

## ARTICLES

### **BRICS IN INTERNATIONAL LEGAL SPACE: HUMANITARIAN IMPERATIVES OF INTERNATIONAL SECURITY**

BABEK ASADOV,

League of International Youth Diplomacy (Saint Petersburg, Russia)

VLADIMIR GAVRILENKO,

Sapienza University of Rome (Rome, Italy)

STANISLAV NEMCHENKO,

Saint Petersburg University of State Fire Service of EMERCOM of Russia  
(Saint Petersburg, Russia)

<https://doi.org/10.21684/2412-2343-2021-8-1-8-34>

*The article is devoted to the examination of the formation of new vectors for international relations development within the global format of cooperation. The establishment and unification of BRICS in the international legal sphere through a wide range of common interests and views of its members towards issues facing the modern world reflect objective tendencies of world development to the formation of a multipolar international relations system and determination of particular large country actors of broad integration and having many dimensions. The authors reveal particular characteristics of the international-legal status of BRICS, which make it possible to have an effective impact on challenges facing the modern world. The legal BRICS status differs crucially from traditional legal approaches to international organizations. Acting as a special subject of world politics, creating more trusted interaction conditions, BRICS focuses its attention on the alternative world order principles within the new model of global relations. Such a format of multilateral cooperation, as well as more trusted and additional mechanisms of international interaction, gives the members an opportunity to demonstrate their geopolitical and geoeconomic world significance, and in addition their demanded*

*humanitarian role, which, as the analysis of the mentioned actor demonstrates, is aimed at forming its own interaction model. The logic of the BRICS agenda extension to the level of an important global management system element demonstrates the goal in the field of action and, accordingly, intensive progress of humanitarian imperatives. For these humanitarian imperatives, the issues of international peacekeeping, security, protection, encouraging human rights and providing stable development are an objective necessity, especially for active demonstration of the members' viewpoints on the international scene. For understanding the process of the alignment of international security humanitarian imperatives it is necessary to study the existing objective needs in conjunction with each country, member of BRICS.*

*Keywords: international legal space; BRICS countries; humanitarian cooperation; humanitarian imperative; soft power; international and regional security.*

**Recommended citation:** Babek Asadov et al., *BRICS in International Legal Space: Humanitarian Imperatives of International Security*, 8(1) BRICS Law Journal 8–34 (2021).

## Table of Contents

### Introduction

#### 1. BRICS as a Multilateral Format for Interaction in the Legal Field

#### 2. Security Cooperation: Humanitarian Aspects

#### 3. Strengthening Russia's BRICS Positions: The Human Dimension

### Conclusion

## Introduction

In recent decades, the processes of globalization and regionalization have become the most important objective factors in the development of trends in the field of shifting decision centers on the international scene. As part of a new coordinate system formation for international cooperation, special interest was increasingly growing regarding the issues relating to the prospects of a polycentric world, the transition to which was clearly demonstrated, including the most recent new large interstate associations and structures that had been created recently.

In the existing geopolitical realities, in order to intensify the efforts of such actors, representing coalitions of individual regional powers, new horizons of development and cooperation have opened up on a number of topical issues in international life. This was expressed in the need for the aspirations of individual regional powers to create new mechanisms and use the potential of established mechanisms of

international relations for joint efforts in expanding relationships in the field of economy, politics and the development of the world community. Today a state cannot exist in isolation from other states, refraining from participating in various formats of regional and global cooperation.

The existing (complex) features of the system of international relations is able to generate new alliances, formations and structures for deep integration and expansion of joint action channels on issues relating to world development and which have become the most popular mechanisms of interaction. Based on the principles of collective interaction, the activities of international organizations and actors of a multilateral format have become increasingly relevant for developing common approaches to solving common problems, concerted actions, as well as international legal norms on the most important issues of world sustainable development and ensuring the safety of society.

One of such actors in interstate cooperation, acting as a major integration association, is BRICS, as evidenced by the expansion of its global reach, which characterizes the strengthening of the collective influence and the growing dynamics of interaction among its participants. The rapprochement of individual large state actors suggests the development of joint approaches also for the legal development of the planned path of transnational cooperation.

It seems relevant to understand the position of a global actor in the international legal space as a new phenomenon in modern international relations. Without going into detail of analyzing the important aspects of legal approaches to regulating multilateral cooperation within the framework of this format, the participants of which “build their system of relations solely on the basis of international law,”<sup>1</sup> the authors consider it necessary to focus on certain aspects of the emerging “doctrinal-targeted communities” of BRICS countries-members due to multilateral factors.

The growing interest in the role of BRICS, which in a short time has become a significant factor in world politics and one of the important elements of the emerging multipolar world, is due to the fact that there is a special “international legal” format for cooperation among the participants of this entity, in particular, “normativity, characteristic of international legal BRICS doctrine,”<sup>2</sup> allows within this platform to search for new approaches and models in order to ensure geopolitical security, balanced development of the global economy, and the preservation of a variety of spiritual and legal cultures.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Толстых В.В. Некоторые аспекты правового развития стран – участников БРИКС // Вопросы российского и международного права. 2017. № 1А(7). С. 215 [Vladimir V. Tolstykh, *Some Aspects of the BRICS Countries Legal Development*, 1A(7) Matters of Russian and International Law 213, 215 (2017)].

<sup>2</sup> Мартынов Б.Ф. Страны БРИКС и концепции международного права // Международные процессы. 2016. № 1. С. 33 [Boris F. Martynov, *BRICS Countries and Concepts of International Law*, 1 International Processes 33 (2016)].

<sup>3</sup> БРИКС: контуры многополярного мира: монография [BRICS: *Contours of a Multipolar World: Monograph*] 121 (Talia Ia. Khabrieva ed., 2015).

The developing relations within the BRICS framework are based on international law with a common position aimed at supporting a multipolar world, which obviously has many dimensions, and this requires taking into account issues of a humanitarian nature as well as the formation of a common security space. Ensuring the formation of this space is impossible without a sustainable balanced development of multifaceted and balanced relations. At the same time, a significant number of international law subjects in this process could not but affect the nature of the development of the interaction and the attempts of individual members to position themselves as a world leader. The basis of the influence of relations in the BRICS format can be characterized not only by the consolidated potential of the participants, but also by the strengthening of their geopolitical, geo-economic and especially humanitarian potential.

This new emerging security system, which includes a set of legal norms and institutions, taking into account the above aspects and the sphere of interaction between the BRICS members, can be considered a key element for ensuring international security, in accord with Article VIII of the United Nations Charter.

At the same time, the expansion of the security space of the BRICS countries is due to the inclusion of non-military, humanitarian factors in the overall integrated security field. Active inclusion of the humanitarian theme in the summit agenda, which was not originally the basis for the creation of BRICS, occurred after the technogenic catastrophe in Japan (at the Fukushima-1 nuclear power plant) that followed the March 2011 tsunami.<sup>4</sup> Expanding the agenda of the meetings of the BRICS leaders due to the consistent penetration of humanitarian issues was necessary and provided them with a number of advantages of cooperation in an attempt to increase the international significance of the issues considered.

Nevertheless, against the backdrop of rapidly changing conditions, the growth of negative trends that create threats to humanitarian security, the choice of priorities for creating sustainable mechanisms to minimize the impact of the latter on society is determined primarily by the work of the BRICS countries in the field of facilitating humanitarian development. The presence of a "consolidated" humanitarian potential allows the BRICS countries to create real interfaces and new forms of interaction and cooperation in many areas, which has a security dimension.

The regularities of the process of globalization of international relations, which led to the integration of the BRICS participants and the growth of their significant influence on the development of the world community, fully fit into this understanding and the proposed perspective of the vision of the especially emerging humanitarian imperative of BRICS. In this sense, the expansion of the role of the new format of cooperation in the international legal space can be considered to be the

---

<sup>4</sup> Сотрудничество стран – членов БРИКС в сфере оказания гуманитарной помощи: «новые» доноры и старые правила // РСМД. 28 мая 2014 г. [Cooperation of BRICS Member Countries in the Field of Humanitarian Assistance: "New" Donors and Old Rules, RSMD, 28 May 2014] (Dec. 25, 2020), available at <https://russiancouncil.ru/blogs/digest/1199/>.

result of deliberate “contact,” which allows for additional channels of dialogue and interaction, due to which collective strategic initiatives on a number of pressing issues have been identified.

At the same time, in order to understand the laws of the emergence of objective needs for the use of collective efforts in resolving pressing issues of world development, it is informative to trace the evolution of the main BRICS imperatives from summit to summit.

### **1. BRICS as a Multilateral Format for Interaction in the Legal Field**

As the historical practice of recent decades shows, large international structures of interaction arose primarily as a tool for reconciling and smoothing out existing contradictions with the aim of jointly developing separate territories as well as creating a single socio-cultural and humanitarian space. There were other aims in the creation of such structures, which were largely oriented towards consultations avoiding the complex process of further institutionalization. In this context, it should be noted that during the creation of BRICS none of the just-listed possible motivational factors were inherent in the many new and existing separate institutions of multilateral cooperation.

Today, the BRICS members are the fastest growing countries, which have not only a favorable geographical and economic position, but are also influential state actors in world politics, representing the largest civilizational areas in which about 3 billion people live. The emergence of a new global BRIC actor and its further transformation into BRICS (with the accession of South Africa to the bloc in 2011), having a certain common basis, largely accompanied the process of the emergence of other similar specific participants in international relations.

Against the background of the observed significant increase in the study of the issues relating to the formation and development of the interaction format of BRICS, which represents different socio-economic models (providing about half of world economic growth) and civilizations, and at the same time “the level of common interests both in relations with each other and towards the world order is small enough,”<sup>5</sup> the views of individual researchers elucidate the main reasons for the unification of the five countries within the framework of the existing objective and market conditions. In the opinion of Russian expert V. Panova, the latter

are determined by the current position of each of the five countries in the international hierarchy and the desire for the full-scale projection of their

---

<sup>5</sup> Carlos Eduardo Lins da Silva, *BRICS: De acrônimo esperto a fórum influente* (2012) (Dec. 25, 2020), available at [http://www.nkibrics.ru/system/asset\\_bulletins/data/53cf/aecd/676c/7665/0015/0000/original/bulleten-brics-7.pdf?1406119629](http://www.nkibrics.ru/system/asset_bulletins/data/53cf/aecd/676c/7665/0015/0000/original/bulleten-brics-7.pdf?1406119629).

own power on the form and content of the existing system of international relations.<sup>6</sup>

The formation of a new platform for international partnership of the largest states-civilizations, which are “the main subjects of historical development,”<sup>7</sup> including with the aim of putting forward an alternative to the existing world order to the world community, receives a new impetus in the context of strengthening the intentions of countries to bolster the basis of strategic unity. According to Russian expert V. Lukov,

Strategic interests serve as the deep foundation for the rapprochement of the BRICS countries.<sup>8</sup>

The historical retrospective of certain aspects of becoming one of the leading global institutions testifies to the objective political and economic preconditions at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century and the interests of dissimilar states that represent the largest civilizational areas for the formation of such a non-standard association in the international arena. The need to strengthen integration within the framework of the new group of countries that have actively shown their commitment to the principles of commonality, similarity or coincidence of positions on the main issues of international relations has increased, especially against the backdrop of crisis situations in the world economy and financial sphere. That is, individual major regional powers, which are increasingly defending the priorities of developing a polycentric world, building a fair economic architecture, supporting the central role of the U.N., the inviolability of international law, the non-use of force and the collective approach to conducting world affairs, are becoming particularly relevant. Clearly important in this regard were the applications on creating channels of cooperation with large countries (the “Declaration on Cooperation between Russia and Brazil, aimed at the 21<sup>st</sup> Century”), and especially the attempts to establish “preferential cooperation” between Russia, China and India (“Primakov’s Triangle”).<sup>9</sup>

---

<sup>6</sup> Панова В.В. БРИКС: проблемы взаимодействия и потенциал сотрудничества // Обозреватель. 2013. № 1 (276). С. 39–53 [Victoria V. Panova, *BRICS: Problems of Interaction and Potential for Cooperation*, 1 (276) Observer 39 (2013)].

<sup>7</sup> Яшкова Т.А. БРИКС как вариант мягкой силы // Потенциал современной науки. 2014. № 8. С. 58–62 [Tatiana A. Iashkova, *BRICS as an Option of Soft Power*, 8 Potential of Modern Science 58 (2014)].

<sup>8</sup> БРИКС: глобальные проблемы от Форталезы к Уфе // Индекс безопасности. 2015. № 2 (113). С. 102 [BRICS: Global Problems from Fortaleza to Ufa, 2 (113) Security Index 101, 102 (2015)].

<sup>9</sup> Мартынов Б.Ф., Ивановский З.В., Симонова Л.Н., Окунева Л.С. Ключевые интересы и целевые ориентиры Бразилии как участницы формата БРИКС // Стратегия России в БРИКС: цели и инструменты: сборник статей [Boris F. Martynov et al., *Key Interests and Targets of Brazil as a Member of the BRICS Format in Russia's BRICS Strategy: Goals and Tools: Collected Papers*] 86 (Viacheslav A. Nikonov & George D. Toloraia eds., 2013).

Although the idea of creating a strategic Eurasian triangle of the largest regional powers in the area was expressed as far back as the late 1990s;<sup>10</sup> the practical interaction between the participants of this informal interstate association began at the moment of its creation. In many ways, it focused on the development of new formats of global cooperation.

The existing practice of international cooperation “on many issues of mutual interest”<sup>11</sup> has been built and formed through annual summits and other working meetings. The start of these gatherings was laid in the framework of the St. Petersburg Economic Forum in 2006 with the participation of the ministers of economy of Brazil, Russia, India and China. Meetings on the “sidelines” of the U.N. General Assembly session in Japan as part of the G8 events in 2008 gave a new impetus to the development of this format of cooperation.

The existing BRICS system of activities, developed on the basis of the principles of equality, indicates that the activities of this global institution are carried out in two directions. Firstly, these are consultations on issues of mutual interest. For this purpose, within the framework of BRICS, meetings of leaders, ministers of finance, trade, health, education and other authorities are organized. Secondly, this is practical cooperation, which occurs in separate areas through separate mechanisms (meetings of working groups, senior officials).<sup>12</sup> Of course, the key events that determine the path of institutionalization and the search for a particular model for the development of this format of cooperation are the BRICS summits, whose location alternates annually among the member countries. The annual summits determine the main directions of the BRICS work in accordance with the action plans adopted during their implementation. The summits that have become the central element of the multidisciplinary dialogue within the framework of BRICS are a rotational process in which all members participate in turn. Within the framework of the existing rules for the equality of all participants, this does not mean that the receiving party has special rights and preferences, which are often reflected in individual publications and media materials. Certainly, administrative concerns and financial expenses, and other actions that make up the organizational process, are generally conducive to the successful promotion of the planned initiatives of the host country.

To date, the following ten summits have taken place: I BRICS Summit Yekaterinburg, 16 June 2009; II BRICS Summit Brasilia, 15–16 April 2010; III BRICS Summit Sanya, 13–14 April 2011; IV BRICS Summit New Delhi, 28–29 March 2012; V BRICS Summit

<sup>10</sup> Мареева Ю.А. Стратегический треугольник «Россия–Индия–Китай» в международных отношениях (теория и историческая практика) // Вестник МГИМО-Университета. 2012. № 5(26). С. 240–249 [Julia A. Mareeva, *Strategic Triangle “Russia–India–China” in International Relations (Theory and Historical Practice)*, 5(26) MGIMO Review of International Relations 240 (2012)].

<sup>11</sup> *Smart Cities Movement in BRICS 7* (Rumi Aijaz ed., 2017).

<sup>12</sup> Leslie E. Armijo & Cynthia Roberts, *The Emerging Powers and Global Governance: Why the BRICS Matter in Handbook of Emerging Economies* 503 (Robert E. Looney ed., 2014).

Durban, 26–27 March 2013; VI BRICS Summit Fortaleza and Brasilia, 15–16 July 2014; VII BRICS Summit Ufa, 8–10 July 2015; VIII BRICS Summit Goa, 15–16 October 2016; IX BRICS Summit Amoy, 4–5 September 2017; X BRICS Summit Johannesburg Declaration, Johannesburg, South Africa, 26 July 2018.

The general practice of holding summits and other numerous working meetings is quite consistent with the position recently voiced by the Russian side that it proposes to transform BRICS into a full-fledged mechanism for strategic interaction.<sup>13</sup> Within the framework of summits and other events, the BRICS member countries largely adhere to an agreed policy line that characterizes the development of integration in the form of a horizontal system of obligations. An important stage in respect of advancing such a mechanism and system was the I Summit of country leaders at the highest level, which took place in Russia (Yekaterinburg, 2009). The global financial crisis and its consequences made it possible to take a fresh look at the concept of joint actions within the framework of the emerging format of cooperation. Along with identifying important principles for reforming the financial and economic architecture of the world, which demonstrate the aspirations of participants to create a more balanced and fair system of world economic relations, topical issues of world development as well as prospects for further strengthening of cooperation within BRIC were considered at the summit.

Despite the fact that the final decisions of the summits are largely declarative in nature, some specific actions have led to the institutionalization of this global actor which are increasingly acquiring some of the features of international organizations. Moreover, BRICS, which has become one of the modern global institutions of cooperation, does not act as a subject of international law, rather it remains a complex and controversial phenomenon in international legal space. In fact, today, occupying a specific place as a subject of world politics, it possesses the features that characterize it as an interstate entity (i.e. not an integration association nor an international organization), but which does not have an international treaty, formal membership, charter, permanent bodies, etc.

This global actor, having a limited membership, does not have the main features inherent in international organizations, which are considered in the framework of the theory of international organizations. International organizations that do not have all the features of an international intergovernmental organization give the grounds for the expert community to call these structures informal international institutions, international quasi-organizations or para-organizations.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>13</sup> Россия предлагает трансформировать БРИКС в полноформатный механизм стратегического взаимодействия – Владимир Путин // ТАСС. 22 марта 2013 г. [Russia Suggests Transforming BRICS into a Full-Scale Mechanism for Strategic Interaction – Vladimir Putin, TASS, 22 March 2013] (Dec. 25, 2020), available at <https://tass.ru/interviews/1598809>.

<sup>14</sup> Абашидзе А.Х., Солнцев А.М. БРИКС – международная квазиорганизация? // Актуализация процесса взаимодействия стран БРИКС в экономике, политике, праве: материалы научного семинара,



At the same time, despite “lacking legal personality and law-making properties and obvious institutional qualities,”<sup>15</sup> the BRICS interstate structure can be qualified as a permanent format of cooperation using signs of behavior inherent in international intergovernmental organizations. Unlike the latter, which are subjects of international law and are able to conclude agreements, bear responsibility under international and national law, the BRICS decisions are not binding. The obligations of the parties recorded in joint documents are not legally enforceable. The actual implementation of obligations and decisions at the BRICS level is motivated by mutual expectations and pressure from partners. Thanks to the decisions made by each participant, according to certain obligations and acts, within the framework of BRICS, there is a legalization of countries’ policies to achieve their goals and overcome obstacles.

Still, BRICS, creating its own new mechanisms, at the same time strengthens existing channels of cooperation according to the management model in alliance with multilateral organizations.<sup>16</sup> An important element of the institutionalization of actions that had a positive impact on the expansion of international cooperation among the BRICS member countries is the existing mechanisms of interaction within the United Nations, UNESCO and other inter-international organizations. The BRICS member states are participants in leading international structures, such as the Non-Aligned Movement and the G20. The basis for the development of interaction between the BRICS partners in a multilateral format is bilateral relations and interactions within large international platforms.

Regarding the prospects of BRICS as an international organization, it should be noted that in the expert community there are similar fair points of view. These assessments are in many respects connected with increasing external challenges and conditions of interdependence, which are pushing countries closer to all types of institutional consequences, which are inherent in the process of formation and development of certain binding supranational regional structures. According to B.A. Heifets, such an organization is unlikely to be created in the longer term.<sup>17</sup> In general, in the expert community, there is an understanding that the appearance within BRICS of an international actor similar to the European Union model, which takes away

---

Москва, 9 октября 2012 г. [Aslan Kh. Abashidze & Alexander M. Solntsev, *Is BRICS an International Quasi-Organization?* in *Updating the Process of Interaction Between the BRICS Countries in the Economy, Politics, and Law: Materials of the Scientific Seminar, Moscow, 9 October 2012*] 10 (Ksenia M. Belikova ed., 2012).

<sup>15</sup> Бевеликова Н.М. БРИКС: правовые особенности развития // Журнал российского права. 2015. № 8. С. 110–123 [Nelly M. Bevelikova, *BRICS: Legal Features of Development*, 8 *Journal of Russian Law* 110 (2015)].

<sup>16</sup> Ларионова М.В. Российское председательство в БРИКС: модели взаимодействия с международными институтами // Вестник международных организаций. 2016. № 2(11). С. 113–139 [Marina V. Larionova, *The Russian Chairmanship in BRICS: A Model of Interaction with International Institutions*, 2(11) *Bulletin of International Organizations* 113 (2016)].

<sup>17</sup> Хейфец Б.А. Россия и БРИКС. Новые возможности для взаимных инвестиций [Boris A. Kheifetz, *Russia and the BRICS. New Opportunities for Mutual Investment*] 196 (2014).

much of the sovereignty of the member countries of the association and, accordingly, establishes supranational bodies, will not be delegated mandatory law.<sup>18</sup>

Nevertheless, today, due to the presence of a number of factors of various components of an internal and external nature, as well as the existing status of BRICS, and developing the level of responsibility, BRICS manifests itself as an influential actor in interstate interaction. Some individual specialists in the field are in favor of the growing role of the multilateral format of interaction between large state actors and express the point of view which, in this context, includes the following factors:

- vulnerability caused by crisis phenomena (which appeared in such areas as finance, food security as well as in the form of armed conflicts);
- collective superiority and equal opportunities of the BRICS countries and the presence of common characteristics and principles;
- high degree of control by the BRICS leaders over the internal political situation in their countries and the controlled nature of club membership;
- ineffective activities of well-known multilateral institutions.<sup>19</sup>

Despite the fact that today one of the most important imperatives of the world community (and one which is included in the U.N. Charter) is the principle of the prohibition against the use of force, individual state actors increasingly make attempts to change its content, which poses a threat to international security. The realities of international relations show that this practice was clearly manifested in the inability of the U.N. Security Council to prevent NATO military intervention in Libya. As is well known, following the Libyan conflict, the solution of which is still the focus of the attention of large multilateral institutions, criticism by representatives of the expert community appeared as a free interpretation of the wording of the resolution (U.N. Security Council Resolution 1973 of 17 March 2011), and often an open violation of the principles of international law.<sup>20</sup>

Thus, the above aspects characterizing some of the features of this informal actor allow us to note that, for cooperation in order to form common positions in the international arena, BRICS objectively currently has acceptable institutional capacities inherent in international organizations and multilateral institutions. The most effective channels of interaction covering the relevant topics of the BRICS agenda along with annual summits and meetings of leaders on the sidelines of G20 summits and other gatherings, are meetings of foreign ministers and heads of other sectoral ministries

<sup>18</sup> Участие России в БРИКС рассчитано «всерьез и надолго», считает Никонов // ТАСС. 25 марта 2013 г. [Russia's Participation in BRICS Is Intended to Be "Serious and for a Long Time," says Nikonov, TASS, 25 March 2013] (Dec. 25, 2020), available at <https://tass.ru/arhiv/591443>.

<sup>19</sup> Белова В.А. Институциональное развитие БРИКС // Социально-экономические явления и процессы. 2015. № 9(10). С. 174–183 [Veronika A. Belova, *Institutional Development of BRICS*, 9(10) Socio-Economic Phenomena and Processes 174 (2015)].

<sup>20</sup> Галицкий В.П. Международное право по-натовски // Обозреватель. 2011. № 11(262). С. 101–108 [Vladimir P. Galitsky, *International Law in the NATO Way*, 11(262) Observer 101 (2011)].

and departments dealing with issues of trade economics, finance, the environment, education, health, science, technology and innovation, labor, employment, etc.

With the expansion of the field of activity of the BRICS countries due to their growing economic power, which formed the basis of the influence of BRICS in the international arena, new formats of interaction in the field of security appeared. For example, meetings of senior representatives in charge of national security issues and the availability of many institutional opportunities, fully complying with the BRICS philosophy, stimulate participants in the developing format of transnational interaction and make it possible to have accessible and acceptable tools to achieve the goals of the organization.

Namely, these recent best opportunities for legitimizing the agreements of the BRICS participants contribute to the growing role of this format in the international legal space in order to strengthen the rule of international law in world affairs.

The current picture actualizes the need for the basis of the legal development of the mechanism of cooperation within the BRICS framework, which requires ensuring the legitimacy of decisions and actions. This is dictated by the intensity of the processes taking place in a rapidly changing world and, accordingly, the growing demand of large state entities in the formation of new security spaces and the creation of additional channels of influence on the nature of international relations.

## **2. Security Cooperation: Humanitarian Aspects**

Throughout the existence of BRICS, its members, whose political and economic systems vary, so too do their cultures and traditions, and who periodically make general political declarations, have formed joint micro-political positions on a wide range of international issues. The range of issues, addressed within the BRICS framework, starting with issues of integration and mutual interest, has expanded significantly on the agenda of summits and other meetings of this association. This was the result of many years of discussions and commitment of the parties to the selected format of partnership and interaction on pressing issues of international politics and on agreements of mutual interest.

Analysis of the issues considered within the BRICS framework allows us to identify the main areas and priorities of the participants from the moment of its formation. It is known that in the formation of their own BRICS agenda, the participants mainly focused on the issues of interaction and cooperation in the economic field. Despite the dominance of this topic in the work of BRICS for the initial period of its activities, problems of a political nature and security issues in recent years (especially starting with the second declaration and subsequent actions of the BRICS member countries) are increasingly being included in the agenda of the annual summits. Clear signs have appeared for the need to discuss peace and international security as one of the main imperatives of BRICS. Based on this, it is necessary to determine some

features of the practice of multilateral cooperation, in which the development and promotion of the important humanitarian priorities of the BRICS participants in the field of peace and international security are the defining characteristic of the new reality of the modern world.

Taking into account the fact that the development of BRICS continues to take place in the conditions of new geopolitical realities, which highlight the intensification of competition between individual power centers and integration groups, the formation of the priorities of the BRICS countries could not but be significantly affected by the consequences of the existing contradictions, both global and regional aspects. In this sense, aspirations to solve specific issues of peace and security, as well as the development of various mechanisms that contribute to overcoming new threats, which have become a priority area of international dialogue, are seen as a logical step on the part of the BRICS countries. Against the background of the institutionalization of BRICS, security has become a more common topic of discussion at the annual summits of heads of state and at the level of meetings of ministers and national security advisers.<sup>21</sup>

We agree with the Russian definition that,

The security of the state is a state of protection of the state, society and its citizens from manifestations of various actions aimed at undermining the constitutional foundations of the Russian state, violation of human and civil rights and freedoms in the Russian Federation, which is ensured by specially created state bodies.<sup>22</sup>

This definition seems to be relevant for determining the security of any state.

Separate prerequisites predicting the intentions of the countries participating in cooperation in this area were reflected in statements and joint documents at the initial summits and working bilateral meetings. By expanding the institutional development opportunities for BRICS, great opportunities have appeared for cooperation in the formation of a common security space, based on the agreed positions of the participants on the issues of maintaining stability in the world in various contexts.

The documents of the initial summits confirmed the willingness of the members to act together in solving problems that have a significant impact on the security status of individual countries. In particular, the "deep concern" of the BRICS members

---

<sup>21</sup> Абденур А.Е. Могут ли страны БРИКС сотрудничать в вопросах международной безопасности? // Вестник международных организаций. 2017. № 3(12). С. 73–95 [Adriana E. Abdenur, *Can the BRICS Cooperate in International Security?*, 3(12) International Organisations Research Journal 73 (2017)].

<sup>22</sup> Винокуров В.А. Безопасность государства: конституционно-правовой аспект // Конституционное и муниципальное право. 2017. № 12. С. 33–36 [Vladimir A. Vinokurov, *The Security of the State: Constitutional Legal Aspect*, 12 Constitutional and Municipal Law 33 (2017)].

was recognized in connection with the situations in certain regions of the world (the Middle East, North and West Africa). The issues noted in the Declaration of the Sanya Summit (PRC) of 14 April 2011 to achieve a world of stability, prosperity and progress should ensure that those regions have a decent and worthy position in the world in accordance with the legitimate aspirations of their peoples. This was seen as a “sincere desire” and a collective position of the BRICS participants, that is to say, on the principle of the non-use of force. This approach to the issues of ensuring international security acquired a special character in the work of subsequent summits. For example, the topic of the IV Summit in New Delhi (India, 2012) “The BRICS Partnership for Global Stability, Security and Prosperity” showed the members’ desire to increasingly use the new interaction mechanism to discuss these issues in the Middle East and North Africa, as well as to consider Iran’s nuclear program and the situation involving Afghanistan, by the position of the participating countries in the Etequin Declaration (at the V Summit in Durban, South Africa):

We are committed to building a harmonious world order based on lasting peace and prosperity, and we reaffirm that the 21<sup>st</sup> century should be the century of peace, security, development and cooperation.

BRICS continues to demonstrate its desire to act in a consolidated manner according to the mentioned priorities.<sup>23</sup>

The logic of the evolution of the expansion of the multilateral format agenda, BRICS, testifies to the deliberate filling of the field of action in which international security issues become an objective necessity for actively demonstrating the position of participants in the international arena. Despite the lack of clear guidelines and programmatic actions to create a military coalition and other specific mechanisms to counter threats of a military-political nature, there has been the practice of coordination on issues of strategic importance such as information security and countering international terrorism.

The agendas of subsequent summits included the issues of further militarization of the Syrian conflict, the spread of instability from North Africa, especially the Sahel and the Gulf of Guinea, the achievement of lasting peace and stability in Afghanistan, security and stability in the Republic of Iraq, the settlement of the conflict between Israel and Palestine, support for the convening of a conference on the establishment in the Middle East of a zone free of nuclear and all other types of weapons of mass destruction, the creation of safe and open digital and Internet spaces, and other issues clearly demonstrated a unity of position on pressing issues of international security.

---

<sup>23</sup> Этеквинская декларация и Этеквинский план действий на V саммите БРИКС от 27 марта 2013 г. [Etequin Declaration and Etequin Action Plan at the V BRICS Summit of 27 March 2013] (Dec. 25, 2020), available at <http://www.kremlin.ru/supplement/1430>.

Thus, along with the expansion of the BRICS institutional capacities, several initiatives have been launched aimed at international security and especially the fight against terrorism. In this context, the adopted Declaration following the Goa Summit in 2016 in which the terms “security” and “terrorism/terrorist” were used almost as much as the term “economic”<sup>24</sup> is important. Despite the fact that the security issue was considered in the framework of separate meetings at the level of national security advisers in the BRICS countries, this area of the organization's activities does not essentially receive wide development for discussion and implementation of specific steps. In a certain respect on security issues, there were signs of discrepancies in the consideration of certain pressing international issues in this area.

This was especially clearly demonstrated by some of the BRICS participants in the 17 March 2011 vote on the well-known Resolution 1973, which opened up NATO's ability to bomb Libya and discussion on the situation in Syria, in which Russia and China vetoed a resolution that opened the way for intervention. In this matter, Brazil, India and South Africa held a different political position.

The issue of political coordination in order to develop common approaches and especially to resolve the existing differences, which indicates the excessive relevance of this problem for a new large mechanism of collective interaction, according to the Indian researcher Jagannath Panda is not an easy task, because the political interests of members clash at different levels.<sup>25</sup>

When assessing the role and place of this actor in the modern world, in the expert community the point of view of a Russian specialist, the general director of the Russian International Affairs Council, Andrei Kortunov, who considers them in the framework of two conflicting approaches, also deserves attention. As the expert has noted, as the BRICS develops, the contradictions between these two approaches will become more and more obvious. The presence of this is due to the fact that in the formulated approaches to which Russia and, partly, China follow, BRICS is considered to be an alternative to the Western world order, while India, Brazil and South Africa profess the other. That is to say, they see BRICS as a tactical alliance, membership in which can be used to bargain with the West and solve their own internal problems.<sup>26</sup>

Obviously, the critical views of individual authors regarding the role and existing practice of political coordination, especially on issues of international security, are largely due to the fact that these countries are inherent in the traditional character

---

<sup>24</sup> Декларация Гоа на VIII саммите БРИКС от 16 октября 2016 г. [Goa Declaration at the VIII BRICS Summit of 16 October 2016] (Dec. 25, 2020), available at <http://www.kremlin.ru/supplement/5139>.

<sup>25</sup> Jagannath P. Panda, *New Delhi BRICS Summit: New Prospects, but More Challenges?* (Dec. 25, 2020), available at [https://idsa.in/idsacomments/NewDelhiBRICSSummit\\_jppanda\\_190312](https://idsa.in/idsacomments/NewDelhiBRICSSummit_jppanda_190312).

<sup>26</sup> БРИКС становится слишком многополярным. Саммит в Гоа выявляет проблемы альянса // Коммерсантъ. 14 октября 2016 г. [BRICS Is Becoming Too Multipolar. The GOA Summit Reveals the Alliance's Problems, Kommersant, 14 October 2016] (Dec. 25, 2020), available at <https://www.kommersant.ru/doc/3114823>.

of behavior in the international arena and because of the presence of overlapping and dissimilar interests of some members, particularly between India and China. The interests are both military-political and economic in nature.

At the same time, despite the presence of many negative factors that remain between these countries in the expert community<sup>27</sup> and at the level of individual statesmen, the role of BRICS has been increasingly perceived as an actor that has a significant impact on world stability; differently, however, at one point then U.S. Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta characterized BRICS as a threat to U.S. national security and international security.<sup>28</sup>

But it should be emphasized that the “The concept of the Russian Federation’s participation in BRICS” (developed in 2015) does not provide for the consideration of issues of a military-political nature and the creation of mechanisms for cooperation in the military field.<sup>29</sup> But urgent issues in the sphere of international and regional security are the subject of agreed positions.

The considered aspect of the BRICS activity, which is a new type of organization, is gaining recognition among domestic as well as international experts. The expanding role of this actor in international interactions is considerable. BRICS sets itself global tasks and recognizes that all of them can be realized through the prism of security.<sup>30</sup>

At the same time, today in the broad sense security is becoming more and more a task demanded of the states that are members of BRICS. In this context, the views of well-known experts in the field of international relations B. Buzan and O. Wæver deserve mention, which notes that interstate unions in which participants share common ideas about security become dominant actors in international relations within the framework of security complexes.<sup>31</sup> In this regard, the possibility of using the potential of various international mechanisms in order to strengthen their own position and minimize the impact of new challenges and threats due to factors of collective efforts seems to be one of the important priorities for states in creating a common security space.

---

<sup>27</sup> Peter van Ham, *The BRICS as an EU Security Challenge: The Case for Conservatism*, Clingendael Report (September 2015), at 10–27 (Dec. 25, 2020), available at [https://www.clingendael.org/sites/default/files/2016-02/the\\_brics\\_as\\_an\\_eu\\_security\\_challenge.pdf](https://www.clingendael.org/sites/default/files/2016-02/the_brics_as_an_eu_security_challenge.pdf).

<sup>28</sup> Melissa C. Tyler & Michael Thomas, *BRICS and Mortar(s): Breaking or Building the Global System? in The Rise of the BRICS in the Global Political Economy: Changing Paradigms?* 254 (Vai lo Lo & Mary Hiscock eds., 2014).

<sup>29</sup> Концепция участия РФ в БРИКС (2015 г.) [The Concept of the Russian Federation’s Participation in BRICS (2015)] (Dec. 25, 2020), available at <http://static.kremlin.ru/media/events/files/41d452a8a232b2f6f8a5.pdf>.

<sup>30</sup> Еремина Н.В. БРИКС в решении задач безопасности: основные аспекты // Азимут научных исследований: экономика и управление. 2017. № 3(20). С. 393–395 [Natalia V. Eremina, *BRICS in Solving Security Problems: Main Aspects*, 3(20) Research Azimuth: Economics and Management 393 (2017)].

<sup>31</sup> Barry Buzan & Ole Wæver, *Regions and Powers: The Structure of International Security* 40–45 (2003).



Today, BRICS has emerged as a universal global action actor that is able to take responsibility and put forward various initiatives on many aspects of security issues. BRICS has expressed its firm commitment to the core responsibilities of the United Nations, which has the responsibility to assist the international community in maintaining international peace and security, protecting and promoting human rights and ensuring sustainable development.<sup>32</sup> An important aspect of this activity, both today and in the future, is to consider the humanitarian components of security, which go far beyond the protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms. At the BRICS summits, discussions on food, energy, information, cooperation in the areas of security and the exchange of information technologies, financial, economic and other issues indicate that collective action is aimed at stabilizing the international situation. This form of activity requiring the development of legal policy and program regulation of the problems within this sphere is aimed at assisting the rule of law and building democratic institutions and creating an atmosphere of tolerance in the BRICS collective security zone.

As an analysis of the formation of the BRICS humanitarian dimension process shows, to which individual initiatives gave important impetus, agreements on many aspects of the development of relations, and awareness of the common interests of countries in this area, are the objective needs of the BRICS countries. Obvious preconditions for the development of cooperation in the area of humanitarian action, although significantly inferior to economic and political motives, were seen at the initial stages of the countries' interactions. Starting from the first summits, the urgent problems within the humanitarian sphere were included in the sphere of the BRICS interests, and these issues along with "multilateral obligations" were periodically reflected in the final documents of the summits and other working meetings.

For example, in the final document of the BRICS summit in Ekaterinburg, it was noted that participants confirm their intention to develop cooperation in socially significant areas, and to strengthen their efforts to provide international humanitarian assistance and reduce the risk of natural disasters. There was a commitment to the practice of multilateral diplomacy in combating global challenges and threats, and the importance of the BRICS countries' attention to food security was noted.<sup>33</sup>

The practice of readiness to bolster multidisciplinary cooperation continued in subsequent summits. At the same time, taking into account the special needs of developing countries, the acute problems of the least developed countries, small island states and African countries, BRICS expanded the range of issues in the field of

---

<sup>32</sup> Форталезская декларация на VI саммите БРИКС от 15 июля 2014 г. [Fortaleza Declaration at the VI BRICS Summit of 15 July 2014] (Dec. 25, 2020), available at <http://static.kremlin.ru/media/events/files/41d4f1dd6741763252a8.pdf>.

<sup>33</sup> Совместное заявление лидеров стран БРИК от 16 июня 2009 г. (Екатеринбург, Россия) [Joint Statement by the BRIC Leaders of 16 June 2009, Yekaterinburg, Russia] (Dec. 25, 2020), available at <http://nkibrics.ru/pages/summit-docs>.



ensuring humanitarian security. Focusing on the pressing issues of international life such as combating poverty, social marginalization and inequality, BRICS calls on the international community to make all necessary efforts to minimize the negative impact of these challenges on the state of societies and people (II BRIC Summit, Brazil, 2010). Consideration of the issue of eradicating extreme poverty, which “is the ethical, social, political and economic imperative of mankind and one of the most important global challenges facing the world ...,”<sup>34</sup> received a new development in the framework of the Sanyan Declaration (China, 2011) following the results of the III BRICS Summit.

In choosing the topic for discussions in the new cycle of summits of “Inclusive Growth: Sustainable Solutions,” BRICS considers the issues of responding to the challenges that humanity is facing. This motivates participating countries to attempt to simultaneously ensure growth, inclusion, protection and conservation. The initial BRICS summits also focused on questions of intentions to comprehensively promote sustainable social development, ensure social security and achieve full employment, and implement decent policies and programs in the field of labor relations. In this regard, special attention was paid to the most vulnerable groups of the society, such as the poor, women, youth, migrants and people with disabilities. As an analysis of the record of the BRICS countries shows, social protection mechanisms for both able-bodied and disabled people are legally fixed.

In developing this topic, the BRICS Goa Declaration (India, 2016) paid special attention to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the aspirations, goals and priorities of the African Union (AU) in Africa’s development, as stipulated by the Agenda to 2063.

The BRICS members support actions focused on human interests and a holistic approach to sustainable development, the implementation of which should be carried out taking into account national conditions and the development context in accordance with “the spectrum of political opportunities.”<sup>35</sup> And along with these pressing problems, the agenda covers the problems of the acute humanitarian crisis in certain regions of the world. Especially, the leaders of the BRICS countries devoted their attention to the prevailing acute humanitarian situations in Syria, Mali and the Central African Republic in terms of providing unhindered access for humanitarian assistance.

Peacekeeping was considered an equally important area of joint activity of the countries, for which support the South African Republic advocated. Despite the formation of special attention to such an urgent issue, which was motivated by the special need to regulate numerous conflicts on the African continent, BRICS has to

---

<sup>34</sup> Декларация, принятая по итогам саммита БРИКС 14 апреля 2011 г. (г. Санья, о. Хайнань, Китай) [Declaration adopted at the BRICS Summit of 14 April 2011, Sanya, Hainan Island, China] (Dec. 25, 2020), available at <http://nkibrics.ru/pages/summit-docs>.

<sup>35</sup> Goa Declaration, *supra* note 24.

overcome many obstacles, in particular, the development of general formulations of mandates for peacekeeping missions that do not go beyond U.N. resolutions.

The emphasis on important humanitarian imperatives of our time, in particular the eradication of poverty, the importance of ensuring food security, addressing the problem of malnutrition, eradicating hunger, the global nature of health challenges and infectious diseases, including HIV and tuberculosis, the prevention and elimination of natural disasters and many acute problems of modern societies, which were reflected in the BRICS documents, indicate a significant expansion of the humanitarian agenda. At the same time, notwithstanding the general nature of intentions and aspirations of the international agenda, which are not always provided with specific resources and mechanisms, BRICS creates more opportunities for a global policy dialogue and ideological influence on international humanitarian relations.

The issues relating to international peace and security, which in fact were the focus of attention of the participants at the Goa Summit, have become the subject of wide discussion among representatives of the academic community. Along with the issues of transforming global governance and regulation of common spaces, and ensuring sustainable development and environmental issues, particular attention was paid to issues of joint counteraction to new threats and challenges. In the opinion of the Russian scientist Vladimir Orlov, one of the serious challenges for the BRICS countries is terrorism by means of weapons of mass destruction, and for this purpose they indulged in developing mutually acceptable international legal approaches to respond to the threat of chemical and biological terrorism. In particular, according to Orlov, there is a need to develop a common terminology on cyber terrorism, and recommendations and standards for nuclear facilities against cyber attacks.<sup>36</sup>

Of course, in the modern world, within the framework of the activity of such structures, more and more sound arguments are made about the influence of new safety factors and challenges for modern societies. At the same time, there are individual points of view of experts who note the various interests of the BRICS participants regarding the issue of developing a common approach to cyber security, for example, Russia and China focus on information security but Brazil focuses on technical and infrastructural matters, while in general it is suggested that it is necessary prevent the militarization of the Internet.<sup>37</sup>

In the scientific discourse on the activities of BRICS there is an increasing presence of the recognition of the impact of soft security challenges, which have a greater impact on the security and development of the BRICS countries than ever before,

---

<sup>36</sup> Vladimir A. Orlov, *New Threats and Challenges to Global Security: A View from Russia*, BRICS 2016 Academic Forum, Goa, India, 19–21 September 2016 (Dec. 25, 2020), available at <https://www.pircenter.org/media/content/files/13/14742852490.pdf>.

<sup>37</sup> Масиел М. Выступление на VI Российском форуме по управлению Интернетом [Marilia Maciel, *Speech at the VI Russian Internet Governance Forum*] (Dec. 25, 2020), available at <https://www.pircenter.org/media/content/files/13/14303080980.pdf>.

and which some members are now feeling particularly painful. Among other key threats to international security, corruption has been noted as an urgent issue for all of the BRICS countries.<sup>38</sup>

Today in the era of globalization, the growing interdependence of individual regions and territories with regard to acute social problems and shocks, humanitarian crises of various kinds opens up new horizons and opportunities for wider international cooperation within the BRICS framework. At the level of the world community, it is increasingly understood that health as a security factor and humanitarian protection of a person, including equal access to primary care and collective protection against transnational threats, are a shared responsibility. The problems of global health formation, in which these basic values are increasingly coming to the fore in the framework of specialized international humanitarian actors, are associated with the growth of new challenges, the preservation of negative trends in several regions of the world and, of course, the ineffective role of individual states and international structures in this area.<sup>39</sup>

The acuteness of the issues relating to preserving and strengthening “global health” as the provision by the world community of the need for health of all people on the planet leads to increased coordination of the BRICS members in this area. At the same time, against the background of economic growth, the existing practice of health inequality remains an important urgent problem in most of the BRICS countries. Given that these countries account for about 50% of the world’s poor, this humanitarian issue can have serious negative consequences for the population of these countries.<sup>40</sup> According to Andrew Harmer, who was one of the first researchers to study the role of the BRICS countries in healthcare, BRICS activities in this area, unlike the United States, which follows the path of bilateral relations, are manifested in their desire to promote the development of multilateralism in the field of health. Until recently, considering BRICS to be a new center of power in global health care, which has its own new set of priorities opposing the dominant Western development paradigm in health care, emphasized the prospects for promoting this direction based on the experience of participants through collaboration with a focus on partnerships and equality.

An important channel in building the humanization of<sup>41</sup> international relations of a safe world is considered to be to promote the dialogue of civilizations, cultures,

---

<sup>38</sup> Orlov, *supra* note 36.

<sup>39</sup> Асадов Б.Р. Глобальное здоровье – фактор безопасности в контексте партнерства ВОЗ и акторов международной гуманитарной деятельности // Право. Безопасность. Чрезвычайные ситуации. 2019. № 2(43). С. 43–53 [Babek R. Asadov, *Global Health Is a Security Factor in the Context of Partnership Between the WHO and Actors in International Humanitarian Activities*, 2(43) Law. Security. Emergencies 43 (2019)].

<sup>40</sup> Shambhu Acharya et al., *BRICS and Global Health*, 92(6) Bulletin of the World Health Organization 386 (2014).

<sup>41</sup> Andrew Harmer, *BRICS Countries: A New Force in Global Health?*, 92(6) Bulletin of the World Health Organization 394 (2014).

religions and peoples. In this area, the Alliance of Civilizations initiative was supported, which was aimed at developing contacts, expanding knowledge of each other and deepening mutual understanding around the world. A significant factor in deepening the relationship between peoples is considered “the role of culture and cultural diversity in promoting sustainable development” (Xiamen Declaration, China, 2017). The expansion of communication channels from a humanitarian aspect was continued both in terms of increasing the number of issues addressed, and in terms of qualitatively changing the implementation of individual programs and projects (BRICS Network University, Academic Forum, Citizens Forum, Forum of Young Diplomats, Youth Forum, Forum of Young Associated Institutions for the Development of Cooperation between Institutions) in civil society.

As an analysis of the record of the BRICS summits and other working meetings shows, actions aimed at meeting the growing needs of the participating countries in the field of protection, the preservation of people and society is filled with new content. By deliberately expanding the range of issues addressed, BRICS continues to declare its commitment to a people-centered approach in promoting development, which encompasses all sectors of the population. Particular attention within the framework of BRICS began to be paid to strengthening coordination and cooperation in the field of vaccine research and development which supported the establishment of the BRICS Vaccine Research and Development Center. Thus, promoting the development of safety as a health issue and protection in difficult crisis situations and conflicts have become increasingly important and require the development of the most effective organizational and legal decisions.

A characteristic feature of the BRICS activities in this area is the ability to use both its own resources and those of other actors in international relations in order to promote mutual interest. BRICS seeks to establish cooperation with well-known actors in international relations aimed at promoting humanitarian development and solving the political problems of the poorest countries. An analysis of this practice of cooperation with international organizations and structures shows that interactions with the latter have been gaining positive momentum since the creation of BRICS. And today, BRICS is characterized by two main models of interaction: “catalytic impact” and “parallel control”<sup>42</sup> that contribute to the most acceptable conditions for cooperation.

At the same time, a very necessary channel of interaction for the BRICS participants is the practice of using the platform of international institutions to create the necessary mechanisms for joint coordination of positions on pressing issues on the United Nations agenda. This practice of interaction is applied within the framework

---

<sup>42</sup> Шелепов А.В. БРИКС и международные институты: модели взаимодействия в процессе осуществления многостороннего управления // Вестник международных организаций. 2015. № 4(10). С. 7–28 [Andrei V. Shelepov, *BRICS and International Institutions: Models of Interaction in the Process of Implementing Multilateral Governance*, 4(10) Bulletin of International Organizations 7 (2015)].

of the G20, the WTO, the IMF, the World Bank as well as with regional organizations such as the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU), the African Union, the League of Arab States, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, the integration structures of Latin America, ASEAN and others in terms of improving the effectiveness of decisions.

The formation of a sustainable model of multilateral interaction is a necessary component of security issues; humanitarian problems should take into account the existing effective practice of cooperation, which is available within the framework of both bilateral and individual international structures, which will allow development of effective mechanisms and development strategies for BRICS in world politics. The gradual formation of humanitarian policy, which has become one of the channels of dialogue between partners and, consequently, the increasing influence of BRICS in this area become an objective inevitability.

### **3. Strengthening Russia's BRICS Positions: The Human Dimension**

Recently, the growing role of Russia in new international institutional formations has become particularly relevant for the development of new channels of integration and cooperation of an inter-regional and transnational nature. Participation in international structures, which has many dimensions, gives it a number of significant advantages, opening up wider access to various resources, and the ability to act on the wider international space of political, economic and humanitarian interaction.

In view of the aforementioned significant role of Russia in global international cooperation, where a new place is given to new international structures, the strategic importance Russia's activities within the BRICS framework should be highly appreciated.

It is acknowledged that in the development of BRICS as a forum for discussion on a wide range of issues, a special place is given to the Russian side. Today, Russia continues to play its special multi-faceted role in the development of new vectors of international cooperation within the framework of BRICS. The existing point of view that the Russian approach in this structure is to gradually transform this association into a new center of political influence<sup>43</sup> is fully consistent with its strategic goals in the global governance system. The importance of the role of the Russian factor, in particular, "the orientation of Russia towards the creation of a serious international organization in the person of BRICS is calculated seriously and for a long time" was noted by the head of the National Committee for the Study of this organization and one of the authors of the report "Russia in BRICS. Strategic goals and means of achieving them"<sup>44</sup> in the initial periods of institutionalization of this structure.

---

<sup>43</sup> Колдунова Е.В. Роль стран БРИКС в глобальном управлении // Сравнительная политика. 2014. № 1(14). С. 60–64 [Ekaterina V. Koldunova, *The Role of BRICS Countries in Global Governance*, 1(14) Comparative Politics 60 (2014)].

<sup>44</sup> Russia's Participation in BRICS, *supra* note 18.

In the context of minimizing the channels of cooperation with the West, the trans-national coordination of interaction with the BRICS countries on topical issues of today is an objective and necessary direction for building Russia's capabilities on a wide range of issues. The interests of the Russian side in BRICS, which, as an additional platform, provides it with the position of a global player, are fully consistent with the process of purposeful institutionalization of this structure, and the initiation of joint projects in its main areas of activity.

One notes that the recognition of the important role of Russia in the formation of BRICS, which is increasingly acquiring the features of an influential interstate union, is logical, given its special role in taking real steps in the context of rapprochement of positions on many pressing issues. The stated Russian initiatives in separate documents<sup>45</sup> and actions demonstrating the need to expand the framework of ongoing dialogue and cooperation as a way to ensure stability of peace and security give a special impetus to the development of relations between the BRICS members.

Many decisions within the framework of this format are of particular importance, which has not only a political and economic, but also a humanitarian dimension. Such interaction in international affairs contributes to the formation of favorable external conditions with in fact many dimensions.

Against the background of the expansion of cooperation channels, Russia's active involvement in the system of interstate relations, in which it occupies the most flexible position, especially in the field of international peace and security (e.g. the issue of terrorism, including cyber terrorism and energy security), humanitarian relations continues to have special content and dynamism. The practice of past years shows that close cooperation between Russia and other BRICS participants in order to strengthen their role in the humanitarian field opened up new possibilities for its influence and the formation of the BRICS international agenda. The application of new channels of inter-civilization dialogue and forms of interaction by bringing together the practical approaches of the BRICS member states to expanding humanitarian cooperation is determined by the participation in this process of various actors along a non-state line, increasing the potential of "soft power."

One of the key priorities of Russia during its chairmanship of BRICS in 2015–2016 was to deepen humanitarian cooperation in the BRICS format. It is in this that, thanks to events such as the Parliamentary, Civil, Trade Union, Youth Forums, as well as the Global University Summit, the further development of non-governmental relations takes place. Among the outcomes of Russia's chairmanship was the strengthening of BRICS' position in the world as an influential factor in international life, and BRICS was seen as an effective mechanism for coordinating positions on the pressing challenges of our time.<sup>46</sup>

---

<sup>45</sup> Стратегия экономического партнерства БРИКС [The Strategy for the BRICS Economic Partnership] (Dec. 25, 2020), available at [http://www.tunisie.mid.ru/brics/brics\\_09.pdf](http://www.tunisie.mid.ru/brics/brics_09.pdf).

<sup>46</sup> Доклад по итогам председательства Российской Федерации в межгосударственном объединении БРИКС в 2015–2016 гг. [Report on the Results of the Russian Federation's Chairmanship of the BRICS

In the context of ensuring humanitarian security, a special place in BRICS was occupied by issues relating to providing humanitarian assistance in the context of the conflict in Syria. In the adopted BRICS Summit Declaration, the BRICS leaders, supporting the proposal of the Russian side, called on the international community to step up efforts to provide humanitarian assistance to the Syrian people “taking into account the urgent need for reconstruction of the country.”<sup>47</sup>

Of course, like other participants, it is also natural for Russia not only to strive to demonstrate its leadership qualities during its chairmanship, but also to ensure a qualitatively new level of interaction between partners. In this area, the practice of previous periods of Russian leadership and successful international summits and forums matters.

At the same time, it should be noted that recently Russia’s participation in such a multilateral format as BRICS has been quite often criticized by the expert community. In this context, it was characterized by the fact that the priority of BRICS is inexplicably overstated in Russian foreign policy. And, accordingly, Russia’s policy towards BRICS is a classic “foreign policy of prestige.”<sup>48</sup> In the expert community, many increasingly focused on such issues as the lack of real innovative potential, dependence on energy exports, high levels of state control, corruption and poor investment attractiveness than well-known factors – Russia’s geopolitical, socio-cultural and military potential.

In recent years, of course, in the process of the in-depth nature of cooperation for the Russian side, the issue of maintaining its strategic independence as a key actor in international relations and, accordingly, the level of relations with key centers of power from the West in matters of participation in the development of important decisions in the field of international stability and security remain important. The participation of Russia and other state actors such as China and India to a certain extent predetermines the appearance of new risks genesis of Russia and other countries, especially in the current practice of Sino-American contradictions. Periodically, the aggravation of relations between these large states will probably have a certain influence on the behavior of individual participants (China and India) in the framework of their BRICS activities.

Thus, despite the indicated BRICS humanitarian imperatives, joint concrete actions in this area have not been carried out so intensively compared to economic, political and other areas. An analysis of the agendas of the BRICS summits and other working events indicates that the possibilities of using the BRICS institutional experience

---

Interstate Association in the Years 2015–2016] (Dec. 25, 2020), available at <http://brics2015.ru/news/20160212/885593.html>.

<sup>47</sup> Йоханнесбургская декларация на X Саммите БРИКС от 26 июля 2018 г. [Johannesburg Declaration at the X BRICS Summit of 26 July 2018] (Dec. 25, 2020), available at <http://www.kremlin.ru/supplement/5323>.

<sup>48</sup> Байков А.А. Место БРИКС в приоритетах России // МГИМО. 23 ноября 2016 г. [Andrei A. Baikov, *The Place of BRICS in Russia's Priorities*, MGIMO, 23 November 2016] (Dec. 25, 2020), available at <https://mgimo.ru/about/news/experts/mesto-briks-v-prioritetakh-rossii>.



as a sustainable model of transnational coordination of humanitarian cooperation are limited.

Despite the large volume of material on the record, a brief chronological retrospective of selected sides of the expansion of humanitarian activities of BRICS indicates that this process takes place both in the context of the development of the principle of community, as well as in the context of the existing contradictions, and the issue of the desire of each of the participants to claim the role of an independent center in the emerging international device. With the expansion of the institutional framework of the BRICS activities, participating countries continue to discuss quite a few topics on the summit agenda. This institutional practice, requiring the application of an additional set of bureaucratic actions, etc., does not always lead to the desired results in terms of the timely implementation of the intended humanitarian goals, which are more limited, including due to many existing problems at the bilateral level.

Nonetheless, a number of results of recent summits and other working events allow us to note that the existing institutional basis for the functioning of cooperation mechanisms contributes to the targeted implementation of the BRICS goals outlined in the field of ensuring certain aspects of humanitarian security.

### **Conclusion**

In the modern world, international cooperation is taking on new forms and models of global relations having many dimensions. The efforts of individual large countries, independently or jointly with others, to promote new integration mechanisms and projects continue to be in the center of attention of representatives of the scientific and practical community.

The formation of BRICS and the design of its international legal format reflect the objective trend of world development towards the formation of a multipolar system of international relations and the strengthening of economic interdependence. Today, the position of BRICS as one of the important factors in the modern system of international relations, which represents not only different socio-economic models, but also civilizations in the international legal space, allows us to note that the member states of the informal actor, purposefully forming new interaction vectors and promoting all new initiatives and solutions, create the necessary conditions for the formation of a more just and representative multipolar world order. In international law, this well-known subject of world politics, while not possessing the important features inherent in traditional international organizations, purposefully demonstrates certain properties that make it possible to ensure global coverage due to the desire of the participating states to exert political, economic and humanitarian influence on the development of the world order.

The intentions of countries in this area, and especially strengthening the foundations of the strategic unity of countries, are not only related to improving



the financial and economic order, but also the problems of ensuring international, regional and national security. Continuing to influence the entire spectrum of international processes of global and regional development, the participants strive to greater manageability of international relations. Significant components of the BRICS actions in this area are consistency in expanding cooperation and active steps in promoting collective interests in the international arena.

From the very beginning of the functioning of BRICS, which sought to act as a new pole of political influence and proposed a new design for the future world order, the practice of combining economic topics with the external political agenda and security issues was an acknowledged necessity within the framework of this actor's consideration of humanitarian components. Today, through this structure, through various acts, and documents formally not legally binding, but having important political significance, there are other institutional opportunities, especially for building and developing a system of relations in order to carry out actions aimed at maintaining international security and solving the urgent multidimensional humanitarian problems of our time.

Despite the limited nature of the BRICS activities in the humanitarian field, which was more related to the initial period, the expansion of the summit agenda due to issues of ensuring international peace and security clearly have strengthened its position as a recognized actor in world politics. Promoting its own, including humanitarian, priorities, a flexible but still consistent actor in international relations creates the necessary legal framework for enhancing cooperation in this area.

The gradual strengthening of the humanitarian influence of BRICS in the system of modern international relations and, for this purpose, building dialogue at different levels on a wide range of issues with interested partners is an existing objective reality, which is dictated by the growing role and importance of its participants in the world arena. Format and interaction, which, along with economic and political imperatives, should serve to create a space of peace, security and joint prosperity.

Giving due attention to the positive aspects of the BRICS activities, about which there are many scientific works and media materials, it is necessary to avoid idealizing and evaluating them in such a way that does not reveal the objective aspects of the influence of this informal transnational actor in the system of international relations. Having a strong commitment to international law, in particular in counteracting trends aimed at eroding its fundamental principles and a multilateral approach, and in supporting this central element of the United Nations Charter, presupposes a wide coverage of the activities of this global actor. In this regard, special attention at the BRICS level will undoubtedly continue to be devoted to complex humanitarian issues, which in the face of the growing challenge and command of new centers of threats, man-made and natural disasters, humanitarian crises, etc., remain the most demanding quick response and effective coordination of joint efforts.

Given that today the prevention and elimination of emergencies and natural disasters has become one of the most important basic functions of a modern

developed state, the cooperation of the BRICS countries in the field of prevention and elimination of accidents, disasters and catastrophes could become another form of dialogue in the development of humanitarian imperatives of global security.

The practice of continuing the development of many organizational mechanisms, including regulatory ones, requires in the future not only the purposeful filling of the content of cooperation through humanitarian components, but also a certain rethinking of the prospects for the formation of our models of humanitarian interaction. Namely, in the context of building up channels of cooperation, there is the need to identify new priorities and timely consideration of changes in relations with multidimensional interests. The impact on the humanitarian content of the BRICS activities can significantly contribute to the process of effective coordination of the joint efforts of the participating countries within the framework of bilateral, multilateral and other structures of world politics. In the future, it seems that the BRICS format in this area will develop as against aspirations of the participating countries to closer forms of cooperation, as well as growing challenges and issues, which inevitably lead to the formal character of the humanitarian imperatives of this organization.

## References

Абденур А.Е. Могут ли страны БРИКС сотрудничать в вопросах международной безопасности? // Вестник международных организаций. 2017. № 3(12). С. 73–95 [Abdenur A.E. *Can the BRICS Cooperate in International Security?*, 3(12) International Organisations Research Journal 73 (2017)]. <https://doi.org/10.17323/1996-7845-2017-03-73>

Асатов Б.Р. Глобальное здоровье – фактор безопасности в контексте партнерства ВОЗ и акторов международной гуманитарной деятельности // Право. Безопасность. Чрезвычайные ситуации. 2019. № 2(43). С. 43–53 [Asadov B.R. *Global Health Is a Security Factor in the Context of Partnership Between the WHO and Actors in International Humanitarian Activities*, 2(43) Law. Security. Emergencies 43 (2019)].

Бевеликова Н.М. БРИКС: правовые особенности развития // Журнал российского права. 2015. № 8. С. 110–123 [Bevelikova N.M. *BRICS: Legal Features of Development*, 8 Journal of Russian Law 110 (2015)]. <https://doi.org/10.12737/12253>

БРИКС: контуры многополярного мира: монография [BRICS: *Contours of a Multipolar World: Monograph*] (Talia Ia. Habrieva ed., 2015).

Мартынов Б.Ф., Ивановский З.В., Симонова Л.Н., Окунева Л.С. Ключевые интересы и целевые ориентиры Бразилии как участницы формата БРИКС // Стратегия России в БРИКС: цели и инструменты: сборник статей [Martynov B.F. et al. *Key Interests and Targets of Brazil as a Member of the BRICS Format in Russia's BRICS Strategy: Goals and Tools: Collected Papers*] 86 (Viacheslav A. Nikonov & George D. Toloraia eds., 2013).

Панова В.В. БРИКС: проблемы взаимодействия и потенциал сотрудничества // Обозреватель. 2013. № 1(276). С. 39–53 [Panova V.V. *BRICS: Problems of Interaction and Potential for Cooperation*, 1(276) Observer 39 (2013)].

Толстых В.В. Некоторые аспекты правового развития стран – участников БРИКС // Вопросы российского и международного права. 2017. № 1А(7). С. 213–224 [Tolstykh V.V. *Some Aspects of the BRICS Countries Legal Development*, 1А(7) Matters of Russian and International Law 213 (2017)].

Armijo L.E. & Roberts C. *The Emerging Powers and Global Governance: Why the BRICS Matter* in *Handbook of Emerging Economies* 503 (Robert E. Looney ed., 2014). <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203108765-26>

Buzan B. & Wæver O. *Regions and Powers: The Structure of International Security* (2003). <https://doi.org/10.1017/cbo9780511491252>

*Smart Cities Movement in BRICS* (Rumi Aijaz ed., 2017).

Tyler M.C. & Thomas M. *BRICS and Mortar(s): Breaking or Building the Global System?* in *The Rise of the BRICS in the Global Political Economy: Changing Paradigms?* 254 (Vai lo Lo & Mary Hiscock eds., 2014). <https://doi.org/10.4337/9781782545477.00022>

### Information about the authors

**Babek Asadov (Saint Petersburg, Russia)** – Chairman of the League of International Youth Diplomacy (15 Vilensky St., Saint Petersburg, 191014, Russia; e-mail: [asadovspb@mail.ru](mailto:asadovspb@mail.ru)).

**Vladimir Gavrilenko (Rome, Italy)** – Doctoral Researcher, Faculty of Law, Sapienza University of Rome (5 Piazzale Aldo Moro, Rome, 500185, Italy; e-mail: [gv22@mail.ru](mailto:gv22@mail.ru)).

**Stanislav Nemchenko (Saint Petersburg, Russia)** – Head of the Theory and History of State and Law Department, Saint Petersburg University of State Fire Service of EMERCOM of Russia (149 Moskovsky Av., Saint Petersburg, 196105, Russia; e-mail: [nemchenko-st@mail.ru](mailto:nemchenko-st@mail.ru)).