

Indonesian humanitarian diplomacy in the resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict: The role of mediation and humanitarian assistance (2023-2024)

Hendra Manurung^{1*}, Mitro Prihantoro²

- 1. Faculty of Defence Strategy, Republic of Indonesia Defence University.
- 2. Faculty of National Security, Republic of Indonesia Defence University.

Article Info Abstract

Report

Main Object:
Interdisciplinary
Scope: Indonesia, Israel &
Palestin

Received: 24 July 2025 Revised: 26 July 2025 Accepted: 09 August 2025 Published online: 19 August 2025

Keywords:

conflict resolution, diplomatic effort, humanitarian crisis, humanitarian diplomacy, Indonesia, Middle East, Palestine.

The Indonesian government's diplomatic efforts focused on resolving and addressing the humanitarian crisis in the region can be defined as Indonesia's humanitarian diplomacy in the Middle East. This is particularly true in relation to resolving the Palestinian conflict. This research utilizes a qualitative research analysis along with Indonesia's humanitarian diplomacy perspective. Indonesia continues to implement this diplomacy through various concrete steps, such as conducting high-level visits and consultations with countries in the Middle East (Turkey, the United Arab Emirates, Egypt, Qatar, and Jordan) to discuss developments in the humanitarian situation, affirm support for the rights of the Palestinian people, and reject all forms of forced relocation of Palestinians. Indonesia's humanitarian diplomacy in resolving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in the 2023-2024 period demonstrated Indonesia's active role as a country consistently striving for peace and justice for the Palestinian people. This diplomacy focused not only on political and multilateral diplomatic measures but also included a crucial role in mediation and the provision of direct humanitarian assistance. Indonesia's humanitarian diplomacy in the Middle East is concluded as a combination of a political diplomatic approach and concrete humanitarian aid actions, which focus on protecting civilians, maintaining peace, and respecting universal humanitarian principles amidst increasingly complex and prolonged conflicts.

Cite this article: Manurung H, Prihantoro M. (2026). "Indonesian humanitarian diplomacy in the resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict: The role of mediation and humanitarian assistance (2023-2024)". Countries Studies. 4(3): 205-215. doi: https://doi.org/10.22059/jcountst.2025.399340.1321.



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Website: https://jcountst.ut.ac.ir/ | Email: jcountst@ut.ac.ir/ |

EISSN: 2980-9193

Publisher: University of Tehran

^{*} Corresponding author:

hendra.manurung@idu.ac.id,
https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4560-1729

1. Introduction

The renewed conflict between Israel and Hamas since October 7, 2023, has given rise to a severe humanitarian crisis in the Gaza Strip, including increasing casualties and limited access to food, clean water, medicine, and healthcare. The humanitarian crisis in Gaza has escalated dramatically since 2023, with increasing casualties, displacement of Palestinians, and damage to infrastructure triggering an urgent need for further research on effective diplomatic and humanitarian strategies.

This research is important and needed to: (a) understand the deep interaction between mediation and humanitarian efforts by countries with Muslim majorities; (b) increase the effectiveness of Indonesia's contribution to peace and assistance in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict during periods of acute crisis; and (c) offer new models for international diplomatic engagement rooted in humanitarian principles. In addition, this research will fill a specific academic gap by detailing how a Global South actor, focusing on humanitarian values, mediates, and influences outcomes in a region traditionally dominated by major-powers. Thereafter, insights will be provided into how middle-power states leverage humanitarian diplomacy to impact protracted conflicts, offering a comparative perspective with traditional mediation frameworks. The government of Indonesia's active response including calls for ceasefire, support for Palestinian rights at international bodies, and intensified humanitarian assistance makes this period uniquely significant for studying the actual impact of its diplomacy.

Indonesia, as the country with the largest Muslim population and a member of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), feels a moral obligation and responsibility to support peace and humanitarian efforts in the region. The research question in this paper relates to the effectiveness of Indonesia's multilateral diplomacy in encouraging an end to violence and the delivery of humanitarian aid in Gaza since the outbreak of the Israel-Hamas conflict on October 7, 2023, through the UN, OIC, and Non-Aligned Movement forums. The Indonesian government then took several multilateral diplomatic steps, primarily through:

- 1. United Nations (UN). Indonesia was active in UN forums, including Security Council and General Assembly meetings, pushing for an immediate ceasefire, accelerating unhindered humanitarian aid to Gaza, and implementing a just two-state solution.
- 2. Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC). Indonesia encouraged the OIC's unity and solidarity in resolving the conflict, calling for accountability for Israeli humanitarian violations, and encouraging peace negotiations. President Joko Widodo proposed four concrete suggestions to the OIC to stop the violence and accelerate humanitarian aid.
- 3. Non-Aligned Movement (NAM). Indonesia encouraged NAM members to take an active role in advocating for a peaceful

solution and humanitarian protection for the Palestinian people.

The research question in this paper relates to how Indonesia's multilateral diplomacy can encourage an end to violence and the delivery of humanitarian aid in Gaza since the outbreak of the Israel-Hamas conflict on October 7, 2023, through the UN, OIC, and Non-Aligned Movement forums. Indonesia as the largest Muslim country in the world contributes to Indonesian diplomacy at the UN, including the Security Council and General Assembly, at the international and regional levels, as well as its role in advocating for an end to the war, unrestricted access to humanitarian aid, and a two-state solution.

However, obstacles remain, including UNSC decisions, fragmentation in multilateral forums, and the risk of selectivity or accusations of inconsistency in Indonesia's foreign policy. Jakarta faces various diplomatic challenges and limitations related to balancing political pressures such as advocacy for Palestinian rights and condemnation of Israeli human rights violations, as well as implementing effective humanitarian diplomacy amidst the blockade and polarizing international politics. Practically, Indonesia's humanitarian diplomacy includes:

- a) Sending humanitarian aid in the form of medicines, medical equipment, training, and capacity building for the Palestinian community;
- b) Planning to evacuate injured Palestinians, orphans, and students affected by the conflict to Indonesia for temporary treatment and protection, as a tangible manifestation of humanitarian concern and solidarity;
- Using Indonesia's position as a neutral and Muslim-majority country to facilitate impartial humanitarian diplomacy that can overcome political barriers, for example in Syria and other conflict-prone regions;
- d) Conducting active and voluntary humanitarian diplomacy, based on the agreement of all relevant parties, with the aim of suppressing military aggression and promoting a just and peaceful solution, including supporting the idea of a two-state solution for Palestine and Israel.

Indonesia's multilateral diplomacy emphasized balancing political pressure and humanitarian needs through active engagement within the international framework. Indonesian diplomacy has been successful and opened-up opportunities for strategic cooperation with Middle Eastern countries in the fields of economics, education, and humanitarian aid. Ultimately, strengthening bilateral and multilateral relations, which have a positive impact on regional stability and global peace, also needs to be maintained and nurtured.

2. Discussion

2.1. Indonesia's humanitarian diplomacy in the Middle East

Indonesia's position as a developing country with the world's largest Muslim population and a pluralistic democracy makes it a credible actor in religious diplomacy, capable of overcoming sectarian rivalries and promoting reconciliation in the Islamic world and globally. This offers new hope for peace efforts, which have often been hampered by dominant geopolitical interests. Indonesia's diplomatic strategy that combines political mediation, international advocacy, humanitarian aid, and religious diplomacy strengthens Indonesia's role as a credible mediator and an important voice for Middle East peace that has a positive impact on global peace efforts. The role and contribution of Indonesian humanitarian diplomacy in the Palestine-Israel conflict includes 5 (five) aspects, including:

- 1. International Mediation and Advocacy Diplomacy. Indonesia actively promotes a peaceful resolution of the conflict by emphasizing the two-state solution (Palestine and Israel living side by side peacefully) and supporting Palestinian sovereignty through international forums such as the UN, ASEAN, and the OIC. Indonesia strives for a ceasefire and rejects the unilateral recognition of Jerusalem as Israel's capital. Its diplomacy includes intensive communication, shuttle diplomacy, and multilateral cooperation to reduce tensions in Gaza;
- 2. Concrete Humanitarian Assistance. Indonesia provides direct humanitarian support to the Palestinian people through the delivery of medicine, medical equipment, and food aid. For example, in 2024, Indonesia distributed approximately Rp30 billion (approximately US\$2.2 million) in aid to address the humanitarian crisis in Gaza, including aid deliveries through UNRWA, the International Committee of the Red Cross, and diplomatic channels to the Palestinian and Egyptian governments;
- 3. The Role of Non-Governmental Actors. Humanitarian organizations such as Muhammadiyah play a significant role in implementing humanitarian diplomacy by sending aid missions to Gaza, strengthening Indonesia's image as a caring humanitarian actor, and collaborating with international partners to support peace initiatives aligned with Indonesia's foreign policy;
- **4. Human Rights and Justice Diplomacy.** As a member of the UN Human Rights Council, Indonesia calls for an end to human rights violations in conflict areas, encourages enforcement of international law against Israeli human rights violations, and supports international mechanisms such as the International Criminal Court (ICC) to prosecute those responsible for these humanitarian violations;
- **5.** Civil Society Participation and Parliamentary Diplomacy. Indonesia mobilizes civil society to participate and take a stand in

solidarity actions and fundraising campaigns, and uses parliamentary diplomacy to encourage de-escalation of the conflict and policies supporting Palestine through domestic and international political diplomacy.

Indonesia's humanitarian diplomacy has clearly combined mediation, international advocacy, humanitarian distribution, and cooperation with non-governmental actors and civil society to make a positive contribution to resolving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and reducing the impact of the humanitarian crisis in Gaza, while maintaining Indonesia's position as a country that consistently supports Palestinian rights and independence. Furthermore, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict has a significant impact on Indonesia and is closely linked to ideological, geopolitical, and national interests. Overall, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is a multidimensional issue for Indonesia, involving:

- a) Ideological issues. Rejection of colonialism, defense of humanity, and collective identity through Pancasila and Islamic religious sentiment.
- **b) Geopolitical issues.** Indonesia's position in the Muslim world and internationally, maintaining a balance in foreign relations, and ensuring an active role in peace diplomacy.
- c) National interests. Economic resilience against oil price fluctuations and inflation, domestic stability, and the protection of Indonesian citizens.

The impact is not only visible in Indonesian diplomatic strategy and political statements, but also felt in the economic, social, and national identity sectors. Meanwhile, Indonesia's humanitarian diplomacy in the Middle East is a diplomatic effort focused on reducing military aggression and managing humanitarian crises, particularly in conflict zones such as Gaza and Palestine. Indonesia implements this strategy by sending humanitarian aid in the form of medicines, medical equipment, and training and capacity building for the Palestinian community. This assistance is tangible and involves the participation of civil society, non-governmental organizations, and non-governmental organizations in Indonesia.

Thereafter, Indonesia actively engages in diplomatic engagement with countries in the Middle East and in international forums such as the UN and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC). Indonesia supports a two-state solution to the Palestine-Israel conflict and acts as a neutral facilitator in impartial humanitarian diplomacy, including opening aid access to hard-to-reach areas such as Syria. Indonesia also offers temporary evacuation for refugees and conflict victims from Gaza as a concrete form of humanitarian solidarity. In recent developments throughout 2024 and early 2025, Indonesia demonstrated

its commitment by sending billions of rupiah in humanitarian aid, actively participating in peace dialogues, and declaring its readiness to accommodate up to 1,000 Gaza refugees with the approval of the relevant parties. This humanitarian diplomacy is carried out based on the principles of neutrality, protection of human rights, and support for a just and peaceful resolution in the region.

Indeed, Indonesia's humanitarian diplomacy in the Middle East is essentially a combination of political tactics, concrete humanitarian action, and an active diplomatic role that consistently emphasizes the protection of civilians and sustainable peace efforts in this complex and protracted conflict.

2.2. The role of mediation and bilateral dialogue

The Indonesian government expressed its deep concern over the continuing deterioration of the inhumane situation in Gaza, including the brutal killing of civilians. It considers with that thousands of Palestinians are on the verge of starvation due to Israel's refusal to provide essential humanitarian aid, the Indonesian Ministry of Foreign Affairs strongly urges the international community through the UN Security Council to immediately stop Israel's aggression and ensure the entry of humanitarian aid.

President Prabowo supports the summit initiated by France and Saudi Arabia as an effort to advance a peaceful solution to the conflict. Therefore, Indonesia, under Prabowo's national leadership, is ready to send peacekeeping troops to the conflict-affected region to support the implementation of peace. In addition to diplomatic aspects, Prabowo called on the international community to stop the violence in Gaza and pay serious attention to restoring humanitarian conditions there, including rebuilding infrastructure and reopening access to education and other basic services.

Moreover, President Prabowo's overall role in resolving the Palestine-Israel conflict is to take a firm but balanced position, supporting Palestinian independence and rights, while recognizing Israel's existence and rights, and encouraging diplomatic efforts and peaceful resolution through international channels and multilateral cooperation.

Indonesia fully supports the call by leaders of several countries and the European Union for the Israeli government to immediately lift restrictions on humanitarian aid, and urges all parties to protect and guarantee the security of civilians and comply with obligations under international humanitarian law.

Jakarta consistently supports Palestinian independence and the right of the Palestinian people to have their own state based on international law and human rights. Indonesia opposes the Israeli occupation of Palestinian territories, such as the West Bank, Gaza Strip, and East Jerusalem, as well as the construction of Israeli settlements in

those territories. Indonesia actively provides development assistance and training to the Palestinian people, including in the fields of infrastructure, technology, and health.

Meanwhile, Indonesia continuously demands fair justice and Palestinian rights in various international forums such as the UN, the Non-Aligned Movement, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), and other international forums to encourage a peaceful resolution to the conflict. Indonesian Foreign Minister Retno Marsudi served as the OIC's special envoy for the Palestinian issue, conducting shuttle diplomacy to UN Security Council member states to halt the violence and promote a two-state solution.

In addition, high-level dialogues between Indonesian President Joko Widodo and United States President Joe Biden to encourage the US, as Israel's ally, to play a role in de-escalating the conflict and supporting a ceasefire and a two-state solution. President Prabowo Subianto has been actively involved in resolving the Palestine-Israel conflict by calling for a two-state solution as the primary path to a just and lasting peace between the two countries. Prabowo emphasized that Palestinian independence is the only path to true peace, and affirmed Indonesia's readiness to establish diplomatic relations with the Israeli government if Israel recognizes Palestinian independence and guarantees Palestine's rights as a sovereign state and the security of that nation.

At the Southeast Asian regional level, Jakarta and Kuala Lumpur also discussed developments in the Palestine-Israel conflict, as well as the current situation in Palestine, and possible resolution efforts by both countries. Historically, Indonesia has mediated by communicating intensively with relevant parties, including bilateral dialogues with key countries. For example, dialogues with Romania and OIC member states in Bucharest to strengthen international pressure on Israel and accelerate the delivery of humanitarian aid to Gaza.

The calls for a two-state solution to the conflict initiated by Indonesia's government, involving Palestine and Israel leaders fairly and impartially, through a peaceful diplomatic process based on UN resolutions and international law. Jakarta also actively plays a mediator role, encourages Palestinian unity so that it can become an effective negotiating partner, focuses on supporting international diplomacy, advancing the peace process with a two-state solution, and humanitarian assistance to Palestine. Indonesia's role in mediating the Palestinian issue and bilateral dialogue with major regional powers regarding Palestine has been more of an active diplomacy and multilateral support, rather than a direct official mediator in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

These mediation efforts aim to open channels of communication and create a diplomatic consensus to renounce violence and build peace. The seven main principles underlying Indonesia's humanitarian

diplomacy in the Middle East are as follows:

- 1. Protection of human rights for communities affected by crises, particularly the conflict in Palestine;
- 2. Inclusivity and non-discrimination in aid provision, meaning aid is provided without regard to ethnicity, religion, or social group;
- 3. Sustainable humanitarian assistance oriented towards empowering communities affected by crises so they can become independent and socio-economically strong; respect for the national integrity and sovereignty of countries experiencing crises, ensuring diplomacy is conducted without compromising their sovereignty;
- 4. Neutrality and non-alignment in foreign policy, which make Indonesia's humanitarian diplomacy acceptable to various parties and facilitate the entry of humanitarian aid into difficult-to-access areas;
- 5. Commitment to promoting a just and sustainable peace settlement in the Middle East, particularly by supporting a two-state solution to the Palestine-Israel conflict;
- 6. Prioritizing the principles of humanitarian solidarity and Indonesia's moral responsibility, as a Muslim-majority country, prioritize universal humanitarian values in its diplomatic actions; and
- 7. Indonesia's humanitarian diplomacy in the Middle East substantially emphasizes a combination of an inclusive political approach, sustainable concrete aid actions, and respect for the rights and sovereignty of affected countries, in order to maintain peace and the welfare of civilians in conflict areas.

Diplomatic mediation efforts continue through bilateral and multilateral channels, prioritizing round-trip diplomacy among UN Security Council member states, and strengthening strong engagement within the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) to garner global support for peace and humanitarian aid. Despite challenges such as UN Security Council rejection and domestic institutional fragmentation, the Indonesian government remains committed to balancing diplomatic facilitation with humanitarian priorities to mitigate the impact of the crisis and support Palestinian self-determination.

Several humanitarian efforts continue, including increased aid distributed through the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), in addition to direct assistance to the Palestinian government. Indonesia has also sent a medical aid ship and hospital to Gaza, calling for the protection of health facilities and personnel.

Indonesia's combination of policymaking through mediation, advocacy, and humanitarian assistance clearly represents a dual diplomatic pathway, leveraging international cooperation to push for a

sustainable resolution that respects Palestinian rights and strives for sustained regional peace. However, Indonesia has not yet acted directly as a primary mediator due to the absence diplomatic relations with Israel and is considered less neutral by Israel.

3. Conclusion

Indonesia's implementation of humanitarian diplomacy in resolving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict (2023-2024) focused on mediation and humanitarian assistance, emphasizing the two-state solution and Palestinian rights. Furthermore, Indonesia actively participated in international forums, particularly as a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council, advocating for a ceasefire, adherence to international humanitarian law, and opposing policies that undermine Palestinian sovereignty, such as the recognition of Jerusalem as Israel's capital. The conducting bilateral dialogues between Indonesia with major regional and international powers, such as Jordan and Iran, to discuss the Palestinian situation and support ceasefire efforts and humanitarian aid in Gaza. Indonesia's delegation often promotes solidarity and joint action to address the humanitarian crisis and conflict within the OIC forum, calling for a ceasefire and accelerated humanitarian aid.

The long experience of Indonesia as a mediator in other global conflicts, such as Cambodia and Myanmar, and is therefore seen as having potential to mediate in Palestine, particularly due to its close ties with Palestinian factions and its support for Palestinian independence. However, to date, Indonesia has positioned itself more as a facilitator of multilateral diplomacy and political support than a direct mediator.

The role of Indonesia on the Palestinian issue is as an international and regional diplomatic actor, promoting peace through bilateral dialogue with major regional powers and multilateral diplomacy, particularly within the OIC and UN frameworks, while providing strong support for Palestinian independence and a two-state solution.

Conflict of interest

The authors declared no conflicts of interest.

Authors' contributions

All authors contributed to the original idea, study design.

Ethical considerations

The authors have completely considered ethical issues, including informed consent, plagiarism, data fabrication, misconduct, and/or falsification, double publication and/or redundancy, submission, etc. This article was not authored by artificial intelligence.

Data availability

The dataset generated and analyzed during the current study is available from the corresponding author on reasonable request.

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