

Palestine Indonesia, and the Struggle Against Colonialism

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Abstract

Indonesia's relationship with Palestine is strongly influenced by the values adopted by the Indonesian nation. There are several elements that cause the relationship to be consistent in the span of seven decades, in contrast to some Arab states that pragmatically ignore Palestinian interests by establishing diplomatic relations. The first element is the value of anti-colonialism which is embodied in the preamble to the Indonesian constitution. The second element is the religious values adopted by the majority of the Indonesian people so that attention to Palestine is based on Islamic values. The third element is Indonesia's position as a Non-Aligned leader, so there is a tendency not to submit to Western or Eastern powers.

Keywords: Palestine, Indonesia, relationship, anti-colonialism, Islamic values, Non-Aligned

INTRODUCTION

The countries of Indonesia and Palestine are separated by a significant body of water and land in the form of islands. In more specific terms, the distance between Indonesia and Palestine is close to nine thousand kilometers. In addition, whereas in the Middle East you will find Palestine, Indonesia is in the region of Southeast. Comparatively, Indonesia has a population of approximately 270 million people, while Palestine has approximately five million people.

The fact that the vast majority of Palestinians and Indonesians adhere to Islam is one way in which these two populations are comparable. Religion is another factor that contributes to a closer relationship between the two countries. Above all else, the Aqsha

Mosque gives Palestine a unique status in the eyes of the people of Indonesia because it is located in Palestine. This gives Palestine a special place in their hearts. After the Grand Mosque in Mecca, the Al Aqsha Mosque is considered to be the second most holy place in all of Islam.

Not only does Indonesia's conceptual proximity to Palestine play a role in the country's religious history, but it also plays a role in both Indonesia's and Palestine's respective national histories. The Dutch maintained a colonial presence in Indonesia for hundreds of years. In light of this, Michael Leifer (1970) asserted that Indonesia's anti-colonial stance was a direct result of the country's experiences with colonial powers, and that these experiences were the seeds of Indonesia's foreign policy.

Various studies have looked at how the two countries are connected in a political context, among others: Yuliantini, N. P. R., & Sawaki, A. N. P. (2021), Pramuji, N. F. (2020), Rezasyah, T. (2019), Mudore, S. B. (2019), Saragih, H. M. (2019), Prasetya, Muh. N., & Srifauzi, A. (2018). Azani, N. S., & Zuhdi, M. L. (2016), Rahmawati, N. (2014)¹. From the social and humanitarian side, the relationship between Indonesia Palestine can be read in Taqwa, L., & Zuhdi, M.L. (2017), Marzuki, K., & Tiola. (2021), Susilowati, I., & Adila, W. (2021,) Kusumaningrum, D.N., Aditya, D.K., Albahernanda, G., & Guritno, B.S. (2018)²

The analysis that will be used in this article will be based on the constitutional foundations of foreign policy, which Rosenau (1976) referred to as input from within the country.³ Additionally, the relationship between the two countries will be able to be seen from the similarities of religious values, which is one reason why the Palestinian issue is a part of the concerns of the Indonesian nation. And finally, it will explore the context of the relationship between the two countries within the framework of Indonesia's role as the leader of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM).

THEME OF ANTI-COLONIALISM

President Joko Widodo's statement on Indonesia's stance against colonialism is a continuation of foreign policy related to the Israeli occupation of Palestine. Jokowi said, 'We must continue to fight with them. We must support the birth of an independent Palestinian State.' This statement is an unequivocal expression that Indonesia's relationship with Palestine is in an effort to release Palestine from colonialism in order to become independent.⁴

If we look deeper, President Jokowi's statement has been Indonesia's consistent attitude since the beginning. In 1962, Sukarno asserted in his speech: 'As long as the independence of the Palestinian people has not been handed over to the Palestinian people, then during that time the Indonesian nation stands up to challenge Israeli colonization.' President Sukarno's support for the struggle for Palestinian independence was carried out in various forms, one of which was in the form of resistance to colonialism and imperialism.⁵⁶

President Joko Widodo showed Indonesia's stance by meeting with Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas several times. At the 2016 OIC Extraordinary Summit in Jakarta, Jokowi again conveyed three important points, namely supporting the struggle for Palestinian independence in accordance with the framework of a two-state solution, Indonesia's support for its brothers and sisters in Palestine, and the expected results of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) Extraordinary Summit on Al-Quds Al-Sharif.⁷

At the Asian-African conference in Bandung in 1955 Palestinian leaders attended along with 28 other countries. This showed Indonesia's commitment to the Palestinian cause. Even in this conference, it was affirmed what is called Dasa Sila Bandung whose content confirms that relations between nations are based on the principles of independence and justice.

On October 13, 1988, Soeharto reported the Antara news agency, denounced Israel for trying to suppress the Palestinian people's legitimate resistance to the illegitimate Israeli occupation. He called on the UN Security Council to convene an international peace conference on the Middle East.

However, Indonesia's attitude since then has almost changed. President Abdurrahman Wahid, who was in power between 1999 and 2001, even called for the opening of diplomatic relations with Israel. President Wahid instead formalized trade relations with Israel through a Decree of the Minister of Trade on January 10, 2001. President Wahid's efforts to establish relations with Israel were opposed by the Indonesian people. Until the end of his term as president the opening of diplomatic relations did not materialize.⁸⁹

Furthermore, under President Megawati Soekarnoputri (2001-2004), Indonesia was again paying attention to Palestine. At the Summit Meeting of the 56-nation Organization of the Islamic Cooperation (OIC) in Kuala Lumpur in 2002 Megawati committed to support an independent Palestinian state and criticized developed countries which were being unfair in threatening Palestinian people. The Foreign Ministry Hassan Wirajuda visited Palestine with a number of ministers from the Non-Aligned Movement.¹⁰

During the reign of Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, Indonesia became the sponsor who proposed that Palestine become a non-member observer state on November 29, 2012. With the support of Indonesia, Palestine was then included in the category as a non-member observer state. In addition, Yudhoyono affirmed that Indonesia would not recognize and establish diplomatic relations with Israel until Palestine became an independent state living side-by-side with Israel. During the Asian-African Summit in Jakarta in 2005, Indonesia proposed the adoption of the Declaration on the New Asian-African Strategic Partnership (NAASP) that was signed by 106 states including Palestine as the participating country.¹¹

This Indonesian attitude shows that the Palestinian struggle for independence will continue until the ideal is achieved. This emphasis on the Palestinian struggle against colonialism is in line with Indonesia's constitutional foundation. In the preamble to the 1945 Act it is stated that '... freedom is the right of all nations and therefore, the invaders of the world must be abolished because it is incompatible with the fairies of

humanity and the fairies of justice.’ The fourth Paragraph reads ‘... participate in carrying out world order based on freedom, lasting peace and social justice’.

The sentence that colonization must be abolished from the earth is a mirror of Indonesia's firmness in dealing with Israel, which has been colonizing Palestine since 1948. The origin of Indonesia's attitude can be traced to Indonesia's experience of more than a hundred years of colonization by the Dutch. Expert on Indonesian foreign policy Michael Leifer credits Indonesia's firmness in wanting to abolish colonization from the face of the earth because of the bitterness of experiencing colonization. That is why Leifer calls it a seedling of Indonesia's foreign policy direction.¹²

ISLAMIC VALUES

The presence of Islamic values in both countries' societies constitutes the second aspect of the relationship between Indonesia and Palestine. Palestinians are considered to be a part of the Arab world by Indonesians. In the meantime, the Islamic World is commonly referred to as the Arab World. As a result, discussions regarding the Palestinian issue cannot be divorced from the values that are held by the Palestinian people on account of their status as members of the Arab nation and as a predominantly Muslim population.

At the level of the community, Islamic principles exert a significant amount of influence on Indonesia's relationship with Palestine. Therefore, every Palestinian issue is brought up in Indonesian society as a result of Israel's tough stance towards Palestinian society, which is interpreted as an act against Muslims. This is because Israel views Palestinian society as an act against Muslims. This is one of the reasons why Indonesia's relations with Palestine are seen as being close because of the shared values in Islam, despite the fact that the two countries are physically separated by a great geographical distance.

Any demonstration of support for the Palestinian people can be categorized as a form of religious activity. It is possible for the demonstration of support to take the form of an attitude statement that is delivered in a public setting. It is also possible for

it to be expressed through the participation in a variety of meeting activities such as seminars or conferences.¹³ In a similar vein, expressions of support for the Palestinian resistance movement against Israel were carried out by demonstrations at a number of significant locations within the nation's capital. Before COVID-19 struck the world and Indonesia, there were demonstrations held every year in support of Palestine. These demonstrations included, among other things, the carrying of the Palestinian flag.¹⁴

A number of Islamic community organizations in Indonesia have collaborated with representatives of other communities to carry out activities of a similar nature. There are other ways that mass organizations can show their support for the Palestinian people's fight for genuine independence, and examples of such organizations include Muhammadiyah and Nahdhatul Ulama. These organizations, in addition to conveying aspirations of support to the President, Ministers, or other government officials, also participate in the dissemination of information to the general public through its various organizations, as well as hosting seminars and rallies. The statements of support include a number of different components, one of which was a call to action for Indonesia to participate in a number of international forums in order to free Palestine from Israeli occupation.

When the possibility of maintaining diplomatic relations with Israel is broached, that the vast majority of Islamic mass organizations that take a stance against it is understandable. This took place during the time that Abdurrahman Wahid was in power in 1999-2002.

Because living in society may be more powerful and influential, this model of connection between Indonesia and Palestine is based on Islamic values. This is due to the fact that the support of the Islamic community that is predominantly Islamic originates from Islamic values, which state that a nation should not exploit the values of other nations, as well as Islamic messages that call for justice to be upheld throughout the world.

NON-ALIGNED MOVEMENT LEADER

Indonesia's position in the world as the leader of the Non-Aligned Movement was colored by the country's relationship with Palestine. The Asian-African Conference that took place in Bandung in 1955 and resulted in the creation of the Dasa Sila Bandung was partially responsible for the realization of the Non-Aligned Movement. Because of this, Indonesia and a number of other countries were among the first to participate in the Non-Aligned Movement. One of the perspectives held by members of the Non-Aligned Movement is the notion that the principle of non-alignment in the international arena should not get dragged down to the level of becoming one of the blocs that existed at the time of the Cold War.

The speech given by Vice President Hatta is where the motivation for Indonesia's foreign policy to want to play this role originated. He argued that Indonesia should not have to form alliances with the armed forces of the Soviet Union or the United States in order to protect its national interests and determine its own policies. Hatta was the one who initially proposed this foundation, which later evolved into the foreign policy of the Indonesian government.¹⁵

As a result, in its approach to foreign policy, Indonesia is striving to assume the role of chief architect of the Non-Aligned Movement. Despite the presence of competition from major countries, the Non-Aligned Movement continues to play an important part in the international community. This is in contrast to the circumstances that prevailed when the Movement was first established. Regarding the situation in Palestine, holding the position of leader of the Non-Aligned Movement confers two advantages. First, as an effort to rally forces that do not align themselves with any particular nation or cause in support of complete Palestinian independence and freedom from Israeli occupation. Not only does the spirit of Dasa Sila Bandung inspire the goal of encouraging the liberation of every country on earth from colonization, but so does the experience of members of the Non-Aligned Movement who were colonized by European countries, in particular. This is where the ideal of encouraging the liberation of every country on earth from colonization originates.¹⁶

Second, because Indonesia is in the position of leading the Non-Aligned Movement, it has a solid foundation upon which to stand when facing pressure from major countries that are on Israel's side. The United States of America is one of Israel's most reliable supporters, and each year it is the country that gives Israel the most money for its military budget. Due to the close ties between the two countries, the United States has sided with Israel in every negotiation, including a proposal for peace made by President Donald Trump. Despite its insistence that it is a supporter of Palestine, the Non-Aligned Movement advocates for decolonization around the world, including freedom from Israeli occupation.¹⁷

Despite the fact that Indonesia does not directly oppose the interests of the United States toward Israel, including, for instance, the criticism of the provision of military assistance, Indonesia has conducted diplomacy to stop settlement development in the West Bank as a condition of peace in Palestine. This is because the United States' support for settlement development in the West Bank is a barrier to peace in Palestine. This is due to the fact that the United States is Israel's primary source of aid, including financial and military assistance.¹⁸

CONCLUSION

The relationship with Palestine has been influenced by a number of factors, including the constitutional underpinnings of Indonesia, the Islamic values that guide the country, and Indonesia's position as the leader of the non-Aligned Movement in the international community. When it comes to the foundation of Indonesia's relationship with Palestine, these components are essential. Because of these three factors, Indonesia's position in supporting Palestine has remained unchanged throughout the entirety of the Cold War and in the years that have followed.

The constitutional framework establishes Indonesia as a nation that rejects colonialism and maintains that it must be eliminated entirely from the face of the earth in order to fulfill its role as a global citizen. Israel is seen as occupying Palestine from the perspective of Indonesia. Because of this, Indonesia is pleading with the rest of the

world to assist Palestine in evading Israeli occupation. On the basis that Indonesia is anti-colonial, it then encourages the rest of the world to defend Palestine and, at the same time, eliminate colonization from the land that is considered Palestinian.

The interaction that Indonesia has with Palestine is also guided by the values that prevail in society, specifically those that are founded on Islam. Palestine is considered to be a part of the Arab world by Indonesians. The Islamic faith is commonly associated with the Arab world. As a result, many people in Indonesia consider the question of how to free Palestine from Israeli occupation to be a matter of Islamic concern. Any attempt to normalize relations with Israel is met with resistance not only from political forces such as political parties, but also from the general public.

Finally, because of Indonesia's role in the Non-Aligned Movement, the Indonesian government has implemented a policy to support Palestine in its fight against colonialism and help it achieve independence from colonial rule. This movement emerged as a direct consequence of the Asian-African Conference held in 1955, the primary objective of which was to provide assistance to nations that fought for independence from colonial rule. With the role of a Non-Aligned leader, in which the Palestinian problem is also confronted with various political forces around the world, this stance is clearly to fight alongside the Palestinians through diplomatic means to eliminate colonialism on earth.

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