



# Indonesia's Support Dynamics Toward Israel: Between Solidarity and National Interests

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## Abstract

This paper explores the dynamics of the Indonesian government and society's support for Israel. By highlighting the attitudes of leaders, religious groups, movements, and various expressions in the media. By using qualitative methods, data obtained through library research and historical and discourse approaches to look deeply at symptoms and phenomena that have occurred and are likely to occur. This research reveals that public attitudes are influenced by religious identity, humanitarian values, and historical narratives disseminated through the media and religious organizations. Solidarity with Palestine has become an integral part of Islamic expression that is deeply rooted in society, driving social movements such as demonstrations, fundraising campaigns, and boycotts of products affiliated with Israel. Religious leaders, Islamic organizations, and social media play an important role in shaping collective perceptions that tend to reject the normalization of relations with Israel. Indonesia's foreign policy towards Israel is based on the principles of anti-colonialism and solidarity with the Palestinian cause. Political, ideological, and societal pressures have shaped this policy, with public opinion largely opposed to normalizing relations with Israel. Nevertheless, economic and trade interactions continue on an informal basis. This research concludes that Indonesian attitudes towards Israel are not only influenced by state policy but also by socio-religious factors that shape transnational solidarity and the collective identity of Muslim communities.

**Keywords:** *Indonesia, Israel, religious solidarity, social dynamics.*

## 1. Introduction

The relationship between Indonesia and Israel is a complex diplomatic issue influenced by political, historical, and ideological dynamics. Since its independence, Indonesia has reaffirmed its commitment to the principle of anti-colonialism, as stated in the Preamble of the 1945 Constitution and the second principle of Pancasila "Kemanusiaan yang Adil dan Beradab" which upholds human

rights and global justice as fundamental values in Indonesia's free and active foreign policy.<sup>1</sup> The implementation of this principle is reflected in Indonesia's strong support for the Palestinian struggle, which has been ongoing since Indonesia's independence in 1945. Palestine was one of the first entities to recognize Indonesia's sovereignty after the Grand Mufti of Palestine, Sheikh Muhammad Amin Al-Husaini, lobbied Arab nations to support Indonesia's independence.<sup>2</sup> This long-standing history has made the relationship between Indonesia and Palestine more than just a matter of diplomacy; it is also part of global solidarity and the humanitarian principles highly valued by the Indonesian people.

On the other hand, the conflict between Israel and Palestine has persisted since the early 20th century, particularly following the mass migration of Jews to Palestine in the late 1800s and early 1900s, and it escalated further after the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948. Various Israeli policies and military actions, such as territorial occupation, the construction of illegal settlements in the West Bank, and the Six-Day War of 1967, have exacerbated the conflict and inflicted suffering on the Palestinian people. On March 10, 1948, a group of Zionist leaders even devised a plan for the ethnic cleansing of Palestinians, leading to the mass expulsion of native Palestinians from their lands.<sup>3</sup> Israel's violations of International Humanitarian Law are a stark reality that contradicts Indonesia's principle of promoting global peace. This body of law aims to provide protection and assistance to those who suffer or become victims of war, whether they are actively involved in hostilities or not.<sup>4</sup>

In principle, Indonesia does not establish diplomatic relations with Israel, as it is considered inconsistent with the nation's values of humanity and justice. However, discussions on relations with Israel have emerged, such as when President Abdurrahman Wahid proposed opening trade relations with Israel as a means to improve Indonesia's economic welfare and contribute to the Israel-Palestine peace process. This proposal faced widespread rejection from the Indonesian public, which remains steadfast in its support for the Palestinian cause.<sup>5</sup> Moreover, public pressure on this issue is exceptionally strong, as reflected in demonstrations, fundraising efforts, boycotts of Israel-affiliated products, and opposition to the presence of the Israeli team in the U-20 World Cup held in Indonesia. This solidarity movement is further reinforced by the role of religious organizations, civil society, and students, who actively voice their support for Palestina.<sup>6</sup>

As a country with 87,2% of its population being Muslim,<sup>7</sup> totaling 281.6 million people,<sup>8</sup> Indonesia has a strong emotional connection to the Islamic world, which is a key factor in its firm stance toward Israel. Additionally, the influence of social media and international news coverage depicting the suffering of the Palestinian people has shaped public opinion in Indonesia, which tends to side with Palestine. Given this complexity, this article aims to discuss Indonesia's stance and its people's attitude toward Israel by analyzing historical, ideological, and domestic political factors, public

<sup>1</sup> Dzikiera Pesona Sadewa and Falhan Hakiki, "Free Active Foreign Policy Dynamics Of Indonesia Through The Non-Aligned Movement (NAM)," *Lemhannas RI* 11, no. 1 (2023): 13-28.

<sup>2</sup> Rezki Satris, "Peranan Politik Luar Negeri Indonesia Terhadap Palestina Pasca Pengakuan Jerusalem Sebagai Ibu Kota Israel," *POLITEA* 2, no. 2 (October 15, 2019): 161-170, doi:<https://doi.org/10.21043/politea.v2i2.5884>.

<sup>3</sup> Ilan Pappé, *The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine* (Oneworld Publications, 2006).

<sup>4</sup> Haryomataram, *Pengantar Hukum Humaniter* (Rajawali Press, 2005).

<sup>5</sup> Rumadi, *Damai Bersama Gus Dur* (Kompas, 2010).

<sup>6</sup> Mig & Sef, "Kronologi RI Batal Tuan Rumah U-20 & Pernyataan Lengkap FIFA," CNBC Indonesia, Maret 30, 2023, <https://www.cnbcindonesia.com/news/20230330033306-4-425652/kronologi-ri-batal-tuan-rumah-u-20-pernyataan-lengkap-fifa>.

<sup>7</sup> Badan Pusat Statistik, "Agama di Indonesia, 2024," BPS Samarinda, Mei 17, 2024, <https://samarindakota.bps.go.id/id/statistics-table/1/MzI0IzE=/agama-di-indonesia-2024.html>.

<sup>8</sup> Badan Pusat Statistik, <https://www.bps.go.id/id/statistics-table/2/MTk3NSMy/jumlah-penduduk-pertengahan-tahun-ribu-jiwa-.html>.

pressure, and the influence of international geopolitics in shaping Indonesia's policies regarding its relations with Israel.

This paper fills the gap by taking an in-depth look at changes in Indonesian policies under various eras of government, religious groups, and figures that have had a social influence on public attitudes toward Israel. The role of various actors as well as state policies and public perceptions shape the dynamics of Indonesia-Israel relations. Thus the author wants to provide a new perspective by not only presenting state policy but also looking at the possibility of near normalization and ambiguous actions by various actors.

## 2. Literature Review

Since the Israel-Palestine conflict has persisted for a long time, several studies specifically discuss Indonesia's dynamics toward Israel. There are some noteworthy pieces of literature related to Indonesia's political stance on Israel. One significant study is "*Islamic Attitudes towards Israel and Jews: A Comparison of Malaysia and Indonesia*" by Syed Imad Alatas. The author compares Malaysia's and Indonesia's attitudes toward Israel. In terms of domestic politics, Malaysia's anti-Israel and anti-Jewish stance is often used for domestic political gains, particularly to secure support from Muslim groups. In contrast, Indonesia's domestic politics are more influenced by national and economic interests rather than religious sentiment. From an ideological perspective, Islam is highly politicized in Malaysia's foreign policy, whereas in Indonesia, Islam does not play a dominant role in shaping foreign policy—despite the frequent use of the Palestine issue in international diplomacy. The study concludes that in Malaysia, Islam is politicized both domestically and internationally regarding the Palestinian issue, allowing the government to rally electoral support. Notably, maintaining an Islamic image is crucial to silencing Islamic opposition that deems the government insufficiently Islamic. In Indonesia, Islam plays a limited role in foreign policy toward Israel. The Wahid administration was particularly interested in establishing relations with Israel, while Soeharto's government was indifferent to Islamic opposition to Israel, as seen in its delay in opening a Palestinian embassy in Jakarta. While anti-Semitism exists among Indonesian Muslims, the intellectual landscape is more diverse, with moderate voices advocating against discrimination toward Jews. Furthermore, anti-Semitism is not as deeply rooted in Indonesia's political landscape as it is in Malaysia. This study provides an in-depth analysis of Malaysia's and Indonesia's political stance on Israel, particularly regarding the role of Islamic ideology in both countries. However, Syed Imad Alatas focuses more on Malaysia, while Indonesia is not explored in depth, especially concerning policy changes across different administrations<sup>9</sup>.

Second, a study conducted by Eneng Ervi Siti Zahroh Zidni, Muhammad Lutfi Zuhdi, Yon Muchmudi, and Muhammad Syauqillah, titled "*Global Jihad and Local Sentiment: The Impact of the Hamas-Israel Conflict on Radicalization in Indonesia*", explores how the prolonged conflict between Hamas and Israel influences radicalization and the development of terrorist ideology in Indonesia. Using a qualitative approach with narrative analysis, the study employs two theoretical frameworks: Relative Deprivation Theory and Framing Theory. The findings reveal that: first, extremist groups exploit the suffering of the Palestinian people as propaganda tools to recruit new members and establish a radical ideological base. Second, the conflict exacerbates anti-Israel sentiment in Indonesia,

<sup>9</sup> Syed Imad Alatas, "Islamic Attitudes towards Israel and Jews: A Comparison of Malaysia and Indonesia," *Asia-Pacific Social Science Review* 20, no. 3 (2020): 153–62, doi:<https://doi.org/10.59588/2350-8329.1324>.

which radical groups use to justify acts of violence and jihad. Third, the spread of information and radical propaganda has become easier with social media, allowing international conflicts to directly influence the mindset of Indonesian society. The study concludes that the Hamas-Israel conflict has significant implications for radical Islamic groups. While they may not have carried out terrorist attacks, the spread of radical ideology through recruitment and social media is becoming increasingly uncontrollable.<sup>10</sup> However, this study does not explore Indonesia's official stance and broader public opinion toward Israel. This gap presents an opportunity for further research under the title *the dynamics of Indonesia and its people's attitudes towards Israel*

Third, a study conducted by Siti Mutiah Setiawati, titled "*The Role of the Indonesian Government in Middle East Conflict Resolution: consistent diplomacy or strategic shifts?.*" Explores the motivations behind Indonesia's consistent support for conflict resolution in the Middle East. The research examines the dilemma within Indonesia's "*bebas dan aktif*" foreign policy principle, which restricts the country from taking sides. This principle prevents Indonesia from fully supporting one party while maintaining positive relations with both conflicting sides. As a result, Indonesia remains passive as a facilitator rather than actively mediating conflict resolution efforts. The study's key findings include: Indonesia adheres strictly to the "*bebas dan aktif*" policy, meaning it does not align with any global power but engages diplomatically. Islamic solidarity is a primary factor in Indonesia's support for Palestine. However, beyond religious considerations, Indonesia also supports Palestine based on solidarity with developing nations. Ultimately, Indonesia's foreign policy is heavily influenced by its Muslim-majority population, where religious aspects often pose challenges for policymakers in formulating foreign relations strategies. Supporting the Arab-Palestinian-Israeli issue remains a top priority in Indonesia's Middle East foreign policy. In its diplomatic approach, Indonesia employs a measured strategy, particularly when dealing with conflicts involving other Muslim-majority countries. This study highlights Indonesia's balancing act between diplomatic neutrality and its strong support for Palestine, reflecting the complex interplay of religious, political, and strategic considerations in its foreign policy.<sup>11</sup>

### 3. Method

This research method uses a systematic literature review approach to analyze the dynamic context of Indonesia's attitude toward Israel. In this case, the researcher uses an in-depth literature search by using references that are relevant to the research direction. Regarding the selection of sources, there are several criteria including relevance to the research topic, academic quality of the sources, and contribution to academic enrichment.

## 4. Result and Discussion

### Background of Indonesia-Israel Relations

Israel declared its independence on May 14, 1948, becoming effective after the end of the British Mandate over Palestine on May 15, 1948. The establishment of the State of Israel was not

<sup>10</sup> Eneng Ervi Siti et al., "Global Jihad and Local Sentiment: The Impact of the Hamas-Israel Conflict on Radicalization in Indonesia," *Eduvest-Journal of Universal Studies* 4, no. 10 (2024): 8895–8911.

<sup>11</sup> Siti Mutiah Setiawati, "The Role of Indonesian Government in Middle East Conflict Resolution: Consistent Diplomacy or Strategic Shifts?," *Frontiers in Political Science* 6 (2024), doi:<https://doi.org/10.3389/fpos.2024.1304108>.

a sudden event but rather the culmination of over five decades of Zionist efforts to create an independent Jewish state in Palestine as a solution to the Jewish diaspora issue.<sup>12</sup>

Earlier, Britain's decision in 1947 to relinquish the mandate led to global investigations and debates. After extensive discussions, on November 29, 1947, the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) adopted a plan proposed by the United Nations Special Committee on Palestine (UNSCOP), recommending the partition of Palestine into a Jewish state and an Arab state, while designating Jerusalem as an international territory. While the Zionist movement accepted the plan reluctantly, it was strongly rejected by Arab leaders, who prepared for war to ensure that the entire territory of Palestine would be incorporated into an Arab state.<sup>13</sup>

From the leadership of President Soekarno to President Joko Widodo, Indonesia has consistently fully supported the struggle of the Palestinian people in achieving their right to a sovereign state. Indonesia is one of the countries that has never supported Israel's occupation of Palestinian land. This stance is based on the principle of anti-colonialism and solidarity with formerly colonized nations, particularly Arab countries within the Non-Aligned Movement.<sup>14</sup> Indonesia has consistently voiced its position that Israel's actions constitute colonialism over Palestine and contradict Indonesia's constitution, which upholds global security and humanitarian interests, including the prevention of invasion and intervention in the sovereignty of other nations.<sup>15</sup> This stance is firmly grounded in the 1945 Constitution of Indonesia. The preamble of the 1945 Constitution states "*That independence is the right of all nations, and therefore, colonialism in the world must be abolished because it is not in accordance with humanity and justice.*"<sup>16</sup> Since the administration of Indonesia's first president, Soekarno, the country has refused to establish diplomatic relations with Israel. Soekarno was also a firm opponent of colonialism and occupation, once declaring: "*As long as the independence of the Palestinian Nation has not been handed over to the people of Palestine, Indonesia will always stand against Israeli colonization.*"<sup>17</sup>

Nevertheless, in the reality of the global economy, Indonesia continues to engage in indirect cooperation with Israel. In September 1979, Indonesia signed an agreement to purchase 28 Skyhawk aircraft and 11 helicopters from Israel's Air Force surplus. In 1994, a delegation from the Israeli Chamber of Commerce visited Indonesia, and in the same year, the Director of Israel's Customs Service made an official visit to discuss trade arrangements.<sup>18</sup> By 1996, Israel and Indonesia had long maintained informal relations, particularly in the trade sector. Through Indonesia's business community, Israel played a role in revitalizing Indonesia's lagging exports in the Asian region.<sup>19</sup> Furthermore, despite

<sup>12</sup> Howard M. Sachar, *A History of Israel: From the Rise of Zionism to Our Time* (Alfred A. Knopf, 1976).

<sup>13</sup> Bernard Reich, "Themes in the History of the State of Israel," *The American Historical Review* 96, no. 5 (1991): 1466-1478.

<sup>14</sup> Greg Barton and Colin Rubenstein, "Indonesia And Israel: A Relationship in Waiting," *Jewish Political Studies Review* 17, no. ½ (2005): 157-170.

<sup>15</sup> Junior Perdana Sande, "Kebijakan Keimigrasian Indonesia Terhadap Negara Yang Tidak Memiliki Hubungan Diplomatik: Studi Kasus Israel dan Taiwan," *Indonesian Perspective* 7, no. 1 (2022): 14-34.

<sup>16</sup> Sekretaris Jendral MPR RI, *Perundang-Undangan Undang-Undang Dasar Negara Republik Indonesia Tahun 1945* (Sekretaris Jendral MPR RI, 2020). This statement in the Preamble of the 1945 Constitution emphasizes that independence is a universal right owned by every nation. This principle is based on the values of humanity and justice that reject all forms of colonialism. This sentence reflects the spirit of anti-colonialism and is the basis for Indonesia's foreign policy which opposes all forms of colonialism and injustice in the world.

<sup>17</sup> Hasnan Bachtiar, Muneerah Razak, and Soni Zakaria, "Indonesian Progressive Muslims and the Discourse of the Israeli-Palestinian Peace: Soekarno's, Abdurrahman Wahid's and Ahmad Syafii Maarif's Thoughts," *Journal of Social Studies (JSS)* 17, no. 1 (2021): 1-20, doi:<https://doi.org/10.21831/jss.v17i1>.

<sup>18</sup> Greg Barton dan Colin Rubenstein, "Indonesia And Israel: A Relationship in Waiting," *Jewish Political Studies Review* 17, no. ½ (2005): 157-170.

<sup>19</sup> Jonathan Paris, "Step-by-Step towards Indonesian-Israeli Relations," *Israel Affairs* 3, no. 2 (1996): 111-19, doi:<https://doi.org/10.1080/13537129608719421>.

political factors hindering the development of Indonesia-Israel relations, Indonesia's imports from Israel primarily consist of high-tech products, which are obtained through third-party countries such as Singapore, Europe, and Jordan.<sup>20</sup>

### Indonesia's Stance on the Israel-Palestinian Conflict

Indonesia's support for Palestine has become an important topic during leadership transitions. This consistency is not only aimed at maintaining Indonesia's historical commitment to Palestine but also serves as a strategy to seek new approaches and present them in international forums. The OIC is product of a series of mu'tamar which culminated in the 1969 meeting in Rabat, where King Hassan II and King Faisal Bin Abdulaziz brought together leaders and representatives from 25 Islamic countries which marked the beginning of the formation of the OIC and in which the Palestinian issue became the main agenda.<sup>21</sup> In September 2011, during the 66th session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) in New York, discussions were held on resolving the Palestine-Israel issue. Indonesia actively encouraged OIC member states and the international community to support Palestine's membership in the UN as its 194th member.<sup>22</sup> This effort was reiterated at the OIC meeting at the UN on September 28, 2012, in New York.<sup>23</sup> Furthermore, in March 2016, Indonesia hosted the 5th OIC Extraordinary Summit on Palestine and Al-Quds. This summit served as a breakthrough and strategic step to address Israel's illegal occupation and apartheid policies while accelerating the process of achieving peace.<sup>24</sup>

Indonesia has also provided financial assistance to Palestine in addition to its diplomatic support. Through the Medical Emergency Rescue Committee (MER-C), a humanitarian organization based in Jakarta, the Indonesian people established the Indonesia Hospital in Palestine.<sup>25</sup> Additionally, through the Ministry of Health, Indonesia built the Indonesia Cardiac Center at Al-Syifa Hospital in Palestine, with funding of IDR 20 billion (approximately USD 2.6 million).<sup>26</sup> Furthermore, BAZNAS, the government-managed body for zakat, infak, and sadaqah, distributed aid amounting to IDR 547,643,599,000 between 2018 and 2021.<sup>27</sup>

<sup>20</sup> Emanuel Shahaf, "Israel and Indonesia: Window of Opportunity," *Middle East Institute*, September 21, 2014. <https://www.mei.edu/publications/israel-and-indonesia-window-opportunity>.

<sup>21</sup> Gokhan Bacik, "The Genesis, History, and Functioning of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC): A Formal-Institutional Analysis," *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs* 31, no. 4 (2011): 594-614, doi:<https://doi.org/10.1080/13602004.2011.630864>. In preference to the "milieu" method, that examines an organization with reference to its members' capacities and other conditions. Thus, analytical focus is on the formal edifices of an organization: its charters, voting procedures, and committee structures. This article embeds the formal/institutional method with the thesis that the absence from the OIC's structure of (i

<sup>22</sup> Budi Nahaba, "Indonesia Dukung Kemerdekaan dan Keanggotaan Palestina di PBB," *VOA Indonesia*, September 18, 2011, <https://www.voaindonesia.com/a/indonesia-dukung-kemerdekaan-dan-keanggotaan-palestina-di-pbb-130091063/98345.html>.

<sup>23</sup> Detik News, "Indonesia Terus Perjuangkan Nasib Palestina di PBB Bersama OKI," *Detik News*, September 29, 2012, <https://news.detik.com/berita/d-2045062/indonesia-terus-perjuangkan-nasib-palestina-di-pbb-bersama-oki>.

<sup>24</sup> Atep Abdurofiq, "Identitas Islam Dalam Kebijakan Luar Negeri Indonesia Terhadap Palestina, Studi Kasus: Penyelenggaraan Konferensi Tingkat Tinggi (KTT) Luar Biasa Ke-5 Tahun 2016 Organisasi Kerjasama Islam (OKI) DI Jakarta," *Jurnal Sosial Dan Humaniora* 1, no. 1 (2018): 93-108, doi:<https://doi.org/10.47313/ppl.v1i1.197>.

<sup>25</sup> Aries Setiawan, "Rumah Sakit Indonesia di Gaza Secantik Hati Rakyat Indonesia," *Viva News*, November 19, 2012, <https://www.viva.co.id/berita/nasional/368533-rumah-sakit-indonesia-di-gaza-secantik-hati-rakyat-indonesia>.

<sup>26</sup> Kementerian Kesehatan, "Indonesia Bangun Cardiac Center Di Palestina," *Kemkes*, Februari 09, 2011, <https://kemkes.go.id/id/rilis-kesehatan/indonesia-bangun-cardiac-center-di-palestina>.

<sup>27</sup> Muhammad Abdi Ridha, Ibdalsyah, and Qurroh Ayuiniyyah, "Analisis Nilai Kontribusi Bantuan Kemanusiaan Palestina Badan Amil Zakat Nasional (BAZNAS) Tahun 2018-2021," *AL-MUZARA'AH* 10, no. 2 (December 26, 2022): 169-84, doi:<https://doi.org/10.29244/jam.10.2.169-184>.

Indonesia, which declared its independence on August 17, 1945, did not immediately have the full autonomy to implement its domestic and foreign policies. Every leader has faced different opportunities and challenges in foreign policy, depending on the domestic and international situation during their leadership.<sup>28</sup> Sukarno Era (August 18, 1945 – March 12, 1967) as Indonesia's founding father, Sukarno conceptualized the nation's identity and expressed it formally in the Pancasila ideology, which emphasized unity rather than an Islamic state framework. Although he received support from prominent Islamic leaders at the time, such as Wahid Hasyim, who opposed Islamist pressure to frame Indonesia's constitution based on Islamic principles.<sup>29</sup> Indonesia was not established as an Islamic state. However, the country's support for Palestine was strongly influenced by Islamic sentiments. In 1949, when the Netherlands recognized Indonesia's independence, Israel attempted to establish relations with Indonesia through various efforts.<sup>30</sup> In January 1950, Israel officially recognized Indonesia as a sovereign nation. At the time, Israel's Foreign Minister, Moshe Sharett, sought to send a diplomatic mission to Jakarta. However, Mohammad Hatta postponed the plan indefinitely.<sup>31</sup> Meanwhile, Egypt and Palestine were among the first Middle Eastern countries to recognize Indonesia's independence. This aligned with Sukarno's nationalist stance and Gamal Abdel Nasser's Pan-Arabism, both of whom played key roles in the Non-Aligned Movement. Indonesia's alignment with Middle Eastern countries was not based on religious preference but rather as a strategic move to gain international support for its independence.<sup>32</sup> In 1962, during the 4th Asian Games held in Jakarta, Indonesia refused to grant visas to the Israeli delegation due to the absence of diplomatic relations.<sup>33</sup>

Following Sukarno's removal from power in October 1965, Suharto shaped Indonesia's policies toward the Arab-Israeli conflict. Under Suharto's leadership, Indonesia continued to support Arab positions and voiced standard criticisms against Israel in diplomatic forums.<sup>34</sup> On November 30, 1987, Suharto reaffirmed Indonesia's support for Palestine, stating: "*As a nation proud of its own legacy of struggle against colonial subjugation and for national independence, we in Indonesia have always considered the Palestinians a sacred cause, as our own struggle as part of the irreversible global movement against colonial rule and alien domination.*"<sup>35</sup> Despite Indonesia's strong stance, Suharto remained neutral on the normalization of relations between Egypt and Israel through the Camp David Accords in 1978. At the 1979 OIC meeting in Fez, Indonesia abstained alongside Malaysia and Bangladesh, indirectly supporting the Egypt-Israel peace agreement.<sup>36</sup> On October 15, 1994, Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin made a surprise visit to Jakarta. His arrival, which was not coordinated with the Indonesian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the press.<sup>37</sup> Indicated Suharto's engagement in international diplomacy without using Islam as a primary consideration in his foreign policy.

<sup>28</sup> Siti Mutiah Setiawati, *Masalah Perbatasan dalam Politik Luar Negeri Indonesia* (Jakad Media Publishing, 2023).

<sup>29</sup> Barton and Rubenstein, *Indonesia And Israel: A Relationship In Waiting*.

<sup>30</sup> M Muttaqien, "Domestic Politics and Indonesia's Foreign Policy on the Arab-Israeli Conflict," *Global & Strategis* 7, no. 1 (2013): 57-72. .

<sup>31</sup> Alatas, "Islamic Attitudes towards Israel and Jews: A Comparison of Malaysia and Indonesia," *Asia-Pacific Social Science Review* 20, no. 3 (September 30, 2020): 153-162, doi: <https://doi.org/10.59588/2350-8329.1324>."

<sup>32</sup> Jan Melissen and Sook Jong Lee, *Public Diplomacy and Soft Power in East Asia* (Palgrave, 2011).

<sup>33</sup> Randy Wirayudha, "Mengucilkan Israel di Arena Olahraga," *Historia*, Desember 17, 2017, <https://historia.id/olahraga/articles/mengucilkan-israel-di-arena-olahraga-bagian-i-vqr7E/page/1>.

<sup>34</sup> Greg Barton dan Colin Rubenstein, "Indonesia And Israel: A Relationship in Waiting," *Jewish Political Studies Review* 17, no. ½ (2005): 157-170. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/25834625>.

<sup>35</sup> Bosnia Author and Leo Suryadinata, "Islam and Suharto's Foreign Policy (1945-1966)," *Asian Survey* 35, (1995): 23-30.

<sup>36</sup> Adeed Dawisha, *Islam in Foreign Policy* (Cambridge University Press, 1983).

<sup>37</sup> Tempo, "Deplu tidak melempem," *Tempo*, Maret 19, 1994, <https://www.tempo.co/politik/deplu-tidak-melempem-1031266>.

BJ Habibie Era (1998 – 1999) who served as president for just over a year, focused on restoring domestic stability and the economy.<sup>38</sup> His tenure faced legitimacy issues and public controversy. He introduced laws related to human rights, such as Law No. 5 of 1998 and Law No. 29 of 1999. His leadership was also marked by issues surrounding East Timor's independence and Indonesia's aircraft industry.<sup>39</sup>

Abdurrahman Wahid, commonly known as Gus Dur, was the former leader of Nahdlatul Ulama (1984-1999), Indonesia's largest Muslim organization, and served as Indonesia's president (1999-2001).<sup>40</sup> Unlike his predecessors, Gus Dur showed an inclination toward Israel. In October 1994, while leading Nahdlatul Ulama, Gus Dur, along with Bondan Gunawan (Forum Demokrasi-Fordem), Djohan Effendi (Ministry of Religious Affairs), and Habib Chirzin (Muhammadiyah), visited Jerusalem for a seminar on Islam and Judaism organized by the Truman Institute. During the same visit, they attended the Israel-Jordan Peace Treaty signing at the invitation of Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin.<sup>41</sup> Upon returning to Indonesia, Gus Dur lobbied for the establishment of diplomatic relations with Israel, stating "*It is the right time for us to open diplomatic relations with Israel. Then, we would be able to play more important roles in supporting Palestinians.*"<sup>42</sup> On August 14, 2000, Gus Dur met with Israeli envoy and former Prime Minister Shimon Peres, who was also visited by Palestinian leaders on the same day. Despite supporting Palestine, Gus Dur controversially suggested that "*administrative sovereignty*" over Jerusalem should remain under Israeli governance. His foreign policy stance was often ambiguous, as he considered recognizing Israel.<sup>43</sup>

Megawati Soekarnoputri Era (2001-2004) as Indonesia's fifth president, Megawati Soekarnoputri continued to support Palestinian independence but was not actively engaged in the issue.<sup>44</sup> Her focus was on resolving Indonesia's internal crises, including economic, political, and security challenges that had persisted since 1997.<sup>45</sup> She prioritized addressing domestic conflicts in regions such as Aceh, Maluku, Papua, and South Kalimantan, allocating resources to alleviate suffering in these areas.<sup>46</sup>

Indonesia's foreign policy stance during Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono's presidency emphasized "*soft power*" diplomacy. During his speech at the 62nd UN General Assembly in September 2007, Yudhoyono stated that dialogue and soft power had helped resolve conflicts between countries.<sup>47</sup> President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, whose motto is "*million friends, zero enemy*",<sup>48</sup> and bring about

<sup>38</sup> Masyrofah, "*Kebijakan Politik Luar Negeri Indonesia: Studi Diplomasi Pemerintahan Era Reformasi 1998-2018 Dalam Upaya Penyelesaian Konflik Israel-Palestina*" (PhD diss., UIN Syarif Hidayatullah, 2019).

<sup>39</sup> Agus Nilmada et al., "*Kebijakan Luar Negeri Indonesia (Kepemimpinan Habibie, Abdurrahman Wahid, Megawati Dan Soesilo Bambang Yudhoyono)*," *EMERALD: Journal of Economics and Social Sciences* 2, no. 1 (2023): 1-14.

<sup>40</sup> Nathan Franklin, "*Gus Dur's Enduring Legacy: Accruing Religious Merit in the Afterlife*," *Politics and Governance* 12, (2024): 1-16, doi:<https://doi.org/10.17645/pag.7874>.

<sup>41</sup> Moshe Yegar, "*The Republik of Indonesia and Israel*," in Hasan Bachtiar, Muneerah Razak, and Soni Zakaria, "*Indonesian Progressive Muslims and the Discourse of the Israeli-Palestinian Peace: Soekarno's, Abdurrahman Wahid's and Ahmad Syafii Maarif's Thoughts*," *Journal of Social Studies* 17, no. 1 (2021): 1-20, doi:10.21831/jss.v17i1.34843.1-20.

<sup>42</sup> Riza Sihbudi, *Menyandera Timur Tengah: Kebijakan AS dan Israel atas negara-negara Muslim* (Mizan, 2007).

<sup>43</sup> Anthony L Smith, "*Indonesia's Foreign Policy under Abdurrahman Wahid: Radical or Status Quo State?*," *Contemporary Southeast Asia* 22, no. 3 (2000): 498-526.

<sup>44</sup> Masyrofah, "*Kebijakan Politik Luar Negeri Indonesia: Studi Diplomasi Pemerintahan Era Reformasi 1998-2018 Dalam Upaya Penyelesaian Konflik Israel-Palestina*" (PhD diss., UIN Syarif Hidayatullah, 2019).

<sup>45</sup> Arsin Lukman, "*Hukum Dan Pembangunan Krisis Multidimensi Dan Sengketa Tanah Di Indonesia*," *Hukum dan Perdagangan* (2004): 292-316.

<sup>46</sup> Kepemimpinan Presiden Megawati and Diah Permata Megawati Setiawati Soekarnoputri, "*The Leadership Of President Megawati In The Era Of Multidimensional Crisis (2001-2004)*," *Jurnal Pertahanan Dan Bela Negara* 11, no. 1 (2021): 49-66, doi:<https://doi.org/10.33172/jpbh.v11i1.1211>.

<sup>47</sup> Jan Melissen and Sook Jong Lee, *Public Diplomacy and Soft Power in East Asia* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2011).

<sup>48</sup> Jackson Y M Pang, *From Rowing Between Two Reefs to Sailing in Two Oceans: The end of a Thousand Friends, Zero Enemies?* (Thesis., Naval Postgraduate School, 2015).

a country where not only democracy, Islam and modernization go hand in hand, but also thrive together.<sup>49</sup> Indonesia through SBY became part of the Ministerial Conference on Capacity Building for Palestine to build capacity for 10,000 Palestinians, President SBY took the part of 1,000 Palestinians to be improved their capacity.<sup>50</sup> On a number of occasions, President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono issued a dual position, which previously Indonesia condemned Israeli aggression in Gaza and increased aid to Palestine. However, this ambiguous stance was seen when the Indonesian government accepted tsunami disaster aid from Israel.<sup>51</sup>

Under Joko Widodo's administration, Indonesia has focused on three priorities: maintaining the country's sovereignty, strengthening the protection of the armed forces, and intensifying economic growth.<sup>52</sup> Jokowi has consistently voiced that ASEAN and the UN encourage Palestinian-Israeli peace through a "two state solution".<sup>53</sup> The commitment was carried out concretely, in March 2019 Jokowi through the Indonesian Foreign Minister made a visit to the Palestinian refugee camp through UNRWA for 1 million US dollars.<sup>54</sup> In addition, symbolically Jokowi also paid special attention to Palestine by inaugurating the honorary consulate of the Republic of Indonesia in Ramallah, but officially it was not held in Ramallah but in Amman Jordan, because of the aftermath of the refusal of Indonesian Foreign Minister Retno Marsudi to meet with Israeli officials in Jerusalem.<sup>55</sup> In its foreign policy, Indonesia applies "down-to-earth diplomacy" or so-called "pro-people diplomacy", which emphasizes national interests, without neglecting contributions in the international arena.<sup>56</sup> This attitude was seen at the G20 Summit in Bali, where he said that the occurrence of war can create humanitarian tragedies, food security crises, energy crises, and other stability.<sup>57</sup>

### Public Opinion in Indonesia

The international solidarity movement with Palestine, supported by humanitarian organizations, human rights activists and pro-Palestinian groups in various countries, has grown rapidly and gained greater recognition. Boycott, divestment and sanctions campaigns against Israel in protest against settlement policies and human rights violations in the Palestinian territories.<sup>58</sup> Social media has played a crucial role in accelerating the rapid and widespread dissemination of information

<sup>49</sup> Avery Poole, "The Foreign Policy Nexus: National Interests, Political Values and Identity," *Indonesia's Ascent*, (2015), 155–76, doi:[https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137397416\\_8](https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137397416_8).

<sup>50</sup> Sampe Sabar Siahaan and H Andrik Purwasito, "Capacity Building Kerjasama Selatan-Selatan Dan Triangular Indonesia Kepada Palestina Pada tahun 2005-2014," *Jurnal HI UNS* (2017): 1-18.

<sup>51</sup> Ziyad Falahi, "Signifikansi Diplomasi Islam Moderat Era Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono Dalam Merespon Problem Keamanan Timur Tengah," *Andalas Journal of International Studies* 2, no.1 (Mei, 2013): 32-52.

<sup>52</sup> Aryojati Ardipandanto, "Kajian Singkat Terhadap Isu Aktual Dan Strategis Satu Tahun Pemerintahan Jokowi-Kalla," *P3DI Sekretariat Jenderal DPR RI* 7, no. 20 (Oktober 2015): 17-20.

<sup>53</sup> Amanda Puspita Sari, "Di KTT ASEAN-PBB, Jokowi Singgung Upaya Kemerdekaan Palestina," *CNN Indonesia*, September 16, 2016, <https://www.cnnindonesia.com/internasional/20160908093411-106-156897/di-ktt-asean-pbb-jokowi-singgung-upaya-kemerdekaan-palestina>.

<sup>54</sup> Relief Web, "Indonesian Foreign Minister visits UNRWA in Jordan and announces US\$ 1 million contribution for Palestine refugees," *Relief Web*, Maret 6, 2019. [https://reliefweb.int/report/jordan/indonesian-foreign-minister-visits-unrwa-jordan-and-announces-us-1-million?utm\\_source](https://reliefweb.int/report/jordan/indonesian-foreign-minister-visits-unrwa-jordan-and-announces-us-1-million?utm_source).

<sup>55</sup> Donald E Weatherbee, "Indonesia's Foreign Policy In 2016: Garuda Hovering," *Southeast Asian Affairs*, (2017): 163-176.

<sup>56</sup> Irfan Delta Setiawan dan Ragil Rancoko Mahesa Putra Ninggolan, "Eskalasi Konflik Palestine-Israel Di Tahun 2023: Perspektif Kebijakan Luar Negeri Indonesia," *Jurnal Hubungan Internasional* 17, no. 1 (2024): 248-63, doi:<https://doi.org/10.20473/jhi.v17i1.52392>.

<sup>57</sup> Kementerian Sekretaris Negara RI, "Sambutan Presiden pada KTT G20 Sesi I: Kondisi Ekonomi Global, Ketahanan Pangan, dan Energi," *Setneg*, November 15, 2022. [https://www.setneg.go.id/baca/index/sambutan\\_presiden\\_pada\\_ktt\\_g20\\_sesi\\_i\\_kondisi\\_ekonomi\\_global\\_ketahanan\\_pangan\\_dan\\_energi?utm\\_source](https://www.setneg.go.id/baca/index/sambutan_presiden_pada_ktt_g20_sesi_i_kondisi_ekonomi_global_ketahanan_pangan_dan_energi?utm_source).

<sup>58</sup> Adam Hanieh, *Lineages of Revolt : Issues of Contemporary Capitalism in the Middle East* (Haymarket Books, 2013).

about conditions in the Palestinian territories and Israel. Through online, petitions, virtual solidarity actions, individuals from different countries are able to participate in the fight for peace and justice in the Middle East.<sup>59</sup> There has been a surge in social media coverage leading to many solidarity actions, triggered by calls spread through WhatsApp, Telegram and other social media groups, which are easily accessible to anyone.<sup>60</sup>

Not only outside the country, in Indonesia, the protest in defense of Palestine took place in almost all parts of Indonesia as a form of concern for the occupation of Palestine by Israel. On Sunday, November 5, 2023, hundreds of thousands of people packed the National Monument, Jakarta. This peaceful protest aimed to defend Palestine amidst the war between Israel and the Palestinian Hamas group.<sup>61</sup> On Sunday, December 10, 2023, thousands of people gathered for a rally in defense of Palestine as well as a fundraising event that was attended by thousands of people at Maimoon Palace, Medan.<sup>62</sup> This conflict has strengthened solidarity among Muslims in Indonesia, with various backgrounds of Islamic organizations such as Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), Muhammadiyah, Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI), student groups and civil society. They not only oppose violence in Palestine, but also raise aid funds.<sup>63</sup> Indonesia, which is a Muslim-majority country, shows that the attitude of civil society towards Palestine has an Islamic spirit, considering that Palestine has something in common, namely that the majority of its citizens are Muslims. Barnes explained that community groups have a role in handling conflicts, namely conducting constructive conflict resolution campaigns and mobilizing by encouraging people to pressure the government and exert global pressure.<sup>64</sup>

Boycotts and demonstrations are movements carried out by the Indonesian people in response to Israel's occupation of Palestine. The first boycott was initiated by the Minister of Foreign Affairs in the SBY era, Marty Natalegawa. Since the 2000s, many people including religious leaders, students, NGOs, social activists have encouraged the boycott of Israeli-affiliated goods.<sup>65</sup> Community groups are trying to tell their neighbors to stop buying and consuming Israeli goods, including food, drinks, medicine, cosmetics, and tourism.<sup>66</sup> Likewise with religious groups, religious organizations such as NU and Muhammadiyah have a significant role as an effort to reconcile conflicts, namely actively organizing, initiating, and conducting various meetings, conferences and interfaith dialogues, as well as forming the National Ulama Conference and World Muslim Scholars. Muhammadiyah also took part in resolving the Palestinian conflict, by being actively involved in sending aid, as well as the establishment of Muhammadiyah AID.<sup>67</sup>

<sup>59</sup> Della Pergola, S., Dashefsky, A., & Sheskin, I, *World Jewish Population 2020* (Springer Nature, 2020).

<sup>60</sup> Eneng Ervi Siti Zahroh et al., "Global Jihad and Local Sentiment: The Impact of the Hamas-Israel Conflict on Radicalization in Indonesia," *Eduvest - Journal of Universal Studies* 4, no. 10 (October 2024): 8895-8911.

<sup>61</sup> Indra Yoga, "Gelar Aksi Bela Palestina, Ratusan Ribuan Orang Padati Monas," *VOA Indonesia*, November 10, 2023, <https://www.voaindonesia.com/a/gelar-aksi-bela-palestina-ratusan-ribu-orang-padati-monas/7342200.html>.

<sup>62</sup> Syahdan Nurdin, "Aksi Sumut Bela Palestina Dihadiri Ribuan Orang Berkumpul Donasi Sekitar Rp 1M," *Viva*, Desember 10, 2023, <https://www.viva.co.id/berita/nasional/1666201-aksi-sumut-bela-palestina-dihadiri-ribuan-orang-terkumpul-donasi-sekitar-rp1-miliar>.

<sup>63</sup> Ading Reflin, "Ormas Islam Galang Donasi Untuk Palestina," *RRI*, Desember 11, 2023, <https://www.rri.co.id/daerah-3t/477144/ormas-islam-galang-donasi-untuk-palestina>.

<sup>64</sup> Catherine Barnes, *Agents for Change: Civil Society Roles in Preventing War & Building Peace European* (Centre for Conflict Prevention, 2006).

<sup>65</sup> Muhammad Risqi Fauzan Septiazi dan Nina Yuliana, "Analisis Pengaruh Media Sosial, Terhadap Gerakan Boikot Produk Israel di Indonesia," *Triwikrama: Jurnal Multidisiplin Ilmu Sosial* 2, no.4 (2023): 31-40.

<sup>66</sup> Dini Riyanti and Fauzatul Laily Nisa, "Dampak Aksi Boikot Produk Berafiliasi Israel Terhadap Pertumbuhan Produk Lokal Di Era Konflik Israel-Palestina," *DJIEB* 3, no. 2 (2023): 68:80, doi: <https://doi.org/10.14710/djieb.21613>.

<sup>67</sup> Kasmuri Selamat, "Moderate Islam To Reduce Conflict And Mediate Peace In The Middle East: A Case Of Nahdlatul Ulama And Muhammadiyah," *European Journal For Philosophy Of Religion* 15, no. 1 (March 10, 2023): 280-300, doi:10.24204/EJPR.2023.4116.

Although support for Palestine is strong, there are different approaches among Indonesian figures. Jusuf Kalla, as the 10th and 12th former President of Indonesia, in a public lecture at UGM stated that he had met with PM Netanyahu and emphasized dialogue with Israel as a solution.<sup>68</sup> Nahdlatul Ulama through its chairman Yahya Cholil Staquf called on the permanent members of the United Nations Security Council (UN) not to use the veto to defend one of the parties in the prolonged humanitarian tragedy.<sup>69</sup> This stance was supported by the holding of a rally in defense of Palestine on November 24, 2023, which was carried out by the NU Pesantren, Tebuireng. In the action, Tebuireng Pesantren held a joint prayer and called for an edict on the oppression of Palestine.<sup>70</sup> However, it is rather dilemmatic that Gus Yahya visited Israel and met with PM Benjamin Netanyahu at the Israeli PM's office on June 14, 2018.<sup>71</sup> Furthermore, NU figure Masykuri Abdillah argues that one of Indonesia's obstacles is the issue of diplomatic relations. Indonesia does not open diplomatic relations with Israel, even though one of the conditions for participating in peace is diplomatic relations, as well as recognizing Israel as a sovereign state.<sup>72</sup> In contrast to NU, Muhammadiyah figure Din Syamsudin considers that the US interference in Palestine is a clear form of provocation, aggression and contains elements of radicalism.<sup>73</sup> Not only from Muhammadiyah officials, support also came from Muhammadiyah academics themselves. On May 7, 2024, 127 Muhammadiyah campuses held a rally in defense of Palestine.<sup>74</sup> In Indonesia, the actions in defense of Palestine were not only carried out by NU and Muhammadiyah, but various Islamic organizations such as the Islamic Union (Persis), the Islamic Defenders Front (FPI), the Ahlussunnah Association for Islamic Society (Hasmi), Al-Washliyah, Mathla'ul Anwar, Wahdah Islamiyah, Ex-Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia, and so on.<sup>75</sup> Therefore, the government must be careful not to take a stance that could cause domestic conflict, because the Muslim community in Indonesia is not monolithic.<sup>76</sup>

There are facts that show that there are many Indonesians who support the existence of Israel. The Manado area of North Sulawesi has a 62-foot menorah, which is a symbol of Judaism and the state of Israel.<sup>77</sup> Not only that, according to Myrntinen, Papua is a society under two flags, not the Indonesian flag, but the Morning Star flag and the Israeli national flag. Myrntinen witnessed that there is an "Israel boom" in Papua with the use of Jewish or Israeli symbols in the form of pro-

<sup>68</sup> Kanal Pengetahuan Fakultas Ilmu Budaya, "Diplomasi Budaya Dan Perdamaian," *Youtube*, Februari 24, 2025. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y9L\\_OR8GSmo](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y9L_OR8GSmo).

<sup>69</sup> Risma Savhira, "Pernyataan Sikap PBNU tentang Konflik Israel-Palestina," *Jatim NU*, Oktober 10, 2023. <https://jatim.nu.or.id/metropolis/pernyataan-sikap-pbnu-tentang-konflik-israel-palestina-0oiMY>.

<sup>70</sup> Rara Zarary, "Ikutilah Doa Bersama dari Tebuireng Untuk Palestina," *Tebuireng Online*, November 23, 2023, <https://tebuirengonline/ikutilah-doa-bersama-dari-tebuireng-untuk-palestina/>.

<sup>71</sup> Kumparan, "Kunjungan ke Israel pada 2018 Viral lagi, Gus Yahya Bilang demi Perdamaian," *Kumparan News*, April 18, 2024, <https://kumparan.com/kumparannews/kunjungan-ke-israel-pada-2018-viral-lagi-gus-yahya-bilang-demi-perdamaian-22ZWaHTUkou/1>.

<sup>72</sup> Masykuri Abdillah, "Indonesia Bisa Selesaikan Konflik Palestina Israel," *NU Online*, Maret 27, 2007, <https://nu.or.id/warta/indonesia-bisa-selesaikan-konflik-palestina-israel-UTLeF>.

<sup>73</sup> Ihsanuddin, "Din Syamsudin, AS Tidak Sungguh-Sungguh Selesaikan Konflik Israel-Palestina," *Kompas*, Desember 7, 2017, <https://nasional.kompas.com/read/2017/12/07/13595161/din-syamsuddin-as-tak-sungguh-sungguh-selesaikan-konflik-israel-palestina>.

<sup>74</sup> Suara Muhammadiyah, "Serentak! 172 Kampus Muhammadiyah Gelar Aksi Bela Palestina," *Suara Muhammadiyah*, Mei 7, 2024, <https://suaramuhammadiyah.id/read/serentak-172-kampus-muhammadiyah-gelar-aksi-bela-palestina>.

<sup>75</sup> Nahdlatul Ulama Online, "Aksi Bela Palestina dan Sisi Lainnya," *NU Online*, Desember 18, 2017, <https://nu.or.id/opini/aksi-bela-palestina-dan-sisi-lainnya-Zs137>.

<sup>76</sup> Ann Marie Murphy, "Islam in Indonesian Foreign Policy: The Limits of Muslim Solidarity for the Rohingya And," *Asian Institute for Policy Studies* (2020): 1-15.

<sup>77</sup> Mirjam Lücking, "Travelling with the Idea of Taking Sides: Indonesian Pilgrimages to Jerusalem," *Bijdragen Tot de Taal-, Land- En Volkenkunde* 175, no. 2-3 (2019): 196-224, doi:<https://doi.org/10.1163/22134379-17502020>.

Israel graffiti, t-shirts, smartphone wallpapers, and other accessories.<sup>78</sup> Even in Papua itself there is the Sion Kids movement which is a movement to return the Bible back to its Jewish roots. In this movement Papua must rise to bless Israel, and Israel as a nation blessed by God will bless them.<sup>79</sup> The presence of the Israeli flag is regretted by the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI), which is carried out by residents in Papua who contradict the attitude of the State of Indonesia to support Palestine.<sup>80</sup> Even The Anti-Defamation League (ADL) reports that 61% of the adult population in Malaysia had anti-Semitic attitudes in 2013. Indonesia as a country with a much larger Muslim population, the percentage of anti-Semites is 48%.<sup>81</sup>

Social media plays an important role in shaping people's views and attitudes. Social media algorithms have a tendency to display content that matches the user's preferences. This creates a so-called "filter bubble" where users are only exposed to certain perspectives, reinforcing existing beliefs and limiting them to alternative options.<sup>82</sup> In the Indonesian context, media such as detik.com, REPUBLIK.CO.ID, Merdeka.com, CNNIndonesia.com, kompas.com, CNBC Indonesia.com, are popular among Indonesians. Regardless of the factors that influence them, these media have a point of view on Israeli-Palestinian issues and have the potential to invite the public to the same view.<sup>83</sup> With a Muslim-majority population, it does not mean that 100% of Indonesians are inclined towards Palestine.

Siding with Palestine is not something new in Indonesia. This consistency occurs until today and undergoes changes in ideology and context. This pro-Palestine position has become part of public opinion and ultimately an inseparable part of the views of the Indonesian people at large.<sup>84</sup> Indonesia's policies are closely related to public opinion, although it is not entirely unreasonable to use it as a basis for decision-making.

### Challenges and Future Prospects

The Palestinian-Israeli conflict is an important conflict for Muslims in Indonesia. Indonesia's support for Palestine is not only a government policy, but also part of the solidarity of the people, especially Muslims who feel emotionally attached to the Palestinian cause. According to Wardoyo, there are several factors that make Indonesia support Palestine, including; Muslim solidarity, the struggle for independence, and UN resolutions.<sup>85</sup> Not only that, the experience as a country that was once colonized makes Indonesia feel the same way about what is happening to Palestine now. This consistency also does not come from Indonesia as a government, but also from the Indonesian people

<sup>78</sup> Henry Myrntinen, *From 'Stone-Age' to 'Real-Time' Exploring Papuan Temporalities, Mobilities and Religiosities* (Australia National University Press, 2015).

<sup>79</sup> Ihsan Dalimunthe, "Tradisi Sion Kids dan Konvoi Bendera Israle oleh Warga Papua," *CNN Indonesia*, Mei 18, 2018, <https://www.cnnindonesia.com/nasional/20180518085709-20-299153/tradisi-sion-kids-dan-konvoi-bendera-israel-oleh-warga-papua>.

<sup>80</sup> CNN Indonesia, "MUI Nilai Konvoi Bendera Israel di Papua Menentang Negara," *CNN Indonesia*, Mei 18, 2018. <https://www.cnnindonesia.com/nasional/20180518130016-20-299229/mui-nilai-konvoi-bendera-israel-di-papua-menentang-negara>.

<sup>81</sup> Mary J Ainslie, *Anti-Semitism in Contemporary Malaysia Malay Nationalism, Philosemitism and Pro-Israel Expressions* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2019).

<sup>82</sup> Beti Dwi Sholehkatina, et.al., "Analisis Peran Media Sosial Dalam Konflik Israel-Palestina ditinjau Dari Teori Orientalisme Edward Said," *HUMANIS: Human Resources Management and Business Journal* 1, no.1 (2024). 31-39.

<sup>83</sup> Mutiara S Ramadani, Khaerudin Kurniawan, and Ahmad Fuadin, "Menguak Bias Media Dalam Pemberitaan Konflik Israel-Palestina: Sebuah Analisis Konten Kritis," *Bahasa Dan Sastra* 10, no.1 (2024): 887-905.

<sup>84</sup> Ronald A. Lukens-Bull and Mark R. Woodward, "Goliath and David in Gaza: Indonesian Myth-Building and Conflict as a Cultural System," *Contemporary Islam* 5, no. 1 (April, 2011): 1-17, doi:<https://doi.org/10.1007/s11562-010-0145-4>.

<sup>85</sup> Broto Wardoyo, Diyauddin, Rizal Valentino, dan Kamila Rona Balqish, *Prospek Normalisasi Hubungan Diplomatik Arab Saudi dan Israel* (LAB 45, 2023).

themselves. This is proven by Indonesia canceling its bid to host the prestigious U-20 World Cup.<sup>86</sup> This cancellation arose due to the massive rejection of the presence of the Israeli National Team as one of the participants, although there are still pros and cons in it.

In fact, normalizing relations with Israel is something that Indonesia still hasn't thought about. Initially, the relationship between Arab countries and Israel was limited by a towering wall. This was due to differences in Islamic and Jewish ideologies. However, at the end of 2020, four Arab countries namely Sudan, Morocco, Bahrain and the United Arab Emirates have normalized diplomatic relations with Israel, following Egypt and Jordan who had already done so.<sup>87</sup> This normalization is not impossible to influence public opinion in Indonesian society. Diplomatic relations between Indonesia and Israel have not been established, influenced by cultural differences, political views, and pressure from Islamic groups in Indonesia. Many consider that normalizing relations with Israel has the potential to betray the Palestinian cause and humanitarian values. This attitude is reinforced by vocal opposition from community organizations and religious leaders, leaving the government faced with a dilemma between geopolitical interests and maintaining domestic stability sensitive to the Palestinian issue.

Indonesia, with its ideology of Pancasila, has the values of divinity, humanity, justice, which prohibit violating, harming, and depriving others of their rights.<sup>88</sup> Pancasila emphasizes the importance of unity, respect for human rights, and social justice for all its people, without discrimination based on ethnicity or religion. In contrast, there are two doctrines developed by Israel in relation to the Zionist Movement and their religious movements in modern history that became the basis for the colonization of Palestine, namely "God's chosen people" and "God's promised land". This doctrine is not only theological but also the basis for modern Jewish ideology both theologically political, historical and economic.<sup>89</sup> In practice, Zionists aspire to create an autarkic society, separate from the surrounding non-Jewish society,<sup>90</sup> in other terms trying to delegitimize the presence of Palestinian Arabs, and legitimize the presence of Jews. It emphasizes unity in diversity and rejects all forms of colonization and injustice. Zionism itself is oriented towards the exclusive domination of one group over another by overriding the principles of justice and humanity. Thus, the Zionist movement and its colonialist practices against Palestine contradict the fundamental values upheld by Pancasila, which prioritizes justice, equality, and respect for the rights of all nations.

Differences in religious recognition and relations also characterize the two countries. In Israel, Judaism is the dominant religion with a population of 80% Jews, 15% Muslims, 2.5% Druz and 2.5% Christians.<sup>91</sup> However, the country also recognizes and protects the existence of other religions. The early founders of Zionism relied on Judaism to define national boundaries and legitimize territorial claims. Even after the state was established, this identity helped create and legitimize a segmented citizenship regime, which secured privileges for Jews Yahudi.<sup>92</sup> In Israel, religion plays a significant

<sup>86</sup> FIFA "FIFA removes Indonesia as host of FIFA U-20 World Cup 2023," FIFA, Maret 30, 2023. <https://www.fifa.com/en/articles/fifa-removes-indonesia-as-host-of-u20-world-cup-2023>.

<sup>87</sup> Yulia Rimapradesi and Ahmad Sahide, "Kepentingan Negara-Negara Arab (Uni Emirat Arab, Bahrain, Sudan Dan Maroko) Melakukan Normalisasi Hubungan Dengan Israel," *MANDALA* 4, no. 1 (2021): 67-84.

<sup>88</sup> Sumarto, *Pancasila Dan Peradaban Indonesia* (Penerbit Buku Literasiologi, 2019).

<sup>89</sup> Andi Satrianingsih dan Zaenal Abidin, "Sejarah Zionisme Dan Berdirinya Negara Israel," *Jurnal Adabiyah* 16, no. 1 (2016): 172-184.

<sup>90</sup> Yosef. Gorni, *Zionism and the Arabs, 1882-1948 : A Study of Ideology* (Clarendon Press Oxford, 1987).

<sup>91</sup> Gideon Sapir and Daniel Statman, "Minority Religions In Israel," *Journal of Law and Religion* 30, no. 1 (2015): 65-79, doi:<https://doi.org/10.1017/^2014.3>.

<sup>92</sup> Guy Ben Porat and Dani Filc, "Remember to Be Jewish: Religious Populism in Israel," *Politics and Religion* 15, no. 1 (March 1, 2022): 61-84, doi:<https://doi.org/10.1017/S1755048320000681>.

role in politics and governance, with many policies influenced by Judaic values. This factor is due to the fact that Jewish identity has been an important legitimization of nationhood and society since the country's founding.

Meanwhile, Indonesia officially recognizes six religions, with 87.2% Muslim, 6.9% Protestant, 2.9% Catholic, 1.7% Hindu, 0.7% Buddhist, and 0.05% Confucian Konghucu,<sup>93</sup> but excludes Judaism. This has an impact on public perceptions and attitudes towards the Jewish community, which are often influenced by state policies and a lack of understanding of Judaism. Indonesia, while religion plays an important role in people's lives, is a secular state that keeps religion and government separate. However, the interaction between religion and politics remains visible in various aspects of social and political life in Indonesia. It can be seen that the establishment of the Ministry of Religious Affairs is part of a compromise between the concept of secularism and the role of religion in the state, which proves that despite the separation between religion and government, the state still has involvement in religious affairs.<sup>94</sup> The different historical backgrounds, demographics and government policies of each country, in turn, shape the unique cultural character and social interactions in Israel and Indonesia.

## 5. Conclusion

Indonesia has consistently supported Palestine based on its anti-colonial stance, which is reinforced by Islamic organizations, social media, and public opinion that reject normalization with Israel. Despite not having diplomatic relations, informal interactions in trade and technology continue. Each government has a different approach to the Israel-Palestine issue-Soeharto, Abdurrahman Wahid, Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, and Joko Widodo took diverse stances, with some engaging in dialogue or accepting aid. Public support for Palestine is strong, evident in demonstrations and boycotts, although a minority of people, especially in Papua and Manado, sympathize with Israel. Going forward, Indonesia must balance its Free and Active foreign policy with geopolitical and domestic factors. It is possible that normalization of relations with Israel could occur in the future, especially if economic and geopolitical factors play an important role.

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<sup>93</sup> "Agama," <https://indonesia.go.id/profil/agama>.

<sup>94</sup> Luthfi Assyaukanie, *Islam and the Secular State in Indonesia* (ISEAS Publications, 2009).

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