



Indonesian Government Efforts in Helping Handling Ethnic Humanitarian Conflict In Myanmar

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ABSTRACT

Myanmar, which is under military rule, has committed crimes, violence and human rights violations against the Rohingya in Myanmar. The Rohingya are an ethnic minority in Myanmar. Indonesia as a country where the majority of the population is Muslim realizes that this is a humanitarian problem, so it feels a moral burden to help the Rohingya ethnic community. Indonesia plays an important role in resolving the Rohingya ethnic conflict because it helps find solutions that will be offered to Myanmar for the resolution of the Rohingya ethnic conflict. Various efforts that have been made by Indonesia have succeeded in obtaining permission from the Myanmar government so that Indonesia can distribute humanitarian aid to the Rohingya ethnic community in Myanmar.

1. Introduction

Myanmar is an ethnically diverse country, there are 135 ethnicities recorded, but only a few dominant ethnicities are grouped into 8 national ethnic races. There are 8 dominant national ethnic races in Myanmar, namely Burma 68%, Shan 9%, Karen 7%, Rakhina 4%, Chinese 3%, India 2%, Mon 2%, and others 5%. Although Myanmar is an ethnically diverse country, issues related to SARA are still a work that has not been resolved by the government. One of them is the issue of human rights violations against the Rohingya ethnicity (Bambang, 2012). The term Rohing comes from the word "Rohang", which is the name of the "Arakan" in the past (which is now Rakhine). And the people who live in that area are called "Rohingnya". The Rohingya are a

minority with a Muslim background who have long been victims of human rights violations (Fortify Rights, 2015).

The arrival of the Rohingya ethnic group to Myanmar dates back to the XIV century when there was a massive migration from Bangladesh by the Rohingya people to Southeast Asia (Myanmar). This massive migration is caused by frequent natural disasters in the form of floods which cause food crises (Indra, 2018). Besides that, the Rohingya ethnicity was also brought by the British colonial. In 1824 the British set foot in Myanmar and a war broke out against Myanmar. The war was won by British colonialists and brought British-Indians and ethnic Rohingya to Arakan / Rakhine. During the British colonial period, the Rohingya Muslim ethnicity was prosperous because they controlled the economic sector. This has resulted in economic and social disparities that have led to the envy of the ethnic majority in Rakhine. Then, during the colonial period, Britain experienced a setback due to its defeat by colonial Japan, which caused its Rohingya ethnicity to be threatened. At that time, the Japanese colonialists and the Myanmar government carried out massacres against people brought by the British colonialists. When Myanmar became independent, the military regime controlled the government and carried out anti-Muslim propaganda which resulted in many Muslim minorities (Rohingya) being expelled from Myanmar (Azizah, 2017).

The human rights violations experienced by the Rohingya ethnic group in Myanmar continue to occur repeatedly. According to Chris Lewa (Director of the *Rohingya Advocacy Group*), the Rohingya ethnic group has been discriminated against since the beginning of Burma's independence, namely in 1948. At that time, of the 135 national ethnic groups registered, the Rohingya were not included in the list. (Saputra, 2019). The Rohingya ethnic group is officially considered not part of Myanmar citizenship since the enactment of the Citizenship Law in Myanmar (*Burma Citizenship Law 1982*). In the *Burma Citizenship Law 1982*, the Myanmar military junta government declared the Rohingya ethnic as foreigners (*Stateless*) in Myanmar because the Myanmar military junta government considered the Rohingya ethnic as immigrants brought by the British colonial (Azizah, 2017).

In 1989, the Rohingya were again discriminated against. At that time, the Myanmar government classified citizenship with color cards. There are three colors that indicate the type of citizenship for each owner, namely red which means full citizenship, blue means association member, and green means naturalized citizens, but Rohingya ethnicities do not get cards of any color (Saputra, 2019).

Discrimination against Rohingya ethnicity continued until the leadership of President Thein Sein, who came to power in 2011, stating that the Rohingya are part of illegal Bengalis, who are ethnic Bangladeshis who entered Myanmar *illegally*. In addition, Sein also stated that: "*Rohingya are not our people and we have no duty to protect them*". The Myanmar government wants the Rohingya to be included in the management of the *United Nations High Commission on Refugees* (UNHCR) for refugees or Rohingya refugees to be accommodated by third countries. UNHCR is an international institution of high commissioner of the United Nations which aims to protect and provide assistance to refugees based on the request of a government or the United Nations itself which then accompanies the refugees in the process of moving from their place of residence to a new place. (UNHCR, 2001). Data shown by UNHCR are as many as 792 asylum seekers and Rohingya refugees as of February 2015. Some of the Rohingya refugees are accommodated by Rudenim who are Immigration Detention Centers and some are outside the

Rudeness facilitated by *Internasional Organization for Migration (IOM)* (Yudyachandra, 2015). This has had a negative impact on the Rohingya ethnic group in Myanmar. The continuing conflict has made the Rohingya ethnic victims of violence and targets for the majority of people in Myanmar. As a result of these conflicts resulted in many casualties which resulted in an increasing wave of refugees from Rohingya ethnicity to seek assistance in other countries which are located close to Myanmar. When the Myanmar government carried out a military operation, the Rohingya ethnic community separated themselves to flee to save themselves from the military operation. In August 2017, for almost a month, there was a surge in the displacement of the Rohingya ethnic group, which increased to 123,000 people (BBC News, 2017).

The report issued by the Indonesian Center for Law and Human Rights Advocacy states that there are various forms of discrimination that have been experienced by the Rohingya, such as confiscation of property, forced labor, rape, murder, restricted employment opportunities and frequent burning of houses and places of worship for the Rohingya. (PAHAM INDONESIA, 2012). This is a humanitarian crisis that has reached a threshold and is stinging inhuman for the Rohingya ethnicity. So that the international community will pay attention to the humanitarian crisis experienced by the Rohingya ethnicity, one of which is Indonesia. Indonesia is committed to participating in finding solutions to the problem of discrimination that is being experienced by the Rohingya ethnic group by carrying out humanitarian diplomacy so that the problems experienced by the Rohingya ethnic group can find a bright spot so that they can be resolved properly by the respective parties in dispute. The case that is being experienced by the Rohingya ethnicity is very important to resolve. Indonesia, which is one of the destination countries for the Rohingya ethnic group to evacuate and save themselves, feels the need to take part in helping solve this problem on the basis of humanity. In addition, the Indonesian government has an active interest in finding solutions to the humanitarian crisis for the Rohingya ethnic group because Indonesia is directly affected by the crisis (Moy & Kusuma, 2016).

In the process, the Indonesian government also calls on other countries to take part in helping Rohingya refugees. Indonesia in consultation with UNHCR and IOM, where they agreed to record the Rohingya refugees, the refugees stranded in Indonesia at that time were divided into 2 groups, namely Rohingya refugees and refugees from Bangladesh. The government will differentiate between the two groups because they have different reasons for displacement. Rohingya refugees will be temporarily accommodated for a certain period of time while refugees from Bangladesh will return home on the grounds that the refugees are economic refugees (Pasuhuk, 2015).

Retno Lestari Priansari Marsudi as Minister of Foreign Affairs of Indonesia issued a statement that Indonesia was the first country in the world that was willing to take part in efforts to resolve the problem of the humanitarian crisis conflict that is currently happening in Myanmar. According to Retno Marsudi, the Indonesian government will do something concrete whose impact will be felt by those affected by the humanitarian crisis. The Indonesian government will continue to work together in overcoming the humanitarian crisis in the Rohingya by carrying out four priority assistance, namely in the fields of health, economy, education and assistance, and basic help (Nadlir, 2017). Representatives from UNHCR in Geneva greatly appreciated Indonesia's goodwill for its willingness to help the Rohingya refugees (Pasuhuk, 2015).

Based on the explanation that has been discussed above, the researcher draws a problem formulation "How are Indonesia's efforts in helping to overcome the conflict that has occurred in the Rohingya ethnic group in Myanmar?"

2. Conceptual Framework

To analyze and make it easier to understand how the policies taken by Indonesia in its efforts to help resolve the ongoing conflict with the Rohingya ethnic group in Myanmar, the author uses the Concept of Humanitarian Diplomacy. Larry Minear and Hazel Smith explained that humanitarian diplomacy is seen as an effort to gain access to people who are experiencing crisis. Humanitarian diplomacy is different from diplomacy in general which is seen as a means to achieve interests. Humanitarian diplomacy is ad hoc, which is very conditional depending on the problem of what humanitarian crisis is happening and within a certain period of time and in a particular regional context. Therefore, cultural diplomacy is usually carried out in ways that are not as usual and can develop along with seeing the current situation and condition, of course also involving many parties (Minear & Smith, 2007).

The Indonesian government, through its efforts to help the Rohingya ethnic group who is experiencing conflict, is showing a way of diplomacy related to humanity which is also one of the commitments of the Indonesian government. So that various efforts will be made to ease the burden on the Rohingya ethnic group who are currently experiencing a humanitarian crisis, because they feel they have been taken away by force. Therefore, Indonesia is active in its efforts to stop the conflict by making various efforts within the framework of humanitarian diplomacy. The Indonesian government highly upholds the value of peace so prioritizing peace and humanitarian diplomacy is indeed something that must be done if the government is able to do so. As stated in the fourth paragraph of the preamble to the 1945 Constitution "...ikut melaksanakan ketertiban dunia yang berdasarkan kemerdekaan, perdamaian abadi dan keadilan sosial.." (Kusuma, 2019).

Retno Lestari Priansari Marsudi as Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia through the 2018 Diplomacy Festival held by the Indonesian Ministry of Foreign Affairs said that at the international level, there are two types of diplomacy that are highlighted by Indonesia. This type of diplomacy is peace diplomacy and humanitarian diplomacy. The two types of diplomacy that are being carried out by Indonesia are closely related to each other whose purpose is to fight for human values (Maulana, 2018). Humanitarian diplomacy which is based on the principles of values and norms regarding humanity which structurally must be distinguished from other understandings of diplomacy such as economic diplomacy and security diplomacy. It can be seen from the objective, diplomacy such as economic and security diplomacy is based on and is closely related to materialistic interests (Roy, 1991).

3. Discussion

The actions taken by the Myanmar government against the Rohingya are an example of crimes against humanity (Permata, D, & A.Sinulingga, 2019). The various discrimination and crimes experienced by the Rohingya ethnic group who live in Myanmar have shown the violation of basic human rights that should be owned by the Rohingya ethnic community. The articles listed in *Universal Declaration of Human Right* has explained in great detail related to protection to all

humans. Humans are protected from all forms of violence and are entitled to feel safe and have rights in religious freedom. Those articles are :

Article 3;

Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person;

Article 5;

No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment;

Article 18;

Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance (United Nations, 1948).

However, everything that has been explained in the articles contained in the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* is not owned by the Rohingya ethnicity. The Rohingya ethnic community living in Myanmar experience various forms of discrimination, violence and persecution which makes them feel unsafe. This happened because the Myanmar government really didn't care about what happened to the Rohingya ethnic community. Referring to the problem of the security crisis that occurred in Myanmar, it can be seen that there have been human rights violations that have led to the cornering of the Rohingya ethnicity in Myanmar. At the time of the implementation of the *International Conference on Human Rights* in 1968, it was suggested by the *United Nations (UN)* that the *Universal Declaration on Human Rights* is mandatory for all members of the international community and applies to all people. Referring to this statement, the State of Myanmar has violated the universal declaration related to human rights, where the universal declaration has been made and basically applies to the entire international community (Kusuma, 2015).

Rohingya who are victims of violence by the Myanmar government are trying to save themselves from Myanmar and seek asylum in countries adjacent to Myanmar. This problem will have an impact on security stability in the Southeast Asian region. The movement of people who fled as a result of violence carried out by the Myanmar government was carried out illegally will create new problems because the Rohingya ethnic community does not have clear citizenship. This case has the potential to create risky problems in the Southeast Asia region (The New Humanitarian, 2013). The humanitarian crisis and unclear ethnic Rohingya citizenship status will impact across national borders so that an extensive solution is needed and cooperation from various international actors is needed to stabilize security in the Southeast Asian region. Indonesia as an international actor takes part in striving for regional security and stability, especially in the case of the Rohingya ethnicity which poses a threat to several other countries. Indonesia is the first country to respond to events that attack the Rohingya ethnicity, not only responding politically but also doing factual things that benefit the affected communities. Indonesia is *the first humanitarian responder* (Azizah, 2017).

Indonesia's efforts in helping the humanitarian crisis against the Rohingya ethnicity in Myanmar

In its efforts to help the Rohingya people with the humanitarian crisis they are experiencing, initially Indonesia used an approach to Myanmar by taking a total diplomacy approach through reconciliation with the intention of Indonesia to help restore the conditions and situation in Myanmar so that relations between ethnic groups in Myanmar and the Rohingya ethnicity are re-established. . Indonesia carries out bilateral diplomacy between Indonesia and Myanmar, namely supporting reconciliation in Myanmar and discussing issues related to the Rohingya ethnicity. Indonesia's goal in supporting reconciliation in Myanmar was so that the Myanmar government, which at that time was heading into a democratic government which had been led by military rule, slowly began to open up. At the 2015 bilateral meeting held by Retno Marsudi as the Indonesian Minister of Foreign Affairs with Wunna Maung Lwin as the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Myanmar, Indonesia provided support in accelerating the democratization process. The meeting also discussed *irregular movement of persons*, and Indonesia asked Myanmar to prevent this *irregular movement*. *The Irregular Movement* is a movement carried out by refugees who seek asylum after they have fled the country on the grounds of fear of violence and persecution and do not follow instructions desired by the international community (Jaeger, 1988).

The results of the Indonesia-Myanmar bilateral meeting regarding the issue of *irregular movement of persons*, namely:

- 1) Myanmar agrees to take concrete steps in preventing irregular movement of migrants from the Myanmar region;
- 2) The Myanmar Embassy will conduct consular visits to various regions in Aceh where the refugees are located;
- 3) Myanmar agrees to cooperate with countries in the Southeast Asian region in eradicating human trafficking, as well as;
- 4) Indonesia's offer to develop Rakhine State in an inclusive and non-discriminatory manner was welcomed by Myanmar (Cahyaputra, 2015).

In 2016, Indonesian Foreign Minister Retno Marsudi met Myanmar State Counselor Aung San Suu Kyi on 6 December after the October 9 attack by a number of security officials which ended horribly for the Rohingya ethnic community because they were victims of Myanmar military violence that turned ethnic communities. Rohingya as targets of violence. The meeting between Retno Marsudi and Auung San Suu Kyi was held to discuss the latest issues related to the Rohingya ethnic conflict, the meeting is expected to be a step towards improving the situation for the Muslim community in Rakhine and the existence of stability in each community (BBC News, 2016).

In 2017, Foreign Minister Retno Marsudi will again hold a bilateral meeting with officials in Myanmar, namely the Commander of the Myanmar Armed Forces, Min Aung Hlaing and Myanmar State Counselor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi at Naypyidaw to discuss the Rohingya Genocide. At the meeting discussed about security in Rakhina State. Retno Marsudi also submitted a proposal related to the imposition of security protection for people in Rakhine. Indonesia invites both to provide protection to all people in Rakhine and Indonesia to discuss the provision of humanitarian assistance to Rakhine (Saputri, 2017).

Indonesia has also become one of the fleeing places for ethnic Rohingya people who have escaped death. These refugees are seeking asylum in several countries adjacent to Myanmar. In

2015, four ships were stranded on the coast of North Aceh (BBC News, 2015). The four ships carried 582 immigrants who were later rescued by local fishermen. The whole immigrants will be placed in the North Aceh GOR building (Hamzah, 2015). The majority of Indonesians fully support Indonesia's decision to save and temporarily accommodate the Rohingya refugees on humanitarian grounds. But at that time, the TNI refused to do the same thing, the TNI stated that in order to safeguard the sovereignty of the Indonesian State, their side did not allow anyone for any reason to enter Indonesian territory, even though the Rohingya ethnic (Asril, 2015). Then after holding a bilateral meeting between Indonesia and Malaysia, where Malaysia is also a host country for Rohingya refugees. Both said they were ready to accommodate Rohingya refugees within a year. In addition, the two ministers, namely Indonesian Foreign Minister Retno Marsudi and Malaysian Foreign Minister Anifah Aman invited other countries to join in efforts to resolve the Rohingya conflict. Indonesia itself will build a shelter for refugees. The activity carried out by the Indonesian government in helping Rohingya refugees is in collaboration with the United Nations High Commissions For Refugees (UNHCR). The result of consultations with UNHCR and IOM is that the Rohingya refugees will then be recorded (Pasuhuk, 2015).

Another effort made by Indonesia in helping the Rohingya ethnic community who are involved in this humanitarian crisis is by offering solutions to the Myanmar government. Through humanitarian diplomacy, the Indonesian government has taken a bilateral approach to the Myanmar government. On the recommendation of the UN Secretariat General Kofi Annan, the solution offered by Indonesia is the 4 + 1 formula in order to stop violence against ethnic Rohingya in Myanmar. The 4 + 1 formula covers four points, namely:

- 1) Restores security stability;
- 2) Maximum restraint and not use force;
- 3) Protection of all people residing in Rakhine regardless of ethnicity and religion;
- 4) It is important to immediately open access related to humanitarian assistance.

Those are the four main points offered by Indonesia and added by one point, namely the implementation of the recommendation of the Advisory Commission Report for Rakhine led by Kofi Annan which must be done as soon as possible (Pujayanti, 2017).

Since the time of the Rohingya conflict, Indonesia was the first country to respond to the conflict, Indonesia has continued to provide assistance on a humanitarian basis. Indonesia under the supervision of the *Medical Emergency Rescue Committee* (MER-C) and *Palang Merah Indonesia* (PMI) has also established a Hospital for Myanmar. The Embassy of the Republic of Indonesia to Myanmar stated that the hospital being built was a sign of peace and friendship between Indonesia and Myanmar (Kemenlu RI, 2019). In addition, Indonesia is building four schools in the Rakhine area. The development is under the auspices of Indonesian NGOs. The four schools were inaugurated on December 8, 2014 by Abdurrahman Mohammad Fachir as Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Indonesia together with the Union Minister of Border Affairs and the Chief Minister of Rakhine State. (SEDIKLU XXXIX, 2015).

In 2016, Indonesia sent aid to the Rohingya ethnic community in Myanmar in the form of 10 containers containing aid packages. The aid package will go through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Myanmar which will then be distributed to the Rohingya (Siswoyo & Rahmat, 2016).

In 2017, the Indonesian government has consistently shown its commitment to helping Rohingya refugees who are experiencing a humanitarian crisis in Myanmar. Indonesia again sent humanitarian aid in the form of food for pregnant women and toddlers, ready-to-eat food packages, water tanks, tents, sarongs and blankets. Then, the Indonesian Ministry of Health also provided assistance for 1 ton of packages of medicines for the refugees to use. The aid was distributed using Hercules C-130 aircraft through the Halim Perdana Kusuma Air Force Base (Humas Setkab, 2017).

Barriers experienced by Indonesia in its efforts to help deal with the Rohingya ethnic conflict

The efforts made by Indonesia in helping the Rohingya ethnic group related to the humanitarian crisis in Myanmar have encountered several obstacles. Both Indonesia and Myanmar each have procedures when it comes to resolving problems with other countries. Indonesia and Myanmar are countries that are members of ASEAN and have agreed principles in the ASEAN community. The agreed principle is known as the ASEAN Way. ASEAN adheres to the concept of sovereignty and the principle of non-interference. So, the principle of the ASEAN Way regulates that each ASEAN member country must respect the independence of each ASEAN member state and not interfere with the domestic affairs of each ASEAN member (Hazmi, 2020). Therefore, with regard to the case for the resolution of the Rohingya crisis in Myanmar, Indonesia may not interfere with the Myanmar State because it conflicts with Myanmar's rights and sovereignty. The Myanmar government, apart from the principles of the ASEAN Way, also seems to be closing itself off from other countries that want to help resolve the conflicts that are currently sweeping their country. The unstable security is used as an excuse by Myanmar to refuse aid to be distributed by its country, one of which is humanitarian aid to be distributed by the United Nations (KumparanNews, 2019).

Indonesia, which still wants to help resolve the Rohingya ethnic conflict in Myanmar, tries to diplomacy with Myanmar because Myanmar has issued a policy that all forms of humanitarian assistance to the Rohingya ethnicity will only be allowed if they get permission from the local government. The results of the diplomacy between Indonesia and Myanmar reached an agreement that the Myanmar government allows Indonesia to provide humanitarian assistance but must cooperate with social agencies in Myanmar. Indonesia, which considered the conditions of Myanmar, finally established AKIM (Indonesian Humanitarian Alliance) consisting of 11 NGOs in the humanitarian sector whose task was to distribute aid in collaboration with NGOs in Myanmar (Taufiqqurahman, 2017).

Indonesia, which continues to show its seriousness in handling Rohingya ethnic conflicts, realizes that this is a humanitarian problem, but not only that, but there is a moral burden to help ethnic Rohingya. Indonesia, which is the majority of the adherents of the Muslim religion, feels that it must help as much as possible in dealing with the Rohingya ethnicity in Myanmar, which is known to have claimed many lives (Purnomo, 2016). Despite realizing that the conflict in Myanmar is an internal problem of the country. Indonesia remains committed to helping solve it in various ways. Through the Indonesian Humanitarian Alliance for Myanmar, Indonesia was finally able to distribute aid to the Rohingya ethnic group in Myanmar, although it was rejected by the Myanmar government.

4. Conclusion

Discrimination and human rights violations that occur in Myanmar against the Rohingya ethnicity are an issue of crimes against humanity that is of great concern in the international community. Indonesia, which is committed to helping resolve the Rohingya ethnic conflict in Myanmar, has sought the best solution on the advice of the UN Secretariat General Kofi Annan, namely the 4 + 1 formula, to stop the ongoing conflict. The concept of Peace Diplomacy that the author uses to explain Indonesia's efforts in helping the humanitarian crisis in Myanmar have been carried out by Indonesia through a diplomatic approach to the Myanmar government based on humanitarian interests. The obstacles experienced by Indonesia in helping to deal with the Rohingya ethnic conflict in Myanmar can be overcome even by carrying out some diplomatic practices with the State of Myanmar. But it bore fruit. The government of Myanmar finally opened up to Indonesia and was willing to accept humanitarian assistance from Indonesia for conflict-affected communities on the condition that it cooperated with NGOs in Myanmar. In addition, the efforts made by the Indonesian government have yielded positive results. From various efforts that have been made by Indonesia, Indonesia finally succeeded in building good bilateral diplomacy with Myanmar. Myanmar welcomes Indonesia's good intentions in discussing the Rohingya ethnic conflict that occurred in their country and allows Indonesia to distribute humanitarian aid without intermediaries.

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