

From fatwa to social media: Unleashing global Muslim solidarity through fatwa and digital activism movement

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Abstract

The Israel-Palestine war has brought an enormous amount of attention to religious tension, global solidarity, and humanitarian movement in the Muslim world. This study investigates the underlying factor behind the fatwa issuance and its impact on new trend of global solidarity in the digital sphere. The theory of mediation of meaning and new media by Hoover has been used to navigate the Fatwa of Indonesian Ulama Council regarding boycotts, divestments, sanctions movement. The spread of *Julid Fisabilillah* digital activism is a significant factor in shaping global Muslim solidarity. The digital activism is conducted by Indonesian and Malaysian netizen on specific social media platforms such as X, Instagram and Telegram. This paper aims to contribute to the promotion of solidarity compassion, and moral principles as fundamental aspects of humaneness. The research methods involved using a desk research methodology to collect data by analyzing scientific papers, digital media such as news, social media platforms, literature reviews. The results indicated that this new trend of movements served as a means of expressing concern and advocating for humanity's values. It also aimed to create social justice and beneficial impact through humanitarian aid and establish emotional and moral connections to the Palestinian cause. Subsequently, the elements of religious tension, intrinsic and extrinsic religiosity, have intertwined roles in influencing this situation.

Abstrak

Perang antara Israel-Palestina telah menyita banyak perhatian dari mulai esensi ketegangan agama, solidaritas global, hingga gerakan kemanusiaan di dunia Muslim. Studi ini berusaha untuk menyelidiki faktor yang mendasari diterbitkannya Fatwa Majelis Ulama Indonesia (MUI) terkait dukungan terhadap Palestina dan dampaknya terhadap tren baru solidaritas global di ranah digital.

Keywords:

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Teori mediasi makna dan media baru oleh Hoover diaplikasikan untuk menavigasi dampak dari Fatwa Majelis Ulama Indonesia yang berkenaan dengan gerakan boikot, divestasi, sanksi terhadap produk yang mendukung Israel dan penyebarannya melalui aktivisme digital *Julid Fisabilillah* yang banyak digalakkan oleh warganet Indonesia dan Malaysia di beberapa platform media sosial seperti X, Instagram dan Telegram. Tulisan ini memiliki kontribusi untuk meningkatkan solidaritas, kasih sayang, dan menegakkan prinsip-prinsip moral sebagai aspek dasar kemanusiaan. Metode penelitian yang digunakan adalah metode kepustakaan untuk mengumpulkan data dengan menganalisis beberapa karya ilmiah terdahulu, media digital seperti berita, platform media sosial, dan tinjauan literatur. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa tren gerakan baru ini berfungsi sebagai sarana efektif untuk mengekspresikan kepedulian dan mengadvokasi nilai-nilai kemanusiaan yang bertujuan untuk menciptakan keadilan sosial dan dampak yang bermanfaat melalui bantuan kemanusiaan, membangun hubungan emosional dan moral sejalan dengan perjuangan warga Palestina. Selanjutnya, elemen-elemen ketegangan agama, baik religiusitas intrinsik maupun ekstrinsik, memiliki peran yang saling terkait dalam mempengaruhi situasi ini.

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INTRODUCTION

On October 7th, 2023, a multitude of demonstrators took to the street to protest against Israel's persistent assault on Palestinians, which has led to the fatalities of over 18,700 individuals, including more than 7,700 children. The Armed Conflict Location & Events Data Project a specialized non-governmental organization on collecting conflict data, reported that there were 7,283 demonstrations supported Palestine in over 118 countries and territories between October 7th and November 24th (ACLED, 2023).

The Indonesian Ulama Council (MUI) responded Israeli-Palestinian conflict by issuing a fatwa for Muslim societies to demonstrate a global solidarity for Palestinian. Following the issuance of the fatwa by the Indonesian Ulema Council number 83 in 2023, about the Palestinian cause. The BDS (Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions) movement and *Julid Fisabilillah* digital activism, has garnered increased prominence within Indonesian and Malaysian citizen.

According to Halevi's statement in his article "*The consumer jihād: Boycott fatwas and nonviolent resistance on The World Wide Web*" Yusuf al-Qaradawi's renowned fatwa, "*The boycott of Israeli and American commodities*" is reminiscent of a deliberate reaction to "*The Declaration of Jihād*" (Halevi, 2012). As we observed that a prominent mufti as a religious authority holder played significant sway in shaping an individual's perspective on a particular issue. Yusuf al-Qaradawi (the Egyptian mufti) in disseminating fatwa

through media played significant impact due to his global outlook, had a wide-reaching following of tens of millions through his program on the satellite television network Al-Jazeera. Based on that case, the issuing of Indonesian Ulama Council's fatwa number 83, 2023, demands a larger-scale movement, in which Indonesia holds the distinction of being the second most Muslim majority country, over 88% of the populations are Muslim. Additionally, Indonesian exhibit the highest level of engagement on various social media platforms which over 204 million active internet users (Wolff, 2023).

Boycotts, divestments, and sanctions (BDS) movement and *Julid Fīsabīlillah* digital activism are justified as a means for noncombatant to engage in God's cause. In our view, this contributes to the growing and complex body of thinking referred to 'economic *jihād*' and '*jihād on the internet*' nowadays. By resorting to the fatwa of Indonesian Ulama Council (MUI), we aim to convey that the concept of *jihād*, in the era of digitization may be fulfilled by any individual in nonviolent ways. It dedicated to address the increasing prevalence of advocacy for the Indonesian Ulama Council's fatwa on Palestinian cause. We will emphasize the significance of *mustaftis* (those who are seeking for fatwa), and more generally, the legal decree of Indonesian Ulama Council's fatwa on Palestinian cause.

This paper aims to reveal an analytical framework which including on reevaluating the discussions about global Muslim solidarity and its connection to the notion of *Munāṣarah* in the Qur'an and Hadith. Next, the historical significance of Indonesian Ulama Council's role as the primary entity in addressing legal concerns of either Indonesian Muslim communities and Muslim communities worldwide in relation to Palestine's liberation. Furthermore, the impact of digital activism, particularly Indonesian and Malaysian netizens movement through *Julid Fīsabīlillah*, will be discussed. Last but not least, we are highlighting the increased awareness and sensitivity towards humanitarian issues as framed by the boycotts, divestments, and sanctions (BDS) movement, in which serves as a counter to Israeli supporter. Hoped for reminding global citizens to the fact that Israel's actions have surpassed the rationality limitation, it is imperative that collective efforts be made to combat them.

METHODS

This paper will explore the Indonesian Ulama Council's fatwa and the role of social media that underlying the onslaught of the BDS (Boycotts, Divestments and Sanctions) movement and *Julid Fīsabīlillah* digital activism that spread within Indonesian and Malaysian citizens. The research methods involved a desk research methodology to collect data by analyzing scientific papers, digital media such as news, social media platforms, literature reviews, which implies a case study approach. The case study takes

to design a global Muslim solidarity toward humanity, in which we develop an in-depth analysis on *Munāṣarah* concept in the Qur'an implemented into the media in the digital activism. Cases are bounded by time and activity, starting in late 2023 and early 2024 up to now. This data takes the form of photographs, website main pages, text messages, or social media text that includes in the digital archives (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000).

We collected detail information using a variety of data collection procedures over a sustained period. These are all open-ended forms of data such as Instagram, Telegram, and X (Twitter) platform, in which everyone shares their ideas freely, which were not constrained by predetermined scales or instruments. Subsequently, according to Creswell triangulation data is essential for acquiring more thorough results through observations and data analysis (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). To enhance the reliability and authenticity of the data, we thoroughly examine the entirety of the data, comprehend its meaning, and categorize it into overarching themes that span across all of the data sources. Finally, after the data was collected, the analysis was carried out, and conclusions were drawn.

Conceptual framework

The theory mediation of meaning and new media by Hoover has been applied to this research. The “mediation of meaning” is a distinct theoretical approach employed readily within Digital Religion studies to unpack the ways communication is seen as a process of creating shared meaning (H. A. Campbell, 2017). We are trying to analyze how the active internet users (Indonesian and Malaysian netizen) in a variety of cultural contexts, rely on social media such as Instagram, X, and Telegram to express their religious beliefs. The mediation of meaning has also informed the Center for Media, Religion, and Culture’s “Third Spaces of Digital Religion” project, which notes that mediation occurs not just in technological innovation, but also through movements within digital spaces where religious cultures are negotiated (Cheong, 2012).

Therefore, in our point of view, mediation of meaning theory offers an important perspective for this paper, which we can study the ways religion and spirituality (in this context fatwa of Indonesian Ulama Council on Palestinian cause) are reimagined online through BDS movement and *Julid Fīṣabīlillah* digital activism, while recognizing that these innovations still draw on traditional structures of social power and religious identity. In line with Hoover argument that the “mediation of meaning” approach sees audiences as active consumers and interpreters of media content, seeking to make sense of the media they consume by making connections or contrasts between the messages portrayed and their own beliefs (Hoover, 2006).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Rethinking global solidarity discourses from *munāṣarah* conceptual framework in the Qur'an and Hadith

Munāṣarah is a noun derived from the Arabic verb *nāṣara-yunāṣiru-munāṣaratan*, which means "stand up for" or "stay firm in supporting". The aforementioned structure is derived from the term "*naṣara-yansuru*" by the additional letter "*alif*" which signifies "assistance". *Munāṣarah*, in the essence, refers to the act of providing assistance or support to others through collaborative efforts (Munawwir, 1997). We firmly believe this concept is based on the basic conceptual understanding that claimed humans are inherently depicted as a social being, and by fostering a culture of assisting, we can alleviate the burdens faced by others. *Munāṣarah*, a fundamental principle from the Qur'an, promotes the advocacy and social solidarity necessary for upholding justice and equality throughout society.

Muslim communities worldwide are united by a sense of brotherhood (Syarkawi Syarkawi, 2014). Regarding the existing conflict between Israeli and Palestinian, even it was indirectly related to only just religious aspects, nor a Muslim in the worldwide were instilled with *munāṣarah* doctrine, which was bounded by brotherhood and humanity values. In this context, *munāṣarah* is associated with a solidarity among Muslim citizens in Indonesia and Malaysia towards their Palestinian brothers as a victim of injustice and external aggression.

Munāṣarah is a theological term that refers to the management of the community's potential in the power of unity as outlined in several verses in Qur'an 47:7, "*O you who have believed, if you support Allah, He will support you and plant firmly your feet*". Apart from the verses of the Qur'an, the hadith of the Prophet also serves as the foundation for this concept as narrated by Bukhari "*Undoubtedly, a single believer and another believer may be compared to a structure, where each individual reinforces and supports the other*" (al Bukhari, 1992).

The power of unity would be achieved by fostering the spirit of assisting fellow Muslims with wealth, soul, and even nowadays by clicking our finger on social media. *Munāṣarah* is not limited to assisting the closest individual or collaborating to construct a structure in a specific location. However, *munāṣarah* can also refers to "giving" in a variety of ways, such as through the exchange of money, products, media or even just comments and tweets on various social media platforms. The doctrine of the obligation of every Muslim person, both individually and collectively, is this solidarity (Miftahsolih et al., 2021).

This synergy and support are among the most significant privileges of *ukhuwah Islāmiyya* and *ukhuwah insāniyya*. It is a manifestation of loyalty among them, as well as its conditions. The strong foundation of unity and solidarity among Muslim was one of the factors that enabled Islam to stand firmly. Solidarity facilitates the ability of individuals to confront challenges, share the responsibilities and burdens of others, provide mutual support during crises and problems, and assist one another in overcoming the complexities of life (Yakub, 2019). The concept of *munāṣarah* is one of the doctrines that we are trying to analyze within the Indonesian Ulama Council's fatwa and digital activism in certain social media.

Between authority and interest: Narrating challenges and advantages of Indonesian Ulama Council's fatwa number 83, 2023, on Palestinian cause

In November 2023, the Indonesian Ulama Council (MUI) issued a religious legal decree supporting Palestinian cause. The fatwa is written in the following manner: 1) It is obligatory to provide support for the Palestinian liberation movement against Israeli aggression. 2) This support, as mentioned in the first point, including the *zakat*, *infāq*, and *ṣadaqa* distribution for the betterment of Palestinian people's struggle. 3) Specifically, *zakat* funds should be distributed to those in need, refers to those who are in close proximity to the *zakat* giver (*muzakki*). But during the emergencies or in an urgent situation, *zakat* funds can be allocated to *mustahiq* or those individuals who are suffering even located in a far distance, such as supporting to Palestinian cause. Additionally, it is considered *harām* to provide support for Israeli aggression against Palestine or for people who directly or indirectly support Israel (Komisi Fatwa Majelis Ulama Indonesia, 2023).

The Indonesian Ulama Council (MUI) conveyed the following recommendation for Muslims: 1) Muslims are encouraged to support the Palestinian cause through several activities such as fundraising, offering prayers for the betterment of Palestinian life, and engaging in *ghaib* prayers for the martyrs of Palestinian. 2) the administration is being strongly encouraged to take active resolution for supporting Palestinian, including by engaging in the diplomatic efforts at the United Nations to halt the war, imposing sanctions on Israel, providing humanitarian assistance, and rallying the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) countries to exert pressure on Israel in ceasing this aggressive violence. 3) Muslims are strongly encouraged to minimize their involvement in the transactional matter and the utilization of products associated with Israel that endorse the occupation and Zionism or well-known by the term BDS Movement.

The Indonesian Ulama Council's fatwa on supporting Palestinian cause is underlying on various factors. First of all, the Israeli aggression and annexation of

Palestine, has led to casualties, injuries, the displacement of thousand peoples, and destruction of homes, buildings, and public facilities. Second, numerous entities assisted Palestine, which including the dispatch of aid personnel and weapons, the mobilization of financial resources for the Palestinians' struggle, and the provision of moral support through prayers, as a manifestation of humanitarian solidarity and the embodiment of *ukhuwah Islāmiyya and ukhuwah insāniyya* (Syeikh, 2019).

According to the fatwa described earlier, there is no explicitly narrated that BDS movement is a must, nor it is just a mandatory for all Muslims to provide assistance to support Palestinian cause. But if we examined the fatwa in a comprehensive way, we found additional exclusive explanation stated (in the recommendation points), that the obligatory to reduce the usage of products endorsed Israel and restrict engagements with the supporter companies.

From the author's perception, there was a legal bias in here. On one side, the Indonesian Ulama Council (MUI) urging the Muslim to pay more attention on the limitation of consuming products which endorsed by the companies who supported Israel. On the other hand, the Indonesian Ulama Council (MUI) continues to issuing the halal certification on their products, which did not try to revoke it. How can they deem something haram while also legalizing the product as halal? It is important to note that the notion "*harām*" in this context does not pertain to the composition of the product. Instead, focus on the act of consuming. Naturally, these things are inherently contradictory.

The significance of social media in the digitization era: Tracing impact of fatwa transmission and digital humanitarian activism

Social media exerts significant influence on social changes, as numerous movements has been garnered momentum and are currently more prominent than ever before. These new media enable individuals to garner support from individuals globally who share similar values, whether it be for social justice, environmental conservation, or human rights. The "environment of digital activism" refers to the economic, social, political even religious context in which a specific movement utilizes digital technologies (Shah et al., 2013).

Today activist utilize popular social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, X (formerly known as Twitter), and others to narrate anecdotes, disseminate knowledge, and engage with a broader audience. In X (Twitter) for example, hashtags are commonly employed to set the trends and facilitate the individual's gathering for focus group discussions on specific subjects. Hashtags evolved into powerful symbols that facilitate

participation in internet activism and promote awareness of significant matters (Ta'amneh & Al-Ghazo, 2021). Additionally, memes become an unexpected support of digital activism, revolutionizing the internet into a vibrant venue for expressing discontent and reshaping new ideas (Gal et al., 2016).

The global reaction to the long-lasting conflict between Israel and Palestine has been varied. The notion of *@gerakanbds* and *#JulidFisabilillah* has gained popularity on the social media specifically on X, Instagram and Telegram. While also became a widely discussed subject among internet users worldwide in recent times.

BDS (Boycotts, Divestment, and Sanction) movement (@gerakanbds) in Indonesia and Indonesian Ulama Council's fatwa transmission

Al-Serhan and Boukrami demonstrate that religious and ethical considerations serve as catalysts for boycott movements in the developing nations (Al Serhan & Boukrami, 2015). For example, the boycott of Muslim retailers brought about by CEOs and managers of international corporations acting unethically by misusing Islamic symbols, the Qur'an, and the Prophet Muhammad (Al-Hyari et al., 2012).

This research was conducted in Indonesia, the largest Muslim market, for two specific reasons. First, Indonesia a predominantly Muslim country, it is said to represent the worldwide Muslim consumer protest movement against pro-Israel corporate policy. Secondly, Indonesia being the second most populous Muslim majority country with a substantial middle-class demographic, presents a promising market for international firms such as Microsoft, Google, Facebook, Instagram, and Starbucks. In order to enhance sales volume, retain market share, and sustain a competitive edge, it is imperative to grasp the characteristics of Muslim consumers by comprehending the ethical ideals they have embraced.

Additionally, two categories of consumer boycott actions instrumental and expressive boycotts are recognized by the marketing literature. A lot of boycott initiatives seem to be more symbolic than practical (Friedman, 1985). Because they are motivated by religious beliefs, expressive boycotts are more prevalent among Muslim consumers and are more emotional (Sari et al., 2017). Next, boycotts are motivated by nonreligious causes, such as those that are instrumental in making their arguments logical (Jae & Jeon, 2016; Klein et al., 2004).

According to this paper, Muslim customers' boycotts of goods from international corporations whose policies support Israel, qualify as expressive boycotts since they are primarily motivated by their emotions and are common among Muslim customers. Because the government (in this case) Indonesian Ulama Council (MUI), and religious legal decree production or called Fatwa reasons are involved each other, this action is

more emotionally motivated and common among Muslim consumers (Sari et al., 2017). This is particularly important since the practices of these multinational corporations against the principles of International Human Rights.

To visualize the influence of this Fatwa on the BDS Movement. Let us collectively examine the picture below.



Figure 1. The most ever popular content posted and uploaded by the @gerakanbds Instagram account

Based on the provided picture (Figure 1), it can be inferred that the total of 62,532 likes and 1,533 comments demonstrate the significant enthusiasm of the Indonesian population following the publication of the fatwa to organize a large-scale BDS Movement. Irrespective of the fundamental causes, however, it can be asserted that individuals are currently knowledgeable to conduct digital activism and receptive to the ongoing humanitarian concerns.

Julid Fīṣabīlillah as a massive digital humanitarian activism in response to Palestinian cause: Case study of Indonesian and Malaysian netizen

Julid Fīṣabīlillah is a widely recognized as an initiative that entails a coordinated effort to get access into social media accounts associated with Israeli military, to express global solidarity for Palestinian cause. According to the *Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia* (KBBI), "*julid*" is defined as a strong emotion of envy towards the good fortune of others, accompanied by feelings of fury or great dislike (Badan Pengembangan dan Pembinaan Bahasa, 2016). Usually, the term "*Julid*" is indirectly conveyed, such as through social

media platforms. The designation of "*Fīsabilillah*" refers to the act of utilizing one's riches, speech, and inner self in a holy struggle to advance the cause of faith. The movement called "*Julid Fīsabilillah*" involves a coordinated effort by Indonesian and Malaysian internet user to flood the Instagram accounts of the Israeli police and military (IDF) or the companies who are supporting on Israel with snarky and unpleasant comments.

Julid Fīsabilillah digital activism is a type of protest that uses digital platforms to advance social and political change. The movement gathered steam because of the widespread availability and immediate reach of social media, which allowed for rapid access to a global audience (El-Nawawy & Khamis, 2009). *Julid Fīsabilillah* functions as a potential instrument for conducting psychological warfare (psywar) on the ongoing war between Palestinian and Israeli. This sort of digital activism novelty, originating from Indonesia dedicated by members of the Hassan bin Tsabit Brigade including also Malaysian. They use social media platforms for articulating discontent and censure towards the Israeli government's policies about the conflict.

The movement employs memes, caustic commentary, and severe criticism as strategic means, with the aim of both increasing global awareness and conveying displeasure. *Julid Fīsabilillah* seeks to create a psychological effect by inundating the Instagram accounts of the Israeli police and military (IDF) with amusing remarks and symbolic emojis. This fosters a feeling of unity among individuals who share similar beliefs and highlights the purported acts of unfairness and human rights breaches which occurring in the area of conflict. *Julid Fīsabilillah* serves as an unconventional yet promising tool for psychological warfare, exerting influence on the narrative and advocating for the Palestinian cause through a digital battle of perspectives.

The overview and the establishment of *Julid Fīsabilillah*

Amid the 2023 Hamas and Israel conflict, *Julid Fīsabilillah* also known as *#JulidFiSabilillah*, emerged as a digital activism movement social media. The movement focused on targeting and vandalizing the social media accounts of the Israeli military, police, influencers, supporters, and politicians who promote an anti-Palestine narrative.

Julid Fīsabilillah movement gaining significant popularity, specifically focuses on individuals who engage in gossip or criticism while hypocritically presenting themselves as virtuous or morally upright. This movement exemplifies how social media serves as a platform for diverse viewpoints and expressions, encompassing both critical and abusive comments that are cloaked in moral or religious justifications (Bunt, 2018). The discussion surrounding this movement has become more intense and has garnered significant attention on social media, reflecting society's examination of communication habits in online environments that often have significant societal consequences.

In the late of November 2023, X user @AzzamIzzulhaq declared that Erlangga Greschinov would lead the Indonesian contingent of *Julid Fi Sabilillah*. In just two weeks, the post had 13,000 likes and over 4,300 reposts (refer to the information below in Figure 2).

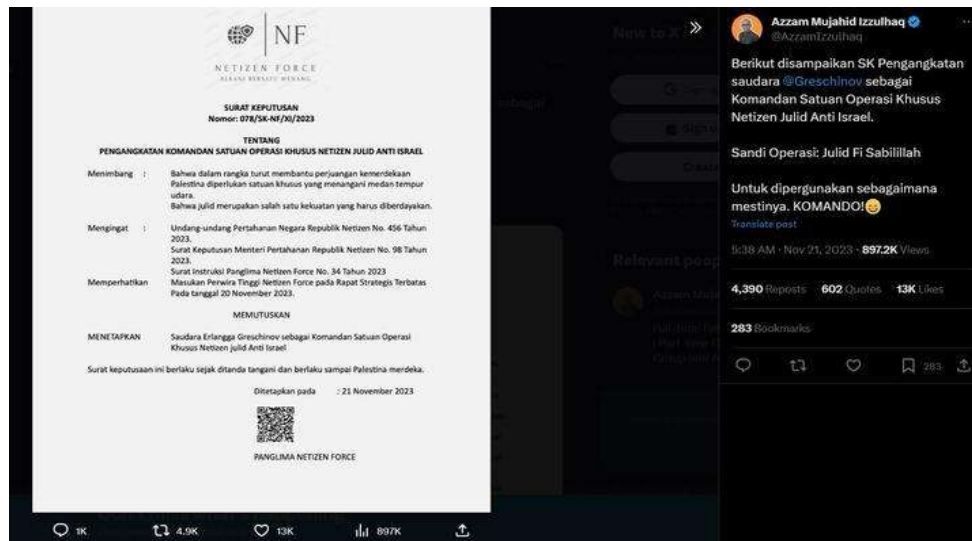


Figure 2. The decree on the appointment of the commander of the anti-Israel netizen special operations unit posted by @AzzamIzzulhaq account

Grechinov commenced the testimonies collection from Israeli police and military personnel on that exact day. Grechinov shared the screenshots of Israeli military social media accounts on his X account on November 21 and 22, 2023, with the intention of exposing them to scrutiny (see Figure 3). The post garnered over 6,200 reposts and 18,500 likes initially, and within a span of two weeks, it accumulated 6,200 reposts and 20,000 likes (the information below, left and right).



Figure 3. Grechinov's screenshots of Israeli military social media accounts

The development of *Julid Fisabilillah* movement

The widespread usage of the hashtag #JulidFisabilillah on X (Twitter) demonstrated the endorsement of Indonesian and Malaysian online users for Palestine. In addition to a series of harsh criticisms, the effort entailed "accessing" the Israeli military's social media accounts. The move has caused a decline in the strength of the targeted accounts, leading to feelings of unease and threat among the account owners.

User @Azzamlzzulhaq made a post on November 23, 2023, discussing user @Marchforward's involvement in the raid as the representative from Malaysia. Within a span of two weeks, the post received more than 17,500 likes and over 4,800 reposts (see the left section below). The user @digermesele posted on December 4th, 2023, detailing his acceptance of an invitation to represent Türkiye in the raid. Within only three days, the post received a total of 12,500 likes and over 4,130 reposts (refer to the image below, on the right side, see Figure 4).



Figure 4. The unity of Indonesian and Malaysian netizens posted by Haq, and the engagement of Turkish in the movement by Digermele account

Erlangga revised the raid conditions on November 27, 2023, using his X account. He directed his attention to item 4, which explicitly prohibits the employment of any antisemitic tropes during raids, such as making references to the Holocaust and Hitler. Furthermore, he advised against carrying out arbitrary raids due to his belief that not all Jews were in favor of Israel. Within only two weeks, it accumulated a total of 17,000 likes and over 6,230 reposts (see Figure 5).

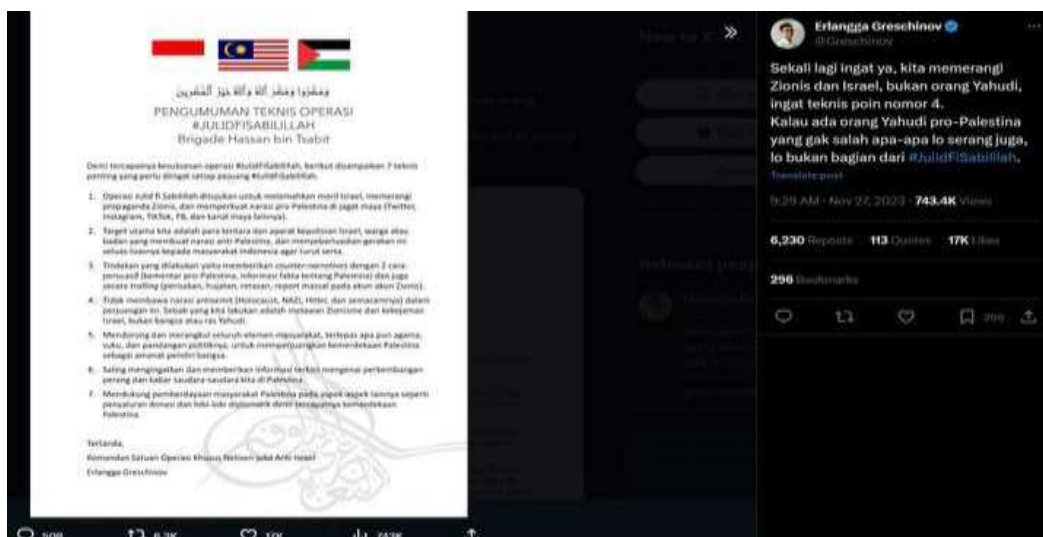


Figure 5. Greschinov's post on *Julid Fisabilillah's* technical operation announcement and his appeal on digital attacks

Greschinov released a recent article on his X platform on December 11th, 2023, highlighting Israeli lawmakers as a newly identified target for raids starting from that day. The post received 12,200 likes and nearly 4,022 reposts over a 24-hour period (refer to the picture below, see Figure 6).



Figure 6. A newly identified target announced by Greschinov

The online reactions from global netizens

On November 20, 2023, @edensissonn, an Instagram user, shared a tale in which she warned that she would report Indonesian hackers who had gained unauthorized access to her account to the Israeli authorities. Grechinov promptly published a screenshot of @edensissonn's narrative from his X account on the same day. Within three weeks, this post received more than 5,200 reposts and 32,000 likes, as indicated on the left side of the image below. On December 2, 2023, X user @OliLondonTV made a post about Grechinov's comments, which has since been deleted, about his plans to attack several pro-Israel social media accounts. Within two weeks, the post received a total of 2,800 likes and 823 reposts, as seen in the section below on the right side (Figure 7).

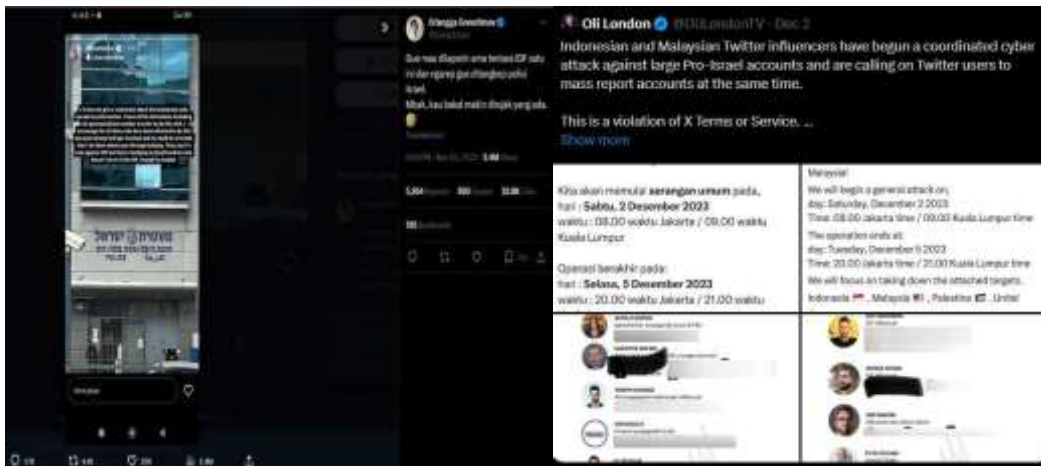


Figure 7. A screenshot of @edensissonn's narrative and Oli London on Grechinov's movement in X platform

Regrettably, on December 20th, 2023, Grechinov X's account was compromised by an unscrupulous party. Subsequently, he initiated the process of creating the newest account namely @mas gres. Recently, there has been discussion of backing South Africa in its efforts to take legal action against Israel through the International Court of Justice. Erlangga disseminated a digital pamphlet on January 5, 2024, to mobilize the members of Hasan bin Tsabit's Brigade. Within seven days, the post received more than 12,000 instances of being shared again and 20,000 instances of being liked (refer to the section below).



Figure 8. The new Grechinov's X account in the spread of #EndIsraelsGenocide by Global Cyber on all social media platform

Memetic warfare and sarcasm

Memes have rapidly emerged as a subject of extensive scholarly investigation and discussion (Gal et al., 2016; Milner, 2013; Wiggins & Bowers, 2015). Memes, commonly humorous images or videos with accompanying text, have proven to be potential instruments for activism and communication. Memes employ comedy as a subversive component, which is one of their distinctive attributes. Memes serve as a means employed by activists from opposing factions to disseminate their messages across linguistic and cultural barriers. Humorous memes can serve as a powerful instrument for disarming adversaries, providing campaigners with a means to effortlessly share and effectively convey significant themes. As the transmission and exposure of memes grow, they exert influence over certain aspects of popular culture, social behavior, and even religion (Burroughs & Feller, 2015; Cheong, 2010).

Memes serve as a form of political commentary that extends beyond just amusement. They offer concise evaluations of political individuals, legislation, and the distribution of authority in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. They provide activists with a platform to express their disagreement, question widely accepted beliefs, and disprove commonly held stories. Memes facilitate a decentralized method of activism by enabling individuals to generate and disseminate grassroots forms of expression. In modern warfare, political entities strive to garner international backing while simultaneously participating in armed conflict and vying for public opinion. The phrase also refers to the use of pictures as weapons in warfare (Yarchi & Boxman-Shabtai, 2023).

Furthermore, this paper suggests that the current memetics thought should consider as the presence of institutional memes, in addition to create and spread memes by individuals. Memes can be disseminated either by institutions or individual users, and might be seen as active participants. In this context, religious communication serves as a rich ground for comprehending the conflict between practiced religion, emerging technology, and institutional authority (Burroughs & Feller, 2015).



Figure 9. An overview of the *Julid Fisabilillah* movement in a meme, created by Indonesian content creator

The phenomenon known as "meme wars" is currently occurring in the digital realm. Activists with divergent perspectives create and distribute memes as a means of shaping public sentiment. Memes, therefore, confront dominant discourses and present opposing viewpoints, leading to the emergence of alternative narratives. The process of meme formation is characterized by the decentralization and the active participation, contributing to the diverse range of perspectives involved in the Israeli conflict.

The field of digital religion scholarship, along with the broader focus on Internet studies, must acknowledge the transition from online religious worship communities to social networks as the theory of mediation of meaning and new media by Hoover has been used to analyzed this issue. According to *Julid Fisabilillah*, in these networks, religions are no longer confined to specific online communities, but rather are integrated into larger collectives of digital and local religious activities with several creativities. Additionally, religions are seen as connections within the self-created religious networks of individuals who visit these platforms. In this context, proposes the "*religious-social shaping of technology approach*" (H. Campbell & Tsuria, 2022), which emphasizes the importance of acknowledging the active involvement and influence of religious users (Muslim) in developing technology and its impact on religious and social aspects of life.

From an institutional perspective, religious memes align with Cheong's dialectic viewpoint, as they facilitate both the erosion and reinforcement of religious authority, presenting opportunities for both conflict and mutual comprehension and adaptation(Cheong, 2012). In our analysis, we aim to find a harmonious equilibrium

between user involvement, technological capabilities, and institutional authority as conflicting factors in the process of recontextualizing religion in the digital realm.

Sarcasm refers to the deliberate use of statements that directly contradict their intended meaning, to playfully criticize something or cause offense to someone. Twitter users often employ sarcasm by expressing positive sentiment in the face of terrible circumstances (Riloff et al., 2013). Sarcasm is typically characterized as a form of comedy that employs irony or satire to diminish, mock, or entertain. Let us see the figure 10 below.



Figure 10. A sarcasm for Israel's national flag and Israeli military groups by Indonesian

Upon observing the initial image, we can discern the presence of the Israeli flag, which bears resemblance to refuse that ought to be appropriately discarded. It is well understood that the flag serves as a representation of a nation's and state's pride, and there are specific guidelines about its positioning. As we can see above, the first image of sarcasm conveys a sense of dissatisfaction and contempt towards Israel's persistent and unceasing acts of aggression. The second image depicts Indonesian youngsters in pursuit of Israeli forces while wearing diapers. This text critiques Israel's exploitation of innocent children as instruments of warfare. Various laws, such as the genocide treaty and other rules of war, explicitly state that it is unlawful to target children, women, and the elderly.

***Julid Fīṣabilillah's* workshop, summit, and humanity camp**

Today, *Julid Fīṣabilillah* movement persists in displaying its aggressive nature, extending beyond online and digital platforms. Nevertheless, it is currently proliferating in face-to-face interactions through diverse gatherings such as workshops, summits, festivals, and camps. Let us see the invitation below.



Figure 11. *Julid Fīṣabīlillah's* Workshop and Summit Invitation

Julid Fīṣabīlillah workshop is scheduled to take place on January 27th, 2024. This is predicated on the significance of employing a methodical, concise, and focused approach to combat the Zionist narrative on social media. Therefore, it is imperative to undergo rigorous training on the necessary actions to do. *Julid Fīṣabīlillah* workshop covered a range of materials, including 1) familiarize with Hasbara, Israel's system of disseminating propaganda; 2) delving deeper into the strategies for countering the Zionist narrative on social media and its constraints; 3) the storylines should be created in social media.

CONCLUSION

The Indonesian Ulama Council plays a crucial role in addressing the contemporary legal concerns of Indonesian Muslim daily issue (*Mustaftis*). Anti-Israel incidents have sharply increased worldwide, since October 7th, 2023. When the swords of iron war began, and in the context of heightened public unrest and a wave of protests labeled as "pro-Palestinian". To response the conflict and war of Palestinian and Israeli, Indonesian Ulama Council or called (Majelis Ulama Indonesia) issued a fatwa which is consist of several points. An analytical framework built by the author by taking Hoover's theory involves reassessing the discourses in Muslim solidarity and its relationship to the concept of *Munāṣarah* in the Qur'an and Hadith. Then, the author examined the influence of active internet users globally, specifically focusing to the Indonesian and Malaysian netizens movement which was known as *Julid Fīṣabīlillah*. The utilization of sarcasm and memes within the realm of online activism, emphasizing their function as instruments for political critique and alternative storytelling. The author ended this paper by examining the image war and the transformation of religious communication in the digital domain

as the result that can be seen from the theory of mediation of meaning and new media. It highlights the active participation of religious users in influencing technology and its effects on religious and social dimensions of existence.

Lastly, it is important to emphasize the growing consciousness and empathy towards humanitarian concerns, as seen by the boycotts, divestments, and sanctions (BDS) Movement in Indonesia, which acts as a response to those who support Israel. It is crucial for all human beings to be reminded that Israel's acts have exceeded the boundaries of rationale. Therefore, digital activism such as *Julid Fīṣabilillah* in X and Telegram, and also BDS Movement in Instagram were both essential means to take collaborative and collective action, which would be undertaken for counteracting Israeli actions.

Regarding Indonesian Ulama Council's fatwa on supporting Palestine, the author argues that there was a legal bias within the fatwa. On one side, the Indonesian Ulama Council (MUI) urging the Muslim to conduct limitation of consuming products which endorsed by the companies, who supported Israel. On the other hand, the Indonesian Ulama Council (MUI) continues to issuing the halal certification on their products, which did not try to revoke it. How can they deem for something haram while also legalizing the product with "*halāl*"? It is important to note that the term "*harām*" in this context does not pertain to the composition of the product. Instead, focus on the act of consuming. We recommend other researcher to examine this sort of issue as clear as possible, to address this problematic role between authority and interest of Indonesian Ulama Council (MUI).

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