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Indonesian Muslim Responses to The Gaza Humanitarian Crisis Since 2023

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Abstract

This article examines the role of NGOs and Islamic movements in Indonesia, specifically Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), Muhammadiyah, the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI) and other pro-Palestinian movements in responding to the Gaza genocide since 2023. Utilizing, the concept of NGOs in international politics, this study analyzes three primary dimensions: humanitarian relief, social and economic contribution and political advocacy . Employing a qualitative approach, the research draws on data from online media sources representingvarious Islamic organizations and institutions in Indonesia. The findings demonstrate that Muhammadiyah, NU, and MUI actively support Gaza through integrated humanitarian and political approaches, ranging from official statements, and aid distribution to solidarity actions on social media. However, the study identifies a need for enhanced cross-instittutional coordination and the development of structured and long-term strategies to ensure that Palestinian support agendas are more tangible and impactful. This study contributes to the field of social movements, particularly regarding institutional responses toumanitarian crises.

Keywords: Gaza Genocide, Indonesia, Islamic movement, NGOs.

Abstrak

Artikel ini mengkaji peran LSM dan gerakan Islam di Indonesia, khususnya Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), Muhammadiyah, Majelis Ulama Indonesia (MUI), dan gerakan pro-Palestina lainnya dalam menanggapi genosida di Gaza sejak tahun 2023. Dengan memanfaatkan konsep LSM dalam politik internasional, studi ini menganalisis tiga dimensi utama: bantuan kemanusiaan, kontribusi sosial dan ekonomi, serta advokasi politik. Menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif, penelitian ini mengacu pada data dari sumber media daring yang mewakili berbagai organisasi dan lembaga Islam di Indonesia. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa Muhammadiyah, NU, dan MUI secara aktif mendukung Gaza melalui pendekatan kemanusiaan dan politik yang terintegrasi, mulai dari pernyataan resmi, distribusi bantuan, hingga aksi solidaritas di media sosial. Namun, studi ini mengidentifikasi kebutuhan akan koordinasi lintas lembaga yang lebih baik serta pengembangan strategi terstruktur dan jangka panjang untuk memastikan bahwa agenda dukungan bagi Palestina menjadi lebih nyata dan berdampak. Studi ini berkontribusi pada bidang gerakan sosial, khususnya terkait respons institusional terhadap krisis kemanusiaan.

***Kata Kunci**: Genosida Gaza, Indonesia, Gerakan Islam, LSM.*

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A. INTRODUCTION

Historically, armed conflicts exert a profound a huge impact on both victors and the defeated, especially in terms of casualties, infrastructure damage, and shifts in the global political order (Hanif et al, 2025). Conflict acts as a fundamentally destructive element for any nation, yielding severe repercussions, most significantly regarding humanitarian issues (Maftuh et al, 2026). The humanitarian crisis in Gaza has emerged as one of the most pressing international concerns, marked by a catastrophic loss of life and socio-economic devastation that continues to affect civilian life on a massive scale. According to Schultz (2023), the people of Gaza have experienced prolonged and multidimensional suffering exacerbated by the enduring Israel–Palestine conflict. This suffering is reflected not only in military violence, but also in the long-term consequences of economic blockades, restricted mobility, limited access to health services, and disruption of education. In this context, Indonesia, as the country with the largest Muslim population in the world, has demonstrated sustained public and institutional concern for the Palestinian people (UMY, 2024). The acts of solidarity expressed by Muslim communities in Indonesia transced mere emotional reactions, they represent forms of religious, social, and humanitarian mobilization that reflect broader universal human values (KOMAHI, 2002).

The Indonesian government has consistently advocated for Palestinian rights in international forums like the United Nations (UN) and OIC (Organization of Islamic Cooperation) utilizing various diplomatic channels and bilateral meetings with other countries (Wangke, 2018). In Indonesia, Muhammadiyah and Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) stand as the two most influential socio-religious organizations, with followers reaching tens of millions. Both play a crucial role in the development and advancement of Islamic teachings within the country (Rivaldi et al, 2026). Concurrently, Indonesia's Muslim communities, NGOs, and civil society groups have contributed through diverse mechanism, such as public demonstrations, fundraising, and advocacy campaigns (Grehenson, 2024).

Social media serves as a potent communication tool that facilitates rapid information dissemination and collective mobilization. Digital platforms have allowed humanitarian narratives from Gaza to spread quickly among Indonesian Muslim

communities, transforming geographically distant suffering into a domestic public issue that demands a moral and practical response (Prasetyo, 2024).

Fundraising represents a primary means through which Indonesians show their support for Palestine. For example, Muhammadiyah and Nahdlatul Ulama frequently spearhead the efforts (CNN Indonesia, 2023). These organizations emphasize the critical importance of humanitarian aid is, especially during crises and mobilize resources to assist communities that have been affected. On the other hand, marches, rallies, and public demonstrations are also used where many Indonesians go to the streets to show their support for Palestine that involve not only Muslims, but also students, activists, community leaders, and other elements of civil society (Wardah, 2024; Yoga, 2023).

Various studies have investigated distinct aspects of global movements advocating for the Palestinian cause through political and humanitarian frameworks. Younes (2019) examines the BDS (Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions) movement, an international movement that calls for resistance to Israel and the countries that support it through economic pressure, such as boycotts and divestment from companies that work with Israel to challenge its policies. Furthermore, existing literature provides a comparative analysis of state and global public reactions to the Gaza crisis, framed within the concepts of cosmopolitanism and nationalism. This article posits that the inadequacy of state responses to Gaza is attributable to the prioritization of national interests, whereas global public responses are frequently driven by international solidarity and human rights principles.

In Indonesia, several studies have investigated citizen solidarity in response to the Gaza war since 2023, particularly via online media and collective actions (Kaslam, 2024). For example, Santi (2024) analyzes the hashtag #JulidFiSabilillah as a digitala movement that people use to counter Israeli propaganda on social media. Other studies examine the dynamics between Islamic groups like Nahdlatul Ulama and Muhammadiyah, as well as how these groups have provided aid to Palestine (Zidni, 2023; Fatihah & Maksum, 2024). These studies offer significant insights into digital activism, public mobilization, and the general engagement of Islamic organizations; however, they have not adequately elucidated the institutional nuances among major Muslim organizations in Indonesia

regarding their specific responses, movement repertoires, and strategic approaches to the Gaza crisis.

This study addresses that specific research gap. Previous studies has tended to focus on social media movements, public demonstrations, state responses, or general expressions of solidarity. By contrast, this research provides a comparative institutional analysis of how major Muslim organizations in Indonesia have responded to Israeli attacks on Gaza since 2023. The study examines not only the presence of solidarity, but also the forms, mechanisms, and strategic variations of organizational responses. Therefore, the central research question guiding this study is: How have major Muslim organizations in Indonesia responded to Israeli attacks on Gaza since 2023, and in what ways do their movement repertoires and response strategies differ from one another? This research addresses this question by comparing the types of movements and methodologies employed by these groups. Through this focus, the study contributes to a more systematic understanding of Indonesian Muslim solidarity as an organized, institutionally mediated, and strategically diverse response to the Gaza crisis.

B. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research uses a qualitative approach to examine Muslim solidarity actions in Indonesia in response to the humanitarian crisis in Gaza. The study focuses on three major Islamic organizations, namely Nahdlatul Ulama, Muhammadiyah, and the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI), while also considering solidarity initiatives led by public figures, community groups, and grassroots activists. The online media search was conducted from October 2023 to January 2025. This period was chosen because it captures the escalation of the Gaza humanitarian crisis after October 2023 and allows the research to trace how solidarity actions in Indonesia developed over time, from immediate humanitarian responses to broader public campaigns and advocacy-oriented initiatives.

For the analysis, this study applied qualitative content analysis by focusing on two main dimensions. First, forms of solidarity, including fundraising, demonstrations, public awareness campaigns, humanitarian assistance, and other community initiatives. Second, narratives, which examine how the Gaza issue was framed, circulated, and reproduced

across different platforms, including how dominant storylines appeared in news reports, official statements, and social media content. Findings are presented through a narrative synthesis that integrates these dimensions.

This research will use thematic analysis by identifying and interpreting recurring themes in online media materials related to Muslim solidarity actions in Indonesia for Gaza. The study focuses on Nahdlatul Ulama, Muhammadiyah, the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI), as well as initiatives led by public figures and grassroots activists. Data were collected through online searches using relevant keywords across news websites, organizational websites, blogs, and social media platforms. The keywords used included terms such as "solidaritas Palestina," "aksi bela Palestina," "donasi Gaza," "bantuan kemanusiaan Gaza," "NU Palestina," "Muhammadiyah Gaza," "MUI Palestina," "public figure Palestina," and "aktivis solidaritas Gaza."

The analysis was conducted by reading the materials repeatedly, generating codes related to actors, forms of solidarity, motivations, and narratives, and then grouping them into broader themes. To strengthen validity and reliability, the study used source triangulation by comparing information from mainstream news, official organizational channels, and public social media content.

For interpreting the results, we use the NGO roles framework in international relations from Ahmed & Potter (2006): First, Humanitarian relief: provision of emergency aid in disasters, famine, or armed conflict, such as the International Red Cross, Save the Children, and Oxfam; Second, Economic and social development: long-term programs for poverty reduction, sustainable development, and social services; and Third, Political engagement: advocacy and lobbying, public education and awareness-raising, agenda-setting, and monitoring other transnational actors (Ahmed & Potter, 2006).

Ahmed and Potter's framework was selected because it offers a broad yet operational typology for understanding how non-state actors work in international relations, not only as providers of humanitarian assistance but also as agents of social development and political engagement. This framework is more suitable for this research than NGO theories that focus only on civil society mobilization, transnational advocacy, or social movement dynamics, because Muslim solidarity for Gaza in Indonesia does not appear in a single form. It includes emergency fundraising, public education, mass

mobilization, religious framing, and advocacy-oriented narratives. These three roles therefore help explain how Indonesia's mainstream Islamic organizations, together with public figures and community networks, express and organize solidarity for Gaza, from immediate relief to ongoing public education and policy-oriented advocacy.

C. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Indonesia's policy stance regarding Palestinian issue has remained consistent era of independence, encompassing Islamic groups and the broader Indonesian public in general. A multifaceted approach has been adopted to support Palestine, incorporating political advocacy, humanitarian assistance, and economic support. At the governmental level, the Indonesian government has consistently advocated for the plight of the Palestinian people in international forums, including ASEAN, the United Nations, and Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC). On the other hand, the public has remained steadfastly in supporting Palestine, especially since the brutal Israeli attack from 2023 through 2025 continuing into the present. This section of the study focuses on mapping the actions of various Indonesian Muslim institutions, specifically Nahdlatul Ulama, Muhammadiyah, and the Indonesian Scholar Council (MUI), while analyzing broader solidarity actions carried out by Muslim community. The paper concludes by reflecting on the efforts required by Muslims to further expand their support for the Palestinian struggle.

1. Nahdlatul Ulama

Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), one of Indonesia’s largest socio-religious organizations has been actively supporting Palestine based on the foundations of religious conviction., humanity, and social justice. From a religious perspective, according to NU, Palestine is historically a sacred site for Abrahamic religions, including Islam, Christianity, and Judaism (Zidni, 2023). From a humanitarian perspective, NU's support is based on the narrative of supporting human brotherhood (*ukhuwah basyariyah*), alongside motives of social justice concerning the Israeli colonialism over Palestinian territories, primarily in the West Bank and Gaza Strip (Setiawan, 2024). Furthermore, NU's position aligns with the mandate of Indonesia's independence which is grounded in the constitutional values of Indonesia's establishment as a nation (Noor, 2025).

While NU adheres to consistent organizational principles, the articulation of its institutional support for Palestine has varied across different leadership periods. Despite sharing the same ideological foundations, NU's leadership has narrated its organizational support for the Palestinian issue using distinct frameworks (Zidni, 2023). For example, during the leadership era of the General Chairman of PBNU K.H. Abdurrahman Wahid (Gus Dur) (1984-1999), who was known for his controversial ideas regarding the possible normalization of diplomatic relations between Indonesia and Israel. Wahid envisioned this as a strategic maneuver to strengthen Indonesia's position as a mediator for Palestinian interests. In the era of K.H. Hasyim Muzadi (1999-2010), the approach shifted toward fostering reconciliationamong groups within Palestine, particularly Fatah and Hamas, as part of the effort to strengthen resistance against the Israeli occupation. A similarly firm stance was shown by NU during the leadership of K.H. Said Aqil Siroj (2010–2021) through close diplomatic ties with Palestine,. Siroj notably asserted that he would not visit Israel until the state recognized Palestinian independence, subsequently rejectingan invitation from an Israeli representative to meet in Tel Aviv (Zidni, 2023).

In the era of leadership of K.H. Yahya Cholil Tsaquf or popularly known as Gus Yahya (2021-2027), the discourse regarding Palestine emphasizes mediation by engaging bothPalestinian and Israeli stakeholders. This aligns with the diplomatic approach pioneered by Gus Dur. According to Gus Yahya, the status quo in Israel-Palestine should be framed as a humanitarian conflict rather than solely a religious conflict. However, he acknowledges that the religious dimension remains pivotal, as the conflict is deeply intertwined with religious aspects, especially among both parties, whether from the Palestinian Muslim community or the Jewish community in Israel, to advance the liberation of Palestine (Indiraphasa, 2023; Mantalean, 2022; Zidni, 2023). This argument was also presented by Gus Yahya while serving as Katib 'Am PBNU at an international forum organized by the American Jewish Committee (AJC), which received public criticism, especially since Gus Yahya was also a member of the presidential advisory council under Joko Widodo (Zidni et al., 2024). Nevertheless, these divergen leadership approaches do not diminish support for Palestinian independence from Zionist Israeli occupation.

In response to the escalation of Israel's military aggression in Gaza since 2023, NU has carried out various activities as a form of support for Palestine, such as various solidarity actions based on spiritual aspects like the Rajabiyah Week and the recitation of *qunut al-nazilah* during prayers, including philanthropic efforts (Alawi, 2023). Examples of solidarity actions include humanitarian campaigns, crowdfunding, discussions and publications, diplomatic meetings, and the use of media channels and online platforms (Zidni et al, 2024). To raise funds, NU has the NU-Care-LAZISNU institution and the NUcare.id platform, which receive and facilitate the distribution of humanitarian aid for the independence of Palestine. Furthermore, in executing these aid distributions, NU also utilizes its global network, particularly the Special Branch Management (PCI), alongside international partner institutions, such as the Althoure-Silwan Women Center (AWC) based in Jerusalem and Gazze Destek Dernegi (GDD) in Türkiye (Noerhadi, 2024a, 2024b; Solkan, 2024).

International forums and conferences organized by NU have also helped strengthening the narrative concerning peace and Palestinian independence. These dialogs conceptualize religion as "a source of solutions for global challenges." Key initiatives includes the Religion Twenty (R20) forum, the International Congress on Civilization Jurisprudence discussing the review of Israel's annexation of Palestine as a violation of international law, and the R20 ISORA (International Summit of Religious Authorities), the latter proposed reforming the UN Security Council by abolishing the veto power of permanent members and encouraging collaboration between religious institutions and economic-political leaders worldwide in maintaining the international order (Salam & Wulan, 2023; Zidni et al., 2024). At the 2023 International Congress on the Jurisprudence of Civilization, NU reaffirmed its commitment to contemporary world order centered on the United Nations (UN). While acknowledging that the UN has yet to fully resolve global issues such as the Palestinian issue, NU still plays an important role in realizing the benefits for the global Muslim community (*al-ummah al-Islamiyyah*), based on humanitarian values (Luthfi, 2023). That acknowledgment reflects NU's latest view on the importance of respecting a rules-based order to create long-term global security (Indiraphasa, 2024; Salam, 2023).

Prior to the *Thufan al-Aqsa* Operation, carried out by Hamas on October 7, 2023, the NU narrative focused on positioning the Palestine-Israel issue as a religious issue, as the conflict should not be linked to religious identity. Based on Gus Yahya's assessment, the key to solving the problem lies in the establishment of a peaceful resolution based on a two-state solution, alongside the global community's respect for the principles of the international order, including the sovereign right of the Palestinian people to independence (Indiraphasa, 2023).

Throughout the conflict, NU issued a formal statement urging the implementation of a ceasefire and prioritizing on humanitarian issues. Specifically, the statement conveyed the message about the obligation of the international community to respond to escalated the Israel-Palestine conflict in accordance with international law, and for the permanent members of the UN Security Council not to unilaterally exercise their veto power. NU also emphasized that the war between Israel and Palestine should not be associated with "identity and religious calls" that foster mutual hatred, while highlighting the position of religion as a source of inspiration for universal justice in promoting conflict resolution at all levels. Various forms of solidarity support that have been proposed throughout NU's history, including the practice of absentia funeral prayers (*salat al-ghaib*) and communal prayers, have also been voiced (Patoni, 2023).

Duringits activities, NU encountered significant internal challenges when five of its cadres visited and met with Israeli officials, particularly President Isaac Herzog in 2024, which was deemed contrary to NU's official position as an institution and led to the organization's decision to dismiss the cadres from the management structure (Abdurrahman, 2024c; Attar, 2024). The dismissal was also accompanied by an internal evaluation by NU regarding the involvement of the cadres in the Center for Ibrahim Heritage Studies for Peace (Rahim), which was revealed to be a "lobby organization" advocating for Israeli interests in Indonesia (Abdurrahman, 2024a). This policy demonstrates NU's recognition, as one of the Islamic movements in Indonesia, of the urgency of prioritizing Palestine in the context of the ongoing bombing of the Gaza Strip and the clarity of Palestine's state status (Abdurrahman, 2024b; Yaputra & Azzahra, 2024). NU also supports solidarity actions such as boycotting products affiliated with

Israel. Although considered a short-term measure, the civil advocacy movement through boycotts remains critical tool for garnering to gain political attention (Syakir NF, 2023).

Based on the frameworkds of NGOs' roles in International politics, NU plays a role in relief and political engagement. It engages in relief or humanitarian role through its philanthropic arm such as the NU-Care-LAZISNU institution and the NUcare.id platform, which receive and facilitate the distribution of humanitarian aid for the independence of Palestine as well as cooperating with various foreign partner institutions, such as the Althoure-Silwan Women Center (AWC) based in Jerusalem and Gazze Destek Dernegi (GDD) in Türkiye.

Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) also engages in political engagement through public education and advocacy. NU's role is evident in religious discourses, *da'wah*, religious forums, fatwas, and humanitarian solidarity campaigns. NU fulfills this function by leveraging its network of Islamic boarding schools, religious scholars, and social organizations to foster solidarity among the Muslim community regarding Palestine as both a humanitarian and global issue. NU is also actively advocating for an end to the war and a ceasefire through various international forums such as Religion Twenty (R20), and American Jewish Committee (AJC) Forum and the International Congress on Civilization Jurisprudence, which discuss support for Palestinian independence and reform of the international system all of which discuss support for Palestinian independence and reform of the international system. In terms of public advocacy, NU supports the boycott of products affiliated with Israel as a form of political pressure from civil society.

2. Muhammadiyah

Muhammadiyah is one of the Islamic organizations that exert significant impact on Indonesia, in addition to NU. As an Islamic-based civil movement with tens of millions of members, Muhammadiyah maintains a steadfast commitment to supporting Palestine based on three primary reasons: its constitutional mandate, historical obligations, and solidarity as a partner third-world country. Muhammadiyah, for instance, points out Indonesia's dedication to the 1945 Constitution's preamble, particularly the phrase that advocates for the independence of all nations and condemns all forms of colonialism, as well as the state's aspiration to establish enduring peace and social justice-values that also serve as the foundation for Pancasila (Muhammadiyah, 2021, 2023c). Furthermore,

religious motivations are essential for strengthening Muhammadiyah's advocacy concerning Palestine, given the status of al-Aqsa Mosque as a sacred site for Muslims (DepokPos, 2023).

Moreover, the narrative of Palestinian support within Muhammadiyah is rooted in historical precedent. The historical record of numerous Muhammadiyah figures have long prioritized the Palestinian issue across various international platforms. For example, Prof. K.H. Abdul Kahar Muzakkir, a Yogyakarta citizen, was in direct contact with Sheikh Amin al-Husaini, the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem and a Palestinian leader, during his time studying in the Middle East. The historic role of Muhammadiyah in supporting an independent Palestine is shown by the participation of these Muhammadiyah figures in forums such as the *Mu'tamar 'Alam Islami* (Islamic World Congress) in 1931 and the Bloudan Conference in 1937 as a representatives of Southeast Asian scholars. This function was even maintained when Pak Kahar established the Mu'tamar 'Alam Islami branch organization in the Dutch East Indies (Mu'arif, 2023).

The Amal Usaha Muhammadiyah (AUM) are initiatives established by Muhammadiyah to achieve its mission and objectives, namely to uphold and promote the Islamic faith. All AUM are directed toward the fulfillment of Muhammadiyah's strategic mission and objectives. The Amal Usaha Muhammadiyah (AUM) movement has developed into a network of Muhammadiyah-affiliated institutions that also mobilized the support of organizations related to Palestine. Muhammadiyah maintains substantial resources to articulate its opinion of partiality toward Palestine in the areas of education (management of educational institutions at various levels), health (ownership and management of health clinics to hospitals), and community empowerment (Aswar et al., 2025). For example, Muhammadiyah issued the Risalah Islam Berkemajuan(Treatise on Progressive Islam) during the 48th Congress in 2022, which reaffirmed its status as a moderate Islamic organization engaged in peace diplomacy, particularly regarding Palestine (Muhammadiyah, 2023a, 2025).

The organization provides humanitarian support primarily through the initiatives Muhammadiyah Aid and Lazismu, working together with local partners in Palestine. The provision of scholarships for Palestinian students at Muhammadiyah 'Aisyiyah Universities (PTMA) is a long-term strategy, while the distribution of assistance packages

is a form of short-term support. Additionally, citizen enterprise empowerment programs are implemented as a medium-term support model (Lazismu, 2023; Muhammadiyah, 2023d). Muhammadiyah also contributes to the development of emergency facilities in the Gaza Strip and the Indonesian Hospital in Hebron in the health sector (Mikaputri, 2024; PWM Central Java, 2024; Wardah, 2021). Additionally, Muhammadiyah, through the Muhammadiyah Disaster Management Center (MDMC), initiated discussions with a variety of partner institutions to develop a sustainable and effective collective vision and systemic advocacy strategies to promote Palestinian independence, with regard of the numerous reactive-sporadic solidarity strategies for Palestine (Muhammadiyah, 2023b).

Muhammadiyah issued an official position statement on October 7, 2023, urging international organizations, including the United Nations, the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), and the Arab League, to rapidly develop political and diplomatic measures to conclude the conflict. Additionally, the statement called upon the Indonesian government to engage in conflict resolution proactively. The release also articulates Muhammadiyah's stance, which emphasizes the treatment of Palestinian children and women as the most vulnerable victims of Israeli annexation and aggression, and calls for prayers and spiritual petition for Palestinian Muslims conflict (Muhammadiyah, 2023e; Suara Muhammadiyah, 2023).

Muhammadiyah proposes that the historical and moral conditions, specifically the issues of ending colonization and genocide, and the recognition of Palestinian sovereignty, must be clarified prior to discussing formal relations between countries (Khairunisa, 2025; Saputra, 2025). Muhammadiyah provides assistance that is in line with the government's approach to problem-solving and is considered mainstream. Muhammadiyah appears to be compromising on the concept of a two-state solution (TSS) for Palestine-Israel, despite its continued condemnation of the genocide committed by Israel in Gaza and its surroundings. For instance, the Institute of Foreign Relations and International Cooperation (LHKI) of the Central Executive of Muhammadiyah regards this discourse as the most "just and rational step to end the conflict" due to its status as a framework of ideas that have been agreed upon by the majority of the international community, including the United Nations and the OIC. Nevertheless, Muhammadiyah was skeptical of TSS as a foreign policy projection, particularly in relation to Israel's apparent

lack of genuine intentin its implementation (Khairunisa, 2025; Muhammadiyah, 2021; Suara Muhammadiyah, 2023, 2025).

Muhammadiyah's activism is characterized by multifaceted array of strategies, including government lobbying, information dissemination, scholarly discussions, and public demonstrations, all of which advocate for Palestinian issues in international forums.(Mahdi, 2024). Muhammadiyah frequently provides expert lectures and publications that not only emphasize the urgency of material assistance but also reflect criticism of Israel's actions that contradict international law (Meidyana, 2025). For example, Muhammadiyah has a network of affiliated institutions that organize Palestinian solidarity actions, including the Muhammadiyah Student Association (IMM), Nasyiatul Aisyiyah (NA), the Muhammadiyah Student Association (IPM), and studies at PTMA. These institutions facilitated the "Defending Palestine and Condemning Israel" action (CNN Indonesia, 2024; Riski, 2023; Alert, 2023). Furthermore, the Muhammadiyah network is further empowered by the PTMA, which has initiated the concentration of interest in Baitul Maqdis Studies (Islamic Jerusalem Studies) in the master's program at the University of Muhammadiyah Jakarta (UMJ). This program is believed to have been the first to be established in the Southeast Asian region (Muhammadiyah, 2024; Rizqa, 2024).

Based on the concept of NGOs' roles in International politics, Muhammadiyah operates across three primary dimensions: humanitarian relief, social and economic development and political engagement. In terms of relief or humanitarian aid, Muhammadiyah provides essential health, educational, and humanitarian aid to Palestine through institutions such as Muhammadiyah Aid. Muhammadiyah focuses on long-term program sustainability for poverty reduction, social services, and sustainable development.

Muhammadiyah not only provides emergency aid but also supports the sustainability of Palestinian communities through a social development approach. With its substantial institutional capacity, Muhammadiyah functions as a transnational development organization based on Islamic civil society. This is evident in initiatives such as Muhammadiyah providing scholarships for Palestinian students at Perguruan Tinggi Muhammadiyah dan ‘Aisyiyah (PTMA), which has established a concentration in Baitul

Maqdis Studies (Islamic Jerusalem Studies) within the master's program at the University of Muhammadiyah Jakarta (UMJ). Muhammadiyah has also established the Indonesian Hospital in Hebron, an emergency hospital in Gaza, and distributed medical aid through The Amal Usaha Muhammadiyah (AUM), Muhammadiyah Aid, Lazismu, and the Muhammadiyah Disaster Management Center (MDMC). In Potter's theory, these activities reflect the characteristics of an NGO social and economic development that focused on social services and long-term community development.

Muhammadiyah also carries out political engagement functions through lobbying the government, academic discussions, campus solidarity actions, and advocacy for the recognition of Palestinian sovereignty in international forums. It did this through government lobbying, dissemination, discussions, and demonstrations, in order to advocate for Palestinian issues in international forums. Muhammadiyah is very active in criticizing Israel's actions that contradict international law. This is carried out by institutions such as the Muhammadiyah Student Association (IMM), Nasyiatul Aisyiyah (NA), and the Muhammadiyah Student Association (IPM).

3. Indonesian Ulama Council (MUI)

As an independent Islamic educational body, the Indonesian Ulama Council (MUI) provides guidance on a variety of Islamic matters in Indonesia, including the Palestinian issue, to the government, Muslim organizations, and the general public. This includes issuing fatwas. The MUI has demonstrated its dedication to the Palestinian people and its opposition to Israeli aggression in Gaza by maintaining a consistent position throughout the 2023-2025 period. The Palestinian struggle for independence was consistently supported by the MUI in a diplomatic and measured manner prior to the October 7, 2023, attack. The MUI's primary objectives include the enforcement of human rights, the abolition of colonialism, and the pursuit of peaceful settlements. The MUI generally avoids directly defending Hamas' military actions, despite its support for Palestinian independence. Following the Al-Aqsa Flood (Thufan al-Aqsa) operation, the MUI's narrative experienced a shift toward greater assertiveness and explicit condemnation, resulting in the issuance of a fatwa that accompanied by a consumer boycott. This narrative shift represents a reaction to the Palestinian people's escalation of conflict and the intensified suffering of the Palestinian people following the October 7, 2023, attacks.

Fatwa No. 83/2023, adopted in November 2023, sets out two main rulings. First, any support for Israeli aggression or for those who back Israel, directly or indirectly, is deemed *'haram'* (forbidden). Second, supporting the Palestinian struggle for independence against such aggression, is considered *'wajib'* (obligatory). The MUI uses this fatwa to frame its public statements and calls to action, including nationwide solidarity efforts and boycott campaigns. In practice, MUI urges channeling zakat and *sadaqah* to Palestinians and avoiding Israeli-affiliated products (N, 2023).

To encourage the use of local products, MUI released ten criteria for identifying domestic substitutes for Israel-linked goods while simultaneously strengthening the national economy. Among these criteria are requirements that a product maintains no business ties with Israel and is manufactured by firms that do not support aggression against Palestinians. The public is encouraged to prioritize locally produced goods to avoid entanglement with Israel-linked supply chains. This approach aligns with consumer sentiment, around 85% of Indonesians reportedly prefer local products, and is paired with a warning about "Palestine-washing," wherein companies pose as pro-Palestine stance solely for reputational gain. To protect consumers, experts advise healthy skepticism when evaluating brand or product affiliations (Putranto, 2024; Yunus, 2024).

Additionally, in 2025, MUI recognized a jihad fatwa issued by the International Union of Muslim Scholars (IUMS). The IUMS text considers the defense of Palestine as a religious obligation and encourages Muslims to unite against Israel and its allies, which is in accordance with MUI's previous rulings. The document specified approximately 15 points that advocated for the implementation of military, economic, and political measures to safeguard Palestinians from genocide. At the same time, MUI advocated for the coordination and implementation of concrete measures by OIC member states to mitigate Israel's violent conduct (CNN Indonesia, 2025).

The Indonesian Ulama Council (MUI) functionsas a form of political engagement specifically in the areas of agenda-setting and lobbying. The MUI instrumentally shapesthe political direction and stance of Indonesian Muslims toward Palestine through fatwas, calls to consumer boycott initiatives, and policy recommendations adressed to the government. The MUI not only shapes religious opinion but also applies moral-

political pressure on the state and society to ensure the Palestinian issue remains on the international agenda.

By leveraging its institutional legitimacy, the MUI acts as a bridge connecting civil society with state policymakers. The MUI also urges the Indonesian government to remain consistent in supporting the Palestinian struggle at international forums. This is evident in Fatwa No. 83 of 2023, which states that supporting Israeli aggression is *haram* (forbidden), while supporting the Palestinian struggle is *wajib* (obligatory). This fatwa subsequently served as the basis for a national campaign to boycott products affiliated with Israel and to encourage the public to channel zakat and sadaqah to the Palestinian people.

4. Muslim Solidarity for Palestine

From 2023 to 2025, various Muslim entities in Indonesia participated in solidarity actions alongside major Islamic mass groups like Muhammadiah and NU. A significant large-scale national demonstration occurred on 5 November 2023 at Monas (National Monument), organized by the Indonesian People's Alliance to Defend Palestine (Aliansi Rakyat Indonesia Bela Palestina, ARI-BP), drawing hundreds of thousands of individuals from diversereligious affiliations. Participants symbolized their solidarity with the struggle for Palestinian independence by wearing white clothing and displaying the Palestinian flag. This event was attended by prominent national officials, including Jusuf Kalla, former vice president; Retno Marsudi, former foreign minister; Puan Maharani, chairperson of the DPR RI; and Din Syamsuddin, former head of the Muhammadiyah organization. Additionally, representatives from various interfaith organizations were present, including the Indonesian Catholic Bishops' Conference (KWI), Indonesian Church Fellowship (PGI), Parisada Hindu Dharma Indonesia (PHDI), Indonesian Buddhist Association (Permabudhi), Indonesian Confucian High Council (Matakin), as well as representatives from universities and colleges, and Islamic boarding schools (VOA Indonesia, 2023).

Beyond the capital, the residents of Aceh mobilized to advocate for Palestine on November 8, 2023, under the Aceh Palestine Youth Action Solidarity (Solidaritas Aksi Pemuda Aceh Palestina, SAPA Palestina) to demonstrate their support for Palestine at the Baiturrahman Grand Mosque in Banda Aceh. The United States flag was also burned as a

symbol of protest. The mass mobilization originated from many villages, youth, and student organizations in the westernmost region of Indonesia. They requested the world community to promptly implore Israel to cease the genocide and dismantle the state of Israel. SAPA Palestine not only initiated action but also urged the populace of Aceh to boycott Israeli products. In addition to the activities, they conducted a substantial fundraiser at the primary venue of the 8th Aceh Cultural Week (Pekan Kebudayaan Aceh, PKA) in Taman Ratu Safiatuddin (Surry, 2023).

Solidarity initiatives persisted in 2024. On August 4, 2024, members of the Indonesian People's Alliance to Defend Palestine (ARI-BP) conducted solidarity actions by assemblinghundreds of individuals assembled in front of the US Embassy in Jakarta. The public demonstration demanded that the genocide against Palestine be halted and encouraged the government to cooperate in the struggle for Palestinian freedom (Dewi, 2024).

On November 29, 2024, a similar demonstration was heldin front of the US Embassy in observance of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, a global observance established since 1978. This date was selected in accordance with the UN General Assembly's directive to commemorate the adoption of the resolution regarding the partition of Palestine annually. Protesters demanded justice and human rights for the Palestinian people, denounced Israeli aggression, and affirmed their solidarity with the Palestinian cause. In anticipation that global scrutiny would facilitate the resolution of the prolonged conflict (Newswire, 2024).

To commemorate the 70th anniversary of the Asian-African Conference, severalsolidarity events were held throughout Indonesia in 2025, including a notable demonstration in front of Bandung's Merdeka Building on April 20, 2025. This action reaffirmed Indonesia's standinge as a nation commited to the advocacy of Palestinian rights and illustrates the increasing recognition of Palestine as an independent state by international communities. It underscored the necessity of executing international resolutions that endorse Palestine, acknowledging that Palestine participated in the 1955 Asian-African Conference and was the inaugural country to acknowledge Indonesia's independence. Participants in the demonstration displayed an array of banners and flags, including appeals to boycott Israeli products (Meidyana, 2025).

The Islamic movement in Indonesia, particularly via prominent groups like Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), Muhammadiyah, and the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI), significantly contributes to addressing the humanitarian crisis in Gaza through various humanitarian, economic, and political strategies.

Within the framework of NGOs' involvement in international politics, their activities can be categorized into three primary dimensions: humanitarian relief, economic and social, and political. Regarding humanitarian efforts, NU and Muhammadiyah, via their philanthropic organizations, NU Care-LAZISNU and Lazismu, have consistently provided financial assistance, medical supplies, and logistical support to Gaza through a network of global allies. Furthermore, the Indonesian Islamic movement exerts influence in the political sphere by promoting public education, advocating to the government, and participating in boycott campaigns against products associated with Israel. The MUI fatwa asserts that aiding the Palestinian resistance is a duty and urges Muslims to refrain from eating anything associated with Israel. In the digital sphere, activism has manifested through the hashtag #JulidFiSabilillah, initiated by Indonesian and Malaysian netizens to challenge the Zionist narrative on social media. Political actions are executed through diverse types of advocacy, including protests and solidarity initiatives, particularly by various communities in Indonesia, such as the Indonesian People's Alliance to Defend Palestine (ARI-BP) and the Aceh Palestine Youth Action Solidarity (SAPA Palestina).

Despite the active involvement of numerous mass organizations in Indonesia, their efforts to advocate for Palestine have failed to coalesce into a unified movement with systematic objectives. NU, Muhammadiyah, and MUI each possess distinct operational priorities and perspectives. NU and Muhammadiyah prioritize humanitarian and educational initiatives, whereas MUI emphasizes education through fatwas advocating for Palestine and urging the boycott of Israeli-affiliated products. Notably, these actions are often not undertaken collaboratively with the other major mass organizations like NU and Muhammadiyah, as well as other communities defending Palestine. The resulting uncoordinated agenda among these groups leads to suboptimal societal and political influence.

It is crucial to establish synergies between Islamic institutions and social movements to amplify public mobilization for humanitarian aid and advocacy. This is particularly vital fon ensuring that pro-Palestinecommunities and all major mass groups join forces to demand a boycott of pro-Israel goods. In addition, a range of systematic measures can be implemented, including lobbying, to compel the government to adopt a more assertive position, that extent beyond mere protests, fundraising, or public education.

The movement for Muslim Solidarity for Palestine plays a dual role in both humanitarian relief and political engagement. The movement utilizes social media, demonstrations, public advocacy, and international campaigns to build moral and political pressure on international actors perceived as supporting Israel. In the aspect of humanitarian relief, the organization actively raises humanitarian aid for conflict victims in Palestine in the form of funds, food, medicine, and other emergency assistance. In terms of political engagement, this movement is evident in massive demonstrations such as the "Defend Palestine" rally at Monas in 2023, which was attended by hundreds of thousands of participants from diversereligious backgrounds and prominent national figures. Other solidarity actions also took place in Aceh through SAPA Palestina, which not only organized demonstrations but also called for a boycott of Israeli products and humanitarian fundraising. In 2024 and 2025, solidarity actions were also held in front of the U.S. Embassy, furthermore to commemorate the 70th anniversary of the Asian-African Conference, Indonesia called for an end to the genocide in Gaza and expressed support for Palestinian independence. These activities demonstrate that Muslim Solidarity for Palestine functions as a transnational advocacy network that mobilizes public opinion and political pressure through mass actions and solidarity campaigns.

It is crucial to establish connections between Islamic institutions and social movements in order to increase public mobilization for humanitarian aid and advocacy, notably when pro-Israel communities and all major mass groups join forces to demand a boycott of pro-Israel goods. In addition, a range of systematic measures can be implemented, including lobbying, to compel the government to adopt a more assertive position, beyond mere protests, fundraising, or public education.

D. CONCLUSION

The Israeli occupation of Palestinian territories and the genocide that has occurred since 2023 have triggered reactions from countries, international organizations, and global civil society. Various criticisms and actions have been undertaken to pressure Israel to stop its atrocities in Gaza. As a majority Muslim country, Indonesia actively supports independence and defends Palestinian rights from a humanitarian and political perspective.

This study focuses on the roles of Islamic mass organizations in Indonesia, including Nahdlatul Ulama, Muhammadiyah, and the Indonesian Ulema Council, as well as various Muslim solidarity actions in Indonesia, using an NGO approach in international politics through three main roles: relief, social and economic, and political. In general, various Islamic organizations in Indonesia are active in providing political support through stance statements in support of Palestine. Nahdlatul Ulama and Muhammadiyah are also active in providing humanitarian support to Palestine through humanitarian institutions owned by both NU and Muhammadiyah.

However, the various humanitarian and political agendas of these movements have not been carried out in an integrated manner but rather separately. This is why the various actions carried out do not occur simultaneously, which has implications for the low number of people involved, and the range of opinions supporting Palestine is not optimal. Therefore, Islamic movements in Indonesia need to unite their vision and movement in fighting for the fate of Palestine by determining short-term and long-term targets as well as measurable strategies to achieve these targets.

This study contributes to the growing body of research on Muslim public support for Palestine by examining case studies in Indonesia. For the future development of this study, a comprehensive study of pro-Palestinian movements across ideologies, including religion, is needed to obtain a complete picture of the Indonesian public's response to the Israeli occupation in Palestine.

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