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Research Article

Jihad as A Realistic Approach: Responding to the Palestinian Colonization from 1948 to Present

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ABSTRACT

This article provides a new perspective on responding to the turmoil in Palestine from 1948 to the present. The main argument of this article is that the primary cause of the Palestinian issue is the existence of the Zionist Jewish occupiers in Palestinian land, supported by the United States and its allies. Hence, the solution to this occupation is to liberate Palestine from Zionist occupation. This study uses the concept of jihad in Islam as a framework to explain the steps in liberating Palestine. The method used is qualitative analysis of data collected from various books, journals, and websites. This study finds that, given the current conditions in Palestine, the approach of jihad is the most realistic approach that pro-Palestinian Muslim-majority countries can undertake. However, the implementation process is inaccessible due to several factors, including the political, economic, and military conditions in Muslim countries, as well as the dominant ideologies currently followed and applied by these countries.

1. INTRODUCTION

Since the Ottoman Empire/Caliphate lost the First World War in 1917, Israel has had the freedom to bring Jewish communities from Europe to Palestine. Not only that, the British also protected the Jews from attempts to harass Arab residents in Palestine who did not accept the mass exodus of Jews to their territory. The Muslim community in Palestine has carried out various resistances since the British-backed Jewish occupation in the early 20th century and continues to this day. In 1947, the UN decided to divide Palestine into two, with more than 50% under Jewish authority; the remaining 40% was given to Palestine and Jerusalem under an international mandate. This decision was rejected by Palestinians, including Palestine's neighboring Arab countries such as Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, and Egypt, leading to the First Arab - Israeli War in 1948. That same year, Israel declared independence, formally establishing itself as the State of Israel (Rowley & Taylor, 2006).

Since 1948, Israel has not only seized the majority of Palestinian land but also exerted control over all of Palestine, encompassing its land, sea, and air. This control severely restricts the mobility of Palestinians both within and outside the country, in addition to ongoing arrests, torture, killings, and territorial annexations. The detail of this discrimination and repression of the Israelis in Palestine is well documented in the report by Amnesty International in 2022, entitled "Israel's apartheid against Palestinians: A Cruel System of domination and a crime against humanity"(Amnesty International, 2022).

Since the beginning of the Jewish occupation war in Palestine, there have been various efforts by the international community to resolve this problem, including mediation between the two parties, as well as Arab and Israeli mediation efforts to create regional stability. However, these various mediation efforts have not stopped the expulsion and discrimination against Palestinians, even though various world criticisms of Israel continue to be carried out. On the one hand, the two-state solution is a recommended solution to the Israeli-Palestine conflict; people envision Jews

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and Palestinians living peacefully with one another. However, this solution has not produced any good results. Surveys and proof from Palestinians and Muslims of the Middle East reflect a general dismissal of the two-state solution. Similarly, the Zionist regime is unwilling to accept this solution(Sherwood, 2023; The Conversation, 2024).

Addressing the crisis in Palestine requires more than mere mediation efforts. The issue at hand involves systematic military occupation and violence, manifesting both through direct aggression and the enforcement of discriminatory laws. Global criticism of Israel and various proposed solutions highlight the complexity of the Palestinian problem, which cannot be resolved by focusing solely on mediation. This article will discuss the context of Islamic views regarding the Israeli occupation of Palestine, as well as the Jihad solution, as one of the treasures of thought in Islam, in dealing with a crisis that occurred as a result of military occupation.

2. RESEARCH METHODS

This study uses a qualitative approach to interpret the data and produce a complete picture of the problem under study. The data sources in this research are both primary and secondary. Primary data were obtained from studies on jihad in Islam, the Koran and Sunnah, and the opinions of Islamic scholars (Ulema). Meanwhile, secondary data was obtained from writings about the Israeli occupation of Palestine, both from books, journals, and website pages.

The collected data will be sorted based on the variables in this study. The Israeli occupation of Palestine is the dependent variable, and Jihad is the independent variable. At the beginning of this article, we will discuss the facts of the Israeli occupation of Palestine along with efforts to resolve this occupation and its challenges. The following discussion will review the relevance of jihad in resolving the Palestinian problem, including its concept, its actors and processes, and the challenges faced in carrying it out to defend Palestine.

2.1. Jihad and Its Relevance in Contemporary International Politics

International politics is always characterized by two main aspects: cooperation and conflict. Human history has recorded various dynamics and developments between these two aspects across different civilizations worldwide. There are times when the world is dominated by peace, and other times when various wars plague it.

Although the world is generally more peaceful in post-Cold War international relations than in previous eras, military interventions still occur frequently between nations. Examples include NATO coalition interventions in Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya, and Syria, and interventions by Saudi-led coalitions in Yemen. Regardless of the controversies surrounding the motives of these military interventions, the use of force remains relevant in cases that cannot be resolved through diplomatic efforts. Article 7 of the UN Charter also outlines steps to restore peace in the face of threats, including military intervention by land, sea, or air.

From the perspective of international relations in Islam, the practical approach is not much different, encompassing either cooperation or conflict. Cooperation occurs between states that maintain peace with the *Dar al-Islam* (Islamic State). At the same time, conflict or war arises between non-believing states (*dar al-Kufr*) that are hostile towards Islamic states or the Muslim community (Aswar & Rakhmat, 2023).

Normatively, Jihad in Islam is one of the most paramount teachings because it is through Jihad that Islamic teachings and the Muslim community can be protected from the attacks of Islam's enemies, as Allah SWT states in Surah Al-Hajj, Verse 78: "Strive for Allah with the striving due to Him."Allah also declares in Surah At-Tawbah, Verse 111: "Indeed, Allah has purchased from the believers their lives and their properties [in exchange] for that they will have Paradise. They fight in the cause of Allah, so they kill and are killed. [It is] a true promise [binding] upon Him in the Torah and the Gospel and the Qur'an. Moreover, who is truer to his covenant than Allah? So rejoice in your transaction, which you have contracted. Moreover, it is that which is the great attainment" (Az-Zuhaili, 2011, p. 26).

From a legal perspective, the implementation of Jihad can be classified as either a collective obligation (*fardhu kifayah*) or an individual obligation (*fardhu 'ain*) for Muslims. Jihad becomes a collective obligation if a war occurs in a region and the local population is resisting. If this goal can be achieved with the participation of only a portion of the Muslim community, the obligation is lifted for the rest. However, if the local population cannot repel the enemy, nearby Muslims are obligated to join the Jihad and assist by supplying arms and funds (Az-Zuhaili, 2011, p. 28).

Jihad becomes an individual obligation under three specific conditions. First, when two armies face each other, a Muslim on the battlefield must not retreat but confront the enemy. Second, if an infidel army invades a Muslim territory, the inhabitants must defend themselves. Third, if a leader calls upon a group to fight, those summoned must join the battle alongside their leader (Az-Zuhaili, 2011, p. 30).

To ensure the effective conduct of Jihad, Islam emphasizes the importance of mental, spiritual, and material preparation, including mastery of the battlefield, war strategies, and military equipment. Such preparation is crucial

for achieving the objectives of Jihad optimally, as Jihad is fundamentally a political strategy focused on goal optimization (Al-Qardhawy, 2013, p. 439).

Throughout Islamic history—from the era of the Prophet Muhammad SAW to the Ottoman Empire—Jihad—whether defensive or offensive—was conducted with well-defined objectives and strategies. For example, during the Battle of Badr, the Prophet Muhammad consulted his companions on positioning their forces near the wells of Badr to control the water supply, which contributed to their victory over the Quraysh.

Similarly, in the Battle of Uhud, Muslims initially gained the upper hand by strategically placing archers on the hills, only to suffer a reversal when the archers prematurely abandoned their positions in pursuit of war spoils. In the Battle of the Trench, facing a coalition of Quraysh and Jews, the Muslims, under the guidance of Salman al-Farisi, adopted the Persian trench defense, which successfully thwarted the enemy coalition. In the context of the 11th-century Crusades, before Sultan Salahuddin al-Ayyubi liberated Palestine from the Crusaders, he first consolidated Muslim forces that were fragmented and preoccupied with internal matters.

These historical examples illustrate that for Jihad to achieve its goals, thorough material preparation—including arms and strategy—is essential, alongside the mental and spiritual readiness of the fighters (mujahidin). The Prophet Muhammad emphasized this by stating, "And prepare against them whatever you are able of power, including steeds of war" (Ash-Shallabi, 2017)

In Surah Al-Anfal, Verse 60, Allah SWT commands: "And prepare against them whatever you are able of power and of steeds of war by which you may terrify the enemy of Allah and your enemy and others besides them whom you do not know [but] whom Allah knows. Moreover, whatever you spend in the cause of Allah will be fully repaid to you, and you will not be wronged."

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Since 1947, the international community, through the UN, has made the two-state solution a solution to the crisis that occurred in Palestine between Palestinians and Jewish immigrants. The UN took this solution after Britain gave up on resolving the ongoing war between immigrant Jews and Palestinians, who did not accept the arrival of Jews to take over their lands and expel Palestinians from their homes. Apart from that, Jewish militants also terrorized British representatives and troops in Palestine to ensure their independence from British intervention.

In the UN General Assembly resolution in 1947, Palestine was divided into three parts: Israel got more than 50%, Palestine more than 40%, and Jerusalem under international authority, which functions as a place of worship for three religious communities, Muslims, Christians, and Jews. The resolution was not accepted by the Palestinian people, including the surrounding Arab countries, which ultimately resulted in the first war between Arabs and Israelis in 1948, which was won by Israel and made Israel control more of the Palestinian territory, namely around 70%.

Despite much controversy, the UN, OIC, and the majority of countries believe the two-state solution is the most acceptable solution in which Palestine and Israel live side by side peacefully in two separate sovereign states. The OIC supported Palestinian independence with standard borders on June 4, 1967, with Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its capital, and made a solution to the Palestinian problem based on a two-state solution, the only way to realize long-lasting, comprehensive peace and security in the region (Organization of Islamic Cooperation, 2024). In December 2022, EU Foreign Minister Josep Borrell declared that:

> *There is, nonetheless, no credible alternative. The two-state solution remains the best way to achieve lasting peace, stability, and equal rights for both peoples… This will also be our message to the incoming Israeli government, which we hope will confirm the country's full commitment to the shared values of democracy and rule of law, and with which we hope to engage in serious conversation on the conflict and the need to reopen the political horizon for the Palestinian population (Borrell, 2022).*

Another solution besides the two-state solution, which various groups also offer, is a one-state solution with three models: first, one country with two nations sharing power. This solution has been applied in several countries, such as Iraq, Lebanon, Yugoslavia, and Cyprus. However, this solution still has the potential to be harmful if both parties insist on dominating each other, such as in the Rwandan genocide and the Syrian War in 2014. The second model is the civic nationalism state, in which identities from two opposing parties fuse into a new national identity. This model is based on modern countries that emerged from the unification of various tribes or nations into a new national consciousness as their national bond, while still maintaining their respective ethnic or racial identities. The third model is the domination of one race over another race through the repression of minorities to create stability in the country (Miller, 2016).

Even though it is the dominant solution, the two-state solution seems unlikely to be realized until now, considering Israel's attitude towards the Palestinians and Israel's tight control of the Palestinian territories, both in Gaza and the West Bank. Indeed, the 1994 Oslo Agreement divided the territory, but in reality, Palestine did not gain political or legal sovereignty. Israel arbitrarily arrested Palestinians, seized houses, and carried out various kinds of violence, including killing Palestinians. Palestinians' mobilization is also limited both within Palestine and for residents who want to leave the country. Instead of supporting two states, Israel has, in fact, become dominant in Palestine through the domination of the Jewish race with the idea of one Jewish state (Barnett et al., 2023).

On the other hand, Palestinians cannot accept a two-state solution because Israel's existence since the mass migration after World War 1 has expelled more than one million Palestinians from their land, and thousands of others were killed. Suppose a two-state solution were to be accepted by the Palestinians. In that case, this means that Palestinians will also have to admit that their brothers and sisters will no longer have the right to return to their lands and homes that have been confiscated by Israel, which is becoming an impossible idea. Palestinians have always believed that the Jewish settlers were immigrants who plundered and colonized them, and the solution to all of this is Palestinian independence with the return of the citizens' rights that have been taken away from 1948 until now.

Furthermore, it is unrealistic to expect Jewish citizens to return their land to the Palestinians voluntarily. This idea is absurd because the Zionist regime actively encourages and facilitates Jewish immigration to settle in the Palestinian territories. As a result, colonization and land appropriation involve not just the government but also immigrant civilians, which is why the Zionist occupation of Palestine is often referred to as settler colonialism.

Historically and logically, colonialism is always perceived as a problem by the local population, leading to resistance. This is precisely what is happening in Palestine, where the residents' response and resistance are a natural reaction to the occupation. The history of the anti-colonial movement around the world proved these histories.

Therefore, the two-state solution that is always raised by the international community is actually problematic and even seems to be a political condiment to cover up the world's inability to stop colonialism and violence against Palestinians. Apart from that, this attitude also covers up the world's betrayal of humanity. Through the narrative of the two countries and the defense of Palestine, the world is trying to cover up its involvement in recognizing the existence of colonial Israel and, thus far, allowing Israeli colonialism or even collaborating intensively with Israel in various fields. It is true that the majority of UN members also recognize Palestine, but this does not have an impact on the fate of Palestine except for moral appeals and the flow of humanitarian aid. The real condition in Palestine is systematic colonization and violence, and the solution to this violence is to stop violence and uproot the roots of violence, namely the regime and radical Zionist thinking in the minds of the Jewish people.

Considering the character and attitudes of both parties, the Israeli regime and the Palestinians, the coexistence of these two entities seems unachievable, whether as two separate states or as a single state with shared territory, including a one-state solution with a new nationalistic identity. This is because both sides have deeply held beliefs regarding their right to exist. Moreover, Israel's arbitrary actions towards Palestinians only strengthen the narrative of colonialism and hatred, making it impossible to eradicate from the Palestinian people's minds, let alone that they are aware that the United States, the United Kingdom, France, Germany, and many other countries fully support Israeli colonialism.

With the logical principle of Israeli colonialism in Palestine, we can easily conclude that the strategy to resolve the Palestinian problem is through liberating Palestine from the entity of the Israeli colonial regime and returning the expelled citizens, as well as repatriating Jewish immigrants to their respective countries, and leaving the Jews who have lived in Palestine for generations to obtain their natural rights. In this way, renormalization between Muslims, Arabs, Christians, and Jews in Palestine can be born again.

Historically, the world has witnessed Muslims and Jews living side by side in Palestine under Islamic rule for approximately a thousand years. Jews also spread across various regions of Islamic civilization, including Andalusia, Cordoba, and Turkey. Jews admit for themselves how, in Islamic civilization, they are guaranteed religious rights, the right to life, property, and other fundamental rights. This happened when Jews in Europe were always persecuted and became people who were always suspected and hated. The Sephardic Jews on their website provide testimony that: "*Despite the numerous disadvantages faced by Jews under Muslim rule, there is no question that they fared far better than Jews in most other parts of the world at the time. They had full religious rights, were allowed to engage in a livelihood and own property, and, for the most part, were not physically abused"* (Sephardic Heritage Museum, 2019).

Harmonious relations between Jews and Muslims in Palestine flourished during Islamic rule. When the Crusaders took over in the 11th century, both Muslims and Jews suffered equally until Sultan Salahuddin Al-Ayyubi retook them in 1187 AD. This good relationship changed when the Zionist movement emerged in the early 19th century, and

Zionists became a significant political movement. Influential and received British support in the First World War, which facilitated Jewish immigrants to come and control the Palestinian territory. This Zionism continued to develop alongside Western political domination, as Muslim power was defeated and finally divided after the First World War (Al-Ahsan, 2019).

This Zionist movement was also initially not supported by the majority of Jews, including their rabbis. This idea is considered strange and deviant because, normatively, the Jewish religion does not suggest building a state for them. Apart from that, the meaning of Palestine and Jerusalem for Jews is limited to a spiritual meaning, not a political one. Anti-Zionist Jewish attitudes still exist among Jews today (Pappé, 2017). The historical narrative above clearly illustrates that the main problem that occurred in Palestine was the Zionist colonization and occupation, which the West supported. That means there is a way out and a solution for Palestine.

3.1 Application of the Jihad Concept in Resolving the Palestinian Problem

The humanitarian crisis in Palestine, from an Islamic perspective, is not just a humanitarian issue. Still, it is an important part of Islam: the land of Palestine, once conquered by Muslims in the era of Umar bin Khattab, and Bait al-Maqdis, or the al-Aqsa mosque, as one of the holy places for Muslims, the first Qibla before the al-Haram mosque in Mecca. Al-Aqsa also has historical significance as the place where the Prophet Muhammad ascended to the seventh heaven, as stated in the Quran (Surah al-Isra).

As a religious entity, the Palestinian issue receives great attention from Muslims, especially the ulama. Sheikh Abdul Aziz bin Baz (2002) once stated that the solution to the Palestinian problem is cooperation between Muslims in waging jihad against Israeli Jews, expelling them from Palestinian land, and returning Palestinian land to Muslim hands as before.

> *It is worth pointing out in this context that the Palestinian issue is an Islamic issue, first and last. However, the enemies of Islam are striving their utmost to remove it from the Islamic map and make the non-Arab Muslims think that it is an Arab issue that does not concern the non-Arabs. It seems they have succeeded to some extent. Hence, I think that a solution cannot be reached in this matter unless it is regarded as an Islamic issue. The Muslims cooperate to find a solution and wage an Islamic jihad against the Jews until the land is given back to its people and the Jewish immigrants go back to the countries from which they came. The original Jewish inhabitants stayed in their towns under Islamic rule, not communist or secular rule. In this manner, truth will prevail and falsehood will be defeated, and the people whose land it is will return to their land under Islamic rule and none other. Moreover, Allah is the source of strength (Al-Shaykh Ibn Baaz, 2002).*

According to Sheikh Yusuf al-Qardhawy (2013), jihad in Palestine applies in two contexts of obligation: wajib *Kifayah* and *wajib Ain*. When a Muslim region is fought against, the obligation of the Ain or individual for that country to carry out resistance, and for other Muslims, their *kifayah* obligation becomes void. However, if the Muslims who are fighting are unable to fight effectively, then Ain's obligation extends to neighboring regions. If they are also unable to help, Ain's obligation extends to the entire Islamic world to support Jihad activities physically and financially (Yusuf Al-Qardhawi, 2013). Of course, physical jihad can only be carried out by the state through its trained military forces. In contrast, financial or economic efforts and the war of ideas can be carried out by the Muslim people.

In the context of Israel's invasion of Gaza in October 2023, the call for jihad was conveyed by the International Union of Muslim Scholars (IUMS) by emphasizing the emergency in Gaza due to the genocide committed by Israel and criticizing the double standards of the West, which support Israeli atrocities. This Ulama Community urges the leaders of the Islamic world to take firm steps to stop Israel, first, by severing diplomatic and economic relations with Israel. If Israel still does not stop, Muslim countries can expand the scope of the war and economically boycott countries that support Israel—second, forming a humanitarian alliance of countries that support the rights of the Palestinian people in Asia, Europe, America, South America, and Africa, together with human rights institutions around the world through an emphasis on the reality of Gaza victims of racism and holocaust practices, as the Nazi Holocaust against the Jews. Third, seek various methods by air and land to assist the people of Gaza. If Israel and its state supporters do not respond to these demands, then a complete boycott is necessary, including a boycott of the export of oil and gas to all of those countries (IUMS, 2023).

To realize the Jihad to liberate Palestine, several viewpoints from scholars above can guide the steps of this Jihad:

First, Muslim countries that have been maintaining diplomatic relations with Israel and cooperating in various fields should sever their diplomatic relations and other forms of cooperation, including economic ties and trade routes by land, sea, and air. Countries bordering Israel, such as Egypt, Turkey, Lebanon, Syria, and Jordan, can close their

land, sea, and air access to block Israel's export and import routes. As a country that exports oil to Israel, Azerbaijan could halt oil exports to Israel and Turkey, halting the flow from Azerbaijan, which supplies 40% of Israel's oil needs (Turkish Minute, 2023).

This first approach could deliver a significant blow to Israel, considering that the Islamic world surrounds Israel and depends on neighboring Muslim countries for economic export and import activities, as well as weaponry. Internally, Israel's territory is tiny. In a geopolitical context, the area under Israeli control is tiny — only 22,000 square kilometers, with a narrowest width of 15 kilometers — and most of the country's industrial, commercial, and social activities are concentrated in a 100-kilometer-long coastal strip (Pinfold, 2023). This geographical vulnerability causes Israel to act extra cautiously in the face of both internal and external threats, such as when Hamas attacked on October 7, 2023, and the disturbances caused by Houthi forces in the Red Sea, as well as Israel's attacks on Iranian facilities in Syria (Aswar, 2024).

Suppose the first approach—a blockade from all directions — fails. In that case, the second approach, which is the Islamic world, can carry out a military approach through attacks that cripple Israel's military and industrial facilities. As a small country, it is not difficult to direct tens of thousands of missiles from various Muslim countries to destroy Israel's strategic facilities. Considering that Israel has 169,500 active-duty soldiers and a total of 465,000, including reserve soldiers, the number is not that significant compared to the Muslim armies in the Middle East that could be deployed to liberate Palestine (AJLabs, 2023). If carried out effectively and optimally, this second approach could resolve the current issue of Zionist occupation in Palestine.

Examining the composition and power dynamics between Muslim countries and the West, these two steps are challenging but not impossible if Muslim countries are willing to be assertive. Considering the West's dependence on the Islamic world in terms of economy and geographical position, the firmness of Muslim leaders will force the West to follow the interests desired by the Muslim community. Even if the West eventually responds to the Islamic world's stance with a boycott or military approach, for the Islamic world, that is a positive path toward martyrdom and independence from Western influence. In Islam, dying in the struggle for Islam and the interests of the Muslim community is nobler than living and submitting under the colonization and domination of infidels.

If Muslims find themselves in a position of weakness before their enemies, Islam offers an alternative to make peace with the enemy. However, Muslims must continue to prepare their strength to carry out jihad. Choosing peace here serves as a strategy to pause the war, allowing Muslims to prepare their strength to face the enemy effectively. In the context of the Muslim jihad against Israel, if Muslim countries feel weak before Israel, the US, and their allies, Muslim leaders can choose not to engage in war but use this time as a strategy to prepare adequate strength for future confrontations. It should be noted that in this situation, Muslims must not rely on Israel or engage in strategic cooperation in various areas, such as the normalization efforts undertaken by many Muslim countries with Israel, and rely on Israel's partner countries. The above provision is based on the word of Allah SWT in the Quran, Surah Al-Imran (3) verse 28: Believers should not take disbelievers as guardians instead of the believers, and whoever does so will have nothing to hope for from Allah—unless it is a precaution against their tyranny. Moreover, Allah warns you about Himself (Sabiq, 2009, pp. 508–509).

3.2. The Challenge of Jihad to Liberate Palestine

Jihad in Islam has a high position and virtue, along with several other major deeds (At Taubah/9: 21-22). In fact, this virtue is not only present for those who directly engage in jihad in the name of Allah. Furthermore, those who are considered to help donate or equip the mujahideen and those who take care of the families of the mujahideen are also considered to have participated in fighting in the name of Allah (*Muttafaq 'alaihi)* (Almanhaj, 2023). With these virtues, it is no wonder that the companions of the Prophet Muhammad competed to participate in Jihad.

Different times present different challenges. Slightly different from the time of the Prophet, today, Jihad faces various challenges across various dimensions. In relation to the liberation of Palestine from Israeli occupation at the moment, Jihad faces several challenges of the times. This section will discuss three main challenges in the liberation of Palestine. First is the physical challenge, which includes explanations related to the military, economy, and politics. Second is the leadership challenge of the Muslim world. Third is the ideological challenge that hampers the mindset of the current generation of Muslims.

3.3. Physical Challenges: Military, Economic, and Political

The current physical condition of the Muslim ummah is at its lowest point since Islam was championed by the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) in the Arabian Peninsula. Although Islam is now the second-largest religion in the world by number of adherents, comprising one-quarter of the global population (Worldpopulationreview, 2024), its quality

does not match that of the companions during the time of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). This situation results in the current impotence of Islam. Evidence of this can be seen in three main areas: the military, the economy, and politics.

From a military perspective, the combat strength of countries with a Muslim majority is relatively weak compared to several countries with a Muslim minority. None of the top five best militaries in the world is from a Muslim-majority country (Global Fire Power, 2024). Similarly, none of the countries with the best military technology are Muslim-majority nations (Kelas Pintar, 2023). Even more concerning is that two of the countries that oppose the Muslim ummah, the United States and India, are in the top five of both rankings. This military situation places Muslim-majority countries in a cautious position when considering actions against Israel, which the United States supports.

Economically, most Muslim-majority countries are blessed with abundant natural resources, but unfortunately, they lack sovereignty over them. This is evidenced by the fact that most Arab countries, which are predominantly Muslim, have abundant oil resources (Mydin & Mirakhor, 2020). This wealth of natural energy should give Palestine significant bargaining power in international politics, but this leverage has not yet been used to defend Palestine. For example, Saudi Arabia, which possesses abundant oil resources, has not been able or courageous enough to impose an oil blockade on countries supporting Israel, even though Western countries are heavily dependent on Saudi oil (Herbstreuth, 2014)

From a Political Perspective, countries with a Muslim majority are unable to become dominant players in global politics. Their abundant resources and wealth cannot position Muslim-majority countries as part of the leading players in global politics. This is closely related to these countries' dependence on Western dominance. As evidence, many Muslim-majority countries depend on Western countries for military weapon technology.

Islamic countries are still preoccupied with internal divisions. Formally, Islamic countries cooperate through the OIC, but Islamic identity has not yet been able to unite them or eliminate conflicts among them. Several ongoing conflicts (such as between Saudi Arabia and Iran and internal conflicts in Syria) have diverted attention that should be directed toward the liberation of Palestine.

In other aspects, Muslims spread across the world still experience persecution from non-Muslim governments, both from their governments directly and from their societies (Alper et al., 2024). Islamophobia sentiment is widespread in various countries and significantly disadvantages Muslims in those countries. In Europe, refugees who should have protection rights are denied these rights simply because they are Muslims. Muslims in non-Muslim countries often face unfair treatment and lack the freedom to practice Islamic teachings. Worse still, Muslims also suffer physical violence from extremists who hate Islam, such as what happens in India (Alaa et al., 2022). The impotence of Islam in the global arena allows this persecution to proceed without significant resistance.

3.4. Leadership Challenges: Pro-Western Authoritarianism and Pro-Western Democracy

The leadership of a country poses its own challenges to the liberation of Palestine. A country's leadership system plays a significant role in policy-making. Besides the leadership system, a leader's alignment also greatly influences the country's political policies. At least two systems and two types of leadership pose clear challenges to the liberation of Palestine today: Pro-Western Authoritarianism and Pro-Western Democracy.

The first system is a country with a pro-Western authoritarian leadership that tends to be repressive toward society. Countries with such a power system have complete control to determine unilateral policy directions without the need for societal consensus. The other system is pro-Western democratic leadership, referring to Muslim-majority countries that adopt democratic systems but align with the West. Countries with such a leadership system tend to remain silent even if their society desires to support Palestine. Although these two leadership systems are different, they share a crucial similarity (Nugent et al., 2018).

3.5. Ideological Challenges: Nationalism and Liberalism

The modern world has developed by adopting a Western worldview and spreading it to various regions. Islam highly values reason and knowledge, but does not accept values that are inconsistent with religious law. Islam is very open to Western technologies that promote societal prosperity. However, Islam is selective and does not accept values that have the potential to weaken faith, especially those that contradict Islamic beliefs.

Muslims will only be strong when united and will be weak when divided and fragmented. In the struggle to liberate Palestine, the adoption of certain ideologies by Muslims around the world significantly impacts the continuity of this struggle. The differences in ideologies adopted can have various consequences, the most significant being the creation of divisions among Muslims. At least two dominant ideologies pose challenges to the liberation of Palestine: nationalism and liberalism.

Nationalism was born from the existence of nation-states, which require a country to stand for a specific nation. In this context, the Treaty of Westphalia, which marked the birth of nation-states, indirectly contributed to the emergence of nationalism. Nationalism, which is tied to the nation-state, is also shaped and, at times, imposed through specific narratives that can give rise to extremism that considers one's nation superior to others (Whitmeyer, 2002).

Every country in the current international environment strives to establish nationalism within its borders for specific purposes, including Muslim-majority countries. Nationalism, which prioritizes national unity above other commonalities, is crucial for maintaining political legitimacy. For politicians, nationalism is essential to mobilize the broader public within a country. However, nationalism has significant consequences for the unity of the global Muslim community (Baban, 2018). It marginalizes the idea of the ummah in favor of the nation. The alienation of religion (Islam) by nationalism leads to the fragmentation of Muslim unity due to differences among nation-states worldwide.

Today, Muslim identity is being eroded by nationalism, which arises from the concept of nation-states (Zubaida, 2004). The drumbeat of nationalism is louder and more frequently heard from national leaders than the call for unity among Muslims. Such narratives subsequently influence decision-making, prioritizing national interests over unity in defending religion.

Another ideology alongside nationalism is liberalism. Liberalism is closely associated with democracy, a primary agenda promoted globally. Liberalism views democracy as the best system and believes it should be adopted worldwide, either voluntarily or by force. This perspective indirectly implies that systems other than democracy are inferior and must be changed.

In the struggle for the liberation of Palestine, liberalism poses another significant challenge. Liberalism, synonymous with democracy, has shifted the focus of Muslim interests. Amidst the genocide faced by Palestinians at the hands of Israel, Muslims in various countries are preoccupied with short-term domestic politics, neglecting the suffering of their fellow Muslims. They may feel sympathy when seeing the situation of Palestinians on social media, but soon forget it amidst their daily routines.

All the challenges faced by the Muslim ummah mentioned above can be summarized under the primary idea of secularism. The separation between the worldly and the hereafter has evidently weakened the unity of the global Muslim community. Muslims today have been mesmerized by the glittering offers of the world by liberalism. Even in the pursuit of worldly gains, Muslims today conflict with each other. Furthermore, the concept of nation-states has fragmented the global Muslim community into several nationalisms. Secularism has evidently eroded the true essence of being a Muslim, which is the prioritization of the hereafter over worldly matters.

3.6. Solving the Challenges

The material issues faced by Muslims are not the primary obstacles to making a significant contribution to the Palestinian cause. Evidence shows that Muslim countries in the Middle East are not truly weak, as demonstrated when Saudi Arabia led a coalition to intervene militarily in Yemen in 2014 to assist the Yemeni government against the Houthis. Saudi Arabia collaborated with Egypt, Morocco, Jordan, Sudan, the United Arab Emirates, Kuwait, Qatar, Bahrain, Djibouti, Eritrea, and Somalia. Historically, Middle Eastern Muslim countries have also conducted military interventions against Israel in 1948, 1967, and 1973. These wars should serve as lessons to strengthen military power more effectively. Unfortunately, instead of doing so, Muslim countries have chosen to maintain harmonious relations and dependency on Israel and Western countries that have long facilitated Israel. As a result, military resistance, which states with military power should conduct, has become increasingly unlikely, leaving only jihadist groups to carry out such actions with their limited resources.

In short, the main issue behind the inability of Muslim countries lies in the political or leadership mentality that lacks the strength to take a firm stance against Israeli colonization. To resolve this issue, the power of the people is the only solution to pave the way for strong and courageous leadership through several means:

First, the people in the Islamic world must continuously pressure Muslim leaders to take a firm stance. People at all levels must keep raising awareness about the urgency of the situation in Palestine and encourage others to push their governments to take a strong stand against Israel and its state supporters until the Palestinian issue can be effectively resolved (Yusuf Al-Qardhawi, 2013). In the current context, various Muslim countries, both Arab and non-Arab, have been actively applying pressure through demonstrations, including calls for boycotts, but Muslim governments have yet to take a decisive stance. Some Muslim countries, such as Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, and Morocco, have even repressed and arrested anti-Israel demonstrators (Yee et al., 2024).

Second, suppose Muslim countries remain unmoved by the people's demands to defend Palestine due to their consideration of national interests, elite interests, or feeling weak in the face of Israel and the West. In that case,

Muslims need to consider political reform. This involves transforming the political landscape in the Islamic world, whether authoritarian or pro-Western democracies, into regimes that are independent, strong, and bold enough to take a firm stance. This must be done collectively across various Muslim countries, both Arab and non-Arab, by strengthening social movement networks within the Islamic world. The Arab Spring demonstrates that people have the power to change the political dynamics in their own countries.

However, this change must be directed correctly, as Sheikh Ibn Baaz (2002) stated, emphasizing the importance of Muslims adopting an Islamic perspective as a solution to governance rather than communism or secularism. If Muslims pursue change based on secular foundations, it could potentially pave the way for the return of foreign domination in the Islamic world once again, as is currently the case. This Islamic governance will liberate the Palestinian people by establishing a new state governed by Islamic principles rather than socialism or secularism (Al-Shaykh Ibn Baaz, 2002).

4. Conclusion

In conclusion, the article addresses jihad as a realistic response to Palestinian colonization from 1948 to the present. This article contends that the main root of the crisis in Palestine is the Zionist Jewish occupation of Palestinian territory, which the United States and its allies support. This article suggested the answer to the problem, which is to liberate Palestine from Zionist occupation by applying the Islamic notion of jihad by the pro-Palestinian Muslim-majority countries. However, the execution is hampered by political, economic, and military conditions in Muslim countries, as well as the dominant ideologies these countries follow. This includes physical challenges in the military, economic, and political spheres due to pro-Western authoritarianism and democracy, as well as ideological challenges related to nationalism and liberalism. The article suggests that the only way to overcome these challenges is by empowering and pressuring Muslim leaders to take a firm stance and advocate for political reform based on Islamic principles.

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