

Towards a Bandung de los Pueblos

Multilateralism, corporate power, and the building of a Global South Front¹

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February 7th, 2026

“The South does not know the South—what goes on in its countries, What are the ideas of its peoples, what its potential is, and the manner in which South-South cooperation can widen development options for all countries. Instead each country is forced to make its own mistakes, without being able to learn from the experience of others in a similar situation, and to benefit from the experience of their successes”.

[The Challenge to the South, Report of the South Commission](#)

We are living in a world in transformation. As capitalism enters into a new cycle of accumulation and fascism rises, global elites are pushing to reshape the world order to continue serving the interests of imperialism. At the same time, these changes are an opportunity for peoples and nations to find and develop new pathways towards internationalist solidarity and peoples' power.

These avenues, however, will not open spontaneously. Intentional change needs strategy, ideas, and a shared understanding, on a global scale, within the diversity of progressive social and political actors. We are not starting from scratch: socialist and national liberation movements have been the most inspiring political struggles of the past century. Drawing from their experiences and learning from their strategies, this paper uses the term “progressive forces” to refer to the broad spectrum of the political left, encompassing the different forms resistance takes in our different continents. It is urgent to consolidate a cooperative arena of dialogue and action; we otherwise risk being smashed in yet another cycle of oppression and exploitation, caught in the middle of geopolitical struggles determined by the interests of the capitalist superpowers.

This paper outlines the urgency for all progressive forces of the Global South to engage in an ambitious and emancipatory collective action plan to change our current world order. It is the product of several rounds of informal consultations in Africa, Asia, and Latin America with social movements, trade unions, activist-scholars, and other civil society organizations engaged with multilateralism. It lays out the analysis and the reasoning behind the building of a Global South Front (Part I), its challenges and opportunities (Part II), underlining some elements for the development of a mobilizing common global strategy (Part III).

Part I: The Multilateral (Dis)order

¹ This paper is deeply collective. Not only because of its many authors, but because it was built upon decades of collective work together with comrades from the many trenches with which TNI engages. Although it would be impossible to name them all, we are genuinely grateful. We must mention, though, those who co-developed our many regional consultations, and those who somehow participated in the development of this paper: Anita Gurumurthy, Baba Aye, Benny Kuruvilla, Brian Ashley, Charles Santiago, Danilo Urrea, David McCoy, Diana Aguiar, Ferrial Adam, Giorgio Romano, Graciela Rodriguez, Harris Gleckman, Joseph Puruggunan, Josua Mata, Leticia Paranhos, Martin Drago, Mercia Andrews, Natalia Lobo, Raffaele Morgantini, Tatiana Cuenca, Tica Moreno, Vijay Prashad, and Walden Bello. A special thanks to our many TNI colleagues who helped us develop these ideas, or helped them see the light of day, especially: Danilo Borghi, Denis Burke, Hamza Hamouchene, and Rachmi Hertanti. We dedicate our Bandung de los Pueblos to our comrades, the many activists, strategists, organizers and thinkers from Asia, Africa, Latin America and the Global-South-in-the-North with whom we share life, soul, and struggles. We count on you in the journey ahead.

The ground is moving under our feet. North and South of the world, the international system is crumbling. For many within the progressive forces, its end was more of a horizon than a problem. The reality, however, is that this crumbling system is going down with us, not *for* or *because* of us. Instead of singing victory, we hear the bells of war.

For the past 80 years, both criticism and hope have shared and disputed the spirit of our multilateral institutions. Never an end in itself, the engagement with multilateralism for social movements, women, Indigenous Peoples, peasants, fisher peoples, trade unions, civil society organizations, migrant and refugee people has, in effect, advanced many important global agendas, translating struggles into International Law through UN Declarations, treaty processes, and so forth². Throughout this time, however, it has become clear that the rules of this “rule-based system” have been systematically violated by those who could get away with it. If all states are supposed to be equal, some are definitely more equal than, say, Iraq in 2003, Libya in 2011, or Venezuela in the first days of 2026.

Such power imbalances have also been reflected in our economic and financial global architecture. Instead of privileging multilateral negotiations, in which the South could exert some balancing collective power, world trade has been ruled by a net of pluri- and bilateral agreements binding most of the Global South countries as subordinate partners to an ever- more rich and financialized Global North. While Investor State Dispute-Settlement (ISDS) claims make Southern governments hostages of vulture investments from which their peoples rarely benefit, International Financial Institutions keep playing the game of power and imperialism, making it impossible for highly indebted countries to conceive or pursue their own paths to development.

The overwhelming influence of corporate power and its systematic capture of decision-making processes within multilateral institutions further compounds this imbalance. On the premise of expanding participation to a wider range of “stakeholders” in multilateral decision-making spaces, “multistakeholder governance” soon became [multistakeholderism](#), a process of corporate take-over of multilateralism through revolving doors, unregulated lobbying, and strategic philanthropy. Designed by the likes of Bill Gates, backed by the World Economic Forum, [COVAX](#) is a staggering example of how such mechanisms allow corporations to sit alongside powerful states to decide on life and death for most of the Global South population.

These asymmetries between the potential and the reality of multilateralism have shaped activist debates since the early years of this century. A decade after the end of the Cold War and the consolidation of neoliberal globalization, they were the criticism and the hope shared across the tents and between round tables in many World Social Forums, framed around a clear rejection of the new *status quo*. Since then, the 2008 financial crisis, the pandemic, the deepening of our climate emergency, the Genocide of the Palestinian people, and the consolidation of a coordinated international macho-fascist wave of far-right governments across the world have further shredded the ragged tapestry of our international world order.

If we listen very carefully...

These fault lines are not isolated events, but interconnected symptoms of systemic failure. Each carries essential elements of the current multilateral order, and each points towards what must change. If the 2008 financial crisis exposed the vulnerabilities of current capitalism, the choice of

² See, for instance, the [Declaration on the Right to Development](#) (1986), the [United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples](#) (2007), and the [United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Peasants and Other People Working in Rural Areas](#) (2018).

most governments to bail out corporations with public funds, with little-to-no conditionalities, shows that business-as-usual prevailed over democratic regulation. When states rewarded bankers' recklessness with impunity, people had to pay the price with the further dismantling of social welfare and labour rights. Increasing surveillance and militarisation further tipped the scales, structurally redefining the balance between consent and coercion, this time also in the Global North. Meanwhile, the pandemic and the climate change crisis both give testimony to the insurmountable limitations of current multilateral institutions. Since viruses and greenhouse gases need no visas, these are global issues by definition. However, instead of the World Health Organization, the recovery from the pandemic was led by the same transnational corporations profiting from it, backed by Global North countries [with substantive public funding](#), while the solutions to our climate emergency have been trusted to [money-making polluting giants](#) who generated and still highly benefit from environmental destruction.

Yet, the Genocide of the Palestinian people hit the hardest blow to those on the left who were still on the edge of hope. The role the International Court of Justice is playing, as well as the commitment of countries like South Africa and Colombia, are inspiring developments. But the reality of deliberate starvation, of torture, of death of women and children in a never-ending orchestrated systematic ethnic cleansing committed by Israel, with the active support of the US and the EU, makes us question if there will ever be a system to rule over the Zionist entity or US empire. There are but very few international norms left for them to violate.

If anything, the UN Security Council vote on [Resolution 2803](#) of November 2025 is only the latest example of how multilateralism has been used to normalize occupation and genocide. The US alone has vetoed [at least six](#) UNSC Resolutions proposed to stop the bombings. After two years of blocking all efforts to uphold Palestinian self-determination and human rights, Trump and other genocide enablers—the EU as well as some Arab governments—have rebranded occupation as a u-turn in the direction of peace. With the notable abstention of China and Russia, Resolution 2803 is legitimising the re-occupation of Palestine, now under direct US control and governed by a “*Board of Peace*” that excludes any Palestinian representation. According to UN Special Rapporteur Francesca Albanese, this Resolution “[betrays the people it claims to protect](#)”. This “peace” agreement, imposed by Trump but officially ratified by the Security Council, pays testament to the transactional relationship imperialism has always had with the United Nations: use it for validation, discard it if inconvenient, but ignore it most of the time.

For global progressive forces, holding strong to the pillars of the United Nations alone will not deliver. As argued by Jeena Shah, “[the primary purpose of international law was to facilitate and manage imperialism](#)”. Even if [decolonization fundamentally reshaped the dynamics within the United Nations](#), our struggle cannot be centered on bringing back what was never designed to be ours. At the same time, Trump's second inauguration, the epitome of the macho-facho international, certainly makes us feel like regressive forces are winning by default. While it is clear that the current international system is unable to deal with the most crucial issues of our times, Trumpism is the antithesis of multilateralism, the true embodiment of the 21st-century authoritarian far-right powered by high-tech surveillance and profits. There is an urgent need to transform multilateralism, and for it to deliver different results, it needs to be grounded upon different assumptions and commitments.

For the left and progressive forces to resist the rule of force imposed by naked US Imperialism and neoliberal globalization, there are alternatives both to the multilateralism that is crumbling and to the multilateralism many got used to believing was the ceiling of all to which one could aspire. So it is as much about resetting multilateralism as it is about imagining and building other processes

and new institutions for the transnational coordination of peoples and states, a new multilateral order where the Global South has a decisive voice and effective power.

It is time to think, connect, and organize to build a Global South Front that can collectively promote and harvest these three tasks, on a global scale, to generate a common action plan and new political paradigms fit for a life-affirming, peaceful, and equitable world order. Because “if we listen carefully, another world is not only possible, she’s on her way”³.

Part II - Building a Global South Front

Establishing a new foundation for an equitable and democratic international order means that the peoples of the Global South need to be the driving force and the main beneficiaries of multilateralism. We may speak of two Global Souths: one is drawn on maps, comprising the post-colonial states still bearing the scars of empire, fighting for a seat at a table they did not build but still carry on their backs. The other knows no borders: it is the South that lives in the streets of Jakarta, the banlieues of Paris, the favelas of Rio, the townships of Johannesburg, in detention centres in Texas. They are the working class born into a debt they never incurred, inheriting a life of struggle as billionaires inherit their wealth. The Global South Front combines both. It is not a bloc of nations but the organised transnational left, together with progressive forces, becoming a collective political subject capable of moving peoples and states toward an emancipatory future. The Front is forged precisely where the Souths of peoples and states meet, clash, and discover what they might become when they march together.

Forging a united front calls for the building of common values based on respect for peoples’ self-determination and countries’ and regions’ different social processes. The building of our collective emancipation entails a dialogue among a comprehensive diversity of human experiences and ways of being and living. Through a humble and productive engagement with other political cultures and processes, it should be possible to forge the culture of a new internationalism where Western hegemonic values, literature and narratives are not the rule to measure the diversity of all human experiences. It implies the need to de-Westernize and de-Northernize the left’s political vocabulary, ambitions, and strategies.

As a process, the Global South Front promotes the strategic coordination of progressive social forces anywhere in the world, assembling all of those fighting imperialism, value extraction and oppression. Becoming a *Front* demands the ecumenical design of our trenches, but it can never mean compromising our core principles. Dissent, contestation and dispute are intrinsic to politics precisely because they are born out of the very diverse human lived experiences, our relationships with our communities, with nature, with the state, with power. To compose interests within a diversity of backgrounds and political cultures means to allow for our own positions to be challenged, enriched, strengthened, and even changed. This cross-fertilization dialectics entails a non-sectarian approach and a clear vision of who is actually on the other side of the barricades. This means working together with social movements and political parties as well as with civil society organizations, intellectuals and individuals committed to radical social change.

But building a Global South Front also means understanding the state as spaces of contestation and as crucial actors to address the needs of their peoples. While states in many cases have

³ From Arundhati Roy 2010 speech [Come September](#): “Another world is not only possible, she’s on her way. Maybe many of us won’t be here to greet her, but on a quiet day, if I listen very carefully, I can hear her breathing.”

become conveyor belts of oppression and domination, captured by ruling elites, the building of a Global South Front cannot ignore the power progressive states can mobilize. Working with and within the state, wherever possible, is thus another important pillar to build a Global South Front, especially considering their prominent role in the current multilateral order. As of today, the multilateral regime can both limit and expand the opportunities social movements have to challenge the uneven access to rights and distribution of resources within their territories. If states are drowning in debt, or locked by trade agreements in destructive productive processes, there are far fewer resources left to meet the needs of their peoples. Despite the contradictions inherent in working with the state, such an alliance can leverage different power sources, scales of action and expertise to build an overarching strategy that is capable of both resisting imperialism and engendering alternatives to it. To realize such potential, though, the building of a Global South Front depends on the resources, the capacities, and the leverage that the Global South can bring to bear. If the South gets to know and to work with the South, the current conjuncture offers tangible pathways.

Opportunities at hand

Pushed by the digital revolution and by the “energy transition”, structural changes in the world economy [directly impact the current distribution of wealth and of geopolitical power](#). On the one hand, the incorporation of cutting-edge technologies within our modes of production requires much more energy and capital to reproduce capitalism than before. Paying for the digital revolution—including AI technology and related infrastructure—means that our economies have to push further into the financialization and de-regulation of production and labor rights, widening the cracks to the circuit of capital that lead to structural economic crises. On the other hand, there is [an aggressive new minerals rush underway](#) to build the batteries and wind turbines needed to power data centers and e-vehicles. This scramble has translated into wars to secure the steady supply of raw materials to Western powers, and in a new wave of free trade and bilateral investment agreements to constrain sovereign policies and regulation. Business-as-usual, in this context, means that the North keeps reaping the profits while the South keeps raising its debt and counting the dead.

Holding most of the mineral reserves and most of the available working force, the South could better leverage its assets. There is a material imbalance between the Global North and the Global South, and it is time the South understands and acts on the power of its wealth. Across the South there are enough resources and productive complexity to support the provision of what the South really needs: jobs, infrastructure, food, health, education. From an economic perspective, an integrated South could become as technologically complex as the North but with larger markets and many more resources available to carry out the transition our planet and our peoples so desperately need.

If the peoples of China, India, Brazil, South Africa, and Indonesia combine and coordinate their capacities and expertise, the world could be shaped by the Global South. By disposing of paradigms and frames that only benefit the North, such as Intellectual Property Regimes and Investor-State Dispute Settlement mechanisms, the South could foster a technological leap that could address not only climate change but also health, education, land, and food challenges, to name a few. Moreover, the provision of sustainable livelihoods could reverse labour-export programs so workers can contribute to their own societies, while brain-gain policies could enable Southern states to access cutting-edge know-how from key productive and social industries. Contingent to the realization of this potential, however, is the recognition that the power of the Global South is collective, and that only collectively the South can unchain its capacities and its future under its own terms.

It is necessary to coordinate strategies, to integrate production chains within and across regions, building a strategic alliance among all countries and peoples that have been oppressed by and excluded from the perks of Western hegemony. These cooperative arrangements would need to be radically different from what the United Nations' and the Bretton Woods' institutions have been able to offer. Grounded on a clear mapping of their collective resources and, more importantly, on a clear mapping of their peoples' and our planet's needs, the economic integration of the Global South is the only path available for it to devise development paths that are truly sustainable: non-predatory while exclusively dependent on their own efforts and resources.

There are important initiatives already in place from both social movements and Global South states to collectively devise alternatives to the crumbling of our economic and geopolitical order. There is hope and there is power in initiatives such as the [Nyeleni process](#); the [International Peoples' Assembly](#); the new trade framework centered on food sovereignty, peasants and rural workers rights led by [La Via Campesina](#); the [Tricontinental Institute](#) series of studies and proposals [to re-define development from a Global South perspective](#); [Progressive International](#)'s proposals for a [21st-century New International Economic Order](#); and the [national](#) and [international](#) bottom-up legal frameworks developed by the [Global Campaign to Reclaim Peoples' Sovereignty, Dismantle Corporate Power, Stop Impunity](#). Southern thinkers have also been very active in understanding the South in current capitalism, such as Leda Paulani's analysis of [Capitalism 4.0](#), as well as devising new pathways to an integrated development, such as Fadhel Kaboub's proposal for "[The Bargain of the Century](#)", Walden Bello's [De-globalization](#), Jomo Kwame's reading of the potential of [ASEAN + 3](#), and Ndongo Sylla's [African Monetary Integration](#).

As for Global South states, it is important to understand that [the transformations of current capitalism are reflected in a distribution of geopolitical power](#) that is significantly different from the one that has given rise to the [Bandung Conference and the Non-Aligned Movement](#), early experiments of Global South coordination that did not realize their full potential. Inheriting this legacy, at the regional level, the coordination of [Pan-Africanist revolutionary processes in the Sahel](#) provide an inspiring example of anti-colonial resolve and resistance in this century. At the international level, the BRICS has played an important role as a space where proposals are shared and coordinated, focusing on technological and scientific cooperation as well as on finances and political coordination. In spite of its many contradictions, by both coordinating strategies within our crumbling institutions while developing their own, the BRICS is, *de facto*, the most developed counter-hegemonic bloc with conditions to enforce most of the necessary changes needed for the building of a truly participatory and emancipatory multilateralism. |

The potential of the BRICS to challenge and transform multilateralism is widely recognized, but the alliance also exposes some of the great challenges we have for the building of a liberated future. First, there are clear material imbalances among Southern states, especially, although not only, in relation to China. Second, in spite of economic and political power significantly shifting in the past decades, the US and its allies still keep an undisputed military supremacy on every account over all Global South countries combined. Third, there are important ideological cleavages dividing Southern governments, also but not only within the BRICS. Finally, if an emancipatory multilateralism must be grounded on peoples' needs and our planet's boundaries, the integration of cross-regional or sub-national voices within international institutions is neither straightforward nor necessarily an obvious choice for BRICS leaders.

Challenges ahead

Asia's very complex financial and technological capacities, Africa's substantial and diverse mineral reserves, and Latin America's biodiversity are crucial resources. These regional assets, while important and often complementary, do not necessarily translate into equivalent political power for Global South states. More importantly, each of these regions have significant material imbalances that have, many times, been exploited by the most regionally powerful to the detriment of smaller or resource-poor countries. How to make sure that, instead of structurally changing our economic relations, some countries do not simply focus on moving up the development ladder alone?

Regional integration here is key. A long-lasting dream for many within the left, it is also an unavoidable pragmatic path to transform global and regional production chains so that they reflect and compensate for different capacities and resource availability. In this context, it is also crucial to devise regional cooperative structures that make sure that development is necessarily emancipatory, not extractive subimperialism. Peoples' engagement with global South regional coalitions are spaces within which tensions and contradictions between corporate power and peoples rights are at play, and where the logics of capitalism must be challenged.

China further complexifies this equation. Understanding Chinese domestic and foreign policy ambitions and red lines, as well as how to influence them, will be determinant to the building of a transformative South-South multilateralism. From a progressive emancipatory perspective, we cannot deny that the Chinese path, even though not perfect or necessarily replicable, started off with a popular revolution that has succeeded in substantively changing the lives of their people. With the state holding on to the careful coordination of their economic agents, both within and outside the country, China has managed to change their role within a rigid international division of labour, taking millions of people out of poverty. There are lessons to be learned from their planning, their sovereign development strategies, and their sustained popular support—because *there is* popular support: any narrative that implies that 1.4 billion people are living under an exclusively coercive regime is at best, naive and, at worst, racist. It is not surprising that many progressive forces are seeing China as a natural ally in the quest to dismantle Western hegemonic power and neoliberal capitalism⁴.

At the same time, China hasn't explicitly taken the leadership in this collective re-drafting of the world's economic and political structures⁵. As the ascending global economic power, rooted in different political traditions, there is a risk that China moves pragmatically into the new low-carbon digital capitalism as just another market player, potentially reproducing colonial and imperial practices. It is not yet clear how much the country would be willing to actively invest in the building of a peoples' internationalism, towards a truly democratic world order. Can China be the dynamic engine of such an effort without becoming a new hegemon purely guided by their own interests? It is key, therefore, to understand what are China's core interests, and how much it is willing to concede in negotiations with other Global South states to allow for their emancipatory and sovereign development. Finally, it is imperative to take into account the different relationship China has with each of the Southern regions: while for some it has been a partner of hope, for others, power imbalances are much more explicit and potentially conflictual, as it is the case in the South China Sea where the growing military presence of both the US and NATO further escalates the tensions.

⁴ See Landless Workers Movement' 14th National Encounter reading material: **Caderno de Subsídios do MST**, 14th *Encontro Nacional do Movimento dos Trabalhadores Rurais Sem Terra*, Salvador, Bahia, January 19th to 23rd 2026.

⁵ At the latest Summit of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation in September 2025, President Xi Jinping launched [China's Global Governance Initiative](#), the fourth of a series of global policies outlining China's vision for our international order, together with the [Global Development Initiative \(2021\)](#), the [Global Security Initiative \(2022\)](#), and the [Global Civilisation Initiative \(2023\)](#). These Global initiatives are meant to be seen as complementary and cumulative, presenting China's reading of the current global conjuncture and the role they should have in it.

Military imbalances between North and South

The dangerous global military escalation the US is leading, together with NATO, is the second challenge a Global South Front will need to address. The alliance's recent commitment to increase their countries' military expenditure to 5% of their GDPs is the visible face of an arms race that both exponentially grows and technologically transforms [NATO's overpowering military arsenal](#). After the US, China is the second largest individual military spender, but their expenditures only amount to around 1.6% of their GDP, a clear contrast with the West. Much more relevant, however, is the realization that while the US has around 750 military bases across about 80 countries worldwide, China has officially one, [in Djibouti](#). It is against this background that we need to understand the US invasion of Venezuela and the increasingly provocative joint military exercises of the US with its allies in the South China Sea. This staggering contrast between the military capacity of Global South and Global North is probably the most significant challenge to any substantive transformation towards the democratization of our world order.

When *realpolitik* kicks in, how resilient would Global South peoples and countries be to sustain their collective emancipatory strategies, when facing counter-revolutionary armies backed by Western powers? How strong can progressive forces hold the line when Big Tech interferes in democratic processes, with political coups against Southern governments, with the assassination of Southern leaders? Equally important is to understand how much transformation imperial powers are willing to accept before moving into a wide-scale world war. To address such imbalances, more than counting the nuclear weapons the South may have⁶, it is imperative to build collective strategies, organically engaging all progressive forces willing to substantially transform our reality. If political processes are developed and implemented top-down, it may only take a TikTok trend to end our democracies, no bullets fired.

The enemy within

It is also important to acknowledge the other counter-hegemonic bloc disputing our future, the [Reactionary International](#). Coordinating Southern macho-fascist leaders such as Nayib Bukele, Javier Milei, and Jair Bolsonaro with their Global North counterparts of the likes of Donald Trump, Victor Orbán, Giorgia Meloni and Benjamin Netanyahu, this bloc is very well-funded, internationally coordinated, and media-savvy⁷. Similarly to progressive discourse, many are also denouncing neoliberal globalization, but with radically different policy proposals, grounded on exclusion, militarism and xenophobia—also within the BRICS.

To address such issues, [Walden Bello proposes](#) South-South human rights and democratic clauses based on positive and negative reinforcements. It is very important to draw a line on these issues, but it is also challenging to devise a substantive baseline and mechanisms to enforce it given the significant power imbalances not only within the BRICS but across the Global South.

⁶ Nuclear weapons are indeed a matter of deep concern in this conjuncture. The expiry of the New START Treaty, between the US and Russia, on 5th February 2026, means it is the first time in almost half a century that there will be no binding norms to limit their strategic nuclear arsenals, as emphasized by UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres. Considering such a dangerous vacuum, the UNSG underlined the importance of a succession treaty to address the future of nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament.

⁷ TNI's 14th [State of Power](#) report on Fascism, from 2026, dives into the underlying reasons for its rise, the economic interests supporting it, and the ways Fascism weaponises social and ecological crises, while also addressing ways to fight back.

Considering the political and unilateral use of human rights and democratic clauses in North-South relations, as well as North-North human rights violations complicity, how can these proposed reinforcements be collectively decided and implemented?

A way to address this issue is the inclusion of processes and spaces that guarantee, within a Southern-led multilateralism, the meaningful engagement, with clear decision-making power, of social movements, trade unions, peasants, Indigenous Peoples, and other relevant constituencies and communities affected by the decisions to be taken at the multilateral level. While orthodox Westphalian geopolitics assumes that the states will reflect, in their foreign policies, the result of sub-national power disputes and discussions, a peoples-centred multilateralism needs to explicitly incorporate these voices because any decision will be better and far more legitimate if drawn from the lived experiences of those that will be mostly affected by them. It is crucial to respect self-determination, but it is time self-determination is not only a right for states but also an enforceable right for the peoples⁸. Equally important, these spaces must also structurally connect social struggles, cross-fertilizing peoples' understandings of their own shared realities, improving their strategies and potentializing their transformative power.

The [Reactionary International](#), nonetheless, is only the international face of a deeper and more structural issue. Across the Global South, national elites have long traded sovereignty for privilege, too often working as transmission belts of neocolonial dependency, aligning not with their own peoples but with the reproduction of a violent, racist, extractivist and unequal international division of labour. Global South domestic elites have at times played a positive role on the path of liberation, but it is also they that ensure that extraction continues and resistance is repressed. Less and less we see domestic elites upholding sovereign projects: instead, they sustain the extractive model while selling national assets to transnational capital, comfortably functioning as agents of foreign interests. They accrue benefits from playing this part in international production chains, which makes them immensely wealthy. Any serious project for Southern sovereignty must therefore reckon with the enemy within: the class struggles that have always been instrumental to the maintenance of dependency, and the local bourgeoisies whose power rests precisely on the perpetuation of privilege and inequalities.

The building of a Global South Front is founded upon this understanding that there is more to unite than to divide peoples and states of the South. There are unprecedented challenges to tackle, and surely the list is much wider than what has been drafted in this section. They are, however, departure points for progressive forces to consider in the development of this collectively devised future, which will require ambition, brave political leaders, and strong social movements. These challenges should not be reason for inaction. On the contrary, most of the time their solutions are embedded within the day-to-day making of resistance itself.

Part III - Strategizing for a Common Agenda

Building a Global South Front starts from seeing things differently. The power that the [America Invertida](#) exerts on every leftist Latin American teenager is a case in point. The child-like drawing from Torres García showing an inverted South American map communicates, with a simple image, how easy and how challenging it is to change the way we see the world. To act together we must learn how to think together, from the South, for the South. Because mainstream political

⁸ The Right to [Free, Prior, and Informed Consent](#) and [the Right to Say No](#) are mechanisms directly addressing peoples' self-determination.

vocabulary and imagination are many times framed by theories formulated very far from the experiences and territories of the Global South. For the world to address Southern peoples needs and aspirations, the processes and institutions governing our international relations must reflect their many faces. There is an urgent need for the South to think and speak for and by itself, prioritizing their narratives and platforming their different material realities.

The definition of “Global South”, however, is neither static nor precise. While there is a clear recognition of a shared reality of oppression, stemming from their subordinate inclusion in the international division of labour, “Global South” is the name of a struggle. Encompassing some of the biggest economies of the world, the South speaks more of these countries' exclusion from multilateral decision-making spaces than of a concrete macroeconomic identity. All in all, the Global South does not get to determine the international structures affecting their people's wellbeing, subject to both value extraction and constant external shocks. Combining many of the ‘second’ and ‘third’ world countries, as well as most of the so-called “periphery” or “developing countries”, the Global South also speaks of otherness, of those excluded from capitalist hegemonic definitions of what is good, beautiful, and knowledgeable.

The South too shares a past of many great civilizations, a history of resistance, of anti-colonial liberation struggles, as well as deep wounds from more recently imposed neoliberal structural adjustments. In spite of a lack of clear definition, the “South” is a powerful geopolitical and geoeconomic identity, one that in every account needs to be centre stage in the building of a liberated future. But any successful strategy for and by the Global South needs to understand its relationship to and presence within the Global North.

The Global South in the North

What would be the role of the Global North in the building of this new internationalism? An in-depth understanding of its role is, of course, a task for the movements and activists of the Global North themselves. It is worth mentioning, however, that while global inequalities and impoverishment in this era have a strong Southern geography, there is also significant and growing inequality in the Global North. If worldwide [the richest 0.001% controls three times more wealth than 50% of the whole of humanity combined](#), in the US, a developed country in macroeconomic terms, [35.9 million individuals were living in poverty](#) in 2024. For the same year, [the EU counted 93.3 million people at risk of poverty or social exclusion](#)⁹, a staggering 21% of the EU's population. While there must be a radical revisiting of the racist and neo-colonial relations between North and South, there must also be a profound re-reading of the extreme inequalities as well as the class composition of societies in the Global North.

Migrant and refugee people living and working in the North are the most visible face of what we call the Global South in the North. Intrinsic to the reproduction of current capitalism and the global re-structuring of labour, they are embedded in Global North societies, doing the heavy lifting neoliberal globalization could not directly outsource to the Global South. Typically working in construction, agriculture, health and care work, oil rigs, transportation, construction, and service sectors, they are usually treated as an addendum, an appendix to otherwise thriving societies. Nevertheless, even if invisibilized and systematically criminalized, migrant and refugee labour substantively contributes to both host countries' economies and their own countries of origin GDPs

⁹ According to Eurostat, the “[at-risk-of-poverty rate](#)” outlines “the percentage of the population living in households where the equivalised disposable income was below the at-risk-of-poverty threshold for the current year and at least two out of the preceding three years”.

—[in 2024](#), for instance, foreign remittances comprised 8.7% of the Philippines GDP, 11.4% of Senegal's, 19.1% of Guatemala's, and 3.6% of Mexico's.

In effect, major multilateral instruments protecting the human rights of “people on the move” (the [Refugee Convention](#), 1951; the [Anti-Racist Convention](#), 1965; and the [Migrant Convention](#), 1990) have been [dismantled](#) by frameworks such as the 2018 [UN Global Compacts](#), the 2024 [EU Pact on Migration and Asylum](#), and the 2025 [US One Big Beautiful Bill](#). Migrant and refugee people are increasingly deemed as terrorists, as criminals, individuals whose humanity can be legally erased through ever-intensifying regimes of categorization. Those of Arab and African descent are disproportionately affected, often treated as security threats. Racist migration policies are increasingly expanding beyond border control, affecting the every-day life of migrant men, women and children with names deemed suspicious or with the “wrong” skin colour, bearing witness to the [continuity between colonialism and immigration controls](#).

Nevertheless, the push-backs are encouraging. The Palestinian people's resistance and *Sumud* in the face of the continuing zionist occupation and genocide holds a mirror to US-EU complicity, catalysing a renewed internationalism focused on system change. Movements and networks of [migrant and refugee people](#) as well as anti-racist and anti-islamophobic organisations are playing an important role in the Global North by driving solidarity away from *dogood-ism* towards radical action—so much so that global social movements are increasingly taking on migrant struggles as a core agenda, as is the case, for instance, of the food sovereignty, collective health, and anti-militarization movements. The political organization of migrant and refugee people can be seen as [a great global protest](#) against the unsustainability of capitalism, as well as a sobering reminder of how deeply unfinished the decolonization process is.

These dynamics also have an impact on electoral and parliamentary processes. In the face of impoverishment and exclusion, it is the extreme right that is gaining support. Both the US and Europe have given second mandates to Trump and Von der Leyen, and many European countries have outed social democratic parties in favour of fascist and other extreme right parties, undressing the logical culmination of decades of neoliberal globalization. There are thus major strategic questions posed for progressive forces in the North. Crucially, such a scenario demands a comprehensive analysis not only of the impacts of neoliberalism but also of the grounds upon which to rebuild their social infrastructures, moving away from [neo-colonial extractivism](#) in the Global South.

For the left in the North, it is imperative to develop a more radical understanding of internationalism. While alliances with Global South struggles remain crucial, as with the struggle for Palestine's self-determination, substantively changing the way the countries in the North govern themselves will have major and much more lasting impacts in the South than discretionary development aid programs. It is about dismantling capitalism and imperialism from the inside out, breaking with a model that sacrifices social rights and democratic accountability to protect wealth and power through militarization, exclusion, extraction and war. Fundamentally, to the Global North, the task begins with learning to live without empire.

The Global-South-in-the-North can be determinant to systemic change. It includes migrants and refugees, Black people, Indigenous peoples, marginalized communities and social minorities, as well as the impoverished and disenfranchised white working-class whose lives in both the US and the EU have been hollowed out by neoliberal restructuring. Their task involves building economies of solidarity and democracy in the North that can prefigure post-capitalist relations, actively dismantling racist and colonial structures without disregarding the provision of due reparations. It is

about the North engaging in a new internationalism that places systemic change at the centre of global transformation, from the belly of the beast.

Elements of a common strategy

Building a Global South Front demands concrete mechanisms for coordination, clear channels of communication, and strategic alignment across vastly different contexts. From Jakarta to Johannesburg, from São Paulo to Manila, progressive forces face distinct immediate battles while confronting the same structural adversaries: imperialism, corporate power, militarization, and the macho-facho international. The challenge is to connect these struggles without flattening their specificity, to coordinate without imposing uniformity, to build power from the very reality of the many struggles. It is about building a collective horizon, a common voice capable of articulating shared interests and shaping political agendas at the national, regional, and global levels.

This section outlines some elements of such a strategy, not as a blueprint, but as an invitation, a framework to be tested, adapted, and collectively refined through practice. It identifies three interconnected spaces where the work of building peoples' power must unfold: among social movements and civil society organizations; within and alongside states and political parties; and through networks of thinkers, communicators, and popular educators. Each alone is but a piece of a mosaic that, together, can forge a common vision and a strategy that is demanded by a Global South Front.

The first space is tasked to build strong links among peoples and movements across the Global South, connecting local struggles to international dynamics and identifying the points of convergence that enable collective action. This requires creativity, openness, and political will, a process rooted in concrete struggles as experienced differently in each country. What are the most significant struggles for each society? How does the intersection between the different fronts of struggle play out in each of the continents? In Brazil, for instance, racial justice, gender equality, Indigenous Peoples' rights, employment and labor protection, wealth and land distribution, and (State) violence make up for a very specific configuration of struggles. What are the social forces that determine the fronts of struggle in, say, Indonesia, in South Africa? From the diversity of similar realities across the South, the substance of a shared political voice can emerge.

The second space implies a strategic engagement with Global South states, with mobilization being complemented by sustained public advocacy and campaigning. This part of the strategy includes work with capitals and across South-South coalitions, such as the BRICS, the G77, and the Non-Aligned movement at a global level; or the African Union, ASEAN and CELAC at the regional level. The work of the Global Campaign within the UN Binding Treaty process, fostering Global South countries' coordination around legal provisions drafted from the reality of human rights violations committed by transnational corporations, can teach important lessons on the limits and, especially, on the potential of social movements engaging with states. In spite of their many contradictions, these political arenas can provide strategic opportunities to advance shared demands and strengthen political coordination.

Another dimension of this second space is the work with political parties and parliamentarians, essential for translating social demands into institutional power. In Latin America, for instance, the Foro de São Paulo, the Grupo de Puebla, the Congreso Panamericano, and the Red Futuro provide important platforms for the regional coordination of progressive party programs. It is crucial to cross-fertilize these lessons across the regions, building global alliances of progressive Southern representatives, such as the initiatives recently organized by Progressive International with [the Hague Group](#) and [Nuestra América](#).

The third space demands coordination among thinkers, intellectuals, and the media. This includes building networks of Southern-based intellectuals and experts across key disciplines, as well as strengthening think-tanks rooted in Southern realities. These initiatives must be complemented by efforts on intentional collective political formation, to understand past, present and future from a progressive perspective, recovering Southern thought and Southern culture, such as the work being developed by the [Tricontinental Institute](#) and [Focus on the Global South](#). Recently launched, the *Transnational Academy* is one concrete contribution to this effort, where, together with allies, TNI fosters collective political formation processes. For the second half of 2026, a course is being designed to spark analysis, strategy, and mobilization from a Southern perspective, for the South to get to know more of the South. Together, these initiatives can deepen our collective knowledge, shape public discourse, and reinforce the intellectual foundations of a shared Southern project.

All three spaces of struggle meet at the anti-imperialist anti-fascist front—an urgent task for our generation. Through consistent mobilization, political coordination, and organic intellectual production, this strategy allows us to build a different future while we fight back.

Looking ahead

Throughout 2025, TNI has promoted consultations in all Global South regions with many close allies to understand their reading of the current conjuncture and the strategies they envisioned for a new multilateral order. In most conversations, there was a similar diagnosis: in spite of the uncertainties, or because of them, our current conjuncture presents many opportunities progressive forces need to seriously and collectively explore. The challenges have somewhat varied in emphasis among the regions, but it was clear across the board that we need to develop a voice—a “chorus” of plural voices—, and a common strategy to shape the future. To guide us there, some issues have been consistently mentioned as core thematics to be further explored¹⁰ so as to design these many tapestries in a union of struggles from the Souths of the world.

But how do we follow through with the high ambition of our peoples and movements? Throughout 2026, together with social movements, trade unions and other civil society organizations, TNI will engage in a collective process of political formation, encounters in mobilisation and action, to contribute to the consolidation of a collective political identity and develop a common strategy and action plan. Departing from the learnings of a living Global South Front Agenda, we will work to connect the diversity of political voices, struggles, and traditions towards a Bandung *de los Pueblos*, in 2027.

Seventy years ago, the Bandung Conference marked the birth of South-South cooperation, bringing together 29 newly independent Asian and African states to address decolonization, development, and imperialism. We believe that the symbolic and political energy that projected Bandung 70 years into the future is more than an inspiration, it is a call for emancipation in this new era. A Bandung of the peoples, however, must encompass not only states, as it did back in 1955; not only Africa and Asia, but also Latin America, the Caribbean, and the immense diversity of social movements, political forces, and popular struggles from the world’s many Souths. It is *Bandung* because it embodies the transformative promise of a South-South common strategy. It is in Spanish to emphasize the inclusion of Latin America. But above all, it is “of the peoples”

¹⁰ The recurring thematics across all consultations could be grouped in six intertwined and diverse struggles: 1) Reclaiming sovereignty over life and resources, 2) Peace, liberation, and human dignity, 3) Knowledge and Digital Sovereignty, 4) Life-affirming economies and development policies, 5) Collective governance and enforcement, 6) Radical political organizing and mobilization.

because peoples' power must drive this new multilateralism, to be founded on internationalist solidarity and genuine democracy.

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