

Thesis Title:

Human Rights Violations in Saudi Arabia's NEOM Project (2020-2024):

A Rights-based Development Approach

This thesis is submitted to fulfill the requirements for the Bachelor of Arts degree in International Relations.

Name : Rahmah Alyanisa

Student ID Number : 2110412026



**INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS DEPARTMENT
FACULTY OF SOCIAL AND POLITICAL SCIENCES
UNIVERSITAS PEMBANGUNAN NASIONAL "VETERAN" JAKARTA
2025**

**HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS IN SAUDI ARABIA'S NEOM PROJECT (2020-2024):
A RIGHTS-BASED DEVELOPMENT APPROACH**

**PELANGGARAN HAK ASASI MANUSIA DALAM PROYEK NEOM ARAB SAUDI
(2020 2024): PENDEKATAN PEMBANGUNAN BERBASIS HAK ASASI MANUSIA**

Oleh:
RAHMAH ALYANISA
2110412026

SKRIPSI
Diajukan untuk memenuhi persyaratan gelar Sarjana pada
Program Studi Hubungan Internasional

Telah disetujui oleh Pembimbing pada tanggal yang tertera di bawah ini

Jakarta, 4 Februari 2026
Pembimbing,



Muhammad Kamil Ghiffary Abdurrahman, M.Si.



Program Studi Hubungan Internasional
Fakultas Ilmu Sosial dan Ilmu Politik
Universitas Pembangunan Nasional "Veteran" Jakarta
2026

PERNYATAAN ORISINALITAS

Tugas Akhir ini adalah hasil karya sendiri dan semua sumber yang dikutip maupun yang dirujuk telah saya nyatakan dengan benar:

Nama : Rahmah Alyanisa

NIM : 2110412026

Program Studi : S1 Hubungan Internasional

Bilamana di kemudian hari ditemukan ketidaksesuaian dengan pernyataan ini maka, saya bersedia dituntut dan diproses sesuai dengan ketentuan yang berlaku.

Jakarta, Desember 2025

Yang menyatakan,



Rahmah Alyanisa

**PERNYATAAN PERSETUJUAN PUBLIKASI TUGAS AKHIR UNTUK
KEPENTINGAN AKADEMIS**

Sebagai civitas akademik Universitas Pembangunan Nasional Veteran Jakarta,
saya yang bertanda tangan di bawah ini:

Nama : Rahmah Alyanisa
NIM : 2110412026
Fakultas : Fakultas Ilmu Sosial dan Ilmu Politik
Program Studi : S1 Hubungan Internasional

Demi pengembangan ilmu pengetahuan, menyetujui untuk memberikan kepada
Universitas Pembangunan Nasional Veteran Jakarta Hak Bebas Royalti Non
eksklusif (*Non-exclusive Royalty Free Right*) atas karya ilmiah saya yang
berjudul:

**HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS IN SAUDI ARABIA'S NEOM PROJECT
(2020-2024): A RIGHTS-BASED DEVELOPMENT APPROACH**

Beserta perangkat yang ada (jika diperlukan). Dengan Hak Bebas Royalti ini,
Universitas Pembangunan Nasional Veteran Jakarta berhak menyimpan, mengalih
media/formatkan, mengelola dalam bentuk pangkalan data (*database*), merawat
dan mempublikasikan Skripsi saya selama tetap mencantumkan nama saya
sebagai penulis/pencipta dan sebagai pemilik Hak Cipta.

Demikian pernyataan ini saya buat dengan
sebenarnya:

Dibuat di : Bogor

Pada tanggal : 17 Desember 2025

Yang menyatakan,



Rahmah Alyanisa

SURAT PERSETUJUAN PUBLIKASI ILMIAH

Sebagai civitas akademik Universitas Pembangunan Nasional Veteran Jakarta,
saya yang bertandatangan dibawah ini:

Nama : Rahmah Alyanisa
NIM : 2110412026
Fakultas : Fakultas Ilmu Sosial dan Ilmu Politik
Program Studi : S1 Hubungan Internasional
Judul Skripsi : Human Rights Violations in Saudi Arabia's NEOM
Project (2020-2024): A Rights-based Development
Approach

Dengan ini saya menyatakan bahwa saya menyetujui untuk:

1. Memberikan hak saya bebas royalti kepada Perpustakaan UPNVJ atas penelitian karya ilmiah saya demi pengembangan ilmu pengetahuan.
2. Memberikan hak menyimpan, mengalih mediakan atau mengalih formatkan, mengolah pangkalan data (*database*), mendistribusikan, serta menampilkan dalam bentuk *softcopy* untuk kepentingan akademis kepada perpustakaan UPNVJ, tanpa perlu meminta izin dari saya selama tetap mencantumkan nama saya sebagai Peneliti/pencipta.
3. Bersedia dan menjamin untuk menanggung secara pribadi tanpa melibatkan pihak perpustakaan UPNVJ dari semua bentuk tuntutan hukum yang timbul atas pelanggaran hak cipta dalam karya ilmiah ini.

Demikian pernyataan ini saya buat dengan sebenar-benarnya dan semoga digunakan sebagaimana mestinya.

Dibuat di : Bogor

Pada tanggal : 17 Desember 2025

Yang menyatakan,



PENGESAHAN TUGAS AKHIR

NAMA : RAHMAH ALYANISA
NIM : 2110412026
PROGRAM STUDI : S1 HUBUNGAN INTERNASIONAL
JUDUL : HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS IN SAUDI ARABIA'S
NEOM PROJECT (2020-2024): A RIGHTS-BASED
DEVELOPMENT APPROACH

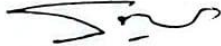
Telah berhasil dipertahankan di hadapan Tim Penguji dan diterima sebagai bagian persyaratan yang diperlukan untuk memperoleh gelar sarjana pada Program Ilmu Hubungan Internasional, Fakultas Ilmu Sosial dan Ilmu Politik, Universitas Pembangunan Nasional Veteran Jakarta.

Pembimbing



M. Kamil Ghiffary A., M.Si.

Penguji 1



Dr. Nurmasari Situmeang, M.Si.

Penguji 2



M. Chairil Akbar S., S.IP, MA.

Ketua Program Studi
Ilmu Hubungan Internasional



Wiwiek Rukmi Dwi A., S.IP, M.Si.

Ditetapkan di : Jakarta
Tanggal Ujian : 7 Januari 2026

ABSTRACT

Title: Human Rights Violations in Saudi Arabia's NEOM Project (2020-2024):

A Rights-Based Development Approach

Although NEOM is recognized as a central pillar of modernization under Saudi Vision 2030, its development reveals tensions between economic ambitions and human rights protection. This study assesses the extent to which NEOM's development complies with the principles of the Rights-Based Development (RBD) approach. Employing a qualitative method and the PANEL analytical framework (Participation, Accountability, Non-discrimination, Empowerment, and Legality), the study identifies systemic failures across all five principles. Participation fails due to the denial of Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC) and the implementation of pseudo-participatory practices. Accountability fails as a result of the absence of independent grievance mechanisms and the persistence of state impunity. Non-discrimination fails due to non-transparent compensation schemes that increase the risk of impoverishment. Empowerment fails as a result of coercive measures, including arbitrary detention and harsh sentencing of local activists. Legality fails due to the use of the 2017 Counter-Terrorism Law to suppress peaceful dissent, in contradiction to Saudi Arabia's international obligations. The study concludes that NEOM exemplifies a model of "authoritarian development," where legal and political infrastructures are engineered to prioritize investment speed over international human rights obligations.

Keywords: NEOM, Rights-Based Development, PANEL Framework, Howaitat Tribe, Human Rights Violations.

ABSTRAK

Judul: *Pelanggaran Hak Asasi Manusia dalam Proyek NEOM Arab Saudi (2020-2024): Pendekatan Pembangunan Berbasis Hak*

Meskipun NEOM dikenal sebagai pilar utama modernisasi dalam kerangka Visi Saudi 2030, terdapat ketegangan antara ambisi ekonomi dan perlindungan hak asasi manusia dalam pembangunannya. Penelitian ini menilai sejauh mana pembangunan NEOM mematuhi prinsip-prinsip pendekatan Rights-Based Development (RBD). Dengan menggunakan metode kualitatif dan kerangka analisis PANEL (Participation, Accountability, Non-discrimination, Empowerment, dan Legality), penelitian ini mengidentifikasi kegagalan sistemik pada kelima prinsip tersebut. Prinsip Partisipasi gagal akibat pengabaian Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC) serta penerapan praktik partisipasi semu. Prinsip Akuntabilitas gagal akibat ketiadaan mekanisme pengaduan yang independen dan berlanjutnya impunitas negara. Prinsip Non-Diskriminasi gagal akibat skema kompensasi yang tidak transparan dan meningkatkan risiko pemiskinan. Prinsip Pemberdayaan gagal akibat tindakan koersif, termasuk penahanan sewenang-wenang dan pemberian hukuman berat terhadap aktivis lokal. Prinsip Legalitas gagal akibat penggunaan Undang-Undang Anti-Terrorisme tahun 2017 untuk menekan penolakan damai, yang bertentangan dengan kewajiban internasional Arab Saudi. Penelitian menyimpulkan bahwa NEOM merepresentasikan model "pembangunan otoriter", di mana infrastruktur hukum dan politik direkayasa untuk memprioritaskan kecepatan investasi di atas kewajiban hak asasi manusia internasional.

Kata Kunci: *NEOM, Rights-Based Development, Kerangka PANEL, Suku Huwaitat, Pelanggaran HAM.*

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Throughout the completion of this research, the author feels thankful for the support and help from numerous parties. Thus, the author would like to convey and extend profound gratitude to those as follows:

1. **Allah SWT**, for the countless blessings and grace bestowed upon the author. By His will, every challenge was met with strength and every obstacle overcome. Without His divine guidance, this research would never have reached completion.
2. **Papa** and **Mama**, the author's beloved parents, for their unconditional love and boundless support. Thank you for raising me with honor, wisdom, and tenderness. You both have taught me how to face life bravely, to keep fighting, and to strive to be a better person every single day.
3. **Teteh Desty**, the author's sister by blood and true lifesaver by heart. She would not be who she is today without you as her role model. And **Aa Fajri**, the author's gentle brother, thank you for your quiet care. Even behind your silence, she knows you wish for her well-being in your own sincere way.
4. **Muhammad Azka Rhandhasmara**, the author's one-of-a-kind, the man she cherishes, the dearest lover, also the longtime friend who has bewitched her body, mind, and soul. Thank you for stepping into and staying through one of the challenging chapters of her life. For being strong, and for your unwavering commitment to be there for her. She wishes for you to win everything in life.
5. **Halimatun Zakiah**, the author's "Bonnie", the adorable best friend since her first days of college. Thank you for being a devoted companion both on and off-campus, and for being the first to break through her introverted shell. Your laughter and understanding have made every moment more meaningful.
6. **Adinda Sharfina** and **Hana Widya Permata Sari**, the author's close friends in college as well, whose dynamic energy never fails to brighten any room. Thank you for turning even the dullest days into something joyful.

7. **Najwa Khabiza Egaikmal**, the author's other half in college. Through you, she has learned to grow with greater integrity and a bigger heart, both academically and personally. Look forward to every meeting life allows us in the future.
8. **Ananda Naila**, the author's dear friend since high school, whose strength is beautifully reflected in her eyes. Thank you for being a place that feels like delightful home and for teaching her the power of feeling deeply.
9. **Azizah Hafshah Hapsari**, the author's kind and independent best friend since high school. Thank you for remaining by her side until this very day.
10. **Joji** and **Geboi**, the author's cats, for their warmth, playful presence, and the silent companionship that accompanied every paragraph of this thesis.
11. **M. Kamil Ghiffary A., M.Si.**, as the research advisor, for his invaluable guidance, insightful ideas, and the constructive recommendations that shaped this research into its final form.
12. **Wiwiek Rukmi Dwi A., S.IP., M.Si.**, Head of the International Relations Department; **Dr. Nurmasari Situmeang, M.Si.** and **M. Chairil Akbar S., S.IP., M.A.**, as examiners, for their critical insights and thought-provoking discussions during the proposal and defense stages.
13. **Kurt Cobain**, for teaching the importance of authenticity and perseverance in seeing things through. You will always be remembered.

With Love,

RAHMAH ALYANISA

Bogor, Indonesia, December 21st, 2025

TABLE OF CONTENTS

COVER	i
STATEMENT OF ORIGINALITY	ii
STATEMENT OF PUBLICATION APPROVAL	iii
LETTER OF APPROVAL FOR SCIENTIFIC PUBLICATION	iv
SHEET OF THESIS APPROVAL	v
ABSTRACT	vi
<i>ABSTRAK</i>	vii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	viii
CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION	
1.1 Background	1
1.2 Research Problem.....	7
1.3 Research Limitation	8
1.4 Research Purpose	8
1.5 Research Benefits.....	8
1.6 Writing Structure.....	9
CHAPTER 2 THEORETICAL AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK	
2.1 Rights-Based Development.....	11
2.1.1 PANEL Concept.....	16
CHAPTER 3 RESEARCH METHODS	
3.1 Research Object	19
3.2 Research Type	19
3.3 Data Collection Technique.....	20
3.4 Data Source	20
3.5 Data Analysis Technique.....	21
3.6 Research Timeline.....	23
CHAPTER 4 HUMAN RIGHTS IN SAUDI ARABIA	
4.1 Contextualizing Human Rights in the Political Economy of Saudi Arabia	24
4.2 Human Rights Violations Towards Howaitat Tribe in NEOM	29
4.3 Actors and Power Relations in NEOM's Development	39
4.3.1 The Duty-Bearers.....	39

4.3.2 The Right-Holders	44
4.4 Analysis of the Failure of RBD in the NEOM Project.....	48
4.4.1 Failure of the Participation (P).....	49
4.4.2 Absence of the Accountability (A).....	52
4.4.3 Practices of Discrimination (N)	54
4.4.4 Processes of Empowerment Undermining (E).....	56
4.4.5 Violation of the Legality (L)	59
4.5 Implications of the Findings: Global Development & Saudi Governance	60
CHAPTER 5 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS	
5.1 Conclusion	69
5.2 Recommendations	70
5.2.1. Practical	70
5.2.2. Theoretical	72
BIBLIOGRAPHY	73
BIOGRAPHY	85
APPENDIX	86