76. <https://doi.org/10.17304/ijil.vol17.4.795>.

²³ Toivo Miljan, "The Baltic Sea: Mare Clausum or Mare Liberum?", *Cooperation and Conflict* 9, no. 1 (1974): 19–28, <https://doi.org/10.1177/001083677400900103>.

²⁴ Arif Havas Oegroseno, "Archipelagic States: From Concept to Law," in *The IMLI Manual on International Maritime Law: Volume I: The Law of the Sea*, ed. David Joseph Attard, Malgosia Fitzmaurice, and Norman A. Martínez Gutiérrez (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 125–136, <https://doi.org/10.1093/law/9780199683925.003.0005>.

²⁵ United Nations Treaty Collection, *Status of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea*, accessed January 27, 2026, https://treaties.un.org/Pages/ViewDetailsIII.aspx?src=TREATY&mtdsg_no=XXI-6&chapter=21&Temp=mtdsg3&clang=_en.

²⁶ K. Kittichaisaree. Roles and Future Developments of UNCLOS. In: Nguyen, L.A.T., Vu, H.D. (eds) *Viability of UNCLOS amid Emerging Global Maritime Challenges*. Springer, Singapore. 2025. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-97-5838-8_1.

extent to which certain states have become structurally dependent on international maritime law.²⁷

Notwithstanding these achievements, it must be emphasized that legal regimes such as WTO law and UNCLOS 1982 are fundamentally designed to operate under conditions of peace.²⁸ They do not provide explicit mechanisms governing their application during armed conflict. This limitation is reflected in Article 73 of the Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties (VCLT), which leaves unresolved questions concerning the effects of hostilities on treaty obligations.²⁹ Consequently, in situations of war, such treaties may be suspended or rendered inapplicable, often justified by the principle of *rebus sic stantibus*, which permits treaty modification in response to changing circumstances.³⁰

State practice provides illustrative examples. Iran terminated its nuclear agreement with the United States following the revolutionary transition from the Pahlavi regime to Khamenei.³¹ Indonesia, in the post-independence period, unilaterally nationalized Dutch assets without providing the requested compensation.³² Germany, following the rise of Hitler, repudiated its obligations under the 1919 Treaty of Versailles, including reparations and disarmament provisions.³³

²⁷ Agustina Merdekawati, Marsudi Triatmodjo, and Irkham Afnan Trisandi Hasibuan, "The Recent Challenged Development to Implement UNCLOS 1982's Common Heritage of Mankind," *Mimbar Hukum* 34, no. 1 (2022): 1–31, <https://doi.org/10.22146/mh.v34i1.4000>.

²⁸ United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, December 10, 1982, 1833 UNTS 3, accessed January 27, 2026, https://www.un.org/depts/los/convention_agreements/texts/unclos/unclos_e.pdf. UNCLOS 1982 does not have a mechanism for enforcing treaties in times of war.

²⁹ VCLT, art. 73.

³⁰ D. Sidik Suraputra. "Doctrine of Rebus Sic Stantibus and Law of International Treaty," *Indonesian Journal of International Law* 11, no. 4 (2014): 462-82. <https://doi.org/10.17304/ijil.vol11.4.518>.

³¹ Robert J. Reardon. "Iran's Nuclear Program: Past, Present, and Future." In *Containing Iran: Strategies for Addressing the Iranian Nuclear Challenge* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2012), 9–64, <https://doi.org/10.7249/j.ctt1q60rb.10>.

³² Sefriani. *Hukum Internasional: Suatu Pengantar*. 2nd ed. (Depok: PT Raja Grafindo Persada, 2022)

³³ E. D. Morel. "The Curse of Versailles Treaty." *Current History (1916-1940)* 19, no. 1 (1923): 39–44. <https://doi.org/10.1525/curh.1923.19.1.39>; DeWitt C. Poole. "Light on Nazi Foreign Policy." *Foreign Affairs* 25, no. 1 (1946): 130–54. <https://doi.org/10.2307/20030025>.

Similarly, Israel has been observed to violate territorial boundaries with Palestine under claims of self-defense.³⁴

These developments indicate that, in wartime, the application of international law within domestic legal systems may take one of three forms: continued implementation, suspension, or complete non-implementation. Such outcomes depend on the structure of the national legal system, prior experience, and the relative political power of the state concerned.

An examination of the constitutional and statutory frameworks of the United States, the United Kingdom, Russia, Yemen, and Libya reveals the absence of explicit regulation concerning the interaction between international and national law during wartime.³⁵ At most, these systems address the status of international law within domestic law and the mechanisms of its incorporation. This normative gap creates space for ambivalent state practice.³⁶

For example, during the 2003 Iraq War, the United States was widely criticized for ignoring the United Nations Charter by employing force absent a clear justification of self-defense, thereby infringing Iraqi sovereignty,³⁷ while simultaneously maintaining active participation in international economic regimes under WTO law.³⁸ Similarly, the United Kingdom was noted to have departed from the peace-oriented commitments of the Treaty of Versailles and the

³⁴ Shavit, Eldad, and Chuck Freilich. "The US, Israel, and the Ongoing War in Gaza." Institute for National Security Studies, 2023. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep55310>.

³⁵ The constitutions of the US, UK, Russia, Yemen and Libya have provisions for international law in times of war; U.S. Constitution, art. I, sec. 8; Russian Constitution, art. 15, sec. 4; Transitional Constitutional Declaration of Yemen (2015), art. 92; Libyan Constitutional Declaration (2011), art. 17; as the constitution of the United Kingdom is uncodified, we can see some illustrative sources of how it's handled as follow: Human Rights Act 1998, s 1; Geneva Conventions Act 1957; Constitutional Reform and Governance Act 2010, Sch 2; R (Hassan) v UK ECHR 865 (2014). Accessed January 27, 2026.

³⁶ Fabitul Rahmat, Moh. Muhibbin, Budi Parmono, Concept Regulation on the Transfer Sentenced Persons Between Countries in Indonesia: An Initial Step, *Hang Tuah Law Journal* 8, no. 1, (2024): 158–172, <https://doi.org/10.30649/htlj.v8i2.252>

³⁷ N. J. Simuziya. The (il)legality of the Iraq War of 2003: An Analytical Review of the Causes and Justifications for the US-led invasion. *Cogent Social Sciences* 9, no. 1 (2023). <https://doi.org/10.1080/23311886.2022.2163066>.

³⁸ MacFarlane, and Michael Mastanduno (eds), *US Hegemony and International Organizations: The United States and Multilateral Institutions* (Oxford, 2003; online edn, Oxford Academic, 1 Nov. <https://doi.org/10.1093/0199261431.001.0001>.

League of Nations framework during World War II,³⁹ yet continued to comply with various trade agreements during the Falklands War, except in relation to Argentina as a belligerent adversary.⁴⁰

Russia, in the context of the 2022–2024 conflict with Ukraine, has been associated with violations of international law, including alleged crimes against humanity targeting civilians and healthcare infrastructure.⁴¹ Nevertheless, Russia has continued to engage in international economic cooperation, particularly with China and other Asian states, despite the imposition of Western sanctions.⁴²

In contrast, Yemen and Libya demonstrate a different pattern. Despite ongoing civil conflicts, both states have continued to comply with international obligations in specific sectors, particularly education, as evidenced by the sustained presence and protection of foreign students, including Indonesians.⁴³ However, serious violations of international human rights law—most notably the right to life as enshrined in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR)—remain evident, given the significant casualties resulting from internal armed conflicts and the absence of accountability for those responsible.⁴⁴

It is important to underscore that, although all five states have engaged in violations of international law during wartime, their capacity to do so is closely linked to differing degrees of political power. The United States, the United Kingdom, and Russia possess

³⁹ Jeffrey L. Hughes. "The Origins of World War II in Europe: British Deterrence Failure and German Expansionism." *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 18, no. 4 (1988): 851–91. <https://doi.org/10.2307/204827>.

⁴⁰ M. Spence. "Imperialism and decline: Britain in the 1980s." *Capital & Class* 9, no. 1 (1985): 117–139. <https://doi.org/10.1177/030981688502500106>.

⁴¹ Atul Alexander. "Crisis and General International Law: Lessons from the Russia-Ukraine Conflict," *Indonesian Journal of International Law* 21, no. 1 (2023): 1–28. <https://doi.org/10.17304/ijil.vol21.1.1>.

⁴² Marcin Kaczmarek. 2026. "China-Russia Partnership: An Axis of Revisionism?" *Asia & the Pacific Policy Studies*: e70066. <https://doi.org/10.1002/app5.70066>.

⁴³ Natalia Santi, "Hundreds of Indonesian Students Trapped in Yemen Conflict," *Tempo*, October 19, 2018, Accessed January 27, 2026, <https://en.tempo.co/read/534355/hundreds-of-indonesian-students-trapped-in-yemen-conflict>.

⁴⁴ Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, "Human Rights Council Discusses the Situation of Human Rights in Yemen and Libya," press release, September 26, 2018, Accessed January 27, 2026 <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2018/09/human-rights-council-discusses-situation-human-rights-yemen-and-libya-under>.

considerable leverage, including veto power within the UN Security Council⁴⁵ and substantial military capabilities.⁴⁶ Additionally, the United States and Russia rank among the top ten countries in terms of oil reserves,⁴⁷ while the United Kingdom compensates for its more limited reserves through extensive imports.

By contrast, Yemen and Libya rely on alternative forms of leverage. Both states are not parties to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, thereby limiting the jurisdiction of the International Criminal Court over alleged violations.⁴⁸ At the same time, Libya's substantial oil reserves⁴⁹ and Yemen's strategic access to the Gulf of Aden provide significant geopolitical bargaining power, enabling them to mitigate external legal and political pressures.⁵⁰

Taken together, these dynamics demonstrate that, in wartime, states are likely to violate certain categories of international law—particularly those relating to the law of armed conflict, dispute settlement, and human rights—while continuing to comply with others, especially in areas such as economic cooperation and education. This suggests that reliance on international law, even where oriented toward cooperation and legal equality, does not guarantee compliance under conditions of war. Rather, the practices of these states reveal an inherently ambivalent approach to the management of international and national law in wartime, shaped by factors such as institutional position, military capacity, resource endowment, and strategic geography.

⁴⁵ Michal Hatuel-Radoshitzky, "Criticism of the UN Security Council Veto Mechanism: Ramifications for Israel," *INSS Insight* No. 765, November 10, 2015, Institute for National Security Studies, <https://www.inss.org.il/publication/criticism-of-the-un-security-council-veto-mechanism-ramifications-for-israel/>.

⁴⁶ Global Firepower. "GlobalFirepower.com Ranks (2005–Present)," Accessed January 27, 2026, <https://www.globalfirepower.com/global-ranks-previous.php>.

⁴⁷ Statista, "Leading Countries Based on Natural Resource Value," 2021, Accessed January 27, 2026, <https://www.statista.com/statistics/748223/leading-countries-based-on-natural-resource-value/>.

⁴⁸ International Criminal Court, "Libya," accessed January 29, 2026, <https://www.icc-cpi.int/situations/libya>. Also see Amulya Vadapalli, "Justice Without Power: Yemen and the Global Legal System," *Michigan Law Review* 121, no. 5 (2023): 811–44, <https://doi.org/10.36644/mlr.121.5.justice>.

⁴⁹ Statista, "Leading Countries Based on Natural Resource Value."

⁵⁰ Emilio Rodriguez-Diaz, J. I. Alcaide, and R. Garcia-Llave. 2024. "Challenges and Security Risks in the Red Sea: Impact of Houthi Attacks on Maritime Traffic" *Journal of Marine Science and Engineering* 12, no. 11: 1900. <https://doi.org/10.3390/jmse12111900>.

B. International Law and National Law in Indonesia: 1945-2025

The relationship between international law and national law in Indonesia may be traced back to 1950, when Indonesia was admitted as the 60th member of the United Nations.⁵¹ Indonesia's accession to the UN implicitly reflected its acceptance of the normative framework embodied in the United Nations Charter as part of international custom, not without standing the absence of formal domestic ratification at that time. In the immediate aftermath, Indonesia actively pursued foreign relations through the establishment of bilateral and multilateral cooperation. Its first bilateral treaty was the Treaty of Friendship between the Republic of the Philippines and the Republic of Indonesia.⁵² However, during the Soekarno era, Indonesia was not yet engaged in multilateral treaty commitments; indeed, in 1965, Indonesia withdrew from the UN in response to the admission of Malaysia as a non-permanent member of the Security Council, reflecting its perception of institutional bias toward Western powers.⁵³ Multilateral engagement resumed during the Soeharto administration, notably through accession to the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations and the Vienna Convention on Consular Relations via Law No. 1 of 1982.⁵⁴

⁵¹ Y.P. Hermawan and A.D. Habir. "Indonesia and International Institutions: Treading New Territory." In: Roberts, C.B., Habir, A.D., Sebastian, L.C. (eds) *Indonesia's Ascent*. Critical Studies of the Asia Pacific Series. (Palgrave Macmillan, London, 2015). 177-94. https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137397416_9.

⁵² Ikrar Nusa Bhakti. "Bilateral Relations between Indonesia and the Philippines: Stable and Fully Cooperative." In *International Relations in Southeast Asia: Between Bilateralism and Multilateralism*, edited by N. Ganesan and Ramses Amer, 287-310. ISEAS-Yusof Ishak Institute, 2010.

⁵³ Schwelb, Egon. "Withdrawal from the United Nations: The Indonesian Intermezzo." *The American Journal of International Law* 61, no. 3 (1967): 661-72. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2197461>.

⁵⁴ Undang-Undang Nomor 1 Tahun 1982 tentang Pengesahan Konvensi Wina Mengenai Hubungan Diplomatik Beserta Protokol Opsionalnya Mengenai Hal Memperoleh Kewarganegaraan (Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations and Optional Protocol to the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations Concerning Acquisition of Nationality, 1961) dan Pengesahan Konvensi Wina Mengenai Hubungan Konsuler Beserta Protokol Opsionalnya Mengenai Hal Memperoleh Kewarganegaraan (Vienna Convention on Consular Relations and Optional Protocol to the Vienna Convention on Consular Relations Concerning Acquisition of Nationality, 1963), January 25, 1982, Accessed January 29, 2026., <https://peraturan.bpk.go.id/Details/46993/uu-no-1-tahun-1982>.

Following these foundational ratifications, Indonesia significantly expanded its participation in international legal regimes, both through accession to multilateral treaties and the conclusion of bilateral agreements. Among the most prominent multilateral instruments ratified are the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, the Marrakesh Agreement Establishing the World Trade Organization, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the United Nations Convention Against Corruption, and the Paris Agreement. In parallel, data from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs indicates that, by 2025, Indonesia has concluded no fewer than 2,894 bilateral treaties, covering strategic sectors such as economic cooperation, defense, education, and taxation, with key partners including the European Union, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, the Asia-Pacific region, the United States, and the United Kingdom.⁵⁵

In general, the interaction between international law and national law in Indonesia has proceeded in a relatively stable and consistent manner. Between 1945 and 2025, Indonesia has not engaged in unilateral conduct that overtly contravenes international law, in contrast to the practices observed in states such as the United States, the United Kingdom, Russia, Yemen, and Libya. This condition is largely attributable to the fact that Indonesia has not experienced interstate war or civil war after becoming bound by international treaty obligations. Indonesia's military operations in East Timor during 1974–1975, conducted under the justification of anti-colonialism and anti-communism, occurred prior to its accession to the ICCPR.⁵⁶ Similarly, major episodes of internal violence during the New Order period—such as the G30S incident, the Malari Incident, the Tanjung Priok Incident, the Kudatuli Incident, the Trisakti Tragedy, and the Semanggi Tragedy—also predated Indonesia's

⁵⁵ Treaty Room, "Daftar Perjanjian."

⁵⁶ C. Fernandes. Indonesia's war against East Timor: how it ended. *Small Wars & Insurgencies* 32, no. 6, (2021): 867–886. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09592318.2021.1911103>.

ratification of the ICCPR.⁵⁷ As a result, from the standpoint of treaty obligations and international custom, Indonesia was not yet formally bound at the relevant time, notwithstanding that such events may be characterized as violations of human rights.⁵⁸ This configuration stands in contrast to the United States, the United Kingdom, Russia, Yemen, and Libya, all of which were already parties to the ICCPR at the time they experienced armed conflict.⁵⁹

This trajectory indicates that the relationship between international law and national law in Indonesia has thus far operated predominantly within a peacetime paradigm. It reflects a consistent pattern of compliance, manifested in the harmonization of domestic policies with international legal obligations and the preference for peaceful mechanisms in the settlement of disputes. At the same time, it reveals a structural limitation: Indonesia lacks practical experience in managing the interaction between international and national law under wartime conditions, an issue of increasing relevance in light of evolving geopolitical tensions.

From a normative perspective, Indonesia's domestic legal framework also exhibits limitations in addressing this issue. Article 11 of the 1945 Constitution (UUD NRI 1945), which governs foreign relations, does not explicitly regulate the management of international legal obligations in wartime.⁶⁰ Likewise, Article 18 of Law No. 24 of 2000 on International Treaties, which provides grounds for treaty termination, does not expressly include war as a basis, although the clause concerning "harm to national interests" may be interpreted as permitting suspension or termination under such circumstances.⁶¹

⁵⁷ Julia Batanghari. "Explaining Suharto's Rise and Fall: International and Domestic Variables." *Undergraduate Honors Theses*, 2022, https://digital.sandiego.edu/honors_theses.

⁵⁸ Malcolm N. Shaw. *International Law (9th ed)*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 2021).

⁵⁹ Human Rights Committee, "Status of Ratification: International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (CCPR)," Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, accessed January 29, 2026, https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/TreatyBodyExternal/Treaty.aspx?Treaty=CCPR&Lang=en.

⁶⁰ Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia, accessed January 29, 2026, <https://peraturan.bpk.go.id/Details/101646/uud-no-->.

⁶¹ Undang-Undang Nomor 24 Tahun 2000 tentang Perjanjian Internasional [Law of the Republic of Indonesia Number 24 of 2000 on International Treaties], <https://peraturan.bpk.go.id/Details/44991/uu-no-24-tahun-2000>. Accessed January 29, 2026.

In terms of political leverage within international institutions, Indonesia occupies a relatively constrained position. Unlike the United States, the United Kingdom, and Russia, Indonesia does not possess veto power within the UN Security Council, thereby limiting its capacity to shield itself from retaliatory measures in response to treaty suspension during wartime, including economic sanctions or even military intervention.⁶² This structural limitation is compounded by Indonesia's obligations under the ICCPR, which impose stringent requirements regarding the protection of civilians, even in armed conflict.⁶³ Indonesia's non-participation in the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court provides a limited degree of legal flexibility, insofar as it precludes the jurisdiction of the International Criminal Court; however, reliance on this position entails significant political and legal risks, particularly in the face of potential responses from major powers.⁶⁴

Conversely, Indonesia possesses notable strengths in terms of military capacity and natural resources. These factors may serve as strategic assets in navigating the relationship between international law and national interests during wartime. Comparative experience suggests that resource endowment and military capability can enhance a state's bargaining position, as illustrated by Libya, which has managed its international legal obligations in wartime without experiencing state disintegration, unlike cases such as Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia.⁶⁵ Accordingly, the extent to which Indonesia can leverage its military and resource capacities in managing the interface between international and national law during armed conflict

⁶² Jan Wouters and Tom Ruys, "Use and Abuse of the Veto Power," in *Security Council Reform: A New Veto for a New Century?* (Brussels: Egmont Institute, August 2005), 9–18, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep06699.5>.

⁶³ Undang-Undang Nomor 12 Tahun 2005 tentang Pengesahan International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights [Law of the Republic of Indonesia Number 12 of 2005 on the Ratification of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights], Accessed January 29, 2026, <https://peraturan.bpk.go.id/Details/40256/uu-no-11-tahun-2005>.

⁶⁴ Darin E. W. Johnson. "Conflict Constitution-Making in Libya and Yemen." *University of Pennsylvania Journal of International Law*. 2017. <https://scholarship.law.upenn.edu/jil/vol39/iss2/1/>.

⁶⁵ Milica Z. Bookman. "War and Peace: The Divergent Breakups of Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia." *Journal of Peace Research* 31, no. 2 (1994): 175–87. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022343394031002005>.

constitutes a critical issue, to be examined further in the subsequent section.

C. Managing International Law and National Law in Indonesia during Wartime

A state's foreign policy orientation is, inter alia, shaped by geopolitical considerations. Within a geopolitical framework, a state is required to assess both its own strategic advantages and vulnerabilities, as well as those of potential adversaries. Such an approach typically emphasizes variables including territorial extent, geographic positioning, and the availability of natural resources. On this basis, states are able to calibrate their foreign policy posture along a spectrum ranging from assertive (hard) to accommodative (soft), depending on prevailing strategic calculations.⁶⁶

In the specific context of managing the relationship between international law and national law during wartime, geopolitical reasoning frequently serves as a decisive analytical lens. State practice illustrates this tendency. For example, policies attributed to Donald Trump in relation to Venezuela demonstrated a willingness to challenge the principle of sovereignty, premise on the United States' dominant position within the Americas.⁶⁷ Similarly, Vladimir Putin's actions in Ukraine have been associated with significant violations of principles of peace and human rights, justified in part by Russia's military superiority in Eastern Europe.⁶⁸ The United Kingdom's decision to withdraw from the European Union also reflected a confidence grounded in its relative military and economic strength.⁶⁹ Libya, for its part, has historically maintained state continuity despite allegations of human rights violations, supported by its substantial oil

⁶⁶ Andrew Hurrell. "Geopolitics and Global Economic Governance." *Oxford Review of Economic Policy* 40, no. 2, (2024): 220-233, <https://doi.org/10.1093/oxrep/graec013>.

⁶⁷ Matthew Olay, "Trump Announces U.S. Military's Capture of Maduro," *Pentagon News*, January 3, 2026, Accessed January 29, 2026. <https://www.war.gov/News/News-Stories/Article/Article/4370431/trump-announces-us-militarys-capture-of-maduro/>.

⁶⁸ Andrea Beccaro and General Nicola Cristadoro. "The Russian Armed Forces in Ukraine and What We Can Learn from It." *Journal of Contemporary European Studies*. (2025): 1–21. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14782804.2025.2610825>.

⁶⁹ HM Government. *Global Britain in a Competitive Age: The Integrated Review of Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy*. London: The Stationery Office, 2021. <https://www.gov.uk/official-documents>.

reserves; Indeed, during the era of Muammar Gaddafi, the state even advanced expansive social policies, including global scholarship initiatives.⁷⁰ Yemen, likewise, has maintained its statehood amid persistent conflict, owing in part to its strategic control over the Gulf of Aden, a vital international trade corridor.⁷¹

Against this backdrop, a geopolitical assessment of Indonesia becomes essential in identifying an appropriate model for managing the interface between international law and national law in wartime. Indonesia possesses at least four principal strategic assets: crude palm oil (CPO), manufacturing capacity, marine resources, and religious tourism. Indonesia remains the world's largest exporter of CPO, with exports in 2025 reaching approximately 46 million tons, representing nearly 60% of global production⁷²—more than triple Malaysia's output of 19 million tons.⁷³ In the manufacturing sector, Indonesia ranks as the largest exporter within ASEAN and twelfth globally, with total exports estimated at USD 244.75 billion in 2025.⁷⁴ Its marine resource exports reached USD 5 billion in the same year, the highest within ASEAN.⁷⁵ Additionally, Indonesia is a leading contributor to global religious tourism, particularly in the context of Umrah pilgrimage: in 2024, approximately 1.8 million Indonesian pilgrims participated out

⁷⁰ Craig Calhoun. "Libyan Money, Academic Missions, and Public Social Science." *Public Culture* 24, no. 1 (2012): 9-45. <https://doi.org/10.1215/08992363-1443538>.

⁷¹ Y. Koshaimah. & X. Zou. An Analysis of Yemen's Geostrategic Significance and Saudi-Iranian Competition for Regional Hegemony. *Contemporary Review of the Middle East* 10, no. 3 (2023): 251-269. <https://doi.org/10.1177/23477989231176141>

⁷² L. Judijanto. Competitiveness of Indonesian CPO, its successful penetration in the European Union vegetable Oils market, and protectionism trade policies in the EU market to stop it grow further. *Cogent Social Sciences* 11, no. 1. <https://doi.org/10.1080/23311886.2025.2501758>.

⁷³ Ilyana Abdullah, Wan Hasrulnizzam Wan Mahmood, Muhammad Hafidz Fazli Md Fauadi, Mohd Nizam Ab Rahman, and Fathiyah Ahmad. "Sustainability in Malaysian Palm Oil: A Review on Manufacturing Perspective". *Polish Journal of Environmental Studies* 24 no. 4 (2015): 1463–1475. <https://doi.org/10.15244/pjoes/37888>.

⁷⁴ "ASEAN Manufacturing Business September 2025, Indonesia Lags Behind 3 Countries," *Databoks*, October 9, 2025, Accessed January 29, 2026, <https://databoks.katadata.co.id/en/economics-macro/statistics/68e649fae0dec/asean-manufacturing-business-september-2025-indonesia-lags-behind-3-countries>.

⁷⁵ Southeast Asian Fisheries Development Center, "Fisheries Country Profile: Indonesia 2025," SEAFDEC, 2025, Accessed January 29, 2026, <https://www.seafdec.org/fisheries-country-profile-indonesia/>.

of a global total of 17 million.⁷⁶ These sectors collectively constitute potential instruments of legal and political leverage in wartime scenarios.

In circumstances where Indonesia elects to suspend or derogate from certain international legal obligations during armed conflict, two fundamental questions arise: the nature of the threat encountered and the means available to address it.

The first and most immediate political risk is the imposition of economic sanctions or embargoes. Such measures are commonly employed by states in response to perceived violations of international law. Illustrative examples include the European Union's sanctions against Russia following the Ukraine conflict⁷⁷ and the United States' embargo against Iran in the aftermath of the Iranian Revolution, which involved the seizure of diplomats and breaches of bilateral agreements.⁷⁸ Notably, both Russia and Iran have demonstrated adaptive strategies in mitigating such pressures by redirecting economic activities—particularly in the natural resource sector—toward alternative partners, most prominently China.

The second potential threat concerns the prospect of military intervention by third-party states. This dynamic is proven in the experiences of Libya and Yemen. In Libya, external military involvement—especially by the United States and NATO—played a decisive role in supporting opposition forces against the Gaddafi regime.⁷⁹ Similarly, in Yemen, external intervention involving Saudi Arabia and the United States has been justified on grounds of

⁷⁶ Ikram Nur Muharam, "The Economic Dimension of Haj and 'Umrah,'" *The Jakarta Post*, June 7, 2024, Accessed January 29, 2026, <https://www.thejakartapost.com/opinion/2024/06/07/the-economic-dimension-of-haj-and-umrah.html>.

⁷⁷ R. Å. Sagild, & C. W. Hsiung, Chinese Re-Examinations of Russia? The Strategic Partnership in the Wake of Russia's War Against Ukraine. *Journal of Contemporary China* 34, no. 155, (2025): 781–796. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10670564.2024.2358876>.

⁷⁸ A. Ehteshami. Asianisation of Asia: Chinese-Iranian Relations in Perspective. *Asian Affairs* 53, no. 1, (2022): 8–27. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03068374.2022.2029037>.

⁷⁹ Olivier Corten and Vaïos Koutroulis. The Illegality of Military Support to Rebels in the Libyan War: Aspects of *jus contra bellum* and *jus in bello*, *Journal of Conflict and Security Law* 18, no. 1, 59–93, <https://doi.org/10.1093/jcsl/krs029>.

maintaining international peace and security.⁸⁰ In both instances, the effectiveness of domestic resistance has been limited, in part due to relatively weak military capabilities: as of 2025, Libya and Yemen ranked 76th and 85th globally in military strength, respectively, compared to the United States as the preeminent global military power.⁸¹

A comparable scenario cannot be excluded in the Indonesian context, particularly if the United States were to act as the intervening power. Historical precedents, including alleged involvement during the G30S episode, underscore the plausibility of such intervention.⁸² As a permanent member of the UN Security Council, the United States could invoke legal justifications grounded in the maintenance of international peace and the protection of human rights to legitimize involvement in Indonesia's internal affairs.

In such circumstances, the critical variable would be Indonesia's capacity to defend its sovereignty against external intervention. Indonesia currently possesses the strongest military within ASEAN, enabling it to deter intervention from regional actors.⁸³ However, in the event of confrontation with a global military power such as the United States, broader geopolitical alignments would become determinative.

A rational strategic option for Indonesia would involve seeking support from major powers that may serve as counterweights to the United States, particularly Russia and China,⁸⁴ and the European Union, given potentially emerging divergences in transatlantic relations.⁸⁵ Military assistance—both in terms of personnel and advanced weaponry—would be of central importance. This approach is

⁸⁰ A. Carboni. "The Houthi Movement and the Management of Instability in Wartime Yemen." *Civil Wars*, (2025): 1–25. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13698249.2024.2347144>.

⁸¹ Global Firepower, "GlobalFirepower.com Ranks (2005–Present)."

⁸² Mary S. Zurbuchen, "History, Memory, and the '1965 Incident' in Indonesia," *Asian Survey* 42, no. 4 (2002): 564, <https://doi.org/10.1525/as.2002.42.4.564>.

⁸³ Global Firepower, "GlobalFirepower.com Ranks (2005–Present)."

⁸⁴ V. Kollaros. The geopolitics of democracy: The US against Russia and China. *European View* 22, no. 2 (2023): 269–276. <https://doi.org/10.1177/17816858231206278>.

⁸⁵ António Costa and Ursula von der Leyen, "Joint Statement by President Costa and by President von der Leyen on Greenland," *Consilium (European Council)*, January 17, 2026, accessed January 29, 2026 <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2026/01/17/joint-statement-by-president-costa-and-by-president-von-der-leyen-on-greenland/>.

supported by the relative capabilities of these actors: Russia and China rank among the world's leading military powers, while several EU member states are positioned within the top twenty globally.⁸⁶ Indonesia could also consider cooperation with Iran, which, despite comparatively lower overall military ranking, possesses advanced missile capabilities and substantial oil reserves.⁸⁷ Such partnerships are not implausible, given Indonesia's existing economic relations with these states, particularly through CPO exports.⁸⁸

Through the strategic mobilization of such alliances, Indonesia would enhance its capacity to deter or counter external military intervention. This, in turn, would provide greater latitude in managing the interaction between international law and national law in accordance with national interests during wartime. Comparable practices may be observed in Iran's efforts to secure military support from Russia, China, and North Korea in response to external threats, thereby reinforcing its defensive posture and limiting further escalation.⁸⁹

Conclusion

This study demonstrates that the management of the relationship between international law and national law is well-established in peacetime, but becomes ambivalent during armed conflict. Such ambivalence is reflected in the selective compliance of states: on the one hand, there is continued adherence to cooperation-oriented international agreements—particularly in the fields of economics and education—while, on the other hand, there is a tendency toward non-compliance with treaties embodying universal values, especially where such obligations are perceived to constrain the pursuit of national interests

⁸⁶ Global Firepower, "GlobalFirepower.com Ranks (2005–Present)."

⁸⁷ A. Altynbek, E. Wastnidge & A. Yermekbayev. Iran and Central Asia: Eurasian Geopolitics in a Changing World Order. *The International Spectator* 60, no. 4, (2025): 138–155. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03932729.2025.2572372>.

⁸⁸ F. H. Lawson. Iranian overtures to Indonesia: Why? and Why now? *Australian Journal of International Affairs* 77, no. 5 (2023): 578–584. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10357718.2023.2274441>.

⁸⁹ ADM Jonathan W. Greenert, USN (ret.), and Ari Cicurel, "Iran, China, Russia, and North Korea Are Joining Forces Against America — and Israel," *The Allgemeiner*, October 1, 2025, <https://jinsa.org/iran-china-russia-and-north-korea-are-joining-forces-against-america-and-israel/>. Accessed January 29, 2026.

during wartime. This duality is sustained by the existence of supporting factors, including legal flexibility, political leverage, military capacity, and the availability of strategic resources.

In the Indonesian context, the national legal framework has not yet evolved to explicitly accommodate the suspension or termination of international legal obligations in wartime. Moreover, Indonesia lacks practical experience in managing the interface between international and domestic law under conditions of armed conflict, in contrast to states such as the United States, the United Kingdom, Russia, Libya, and Yemen. From the standpoint of international institutional politics, Indonesia also does not possess decisive influence, particularly when compared to states with entrenched power within global governance structures.

Nevertheless, Indonesia retains several structural advantages that may facilitate a more flexible approach. These include the presence of interpretative space within its legal system, as well as significant military capabilities and resource endowments. From a geopolitical perspective, Indonesia's resource base serves as a critical instrument in forging strategic partnerships with major powers, including Russia, China, Iran, and the European Union. Such partnerships, grounded in mutual economic and strategic interests, may yield tangible benefits in the form of military cooperation and support.

This reciprocal dynamic contributes to Indonesia's position as the strongest military actor within ASEAN and enhances its capacity to deter, mitigate, and respond to external intervention. In turn, these conditions provide Indonesia with a degree of strategic latitude in managing the relationship between international law and national law during wartime, enabling it to calibrate its legal posture in accordance with evolving national interests.

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