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## INDONESIAN HUMANITARIAN DIPLOMACY IN RESPONDING TO THE HUMANITARIAN CRISIS IN GAZA GOVERNMENT AND LAW SCIENCE

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### Abstract

Indonesia is a country that adheres to an active free foreign policy system. Indonesia with its foreign policy principles focuses more on two diplomacys, namely peace diplomacy and humanitarian diplomacy. In this case, the Indonesian nation participates actively in solving humanitarian issues in the world, including conflicts in the Gaza Strip, Palestine and Israel. The purpose of this study is how Indonesia's humanitarian diplomacy and efforts made by Indonesia in alleviating the suffering of the people of Gaza? This research uses qualitative methods, with normative and empirical approaches. Data in this study were obtained from articles, journals, magazines, and electronic newspapers. Based on research findings, it is concluded that in resolving the humanitarian crisis in Gaza, Indonesia has been active through various humanitarian institutions, such as MER-C, Indonesian Red Crescent, Dompot Dhuafa, Palestinian People's National Committee, Lazismu, Baitul Maal Hidayatullah, Aksi Cepat Tunjung, Baznas, and Rumah Zakat. These institutions provide assistance in the form of medical support, medical materials, basic necessities, and various other forms of assistance to alleviate the suffering of the Palestinian people.

**Keywords:** Humanitarian Diplomacy, Humanitarian Crisis, Gaza

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## INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is a country that adheres to a free and active foreign policy system. In this case, Indonesia is in a neutral position, not siding with anyone. Freedom can be interpreted as meaning that Indonesia as a country is free to choose to cooperate with any country, there are no restrictions on it. Meanwhile, being active means that Indonesia is participating in creating world peace. Indonesia shows this by helping colonized countries and Indonesia always applies peaceful means in every conflict that occurs. Indonesia, with its foreign policy principles, focuses more on two diplomacies, namely peace diplomacy and humanitarian diplomacy. In this case, the Indonesian people take an active role in humanitarian issues in the world. For example, the case in the Palestinian Gaza Strip (Satrianingsih, 2016).

Palestine is a country in the Middle East which is currently trying to gain its own sovereignty and be recognized internationally. The political conflict that plagues it means that until now Palestine has not been able to realize its dream of becoming an independent and sovereign state. This was exacerbated by the internal conflict between two powerful organizations, namely Hamas and Fatah, which ultimately led to the splitting of Palestine into two territories, the West Bank area controlled by the Fatah party and the Hamas party controlled the Gaza Strip area (Carter, 2010). Gaza is an area located on the eastern coast of the Mediterranean Sea, bordering Egypt to the southwest (11 km), and Israel to the east and north (51 km (32 miles)). The Gaza Strip is about 41 kilometers (25 mi) long and between 6 and 12 km (3.7 to 7.5 mi) wide, with a total area of 365 km<sup>2</sup> (141 mi<sup>2</sup>). The population of the Gaza Strip is around 1.7 million people. The majority of the population was born in the Gaza Strip, the remainder are Palestinian refugees who fled to Gaza after the outbreak of the 1948 Arab-Israeli War. The population in the Gaza Strip is dominated by Sunni Muslims. The annual population growth rate reaches 3.2%, making it the region with the 7th highest population growth rate in the world (Panuntun, 2013).

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict is one of the Middle East conflicts which until now has become an endless conflict and has not yet found a common ground. Zionism campaigned by Theodore Herzl became an embryo that gave birth to the state of Israel. The declaration of the state of Israel in 1948 was a sign of the rolling of the hot ball that made the Arab people aware. The Jewish claim to Palestinian land opened a gaping hole ready to swallow either of them. Israel has never stopped expanding its Jewish settlements on Palestinian land. The Palestinians themselves became sick and were only able to fight as hard as they could, which ultimately resulted in their land being confiscated to make way for Jewish settlements (Mudore, 2019).

This conflict resulted in many casualties. According to data from the Palestinian Ministry of Health, the number of fatalities has reached more than 12,000 as of November 19 2023. This has caused a protracted humanitarian crisis because Israel's efforts to expand settlements are still occurring by displacing Palestinian territories, especially in the West Bank. This conflict has of course received a lot of attention from Indonesian society (Suratningsih, 2020).

The humanitarian crisis experienced by the Palestinian people is due to the protracted conflict, the dispute between Palestine and Israel has been going on for a long time. The arena of sharp disputes is due to Palestine's efforts to become an independent state, so that the results of these disputes cause many casualties. Civil society suffers from war or what is usually called a humanitarian crisis (Fachri, 2020).

Indonesia and Palestine are countries that have established diplomatic relations. This was marked by the posting of the Palestinian Ambassador to Indonesia since 19 September 1993. As one of the countries in the Middle East hit by conflict, Palestine has attracted the attention of the international community, including Indonesia. Indonesia, which is the largest Muslim country in the world, feels concerned about the suffering of the Palestinian Muslim people due to the prolonged conflict (Masyrofah, 2019).

In helping the Palestinian people, the government does not only stand alone, but many humanitarian social institutions also become actors in order to facilitate the distribution of aid to Palestine. Seeing the huge role of humanitarian social institutions in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. This of course has implications for improving Indonesia's image in the international environment. Indonesian social institutions and the Indonesian government are in synergy with each other (Suratningsih, 2020).

This research discusses Indonesia's humanitarian diplomacy towards the humanitarian crisis in Gaza. This research focuses more on the efforts made by Indonesia to protect the lives and dignity of the victims of war and violence in Gaza. Therefore, what will be focused in this research is how is Indonesia's humanitarian diplomacy in alleviating the suffering of the people of Gaza? The author hopes that with this article the wider community will know the role of the Indonesian government and Indonesian social institutions in alleviating the suffering of the people of Gaza, and that the Indonesian people will be more numerous and enthusiastic in trying and helping to alleviate the suffering of the people of Gaza.

Based on the background above, the author is interested in research with the title; "Indonesia's Humanitarian Diplomacy in Responding to the Humanitarian Crisis in Gaza".

## **METHOD**

This research uses qualitative methods with a normative and empirical approach. The data in this research was obtained from articles, journals, magazines, newspapers and other electronic media. The research stages were carried out by collecting library sources, both primary and secondary. This research classifies data based on research formulas (Darmalaksana, 2020).

After all the data has been collected, the next step is for the author to analyze the data until a conclusion is drawn. To obtain correct and precise results in analyzing data, the author uses content analysis techniques, which are in-depth discussions of the content of information contained or printed in the mass media. This analysis is used to analyze all forms of communication, including newspapers, news, radio, television and all other documentation materials (Afifuddin, 2012).

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Indonesian Humanitarian Diplomacy**

Etymologically, humanity comes from the word human, which means human or humanity, which means humanity. In the Big Indonesian Dictionary, humanity means human traits, humanly, as human beings, our feelings prevent us from committing condemnable actions. Humanity comes from the basic word human which means a rational creature (capable of controlling other creatures), human; person; as it could also be a mistake. Humans are sometimes inhumane, meaning things happen only because of mistakes (Tari, 2012).

The concept of humanitarian diplomacy includes the activities of humanitarian organizations to gain space from political and military authorities in a country, by persuading decision makers or leaders to act to uphold and respect humanitarian principles. The activities of these humanitarian organizations include efforts to regulate the presence of humanitarian organizations in certain countries, negotiate access to civilian populations in need of assistance and protection, monitor aid programs, promote respect for international law and norms, support indigenous individuals and institutions, and engaging in advocacy at various levels to support humanitarian causes (Ragnier, 2011).

Humanitarian diplomacy is "persuading decision makers and opinion leaders to act, at all times, in the interests of vulnerable people, and with full respect for fundamental humanitarian principles". Which means that humanitarian diplomacy seeks to invite parties who have power and authority towards weak parties in order to protect and save them from suffering (Humanitarian Diplomacy Policy, 2023).

Humanitarian diplomacy must be seen differently from other diplomatic processes. If diplomacy is generally seen as an effort to achieve interests, then it is different from humanitarian diplomacy, as explained by Larry Minear and Hazel Smith, humanitarian diplomacy can be seen as efforts made to gain access to communities experiencing crisis. Larry Minear and Hazel Smith further explained that humanitarian diplomacy is generally carried out in unusual ways and can be developed according to situations and conditions, and involves many parties. Because humanitarian diplomacy is usually conditional because it depends on the humanitarian crisis that occurs within a certain period of time and in a certain regional context (Minear, 2007).

Indonesia's humanitarian diplomacy is an effort to persuade decision makers and opinion leaders to act in the interests of vulnerable groups, with full respect for humanitarian principles. In contrast to conventional diplomacy, humanitarian diplomacy tends to be conditional, involves many parties, and focuses on access to communities experiencing humanitarian crises.

In carrying out humanitarian diplomacy, countries are obliged to adhere to the fundamental principles of humanity which consist of four principles, namely humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence. Humanity means helping those in need to reduce suffering. Neutrality means that workers must not take sides in a conflict and must focus more on the victims rather than the parties in conflict. Impartiality means that humanitarian workers must not be biased or show favoritism in providing assistance. Meanwhile, independence means that workers must separate themselves from the interests of certain parties, especially parties who provide donors (Alfredo, 2022).

Humanitarian diplomacy generally does not rely on the use of force to achieve goals. The use of force or the threat of the use of force (coercive diplomacy) is considered inefficient to be used as an instrument. It is considered less sharp to be used as a way to achieve humanitarian diplomacy goals. Humanitarian intervention is a failure of humanitarian diplomacy, because the goals of humanitarian diplomacy can almost be said to have been achieved if military force was not used to kill, injure and destroy human life (Albayumi, 2018).

The main aim of humanitarian diplomacy is to focus on the humanitarian feelings of donor countries towards countries receiving aid. If humanity is used as a tool for diplomatic purposes, only national interests take priority. The most important thing about humanitarian diplomacy is how national interests can have an impact on the principles of universal morality (Alfredo, 2022).

Humanitarian diplomacy can be realized in several ways, for example carrying out policy advocacy with the government so that it does not act

repressively towards the international community which is moved to help victims of humanitarian crises. Within a country, humanitarian diplomacy is a facility to express a sense of international empathy and solidarity. This will help a country to improve its reputation in the international region so that it can build trust and cooperation in achieving national interests (Alfredo, 2022). Even though Indonesia is not involved in military intervention, Indonesia's humanitarian diplomacy efforts reflect solidarity and empathy towards the Palestinian people. Apart from helping directly, Indonesia's participation in humanitarian diplomacy can also improve its reputation at the international level and build trust to achieve national interests.

### **Indonesia's Humanitarian Diplomacy Efforts in Resolving the Humanitarian Crisis in Gaza**

A crisis is a clear turning point in the development of events, or “a turning point marked by sharp progress or decline” (Gerung, 2020). Indonesia, with its background as the country with the largest Islamic population in the world, certainly has a sense of the same destiny and responsibility as Palestine. This makes many parties join hands to help the suffering of the Palestinian people. Not only in terms of political support from the Indonesian government, but the Indonesian people also voluntarily make donations to Palestine. The funds collected for aid to the Palestinian people are never small. This has caused many institutions distributing Palestinian humanitarian aid to emerge. Some of them are credible or trustworthy, but there are quite a few who abuse the public's trust. The type of criminal act involving misuse of aid funds is not only misuse of funds, but can also take the form of profiteering the name of an established aid distribution institution. Therefore, it is crucial for institutions that distribute community aid funds (which are NGOs) to maintain their credibility in society (Suratningsih, 2019).

Many Humanitarian Social Institutions provide assistance to Palestine to resolve the humanitarian crisis, these Humanitarian Institutions include:

#### **1. Medical Emergency Rescue Committee (MER-C)**

The Medical Emergency Rescue Committee (MER-C) is a Humanitarian Social Institution which operates in the medical and humanitarian fields and was formed in 1999. MER-C was formed based on Islamic principles by adhering to the principle of rahmatan lil'aalamin. The principle of rahmatan lil 'aalamin can be interpreted as a form of assistance based on urgency to all living creatures without looking at the background. MER-C was formed with the aim of providing medical services to war victims,

victims of violence resulting from conflict, damage and natural disasters at home and abroad (MER-C, 2018).

**2. Indonesian Red Crescent (BSMI)**

The Indonesian Red Crescent (BSMI) was formed on June 8 2002, which operates in the humanitarian sector by providing assistance in the form of support, health, humanitarian and social assistance. BSMI also plays an active role in facing and overcoming humanitarian crises in countries in conflict regardless of race, religion, country or political aspirations (BSMI, 2020). Israel deliberately targets ambulances, attacks medical personnel, and destroyed hospitals resulting in hundreds of casualties. So paramedics also became targets of Israeli attacks. BSMI's assistance is in the form of support, medical materials and medical equipment (BSMI, 2023).

**3. Dompot Dhuafa (DD)**

Dompot Dhuafa (DD) is a National Amil Zakat Institution which aims to alleviate poverty based on 5 main program pillars, namely education, health, economics, social, and da'wah, as well as culture. Pillar regarding education Dompot Dhuafa is committed to providing the widest possible access to education for the poor. Then in the health pillar, Dompot Dhuafa empowers communities based on regional potential to encourage people's independence. The social and da'wah pillars respond quickly to community problems according to their needs. The final pillar regarding culture, Dompot Dhuafa, will not forget the culture which is the legacy of ancient ancestors which contains good values (Dompot Dhuafa, 2019). Dompot Dhuafa provides various assistance to the community, various assistance to the Palestinian community, with the aim of easing the burden on the Palestinian community as a result of the humanitarian crisis. The humanitarian assistance provided by Dompot Dhuafa was in the form of goods weighing 21 tons containing medicine, hospital equipment, food and other necessities according to the needs of the people in Gaza (Dompot Dhuafa, 2023).

**4. National Committee of the Palestinian People (KNRP)**

The Palestinian People's National Committee (KNRP) was founded in May 2006, where KNRP is an NGO operating in the humanitarian sector that cares about the problems of the Al-Aqsa mosque and humanitarian issues in Palestine. KNRP has organized many social and artistic activities to raise funds and opinions for the Palestinian community (KNRP, 2020). The conflict between Israel and Palestine has forced the Palestinian people to experience a humanitarian crisis. KNRP as an NGO operating in the

humanitarian sector continues to provide humanitarian assistance to reduce the suffering of the Palestinian people. The assistance provided by KNRP is in the form of distribution of basic food packages (KNRP, 2023).

**5. Lazismu**

Lazismu is a national level zakat institution which is dedicated to empowering the community through productive utilization of zakat, infaq, waqf and other philanthropic funds for individuals, institutions, companies and other agencies (Lazismu, 2019).

**6. Baitul Maal Hidayatullah**

Baitul Maal Hidayatullah National Zakat Amil Institute (BMH) is a zakat amil institution which is engaged in collecting Zakat funds, infaq, alms, Waqf and Grants as well as social humanitarian funds and company Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), and distributes them through educational programs, da'wah, national social, humanitarian and economic (Baitul Maal Hidayatullah, 2018). In providing assistance to the Palestinian people, BMH also participates in this, such as the campaign to defend Palestine. This was done in solidarity with BMH to help voice the rights to independence that the Palestinian people should have (Baitul Maal Hidayatullah, 2017).

**7. Quick Response Action (ACT)**

Since its founding on April 21 2005, ACT officially launched itself as a foundation that operates in the social and humanitarian fields. With the aim of expanding its work, ACT is developing activities starting from emergency response activities, then various post-disaster recovery programs, empowerment and community development programs as well as spiritual-based programs such as Qurban, Zakat and Waqf. ACT also has programs specifically to reconstruct the problems that befell the Palestinian people. The following are the programs created by ACT to help with humanitarian problems in Palestine, namely Palestine Back to School, Fuel for Electricity, Indonesian Public Kitchen, Hospital Public Kitchen, Disabled, Humanity Card, Al-Aqsa Murabbitun Kafalah, Humanitarian Ship, Food Packages Ramadhan, Water Tank and Winter Aid (ACT, 2019).

**8. Baznas (National Amil Zakat Agency)**

The National Zakat Amil Agency (BAZNAS) is the official and only body formed by the government based on Presidential Decree No. 8 of 2001 which has the task and function of collecting and distributing zakat, infaq and alms (ZIS) at the national level. However, apart from regulating zakat nationally, Baznas also has several programs for the Palestinian community as a form of international program (Baznas, 2020).



## 9. Zakat House

Rumah Zakat is a World Digital Charity Organization that manages zakat, infaq, alms and other social funds through community empowerment programs (Rumah Zakat 2020). Apart from that, the zakat house program also provides benefits to the international community who are experiencing difficulties and disasters, one of which is experienced by Palestine. This program has even become a superior program at the zakat house by actively participating in monitoring developments in issues related to the humanitarian crisis in Palestine. As in dealing with the food crisis, zakat houses distribute food aid to the Palestinian population. This assistance is provided to people with disabilities, orphans and underprivileged people as provisions for facing difficult life in the city of Gaza, Palestine due to the food crisis that has hit. This distribution for 1000 people was carried out at several points such as Rafah, Khan Younis, Central Gaza and North Gaza (Rzadmindevel 2020).

These are the Humanitarian Social Institutions that provide assistance to Palestine to resolve the humanitarian crisis. These Humanitarian Social Institutions provide various kinds of assistance needed by the Palestinian people. There are those who provide assistance in the form of medicines, medical equipment, food, drinks, fuel for electricity, and so on. There are also those who provide financial assistance. The importance of maintaining the credibility of institutions distributing humanitarian aid in Indonesia is the main focus, considering that there is the potential for misuse of funds and profiteering of institutional names. Therefore, transparency and accountability in the management of humanitarian aid need to be maintained so that the public remains confident and support for humanitarian efforts can continue.

## CONCLUSION

Indonesia's humanitarian diplomacy is an effort to persuade decision makers and opinion leaders to act in the interests of vulnerable groups, with full respect for humanitarian principles. In contrast to conventional diplomacy, humanitarian diplomacy tends to be conditional, involves many parties, and focuses on access to communities experiencing humanitarian crises. The fundamental principles in conducting humanitarian diplomacy involve humanity (helping those in need), neutrality (not taking sides in conflict), impartiality (not taking sides), and independence (not depending on the interests of certain parties). Humanitarian diplomacy does not rely on force or the threat

of force to achieve goals, and humanitarian intervention is considered a failure if military force is used to harm humans.

In the context of resolving the humanitarian crisis in Gaza, Indonesia has been active through various Humanitarian Institutions, such as MER-C, Indonesian Red Crescent, Dompot Dhuafa, Palestinian People's National Committee, Lazismu, Baitul Maal Hidayatullah, Aksi Cepat Tunjung, Baznas, and Rumah Zakat. These institutions provide assistance in the form of medical support, medical materials, basic necessities, and various other forms of assistance to alleviate the suffering of the Palestinian people. It is important to maintain the credibility of institutions that distribute humanitarian aid in Indonesia as the main focus, considering that there is the potential for misuse of funds and profiteering of the names of institutions. Therefore, transparency and accountability in the management of humanitarian aid must be maintained so that the public remains confident and support for humanitarian efforts can continue.

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