

**INDONESIA'S HUMANITARIAN DIPLOMACY IN THE FIRST PERIOD  
OF JOKOWI IN HANDLING THE ROHINGYA REFUGEE**

**CRISIS 2015-2018**

**UNDERGRADUATE THESIS**



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Proposed to the Department of International Relations  
Faculty of Psychology and Socio-Cultural Sciences  
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As a partial fulfillment of requirement to earn  
Bachelor Degree in International Relations



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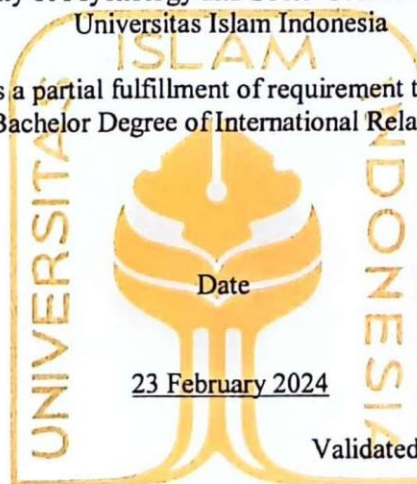
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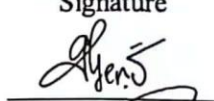


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I hereby declare that this undergraduate thesis is the result of my own independent scientific work, and that all material from the work of others (in books, articles, essays, dissertations, and on the internet) has been stated, and quotations and paraphrases are clearly indicated.

No other materials are used other than those contained. I have read and understood the university's rules and procedures regarding plagiarism.

Making false statements is considered a violation of academic integrity.

*23 Februari 2024*



*Rezkia Fikriyanti*

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AHA Center	: Asean Coordinating Centre For Humanitarian Assistance
AKIM	: Aliansi kemanusiaan Indonesia untuk Myanmar
APSC	: ASEAN Political and Security Community
ARSA	: Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army
ASEAN	: Association of Southeast Asian Nations
HASCO	: Humanitarian Assistance for Sustainable Communities
HRW	: Human Rights Watch
ICRC	: International Committee of the Red Cross
IDB	: Islamic Development Bank
IOM	: International Organization for Migration
NU	: Nahdatul Ulama
OIC	: Organisation of Islamic Cooperation
SC	: Security Council
UN	: United Nations
UNHCR	: United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
ZOPFAN	: Zone of Peace, Freedom, and Neutrality

## ABSTRACT

*The Rohingya ethnic group is a Muslim minority in Myanmar. This ethnic group has experienced acts of discrimination and violence carried out by the police, government military, and other ethnic communities in Myanmar. This act of discrimination turned into a humanitarian conflict that required the Rohingya ethnic group to seek refuge in other countries. Because the wave of migration increased, it became a refugee crisis. Humanitarian diplomacy combines diplomatic and humanitarian aspects to respond to humanitarian crises involving protection, assistance, and recovery for conflict victims. The humanitarian diplomacy process carried out by Indonesia in handling the Rohingya refugee crisis consists of information gathering, communication, and negotiations. The humanitarian diplomacy steps taken by Indonesia are considered more successful than the diplomacy that uses violence and criticism to corner the Myanmar government carried out by the international community. Humanitarian diplomacy carried out by Indonesia has made the Myanmar government willing to open access to foreign parties. Apart from that, Bangladesh is also willing to protect refugees in other countries. Through pressure from Indonesia, the governments of Myanmar and Bangladesh are willing to hold a bilateral meeting and provide a solution for the repatriation efforts.*

**Keywords:** Myanmar, Rohingya, Refugee, Indonesian, Humanitarian, Diplomacy.



# **CHAPTER 1**

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Background**

The refugee crisis is a phenomenon that is currently one of the issues being widely discussed by the international community. The refugee crisis occurs because the risks to their safety and lives are so high that they are forced to leave their home countries and seek protection abroad (Amnesty International, n.d.). One of the refugee crises due to the very high wave of migration is experienced by the Rohingya ethnic group in Myanmar. Rohingya ethnicity is the term given to the Muslim ethnic group inhabiting the cities of Buthidaung and Maungdaw's western sea part of the state of Arakan, Burma (Nemoto 1991).

Most of the Rohingya inhabit the territory of Rakhine state, Myanmar along with other majority ethnicities such as the Arakanese Buddhist ethnicity and the Burmese ethnic group (Nemoto 1991). As an ethnic minority, they experience discrimination by the Myanmar government. Through the Burma Citizenship Law, the Myanmar government stated that the Rohingya ethnic group was not included in the 135 national ethnic groups that they legalized in 1982 (Farzana 2017). The humanitarian crisis experienced by the Rohingya ethnic group was the result of a warning to the Rohingya ethnic group for violating discriminatory regulations set by the Myanmar government.

The conflict began to escalate in 2015 when Myanmar President Thein Sein revoked the white card used by the Rohingya ethnic group as a temporary residence permit. The Myanmar government announced that the temporary identity card or white card would be revoked on May 31 2015 (Marshall 2015). With the removal

of the white card, the Rohingya ethnic group is not considered a national ethnicity in the constitution or as citizens of Myanmar. The Myanmar government's actions caused the Rohingya ethnic group to flee to neighbouring countries to seek protection (Mangku 2021).

On October 9, 2016, a Rohingya armed group attacked 3 police posts in Rakhine which resulted in the deaths of 9 police officers (BBC 2016). The armed group known as Harakah al-Yaqin or Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army (ARSA), contains Rohingya militants who receive support from abroad (Fishbein 2021). The Myanmar Armed Forces, which at that time was led by the Tatmadaw, immediately launched a military operation called "Cleanup Operation" against the Rohingya ethnic group in northern cities as a response to the attacks that had been carried out (Fishbein 2021). The clean-up operation consisted of mass arson, rape and murder which caused hundreds of thousands of people to flee to the Bangladesh border (Fishbein 2021).

On August 25, 2017, the Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army (ARSA) group attacked a Myanmar military base in the Rakhine region. This triggered another military "clearance operation" carried out by Tatmadaw troops, with approximately 600,000 ethnic Rohingya decided to flee Rakhine (Martin, Margesson, and Vaughn 2017).

In 2018, the UN released a report regarding accusations against the Myanmar military of carrying out genocide in Rakhine state. The UN report found conclusive evidence that the actions of the Myanmar armed forces constituted the most serious crimes under international law (Ellis-Petersen and correspondent

2018) This report triggered delays in efforts to repatriate refugees, which resulted in the resolution of the refugee crisis never-ending.

The series of conflicts required the Rohingya ethnic group to flee to seek protection. The increasingly severe conflict in 2017 caused the number of refugees to increase until the holding camps in Bangladesh were unable to accommodate any more, leaving many Rohingya refugees stranded. Bangladesh occupies the top rank as the country with the largest number of Rohingya refugees, reaching 967,842 people. Next in line are Malaysia (157,731), Thailand (91,339), India (78,731), and Indonesia (882) (BBC 2023). Because of this situation then triggered the Rohingya refugee crisis. To resolve the refugee crisis, it is necessary to have a solution in the countries in conflict as well as efforts to protect and repatriate refugees in camps. The Myanmar military junta has closed access to humanitarian assistance that is urgently needed by refugees (Human Rights Watch 2021). This action gave rise to a lot of criticism from outside parties.

The UN, an organization that has the responsibility to protect the population from genocide and crimes against humanity, is unable to address this issue. The UN experienced systematic failure in handling the crisis (Carroll 2019). China and Russia, which have veto rights in the Security Council, are the main obstacles to the UN (Carroll 2019).

During the conflict, ASEAN could not act more even though Myanmar was a member country because of ASEAN's principle of non-intervention (BBC 2017). Due to the principle of non-intervention, ASEAN members are not allowed to interfere in the internal affairs of their respective countries (Limsiritong 2017).

The OIC has repeatedly tried to urge the Myanmar authorities to allow the OIC and other international delegations to visit the conflict area. Unfortunately, the Myanmar authorities refused this by acting more forcefully, leading to persecution (Al-Ahsan 2017). Other organizations, such as Human Rights Watch (HRW), also took part in helping to deal with the conflict that occurred.

Countries such as Malaysia, Turkey, Bangladesh, and Indonesia also participated. Unfortunately, only Indonesia received an open response from Myanmar. The international community's response, which seemed to corner Myanmar, was in contrast to Indonesia's response, which actively provided solutions to resolve the crisis without cornering the Myanmar government. Myanmar responded positively, and the Myanmar government was willing to open and accept humanitarian assistance provided by Indonesia (Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2019).

The majority of Indonesians are Muslim, which is one of the reasons that encourages Indonesia to be actively involved in providing assistance related to the refugee crisis (Alexandra 2017). Nahdlatul Ulama, has a significant role in dealing with the Rohingya crisis. As the largest Islamic organization in Indonesia, NU has been involved in various efforts to provide assistance and support to Rohingya refugees (Suci 2023). Regarding the refugee crisis experienced by the Rohingya ethnic group, Indonesia used humanitarian diplomacy to help handle it. Indonesia's Humanitarian Diplomacy in addressing the Rohingya refugee crisis is an integral part of Indonesia's foreign policy agenda, aligned with the Nawacita principles emphasizing a serious commitment to addressing humanitarian issues on a global scale. Indonesia's actions in handling the crisis encompass various aspects,

including providing direct assistance to refugees and actively participating in various international forums.

Based on the description related to the activities carried out by the Indonesian government in the background of this problem, it has generated interest for the author to discuss further by conducting research related to humanitarian diplomacy carried out by the Indonesian government in handling the Rohingya refugee crisis. Through the crisis that occurred between 2015-2018, the author will analyze Indonesia's efforts to help resolve the Rohingya ethnic refugee crisis through humanitarian diplomacy, both in dealing with conflicts in their countries of origin and handling refugees in holding camps.

## **1.2 Research Question**

How Indonesia's humanitarian diplomacy in the first period of Jokowi in handling the Rohingya refugee crisis 2015-2018?

## **1.3 Research Objectives**

1. The aim to be achieved in writing this thesis is to understand the process of Indonesian humanitarian diplomacy in helping resolve the Rohingya refugee crisis in 2015-2018.
2. Through this research, we can see the effectiveness of humanitarian diplomacy carried out by Indonesia regarding the Rohingya refugee crisis.
3. Apart from that, this research can also help formulate recommendations for improving diplomacy in the future. This research will contribute to improve international policies and practices in handling similar cases.

#### **1.4 Research Scope**

The main problem to be studied is Indonesia's diplomacy in helping Rohingya refugees. This research will focus on 2015 to 2018, where just 3 years is enough to see the effectiveness of Indonesia's humanitarian diplomacy efforts. In 2015, Myanmar President Thein Sein revoked the white cards used by the Rohingya as residence permits, limiting their movement. As a result, many Rohingya fled to other countries. In 2018 the refugee crisis continued but a repatriation solution failed to be implemented.

#### **1.5 Literature Review**

The article entitled Indonesian Diplomacy in Handling the 2015 Rohingya Ethnic Immigrant Crisis (Saputra, Harini, and Dipokusumo 2019) explains how Indonesian diplomacy handled the Rohingya ethnic immigrant crisis that occurred in 2015. This research uses the Diplomacy theory of Bilateral and International Migration because Indonesia and Myanmar are known to have had good bilateral relations for a long time. The research method used in this research is qualitative, which is more exploratory in nature. The results of their research stated that Indonesia had a role in saving Rohingya refugees by providing temporary shelter. The Indonesian government is considering localizing refugees because the arrival of these refugees will certainly provide an additional burden for Indonesia, whose economic situation was not stable at that time. Indonesia is carrying out Bilateral Diplomacy with Myanmar so that national interests are based on humanitarian aspects, thereby minimizing discriminatory actions carried out by the Myanmar government against the Rohingya ethnic group.

The article entitled *Indonesia's Role towards Myanmar in Helping Resolve the Humanitarian Crisis in Rohingya 2014-2018* (Purnama, Dermawan, & Akmaluddin 2019), explains that there were several roles for Indonesia during Joko Widodo administration in helping resolve the humanitarian crisis faced by the Rohingya ethnic group. The role played by Indonesia includes Indonesia as a Regional Leader in ASEAN. Then, through long-standing bilateral relations, Indonesia became a loyal friend of Myanmar by offering assistance as a mediator in dialogue with other actors to resolve the Rohingya ethnic conflict. Indonesia also acts as a Mediator-Integrator and carries out a free and active role in accordance with its national interests.

The journal entitled *Indonesian Diplomacy in Handling the Rohingya Conflict 2013 - 2017* (Zulfa and Pakpahan 2018), explains how Indonesian diplomacy handled the Rohingya conflict 2013 - 2017. The research aims to explain Indonesia's intervention in the Rohingya conflict in 2013 - 2017. This research uses a 7 Neorealism perspective which is supported by diplomacy theory. The author uses multi-track diplomacy and uses 3 paths in this research. The results of this research state that Indonesia has carried out humanitarian assistance with multi-track diplomacy through 3 channels.

Most previous studies that have raised this topic have focused more on humanitarian assistance and conflict resolution in Rakhine. This research does not only focus on handling in Rakhine but also on handling refugees who migrate to Bangladesh, including repatriation efforts so that the Rohingya ethnic refugee crisis can be resolved. Another thing that differentiates this research from previous studies lies in the theoretical and conceptual approach. This research not only

focuses on the Humanitarian Diplomacy process carried out by Indonesia but also reviews the effectiveness of humanitarian diplomacy carried out by Indonesia.

## **1.6 Research Framework**

Based on the problems to be discussed, the author uses the concept of humanitarian diplomacy. Humanitarian diplomacy conceptually explains that diplomacy and humanity are different things (Minear and Smith 2007: 38). Diplomacy is an effort that prioritizes national interests, while humanity is a term that refers to universally recognized international values, principles, and norms. Diplomacy is tied to government power, while humanity is not hindered by the limitations of a country's power. Humanitarian diplomacy combines diplomatic and humanitarian aspects to respond to humanitarian crises involving protection, assistance and recovery for conflict victims. Humanitarian diplomacy actors must maintain their main objectives: saving lives, alleviating suffering, and upholding humanitarian principles. At the same time, humanitarian actors are involved in politically sensitive environments (Minear and Smith 2007).

In practice, humanitarian diplomacy does not use violence because using force or threats in humanitarian diplomacy is considered inefficient. Humanitarian diplomacy actors must implement, negotiate continuously, propose win-win solutions, and become the main negotiator so that they can invite other parties to be on their side and engage in collaborative negotiations whenever possible (Minear and Smith 2007). In implementing humanitarian diplomacy, several processes can be carried out, including information gathering, liaison, and negotiation (Minear and Smith 2007). The details are as follows.



1. Information Gathering. Before carrying out diplomacy, humanitarian diplomacy actors need to collect accurate information about countries in conflict to be able to carry out planned programs and activities effectively and be responsible to countries that also help regarding how they use the selected funds. The information collected becomes accessible for international parties to obtain reliable sources of information. Moreover, it makes the humanitarian diplomacy actors have special access to the host country.
2. Liaison. Humanitarian diplomacy actors carry out communication functions between the host government and the head office of the originating humanitarian diplomacy actor. To collect this information, humanitarian diplomacy actors work physically and politically in conflict areas. Through these humanitarian diplomacy actors, they will be able to reactivate political communication between conflicting actors, which is often not smooth, giving rise to miscommunication. In this case, the diplomatic actor becomes the communication link between the host country's government and the international community.
3. Negotiation. Negotiation is the final process of humanitarian diplomacy carried out by actors to reach an agreement. Agreements are reached using classic diplomatic instruments such as persuasion, promises, and dialogue.

Based on the humanitarian concept and the concept of diplomacy, the concept of humanitarian diplomacy is relevant to the case problem we wish to study, namely Indonesian diplomacy, in helping resolve the Rohingya refugee crisis because humanitarian diplomacy can bridge national and international interests. Apart from

that, the humanitarian diplomacy process is able to facilitate Indonesia in helping the refugee crisis experienced by the Rohingya ethnic group, both in helping to deal with the conflict in Myanmar itself and helping refugees in Bangladesh protection camps.

## **1.7 Provisional Argument**

This research will answer the question of how Indonesian humanitarian diplomacy helped resolve the Rohingya refugee crisis in 2015-2018. The humanitarian diplomacy steps taken by Indonesia are considered more successful than the diplomacy that uses violence and criticism to corner the Myanmar government carried out by the international community. The humanitarian diplomacy process carried out by Indonesia consists of gathering information, then Indonesia acted as a liaison, and Indonesia carried out negotiations regarding a settlement solution. Through the analysis carried out, the humanitarian diplomacy carried out by Indonesia produced solutions both in dealing with the conflict that occurred in Myanmar itself and related to refugees in Bangladesh, although there were several solutions that were delayed in implementation.

## **1.8 Research Method**

### **1.8.1 Type of the Research**

In this research, the author used a qualitative descriptive approach. The qualitative descriptive method is a research method based on postpositivism philosophy which is used to study the condition of natural objects (not experiments) where the researcher is the key instrument (Sugiyono 2016: 9). Descriptive is a problem formulation that can later help explore the social situation that will be

studied thoroughly and in-depth. Meanwhile, qualitative is an approach that aims to understand phenomena or events experienced by research subjects, such as behavior and actions so that that complete information can be obtained. By using a qualitative descriptive approach, we don't just collect and manage data but can describe, explain, and answer the problems we will analyze in more detail. Apart from that, this approach is more suitable because it suits the material that will be the research topic.

### 1.8.2 Subject and Object of the Research

The research object is a scientific objective to obtain data with a certain purpose and use something objective, valid, and trustworthy about a certain thing or variable (Sugiyono, 2016:19). In this research, the object is Indonesian diplomacy because the discussion that will be reviewed is how Indonesian humanitarian diplomacy helps resolve existing problems. Indonesian diplomacy will be a point that will be studied both in terms of its efforts and its effectiveness in helping resolve conflicts. Meanwhile, the research subject is an informant, meaning a person who is used to provide information about the situation and conditions behind the research (Moleong, 2017: 132). In this research, the subject is the Myanmar Government regarding the conflict experienced by the Rohingya community, which led to the refugee crisis.

### 1.8.3 Method of Data Collection

In this research, the author used secondary data. Secondary data is data obtained through observations made by other parties where the author does not interact directly with the research object (Sugiyono, 2016: 137). This secondary data can be obtained through internet sites, news, printed and electronic books, print

media, scientific journals, and other information related to Indonesian diplomacy in helping Rohingya refugees. To obtain valid data, the writer used data that was obtained from the central library of the Islamic University of Indonesia and the Internet. Based on these conditions, the data collection sources mostly came from journals, articles and mass media.

#### 1.8.4 Process of the Research

After the data collection process, the collected data will be prepared for analysis. The next step is to read all the data obtained to understand. From this process, it can be developed into a new idea. The next step is to divide subtopics from the data that has been collected. After this process is carried out, then develop a narrative or description based on the subtopic that will be discussed. Finally, write a description and interpret the findings resulting from the research.

### 1.9 Thesis Outline

**Chapter 1 Introduction** : This chapter describes the background of the problem issue the research raised is related to Indonesia's humanitarian diplomacy in handling the Rohingya refugee crisis. Chapter 1 will also discuss the problem formulation, research objectives, scope research, literature review, framework, temporary arguments, research methods, and the last one is the systematic discussion.

**Chapter 2 Context** : In this chapter will discuss the role of international actors and several countries involved in helping Indonesia resolve the Rohingya refugee crisis

**Chapter 3 Discussion** : In this chapter there will be important points containing the process of Indonesian humanitarian diplomacy in helping resolve the

existing crisis. In this chapter, it will explain how Indonesia collects information and establishes communication, then how Indonesia acts as a liaison between the Myanmar government and the international community, as well as the negotiation process regarding settlement solutions.

**CHAPTER 4** : In this chapter is a conclusion regarding the effectiveness of Indonesian diplomacy in this crisis, as well as recommendations to the next author.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **THE DEVELOPMENT OF ROHINGYA REFUGEE CRISIS**

Chapter 2 of this study will extensively examine the Rohingya refugee crisis that transpired from 2015 to 2018. The primary emphasis will be on tracing the evolution of the crisis, encompassing its causative factors and repercussions on the Rohingya populace. Furthermore, this section will delve into the challenges confronted by Myanmar in relation to the refugee crisis, addressing issues such as obstacles in mitigating the fundamental causes of the conflict and implementing enduring remedies. Subsequently, the discourse will encompass the global initiatives in responding to this crisis, entailing the roles of international institutions and participating nations. Humanitarian diplomacy, particularly Indonesia's involvement, will also be a central focus in this chapter. If viewed in the context of Indonesian foreign policy, Indonesia's diplomatic efforts in dealing with the refugee crisis using Nawacita are nine basic principles that form the basis of the development vision of Indonesian President Joko Widodo and Vice President Jusuf Kalla. Remembering Indonesia's role as a mediator and supporter to achieve a just and sustainable resolution for all stakeholders in this crisis.

#### **2.1. Rohingya Refugee Crisis in 2015 – 2018**

Interfaith relations in Myanmar are a very complex issue. The Rohingya ethnic group is a predominantly Muslim community, and lives in Rakhine state where the majority of the population is Buddhist. The number of Rohingya is around million, but they are not the largest community group in Rakhine (Shams 2015). The Rohingya ethnic group experiences cultural discrimination, is also exploited economically and marginalized politically by the Burmese-dominated

Myanmar government. The Rohingya are considered by Rakhine people to be additional rivals and a threat to the Buddhist lifestyle and beliefs. This is the main cause of tension in the state, and has resulted in a number of armed conflicts between the two groups. The Myanmar government seems to not care about what is happening which is causing the worsening living conditions of the Rohingya people, as well as violations of their socio-political rights.

In 2015, the action of evacuating more than 25,000 Myanmar Muslims by boat became a news topic at the international level (Fitriana 2023). The refugee action is the impact of the Rohingya ethnic group, which often experiences discrimination in everyday life. Discrimination against the Rohingya ethnic group began to escalate into a conflict when the murder of ethnic Rakhine women by Rohingya youth occurred, triggering anger from progressive groups of monks and the Rakhine community towards the Rohingya.

The discrimination experienced by the Rohingya ethnic group has worsened with the denial of citizenship status by the Myanmar government based on the 1982 Citizenship Law which considers the Rohingya as illegal immigrants from Bangladesh (Fitriana 2023). Around 300,000 White Cards, a sign that shows they are residents of Myanmar, were revoked by the Myanmar government and declared invalid since March 31 2015 (Bonasir 2015) . Without these white cards, they are not considered Myanmar citizens, which affects their freedom of movement. The consequences of these discriminatory actions triggered rebellions, persecution and human rights violations, including murder, torture and destruction of places of worship. Because this unfavourable situation has encouraged the Rohingya ethnic group to flee in large numbers to seek refuge in various countries.

On October 9 2016, there was an attack carried out by ARSA on 3 Maungdaw border guard police posts. This incident resulted in the death of 9 members of the security forces (Tarabay 2017). The Arakan Rohingya Solidarity Army (ARSA) is a Rohingya militant group that has been trained outside Myanmar since 2013 as a response to attacks in 2012. Because the attack by ARSA triggered the Burmese military to launch military operations in the form of arson, murder and rape against the Rohingya ethnic group (HRW 2016).

The following day, the Myanmar government stopped humanitarian aid. Military troops were deployed to the Maungdaw, Buthidaung and Rathedaung regions of Rakhine State. In this region, it is estimated that there are around 162 thousand people who currently depend on UN humanitarian assistance (suaralira 2016).

Various media in Myanmar are prohibited from reporting on the Rohingya situation. This is because on October 27 2016, Fiona MacGregor, a Myanmar Times journalist from Scotland, reported documents on dozens of cases of attacks by the Myanmar military on Rohingya women who were tortured and raped in areas of military operations (Holmes and correspondent 2016).

Violence continued until November 12 2016, when the Myanmar military deployed combat helicopters to attack villages in Maungdaw. There were attacks on each other for two days which killed 69 guerrillas, 17 security forces were killed, and 15 thousand residents were displaced. (HRW 2016).

The problems that occurred in Rohingya peaked again on August 25 2017 when the Rohingya ARSA militant carried out attacks on more than 30 police posts in Rakhine state(DW 2022). The Myanmar army then launched an action in



Rohingya settlements, claiming to "drive out the rebel group." The armed forces said they had succeeded in killing 400 guerrilla members, but the opposition claimed that most of the dead were civilians. Based on information from the UN, at least 1,000 people died in the first two weeks of the military operation (DW 2022). According to a report from Human Rights Watch, most of the damage occurred in Maungdaw District.

Due to this incident, the Myanmar government received strong criticism from the international community and was accused of carrying out ethnic cleansing. The UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) reported that the impact of this incident caused more than 730 thousand Rohingya refugees to flee to Bangladesh to escape violence in Myanmar (HRW 2023).

The repatriation effort which was planned to be carried out on January 22 2018 was delayed. Whether repatriating the Rohingya to Myanmar or allowing them to stay in Bangladesh is controversial (Prabandari and Tobing 2018). The number of refugees in Bangladesh has exceeded its capacity but repatriation cannot be carried out due to international pressure regarding reports of indications of genocide against the Rohingya ethnic group.

February 23, 2018, Human Rights Watch reported that the Myanmar military had destroyed 55 Rohingya villages that were vacated during the violence (BBC 2018). The Myanmar military's demolition of buildings in the northern region of Rakhine state has the potential to erase evidence of human rights violations committed by the army. The army conducted searches of Rohingya villages to find the attackers involved in a number of attacks on police posts on August 25, 2017.

On August 25 2018, tens of thousands of Rohingya refugees held a demonstration to mark the first anniversary of their exodus. In the demonstration, they called for the prosecution of Myanmar's military commander and five other military commanders on charges of genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes (DW 2022).

In November, efforts to repatriate 2,260 Rohingya refugees failed because they refused to leave without guarantees of safety. Although Myanmar has built two temporary shelters for returning refugees (DW 2022).

## **2.2. Global Engagement on the Issue**

Regarding the conflict experienced by the Rohingya ethnic group, Myanmar consistently rejects foreign interference in its domestic affairs (Press 2023). Myanmar feels that in resolving the conflict there is no need for external intervention. Even though there is a lot of evidence and international reports showing serious human rights violations against the Rohingya ethnic group, the Myanmar government denies these accusations (Setnasasean 2018). They tend to describe military operations as a response to attacks by rebel groups.

Myanmar seems to limit interactions with the international community. Despite diplomatic efforts to resolve the crisis, Myanmar's involvement in negotiations has often been indifferent and implementation has been less than optimal. There have been several meetings and agreements between Myanmar and Bangladesh regarding the return of refugees, but their implementation often does not meet expectations (Ipdefenseforum 2017). One of the key elements in this crisis is Myanmar's refusal to recognize Rohingya citizenship. They often consider

Rohingya to be illegal immigrants, and state policies have resulted in uncertain citizenship status for many Rohingya.

Handling the Rohingya refugee crisis is a significant challenge involving various parties, including nations and international organizations. International assistance is an urgent necessity in addressing the Rohingya refugee crisis for various reasons. International aid is required to provide emergency relief and fulfil their basic needs, such as food, shelter, and medical services (Kemlu 2020). Through the provision of international assistance, the global community has the potential to help alleviate the burdens borne by refugee-receiving countries and prevent the escalation of tensions that could impact regional security (Setiyono 2018). International aid serves not only as a tool for humanitarian response but also as a means to strengthen diplomatic efforts, including addressing the root causes of the conflict and achieving long-term solutions with positive impacts. International assistance can also be utilized to support peace initiatives and reconciliation at local and national levels.

Indonesia actively participates in providing assistance to address the impact of this crisis. The aid offered is not limited to diplomatic efforts but also involves direct support to the refugees. Indonesia provides medical assistance to address the health issues faced by Rohingya refugees (Kemlu 2020). Beyond healthcare aid, food assistance is also a primary focus in addressing this crisis. Collaborating with international organizations, Indonesia also endeavours to provide access to education for refugee children. Additionally, Indonesia extends significant financial aid, directing funds towards supporting humanitarian programs such as

infrastructure development, aid distribution, and economic recovery in the affected regions (Wardah 2017).

In addition to providing direct assistance, Indonesia actively engages in international coordination and cooperation to ensure that the aid given achieves its objectives effectively. Indonesia initiates various international meetings, conferences, and dialogues to discuss further steps in addressing the crisis comprehensively. Regional coordination serves as the foundation for collective efforts in dealing with this displacement crisis, and Indonesia collaborates with international humanitarian agencies, non-governmental organizations, and other countries.

#### 2.2.1 Nahdatul Ulama

NU plays a crucial role in supporting Indonesia's humanitarian diplomacy concerning the Rohingya refugee crisis (Suci 2023). As the largest Islamic organization in Indonesia, NU provides a significant contribution through various activities such as humanitarian assistance, advocacy and public awareness, Islamic diplomacy, and collaboration with the Indonesian government in humanitarian diplomacy efforts. By involving NU, Indonesia can leverage the strength of religious organizations to garner domestic and international support in addressing the Rohingya refugee crisis (Suci 2023). NU also brings a relevant cultural and religious dimension to humanitarian diplomacy efforts.

#### 2.2.2 Association of Southeast Asian Nations

Since the outbreak of the Rohingya conflict, ASEAN has actively shown its concern for the victims. ASEAN plays an important role in facilitating reform

and communicating it to Myanmar. If it continues to ignore existing concerns, Myanmar could face more severe economic sanctions and travel bans for military commanders, as well as exclusion from important military and economic initiatives in the region and internationally (Pearson 2022). ASEAN, which acts as an initiator in resolving conflicts, is hampered by its principle of non-intervention. ASEAN is trapped by the principle of non-interference in each country's internal affairs, which must be respected (Sundari, Prayuda, and Sary 2021:179). The principle of non-intervention implemented by ASEAN means that it cannot interfere in the internal affairs of its member countries. In a situation like this, ASEAN can make it a reflection regarding its principle of non-intervention.

### 2.2.3 United Nations

Since its founding in 1945, UN member states have been fully committed to maintaining international peace and security, developing friendly relations between countries, encouraging social development, improving decent living standards and human rights (Britanica 2020). The UN actively carries out advocacy through the Security Council (SC) which has the authority to make resolutions of the crisis. This resolution was obtained after obtaining agreement from at least nine countries out of a total of fifteen UN Security Council member countries (Tirto 2017).

Institutionally and procedurally, the UN has issued several resolutions related to the Rohingya crisis through closed and open meetings (Purnama, Dermawan, and Akmaluddin 2019) . On June 12 2007, it was agreed to pay special attention to the humanitarian crisis in Rakhine but unfortunately failed because it did not get approval from all members of the UN Security Council. China and

Russia, who are permanent members of the UN Security Council, used their veto rights not to approve the resolution because they considered that the problem was an internal conflict in Myanmar (Tirto 2017). Then, on March 26, 2017, the resolution regarding the Fact Finding Team in Rakhine also failed. This was due to resistance from the Myanmar authorities. UNHCR, an institution mandated by the UN General Assembly to implement this resolution, has been hampered in its implementation. A resolution issued by the UN can be implemented or not based on permission given by the country concerned (Tirto 2017). UNHCR plays a role in the process of returning Rohingya refugees to Myanmar.

#### 2.2.4 Organisation of Islamic Cooperation

At the OIC Summit on Science and Technology held in Kazakhstan on 10 September 2017, the issue of the Rohingya crisis was on the discussion agenda with encouragement from other member countries such as Turkey, Indonesia, Saudi Arabia, and Malaysia (Syakur 2024). Since 2000, the OIC has issued resolutions with the aim of ending the humanitarian crisis experienced by the Rohingya ethnic group immediately. In the following year, OIC member countries periodically discussed resolution plans related to the Rohingya. The OIC has also advocated for human rights and protection for Rohingya, which can be seen at the 72nd UN session in New York. Apart from holding meetings and conferences to produce resolutions, other efforts made by the OIC to help the Rohingya crisis are also by providing humanitarian assistance in the form of food, medicine, and medical assistance to refugees in Bangladesh. Regarding this matter, this Islamic-based international organization offered cooperation to Indonesia to play a joint role in resolving the Rohingya conflict (Liputan6 2017).

### 2.2.5 Malaysian

After the outbreak of conflict in Rakhine State in 2017, it was discovered that Malaysia had become one of the destination countries for refugees seeking protection. Malaysia hosts the largest number of Rohingya refugees in ASEAN and the fourth-highest number of refugees in the world (Nursyazwani and Prasse Freeman 2020). Malaysia has faced various challenges that have required it to implement strict policies towards refugees.

Malaysia has made several diplomatic efforts to deal with the Rohingya crisis, including recalling its ambassador to Myanmar as a form of protest and expressing condemnation of Myanmar's treatment. Malaysia's attitude of criticizing and appearing to blame the Myanmar government is not considered a solution to the crisis. Najib Razak, Prime Minister of Malaysia, at a meeting of member countries of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) appealed to the organization to pressure Myanmar to stop attacks on the Rohingya ethnic minority group in Rakhine (kompas 2017).

### 2.2.6 Türkiye's

Turkey has been the leading country in assisting Bangladesh in dealing with the influx of refugees, although Turkey also hosts many refugees (Backer 2018). Turkey, which is one of the OIC member countries, has urged that the Rohingya case be discussed at OIC meetings, the UN general assembly, and other political agendas. Turkey supports Rohingya refugees through various organizations and government agencies, including the Turkish Ministry of Health, the Emergency and Relief Administration (AFAD), the Turkish Diyanet Foundation, and the Turkish Red Crescent (Backer 2018). By relying on its organizational expertise, Turkey is

spearheading coordination efforts with other Muslim countries to discuss the Rohingya issue and find joint solutions. Turkey will assist with \$50 million to create humanitarian projects in the Rohingya refugee area (hurriyet 2017).

#### 2.2.7 Bangladesh

Since 1992 Rohingya refugees have continued to increase. They have fled Myanmar by entering the Cox's Bazar district in Bangladesh. Bangladesh is one of the countries receiving the arrival of Rohingya refugees (UNHCR 2020). From year to year, the number of refugees has increased significantly. The UN estimates that nearly 58,000 Rohingya refugees have crossed the border (BBC 2017).

The Bangladesh government considers the provision of assistance to Rohingya refugees to be only temporary because it is waiting for Myanmar's policy to accept the return of ethnic Rohingya to their country. Unfortunately, this has not been implemented because the Myanmar government has refused to repatriate a Rohingya refugees.

### **2.3. Indonesia Humanitarian Diplomacy on Agenda Within Indonesian Foreign Policy**

Nawacita is an abbreviation that refers to the nine fundamental principles serving as the foundation for the development vision of President Indonesia Joko Widodo and Vice President Jusuf Kalla. In this context, Nawacita reflects the commitment to realizing national development goals. In the field of Indonesian foreign policy, Nawacita act as an important force in directing the direction and emphasis of government policy (KOMINFO 2015). One of Nawacita's focuses that has received the spotlight is Humanitarian Diplomacy, which shows a deep



commitment to international humanitarian issues, especially the Rohingya refugee crisis. Through a firm foreign policy approach, Indonesia uses humanitarian diplomacy as a tool to resolve the humanitarian conflict experienced by the Rohingya ethnic group in Myanmar. Nawacita, as the main guide in national development planning, emphasizes the Indonesian government's principles commitment to advancing several cores, including concern for humanitarian issues on a global scale (developer 2017). In this context, Humanitarian Diplomacy is interpreted as a concrete effort to embody humanitarian values and play an active role in addressing crises that require international support.

The Indonesian government is actively involved in investigating the root causes of the conflict and the resulting consequences on the Rohingya community. Indonesian diplomats play a crucial role in understanding the dynamic changes of the crisis, enabling them to formulate strategies in line with the humanitarian principles emphasized by Nawacita concerning efforts to address the violence against the Rohingya and the humanitarian crisis in Myanmar (nawacita 2017).

The Indonesian government seeks to mediate a dialogue between the parties involved in the crisis, including Myanmar as the focal point of the conflict, and Bangladesh as the country hosting Rohingya refugees. This action aligns with the Nawacita vision, emphasizing the role of diplomacy as a tool to achieve peace and justice on the international stage (KOMINFO 2015). In implementing Humanitarian Diplomacy, Indonesia relies not only on formal diplomatic efforts but also provides direct humanitarian assistance and financial support. Through collaboration with international institutions and non-governmental organizations,

Indonesia provides medical aid, food assistance, education, and protection for Rohingya refugees (Kemlu 2020).

Indonesia's Humanitarian Diplomacy is not only seen as a response to the crisis but also as an initiative to promote and protect human rights. Indonesia is committed to engaging international institutions in efforts to resolve the Rohingya crisis, emphasizing human rights principles as the primary foundation (Kemlu 2020).

To strengthen its role at the international level, Indonesia actively engages in various international organizations. Indonesia's membership in ASEAN and its participation in UN peacekeeping missions are concrete examples of implementing Humanitarian Diplomacy in line with the Nawacita agenda (WULAN 2023). Indonesia utilizes Humanitarian Diplomacy as one of the pillars in conducting bilateral relations with countries related to the Rohingya refugee crisis. Through active participation in dialogues and intensive cooperation, Indonesia strives to build a shared understanding of the urgency in responding to humanitarian crises.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **PROCESS OF INDONESIAN HUMANITARIAN DIPLOMACY IN HANDLING THE ROHINGYA REFUGEE CRISIS**

Chapter 3 of this study will extensively examine Indonesia's humanitarian diplomacy process in dealing with the Rohingya refugee crisis, reflecting the Nawacita principles in the era of President Joko Widodo's leadership, which emphasized the main priority of humanitarian values. This diplomacy is a real implementation of Indonesia's commitment to play an active role in overcoming humanitarian challenges at the global level. In the humanitarian diplomacy process, Indonesian humanitarian diplomacy actors, represented by the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Retno Marsudi, collected information regarding countries in conflict, then Indonesia acted as a liaison between the Myanmar government and the international community, and finally carried out negotiations regarding a resolution. This humanitarian diplomacy is reflected in Indonesia's active involvement in international forums, intensive dialogue with relevant countries, and providing direct assistance to Rohingya refugees. Indonesia is committed to ensuring that the response to the crisis is not only uncontrolled, but also preventive, and supports sustainable peace in the affected areas.

#### **3.1. Indonesia collects information and coordinates with international institutions regarding the Rohingya ethnic situation**

As a government agency responsible for Indonesia's foreign policy, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has a strategic role in monitoring, collecting and analyzing information related to crisis situations (Kemlu 2021). During the

Rohingya ethnic conflict in Jokowi's first term, the Indonesian Ministry of Foreign Affairs played an important role in accordance with the Nawacita principles, which were the nine main priorities of President Joko Widodo's government.

As Indonesia's chief diplomat, Foreign Minister Retno Marsudi played a key role in gathering information and understanding in depth the condition of the Rohingya ethnic group (Putri, Harini, and Wijayati 2021). Retno Marsudi carried out direct diplomacy, bilateral meetings and participation in international forums to obtain information related to the crisis. Retno Marsudi represented Indonesia in various international forums, including ASEAN and the UN, which discussed the issue of the Rohingya ethnic crisis and listened to reports regarding the Rohingya ethnic situation. The Minister of Foreign Affairs coordinates efforts with international humanitarian agencies and ensures that Indonesia has access to the latest information and can participate in coordinating humanitarian assistance.

Nahdatul Ulama has an important role in encouraging Indonesia to carry out humanitarian diplomacy regarding the Rohingya crisis. Nahdatul Ulama took part in initiating peace, with the participation of institutions under the auspices of NU (NU 2017). NU has a significant influence in shaping public opinion and influencing government policy.

Since the conflict in Rakhine escalated in 2015, Indonesia has continued to monitor developments in the conflict. The Indonesian government, through Commission I of the DPR RI, has received the aspirations of a number of Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) regarding a number of inputs and reports on the Rohingya (Sekjen 2015). On May 21 2015, Retno Marsudi held a bilateral meeting with the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Myanmar, Wunna Maung Lwin in

Naypyidaw. During the meeting, Foreign Minister Retno Marsudi raised the issue of irregular movement of persons that occurred in the Southeast Asia region (Cahyoputra 2015).

On November 21 2016, Retno Marsudi communicated with the Junior Minister of Foreign Affairs of Myanmar regarding the situation of the Rohingya ethnic group (Liputan6 2016). Indonesia encourages Myanmar to resolve the issue of violence in Rakhine and carry out inclusive in Rakhine (Hidriyah 2016).

On December 6, 2016, Minister of Foreign Affairs Retno Marsudi paid a diplomatic visit to Myanmar to meet Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, State Counselor of Myanmar, to discuss developments in Rakhine State with the hope of improving the humanitarian situation and stability for all communities (BBC 2016). During the meeting, Retno Marsudi conveyed the importance of security and stability to continue development in Rakhine State (BBC 2016).

Before leaving for Myanmar, Retno contacted former UN Secretary General Kofi Annan, Chair of the Rakhine Human Rights Committee, who was at the center of the conflict then. Kofi Annan appreciated the concrete steps shown by the Indonesian government which met directly with the Myanmar State Counselor and related to the participation and support of the Indonesian people in providing humanitarian assistance to resolve the refugee crisis experienced by the Rohingya ethnic group (Waluyo 2016). On December 20 2016 Retno Marsudi also visited Bangladesh as part of shuttle diplomacy and met with Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina to discuss the Rohingya issue and visited the Rohingya refugee camp in Cox Bazar (Kemlu 2017).

The ongoing conflict, accompanied by Myanmar's actions in closing itself off from the international world, makes it difficult for parties who want to help resolve the case, especially for ASEAN member countries that adhere to the principle of non-intervention. On August 29, 2017, Retno Marsudi communicated with Myanmar's National Security Advisor Thaung Tun, Bangladesh Foreign Minister Mahmood Ali, and former UN Secretary General Kofi Annan, Chair of the Advisory Commission on Rakhine State to find out the situation on the ground so that he could determine what humanitarian efforts could be carried out (Berry 2017). The Indonesian government encourages the Myanmar government to immediately restore security and stability in Rakhine State.

Through Prime Minister of Foreign Affairs Mevlut Cavusoglu, on 30 August, 2017 Turkey contacted Indonesian Foreign Minister Retno Marsudi to ask about the current conditions in Rakhine. This is because it was previously known that Indonesia was the only country that was given access and had information regarding the situation in Myanmar. On this occasion, they not only gathered information related to the current situation but also took part in discussing solutions to resolve the crisis that occurred (Iqbal Musyaffa 2019).

On September 1, 2017, Retno Marsudi communicated with UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres to discuss the situation in Rakhine regarding immediately addressing the humanitarian situation (Berry 2017). On September 3, 2017, Retno Marsudi visited Myanmar with the mission of "world peace", in accordance with the ideal goals of the Indonesian nation in the 1945 Constitution. Retno Marsudi met with State Counselor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and encouraged the Myanmar Government to immediately restore security and stability (Berry 2017). Indonesia

also asked Myanmar to open access so that Indonesia and ASEAN could provide humanitarian assistance in Rakhine (I. P. Setiawan & Suryanti, 2021). Indonesia became the only country given access by the Myanmar government to conduct dialogue (Ikhsani 2019).

On September 5, 2017, Retno Marsudi continued her diplomatic visit to Bangladesh. In this meeting, the Indonesian Foreign Minister with PM Sheikh Hasina expressed sympathy for Bangladesh facing the refugee crisis. Through this meeting, Indonesia also stated that it was ready to help Bangladesh face this problem by providing assistance (Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2020). At that time, it was discovered that Bangladesh had issued a policy to close its border access with Myanmar so that Rohingya refugees could not enter the country. On that occasion, Indonesia also asked Bangladesh and Myanmar to hold a dialogue regarding a solution to the Rohingya refugee crisis.

On April 27, 2018, President Joko Widodo held a bilateral meeting with the President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, Win Myint in Singapore. The bilateral meeting discussed Indonesia's concerns regarding the Rohingya refugee crisis that occurred in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh. They also discussed about Indonesia readiness to help Myanmar in terms of humanitarian assistance, especially related to efforts to repatriate Rohingya refugees from Cox's Bazar to Rakhine State with voluntarily, safely and honorably (Aprianus 2018).

Through the process of collecting information carried out by humanitarian diplomacy actors, this collection of information is not only useful for certain parties but also can be used by international parties as their access to obtain accurate information. Indonesia carries out targeted dialogue by encouraging Myanmar to

resolve its domestic problems and asking Myanmar what things Myanmar needs to solve these problems that Indonesia can help with by Myanmar's principles. Indonesia has succeeded in positioning itself as a country that has successfully addressed the Rohingya issue in the international community, as well as being the leading country that has important information regarding the Rohingya case compared to international organizations or other parties. In line with that, Indonesia opened a dialogue to exchange ideas so that what Myanmar thinks and what the international world thinks can be in line, especially regarding Rohingya refugees stranded in Bangladesh.

### **3.2. Indonesia as a Liaison Between the Myanmar Government and the International Community**

In the context of foreign policy, Nawacita emphasized the importance of Indonesia's role in international forums, including in dealing with the Rohingya refugee crisis. Indonesia, as the largest Muslim democracy in the world and an important member of ASEAN, has a strategic position to act as a liaison between the Myanmar government and the international community in efforts to deal with the Rohingya refugee crisis (Setiawan and Suryanti 2021). Indonesia can be a neutral place for dialogue between the Myanmar military and the international community.

Indonesia has diplomatic credibility to bring together various interested actors in peace negotiations. Indonesia offered to be a 'bridge' between the governments of Bangladesh and Myanmar (Reuters 2017). Indonesia is the actor directing the Rohingya crisis experienced by the Rohingya ethnic group at the



ASEAN and global levels. In playing its role as a liaison, Indonesia is trying to build dialogue between the international community and the Myanmar government with the aim of finding the best solution to resolve the Rohingya crisis. Through previously collected information, Indonesia can straighten out communications that were previously missed. Indonesia is trying to communicate the views of various countries and international organizations so that Myanmar is not pressured by the external response they receive.

Indonesia can act as an intermediary between Myanmar and the international community, including the UN. Indonesia can help coordinate international efforts to resolve the crisis in Myanmar, including humanitarian assistance, sanctions and diplomatic pressure. On December 8 2016, President Joko Widodo held a meeting with former Secretary General of the United Nations Kofi Annan to discuss the humanitarian aid mission for the Rohingya people (Kuwado 2016). This meeting was a continuation of efforts after previously President Jokowi had actively communicated with the Myanmar Government regarding the assistance most needed by the Rohingya people.

Indonesia build a dialogue and convince ASEAN member countries to take part in overcoming this crisis. It is known that support from ASEAN is very necessary, not only because Myanmar is a member of ASEAN, but also because this case has a direct impact on the ASEAN region itself (Surun 2022). Apart from the Non-Intervention Principles owned by ASEAN, Indonesia as the liaison between the Myanmar Government and the international community continues to try to hold discussions regarding a settlement solution. Indonesia is conducting dialogue with external actors to inform them of the latest developments regarding

the humanitarian crisis in the Rohingya. On November 13, 2017 at the 31st ASEAN Summit in Manila, President Joko Widodo as the Indonesian representative raised issues related to the Rohingya conflict at the conference (Setneg 2017).

As a country that is respected both in ASEAN and on the international stage, Indonesia has the capacity to organize and mediate meetings aimed at opening paths. By utilizing its membership in various international organizations, Indonesia can invite stakeholders to dialogue about the Rohingya crisis, ensure all voices are heard, and avoid misunderstandings. Indonesia plays a pioneering role in overcoming the problems in Rakhine by requesting that other ASEAN countries participate in providing humanitarian assistance. At the 35th ASEAN Summit in Bangkok, President Joko Widodo with Foreign Minister Retno Marsudi also discussed political and security issues. At the meeting, Indonesia again touched on the Rohingya case. President Joko Widodo emphasized Indonesia's readiness to play an active role in settlement efforts by continuing to hold dialogue with Myanmar (Putri, Harini, and Wijayati 2021).

At the ASEAN Political and Security Community (APSC) meeting in Manila, he stated that he firmly encouraged the Myanmar government and the Bangladesh government to work together in efforts to repatriate or return Rohingya refugees from Bangladesh to Myanmar (Setnasasean 2017). Through ASEAN, Indonesia has wider opportunities to coordinate its policies so that it has diplomatic power regarding the Rohingya ethnic issue. By utilizing international forums, Indonesia can raise global awareness of the Rohingya situation and mobilize international support for a comprehensive and sustainable solution. This includes

highlighting the importance of access for humanitarian organizations and human rights monitors to Rakhine State.

On September 10 to 11, 2017, Indonesia attended the OIC Summit in Kazakhstan. During the meeting, Indonesia, Malaysia, and Turkey who are the chairs of the OIC, also discussed the Rohingya refugee crisis experienced by the Rohingya ethnic group. Apart from inviting ASEAN member countries, Indonesia is also actively encouraging other OIC member countries to participate in providing real assistance in helping resolve the Rohingya refugee crisis (Taufiqqurahman 2017).

After the OIC Summit, Indonesia attended the UN General Assembly, which was held on September 12, 2017. In the general assembly, Indonesia with the OIC brought up cases of violence experienced by the Rohingya ethnic group. At the urging of Indonesia and the OIC, the UN included discussions regarding cases of violence experienced by the Rohingya ethnic group. In a follow-up general assembly on December 24, 2017, the UN urged Myanmar to stop military attacks on the residents of Rakhine State immediately (VOA 2017b). In the follow-up general session, the OIC also submitted a resolution urging the Myanmar government to open access to humanitarian aid from foreign parties, ensure the security of the repatriation process of Rohingya refugees to Myanmar, and provide citizenship rights for the Rohingya ethnic group (Tempo 2017). Unfortunately, even though 122 countries supported it, this resolution failed to be achieved because China and Russia as veto holders rejected this resolution.

Indonesia's role as a liaison is realized through Indonesia acting as a partner for Myanmar and becoming a liaison between Myanmar and the international

community which aims to create policies in resolving the Rohingya refugee crisis. This role has brought results for Myanmar, where Myanmar opened itself to the entry of aid from other countries or actors to help resolve the humanitarian crisis that occurred among the Rohingya ethnic group and also help Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh. Indonesia is trying to build good communication bridges so that we can share views to produce the right policies.

### **3.3. Indonesia's Negotiations with the Government of Myanmar and Bangladesh Regarding Solutions to the Rohingya Refugee Crisis**

Negotiation is the final process of humanitarian diplomacy carried out by actors to reach an agreement. On September 4, 2017, Indonesia visited Myanmar diplomatically to carry out these negotiations. During the visit, Indonesia submitted proposed solutions for resolving the Rohingya refugee crisis. Indonesia, which at that time was represented by Retno Marsudi, in its dialogue conveyed input on the 4+1 formula which contained principles that must be implemented by the Myanmar military while still prioritizing the safety of its citizens (Dewi 2017). The 4+ 1 formula is: (1) restore stability and security; (2) exercise maximum restraint and not use violence; (3) protection for all people in Rakhine regardless of ethnicity and religion; and (4) the importance of immediately opening access to humanitarian assistance. One additional point is that Myanmar immediately implement the recommendations of the Advisory Commission Report for Rakhine led by Kofi Annan (Kusuma and Sitorus 2019). The first to third points are emphasized more by the Myanmar Military Commander who is responsible for stability and security in Myanmar. Meanwhile, in the fourth point, Indonesia places more emphasis on the mechanisms for distributing aid to conflict victims (Kusuma and Sitorus 2019).

Apart from conveying the proposed 4+1 formula, Indonesia also conveyed the importance of communication between the Myanmar government and the Bangladesh government (Kemlu 2017).

During the visit, Indonesia also negotiated regarding the humanitarian aid distributed by Indonesia to the victims to ease the burden on the victims as well as ease the burden on the Myanmar government as the party responsible for the conflict that occurred. Indonesia urges the Myanmar government to immediately open access to humanitarian aid from foreign parties (Wardah 2017). After negotiating, an agreement was reached, namely that access to humanitarian aid would be opened for victims of the conflict in Rakhine. Indonesia has formed an alliance resulting from interaction between the government and Indonesian society. Indonesia collaborated with several non-governmental organizations to form the Indonesian Humanitarian Alliance for Rohingya (AKIM). The Indonesian government and AKIM will collaborate with the Myanmar government to form HASCO (Humanitarian Assistance for Sustainable Communities) to distribute humanitarian aid in the future (Wardah 2017). The distribution of humanitarian aid will be led by Myanmar, involving the ICRC (International Committee of the Red Cross) and ASEAN (Sadewa 2019). Indonesia involves ASEAN in distributing humanitarian aid without having to violate the member's principle of non-intervention. This significant achievement of Indonesia's humanitarian diplomacy mission was realized through an agreement on the participation of Indonesia and ASEAN in delivering humanitarian aid to Rakhine State (Agustina 2017). Apart from humanitarian assistance, Indonesia also facilitated the construction of a

hospital in Rakhine, thereby increasing the Myanmar government's confidence that the assistance provided by Indonesia was for humanitarian purposes.

On September 5, 2017, the Indonesian Minister of Foreign Affairs also visited Bangladesh diplomatically (Kemlu, n.d.). Retno Marsudi met Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and Bangladesh Foreign Minister Abul Hasan during this diplomatic visit. The diplomatic visit aims to negotiate a solution to resolve the refugee crisis experienced by the Rohingya ethnic group in Bangladesh. During the meeting, Indonesia attempted to persuade Bangladesh to accept and protect Rohingya ethnic refugees (VOA 2017a). It was previously known that Bangladesh had rejected the presence of refugees due to several reasons, such as the existing camps being full due to the previous wave of refugees as well as economic factors which were increasingly burdensome for Bangladesh. For this reason, Indonesia offered a solution to the Bangladeshi side in the form of humanitarian assistance which is expected to cover the shortage and lighten the burden on the Bangladeshi side.

To realize this solution, Indonesia is holding dialogue with the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) in Bangladesh (Wardah 2017). The Bangladesh government is finally willing to protect Rohingya refugees and open access for foreign parties to provide humanitarian assistance to Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh.

At the encouragement of Indonesia, the Government of Myanmar and the Government of Bangladesh agreed to hold a bilateral meeting to discuss efforts to resolve the Rohingya refugee crisis. The meeting was held in Myanmar on November 23 2017. From this meeting an agreement was reached on the return of

Rohingya refugees to Myanmar. Myanmar recognized this agreement based on the repatriation pact between Myanmar and Bangladesh in 1992 (Ipdefenseforum 2017). The repatriation effort was agreed upon based on previously determined conditions: having fulfilled data and document verification with security guarantees from Myanmar.

Following the bilateral agreement signed by the Myanmar government and the Bangladesh government in Naypyidaw on 23 November 2017, the repatriation process will begin on 22 January 2018 and be completed in 2020 (Liputan6.com 2019). Unfortunately, efforts to repatriate thousands of Rohingya refugees currently living in Bangladesh have been postponed due to strong international pressure. This is because, in early 2018, the UN Independent International Fact-Finding Mission on Myanmar confirmed that the atrocities committed by the country's military were "genocide." Responding to the report, Myanmar rejected the UN's claims and stated that the investigation was considered "flawed, biased and politically motivated." Myanmar authorities consistently deny atrocities against the Rohingya population in the country and state that security forces only engage "armed rebels" (Billah 2018). In addition, the Myanmar government's lack of transparency and openness to the international community further complicates repatriation efforts.

The failure of the repatriation efforts in January 2018 reflected Myanmar's lack of preparedness in welcoming back Rohingya refugees while also showing that refugees in Bangladesh do not feel ready to return to their "homeland." Uncertainty regarding security guarantees is one of the main reasons behind this disagreement. Although the agreement states that the repatriation process will take place with "security, guarantees and dignity," the agreement does not explain in detail the

conditions that Rohingya will face when they return, and whether the conditions will be different from the previous situation (Prabandari and Tobing 2018).

The repatriation process can be accepted only if it is carried out through mutual understanding, mutual trust, and multilateral consensus between Bangladesh, Myanmar, international parties, and the Rohingya community. Returning Rohingya refugees to Myanmar or allowing them to remain in Bangladesh is a significant challenge because the number of refugees in Bangladesh has exceeded capacity (Prabandari and Tobing 2018).

For now, a repatriation deal appears unlikely. In his most recent trip to Bangladesh in January 2018, Indonesian President Joko Widodo announced that he would provide aid to Rohingya refugees in Cox's Bazar (Prabandari and Tobing 2018). Working towards a constructive agreement with Myanmar is needed to recognize the Rohingya's citizenship status and end persistent systemic discrimination against them.

In June 2018, Myanmar signed an agreement with the UN stipulating that certain conditions must be addressed for repatriation, including security guarantees and a pathway to citizenship (Ellis-Petersen and correspondent 2018). Foreign Minister Retno Marsudi said that efforts to repatriate thousands of Rohingya refugees must also be a priority for ASEAN. In response to this, ASEAN leaders agreed to assist an ad hoc task force to assist the process of repatriating Rohingya refugees from Bangladesh to Myanmar (Satnasasean 2020).

President Joko Widodo attended the 35th ASEAN Summit held in Bangkok on 2-4 November 2019 with the theme 'Encouraging Partnerships for Sustainability'. During the meeting, Indonesia, together with the leaders of other ASEAN member



countries, agreed to form an ad-hoc task team responsible for monitoring and protecting the repatriation process of the Rohingya ethnic group from Cox's Bazar (Bangladesh) to Myanmar based on a report prepared by the ASEAN Coordinating Center for Humanitarian Assistance (AHA Centre) team together with the ASEAN Emergency Response and Assessment Team (Rahman 2019).

In diplomacy, the results are not obtained immediately but instead continuously and gradually. There is a long process to realize an agreement because it is hampered by each party wanting to prioritize their interests. Therefore, seriousness is needed in implementing the solutions that have been formulated previously. The repatriation process cannot be carried out safely in a short time. Doing this too early can bring risks and potential dangers (Prabandari and Tobing 2018). In resolving the refugee crisis experienced by the Rohingya ethnic group, real efforts are needed both in resolving conflicts in their country of origin and related to refugees in refugee camps. Repatriation efforts are one of the future tasks that Myanmar and Bangladesh must consider. The delay in repatriation efforts which should have been implemented in 2018 must be immediately addressed by both parties so that the Rohingya refugee crisis in Bangladesh does not get worse.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **CONCLUSION**

#### **4.1 Conclusion**

In resolving the refugee crisis experienced by the Rohingya ethnic group, it is not only by dealing with refugees in refugee camps, but efforts are also needed to resolve it in the country of origin of the conflict so that no more Rohingya ethnic groups have to seek protection in other countries.

Diplomacy by using threats and cornering the Myanmar government is not an effective effort. It will only make relations more tense. Indonesia presents with humanitarian diplomacy by taking advantage of the good relations that have been established. Indonesia's humanitarian diplomacy in dealing with the Rohingya crisis reflects the application of Nawacita principles in the context of foreign policy. Through an approach focused on dialogue, cooperation and humanitarian action, Indonesia seeks to play a constructive role in finding a peaceful and sustainable solution to this crisis. The process of collecting information is not only useful for certain parties. Still, it can be used by international parties as their access to obtain accurate information. Indonesia is carrying out targeted dialogue by encouraging Myanmar to resolve its domestic problems. Indonesia is the actor directing the humanitarian crisis experienced by the Rohingya ethnic group at the international community level. Indonesia opened a dialogue to exchange ideas so that what Myanmar thinks and what the international community thinks can be in line with what Indonesia thinks and what Myanmar thinks. Indonesia acts as a partner for Myanmar and is a liaison between Myanmar and the international community with the aim of creating policies to resolve the Rohingya refugee crisis. This role has

brought results for Myanmar, where Myanmar has opened itself up to the entry of assistance from other countries or actors to help resolve the humanitarian crisis in the Rohingya.

Negotiation is the final process of humanitarian diplomacy carried out by actors to reach an agreement. To reach this agreement, humanitarian diplomacy actors used classic diplomatic instruments such as persuasion, promises, and dialogue. In these negotiations, Indonesia submitted input to the 4+1 formula, which contains principles that must be implemented by the Myanmar military while still prioritizing the safety of its citizens. Through negotiations regarding this solution, Myanmar government was finally willing to open its health insurance to foreign parties. In this way, the efforts to distribute humanitarian aid to victims can be carried out. Indonesia is also negotiating with Bangladesh. During the meeting, Indonesia attempted to persuade Bangladesh to accept and protect Rohingya ethnic refugees. Indonesia offered a solution to the Bangladeshi side in the form of humanitarian assistance, which is expected to cover deficiencies and ease the burden on the Bangladeshi side. Finally, the Bangladesh government is willing to protect Rohingya refugees and open access for foreign parties to provide humanitarian assistance to Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh.

At Indonesia's insistence, the Government of Myanmar and the Government of Bangladesh were finally willing to hold a bilateral meeting. The bilateral meeting resulted in an agreement on efforts to repatriate Rohingya refugees, which was agreed to be implemented in January 2018. The repatriation efforts planned for January 2018 had to be postponed for several reasons, such as a report from the UN Independent International Fact-Finding Mission in Myanmar, which classified the

atrocities committed by the country's military as “genocide.” Because of this report, the international community has urged that repatriation not be carried out until there is a guarantee of safety for the refugees. The failed repatriation efforts carried out in January 2018 signaled Myanmar's unpreparedness to welcome the return of Rohingya refugees. Also, they indicated that refugees in Bangladesh were not ready to return to their "homeland."

Based on this case study, it can be concluded that humanitarian diplomacy is effectively used in dealing with humanitarian problems such as the refugee crisis experienced by the Rohingya ethnic group. Even though some resolution efforts have not been carried out optimally, so far the humanitarian diplomacy steps taken by Indonesia have had a positive impact. The practice of neutral humanitarian diplomacy by not intervening in the political affairs of conflicting parties and avoiding acts of violence can build trust among the conflicting parties themselves.

#### **4.2 Recommendation**

Through this research, the author recommends that future researchers conduct research related to humanitarian diplomacy carried out by Indonesia from 2018 to 2023, especially regarding repatriation efforts that were postponed in 2018

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