

DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.19860728

FAITH-BASED DIPLOMACY AND HUMANITARIAN ENGAGEMENT: MUHAMMADIYAH'S POSITION IN INDONESIA'S RESPONSE TO THE ROHINGYA CONFLICT

Husni Amriyanto Putra¹, Zuly Qodir², and Hasse Jubba³

¹Doctoral Program in Islamic Politics, Universitas Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta, Yogyakarta, Indonesia.
Email: choenny@yahoo.com

^{2,3}Doctoral Program in Islamic Politics, Universitas Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta, Yogyakarta, Indonesia

Received: 15/03/2026
Accepted: 17/04/2026

Corresponding Author: Husni Amriyanto Putra
(choenny@yahoo.com)

ABSTRACT

This paper examines the role of Muhammadiyah, Indonesia's largest Islamic organization, in responding to the Rohingya conflict, with particular attention to the organization's limited engagement in peacemaking and its emphasis on humanitarian peacebuilding. Situating the analysis within the framework of multi-track diplomacy and faith-based conflict resolution, the study argues that while religious organizations possess moral legitimacy and social capital, their capacity to mediate violent conflicts is shaped by political opportunity structures and state relations. Using a qualitative research design, data were collected through in-depth interviews with Muhammadiyah elites and a systematic review of policy documents, organizational statements, and scholarly literature. The findings show that Muhammadiyah has played a significant role in humanitarian assistance—health services, education, and relief distribution—but has refrained from direct mediation with the Myanmar government. This limitation is driven by the weak institutionalization of conflict-resolution mechanisms, dependence on state diplomatic channels, and tensions with Indonesia's quiet diplomacy approach. The paper contributes to faith-based diplomacy literature by demonstrating how structural constraints and state-civil society dynamics condition the scope of religious actors in international conflict resolution, particularly in protracted humanitarian crises such as the Rohingya case.

KEYWORDS: Faith, Diplomacy, Muhammadiyah, Rohingya, Conflict Zone.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background

In the study of international relations, war and peace remain interesting topics. The complexity of relations between countries and between states and non-state actors in conflictual conditions often becomes a hot topic. The Second World War and the Cold War may be over, but the world still faces conflicts at international, regional, and intranational levels. At the international level, the war between Israel and Palestine has not yet reached a peace, while Russia and Ukraine are still at war. At the regional level, claims of ownership in the South China Sea between China and ASEAN countries have made the region volatile (Han et al., 2023). At the domestic level, intra-state conflicts such as horizontal conflicts between ethnic-religious groups and vertical conflicts between governments and community groups continue to emerge. Examples include Myanmar with Muslim Rohingya and the conflict between the Chinese government and Uighur Muslims. Indonesia has also experienced ethnic and religious conflicts, from the Situbondo Tragedy of 1996 to the Poso Tragedy of 1998, and religious conflicts until 2016 (Suaib Tahir et al., 2023).

Connections between countries are dynamic and constantly changing. War and peace, originally state affairs, have shifted into complex problems involving many parties. In some cases, military force and repressive measures have proven unsuccessful. Relying excessively on intergovernmental organizations such as the United Nations (UN) is also limited, as they tend to avoid deep intervention in domestic affairs. ASEAN similarly upholds the principle of non-interference, seeking appropriate formulations to prevent conflict and realize peace through the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation (TAC) (Sikander, 2011). Ongoing conflicts have pushed countries to seek solutions other than coercion and violence. After the Cold War, peacebuilding became a major discourse in the global agenda. Conflict resolution and transformation are central themes in Peace Studies (Prakoso et al., 2017). Louise Diamond and John McDonald's Multi-Track Diplomacy approach emphasizes that governments are not the only actors in conflict resolution. One pathway is the religious pathway, or peacebuilding through religious communities (Stokke et al., 2022).

Religion can function both as a trigger of conflict and as a solution for peace. Religious teachings, symbols, and doctrines can be manipulated to justify violence. The inter-religious conflict in Maluku demonstrated how religious symbols were used to

arouse hatred and justify violence (Qurtuby, 2015). Conversely, religion can be an effective instrument for negotiation and mediation. It demonstrated the success of religion as a conflict mediator. Religious actors are respected and believed to be able to resolve conflicts due to their perceived neutrality. It concluded that religious elements foster integration and reconciliation. Studies show religious communities have played significant roles in conflict resolution through education and mediation. It concluded that religion motivates individuals to become peacemakers and serves as a tactical foundation for peace (Abraham & Rufaedah, 2014). This is exemplified by Muhammad Ashafa and Pastor James in Nigeria through the Interfaith Mediation Center (IMC). It observed the role of the National Council of Churches of Kenya (NCCCK) in humanitarian missions and post-election conflict resolution. It emphasized the role of religious actors in peacebuilding in Southeast Asia and highlighted religious moderation in Indonesia.

Departing from this explanation, the author discusses Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) and Muhammadiyah in the context of conflict resolution and world peace. NU and Muhammadiyah have received recognition for their peace efforts. Indonesian Foreign Ministry representatives and Nobel laureate Ramos Horta acknowledged their role as assets of Indonesian diplomacy (Haris Firdaus & Anita Yossihara, 2019). NU, since its founding with the principle of *Islam rahmatan lil alamin*, has committed to world peace through international networks, dialogue, and soft diplomacy. NU figures have played roles in international organizations and initiatives, including WCRP and ISOMIL. NU uses dialogue as its primary strategy to facilitate peace and mediate conflicts, including in Afghanistan and the Middle East. Muhammadiyah also has a strong record in conflict resolution. After reformasi, Muhammadiyah focused on resolving communal conflicts through visits, dialogue, and peace forums (Indrawan & Putri, 2022).

Regionally, Muhammadiyah conducted peace missions in Thailand and facilitated dialogue in Mindanao, contributing to the 2012 Peace Agreement. Internationally, Muhammadiyah initiated reconciliation efforts in the Central African Republic. Referring to the success of NU and Muhammadiyah, the strength of religious organizations lies in their mediation capabilities, which facilitate dialogue and peace agreements, as Johan Galtung terms them, negative peace. Muhammadiyah continues its contribution through positive peace by addressing structural violence via

education and social services, including scholarships for Mindanao students (Latief & Nashir, 2020). Muhammadiyah has excellent potential to become a significant religious peacemaker if its structural and individual capital are synergized well.

1.2. Problem Formulation

The conflict between the Myanmar Government and the Rohingya Muslims in the Rakhine region has been in the media since 1991. This ethnic conflict reached the momentum of a massacre by the Myanmar military in 2012 and 2017. There was an attempt at ethnic cleansing through genocide carried out by Myanmar against the Rohingya ethnic group, which, for several decades, had not been recognized, had no legal guarantee for fundamental rights, making the Rohingya a nation without a country and vulnerable to violence and oppression (Setiawan & Suryanti, 2021). Even the UN calls the Rohingya ethnic group the most suffering ethnic group on earth. Various groups have responded to the humanitarian tragedy with different conflict management strategies. ASEAN prioritizes diplomatic relations through official meetings, while the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) prioritizes humanitarian actions through bilateral and multilateral schemes. Although efforts have been carried out since 2012, they have not yielded the best results in achieving a peace agreement.

Official state actors and international organizations adhere to the principle of non-intervention, thereby limiting the scope of conflict resolution. ASEAN becomes a factor inhibiting conflict resolution. OIC plays a role, but Myanmar is not an OIC member. The ongoing conflict shows that states, through traditional ways, are not capable of handling conflict alone. Therefore, the role of other entities is needed in peacemaking and peacebuilding. Muhammadiyah, as the most prominent religious organization in Indonesia, has demonstrated success as a faith-based peace facilitator at national, regional, and international levels. Muhammadiyah's peace diplomacy practices are based on advancing education, providing social services, and improving welfare. In the Rohingya case, Muhammadiyah focuses on distributing humanitarian aid such as financial donations, restoring health, and building schools and educational facilities. Logistics and health assistance were distributed, although Muhammadiyah volunteers faced challenges in the field.

Based on its experience in resolving the Pattani Muslim conflict in Thailand and in reconciling the Philippine Government and the Moro Nation, the

Muhammadiyah peace model is a simultaneous approach to peacemaking and peacebuilding. In the Pattani conflict, Muhammadiyah's role was carried out through peacemaking efforts, including communication with the Thai government and religious leaders since the 1990s, until it was trusted by King Bhumibol to help resolve the conflict. However, Muhammadiyah's approach in the Rohingya conflict is different. Muhammadiyah stands out for humanitarian intervention (peacebuilding) rather than political action to stop violence (peacemaking). There has been no visible initiative for dialogue from Muhammadiyah leaders to the Myanmar government. Even when Din Syamsuddin met Aung San Suu Kyi in 2018, he represented Indonesia as the President's Special Envoy, not as a representative of Muhammadiyah (Fajar Pratama, 2017).

Brchovich and Orellana explained that legitimate capital and mediation channels, including the presence of the state, determine the realization of peace by religious organizations. Muhammadiyah has an opportunity through Indonesia's strategic position, as the Myanmar government recognizes the country. This trust is linked to Indonesia's quiet diplomacy, unlike megaphone diplomacy used by the UN and Malaysia. President Joko Widodo emphasized quiet diplomacy as a necessary strategy in his 2017 address (BBC, 2017). Indonesia's quiet diplomacy received praise and helped open Myanmar to humanitarian assistance from Indonesia (Paul Vrieze, 2017).

However, a distance emerged between Muhammadiyah and the Indonesian Government. Muhammadiyah demanded revision of Indonesia's diplomacy and urged a firmer foreign policy toward Myanmar. Dahnil Azhar Simanjuntak called for severing diplomatic relations, considering Myanmar's actions as a massacre. The Indonesian Ambassador emphasized that silent diplomacy is a long-standing tradition for Indonesia, and that severing relations would complicate humanitarian aid distribution. There are differences of opinion between Muhammadiyah and the Indonesian Government regarding silent diplomacy. The government prioritizes constructive and inclusive approaches, while Muhammadiyah advocates a tougher, more assertive political approach (Andi Nur Aminah, 2017).

Based on the background explanation of the problem above, this research poses the main research question: "Why Muhammadiyah Limits Role in the Process of Peacemaking between the Government of Myanmar and the Ethnicity

Rohingya?" As for the question of other supporters, that is:

- Why does Muhammadiyah have a different view from the Indonesian government in carrying out diplomacy regarding the Rohingya conflict?
- How can the connection between Muhammadiyah and the government reach *peacemaking* in Rakhine?
- How is the connection between Muhammadiyah and the Government of Indonesia in achieving *peacebuilding* in Rakhine?

1.3. Research Objective

By understanding more about the role of Muhammadiyah as a religious organization in the effort to realize world peace, including the dynamics of the relationship between Muhammadiyah and the Indonesian Government in realizing peacemaking and peacebuilding, it is hoped that a new conceptual basis will be born regarding the involvement of faith-based organizations in conflict resolution from Muhammadiyah's perspective. The expected practical objective is to provide input to Muhammadiyah on the importance of strengthening its role in realizing world peace through peacemaking and peacebuilding initiatives.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Research builds on previous studies, and novelty fills existing gaps. Therefore, a selective literature review is conducted on topics relevant to the current study. The author's research revealed several studies on Muhammadiyah's involvement in the Rohingya ethnic conflict, with the majority focusing on humanitarian action in Myanmar. The author found no research specifically addressing

Muhammadiyah's involvement as a mediator in the Rohingya conflict, particularly its limited role. According to Ibrahim (2016), the Rohingya conflict is one of the most complex humanitarian conflicts in Southeast Asia. Since the 1982 Citizenship Law, the Rohingya have been excluded from Myanmar citizenship and deprived of civil and political rights. More than 700,000 Rohingya fled to Bangladesh in 2017 due to repressive measures allegedly amounting to crimes against humanity and genocide.

Research by Siddiquee (2020) shows that international responses reflect ambivalence between global normative commitments and geopolitical imperatives. Western countries condemned Myanmar and imposed sanctions, but without substantial political intervention due to strategic interests, particularly China and Russia. International engagement has tended toward humanitarian rather than political action, highlighting the limited effectiveness of the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) doctrine. A similar study by Zahrul Anam (2012), in the context of Indonesia-Malaysia relations, states that Muhammadiyah limited its role in conflict management due to its weak capacity for conflict resolution. Using Becky Nesbitt's theory, Anam argued that Muhammadiyah has the potential to engage in advocacy and peace negotiation but needs to increase capacity and expand cooperation networks. Simplifying the absence of a conflict resolution council as the main factor hindering Muhammadiyah's mediating role is incorrect. Muhammadiyah already has the World Peace Forum (WPF) as a biennial dialogue platform. The WPF has taken concrete steps, including producing memorandums of understanding with conflicting parties in Central African countries (Biekart et al., 2023). As shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Taxonomy of Research Literature.

No	Title	Methodology	Research result	Source
1	Faith and access: The role of religion in formal mental health service utilization among Black adolescents	This study is a secondary analysis of the <i>Black Teen Help-Seeking</i> (BTHS) study using a mixed-methods explanatory sequential design. The quantitative phase (n=285) examined whether religious affiliation (Protestant/Christian/Catholic vs. Atheist/Unaffiliated/Agnostic) influenced the likelihood of using formal professional mental health services (school, helpline, community/outpatient, primary care physician) using chi-square tests. The qualitative phase (n=6) provided deeper insights, exploring how religion influenced adolescents' views on mental health and service utilization. Qualitative data were analyzed using inductive thematic analysis.	Quantitative: A significant association was found between religious affiliation and use of school mental health professionals (p=0.002). Protestant/Christian/Catholic participants were more likely to use school support, while non-religious groups were less likely to use school services but more likely to use phone or text helplines. No significant associations were found for use of community/outpatient services or primary care physicians. Qualitative: Three themes emerged: "Cultural and Community Emphasis on <i>Religious Coping</i> ," "Stigma and Belittling" (by religious family members), and "Awareness of the Need for Additional	(Baker et al., 2025)

			Support."	
2	An assessment of surging crime, gender violence, and justice mechanisms in the Rohingya camps in Bangladesh	A qualitative research approach was employed, complemented by an extensive literature review. The theoretical framework of <i>intersectionality</i> was used to analyze socio-economic and political dynamics. Data were collected through in-depth semi-structured interviews (n=10 refugees, including 4 victims) and expert interviews (n=10, including judges, <i>Camp-in-Charges</i> , protection managers, and academics). Field observations were also conducted.	Various forms of crime and violence are closely linked to poverty, trauma, social exclusion, and systemic human rights violations. Women and girls are disproportionately exposed due to high socioeconomic vulnerability. Theft is the most commonly reported crime, followed by robbery and banditry. Gender-based violence, including intimate partner violence and child marriage, is highly prevalent. Refugees rely heavily on informal justice mechanisms because they lack formal legal status and civil documentation.	(Islam, 2025)
3	Understanding the mental and physical health consequences of the US citizenship exam for Rohingya refugees: Implications for policy and practice	A critical ethnographic study involving community engagement. Informed by the theoretical frameworks of stress proliferation <i>and</i> intersectionality. Methods: 31 in-depth interviews with adults, supplemented by participant observation in Rohingya community centers, homes, and neighborhoods. Data were analyzed using a thematic approach (inductive and deductive).	Three key findings: (1) the impact of statelessness on physical and mental health; (2) the requirements and preparation for the US citizenship exam are primary stressors that compound additional stressors; and (3) the potential role of health care providers and community-led initiatives in mediating the relationship between stressors and health. Lack of education in Myanmar creates barriers to learning English and health issues (such as memory and vision problems) that hinder exam success.	(Magan & Goodkind, 2025)
4	Conflicting governance realities: Aligning historical and cultural practices with formal marine protected area co-management in Senegal	Mixed methods empirical analysis. Target population: actors interacting with the MPA (fishermen, fish processors, indigenous peoples, management committee representatives). Data collection methods: policy documents, unstructured interviews (n=21), semi-structured interviews (n=172), focus group interviews (n=5), and participatory mapping workshops (n=1). Qualitative data were analyzed using qualitative content analysis.	The MPA management committee does not involve all Joal Fadiouth stakeholders and is not truly representative of all resource users and social organizations. There is a lack of legal clarity, which complicates the protection of marine biodiversity. Formal zones and established (de jure) rules do not reflect the reality of complex (de facto) resource-use practices (cultural sites, subsistence fishing areas). Foreign community users, occasional migrant fishers, and traditional/religious authorities are excluded from the committee.	(Senghor et al., 2023)

The study by Higuchi et al. (2025), entitled "Disentangling Anti-Refugee Sentiment: An Empirical Investigation of the Rohingya Crisis," provides an important contribution to understanding the determinants of negative sentiment toward refugees through a comprehensive analytical approach. This study utilizes lab-in-the-field experiments, field experiments, and primary surveys with multidimensional measurements. Hate is operationalized through costs paid in a joy-of-destruction game, while Fear is evaluated based on perceptions of harmful behavior from refugees. By applying fixed-effects regression models, the study identifies the main drivers of anti-refugee sentiment, particularly spatial proximity. The findings indicate that exposure alone significantly increased hostility, without affecting fear. A one-standard-deviation increase in exposure levels was associated with an approximately 0.23 SD increase in hostility,

confirming that physical presence alone can trigger hostility.

Kibet et al. (2020) explain that NGOs face challenges in conflict transformation due to a lack of commitment from conflicting parties, perceptions of non-neutrality, political instrumentalization, and limited financial capacity. Kibet argues that religious organizations primarily face constraints due to a lack of political will on the part of governments and conflicting parties to involve them as mediators. Research by Khaled et al. (2024) shows the dual role of NGOs as providers of emergency services and facilitators of cross-level dialogue, policy advocacy, and liaison with international organizations. While NGOs cannot replace state-level political settlements, coordination with diplomatic actors is essential. Challenges include uncertain funding, operational security, and aligning humanitarian and long-term peace goals. According to Sudheer & Banerjee (2021),

NGOs also fill local capacity gaps by providing psychosocial services, humanitarian training, emergency education, and localization initiatives. Although these efforts increase refugee resilience, localization agendas are constrained by access limitations and restrictions on humanitarian space.

Ware et al. (2022) note that NGOs function as advocacy and documentation actors by documenting human rights violations and mobilizing international opinion. However, NGOs face politicization, operational restrictions, and security threats, reducing advocacy effectiveness. It shows that the Rohingya crisis stems from structural discrimination, citizenship revocation, and systematic violence culminating in the 2017 military operation. Empirical analysis documents burning of settlements, killings, sexual violence, and expulsions with long-term impacts. Karin et al. (2020) confirm that international NGOs are key actors in emergency response, particularly in Cox's Bazar, providing food, WASH, health care, and shelter. Rapid intervention reduced morbidity and mortality despite coordination challenges. Studies identify high levels of trauma, PTSD, and limited psychosocial services. Women and children face greater risks, necessitating gender-sensitive protection and integrated medical and psychosocial programs.

The OIC plays a role as initiator, mediator, and humanitarian actor. Dewinta (2016) shows that during the 2012 conflict, the OIC initiated dialogue, coordinated member states, and intensified advocacy. It notes that the OIC mobilized humanitarian aid and diplomacy but faced limited access and a slow response. During 2016–2017, the OIC strengthened its diplomatic stance. It categorizes its role as initiator, mediator, humanitarian actor, and facilitator through meetings, aid mobilization, and support for education and health. However, literature confirms that the OIC's effectiveness remains limited due to Myanmar's resistance, weak international regulation, and inconsistent pressure. Kamran Naseem et al. (2021) emphasize that the OIC must move beyond symbolic advocacy to guarantee Rohingya political and citizenship rights.

Although in the literature on Faith-Based Organizations (FBOs), religious organizations are often positioned as strategic actors in conflict resolution and peacebuilding, Muhammadiyah's experience in the Rohingya conflict demonstrates significant structural limitations. Normatively, Muhammadiyah possesses substantial symbolic capital and moral legitimacy through progressive Islamic values, humanitarian solidarity, and international networks. However, in practice,

Muhammadiyah's involvement in the Rohingya conflict has not been supported by adequate organizational institutionalization. The responses that have emerged have tended to be ad hoc and reactive, particularly through Muhammadiyah Aid, thus representing a crisis-driven humanitarian response rather than a planned and sustainable conflict-resolution strategy (Ferris, 2005).

From the perspective of institutionalization theory (Huntington), this condition indicates a low level of institutionalization in handling social conflict within Muhammadiyah (Wraikat et al., 2017). The absence of permanent institutions, conflict policy frameworks, and standard operating procedures (SOPs) specifically for cross-border social conflicts has led to fragmented handling, dependent on the momentum of the crisis (Meyer & Rowan, 2016). This places Muhammadiyah within the framework of an ad hoc organization that excels in flexibility and rapid response but is weak in policy consistency, institutional knowledge accumulation, and peacebuilding sustainability. Thus, Muhammadiyah's role is more concentrated on relief and social rehabilitation, while mediation, conflict transformation, and structural advocacy have not been institutionalized (Mahoney, 2000).

In social conflict studies, conflict is understood as a product of power relations, resource distribution, and identity construction. In critical peace studies, escalation is shaped by direct, structural, and cultural violence, in which violence is embedded in social structures that produce inequality and exclusion (McGinnis, 2020). Thus, handling social conflict is an institutional process involving rule reconfiguration, rights recognition, and accountability. This dynamic is evident in the Rohingya conflict in Myanmar, reflecting governance failure in citizenship, legal protection, and identity recognition. The conflict demonstrates intense structural and cultural violence, producing prolonged vulnerability and mass refugee displacement. The United Nations Independent International Fact-Finding Mission on Myanmar confirmed gross human rights violations. It recommended accountability, indicating the need for cross-level institutional responses, including international legal mechanisms such as the ICJ case (*The Gambia v. Myanmar*).

3. RESEARCH METHOD

Methodology can be defined conceptually as the systematic analysis of the principles, rules, and techniques underlying research. In research, methodology serves as a conceptual framework that enables researchers to understand and apply the

basic principles underlying the research process. Methodology is a philosophical and critical reflection on how facts are generated, verified, and interpreted. It is more than just a list of technical procedures. Therefore, methodology demonstrates the researcher's philosophical direction, the rationale for using a particular approach, and the rationale for using relevant techniques and instruments. Researchers can navigate the complexities of scientific inquiry with a deep methodological understanding. Thus, research findings become more accurate, valid, and meaningful.

In practice, methodology describes the essential elements for conducting research systematically and effectively. This includes determining the appropriate type of research: quantitative, qualitative, or mixed; and selecting appropriate data collection methods, such as observation, interviews, or surveys. Methodology also includes selecting data analysis strategies, such as thematic coding and statistical analysis. These decisions are not made in isolation; they are interconnected with the research objectives, the research context, and the ethical considerations. Ultimately, clear and thorough methodological documentation ensures that the research is transparent, rational, and accountable. This enables others to understand, replicate, and build on the findings. study.

This research aims to understand Muhammadiyah's role in resolving the Rohingya conflict and the critical factors that enabled this. Therefore, we consider the Qualitative research method appropriate for this research topic because it allows us to gain a deep understanding of complex social phenomena and to explore the theme in depth, encompassing objective perspectives and experiences. To systematically identify and analyze textual data, we will use an inductive approach, as it is more efficient than a deductive one. Furthermore, there is no standard theory available; therefore, we will present our concepts based on our observations and analysis. This inductive approach will help us develop a conceptual framework. In addition, through qualitative research, we will be able to understand the phenomena experienced by research subjects, such as behavior, perception, motivation, and social influence, which are described holistically in words and language within a specific natural context, and by utilizing various natural methods. By using analytical descriptive methods, this research will present the results of the analysis of the research object, especially the relationship between Muhammadiyah's role as a peacemaker and its influence by other entities, including the state, in this

case, the Indonesian government.

3.1. Technique Of Data Collection

Data collection methods are defined as the tools used in the data collection process. There are at least several methods that can be applied, including interviews, questionnaires, participant observation, and others. In a study, a researcher must determine the data collection technique. Which is most appropriate? Which will be used? This matters so we can really get valid, reliable data. Do not include all data-collection techniques (questionnaires, observations, interviews) if they cannot be implemented. In this research, the author chose to use interviews and literature reviews as data collection methods. Interviews were conducted with competent sources holding strategic positions within the Muhammadiyah association. The interview sources in the data collection process were Prof. Dr. H Syafiq A. Mughni, as Chairman of the Muhammadiyah Central Leadership for International Relations and Cooperation of the Muhammadiyah Central Leadership, Dr. HM Busyro Muqoddas, SH, M.Hum., as Chairman of the Law, Human Rights, and Wisdom Division, Prof. Dr. Muhammad Sirajuddin Syamsuddin, MA, as Chairman of the Muhammadiyah Central Leadership for the 2005-2015 period, Dr. phil. Ridho Al-Hamdi, S.Fil.I., MA as Chairman of the Institute for Wisdom and Public Policy of the Muhammadiyah Central Leadership, Dr. Imam Addaruqutni as Chairman of International Relations and Cooperation, A. Malik Musa, SH, M.Hum, Chairman of the Aceh Province PWM.

Furthermore, a literature review as a data collection method involves using literature as a reference relevant to the research theme. The literature used as references in this research is based on statements. leadership, the administrator center as well as figures of Muhammadiyah, which delivered loaded media print and electronic. Besides that, academic articles in the form of a journal, which are written by figures of Muhammadiyah as a manifestation of the ideas and concepts of the association, are also a source of literature.

3.2. Technique Of Data Analysis

Data analysis in qualitative research is the process of analyzing data in the form of narratives, actions, reports, and other written sources, enabling researchers to discover aspects of the research object. In turn, data analysis in this model will produce categories, classifications, or typologies of data, not numerical values or numerical relationship patterns.

This research uses the interactive data analysis method proposed by Miles and Huberman. The process involves three stages: data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1. Results

Figure 1, which shows the world's universities with the highest number of publications on the Rohingya issue, reveals a pattern of knowledge

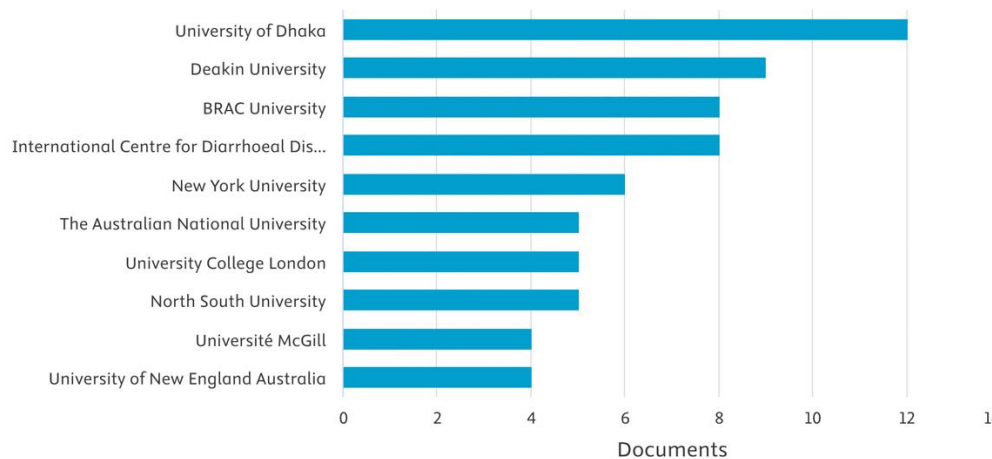


Figure 1: University Graph On Rohingya Literature Contribution.

The high number of publications from universities in Bangladesh reflects the fact that the Rohingya conflict has transformed into a protracted transboundary humanitarian crisis (protracted refugee crisis). When ASEAN failed to push for a substantive resolution in the countries of origin, the burden of the conflict shifted to the host countries. In this situation, academic institutions took on a strategic role in assessing the impact of the conflict on public health, social resilience, education, and the stability of local communities. This phenomenon indirectly demonstrated ASEAN's limited effectiveness as a regional conflict-resolution mechanism, as its response failed to prevent the crisis from spreading beyond Myanmar. Furthermore, the presence of universities from Australia, the United Kingdom, the United States, and Canada in the list of top publications indicates that the Rohingya conflict has become a global issue that transcends ASEAN's regional capacity. Studies from Western institutions generally focus on analyzing regional governance failures, violations of international humanitarian law, and criticism of ASEAN's principle of non-interference. Thus, the increased global academic

production relevant to the analysis of ASEAN's regional policy failures. The dominance of institutions such as the University of Dhaka, BRAC University, and the International Centre for Diarrheal Disease Research, Bangladesh (icddr,b) confirms that academic research on the Rohingya is thriving outside ASEAN's own policy framework. This indicates a gap between the intensity of the social problems caused by the Rohingya conflict and ASEAN's capacity to provide adequate political and institutional solutions.

attention can be understood as a response to ASEAN's policy stagnation, which is considered incapable of adapting to demands for human rights protection and human security.

This bibliometric data also indicates that ASEAN is more often positioned as an object of academic criticism than as a primary actor in conflict resolution. Limited enforcement mechanisms, the dominance of consensus principles, and an orientation toward regional political stability have resulted in ASEAN's failure to establish normative leadership on the Rohingya issue. Consequently, the analysis and advocacy space is filled by the academic community and research institutions, rather than by transformative regional policies. Thus, the distribution of scholarly publications on the Rohingya, as reflected in Scopus data, not only depicts a global knowledge base but also reflects ASEAN's vacuous role in resolving the Rohingya social conflict. When regional mechanisms are unable to drive structural change, academia serves as an alternative arena for documenting violations, critiquing policies, and formulating approaches grounded in social justice and human rights. This

situation confirms that the Rohingya conflict remains in a protracted phase of conflict that has yet to be addressed by an effective regional political solution.

The country distribution of scholarly publications on the Rohingya, as demonstrated by Figure 2, reveals a significant pattern that merits analysis in the context of ASEAN's role and limitations. The dominance of the United States, Bangladesh, and

Australia as the countries with the highest number of publications suggests that knowledge production on the Rohingya conflict is intensively developing outside ASEAN's institutional framework. This pattern indicates a gap between ASEAN's regional responsibility as a regional organization and its actual capacity to respond to and resolve the Rohingya social conflict substantively.

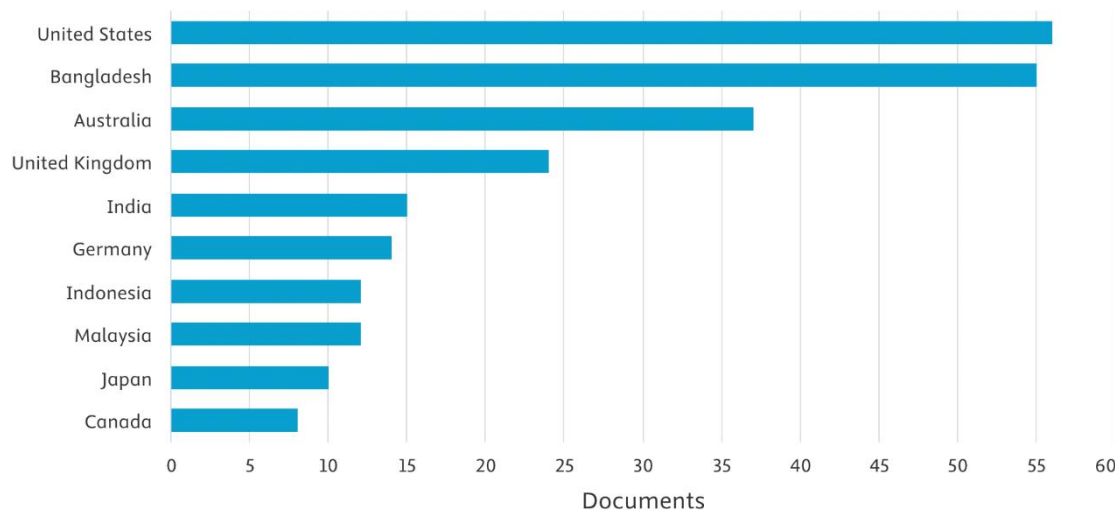


Figure 2: Country Contribution Distribution To The Rohingya Conflict Literature.

The high level of academic contributions from Bangladesh reflects a direct consequence of the failure to resolve the conflict at the regional level. As the primary host country for Rohingya refugees, Bangladesh bears a significant social, economic, and humanitarian burden due to the protracted conflict in Myanmar. In situations where ASEAN is unable to pressure the host country to create safe and sustainable conditions for refugee repatriation, Bangladeshi academic institutions have played a strategic role in documenting the impacts of the conflict, ranging from public health and social resilience to the potential for horizontal conflict in the host region. Thus, the high number of publications from Bangladesh reflects the absence of an effective regional solution.

Meanwhile, the dominance of the United States and other Western countries in Rohingya studies indicates that this conflict has experienced an internationalization of discourse due to ASEAN policy stagnation. Academic studies from these countries generally position ASEAN as a normative regional actor but weak in implementation, particularly due to its adherence to the principle of non-interference and consensus mechanisms. In academic literature, the Rohingya conflict is often

used as a case study to critique the failure of Southeast Asian regionalism in addressing gross human rights violations and structural social conflicts.

The relatively limited contributions from ASEAN member states, including Indonesia and Malaysia, also indicate a regional paradox. On the one hand, these countries are directly affected by the refugee flow and are active in humanitarian diplomacy. However, on the other hand, the limited production of academic knowledge compared to non-ASEAN countries reflects regional political caution in framing the Rohingya conflict as an issue of structural human rights violations. This aligns with ASEAN's tendency to prioritize political stability and regional cohesion over efforts to enforce human rights norms, which could potentially create friction between member states. Thus, the country bibliometric map in Rohingya studies not only reflects the geographical distribution of knowledge production but also serves as an indirect indicator of the failure of ASEAN policies to effectively address the Rohingya social conflict. When regional mechanisms are unable to produce transformative political solutions, discourse and analysis of the conflict instead develop outside the region,

especially in countries not normatively bound by the principle of non-interference. This condition confirms that the Rohingya conflict remains a protracted social conflict, unresolved by ASEAN's

regional approach, and continues to attract attention and criticism from the global academic community. As shown in Table 2 below, too.

Table 2: Humanitarian Assistance Of OIC Member States To Rohingya In 2012 (Myanmar Peace Monitor, 2025).

Country	Information	Amount
Indonesia	Official assistance from the Indonesian Red Cross sent a team of aid workers	US\$1 Million 500 cleaning supplies, 3,000 blankets, and 10,000 sarongs
Iran	Member of the assembly (Iranian Parliament), the Abroad Iran Ministry, the Imam Khomeini Relief Committee, and the Iran Red Crescent Society (sent one delivery)	Food, tent, blanket, and other base commodities to become distributed to Muslims Total heavy: 24 tons
Malaysia	Son 1 Malaysia The club collects and transports relief supplies	Help packaging Total heavy: 500 tons
Qatar	Qatar Red Sickle does support efforts in Rakhine State with support from the Qatar government.	US\$1.5 Million
Saudi Arabia Arab	Saudi Arabia's King Abdullah donated money for the Rohingya to be distributed by UNHCR. Caliphate Rubbish bin Zayed Humanitarian Foundation, under that directive from the President, His Greatness Sheikh Caliphate Rubbish bin Zayed Al Nahyan	US\$50 Million 3 ambulance vehicles and 1,300 tons of goods from the base
Türkiye	The Prime Minister's Disaster and Emergency Management Directorate, the Turkish Religious Affairs Foundation, and the Kimse I Mu Association (a charitable foundation) donated to Rohingya Muslims. The Turkish Foreign Minister distributed humanitarian aid managed by the Red Crescent, including kitchen equipment and food, during a visit in August 2012, and delivered aid in October 2012.	60 million Türkiye lira (US\$33 million) Sent 30 tons from humanity help, including 2,280 checkered from candy, 960 packages from instant rations, 11,000 bags of biscuits, 500 boxes of sandals, 1,000 bales of clothes, 1,000 stationery, and 500 boxes of toys

4.2. ASEAN Organization Response To The Conflict

For years, Myanmar's national and ethnic identity issues were considered internal matters that should not be interfered with by other countries, according to ASEAN. The ASEAN Convention on Non-Interference (2008) prevented open discussion of ethnic issues such as the Rohingya in official forums. However, the humanitarian problems posed by this

ethnic conflict prompted ASEAN to act beyond its conventional boundaries. ASEAN faces a normative dilemma between fulfilling its collective responsibility for human security and upholding member state sovereignty. Consequently, ASEAN has employed technical and humanitarian approaches through the AHA Center, but has failed to address the ethnic discrimination that fueled the conflict in Myanmar. As shown in Table 3 below.

Table 3: Chronology Of the Rohingya Conflict and Dynamics of Refugees in Myanmar.

Period / Year	Key Events	Impact on the Rohingya Community	Data / Implications of the Map (IDPs & Refugees)	Regional / International Response
2012-2014	Communal violence in Rakhine between ethnic Rakhine and Rohingya.	There was social segregation, the burning of villages, and the formation of internal displacement camps in Sittwe and the surrounding area.	Thousands of internally displaced people were first recorded in Rakhine (approximately 120,000 people).	The UN has begun issuing early warnings; ASEAN has yet to respond collectively.
2015-2016	Rohingya migrant crisis in the Bay of Bengal; thousands fled by boat to Thailand and Malaysia.	The Rohingya are starting to be recognized as <i>stateless people</i> at the global level.	Refugees are starting to appear in Thailand and Malaysia (seen by the blue dots on the eastern side of the map).	ASEAN held an emergency meeting, but the principle of non-interference limited solutions.

2017–2018	Myanmar military operations in Rakhine after ARSA attacks (August 2017).	More than 745,000 Rohingya fled to Bangladesh; villages were burned; the UN reported crimes against humanity.	A massive refugee surge into Bangladesh (shown by the large blue circle, ±4.5 million cumulative total in the Cox's Bazar region).	The UN has called Myanmar's actions <i>ethnic cleansing</i> ; ASEAN has only called for humanitarian assistance through the AHA Centre.
2019–2020	Repatriation efforts failed due to security conditions and refugee fears.	Rohingya remain in Bangladeshi camps; repatriation is not underway.	The map shows the stagnation of refugee flows to Bangladesh and India.	UNHCR and IOM increased aid, but Myanmar refused international oversight.
2021 (February)	Myanmar's military coup overthrew the civilian government.	The situation worsened; the military expanded operations to other ethnic areas (Kachin, Chin, Shan, Kayin).	The map shows a surge in new IDPs since 2021: >1.25 million in Sagaing, >345,000 in Rakhine, >254,000 in Magway.	ASEAN issued the <i>Five-Point Consensus</i> , but it was ineffective because the junta refused to cooperate.
2022–2024	Armed conflict is spreading, and humanitarian conditions are deteriorating.	The Rohingya remain stateless, facing violence from the military and local armed groups.	The map shows the expansion of refugees to India (Mizoram and Nagaland, ±70 thousand) and Thailand (±223 thousand in Kayin & Mon).	UNHCR and IIMM continue to document human rights violations; ASEAN remains focused on technical assistance.

Between the Rakhine and Rohingya ethnic communities, communal violence broke out in Rakhine State between 2012 and 2014. News of the rape of a Buddhist woman by three Rohingya men sparked massive unrest, bringing the incident to global attention. This violence was a manifestation of the structural marginalization of the Rohingya, including limited citizenship recognition, restrictions on freedom of movement, and the labeling of “foreigners” within the community and the state. As a result, the Rohingya were socially stratified, unable to access basic services, and forced into internal displacement camps around Sittwe and other areas in Rakhine. Entering 2015 and 2016, the Rohingya migrant crisis escalated regionally as thousands fled Myanmar by sea to Thailand and Malaysia—this marked international recognition of the Rohingya as a stateless group. Migration was a response not only to physical violence but also to structural isolation, restricted rights, and delayed repatriation policies. Consequently, the Rohingya faced displacement and uncertainty regarding legal status and social rights in host countries.

The crisis peaked in August 2017 when the Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army (ARSA) attacked police posts and military bases in Rakhine, prompting a major military operation. The operation involved mass killings, rape, and the forced displacement of more than 700,000 people to Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh. The Rohingya experienced homelessness, collective trauma, and prolonged displacement, leaving them stateless and excluded from the international refugee system. During 2019–2020, repatriation efforts continued to face challenges, with many Rohingya remaining in refugee camps in Bangladesh and neighboring countries. Fear of renewed violence and uncertainty over legal status hindered return, especially after the Myanmar military coup in February 2021. The crisis

escalated, worsening Rohingya conditions and intensifying armed conflict in ethnic areas, including Rakhine, indicating a longer dynamic of ethnic marginalization, armed conflict, and weak protection mechanisms.

The Rohingya crisis is one of the most complex humanitarian issues in Southeast Asia, rooted in structural discrimination, denial of citizenship, and systematic violence in Rakhine State. Exclusionary citizenship policies have left the Rohingya stateless and highly vulnerable, driving mass refugee flows to neighboring countries and creating regional instability. In responding to the conflict, ASEAN has adopted a cautious diplomatic approach based on non-intervention and consensus. This limits ASEAN's capacity to exert pressure on Myanmar, resulting in normative responses such as encouraging dialogue and voluntary repatriation. ASEAN thus functions more as a facilitator of dialogue than an enforcer of human rights norms. ASEAN's efforts also include humanitarian mechanisms through the AHA Center, but studies show this approach fails to address root causes such as structural discrimination and social inequality. Divergent national interests among member states further hinder the development of a comprehensive regional refugee framework (Komarudin & Ayuningtyas, 2024).

Findings show ASEAN consistently positions itself as a facilitator of regional stability rather than a primary conflict-resolution actor, reflecting its state-centric regionalism and commitment to sovereignty and non-intervention. ASEAN human rights bodies such as AICHR lack investigative authority and enforcement mechanisms, limiting ASEAN to soft norms and non-binding dialogue. This has opened space for external and non-state actors, including the UN, donor countries, international humanitarian organizations, and faith-based organizations, which

provide protection, assistance, and advocacy. These findings confirm that resolving the Rohingya crisis is a multi-actor governance process. Within the human security framework, ASEAN's approach prioritizes state security over people-centered security, failing to address statelessness and structural violence at the core of the crisis.

4.3. Myanmar's Position In The International Conflict

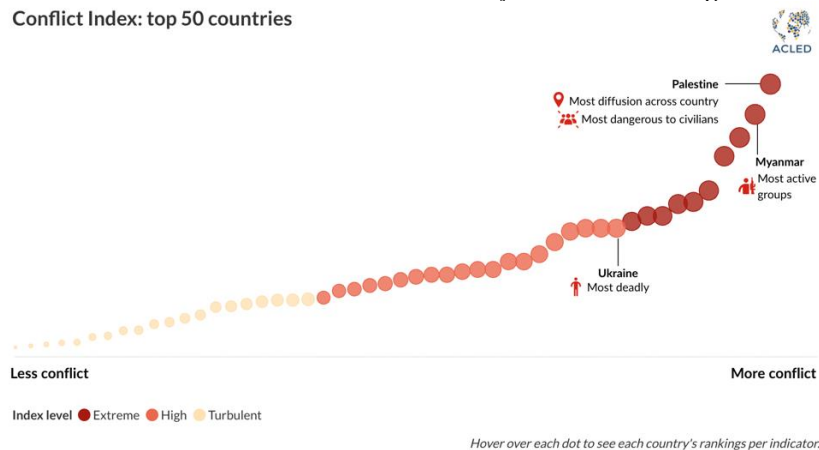


Figure 3: World Conflict Index Image Myanmar Country Position.
Source: (ACLED, 2025)

The political dynamics significantly influence Myanmar's high ranking on the global conflict index following the 2021 military coup that ousted the elected civilian government. The coup triggered a wave of resistance from pro-democracy groups and reignited long-standing armed conflict with ethnic groups, spreading the conflict to various regions of the country. The increasing violence accompanied by a high frequency of fatalities is one of the indicators that strengthen ACLED's assessment of the level of deadliness of the conflict in Myanmar.

Furthermore, Myanmar is characterized by a very high level of fragmentation, with numerous armed groups involved in internal conflict. This fragmentation contributes to the complexity of the security situation, as the violence is not centered on a single dominant actor but involves hundreds of groups, both military factions and ethnic armed organizations. This situation widens the scope of conflict and increases the threat to civilians, who are often targets or indirect victims of military operations, airstrikes, and the use of explosives in residential areas.

The humanitarian impact has been significant. Reports indicate an escalation in civilian casualties and a rise in the number of internally displaced persons due to widespread violence. The use of

Myanmar currently ranks second in the global conflict index compiled by the Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED). This ranking is based on several indicators that measure the severity of the conflict, including the magnitude of lethal violence, the harm caused to civilians, the geographical extent of the conflict, and the degree of fragmentation of the armed actors involved. The assessment confirms that Myanmar is one of the most serious epicenters of armed violence in the world today. As shown in Figure 3.

explosive weapons in densely populated areas exacerbates conditions for civilians, placing Myanmar among the most dangerous countries for non-combatants in the contemporary conflict landscape. Thus, Myanmar's high ranking on the global conflict index reflects not only the intensity of the violence but also structural failures to protect civilians and address the root causes of decades-long political problems.

Myanmar's high ranking on the ACLED conflict index is mainly due to the highly fragmented nature of its internal conflict and the breadth of armed actors involved in the fighting against the military junta. This fragmentation is a key characteristic of Myanmar's conflict, distinguishing it from single-actor or bipolar conflicts, such as those in Ukraine or Syria. The presence of hundreds of armed groups spread across multiple states has expanded the conflict zone, extending it beyond a single region to encompass numerous provinces and communities, exacerbating the humanitarian impact nationwide.

Since the 2021 military coup that ousted the elected civilian government, conflict in Myanmar has escalated dramatically. The reinstated military has expanded military operations into various regions, including Rakhine, Sagaing, Shan, and Kachin. The previously localized conflict has now transformed

into a civil war involving multiple rebel groups and pro-democracy militias. Empirical studies show that the involvement of these multiple actors, including ethnic armed groups, contributes to the high rankings in the armed group fragmentation and geographic diffusion indicators on the ACLED index.

The connection between the Rohingya conflict and Myanmar's high ranking on the ACLED Conflict Index can be seen in the context of the impact of ethnic conflict on national stability. The violence against the Rohingya, which various observations and studies have called an example of "ethnic cleansing," has led to a mass exodus to Bangladesh and created an ongoing refugee crisis. The conflict has not only caused loss of life and social destruction in Rakhine. However, it has also transformed the contestation for power at the national level by

reinforcing the broader military-junta vs. insurgent group dynamic.

Myanmar occupies a complex international position as a country whose domestic conflict has regional and global implications. The Myanmar crisis is not only seen as an internal state issue but also as a human rights violation and a challenge to regional stability in Southeast Asia. Regional organizations such as ASEAN are attempting to play a diplomatic role, albeit limited by the principle of non-intervention and the dilemma posed by their internal norms. Furthermore, the support of major powers like China and Russia for the military junta demonstrates the reality of international politics, where strategic interests often trump human rights concerns. As shown in Figure 4.

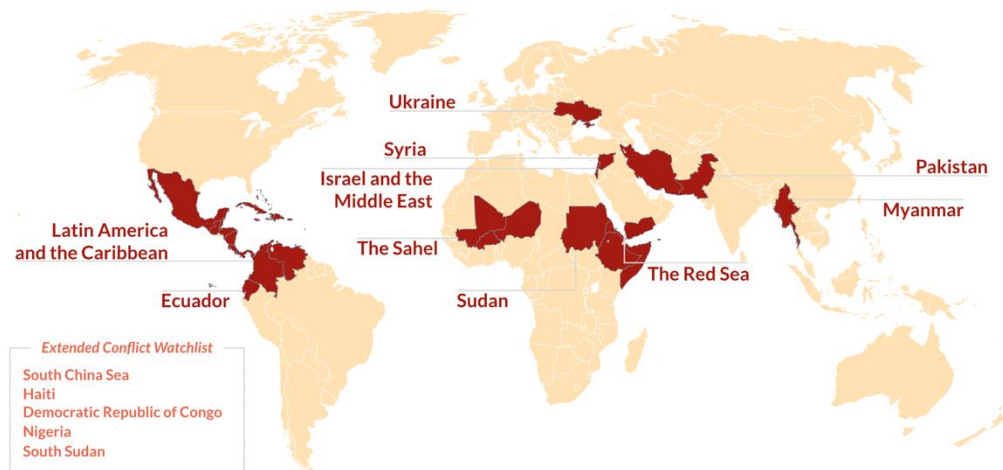


Figure 4: Conflict Countries in the World.

Source: (ACLED, 2025).

The humanitarian dimension of the Myanmar conflict, particularly the violence against the Rohingya and other civilian groups, has made the country a focus of international legal attention. However, legal studies show that human rights protection mechanisms remain hampered by weak law enforcement instruments and misaligned geopolitical interests of international actors. This situation presents a serious challenge in applying global legal standards to cases of human rights violations occurring within a sovereign state. Furthermore, Myanmar has a strategic geopolitical position because it borders Asian powers such as China and India. This makes Myanmar's internal conflict have a broader impact on regional security and economic agendas. The role of major powers in maintaining relations with the military junta demonstrates that conflict resolution requires a multi-level diplomatic strategy involving regional

and global organizations, as well as promoting inclusive reconciliation at the national level as a key prerequisite for sustainable peace. Thus, Myanmar's position in the international social conflict represents the intersection of issues of state sovereignty, human rights violations, and the struggle for global geopolitical influence.

Throughout 2019, there was a significant increase in violence against civilians in Myanmar, particularly in Rakhine State. These violations included forced displacement, targeting of civilians by the military and ethnic armed groups, and the ongoing risk of artillery and landmine attacks. The data in the figure shows that the number of incidents of violence against civilians in Rakhine increased almost ninefold compared to 2018. The majority of perpetrators of this violence were reportedly state forces. forces), shows a pattern of repressive actions by security forces against local communities. As

shown in Figure 5.

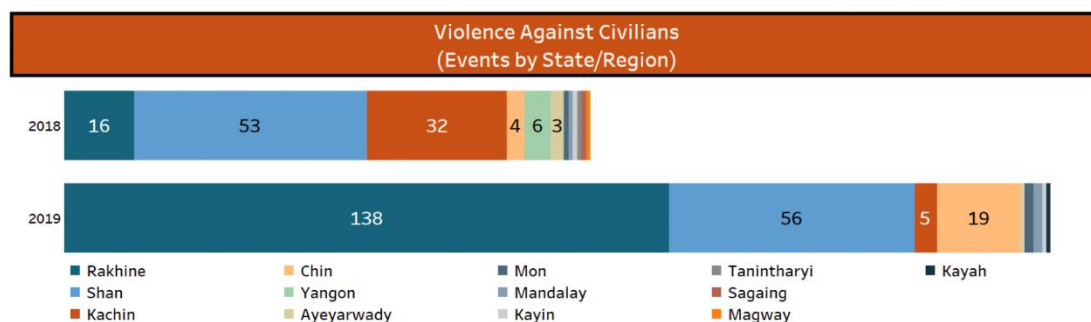


Figure 5: Data On Violence Against Civilians in Rakhine State.

Source: (ACLED, 2025).

This situation is highly relevant to the situation of the Rohingya ethnic group living in the Rakhine state. They not only experience structural discrimination in the form of restrictions on citizenship rights, mobility, and humanitarian access, but are also direct victims of armed violence. Reports of six Rohingya being shot by military personnel in April demonstrate the indiscriminate nature of the violence, with civilians treated as military targets without regard for their non-combatant status. This reinforces the view that the Rohingya face a very weak protection situation amidst the escalating armed conflict.

However, data also shows that violence has not only affected the Rohingya community but also the Rakhine people themselves. In May, for example, seven Rakhine residents were reportedly shot dead while in military custody. This fact suggests that the security operations carried out by the Myanmar military in the Rakhine region are not explicitly directed at one ethnic group, but rather are part of a strategy of coercive control over the entire local population deemed potentially supportive of separatist armed groups such as the Arakan Army. Thus, the conflict in Rakhine creates cross-ethnic vulnerabilities, forming a multi-layered and complex humanitarian crisis.

The sharp increase in violence against civilians in Rakhine State during 2019 demonstrates that security conditions for the Rohingya have not merely stagnated but have seriously deteriorated. Despite several international efforts to promote accountability and protection, the Myanmar military retains dominant control over security decision-making. As a result, the Rohingya remain highly vulnerable, both within the context of active armed conflict and within the dynamics of long-standing institutional discrimination. This situation underscores the urgency of more decisive humanitarian intervention and international

diplomacy to protect civilians and promote a just resolution to the conflict.

4.4. Muhammadiyah In The Context Of Peacemaking And Peacebuilding

Muhammadiyah's involvement in responding to the Rohingya humanitarian crisis is based on the organization's commitment to universal humanitarian values and global solidarity. As one of the most prominent Islamic organizations in Indonesia, Muhammadiyah affirms its active role in supporting the fulfillment of human rights and protection for the Rohingya ethnic group, who have experienced oppression and forced displacement due to the escalating conflict in Rakhine State, Myanmar. (Arifin et al., 2025). Through its humanitarian network, Muhammadiyah is working to ensure that this transnational humanitarian issue receives international attention and is addressed comprehensively. In the context of *peacemaking*, Muhammadiyah's actions focus not only on direct assistance but also on humanitarian diplomacy to open access for non-governmental organizations to assist in conflict areas. These actions require negotiations with political actors in Myanmar to ensure humanitarian aid is distributed legally and safely. These diplomatic efforts are Muhammadiyah's real contribution in creating a space for dialogue and encouraging recognition of the fundamental rights of the Rohingya ethnic group as part of the initial peace process. (Ahmed, 2025).

Meanwhile, in the realm of peacebuilding, Muhammadiyah, through Muhammadiyah Aid and MDMC, has initiated various empowerment programs, including home gardening training and social interventions for conflict victims from the Rohingya Muslim community and other groups in the Rakhine region. These programs emphasize an inclusive approach to foster harmonious inter-ethnic

interactions and strengthen refugees' independence in meeting their basic needs. These empowerment efforts are an important manifestation of sustainable, community-based peacebuilding.

Nevertheless, Muhammadiyah faces various challenges, including social resistance, Myanmar's domestic political dynamics, and the need to continually adapt its approach to the local cultural context. This has prompted Muhammadiyah to strengthen collaboration with the Indonesian government, international organizations, and local community leaders to implement humanitarian and empowerment activities more effectively. This collaborative approach demonstrates Muhammadiyah's capacity as a non-state actor to contribute to peace through flexible, adaptive strategies.

More broadly, Muhammadiyah's role in the Rohingya issue demonstrates that faith-based organizations have a key capacity to build global peace through non-governmental diplomacy, cross-border humanitarian assistance, and community empowerment. This work demonstrates that peacebuilding relies not only on high-level political negotiations but also on concrete grassroots work that strengthens shared social life. Thus, Muhammadiyah's contribution provides a concrete example of how religious values can be translated into peaceful action in international conflicts.

4.4.1. Muhammadiyah In The Context Of Peacemaking In The Rohingya Social Conflict

Muhammadiyah contributes to Rohingya social peace-making through a humanity-based, moderate Islamic approach that emphasizes peace, justice, and universal solidarity. *As a faith-based organization, Muhammadiyah does not position itself as an actor in political conflicts, but rather as a public actor involved in humanitarian diplomacy. This enables Muhammadiyah to reach various parties without being trapped in polarization politics and ethnicity, which has become the root of the Rohingya conflict. Principles of amar Ma'ruf Nahi munkar and progressive Islam become the normative in pushing settlement conflicts through peaceful and dignified ways.*

In the Rohingya conflict, Muhammadiyah's role can be seen in several dimensions. First, Muhammadiyah plays a role as a service provider to humanity (service provider) through institutions such as the Muhammadiyah Disaster Management Center (MDMC), which distributes help, health, education, food, and necessities based on the needs of Rohingya refugees, both in Myanmar and in host countries like Bangladesh. Second, Muhammadiyah

pursues functional moral advocacy, raising Rohingya issues in national and international forums, including by working with global human rights organizations and public civil networks across countries. Third, Muhammadiyah plays a role as a dialogue bridge (bridge builder), emphasizing the importance of solidarity across religions and ethnicities, so that conflicts are reduced to conflicts of religion alone. Muhammadiyah's efforts to restore Rohingya social activities are carried out through a peacebuilding approach, with a medium- and long-term focus. Muhammadiyah does not focus only on emergency response but also on the recovery capacity of the socially affected Rohingya community following the conflict. This is realized through development facility health, school emergency, and empowerment programs for communities in the camps during evacuation. Approach this aim by restoring the human dignity of conflict-affected individuals at this time and by strengthening the social resilience of the refugee community.

Besides that, Muhammadiyah, in general, consistently promotes a narrative of global peace and justice through public education and academic discourse. The Rohingya issue was raised due to a lack of adequate answers from the global community and criticism of the international system's failure to protect the minority group. Thus, Muhammadiyah contributes to building collective awareness that the Rohingya conflict is not only a domestic problem in Myanmar, but rather an international humanitarian issue in need of solidarity across borders.

The peacemaking role is also reflected in the function of bridge-building, namely, communication between the affected community, the regional civil community, and international actors. Through moral advocacy and engagement in humanitarian forums, Muhammadiyah helps transform the Rohingya issue from a conflict in Myanmar's domestic situation into a global humanitarian agenda. Transformation discourse is important in peacemaking because it creates normative pressure on states and actors to refrain from violence and to open the way to peace. Besides that, Muhammadiyah contributes to peacemaking through the production and dissemination of a peace narrative. Through education, public statements, official organizations, and participation in international discourse, Muhammadiyah consistently emphasizes the importance of respecting the rights of basic human beings, protecting minorities, and resolving conflicts peacefully. In framework theory, the resolution of conflict, narrative functions as a mechanism for

conflict transformation, shifting the orientation of conflict from violence towards dialogue and normative solutions.

In contemporary studies of conflict resolution, Faith-Based Organizations (FBOs) are understood as actors among the public who have an exceptional capacity for peacemaking. Because of its moral legitimacy, values transcendental, and social networking across communities. Unlike state actors operating through instrumental politics and law, FBO pursues peacemaking through a normative and relational approach, namely by building trust, reducing violence, and opening a dialogue-based space for humanity. In the context of the Rohingya social conflict, Muhammadiyah can be analyzed as an FBO that serves as a moral peacemaker through informal channels (track-two and track-three peacemaking). First in the FBO peacemaking framework is legitimacy, religious and moral authority. Muhammadiyah obtained legitimacy from moderate Islamic values and principles, namely mercy lil ' alamin, which places peace and justice as the main objectives. In the Rohingya conflict, legitimacy. This allows Muhammadiyah to voice its opinion on peace without being suspected of being a political actor or an interested party. This moral authority functions as an instrument of de-escalation because it is capable of withstanding the reproduction of narrative violence and hatred-based identity. This makes the conflict worse.

Second is narrative religion as a counter-framing of conflict. In the FBO peacemaking framework,

religion is not positioned as a source of conflict, but rather as a source of ethics for peace. Muhammadiyah, in general, consistently frames the Rohingya conflict as a humanitarian crisis, not a religious conflict between Islam and Buddhism. This counter-framing strategy is important in peacemaking because it prevents the expansion of conflict into the realm of ideology and reduces the risk of mobilizing violence based on religious sentiment at the regional and global levels. Third is function *bridge-building*, namely, FBOs' ability to bridge communication between communities affected by conflict, international actors, and global civil society. Muhammadiyah serves as a normative mediator, connecting suffering Rohingya refugees with international humanitarian forums. In the context of peacemaking, the function is not to reach an agreement through formal politics, but rather to open a channel for communication, build trust (confidence-building measures), and create the prerequisites for future peaceful dialogue.

Fourth is a faith based on diplomacy and humanity. As an FBO, Muhammadiyah carries out *humanitarian diplomacy* to help humanity as a door to *peacemaking*. Aid not only functions as a response to suffering, but also as a symbol of commitment to peace and non-violence. In this framework, the action of Muhammadiyah humanity has a soft normative political power, namely, pushing actors in conflict to refrain from violence and open a space for peaceful settlement without coercive pressure.

Table 4: Muhammadiyah Contribution Towards Conflict Resolution.

Year	Form Action / Intervention	Location & Actors	Source
2017-2018	Participation as a member of the <i>Indonesian Humanitarian Alliance (IHA)</i> , sent power medical and open-access health to the Rohingya in Cox's Bazar, working alongside local NGOs, <i>We the Dreamer</i> .	Bangladesh	(Husein et al., 2024)
2017	Workshops & workshops management for Rohingya refugees to MDMC volunteers - delivery of medical and nutritional support to thousands of refugees	Jakarta & Bangladesh	
2020	Distribution of help material, main points, prayer equipment, and assistance for psychosocial support for Rohingya refugees arriving in Aceh	Aceh, Indonesia	
2023-2024	Service health & support free psychological services at the Hall Meuseuraya Aceh by PWM, Lazismu, MDMC, & Muhammadiyah University of Aceh	Banda Aceh, Indonesia	
2025	Submission of help in the form of clothes, equipment, and bags results in craft Aisyiyah for Rohingya refugees at the MDMC-Aisyiyah shelter.	Lhokseumawe, Aceh	

4.5. Policy And Practical Recommendations

Based on the findings regarding Muhammadiyah's limited role in peacemaking and its stronger orientation toward humanitarian peacebuilding, the study proposes the following

structured recommendations:

4.5.1. Institutional Strengthening Within Muhammadiyah

Establish a Permanent Conflict-Resolution Unit:

Create an institutionalized division dedicated to international mediation, conflict analysis, and faith-based diplomacy.

Develop Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs): Formulate formal guidelines for engagement in cross-border conflicts, including mediation protocols, diplomatic communication strategies, and risk assessment mechanisms.

Capacity Building in Mediation and Peace Diplomacy: Provide systematic training in negotiation, conflict transformation, and multi-track diplomacy for Muhammadiyah elites and international affairs divisions.

Strengthen Knowledge Management Systems: Institutionalize documentation and evaluation of past peace missions (e.g., Mindanao, Pattani, Central African Republic) to build organizational learning and policy continuity.

4.5.2. Strategic Alignment with the Indonesian Government

Enhance Structured Coordination Mechanisms: Establish formal consultation platforms between Muhammadiyah and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to synchronize humanitarian and diplomatic strategies.

Complement Quiet Diplomacy with Track-Two Engagement: Position Muhammadiyah as a supportive informal diplomatic channel that reinforces, rather than contradicts, Indonesia's quiet diplomacy approach.

Clarify Role Differentiation: Define boundaries between state-led political negotiation (Track One) and faith-based humanitarian diplomacy (Track Two/Three) to avoid friction and maximize synergy.

4.5.3. Regional And International Engagement

Build Transnational Faith-Based Coalitions: Collaborate with other Islamic and interfaith organizations within ASEAN and OIC frameworks to amplify normative pressure for civilian protection.

Engage ASEAN Humanitarian Mechanisms Strategically: Work alongside the AHA Centre and relevant regional platforms to expand humanitarian access while advocating structural solutions.

Promote Multi-Level Advocacy: Combine grassroots humanitarian initiatives with international policy advocacy to address structural discrimination and statelessness.

4.5.4. Long-Term Peacebuilding Strategy

Shift from Crisis-Driven to Strategic Peacebuilding: Transition from reactive humanitarian response toward integrated long-term

programs linking relief, rehabilitation, and structural transformation.

Integrate Human Security Framework: Embed protection of citizenship rights, identity recognition, and minority inclusion into peacebuilding agendas.

Strengthen Community-Based Resilience Programs: Expand psychosocial support, education, livelihood training, and inter-ethnic dialogue initiatives in refugee-hosting areas.

4.6. Theoretical Implication

The study confirms that faith-based organizations' effectiveness in international conflict resolution depends on institutional maturity, political access structures, and state-civil society alignment, not merely moral legitimacy.

4.7. Discussion

The findings of this study substantively align with and extend existing scholarship on faith-based organizations (FBOs) and non-state actors in conflict resolution. Prior literature (Ferris, 2005; Kibet et al., 2020; Khaled et al., 2024) emphasizes that religious and humanitarian organizations often possess strong moral legitimacy and grassroots access but face structural constraints when attempting formal mediation without state endorsement. The empirical evidence from Muhammadiyah's engagement in the Rohingya crisis confirms this pattern: while the organization demonstrates high capacity in humanitarian relief and community-based peacebuilding, its role in direct political peacemaking remains limited due to restricted diplomatic access and dependence on Indonesia's state-led foreign policy framework.

Furthermore, institutionalization theory (Huntington; Meyer & Rowan) helps explain why Muhammadiyah's response tends toward ad hoc humanitarian mobilization rather than sustained mediation architecture. The absence of a permanent conflict-resolution mechanism within the organization reinforces literature arguing that organizational maturity significantly determines mediation capacity. At the same time, the findings nuance multi-track diplomacy theory by showing that Track Two and Track Three actors cannot automatically escalate into Track One political negotiation without alignment with state diplomatic strategy. In the Rohingya case, Indonesia's quiet diplomacy approach functions as both an enabling and limiting structure—facilitating humanitarian access while constraining independent religious mediation. Thus, this study not only confirms previous research on the structural limitations of

FBOs but also contributes a contextualized explanation of how state–civil society diplomatic relations shape the operational boundaries of faith-based peacemaking.

5. CONCLUSION

This study has examined Muhammadiyah's position and practices in responding to the Rohingya conflict, with a particular focus on the organization's limited engagement in peacemaking and its stronger orientation toward humanitarian peacebuilding. Drawing on qualitative interviews and documentary analysis, the findings demonstrate that Muhammadiyah possesses substantial moral legitimacy, social capital, and transnational networks, thereby positioning it as a potential faith-based mediator. However, in practice, its role in the Rohingya conflict has been primarily confined to humanitarian assistance rather than direct political mediation between the Myanmar government and the Rohingya community. The analysis shows that this limitation is not primarily due to a lack of normative commitment or ethical motivation, but rather to structural and institutional constraints. These include the absence of a permanent conflict-

resolution framework within Muhammadiyah, reliance on ad hoc humanitarian mechanisms, and limited access to formal diplomatic channels without state endorsement.

Moreover, divergent perspectives between Muhammadiyah and the Indonesian government – particularly regarding the use of quiet diplomacy versus more assertive political pressure – have further restricted Muhammadiyah's involvement in peacemaking. As a result, Muhammadiyah's contribution has been more effective in addressing the symptoms of the conflict through relief, empowerment, and social rehabilitation, rather than tackling its political and structural roots. This paper contributes to the broader literature on faith-based diplomacy by highlighting how the effectiveness of religious organizations in conflict resolution is conditioned by their level of institutionalization and their relationship with state actors. The findings suggest that strengthening internal conflict-resolution capacities and enhancing strategic coordination with government diplomacy could enable Muhammadiyah to play a more balanced role in future conflicts, integrating humanitarian peacebuilding with meaningful peacemaking efforts.

Funding Declaration: There was no Funding for this Research.

Clinical Trial Number: Clinical trial number: not applicable.

Consent to Publish Declaration: We confirm that the manuscript has been read and approved by all named authors and that no other persons have satisfied the criteria for authorship but are not listed. We further confirm that all of us have approved the order of authors listed in the manuscript.

Consent to Participate Declaration: Consent to Participate declaration: not applicable.

Data Availability Declaration: All authors agree to make the raw data and materials described in our manuscript freely available to any scientist wishing to use them as long as this does not breach participant confidentiality.

Competing Interests: All authors have approved the fact that there are no known conflicts of interest associated with this publication.

REFERENCES

- Abraham, J., & Rufaedah, A. (2014). "Theologization" of Psychology and "Psychologization" of Religion: How Do Psychology and Religion Supposedly Contribute to Preventing and Overcoming Social Conflicts? *Procedia Environmental Sciences*, 20, 516–525. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.proenv.2014.03.064>
- Ahmed, K. (2025). Rethinking Humanitarian Diplomacy for Myanmar's Rohingya Crisis Resolution: A Critical Analysis. *Journal of Peacebuilding & Development*, 15423166251407446. <https://doi.org/10.1177/15423166251407446>
- Andi Nur Aminah. (2017). Rohingya Need Political Assistance More Than Logistics. *REPUBLIKA*.
- ANTARANews. (2025). ASEAN supports the voluntary repatriation of Rohingya refugees to Myanmar. *ANTARA*. <https://www.antaraneews.com/berita/4961185/asean-dukung-pemulangan-sukarela-pengungsi-rohingya-ke-myanmar>

- Arifin, S., Muthohirin, N., & Fuad, A. N. (nd). *The Dimensions of Leadership in Strengthening and Institutionalizing Religious Moderation in Muhammadiyah*.
- Baker, E., Bland, J., & Goodwin, AKB (2025). Faith and access: The role of religion in formal mental health service utilization among Black adolescents. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 179, 108644. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.childyouth.2025.108644>
- Biekart, K., Kontinen, T., & Millstein, M. (Eds.). (2023). *Civil Society Responses to Changing Civic Spaces*. Springer International Publishing. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-23305-0>
- Dewinta, RTA (nd). *THE ROLE OF THE ORGANIZATION OF ISLAMIC COOPERATION (OIC) IN HANDLING THE RAKHINE-ROHINGYA ETHNIC CONFLICT IN MYANMAR IN 2012-2013*.
- Fajar Pratama. (2017). *Indonesian Ambassador to Myanmar Opens Up About the Background of the Rohingya Crisis*. <https://news.detik.com/berita/d-3633773/dubes-ri-untuk-myanmar-buka-bukaan-soal-latar-belakang-krisis-rohingya>
- Ferris, E. (2005). Faith-based and secular humanitarian organizations. *International Review of the Red Cross*, 87(858), 311–325. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1816383100181366>
- Han, Z., Jiang, K., Peng, F., & Li, S. (2023). The Philippines' hedging strategy against China in the South China Sea dispute: Based on the human-ocean regional system. *Marine Policy*, 151, 105578. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.marpol.2023.105578>
- Haris Firdaus & Anita Yossihara. (2019). Muhammadiyah and NU Play a Major Role. *Kompas*. <https://www.kompas.id/artikel/keagamaan-muhammadiyah-dan-nu-berperan-besar>
- Hidayat, AA, Nurcahya, Y., Sugiarto, D., Hambaliana, D., Suwanda, SA, & Oksa Putra, MZ (2025). History of Muslim Minorities in Myanmar Revisited. *Journal of Faith and Spirituality*, 5(2), 251–264. <https://doi.org/10.15575/jis.v5i2.44711>
- Higuchi, Y., Higashida, K., Hossain, M.M., & Takahashi, R. (2025). Disentangling anti-refugee sentiment: An empirical investigation of the Rohingya crisis. *Economics Letters*, 252, 112341. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.econlet.2025.112341>
- Ibrahim, A. (2016). *The Rohingyas: Inside Myanmar's hidden genocide*. Hurst & Company.
- Indrawan, J., & Putri, A.T. (2022). AMBON CONFLICT ANALYSIS USING SIMON FISHER'S CONFLICT STAGES. *Journal of Collaborative Conflict Resolution*, 4(1), 12. <https://doi.org/10.24198/jkrk.v4i1.36608>
- Islam, M. R. (2025). An assessment of surging crime, gender violence, and justice mechanisms in the Rohingya camps in Bangladesh. *Women's Studies International Forum*, 111, 103122. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.wsif.2025.103122>
- Kamran Naseem, Manzoor Ahmad Naazer, & Amna Mahmood. (2021). Rohingya Crisis in Myanmar and the Role of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC). *Asian Journal of International Peace and Security (AJIPS)*, 5 (1), 286–299.
- Karin, S., Chowdhury, M. A., Hasnat, M. A., & Tarin, N.J. (2020). Status of Rohingya in Refugee Camps of Bangladesh: A Review Study. *OALib*, 07(09), 1–24. <https://doi.org/10.4236/oalib.1106575>
- Haled, A. F., Md., Dijkzeul, D., Ansar, A., & Sikder, M. J. U. (2024). Editorial: Rohingya refugees: humanitarian responses and implications. *Frontiers in Human Dynamics*, 6, 1479802. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fhumd.2024.1479802>
- Kibet, I., Sitienei, S., & Otieno Juma, Dr. T. (2020). A Critical Examination of the Role of Non-Governmental Organizations in Conflict Transformation in Kenya. *International Journal of Scientific and Research Publications (IJSRP)*, 10 (06), 312–317. <https://doi.org/10.29322/IJSRP.10.06.2020.p10236>
- Latief, H., & Nashir, H. (2020). Local Dynamics and Global Engagements of the Islamic Modernist Movement in Contemporary Indonesia: The Case of Muhammadiyah (2000–2020). *Journal of Current Southeast Asian Affairs*, 39(2), 290–309. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1868103420910514>
- Magan, I.M., & Goodkind, J.R. (2025). Understanding the mental and physical health consequences of the US citizenship exam for Rohingya refugees: Implications for policy and practice. *Social Science & Medicine*, 379, 118138. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.socscimed.2025.118138>
- Mahoney, J. (nd). *Path dependence in historical sociology*.
- McGinnis, MD (nd). *Updated Guide to IAD and the Language of the Ostrom Workshop: A Simplified Overview of a Complex Framework for the Analysis of Institutions and their Development*.
- Meyer, J. W., & Rowan, B. (nd). Institutionalized Organizations: Formal Structure as Myth and Ceremony. *American Journal of Sociology*.
- Paul Vrieze. (2017). Myanmar Shrugs Off International Pressure Over Rohingya Crackdown. *VOA News*.

- <https://www.voanews.com/a/myanmar-international-pressure-rohingya/3692894.html>
- Payne, L. (2020). What Can Faith-Based Forms of Violent Conflict Prevention Teach Us About Liberal Peace? *Religions*, 11 (4), 167. <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel11040167>
- Qurtuby, S. al. (2016). *Religious violence and conciliation in Indonesia: Christians and Muslims in the Moluccas*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315659183>
- Senghor, K., Partelow, S., Herrera, C. G., & Osemwegie, I. (2023). Conflicting governance realities: Aligning historical and cultural practices with formal marine protected area co-management in Senegal. *Marine Policy*, 155, 105706. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.marpol.2023.105706>
- Setiawan, I., & Suryanti, MSD (2021). ASEAN's Involvement in Addressing the Myanmar Conflict (Case Study: The Rohingya Ethnic Conflict 2017–2019). *POLITICOS: Journal of Politics and Governance*, 1 (2), 83–97. <https://doi.org/10.22225/politicos.1.2.2021.83-97>
- Siddiquee, M. A. (2020). The portrayal of the Rohingya genocide and refugee crisis in the age of post-truth politics. *Asian Journal of Comparative Politics*, 5(2), 89–103. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2057891119864454>
- Sikander, M.T. (2011). *CONFLICT AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION*.
- Stokke, K., Moo Kham, K.K., Nge, N.K.L., & Kvanvik, S.H. (2022). Illiberal peacebuilding in a hybrid regime. Authoritarian strategies for conflict containment in Myanmar. *Political Geography*, 93, 102551. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.polgeo.2021.102551>
- Suaib Tahir, M., Wahab, AJ, & Hariyadi, M. (2023). INTER-RELIGIOUS CONFLICT MANAGEMENT BASED ON THE QURAN, ETHICALLY AND TECHNICALLY. *Al Burhan: Journal of the Study of the Science and Development of Al-Qur'anic Culture*, 22 (02), 129–154. <https://doi.org/10.53828/alburhan.v22i02.1032>
- Sudheer, N., & Banerjee, D. (2021). The Rohingya refugees: A conceptual framework of their psychosocial adversities, cultural idioms of distress and social suffering. *Global Mental Health*, 8, e46. <https://doi.org/10.1017/gmh.2021.43>
- Ware, A., Ware, V.-A., & Kelly, L.M. (2022). Strengthening everyday peace formation after ethnic cleansing: Operationalizing a framework in Myanmar's Rohingya conflict. *Third World Quarterly*, 43 (2), 289–308. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01436597.2021.2022469>
- Wraikat, H., Bellamy, A., & Tang, H. (2017). Exploring Organizational Readiness Factors for New Technology Implementation within Non-Profit Organizations. *Open Journal of Social Sciences*, 05 (12), 1–13. <https://doi.org/10.4236/jss.2017.512001>
- Zahrul Anam, M. (2012). Islamic Civil Society and Conflict Resolution: Muhammadiyah's Challenges Towards the Dynamics of Malaysia-Indonesia Relationship. *Journal of International Relations*, 1 (2). <https://doi.org/10.18196/hi.2012.0017.160-170>