

<https://doi.org/10.53277/2519-2442-2025.1-01>

IRSTI 11.25.91

ISSN 2519-2442, KAZAKHSTAN

Research Article

GEOPOLITICS OF THE GLOBAL SOUTH: SIMILARITIES IN THE FOREIGN POLICIES OF KAZAKHSTAN AND BRAZIL

Jonathan Christian DIAS DOS SANTOS ¹

¹ Federal Rural University of Rio de Janeiro, 23890-000, Brazil

jonathan_christian95@hotmail.com

ORCID: 0000-0003-4147-9890

Received: 02.09.2024

Accepted: 14.10.2024

ABSTRACT

Over the course of the 21st century, the study of the Global South has evolved beyond a state-centric and strictly geographical conception. This framework now encompasses cultural, philosophical, and social dimensions, as well as the impacts of globalization on countries experiencing similar challenges within the global capitalist system. From a geopolitical perspective, the Global South has been employed as a category to classify countries, many formerly categorized as the “Third World,” that have sought to establish a more equitable international order characterized by cooperation and mutual respect since at least the 1960s. This article, adopting a geopolitical Global South perspective, aims to present the development and convergence of the diplomatic agendas of Brazil and Kazakhstan, particularly since the first term of President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva in 2003. The primary conclusion of this study is that, despite their geographical distance, Brazil and Kazakhstan have developed convergent diplomatic relations that can contribute to strengthening economic ties, renewing the multi-lateral system, and enhancing the role of Global South diplomacy in mediating contemporary geopolitical crises.

Keywords: Brazil, Kazakhstan, Global south, Geopolitics, Foreign policy.

For citation: Dias Dos Santos, C. (2025). Geopolitics of the Global South: Similarities in the Foreign Policies of Kazakhstan and Brazil. *Eurasian Research Journal*, 7(1), 7-27. <https://doi.org/10.53277/2519-2442-2025.1-01>

INTRODUCTION

The city of Brasília, the capital of Brazil, and Astana, the capital of Kazakhstan, are located on different continents, separated by a distance of 13,390 kilometres. Despite this geographical distance, Brazilians and Kazakhs possess, albeit to varying degrees, similar characteristics. Economically, the primary sector serves as a crucial force for development. In terms of foreign policy, both nations exhibit concordant positions on several global issues, including the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, support for the rights of the Palestinian people, and opposition to the use of sanctions as a form of punishment.

However, the rapprochement and affinity between Kazakhstan and Brazil occur within a broader context, beginning in the early 2000s, characterised by the global rise of countries commonly referred to as the “Global South”, particularly by American and European researchers. During this period, there is also a recognition of the intensification of cooperative relations among these nations, grounded in principles of horizontality, non-interference, and non-conditionality, known as South-South Cooperation (Rizzo, 2019: 9).

South-South Cooperation and its foundational principles date back to the Cold War period and the emergence, in the 1960s, of the multilateral mechanism known as the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) comprising countries that sought to avoid alignment with either side of the conflict in order to safeguard the autonomy, sovereignty, and self-determination of peoples (Medeiros and Pereira, 2015: 1-2). This group of states was also popularly referred to as “Third World countries”.

Moreover, in the transition from the twentieth to the twenty-first century, the countries of the Global South, sharing similar experiences with the effects of capitalism and globalisation, have gained prominence through the disruption of the hierarchical logic of International Development Cooperation and their emergence as middle-income nations within the global economic landscape (Mawdsley, 2017: 2). Countries such as Brazil, Russia, South Africa, China, India, Mexico, and Kazakhstan are among those that stand out in this context.

Kazakhstan and Brazil intensified their relations from the onset of Lula da Silva’s first term (2003-2007), during which the Brazilian government began to adopt as part of its foreign policy guidelines the pursuit of international balance and the strengthening of ties with countries previously classified as “emerging” (Vigevani and Cepaluni, 2007: 274).

In addition to strengthening bilateral relations within the framework of South-South Cooperation, emphasising the promotion of economic, particularly commercial and agricultural, and humanitarian cooperation, Kazakhs and Brazilians are politically and economically coordinating to facilitate a more harmonious international system in which they can advocate for their interests, whether shared or divergent.

The mutual support between Brasília and Astana can be observed, for instance, through their actions in international organizations such as the United Nations (UN), the World Trade Organization (WTO) and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), as well as during conferences like Rio+20, which took place in June 2012, in Rio de Janeiro, with the participation of nearly 200 countries (Gov.br, 2012). Additionally, Brazil’s

support for the “Green Bridge Partnership Program” proposed by the Kazakh government during the event further exemplifies this cooperation.

This study is structured around two objectives. First, it will explore the concept of the Global South, examining its origins, evolution, geographical and conceptual boundaries, and associated advantages and challenges. Second, it will present the development of diplomatic relations between Kazakhstan and Brazil, highlighting their shared geopolitical interests and convergent approaches to global issues.

Finally, we will conclude the text by outlining the future of the relations between Kazakhstan and Brazil. In light of the increasingly complex challenges of the World-System, how might the agenda between these countries advance? Which issues could unify their interests and intensify the alliance between the South American regional leader and the Central Asian regional leader?

AN EXAMINATION OF THE GLOBAL SOUTH: ORIGINS AND SIGNIFICANCE

Even though the state-centred notion of the Global South, based on a geographic “North-South” dichotomy, is useful for analyzing the compatibilities in the foreign policy practices of Kazakhstan, it also generates extensive debate about who the actors are and what it means to be part of this region of the world.

In a more intense debate, the Global South can have multiple representations, transcending strictly geographical notions. In sociology, for instance, this concept influences discussions regarding sociological trends and the interpretations of the world derived from this discipline.

The universalist movement, typically comprised of sociologists from wealthy countries, tends to adopt more generalist interpretative readings, often neglecting the local context and adhering to the traditional methodological rules of the discipline. In contrast, the particularist approach, more commonly employed by sociologists from states historically exploited by major capitalist powers, advocates for the use of concepts, methodologies, and ideas that extend beyond the traditional scientific practices dictated by affluent nations (Kislenko, 2020: 117).

Furthermore, the concept of the Global South can be employed to understand social transformations and struggles, unequal relationships, and conflicts among various actors, thereby challenging the construction of a hierarchical geographical imaginary, which is manifest in the binary distinctions between North and South, Western and non-Western, developed and developing countries (Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, 2015: 4).

The concept of Global South, through a qualitative lens, can be understood as a term regularly used to designate regions that have experienced and continue to experience the most significant political, economic, and social shocks of globalization, which are not necessarily located in the geographical south of the world (Kislenko, 2020: 121), and, therefore do not adhere to a fixed and precise territorial logic. Alternatively, it can be understood as “an idea and a set of practices, attitudes, and relations. It is a disavowal of institutional and cultural practices associated with colonialism and imperialism” (Grovogui, 2011: 177).

The idea of the Global South, whether understood in a classificatory sense, as noted by Kislenko, or in an emancipatory light, as elucidated by Grovogui, is

commonly associated with the post-Second World War period, a time characterised by historical, geopolitical, and economic contexts marked by independence movements, anticolonial and anti-imperialism struggles, such as Pan-Arabism, Pan-Africanism, and Zapatismo, as well as the pursuit of autonomy by countries historically colonised and exploited by the Global North (Muhr and Neves, 2018: 358).

Internally, the development and construction of post-colonial present contradictions, and in many cases, the movements that contributed to the independence process, fighting for equitable development, have been overshadowed by a governmental elite supported by industrial capital and agrarian elites. On the international stage, through the New International Economic Order (NIEO), these countries sought a more balanced relationship in light of the economic and technological disparities with wealthier nations (Nilsen, 2016: 277).

From a geographical perspective, the first significant movement of the Global South was the Bandung Conference, held in April 1955 in Indonesia, which brought together leaders from 29 Asian and African states to advocate for autonomy and interests, as well as to devise development strategies in the context of a world polarized by the Cold War. The conference was significant as it laid the foundations for the establishment of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) in 1956 during the Brioni Summit, and later, in 1964, the Group of 77.

Throughout the 1960s, the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) and the Group of 77, also referred to as Third World countries, took form and established guiding political and economic principles that defined their respective roles in the international arena. Solidarity, complementarity, cooperation (also known as South-South Cooperation), equal and reciprocal relations, and non-interference were among the principles deliberated during the Non-Aligned Conferences in Belgrade in 1961 and Cairo in 1964, as well as in the Charter of Algiers in 1967.

By the end of the twentieth century, the economic dimension of the multilateral cooperation platforms (NAM and the Group of 77) gained grater prominence over their political weight, especially with the end of the Cold War and the bipolar World Order (Kislenko, 2020). The term “third World”, used to describe states that were not allied with either side, “become an all-encompassing category reducing the governments, economies and societies of Africa, Asia, Latin America and Oceania to a set of variables distinct from and inferior to the ‘First World’” (Berger, 1994: 270).

The spirit of solidarity, cooperation, and mutual respect established among these countries from the Bandung Conference gave way to a globalisation increasingly driven by neoliberal economic practices, the Washington Consensus, and triangular cooperation forms oriented by Global North agencies (International Monetary Fund (IMF), Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), which attempt to steer South-South relations by providing “best practices” for development that may occur voluntarily or coercively (Muhr and Neves, 2018: 358).

However, at the beginning of the twenty-first century, emerging states in Latin America, Asia, and Africa with intense economic growth, similar social challenges, and marginalization within the global capitalist system (Dados and Conell, 2012: 12) attracted the interest of academic and political spheres in the

Global North, equivalent to the economically developed countries of Europe, North America, and Oceania (Odeh, 2010: 340).

The primary reason for the increased attention towards the countries in these regions was the manner in which they fostered commercial, social, and economic relations among themselves, contributing to a new form of human development and integration among the states occupying the so-called global “periphery” during a time of deep financial crisis in the Global North, “altering the economic geography of the world” (Gray and Gills, 2016: 558).

In 2013, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) stated in the report “The Rise of South” that from 1980 to 2010, the share of emerging Southern countries in global trade increased from 25% to 45%. During the same period, South-South trade dynamics expanded from 6% to 26%. The UNDP defined that “At the same time, the ‘rise of the South’ is contributing to a more diverse architecture for development assistance. This architecture not only involves new actors but also challenges, as well as complements, traditional forms of North–South development cooperation.” (United Nations Development Programme, 2013: 20).

Despite attempts by economically wealthy countries to interfere in the dynamics of relations and multilateral cooperation among Southern states, the increased interaction among them during the financial crisis of the early twenty-first century is not necessarily surprising. The multilateral cooperation platforms that emerged from the Global South between the 1990s and 2010 served as a primary integrative instrument for these countries during the period of global economic instability.

China, for example, deepened its relationship with its neighbours through the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO), officially established in 2001 but with origins dating back to the 1990s, following the dissolution of the Soviet Union. In 2002, on the African continent, the African Union (AU) emerged, with its roots in the Sirte Declaration of 1999. In Eurasia, countries cooperated through the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) and Eurasian Economic Community (EurAsEC), which was later replaced by the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU).

In this context, the multilateral mechanism of the Global South that has gained the most prominence in recent years has been BRICS+, initially formed by Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa, but which has recently expanded to include Iran, Egypt, Ethiopia, and the United Arab Emirates as member states.

The primary objective of BRICS+, through cooperation, is to promote reform in global governance and support emerging economies. This is achieved by proposing changes and alternatives to multilateral mechanisms such as the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) and institutions like the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) (Gov.br, 2023a).

It is axiomatic that BRICS+ aims to construct new pathways and opportunities for development for emerging nations through a ‘de-Westernisation’ of the world (Jurema, 2023). Consequently, other countries intend to join the bloc in the coming years or at least intensify their trade relations with its members.

Countries such as Kazakhstan, Cuba, and Nigeria are among these examples (Omirgazy, 2023; Tass, 2024; Klomegah, 2024).

The economically strong countries of the Global North exhibit different reactions to the admission of new members to BRICS+. While Germany and the United States attempt to downplay the group's growth, claiming it is not particularly significant (Pieper, 2023), France has recognised that this could represent a risk of fragmentation and an alternative to the current World Order model (Tass, 2023).

If in the past the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) had a limited role and was undermined by the triangular cooperations conducted by the Global North, the Global South, primarily through BRICS+, does not seek to develop an anti-Western World Order or to effect profound changes in the capitalist system. In fact, the South defends multilateralism and its renewal by distancing itself from Europe and the United States as centers of economic power, creating more diverse and horizontal economic and political perspectives (Jurema, 2023; Ndlovu-Gatsheni and Tafira, 2018: 139).

Finally, the Global South, which, as we have seen throughout this section, can correspond to multiple elements of a social, economic, political, cultural, and geographical nature common to territories whose relations with the centre of global capitalism have been unequal and exploitative, continues its pursuit of a multipolar, equitable, and just international system, even though there are disagreements on certain points of the contemporary global agenda.

KAZAKHSTAN AND BRAZIL: STRUCTURAL CONVERGENCES AND DIALOGUES IN FOREIGN POLICY

Until the mid-twentieth century, Brazil and Kazakhstan existed in 'different worlds'. The Kazakhs, until 1991, were part of the Soviet Union, considered the then 'second world.' During much of this period, Brazilians were governed from 1964 to 1985 by a civil-military dictatorship that was established with the support of the United States.

As a result of the similar political, social, and economic transformations experienced by Brazil and Kazakhstan during the transition from the last century to the current one, both countries began to face related challenges and issues that allow us to understand them as part of the same 'world', the Global South.

After the Cold War, both countries underwent economic reforms dictated by the economic guidelines set forth by financial institutions centred in the United States, such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank, and others. This model of economic development sponsored by these institutions, came to be known as the Washington Consensus, the basic principles of which included reducing the state's role in economic life, implementing austerity policies, and promoting privatization.

Throughout the 1990s and early 2000s, Kazakhstan and Brazil implemented a series of economic reforms to meet the demands of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and other creditors. Some examples include the establishment of national currencies pegged to the dollar (the real in Brazil and the tenge in Kazakhstan) and the privatisations of public enterprises. In Brazil, this was carried out by the Collor government in 1990 through the National Privatisation

Programme (PND), and in Kazakhstan, it was initiated in 1991 by the Kazakh State Property Committee (Vaz and Melo, 2020: 44; Kazbekov et al., 2015: 6; Larsson, 2010: 3-6).

Socially, both countries also face common challenges, such as the fight to reduce the population living in extreme poverty, which stands at 5.9% or 12.7 million people in Brazil (Gomes, 2023) and 5.3% or 1.06 million in Kazakhstan (Qazstats, 2024a), as well as efforts to decrease unemployment rates and eradicate violence against women. In 2022, more than 200,000 women in Brazil registered domestic violence complaints (Brazilian Security Yearbook, 2023), while in Kazakhstan, this number was 80,000 (Mussabekova et al., 2024: 2).

Kazakhstan is the ninth largest country in the world by land area, covering 2,724,900 km², with an approximate population of 20 million people and a GDP per capita of \$ 2,862.76 (Qazstats, 2024b). In contrast, Brazil is the sixth largest country in the world by land area, spanning 8,510,417 km², with a population of 203 million and a GDP per capita of \$ 9,636.01 (IBGE, 2024; IBGE, 2023).

The primary driving force behind the foreign trade of both Kazakhstan and Brazil is the extraction and exportation of commodities (Amitrano and Araujo, 2024: 1; Qazstats, 2024c). Both countries are significant producers of grains. In the 2023/24 harvest, Kazakhstan ranked among the top twenty wheat producers in the world, while Brazil was one of the three largest producers of corn (USDA, 2024).

Furthermore, their respective territories contain reserves of natural resources such as oil, natural gas, gold, uranium, and deposits of rare earth elements (REEs), which are considered important for the production of clean technologies. Bilateral relations between Kazakhstan and Brazil began in the 1990s.

On 26 December 1991, Brazil was one of the first countries to recognize Kazakhstan's independence. On 22 September 1993, Brasília and Astana officially established diplomatic relations, which were consolidated in the following years through a series of measures that brought the two countries closer together (Embassy of the Republic of Kazakhstan to the Federative Republic of Brazil, 2024; Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2024a).

The strengthening of these relations occurred at the beginning of the 2000s when Kazakhstan sought to become one of the 50 most competitive countries in the world, implementing a series of reforms to achieve this goal. During this same period, a leftist politician, Lula da Silva, assumed the presidency of Brazil for the first time in many years. At that time, both countries aimed to gain more global prominence and shared compatible geopolitical principles.

Historically, Brazil has consistently upheld the fundamental principles of its diplomacy, which include the pursuit of peaceful conflict resolution, the defence of multilateralism, and respect for the sovereignty of other states. The government led by the Workers' Party (PT) redirected the country within the global geopolitical dialogue, striving to realise and advocate for "greater equanimity in international relations" and "a more humane and inclusive model of globalization" (Amorim, 2005: 1).

Since its Independence, Kazakhstan has sought to maintain a multi-vector foreign policy, fostering a mutually beneficial and equal dialogue with its partners.

The country's advantageous geographical location allows for the development of a decentralized geopolitical approach that is not focused on any specific region of the world. Consequently, a part of Kazakhstan's foreign policy discourse is to present the country as a bridge between the East and the West, Muslims and Christians, and the North and the South (Nazarbayev, 2014: 15; Nazarbayev, 2019: 98).

In 2023, during an interview with the Chinese channel CGTN¹, the President of Kazakhstan, Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, reiterated this position by stating his desire to place Kazakhstan "at the heart of the Eurasian continent" and to establish a balanced, multidirectional foreign policy, aiming to create and contribute to peaceful relations with as many countries as possible.

In 2006, Brazil opened its first and only embassy in Central Asia in the city of Astana. This gesture was reciprocated by the visit of the then-President of Kazakhstan, Nursultan Nazarbayev, to Brazil in 2007. During his visit, Nazarbayev thanked Brazil for its support of Kazakhstan's bid to join the World Trade Organization (WTO) and expressed support for Brazil's accession to UNSC (Agência Senado, 2007).

In a speech delivered during the meeting with President Nazarbayev in Brasília, Lula da Silva stated that the occasion symbolised "a historical milestone in the relations between two peoples who are beginning to know each other better" (Presidential Library, 2007) and that Kazakhstan and Brazil were "forging their future, as two peoples determined to sovereignly chart their destinies" (Presidential Library, 2007).

In 2009, President Lula da Silva visited Astana and, in his speech, emphasized that Kazakhstan and Brazil shared the common objective of building:

[A]n agenda that contributes to reducing power asymmetries and democratizing international decision-making bodies. We share the idea of multipolar world and the importance of revitalizing international institutions (Ministério das Relações Exteriores, 2022).

Indeed, Brazilians and Kazakhs have shown harmony and mutual support in their actions and stances on the geopolitical agenda over the past decades. Their actions demonstrate the countries' pursuit of building a multipolar world, considering diverse centres of power and alternative geopolitical narratives to those dominant in the Global North.

On a regional scale, the similarities begin with the common goal that Brazil and Kazakhstan have of integrating the regions where they exert influence. At the beginning of the century, Brazil sought to unite Latin America through multi-sectoral infrastructure projects, as well as addressing issues of security, defence, and energy (Santos, 2014: 1).

Lula da Silva was the main advocate for the creation of organizations such as the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR), which aimed to connect South American countries economically, socially, politically, and structurally, and the Initiative for the Integration of the Regional Infrastructure of South America (IIRSA), which sought to integrate the region through the energy, transport, and

1 Exclusive with President of Kazakhstan Tokayev. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YkSTOWRX2js&t=7s>. Accessed: 02.06.2024.

telecommunications sectors, with partial funding from the Brazilian National Bank for Economic and Social Development (BNDS).

However, in recent years, under the far-right government of Jair Messias Bolsonaro and his foreign policy entirely focused on the United States of America, alongside continuous attacks on important trading partners such as China, Brazil lost geopolitical space and influence. The country's return to regional leadership occurred with the re-election of Lula da Silva to the Palácio do Planalto in 2023.

Brazil has been endeavouring to (re)value cooperation, integration, and the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) and to revive UNSASUR, which was nearly defunct after the end of left-wing governments in South America. Furthermore, Brazil has sought to position itself as a mediator, proposing peaceful resolutions to Latin American geopolitical crises, such as the attempted coup in Guatemala, ensuring fair elections in Venezuela, and the dispute between Caracas and Georgetown over the Essequibo region which is rich in oil (Belém Lopes, 2024: 92-99).

In turn, Kazakhstan, in its early years of Independence, began its process of assuming leadership in regional integration. In 1992, the Kazakh President, Nursultan Nazarbayev, took the first step in this direction by proposing the creation of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence-Building Measures in Asia (CICA), a forum composed of Asian countries, aimed at serving as a channel for dialogue to maintain stability on the continent.

In 1994, Kazakhstan also proposed the creation of a union to economically integrate the region, which was initially rejected but later adopted in 2000, through the establishment of the Eurasian Economic Community (EurAsEC). Throughout the 1990s, Kazakhstan also sought to integrate the region through defense and security by creating a joint peacekeeping battalion with Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan, called "Centrazbat".

Like Brazil, Kazakhstan also seeks to position itself as a mediator of regional conflicts. During the Tajik Civil War in the early 1990s, it deployed military personnel to assist with the security of the Tajik-Afghan border and hosted a round of negotiations concerning the conflict in 1995 in Almaty (Iji, 2010: 7-8).

Since 2017, Astana, the capital of Kazakhstan, has hosted rounds of talks between the parties involved in the Syrian armed conflict, seeking a diplomatic resolution to the confrontation. These negotiation rounds are known as the Astana Process (Nabiev and Nafikov, 2021: 203). In 2024, Kazakhstan also took the initiative to organize a meeting in Almaty between the Foreign Ministers of Azerbaijan and Armenia, so the parties could negotiate a lasting peace (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Armenia, 2024).

At the international level, Brazilians and Kazakhs establish more convergent diplomatic interactions. This can be empirically observed through various elements and actions that the countries adopt on the global scale. Let us begin with the two major ongoing conflicts in the world, between Russia and Ukraine, and Israel and Palestine.

Despite differing positions on whether or not to adopt UN resolutions regarding Russia's invasion of Ukraine, which by November 2023 had claimed the lives of 10,000 civilians (UN News, 2023), Brazil and Kazakhstan, both significant part-

ners of Moscow, advocate for a resolution based on the United Nations Charter and International Law, respecting Ukrainian territorial integrity and sovereignty. On this occasion, President Tokayev stated that without peace, development cannot be achieved and that countries should resolve the situation through a common path at the negotiating table to end hostilities as soon as possible (Official website of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan, 2022).

The Kazakh leader offered assistance in mediating the conflict and stated that “a bad peace is better than a good war” (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Kazakhstan, 2022). The Brazilian government, at that time led by Jair Bolsonaro, called for the suspension of attacks and for the armed conflict to give way to dialogue based on the Minsk agreements, taking into account the interests of the involved parties.

When Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva returned to power in January 2023, he advocated for the creation of a group including other Global South countries, such as India, Indonesia, and China, as well as the parties involved and other geopolitical forces from the Global North, to bring an end to conflict. Throughout 2023, Kazakhstan continued to send humanitarian aid to affected Ukrainian civilians.

Kazakhstan and Brazil did not recognise the referendum arranged by separatist forces in Donetsk and Luhansk in eastern Ukraine, nor the independence granted by Putin after the onset of the conflict (Kussainova, 2022; Coletta, 2022). During the 77th session of the UN General Assembly, Tokayev stated that:

There is nothing more important now than to return to the foundational principles that lie at the root of this universal organization. In particular, we must rethink the linkages between three primordial principles: the sovereign equality of states, the territorial integrity of states, and peaceful coexistence between states (Official website of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan, 2023).

Tokayev reinforced his position with the Ukrainian President, Volodymyr Zelensky, in a call that took place in 2024. Meanwhile, the Brazilian leader, in a speech delivered at the Portuguese parliament in 2023, defended Ukrainian territorial integrity. He stated that:

Brazil understands the apprehension caused by the return of war to Europe. We condemn the violation of Ukraine’s territorial integrity. We believe in an international order based on respect for international law and the preservation of national sovereignties (Gov.br, 2023b).

In October 2023 the Palestinian group Hamas carried out an attack on Israelis and foreigners. Tel Aviv responded with a full-scale invasion and destruction of Gaza, citing the annihilation of Hamas as justification. By November 2024, 43,391 Palestinians had been killed and 11 Israeli hostages remained in Gaza (The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, 2024).

Brazil and Kazakhstan recognise Palestine as a sovereign state and maintain that resolving the conflict involves a two-state solution (Palestinian and Israeli) coexisting harmoniously (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2024b; Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Kazakhstan, 2024). The countries also voted in favour of adopting United Nations General Assembly Resolutions ES-10/21 and

ES-10/22. Resolution ES-10/21 called for ‘an immediate, durable and sustained humanitarian truce leading to a cessation of hostilities’ (United Nations General Assembly, 2023a: 2). Resolution ES-10/22 focused on three main points:

1. Demands an immediate humanitarian ceasefire
2. Reiterates its demand that all parties comply with their obligations under international law, including international humanitarian law, notably with regard to the protection of civilians
3. Demands the immediate and unconditional release of all hostages, as well as ensuring humanitarian access (United Nations General Assembly, 2023b: 1)

Brasília and Astana share concerns regarding the humanitarian crisis created in Gaza following the attacks conducted by the Israel Defense Forces (IDF). In 2023, Brazil sent at least two humanitarian shipments to Palestine containing health kits, water filtration equipment, and food (Agência Gov, 2023). Kazakhstan also provided \$1 million in humanitarian assistance (Teslova, 2023).

Furthermore, Kazakhstan and Brazil oppose the use of economic sanctions as a form of punishment, similar to what the United States has historically done with Cuba, and more recently, with the support of European countries, has done to Russia. In 2023, during a press conference in Germany, in the presence of German Chancellor Olaf Scholz, President Tokayev stated that:

When it comes to sanctions, I have noted in recent sessions of the United Nations General Assembly and in other speeches that sanctions, as a form of confrontation, are entirely counterproductive from the perspective of revitalizing international relations, which have eroded as a result of the escalation of the global situation (Bayramli, 2023).

The Brazilian government has already demonstrated correspondence with the Kazakhs on this issue. This is evident, for example, in Lula da Silva’s speech during the opening of the 78th session of the UN General Assembly:

The international community needs to make a choice. On one side, there is the escalation of conflicts, the deepening of inequalities, and the erosion of the rule of law. On the other side, there is the renewal of multilateral institutions dedicated to promoting peace. Unilateral sanctions cause significant harm to the populations of the affected countries. In addition to failing to achieve their stated objectives, they hinder processes of mediation, prevention, and peaceful resolution of conflicts (Gov.br, 2023c).

Brazil and Kazakhstan also collaborate on other issues, including participation in UN peacekeeping missions. Brazil has a history of deploying troops to missions such as those in Haiti in 2004 and Lebanon in 2011. Kazakhstan recently embarked on its first independent UN peacekeeping mission in 2024, monitoring the Golan Heights. Both countries have also adopted a cautious approach to the Ukraine conflict, opting not to provide weapons to Ukraine to avoid further escalation with Russia.

Given the parallels presented in this section, can the relations between Kazakhstan and Brazil be expanded? If so, in what areas? We will explore this in the next section, where we will conclude the text.

CONCLUSION: THE EVOLVING RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN KAZAKHSTAN AND BRAZIL

Over the years, high-ranking representatives have held Brazil-Kazakhstan Political Consultation meetings to discuss bilateral relations between the countries. In 2013, the then Minister of Foreign Affairs of Kazakhstan, Erlan Idrissov, visited Brazil, where he inaugurated the Embassy of Kazakhstan in the country.

On that occasion, Idrissov and the Brazilian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Luiz Alberto Figueiredo Machado, discussed matters of mutual interest and the relationship between the two countries. Cooperation in areas such as renewable energy, the agricultural sector, increasing bilateral trade, UN reform, nuclear disarmament, and “sustainable development” were among the topics discussed (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2014).

Despite a persistent trade deficit, which increased from – \$43,161,694 million in 2014 to – \$21,913,573 million in 2023 (Comexstats, 2024), neo-extractivism could bolster bilateral trade between Kazakhstan and Brazil. In the field of nuclear energy, for example, Brazilians and Kazakhs could more intensively explore the trade of uranium. Kazakhstan, the world leader in natural uranium mining, partnered and traded with Brazil’s Nuclear Industries (INB) between 2018 and 2022, contributing to the operation of the nuclear power plants in Angra dos Reis, Rio de Janeiro (Petronotícias, 2020; Institute for Energy and Nuclear Research, 2018).

The Kazakhs can also strengthen their friendship with Brazilian agribusiness, which is the fourth largest consumer of fertilizers in the world (Embrapa, 2018). Given Brazil’s low fertilizer production, Kazakhstan could become the main supplier of, for example, Sulphur, which is very important for Brazilian agriculture. In recent years, Kazakhstan has competed with the United States for this position (World Integrated Trade Solution, 2024).

The Brazilian side offers technology developed by the Brazilian Agricultural Research Corporation (Embrapa). In recent years, Kazakhstan has been seeking to establish partnerships of Kazakh agriculture (Embrapa, 2019). During the visit of Kazakhstan’s First Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs, Kairat Umarov, to Brazil in May 2024, the parties committed to maintaining dialogue on a possible agricultural research exchange (Embassy of the Republic of Kazakhstan in the Federative Republic of Brazil, 2024).

Another important factor in this relationship is the operator of Eurasian Resources Group (ERG), of which 40% is owned by the Kazakh government, in the state of Bahia, in the Northeast Brazil. The company owns the Pedra de Ferro Mine, is constructing the Porto Sul Port and Services Complex, and won the concession granted by the Brazilian Federal Government for the operation and development of the West-East Integration Railway (FIOL). Through these ventures, ERG, and consequently the Kazakh government, will control the network of communication and transportation of minerals in part of Brazilian territory, as they are responsible for the extraction of hematite and itabirite and, soon, for

their transportation via FIOOL to the Porto Sul Port and Services Complex, from where they will be distributed to their main customers.

However, it is important to highlight that the neo-extractivism of this commercial relationship has devastating effects. The Pedra de Ferro Mine project, for example, has caused serious territorial consequences in the interior of Bahia. The Oswaldo Cruz Foundation (Fiocruz), through the Map of Conflicts, Environmental Injustice, and Health in Brazil, has already identified some of the consequences of ERG's activities.

In addition to accidents and food insecurity caused to quilombola communities and family farmers in the region, the institution also lists the main socio-environmental impacts of mineral extraction at Pedra de Ferro as changes in the traditional regime of territorial use and occupation, contamination or poisoning by harmful substances, and contamination of water and soil (Mapa de Conflitos, 2022).

Brazilian agribusiness, a major beneficiary of fertilizers from Kazakhstan, has also generated serious environmental consequences within the national territory. Despite being the sector responsible for Brazil's economic growth, in recent decades its activities have led to social, physical, chemical, and natural impacts, such as soil degradation and increased deforestation in the Cerrado and the Amazon, in the Midwest and North regions of the country (Gomes, 2019: 66-67).

In an increasingly polarised world, the countries of the Global South, although having heterogeneous ideas on some points, have been seeking to establish a more robust preservation of multilateralism. In 2023, for example, the fifth round of Kazakh-Brazilian political consultations was held in Astana, where both parties agreed on the importance of converging in decision-making within multilateral organizations. On this occasion, Brazil also expressed support for Kazakhstan's initiatives to establish the International Agency for Biological Safety and the UN Regional Sustainable Development Goals Centre for Central Asia and Afghanistan in Almaty (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Kazakhstan, 2023).

Brazilians and Kazakhs can further contribute to the defense and renewal of multilateralism and multilateral organizations, integration, and the common interest of the Global South. This can be achieved through strengthening BRICS+, with Kazakhstan's elevation to the status of a partner state within the bloc, and by contributing to the construction of a multipolar financial architecture, as recently advocated by Dilma Rousseff, president of the New Development Bank. They can also collaborate in the mediation of conflicts and even in the development of global policies to address humanitarian and migration crises in the Global South, as experienced both at the Kazakh border, with the recent Afghan crisis, and at the Brazilian border, with Venezuelan refugees.

The development of this relationship, which marked its 30th anniversary in 2023, is set to unfold in numerous ways. Together, Kazakhstan and Brazil can contribute to the mutual development of their economies and the exchange of experiences in addressing social and environmental challenges, even if this is paradoxical, as we have seen in the case of the Pedra de Ferro Mine, in addition to, of course, establishing a more democratic international system.

Ethical Commission Approval

This study did not require approval from an ethics committee as it did not involve human participants, animals, or sensitive personal data. All data used in this research were obtained from publicly available sources.

Conflict of Interest Statement

There is no conflict of interest with any institution or person within the scope of this study.

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