



## Indonesian Diplomacy in Resolving the Rohingya Conflict in Myanmar During the Presidency of Joko Widodo (2014-2019)

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### ABSTRACT

*This study aims to examine the direction and foreign policy of Indonesia under the President Joko Widodo administration (2014-2019). Specifically, this study analysed the diplomacy conducted by President Joko Widodo during his first term in office to address the Rohingya crisis. The research used qualitative and descriptive methods with secondary data sources, such as literature from books, documents, journals, newspapers, magazines, and online articles. This study employed descriptive analysis techniques. The collected data were analysed and triangulated. This study found, firstly, a fundamental difference in the direction of Indonesian foreign policy under President Joko Widodo compared to the previous era, namely the administration of President SBY. While SBY's foreign policy was more high-politics, President Joko Widodo's foreign policy was more inward-looking. However, this did not mean that the international role has been neglected; rather, that role—particularly regarding peace efforts—is now exercised more selectively, with a focus on areas directly impacting Indonesia's interests and through a more proactive engagement aimed at achieving concrete results. Secondly, this study identified the reasons behind Indonesia's intensified efforts—under President Jokowi's administration—to help resolve the Rohingya conflict in Myanmar. Beyond the fact that the Rohingya issue directly affects regional and national stability and security, the sensitivity of the matter is also a key consideration, given that the victims of the conflict are predominantly Rohingya Muslims. By employing a combination of bilateral, multilateral, and humanitarian diplomacy, Indonesia has successfully gained the Myanmar government's trust, enabling deeper involvement in the local peace process.*

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## INTRODUCTION

The mission of every country's foreign policy is to fight for national interests at the international level. Similarly, Indonesia's national policy is aimed at fighting for and protecting national interests. Amidst

the development of the world today, which is full of friction between the interests of each country at the bilateral, regional and multilateral levels, it is increasingly important for Indonesia to be able to determine and show attitudes and place the right and clear position.

The basic idea of Indonesia's foreign policy was conveyed by Bung Hatta in his speech "Rowing Between Two Reefs" delivered at the Central National Working Committee in Yogyakarta in 1948. Bung Hatta keenly saw the reality of the internal and external environment in placing foreign policy. If observed, as found in an article written by Bung Hatta (1953) in the leading international journal Foreign Affairs Vol 51/3, free and active foreign policy begins with an effort to find answers to concrete questions: *"Does this mean that the Indonesian people, who are fighting for their independence, have no choice but to become pro-Russian or pro-American? The Government believes that the attitude to be taken is that Indonesia should not be a passive party in the international political arena, but should be an active agent entitled to determine its own attitude. The politics of the Republic of Indonesia must be decided based on its own interests and must be implemented in accordance with the situation and realities it has to face."*

It is clear that the foreign policy ideas put forward by Hatta (1953) were not empty rhetoric about independence, but were based on rational thinking and even full awareness of the principles of realism in dealing with the dynamics of international politics in a specific context and time.

Alexandra's research (2017) showed that Indonesia has made efforts to create stability in the ASEAN region by playing a peacebuilding role in encouraging the implementation of democratic values and respect for human rights in Myanmar. In her research, Alexandra explained that Indonesia has at least intensively played its role there in the last five years. Through its capacity, Indonesia seeks to encourage the process of openness and democracy in Myanmar by involving various stakeholders. It is true that the development of democracy there is not solely due to Indonesia's role, but the concrete role played by Indonesia there has had a positive impact and Myanmar's trust in Indonesia, whereas previously Myanmar was very closed to other countries, especially when it came to domestic issues. This is evidenced by the sending of Myanmar delegations to conduct dialogues related to democracy to Indonesia and the acceptance of Indonesian envoys to conduct dialogues with Myanmar leaders. This trust must be followed up by Indonesia to continue to play its role in creating peace and security in Myanmar in particular and the region in general.

Permata and Sinulingga (2019) specifically examined Indonesia's response to the 2017 Rohingya crisis. The study demonstrates that Indonesia sought to open up humanitarian space amidst the Myanmar government's resistance to various forms of international pressure and aid. Consequently, Indonesia's diplomacy went beyond mere political statements, manifesting also through diplomatic communication and the provision of humanitarian assistance. The Rohingya case illustrates how humanitarian values can be integrated with Indonesia's foreign policy interests to maintain its role as an active regional actor.

Indonesia's commitment to maintaining regional order is also explained by Leifer's research on Indonesian Foreign Policy (2013), especially at the beginning of the New Order when President Soeharto gave a view of Southeast Asian cooperation as a bulwark against the intervention of outside forces. Indonesia's view was later realised with the formation of ASEAN in 1967, where members bound themselves to ensure their stability and security from outside influence in all its forms and manifestations. Indonesia's active and unprecedented participation was seen as a means by which Indonesia could cooperate and create stability in the region while respecting the principle of sovereignty of each country. This principle has been upheld by Indonesia in carrying out its foreign policy, especially related to realising regional peace and security.

Furthermore, research conducted by Situmorang (2015) on Indonesia's Foreign Policy Orientation under the Jokowi-JK Government. According to Situmorang, there was a fundamental difference in

the direction of President Jokowi's foreign policy compared to President SBY. If SBY is seen as displaying an outward-looking foreign policy, then Jokowi's foreign policy is more inward-looking. There are several arguments presented by Situmorang regarding why Jokowi's foreign policy direction will be more inward-looking. First, the Constitutional Principles and Objectives of Foreign Policy. In accordance with Jokowi's vision and mission in the field of foreign affairs, which aims for the realisation of Indonesia which is sovereign, independent, and has a national personality. If it is associated with foreign policy, there is room to interpret the principle of free and active foreign policy based on national independence and positive and constructive cooperation. In addition, the constitutional mandate as stated in the preamble of the 1945 Constitution to participate in maintaining world peace and order is realised; it can only be implemented if national prosperity can first be improved. Increased national prosperity will increase external capabilities, especially participation in the maintenance of world peace.

Second, international and regional political constellations. According to Situmorang (2015), the external conditions experienced by President Jokowi were not much different from previous presidents. The influence of the US, the European Union, and Russia still colours the international political map, in addition to the development of China's power, which has become an interesting issue in recent years, especially China's economic expansion almost throughout the world. Facing this external situation, Jokowi will prioritise national strengthening. Third, domestic political dynamics. By winning only 52 per cent of the vote with a difference of only 7 million votes from his competitor in the presidential election, Prabowo-Hatta, Jokowi really has to consider other political forces if he does not want to get into political difficulties in his administration. The condition of Indonesia's Muslim-majority society also means that in the consolidation of internal democracy, the Islamic dimension of foreign policy must be visible. Fourth, Jokowi's idiosyncrasy. The last argument, according to Situmorang, is the subjective factor of the leader, namely idiosyncratic. In this aspect, Situmorang emphasises 4 important dimensions that need to be observed, namely cognitive, social perception, motivational, and emotional. The cognitive dimension describes the leader's knowledge and understanding of the complexity of international problems, relationships or interactions that take place, identity and interests in each international interaction, regulations, and patterns and processes of international cooperation. Social perception shows the pattern of relationship between self and other.

In Situmorang's view, Jokowi's simplicity and honesty will determine his foreign policy priorities as well as how he views international cooperation and organisations as something as good as himself. On the other hand, Jokowi's assertiveness will emerge if he sees values that contradict these principles of honesty. Jokowi's motivational dimension will emerge because Jokowi is a simple and honest person who wants concrete and realised cooperation. This means that Jokowi wants foreign relations to be based on simple but honest cooperation and provide positive and concrete results for the parties involved. The last is the emotional dimension. Based on the introduction through mass media, it seems that Jokowi has stronger or more prominent positive emotions than negative emotions. Jokowi feels safe in the community. Ethnic, cultural, and social backgrounds are considered to determine Jokowi's emotions. Situmorang then explained that Javanese culture and traditions that emphasise the attitude of “guyup” and prioritise “harmony” have contributed to the ability to control emotions and a more polite appearance.

Research conducted by Cahyono (2024) demonstrated that an Islamic foundation serves as a symbol for fostering solidarity and promoting global values of peace. The study illustrates how the principle of progressive geopolitical coexistence is utilised to support regional peace. It underscores that, since the dawn of independence, Islamic values—particularly peace—have served as a vital instrument of Indonesian diplomacy.

Law No. 37/1999 on Foreign Relations, in Article 1 paragraph 2, states that foreign policy is the policy, attitude, and steps taken by the Indonesian government in conducting relations with other countries, international organisations, and other subjects of international law to deal with international

problems to achieve national goals. Article 3 further explains that Indonesia's foreign policy adheres to the principle of free and active, which is devoted to the national interest.

In the explanation of the Law, it is explained that what is meant by “free and active” is a foreign policy which is not neutral in essence, but a foreign policy which in its implementation is free to determine attitudes and policies towards international problems and does not bind itself to one world power and actively contributes, both in the form of ideas and active participation in resolving conflicts, disputes and other world problems for the realization of world order based on independence, lasting peace and social justice.

At a theoretical level, according to Plano and Olton (1999), foreign policy was a strategy or plan of a country in dealing with other countries or other international political units. Foreign policy is carried out to achieve national goals as outlined in national interests. Meanwhile, according to Holsti (1995), foreign policy is the actions and activities of the state towards its external environment in an effort to benefit from this environment and internal conditions and support the formulation of these actions.

Another international relations expert, Rosenau, explains the theory of internal and external settings in the formulation of foreign policy. According to him, foreign policy is a country's effort through its overall attitude and activities to overcome and benefit from its external environment. Foreign policy in Rosenau's view is directed at maintaining and sustaining the survival of a country. More deeply, Rosenau said that the process of making foreign policy is very complex and involves internal aspects (internal life) and external needs (external needs), including internal and external life such as aspirations, national attributes, culture, conflicts, capabilities, institutions, and routine activities aimed at achieving and maintaining the social, legal, and geographical identity of a country as a nation-state. is a source that comes from the external environment of a country. External needs explain the structure of relations among major states, the patterns of alliances formed among states and external situational factors that can be in the form of issue areas or crises. What is meant by the structure of relations between major states is the number of major states that take part in the structure of international relations and how capabilities are distributed among them. External situational factors are sudden stimuli that come from the latest international situation (Rosenau, 1986).

Drawing on the aforementioned foreign policy theory, this study seeks to explain Indonesia's diplomacy in fostering stability in Southeast Asia regarding the Rohingya conflict. President Joko Widodo employed a humanitarian diplomacy approach during his first term (2014–2019) to address the humanitarian crisis in Myanmar stemming from the Rohingya conflict.

## **METHOD**

The method used in this research was descriptive, which is research used to describe precisely the properties, conditions or symptoms, or to determine the frequency of a symptom or the frequency of a certain relationship between a symptom and another symptom (Bakri, 2002: 17). This study employed a qualitative method with a descriptive-analytical approach. The qualitative method was used because the research aims to gain an in-depth understanding and analysis of Indonesia's diplomacy in efforts to resolve the Rohingya conflict in Myanmar during President Joko Widodo's 2014–2019 administration. The descriptive-analytical approach was utilised to outline the various diplomatic efforts undertaken by Indonesia to foster regional stability, particularly regarding the Rohingya conflict.

The subject of this research was the administration of President Joko Widodo during the 2014–2019 period, while the object of the research was the diplomacy conducted by the Joko Widodo administration to resolve the Rohingya conflict.

The unit of analysis in this research was the state. The focus of this research is to find out the diplomacy and strategic activities carried out by the Joko Widodo administration in creating regional

stability, especially related to the Rohingya conflict in Myanmar. Data collection used in this research was through library research through literature books, notes, the internet, journals, newspapers, and various other periodicals related to this research. In doing this research, data analysis needs to be done to organise, sort, classify, code and categorise it. Meanwhile, data analysis is the process of organising and sorting data into patterns, categories and basic units so that a hypothesis can be found. The collected data were compared using the source triangulation technique to ensure the consistency of the data used in this study.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Joko Widodo's Foreign Policy Direction

The election of Joko Widodo as President of the Republic of Indonesia in 2014-2019 certainly has consequences for the direction of Indonesia's foreign policy. Indeed, the principle of free and active foreign policy is the guideline for anyone who becomes a leader in Indonesia. However, each leader may have a different character and strategy in implementing the free and active policy as long as it does not go beyond the constitution.

If his predecessor Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono (SBY) was known as an internationalist president who was very active on the global stage, then Jokowi's foreign policy is more inward-looking than outward-looking. Jokowi is not overly interested in international issues. The outline of Jokowi's foreign policy direction was clearly outlined in his vision-mission when he ran for president. The Jokowi-Jusuf Kalla pair promotes middle power diplomacy "...which places Indonesia as a regional power with selective global engagement, which means that it will prioritise issues that are directly related to the interests of the nation and the people of Indonesia" (Rasyidin, 2014: 2).

According to Situmorang (2015), SBY's foreign policy displays a high-profile political figure. Indonesia's involvement in international forums is not only directed as a form of expression to gain global recognition but also reflects the government's desire to be considered in the global political arena. Several achievements have been made by SBY during his administration, such as Indonesia's participation in the G-20, which is an organisation of countries that have great economic power. In addition, to increasing self-confidence. Indonesia's active participation in this forum provides a large space for Indonesia to be involved in determining regulations and international order in order to improve world development, international cooperation and security. In addition, several important achievements were also made by SBY in carrying out his foreign policy, including strengthening Indonesia's leadership in ASEAN, APEC, and other partnerships such as the Bali Democracy Forum (BDF), which has made a positive contribution in building partnerships with many countries in promoting democratic values without having to intervene but to conduct dialogue and exchange experiences in solving various problems. The role of peace was also carried out by SBY by sending TNI to be part of the UN Peace Force to be active in every UN peace operation. SBY's administration also actively built dialogue with Myanmar to help the process of democratic transition and communal conflicts that occurred there. The roles above prove that the focus of Indonesia's foreign policy in the SBY era is to strengthen Indonesia's position and role in international fora, so that Indonesia must build an arena as a place to "play".

Indonesian foreign policy in the era of President Joko Widodo repositioned Indonesia's role in the global political arena. One of Jokowi's foreign policy concerns that was always conveyed during the campaign was to increase its global role through middle power diplomacy, which places Indonesia as a regional power with selective global involvement, by prioritising issues that are directly related to Indonesia's interests.

### Rohingya Conflict and Regional Stability

The humanitarian tragedy in Burma has long been the centre of world attention. The barbaric methods practised by the Burmese military junta against its own people are a dark tragedy that has killed the

right to life of the Burmese people. It reminds us of the gross human rights violations against the Jews committed by “Adolf Hitler” in Germany, or “Soeharto” in the early days of the New Order, who killed millions of people and imprisoned the living without any trial.

Since 1962, when General Ne Win carried out a military coup and seized power from Prime Minister U Nu, a political crisis that has not stopped has occurred in Burma. The last crisis occurred again, and the trigger was the policy of the military junta government, which raised fuel prices by almost 500 per cent. As a result, gas prices rose 5 times, gasoline and diesel prices rose 2 times, and bus fares also rose 2 times from before. Massive demonstrations were inevitable.

Myanmar's political crisis began to appear when the SLORC brutally crushed demonstrations led by Buddhist monks and students in Mandalay city and several other cities in August and September 1990. This was also followed by the arrest of several NLD leaders and other political parties (Taylor, 2020). The pro-democracy movement in Myanmar emerged as a strong reaction to the treatment of the Myanmar military junta against its political opponents. The arrests, torture and imprisonment carried out by the SLORC against students and political activists have not been able to stop the enthusiasm of the Myanmar people to realise democracy in their country. Since then, the issue of democracy and human rights in Myanmar has become big news in local and international media almost every day. Political chaos has become one of the characteristics of Myanmar society from time to time. The pro-democracy people have to face the military forces that do not want political change in Myanmar.

With this development, the international world is invited to look back at the political turmoil in Myanmar that has been almost forgotten since the destruction of the 1988 pro-democracy movement by the SLORC. This development also shows how strong the forms of political resistance in Myanmar are even though the SLORC continues to systematically and brutally silence opposition groups.

Myanmar has had to suffer from armed conflict for approximately six decades. The country consists of several armed ethnic groups, each of which wants to maintain its own cultural, economic, and political freedom. The military junta itself failed to gain support from the ethnic groups that control these areas, like a state within a state. Various cases of human rights violations have occurred against unarmed Myanmar residents, including monks, and have drawn repeated criticism from the international community (Taylor, 2020).

The same military attacks were also directed at areas controlled by various ethnic minorities under the umbrella of the NDF organisation. This war caused great casualties and also international condemnation because the Ne Win government's soldiers committed human rights violations against residents of various ethnic minorities.

Soldiers from the Ne Win government often forced villagers from various ethnic minorities to work as guides or transporters of military supplies in the jungle. Many of them died from stepping on deadly landmines. Stories of rape, torture, and burning of people's homes were also heard.

The powerful method used by the Myanmar military junta is psychological intimidation of the people. The arrest and detention of political opponents and demonstrators were carried out without regard to legal and justice aspects. The imprisonment of the people, who are predominantly monks, was carried out without a trial. Those who were detained were tried by a special and instant court, which is a court whose prosecutors and judges are the military junta itself. For the Myanmar military junta, law and courts do not exist at all in their dictionary. The human side is only made fun of; justice and welfare only belong to those in power.

Although the transition towards democracy began rolling since 2010 when the first general election was held since 1990, it did not automatically resolve internal conflicts and change the character of the regime, which seemed to still use old methods (read: violence) in resolving internal conflicts in its

country. One of the conflicts that caught the world's attention was the communal conflict in Rakhine State, which befell the Rohingya ethnic group. Hundreds of thousands of Rohingya ethnic groups had to flee from Myanmar to other countries because of intimidation and acts of violence that threatened their security. The UN even reported that there had been a systematic massacre/genocide of the Rohingya ethnic group carried out by military and civilian forces against the Rohingya ethnic group. This incident certainly had an impact on the stability of the ASEAN region because thousands of Rohingya ethnic groups saved their lives by fleeing to neighbouring countries. Until 2018, the Rohingya ethnic conflict in Myanmar had attracted attention and become the subject of the international mass media and received global condemnation. The oppression and human rights violations experienced by the Rohingya ethnic group have opened the eyes of the international world to the historical tragedy of Rohingya Muslims in Myanmar, where ethnic cleansing has occurred by Buddhists supported by the Myanmar military.

The issuance of the 1982 Citizenship Law, or Burma Citizenship Law, politically made the existence of the Rohingya community illegal in the eyes of the law. Through this regulation, only a few ethnic groups are recognised by the government, namely Kachin, Kayah, Karen, Chin, Burman, Mon and Rakhine. These ethnic groups are ethnic groups that have existed in Myanmar since the time of the kingdoms, before British colonialism in 1892. Apart from that, other community groups recognised by the Myanmar government are associated citizens and naturalised citizens because they have conclusive evidence of their existence in Myanmar before 1948. To obtain this status, an important requirement that must be met is the use of Myanmar as an everyday language. This is where the problem arises because, in the case of the Rohingya ethnic group, most Rohingya people cannot use Myanmar, while Rohingya is not recognised as a national language (Sucipto, 2015).

Human rights violations experienced by the Rohingya ethnic group are actually not new and have occurred since 1962 when General Ne Win carried out a military coup and seized power from Prime Minister U Nu. General Ne Win formed operations that caused the Rohingya ethnic group to be forcibly expelled from Myanmar. It is alleged that thousands of Rohingya ethnic groups were expelled from their villages as a result of the massive military operations carried out by the military junta. In 1978, the Burmese military junta also carried out military operations against the Rohingya ethnic group by destroying mosques, killing, destroying property and forcing labour. At that time, the military regime carried out an operation called Operation Dragon King to register Myanmar citizens and expel people who did not meet the criteria for citizenship. Operation Dragon King was carried out by the armed forces and used violence in carrying out its actions. The Rohingya ethnic group was greatly affected by this operation; the Myanmar military carried out forced expulsions of the Rohingya ethnic group. When the Burmese military persecution increased, more than 167,000 Rohingya ethnic groups fled Myanmar to Bangladesh. After strong international pressure, many Rohingya immigrants were allowed to return to Myanmar. Then in 1991 and 1992, the persecution of the Rohingya returned, with around 250,000 people returning to Bangladesh (<https://www.hrw.org/reports/2000/burma/index.htm>, accessed on August 18, 2019).

An important event then occurred in 2012, when riots involving the Rohingya ethnic group and the Buddhist Myanmar community, activists and organised groups occurred, and it was suspected that there was an attempt to eliminate the ethnic minority in the Rakhine region. The riots that occurred in 2012 were allegedly influenced by Kyaw Zaw Oo, a Rakhine ethnic political activist who published a note stating that Muslims in Rakhine State were foreigners. Although he had been arrested for his role in the 2012 violence, he had time to occupy parliament in Sittwe, the capital of Rakhine State (Burke, 2016).

The riots had a wide impact, causing the burning of hundreds of houses and the destruction of property owned by the Rohingya ethnic group. As a result, approximately 140,000 Rohingya ethnic groups fled to Bangladesh, occupying squalid and overcrowded camps and only receiving limited health services, education, and livelihood opportunities

([http://ec.europa.eu/echo/files/aid/countries/factsheets/rohingya\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/echo/files/aid/countries/factsheets/rohingya_en.pdf), accessed on August 18, 2019).

### **Indonesian Diplomacy and Humanitarian Action in Resolving Conflicts**

Indonesia's approach in helping to resolve the Rohingya conflict in Myanmar is persuasive in line with the principles of co-existence and non-intervention that apply among fellow ASEAN countries. Ali Alatas, former Indonesian Foreign Minister, said that the best approach for Myanmar is Constructive - Engagement, by encouraging Myanmar to modify its policies through ongoing relations and quiet diplomacy, and not isolating the country or imposing economic sanctions (Nasution, 2017). Adhering to these principles, Indonesia is strengthening democracy in Myanmar through dialogue, capacity building, and humanitarian assistance. Indonesia's well-received position, because Indonesia's role in Myanmar was accepted as the chair of ASEAN in 2014, is actually a great asset for Indonesia in approaching Myanmar. Indonesia's diplomatic involvement is an implementation of Indonesia's foreign policy targets based on the 2015-2019 Ministry of Foreign Affairs Strategic Plan, namely increasing Indonesia's role at the global level and increasing the promotion of democracy and human rights throughout the region.

Indonesia's influential position in the ASEAN region and also the UN's support for Indonesia to contribute to resolving the conflict in Myanmar are capital in playing an important role in Myanmar. Even Myanmar democracy activist who is also the Coordinator of the Burma Pathership, Khint Ohmar, assessed that Indonesia could provide real assistance to Myanmar because of Indonesia's good track record as a mediator of conflicts in Southeast Asia and Indonesia has proven itself as a country capable of implementing a smooth democratic transition (<https://m.tempo.co/read/news/2010/05/27/118250907/aktivis-demokrasi-burma-berharap-peran-indonesia-di-asean>, accessed on August 26, 2018). Indonesia's ability was demonstrated by Indonesia being accepted as the first country to successfully enter Myanmar and conduct dialogue with official authorities after the 2017 Rakhine conflict amidst Myanmar's tough stance in blocking access for foreign parties who wanted to take part in the conflict. Of course, Indonesia's success received appreciation from the international community.

Some important notes of diplomacy conducted by Indonesia both bilaterally and multilaterally include (processed from various sources): On December 7, 2016, Indonesian Foreign Minister Retno Marsudi met with Myanmar State Counsellor Aung San Suu Kyi; in their meeting, they discussed the problems befalling the Rohingya ethnic group in Rakhine, Myanmar. Repressive actions against the Rohingya ethnic group are reported to still be ongoing. Foreign Minister Retno told Myanmar to respect the human rights of all people in Rakhine, including the Muslim minority group there. Security and stability in Rakhine were also emphasised by Retno; according to her, inclusive development is important to realise. Indonesia and Myanmar agreed to continue to cooperate on interfaith dialogue as an effort to increase tolerance and harmony among their people. Efforts to send humanitarian aid to Rakhine were also discussed by Foreign Minister Retno; according to her, access to send humanitarian aid is very important. This was responded to positively by Suu Kyi, including six schools that have been built by Indonesia in Rakhine. Indonesia will continue to be committed to this cooperation, while maintaining intensive communication with the Myanmar government and the Rakhine Human Rights Commission led by Kofi Annan, former Secretary General of the United Nations. Furthermore, on January 19, 2017, Indonesia was also involved in the Ministerial meeting of Member States of the Islamic Cooperation (OIC) in Kuala Lumpur. The meeting resulted in two important agreements regarding the resolution of the conflict in Rakhine, Myanmar. First, a request to all OIC member countries to send humanitarian aid to Rakhine, and asking the Myanmar government to open access to sending humanitarian aid to Rakhine. Second, the final communique, which intends to ask OIC representatives from New York, Geneva, and Brussels to continue to pay attention to the development of the conflict resolution in Rakhine, Myanmar.

Two days after multilateral diplomacy in the OIC, on January 21, 2017, Indonesian Foreign Minister Retno Marsudi visited Myanmar with the intention of delivering Indonesian humanitarian aid in the

form of 10 containers of aid to the Rohingya people. In addition to providing humanitarian aid, Retno also held several meetings as part of her visit to Myanmar. Retno had the opportunity to meet with the Permanent Secretary of the Myanmar Ministry of Foreign Affairs, U Kyaw Zeya. In the meeting, Retno explained several positive developments from the cooperation of Islamic countries (OIC) in Kuala Lumpur, which discussed the problems in Rakhine. The Permanent Secretary of the Myanmar Ministry of Foreign Affairs responded positively to Indonesia's aid and development efforts in Myanmar so far.

Not satisfied with multilateral diplomacy alone, Indonesia also conducts direct diplomacy with countries that border Myanmar and are refugee destinations, such as Bangladesh. Indonesia provides support to Bangladesh, which is affected by the flow of Rohingya refugees. On September 3, 2017, Indonesian Foreign Minister Retno Marsudi, in her conversation with the Bangladeshi Foreign Minister, discussed how Indonesia which will help Bangladesh to handle Rohingya refugees in their country. Indonesia's efforts to help handle refugees in Bangladesh were responded to positively by Bangladesh. According to Retno, the situation that is currently happening in Rakhine, if left alone, will threaten stability and security in the Myanmar region, as well as outside Myanmar. The lobbying carried out by Foreign Minister Retno to Bangladesh aims to get Bangladesh to be willing to help protect Rohingya refugees who have taken refuge there.

A day after the meeting with the Bangladeshi Foreign Minister, the next day the Indonesian Foreign Minister continued to meet with Aung San Suu Kyi, the de facto leader of Myanmar, conveying Indonesia's demands for Myanmar to resolve the conflict without the use of violence. In addition to conveying the demands directly, the Indonesian Foreign Minister also proposed four other formulas that Myanmar could apply in the process of resolving the conflict in Rakhine. First, Indonesia asked Myanmar to immediately restore stability and security in the Rakhine region, and provide protection to all citizens regardless of race and religion. In addition, Indonesia also hopes that Myanmar can open up space for humanitarian aid to enter the conflict area from other countries and international organisations. The Indonesian Foreign Minister also asked Myanmar to implement all recommendations that had been submitted by the chairman of the special human rights commission for Rakhine, Kofi Annan. The proposals submitted by Indonesia were welcomed by Aung San Suu Kyi; according to her, Indonesia's proposals were in line with what her government was trying to do in handling the case in Rakhine. During his visit to Naypyidaw, Myanmar, the Indonesian Foreign Minister also had the opportunity to meet with the Commander-in-Chief of the Myanmar Armed Forces, Senior General U Min Aung Hlaing, as well as the national security advisor and junior minister for foreign affairs of Myanmar.

Diplomacy to gain international support is also carried out at a higher forum. On September 28, 2017, Foreign Minister Retno Marsudi and UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres met on the sidelines of a series of UN General Assembly events in New York, United States. Both agreed that the role of the international community in handling refugee problems, one of which is the Rohingya refugee problem, is very important. Indonesia's contribution in seeking and maintaining global stability and peace in the Rohingya case was also appreciated by the UN Secretary-General. In the meeting, Retno also mentioned Indonesia's consistent contributions in providing humanitarian assistance to Rohingya refugees and Myanmar citizens affected by the conflict.

Not enough to mediate with related parties in resolving the conflict, Humanitarian diplomacy is also carried out. This strategy is considered to strengthen Indonesian Diplomacy in the era of President Joko Widodo in helping to resolve the conflict in Myanmar. Humanitarian diplomacy is carried out through the provision of assistance. According to Ayub Muhsin, compared to the previous government, Joko Widodo implemented more concrete diplomacy by assisting victims of the conflict in Myanmar and also Rohingya refugees in Indonesia. (Interview with Dr Ayub Muhsin, former Indonesian Ambassador to Vietnam, 2019). Another interesting thing about this humanitarian diplomacy is that the government involves non-governmental organisations (AKIM) to jointly provide

humanitarian assistance in Rakhine State, not only food and medicine, but also health and education. It is interesting here because in providing humanitarian assistance, the Jokowi government involves the strength of civil society. This society-to-society assistance strategy was built by considering the potential and extraordinary attention of the Indonesian people to the Rohingya conflict. The use of this humanitarian diplomacy instrument is also carried out by involving local NGOs so that the presence of Indonesian assistance can be trusted by local authorities.

It is recorded that there are 11 NGOs that are members of the Indonesian Humanitarian Alliance for Myanmar (AKIM). The eleven NGOs are the Muhammadiyah Disaster Management Centre, the NU Disaster Management and Climate Change Institute, PKPU Human Initiative, Dompot Dhuafa, Rumah Zakat, Dompot Peduli Umat Darut Tauhid, LAZIZ Wahdah, Laznas Infaq Management Institute, Aksi Cepat Tanggap, LAZIZ Dewan Dakwah Islamiyah Indonesia, and the UIN Jakarta Social Trust Fund. The strength of this civil society alliance was able to collect funds of approximately 26 billion Rupiah, all of which were distributed to the people in Rakhine State as the epicentre of the conflict at that time (<https://www.beritasatu.com/dunia/450206/aliansi-lsm-indonesia-sumbang-rp-26.67-miliar-untuk-rakhine>). The distribution of this aid was carried out by collaborating with local NGOs. In addition to ease of access and language, this participatory aid model strategy is carried out to build the Myanmar government's trust in Indonesia.

## CONCLUSIONS

The election of Joko Widodo as President of the Republic of Indonesia 2014-2019 has consequences for the direction of foreign policy. The Vision and Mission of Foreign Relations conveyed during the campaign must be implemented as a concrete manifestation of the promises that have been conveyed to all Indonesian people. Repositioning Indonesia's role by being more selective in playing roles that have an impact or are directly related to Indonesia's interests is shown by more intensive involvement in resolving the Rohingya conflict. Of course, the Rohingya issue is important and sensitive. In addition to being able to directly impact the security and stability of the region due to the flood of Rohingya refugees to ASEAN countries, including Indonesia, the Rohingya issue also arouses the sympathy of the Indonesian Muslim community because the Rohingya ethnic group is predominantly Muslim. If the government does not act actively in responding to the Rohingya conflict, the government will be under pressure from within the country, especially from Islamic groups.

Concrete evidence of Indonesia's positive response in helping to resolve the Rohingya issue is that Indonesia remains consistent in assisting in handling Rohingya refugees in Indonesia even though Indonesia is not a country that has ratified the 1951 Refugee Convention. Compare this to other countries such as Bangladesh, which often forcibly repatriates Rohingya refugees who enter their country. UNHCR, as the UN agency that deals with refugees, is also given easy access without obstacles to register incoming refugees, process refugee status and provide solutions for handling Rohingya refugees. For this government's attitude, UNHCR appreciates the Indonesian government's commitment to ensuring the rescue of refugees at sea, security, access to territory and protecting the rights of refugees and asylum seekers, especially the Indonesian government's decision to allow 800 Rohingya and Bangladeshi migrants to take refuge in Indonesia, providing food, medicine and temporary housing for them. As the next step to raise humanitarian aid, the Indonesian government established AKIM (Indonesian Humanitarian Alliance for Myanmar), whose members are community organisations. The alliance encourages community engagement with the government in raising humanitarian aid for Rakhine State.

The next important step taken by the Indonesian government was to temporarily stop the major riots that occurred in 2017 and to pressure the Myanmar government to accept the peace solution offered by Indonesia. At that time, Foreign Minister Retno Marsudi met specifically with State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi on September 4, 2017, in Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar. This meeting was held in order to respond to the humanitarian crisis that occurred in Rakhine. Indonesia views the resolution of the

humanitarian crisis in Rakhine as important because it is an important part of strengthening democracy, especially in implementing human rights values in Myanmar. In the meeting, the Indonesian Foreign Minister conveyed Indonesia's proposal called the 4+1 Formula for Rakhine State. These four elements consist of: (i) restoring stability and security; (ii) maximum restraint and not using violence; (iii) protection for all people in Rakhine State, regardless of ethnicity and religion; and (iv) the importance of immediately opening access for humanitarian aid. One important achievement that Indonesia managed to achieve in the meeting was the agreement that Indonesia and ASEAN would be involved in distributing humanitarian aid in Rakhine State. The distribution mechanism is led by the Government of Myanmar, but involves the ICRC and several countries, including Indonesia and ASEAN.

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