

## STRENGTHENING ALLIANCES FOR PALESTINE INDEPENDENCE

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Israel's spirit to annex and destroy the Palestinian people and nation never stops. Recently, Benjamin Netanyahu decided to build new settlements in Palestine at a time when the Palestinian people were struggling against Covid 19. The Palestinian people are increasingly threatened and expelled from their homeland. Because of this the social, economic and health situation of the Palestinian people is getting worse. Benjamin Netanyahu's brutal policy to expand Israel's territory of power are fully supported by the American president, Donald Trump. This Israeli-American cooperation has proven two important facts, first, that the spirit of imperialism in the twentieth century still happen. Second, legal, political and humanitarian crimes still occur.

It is fact that what is happening in Palestine is not merely an ordinary political conflict in the Middle East region, but is a serious violation of territorial sovereignty and independence, human rights and the destruction of the socio-economic life and security of Palestine. What is happening in Palestine is a political tragedy, a humanitarian tragedy, and a legal tragedy which is very embarrassing. The main actor is Israel, which has been supported by America. It is no exaggeration to say that Israel has created a dark history during the 20th century to the beginning of the 21st century today.

Efforts to resolve and create peace have actually been done many times. The General Assembly and the Security Council of the United Nations, for example, have affirmed the solution, namely "Two-State Solution." Based on this solution, the sovereignty of Palestine and Israel is guaranteed and they can coexist peacefully. International support for Palestinian sovereignty and independence also exists. On September 14 2015, as many as 136 countries from the 193 member states of the United Nations have recognized Palestine. Then 9 among the 28 EU countries also support Palestine. On 29 Nov 2012, the United Nations General Assembly resolution accepted Palestine as a "non-member observer state." Indonesia is one of the countries which is an important co-sponsor of this idea. There is still much evidence of international support for Palestine.

However, all the supports, resolutions of the General Assembly and the Security Council of the United Nations and the Two-State Solution were undermined and betrayed by America through its veto and this further exacerbated the atmosphere of the Middle East and disrupted the harmony of global relations. The government of Benjamin Netanyahu is really very serious about annexation even though it is opposed by Palestinians and even by the international community. Israel firmly rejects various compromises and is currently using the Pandemic situation to carry out legal, political and humanitarian crimes. I want to emphasize that Israel is a cowardly country because it does not want to open its heart and reject fair dialogues to create peace. This bad and destructive step by Israel will result in a global political escalation higher and will disturb global security and order.

Israel has never stopped launching its invasion and annexation of Palestinian territories. Destruction of settlements, expulsion of residents and construction of new settlements for Jews has been a daily sight to this day. Various acts of violence against the Palestinian people are also frequently carried out and even the Aqsho mosque is increasingly being threatened. Israel has constitutionally implemented Israeli Apartheid politics against Palestinians.

Since 2018, the Trump administration has gradually phased out more than \$ 200 million for West Bank and Gaza economic aid projects. Unfortunately America also stops annual contributions to a United Nations agency that provides health assistance, education and other services to Palestinian

refugees. It is estimated that 1 million Palestinians in Gaza are threatened with starvation. It is not exaggeration to mention that Donald Trump's administration has indeed displayed open hatred and hostility towards the Palestinian people.

This misery was exacerbated by the Covid 19 attacks. In this pandemic era, acts of violence against Palestinians have increased. Covid 19 is also a wide door and opportunity for the Israeli government to annex and build new settlements for Jews in the Palestinian territories. The eviction and destruction of dwellings, water sources, parks continues and this will accelerate the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic. Oxfam demanded the Israeli government to immediately stop illegal policies and measures against international law because this is very dangerous for the Palestinian population during the Pandemic. The poverty rate in this region is rising. The World Bank reported that before the Pandemic the poverty rate in Gaza had reached 53%. During the Pandemic, this figure increased to 64%.

### The Roles of Indonesia

The Indonesian government and people have strongly rejected and opposed Israel, which continues to annex Palestine and threaten the Aqsho mosque. Various political diplomatic efforts have started and will continue to be carried out against Israel. In accordance with the preamble to the 1945 constitution, the Indonesian nation will remain consistent against all forms of colonialism and defend the people and nation of Palestine. Indonesia will never open diplomatic relations with Israel even though President Donald Trump has promised to provide enormous financial assistance to Indonesia. For the Indonesian people and especially Muslims, sovereignty and independence could never be sold to anyone, especially to a colonial state. The invaders must be resisted through various means and steps.

1. Fight through the United Nations forums and other bilateral or multilateral forums. Muslim countries can also encourage the muslim world league to take tactical and strategic steps against Israel. These steps have been and must be consistently continued. The member states of the Muslim World League need to continuously carry out internal consolidation in order to become an effective and influential force to defend the people and nation of Palestine and create global peace.

2. Indonesian Muslim civil society organizations can form and strengthen interfaith alliances to defend the struggle of the Palestinian people and nation against Israel, to restore the social, economic, and political rights of the Palestinian people that have been destroyed and seized by Israel. The right to practice worship and religious teachings must also be protected and therefore this interfaith alliance must also protect the Aqsa mosque which has been threatened by brutal Israeli military actions. Apart from that, the interfaith alliance can also work hard to continue the humanitarian aid, health and education programs that have been provided by the people and nation of Indonesia and others.

One of the important programs that have started is the construction of an Indonesian hospital in Hebron. The hospital construction program is carried out by the Indonesian ulama council in collaboration with a number of Indonesian Islamic philanthropic organizations and is fully supported by the Indonesian government. The funds needed for the construction of this hospital are around 100 billion rupiah. Currently, the Indonesian ulama council has received financial donation from the Indonesian community of 2 billion rupiah and will distribute it as soon as possible. The ulama council has discussed in particular with the Middle East director of the Republic of Indonesia's Ministry of Foreign Affairs regarding the continuation of the construction of the Indonesian Hebron Hospital and the mechanism for distributing the donation.

Furthermore, the Indonesian ulama council will also hold various meetings with the Minister of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia, the Palestinian ambassador to Indonesia, leaders of Islamic philanthropic organizations, leaders of voluntary and humanitarian organizations for Aqsho and Palestinians and other figures raise funds to complete the construction of the Hebron Hospital. On behalf of the Indonesian Ulama Council, please allow me to urgently convey proposal and call upon Indonesian people to strengthen cooperation and fully support this humanitarian program. The alliance among religions and civilizations plays a very important role to actively involve and participate in completing the construction of the hospital as a form of commitment of the Indonesian nation to help the struggle of the Palestinian people and create peace.