

**Call for Abstracts: Special Issue on the UN80 Initiative
and the ‘New Agenda for Peace’: Transformations to the
Rules-Based International Order**

Guest Editors:

Flavia Bellini Zimmermann (The University of Melbourne, Australia), and

Vaishali Singh (XIM University, India)

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ABOUT THE JOURNAL

The *Journal of Law and Public Policy (JLPP)* publishes original scholarship at the interface between law and public policy at the national, regional, and international levels. Contributions that examine the processes of public interest decision-making are especially welcome. Articles must advance interdisciplinary approaches to law and policy with a strong focus on socio-economic and political contexts. The journal also welcomes empirical, historical, and comparative analyses that are grounded in theoretical debates. In addition to upholding high academic standards, *JLPP* encourages writing that is accessible to a wide range of readers, such as policymakers, researchers, and faculty and students of law and public policy across the world. The journal is open access and follows a double-anonymous peer review process.

Founded in 2014, *JLPP* was published by the Centre for Environmental Law, Education, Research and Advocacy at the National Law School of India University, Bengaluru. The University relaunched the journal in 2024 with a new Editorial Board consisting of faculty members from various departments and centres. In its new avatar, *JLPP* releases two issues a year—one general and one theme-based issue. While it continues to be open access, the journal is available in print format as well.

FRAMING NOTE: SPECIAL ISSUE ON THE UN 80 INITIATIVE AND THE ‘NEW AGENDA FOR PEACE’: TRANSFORMATIONS TO THE RULE-BASED INTERNATIONAL ORDER

As the United Nations (UN) marks its eightieth anniversary, it stands at a critical juncture amid the deepening crisis of the Rules-Based International Order (RBIO). In the post-World War II scenario, there was a consensus in the international community on the need to develop an international framework, with a strong focus on liberal principles of cooperation and dialogue, to prevent the advent of future wars. The UN was established in 1945 in this context in an attempt to develop a global architecture that could help promote peace, institutionalise collective security, and foster international cooperation. The UN remains the most significant international organisation, with a broad mandate encompassing peace and security, humanitarian intervention, and sustainable development goals (Claude 1966; Barnett and Finnemore 2004; Weiss 2013). However, it also currently faces a convergence of crises of various kinds—structural, political, and normative—in addition to a profound erosion of trust, which together cast doubts on its international relevance in protracted armed conflicts, such as those in Ukraine, Gaza, Sudan, and Haiti (Brinkel and Sellmeijer 2024; Cattafi and Pena Lianes 2026; Tallberg 2026). The main aim of this special issue is therefore to investigate the UN80 Initiative’s reform efforts to implement the ‘New Agenda for Peace’ and its relevance to the structural, political, and normative continuity of the RBIO in a changing global order, addressing contestations and how they are reshaping the international order.

Situating the Proposed Special Issue

At the heart of the UN crisis lies the concept of RBIO being seen not only as a settled normative framework but also as a contested and evolving political project. While some scholars regard the RBIO as an extension of international law and global cooperation (Larik and Groff 2020; Wright 2020; Bashfield and Proukaki 2022; Jørgensen 2021), others argue that it lacks legal precision, blurs the distinction between binding and non-binding norms, and functions as a political discourse through which dominant powers legitimise particular interpretations of international order (Talmon 2019; Walt 2021; Tuygan 2021; Falk 2021; Cross 2022; Dugard 2023). This absence of a consensus regarding the meaning, sources, and authority of the RBIO raises fundamental questions about whose rules underpin the contemporary international system, how these rules are constituted, and whose interests they ultimately serve (Chalmers

2019).

To address these questions, this issue draws upon three complementary theoretical traditions. The English School conceptualises international order as the institutions, norms, and practices through which states sustain coexistence within an international society (Bull 1977; Buzan 2010). From this perspective, the proliferation of mini-lateral arrangements, regional institutions, and alternative centres of authority raises questions regarding whether the post-war order is being transformed, pluralised, or fragmented (via the rise of international forums such as the G20, BRICS plus, QUAD and AUKUS). Constructivist approaches direct attention to the role of norms, identities, and legitimacy in constituting and sustaining international institutions. The approaches of both the Constructivist tradition and the English School can be seen as complementary to each other, as they can be brought into a constructive cross-fertilisation dialogue in bounded fields of debate (Reus-Smit 2002). This perspective provides an integrated alternative to the English School and Constructivism binary, developing a more nuanced understanding of the role played by international institutions, norms, and practices in the RBIO.

With the advent of the first and second Trump administrations and increasing US disengagement with international organisations such as the UN and NATO and principles of international law, there has been a growing debate on the future of the liberal RBIO (Boyle 2023), and how contestations that predate Trump's era are reshaping the liberal international order (Acharya 2017). Contemporary contestations surrounding the RBIO, sovereignty, and interventions might be understood as reflecting a weakening consensus regarding the values that historically underpinned the liberal RBIO (Wendt 1992; Ruggie 2005). Postcolonial scholarship offers a more fundamental critique of the RBIO by questioning the universality of the post-war order itself. It highlights how international institutions emerged within a broader context of colonialism, unequal power relations, and epistemic hierarchies, thereby drawing attention to the historical exclusions and asymmetries embedded within global governance structures (Grovgui 1996; Bhambra 2021). Taken together, these perspectives suggest that contemporary global challenges—including declining confidence in multilateral institutions, competing governance arrangements, uneven implementation of international norms, and growing geopolitical contestation—should not be understood merely as organisational problems requiring technical reform. Rather, they may be symptomatic of a deeper crisis concerning the legitimacy, authority, and normative foundations of

the international order itself. In this respect, UN80 serves not simply as an institutional reform agenda but as a critical moment for reassessing the assumptions that underpin contemporary global governance. The UN80 vision recognises that the global order has undergone transformations since the UN's creation and is now shaped by factors unforeseen in 1945. The initiative's objective is to identify inefficiencies, review how mandates are implemented, examine possible structural changes, and realign programmes within the UN system. Additionally, the 'New Agenda for Peace' and the 'Pact for the Future' aim to make the organisation more agile, integrated, and better equipped to respond to contemporary global challenges (Stimson Center 2023; Russo and Tadesse 2025; van Emmerik and Albrecht 2025).

A Global South perspective is particularly important to this endeavour. Although the UN is frequently portrayed as the embodiment of universal values of peace, development, and international cooperation, its institutional architecture emerged at a time when much of Asia, Africa, and the Caribbean remained under colonial rule and were largely excluded from shaping the post-war order (Mazower 2009; Acharya 2021; Hogan and Patrick 2024). Consequently, many Global South scholars and policymakers have questioned the assumption that the RBIO represents a universally legitimate framework (Benabdallah 2024; Acharya 2016). From demands for a New International Economic Order in the 1970s to contemporary calls for epistemic, developmental, and political justice, actors from the Global South have consistently articulated alternative visions of global governance that challenge prevailing hierarchies of power and knowledge (Anghie 2023; Stuenkel 2024). From this perspective, contemporary contestations surrounding the RBIO are not merely reactions to shifting geopolitical realities but expressions of longstanding struggles over representation, legitimacy, and authority within international society.

The special issue also seeks to move beyond state-centric understandings of global governance by examining the relationship between international institutions and local communities. Critical scholarship has demonstrated that UN agencies, development institutions, and peacebuilding mechanisms often function as sites through which neoliberal governance practices, technocratic expertise, and externally defined development priorities are diffused across the Global South (Mac Ginty 2011; Ferguson 1994; Li 2007). At the same time, local communities are not passive recipients of these interventions. Through processes of resistance, adaptation, negotiation, and the articulation of alternative knowledge systems, they actively shape the implementation and

outcomes of global governance initiatives (Pahuja 2011; Escobar 2012). Examining these interactions provides an important opportunity to assess whether contemporary multilateral institutions facilitate genuinely inclusive forms of governance or reproduce existing structures of authority, dependency, and exclusion. By situating UN80 within these wider debates, the issue seeks to contribute to a more critical understanding of the future of the RBIO, international law, and global governance in the twenty-first century.

Relevance to international law and public policy

Broadly, the theme of this upcoming issue connects law and public policy, as the erosion of the RBIO exposes significant gaps between existing international legal structures and their policy implementation. This makes the reform agenda not merely a legal question of norms and treaties, but a public policy challenge involving institutional design, enforcement mechanisms, and political feasibility. The special issue aims to contribute to the understanding of international law and governance by examining how global legal principles—such as sovereignty, non-intervention, and responsibility to protect—are negotiated, operationalised, and often contested within policymaking processes, ultimately shaping the effectiveness and legitimacy of international institutions like the UN in responding to contemporary global crises.

CALL FOR ABSTRACTS

The special issue aims to generate empirically grounded analyses that critically examine the historical foundations, normative assumptions, and contemporary contestations surrounding the RBIO in its multidisciplinary dimensions. Contributors are encouraged to explore broader questions concerning the nature of international order, the sources of institutional legitimacy, the role of Global South agency, and the emergence of alternative forms of global governance in the Global South. *JLPP* particularly welcomes contributions that move beyond predominantly US-centric interpretations of the RBIO for this issue. We encourage analyses that examine how emerging and middle powers, such as India, China, Brazil, South Africa, and Canada, understand, contest, and reshape the norms and institutions of global governance. By foregrounding diverse regional perspectives and experiences, the issue seeks to capture competing visions of international order

and explore how shifting centres of power are transforming the legitimacy, authority, and future trajectory of multilateralism in a multipolar world.

We invite abstracts for original, high-quality empirical research papers, case comments, and book reviews that address questions such as (although not limited to) the following:

1. Does the contemporary crisis of global governance reflect institutional dysfunction or deeper structural issues within the liberal RBIO?
2. To what extent does the RBIO reproduce historical hierarchies of power, knowledge, and development?
3. How have Global South actors challenged, reshaped, or reimagined dominant understandings of international order and global governance?
4. What role can middle powers, minilateralism, and regionalism play in a changing RBIO?
5. How do local communities engage with, resist, or transform international governance interventions?
6. Are emerging governance arrangements, such as BRICS+, regional organisations, transnational networks, and community-based governance models, signalling alternative futures beyond the post-1945 order?
7. How can UN80 meaningfully address contemporary legitimacy deficits in the RBIO?
8. How can countries from the Global South and the BRICS plus meaningfully engage with the RBIO and enhance the UN's centrality amidst the mini-lateral arrangements and geopolitical competition?
9. Given the contestations to the RBIO, new security threats, and rising great-power tensions, can global governance remain effective, and what structural reforms are essential to preserve its legitimacy and authority?

Submissions may be from the fields of International Relations, Public Policy, History, Economics, and Law.

SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

Please refer to our submission guidelines at: <https://repository.nls.ac.in/jlpp/>

All abstracts must be submitted via email to flavia.bellienizimmermann@unimelb.edu.au and vaishali@xim.edu.in. Shortlisted submissions will be evaluated by the guest editors, who will provide feedback and invite selected authors to develop and submit a full manuscript for peer review.

Final submission of the developed papers will be through *JLPP*'s Digital Commons platform. Expected publication month is July 2027.

When submitting an abstract please mention the themed issue on UN80 and the 'New Agenda for Peace' in the following format: **Title of Your Proposed Article (for JLPP Special Issue on the UN80 Initiative and the 'New Agenda for Peace')**

Last date to submit abstracts is **30 August 2026**.

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