

Research Article

From Gaza to Unity of the Ummah: Uncovering Potential of The Geopolitics of Ummah

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ABSTRACT

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This study explores the potential of the geopolitics of ummah in uniting the Muslim community amidst the ongoing genocide in Gaza since October 2023. This genocide has sparked global support, including from Western societies. Given Palestine's status as the home of Al-Aqsa Mosque, the third holiest site in Islam, this momentum should spur the ummah to make a noticeable impact. The study underscores the need for the ummah to realize its potential, as demonstrated historically and through Western responses to Ummah's unity efforts. We examine this potential using the Baitul Maqdis Barakah Circle theory by El-Awaisi, focusing on the liberation of mind, and relate it to Wendt's collective identity formation. The social interactions reveal the geopolitical potential, including understanding Islam's position in international spheres, current issues, strengths, and mobilization strategies. Data were obtained from literature studies and analyzed using critical discourse analysis to understand how this discourse influences the thoughts and behaviors of the ummah. The results indicate that support for Palestine has heightened awareness of the liberation of mind. Islamic solutions are gaining recognition as responses to the failure of international actors to end the Israeli occupation. These findings suggest that the Ummah can play a key role in global politics by uniting and mobilizing their strengths, including population numbers, Islamic solution to occupation, and material power such as natural resources and military capabilities.

1. INTRODUCTION

On October 7, 2023, the Palestinian resistance movement in the Gaza Strip, Hamas, breached the border fence of the occupied Palestinian territory in response to 75 years of Israeli occupation. The operation, dubbed Thufan Al-Aqsa by the Al-Qassam Brigades, demonstrated that the Palestinian liberation struggle has evolved from a military perspective (Hassan & Mustafa, 2024). From the first rocket operation, Qassam 1, launched during the second intifada in 2001, which only reached cities and settlements on the surrounding border between Gaza and the occupied territories, such as Ashdod, Ashkelon, and Sderot, it has now reached the heart of Israel, including Tel Aviv, Haifa, and occupied Al-Quds, with increased explosive power (Abi-Habib & Frenkel, 2024). It has now progressed to encompass land, air, and sea operations (Hussein, 2021).

Thufan Al-Aqsa has had a significant impact on the perception of Israeli military capabilities (Landler, 2023). At the same time, it has fostered a sense of awareness and optimism among the Palestinian that Baitul Maqdis can be liberated through resistance movements. In response to Thufan Al-Aqsa, Israel launched a series of airstrikes, followed by ground operations in Gaza, which are continuing as of June 2024. Israeli military operations have been disproportionate, resulting in the targeting of civilians, journalists, medical personnel, humanitarian volunteers, and



the destruction of protected sites such as schools, places of worship, hospitals, and refugee camps (Buheji, 2024). In addition, the use of prohibited weapons, including white phosphorus, has been observed (Khafaei et al., 2024).

The international community, represented by South Africa with the support of Nicaragua, Belgium, Colombia, Turkey, Libya, Egypt, Maldives, Mexico, Ireland, Chile, Palestine, and Spain, has classified the Israeli military operation as genocide and brought a case against Israel before the International Court of Justice (Arribas, 2024). Although the ICJ did not explicitly declare Israel's operation to be genocide, UN human rights expert Francesca Albanese stated that, based on the evidence obtained, it met the threshold to be categorized as genocide and ethnic cleansing (*Rights Expert Finds 'Reasonable Grounds' Genocide Is Being Committed in Gaza | UN News*, n.d.).

As of June 27, 2024, the genocide has resulted in the martyrdom of 38,271 Gazans, including over 15,000 children and over 100 journalists, over 10,000 were missing, and 86,377 were injured (*Israel-Gaza War in Maps and Charts: Live Tracker | Israel-Palestine Conflict News | Al Jazeera*, n.d.). These figures do not include the martyrdom of doctors, medical personnel, and humanitarian volunteers.

In addition, 60% of houses, 80% of public and commercial facilities, and 267 mosques were destroyed, only 17 out of 35 hospitals were still functioning with all limitations, and 130 ambulances were damaged (*Israel-Gaza War in Maps and Charts: Live Tracker | Israel-Palestine Conflict News | Al Jazeera*, n.d.). A total of 88% of school buildings were destroyed, including UN schools used as shelters for residents whose homes were previously destroyed. Humanitarian services such as food, clean water, medicine, electricity, and fuel have been cut off due to the destruction of infrastructure and the Israeli blockade of aid (*Israel-Gaza War in Maps and Charts: Live Tracker | Israel-Palestine Conflict News | Al Jazeera*, n.d.).

The Israeli military has carried out attacks and operations throughout the Gaza Strip without exception, including in Rafah, which was declared a safe zone at the beginning of the attack. The Israeli military had instructed the residents of northern Gaza to flee to Rafah for safety. These actions have demonstrated that Israel has committed various violations of human rights and international law.

Israeli violations of universal values have led to global support for Palestinian liberation and calls for an end to Israeli occupation. This includes support from Western societies, in countries that recognize the state of Israel and have diplomatic relations. In the United States, a YouGov report found that in the first two months of the genocide, young people aged 18-29 showed more sympathy for Palestine than for Israel, 28% to 20% (*Israel-Palestine Conflict Polls & Surveys | YouGov*, n.d.). In the United Kingdom, 59% of respondents said Israel was committing human rights abuses in Gaza, compared to 12% who said the opposite (*Israel-Palestine Conflict Polls & Surveys | YouGov*, n.d.). The YouGov report also revealed a shift in attitudes towards Israel, with a majority of US and UK respondents who previously supported Israel now shifting to a position of neutrality or even support for Palestine.

Demonstrations and boycotts took place around the world. On Western campuses, there have been protests and camps demanding that universities cut off cooperation with Israeli institutions and declare that Israel's aggression in Gaza is a violation of humanity. One notable success has been the declaration of the Crue Universidades Espanolas, or Conference of Spanish Rectors, which agreed to cancel cooperation contracts with Israeli research centers (Buheji & Hasan, n.d.).

In the United Kingdom, demonstrators occupied the Elbit drone factory, a company that supplies weapons to Israel (AMMORI, 2024). On Labor Day, protesters in London blockaded the Department of Trade and Industry to protest arms exports to Israel (*Protesters Blockade Department for Business and Trade to Oppose Arms Sales to Israel*, n.d.). The boycott movement against companies and products linked to Israel is widespread, with the top five boycotters coming from Saudi Arabia, Indonesia, the United Arab Emirates, India, and Germany. Notably, two of these countries are not Muslim-majority, and one, Germany, is a Western country (*2024 Edelman Trust Barometer Special Report Brands and Politics Final.Pdf*, n.d.).

Protests against Israel are also taking place on social media. The United States attempted to ban TikTok, a predictable move after the platform overwhelmingly dominated with citizens' support for Palestine, overshadowing Israel's image (Stern, 2024). Notably, pro-Palestinian posts have received significantly more attention than pro-Israeli ones. For example, the "*All Eyes on Rafah*" post has been reposted over 50 million times, while the pro-Israel counter-post "*All Eyes on 7 October*" has garnered only hundreds of thousands of reposts.

The Gaza genocide has led to a significant increase in public support for Palestine. notably, in the West, there has been a shift in support from pro-Israel to pro-Palestine. This raises the question of what form support takes in the Islamic world. In Indonesia, Erlangga Greschinov popularized Julid fi Sabilillah, a non-violent movement using the X (previously Twitter) platform to weaken the morale of Israeli soldiers and public figures by collectively targeting them through the reply column and reporting their accounts (Saputra, 2024). As a result, many Israelis closed their

accounts. The Julid fi Sabilillah movement spread to other countries and expanded across various platforms, including Instagram, TikTok, Omegle, and WhatsApp.

The term "*Julid fi Sabilillah*" was adopted from the phrase "*Jihad fi Sabilillah*" which translates to "*struggle in the way of Allah*". Julid fi Sabilillah shares the same spirit as jihad, aiming to exert the greatest possible resistance against Israel using tools available to each individual, in this case, the internet and social media (Saputra, 2024). The term "*jihad*" has been reintroduced into the public consciousness through the Julid fi Sabilillah movement.

The ongoing crisis in Gaza has heightened the urgency of struggling in the way of Allah (Abdurohman et al., 2024). Jihad is a human effort to preserve the dignity of life. Julid fi Sabilillah aligns with the Islamic concept expressed in Al-Masad verse 1 (111:1) of the Qur'an, which curses Abu Lahab with "*perish!*". This term is an expression of a curse for someone or a party that is hostile to religion (Alhaj & Abdelkarim, 2022). In the context of the Gaza genocide, this curse is directed to Israel, which has been proven to have committed crimes against humanity and violated all laws. Therefore, Julid fi Sabilillah is a legitimate Islamic practice. The shift in the West from pro-Israel to pro-Palestine has led to a realization in the Islamic world that Islamic solution is needed to end the Israeli occupation. Julid fi Sabilillah also initiated this shift, reintroducing jihad as a proportional and just solution for all parties involved in the crimes.

The efforts of the Muslim community in support of Palestine show that the solutions proposed by various movements can be implemented when there is Muslim collectivity and unity. Julid fi Sabilillah has become a global movement, reflecting the international community's consensus that the Israeli occupation must be ended. This movement highlights that Islam has a solution.

The challenge for the Ummah is to recognize that Islam provides a solution and that this solution can only be realized if the Ummah is united (Shah, 2022). The implementation of solutions in cyberspace should be accompanied by corresponding actions and political attitudes in the real world. Fundamentally, a movement will be constructed when individuals share a common set of ideas and interests.

From demonstrations, boycotts, social media campaigns, and education, to the "*jihad*" movement, the collective identity of the Ummah has been formed. The concept of solutions and unity shows that the Ummah has its geopolitics (Strakes, 2018). It illustrates the potential for the Ummah to assume a leading role in global affairs through the utilization of Islamic tools, methods, goals, and leadership. Prior to the establishment of geopolitical structures, a geopolitical entity needs to have an awareness of its identity, the challenges it faces, its strengths, and how these strengths can be utilized.

The necessity for the Ummah to intervene in the Palestinian issue, using its most robust geopolitical power, is an obligation incumbent upon the Ummah itself (Robani, 2004). This obligation includes the responsibility as a Muslim and the duty as an international actor to maintain peace, aligning with the objectives of the international relations studies (Nursita & Sahide, 2019). Thus, the obligation to liberate Palestine exists from both an Islamic and an international political perspective.

From the perspective of Islam, Palestine, also known as Baitul Maqdis, holds a special status as the location of the first Qibla, the Al-Aqsa Mosque, and the site of Prophet Muhammad's (PBUH) spiritual journey, known as Isra' Mi'raj. During this journey, Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) was commanded to pray five times and became the prayer leader of all the Prophets. This status of prayer leader signifies that Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) is the rightful host, implying that the status of Baitul Maqdis is inherited by his Ummah. Just as the holy cities of Mecca and Medina are currently administered by Muslims, Baitul Maqdis is a holy city tied to the Ummah. The liberation of Palestine is part of the mandate from Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) to preserve the special status of Baitul Maqdis and the sanctity of the Ummah's waqf land (*Palestine and the Question of Islam - Critical Muslim Studies*, n.d.).

From an international political perspective, the Ummah must restore Palestine to a peaceful place for all its inhabitants. The Israeli occupation violates numerous international laws and United Nations resolutions (Uchôa & Van Vossolle, 2024). These violations include the construction of the apartheid walls that separate Palestinian families; the confiscation of homes that have stood for hundreds of years and belong to Palestinians to be occupied by illegal Israeli settlers, especially in East Jerusalem (Old City) and Hebron; the assault and arrest of Palestinians, including children, women and the elderly, without due process of law; the targeting of civilians, journalists, doctors, medical personnel and humanitarian volunteers (Greenstein, 2020). Military checkpoints are set up to restrict Palestinian access to schools and workplaces (Wells et al., 2024). Clean water is also restricted, and illegal settlers destroy agricultural land and steal Palestinian livestock. Palestinian Muslims are also prevented from accessing the Al-Aqsa Mosque, despite the administration of Al-Aqsa is de jure in the hands of Jordan (Kingsley et al., 2024). Ambulances carrying injured Palestinian are often prevented from entering the compound. These are just a few examples of the various violations commonly committed by Israel.

Israel expands illegal settlements by confiscating Palestinian land, contrary to the 1967 agreement, which has been condemned even by The United States and the European Union, with the latter stating that the construction of illegal settlements is a step backward for peace (Sayegh, 2023). One of the clearest examples of Israeli lawlessness is the killing of journalist Shireen Abu Aqleh by the Israeli army bullet (Bsharat et al., 2023). According to the Committee to Protect Journalists, Shireen's shooting marks the 20th Palestinian journalist to die at the hands of the Israeli military in the West Bank in 22 years, with no legal consequences for the perpetrators (*Deadly Pattern: 20 Journalists Died by Israeli Military Fire in 22 Years. No One Has Been Held Accountable.* - Committee to Protect Journalists, n.d.). Despite efforts by the United Nations, the United States, and other countries to intervene, Israel continues to violate international law. Therefore, there is an urgent need for a unified force to end this occupation. As one of the international political actor, the Ummah must play a role in achieving peace in Palestine.

History shows that peace prevailed when Islam led Baitul Maqdis, as evidenced by the Rashida Caliphate of Umar bin Khattab and the Abbasid Caliphate under Shalahuddin Al-Ayyubi (Liebl, 2009). During the time of Caliph Umar, he refused to worship in church despite invitation from Christian leader. Umar's refusal was motivated by his concern that if he worship in the church, his followers might latter consider it a mosque (*Capture of Jerusalem: The Treaty of Umar - IslamiCity*, n.d.). Umar's stance shows that under Islamic leadership, all religious communities can coexist peacefully in Palestine.

Even in Jewish history, during the 16th century, under Islamic rule, Jews were able to live and worship freely (Yiğitoğlu, 2022). It can be argued that the only leadership that guarantee peace for the Jews was under Islamic governance. In contrast, in the present day, the Jewish community of Mea Shearim in Jerusalem, which rejects the state of Israel, faces discrimination and violence from Israeli security forces (Cohn, 2012). The convergence of historical and contemporary situations demonstrates that Israel is incapable of maintaining peace, and its existence must be replaced by a government that practices universal law and peace.

The liberation of Palestine can be pursued from the Islamic perspective. The violations committed by Israel have expanded its power, as international organizations and the United States, as a superpower, are unable to stop it. This suggests that the Ummah must emerge as an actor whose history, ideas, and interests are no longer seen as the alternative actor, but one expected to play a central role in ending the Israeli occupation. The liberation of Palestine is an effort to restore justice and peace in the region, as history has shown that religious tolerance and harmony were achieved under Islamic rule. The Ummah, through its geopolitical influence, has the potential to implement Islamic solutions through the political power of its collective unity.

1.1 Literature Review

1.1.1 Geopolitics and The Ummah

Geopolitics is the study of the political implications of geographic space in foreign relations. Its scope extends beyond a mere political understanding of physical space to include technological developments that give rise to various contests of ideas, thoughts, and the concept of space itself.

One of the foundational idea in geopolitics is Mackinder's Heartland Theory, which asserts that whoever controls Eastern Eurasia will control the world (Gerace, 1991). Maritime dominance, as emphasized by Mahan, is another key aspect of global power (Gerace, 1991). Spykman proposed that the edges of Eurasia constitute the area of power control, a concept known as the Rimland Theory (Gerace, 1991). Together, these three theories represent the classical geopolitical perspective, emphasizing the strategic importance of space, commonly referred to as the "*heart of the world*".

The development of geopolitics has been shaped by the recognition of external factors that can influence the configuration of space, including political economy, technological development, and ideological considerations. Cohen (2010) introduced the concept of functional geography, which emphasizes the interaction between states based on their respective political economies (Cohen, 2010).

The development of the concept of space led geopolitics to be theorized in international relations. From a realist perspective, geopolitics focuses on how to control the world through the use of spacial and political elements (Wu, 2018). According to critical theories, geopolitics evolves due to the interests of dominant groups, in this case, the superpowers, which ultimately reinforce domination and injustice (Bachmann & Moisiu, 2020). Conversely, the existence of domination gives rise to discourse analysis to unravel perceptions of power and identity (Haji Naseri, 2019). This allows geopolitics to be presented as a dynamic of global power. Koopman et al. (2021) emphasize the influence of discourse and representation, arguing that the way actors define space has implications for determining

political policies and practices (Koopman et al., 2021). The media plays a crucial role in influencing public perception, with the potential to shape an ideas of space that can be acted upon by political power.

The link between geopolitics and the theorization of international politics creates awareness of various issues, facilitating the construction of new geopolitical centers. In the context of climate change, for example, Hommel & Murphy (2013) argue that the discourse on the impact of climate change on various tensions and challenges of international cooperation contributes to the emergence of environmental geopolitics, which is manifested in the formation of various standards that are continuously intensified year after year (Hommel & Murphy, 2013). O'Lear (2018) describes environmental geopolitics as the environment supporting selective agendas that benefit humans while, at the same time, it exacerbating inequalities and patterns of injustice due to the clash between the scientific aspects of the environment and the constructive aspects of power (O'Lear, 2018). In the field of energy, oil, gas, and their routes have become a central focus of geopolitics, highlighting the importance of pipelines, shipping routes, and energy dependency in shaping relations between states (Gu & Wang, 2015).

Developments in communications technology have transformed the geopolitical landscape. Competition for internet access, satellite technology, information, and the contestation of ideas through platforms like social media, along with the presence of big data and digital surveillance, demonstrate that digital space and global networks can influence power relations (Khan et al., 2022). The circulation of ideas and information in international interactions is reshaping identity studies, revealing how ethnic, religious, and cultural identities give rise to actors and geopolitical bases.

From the perspective of the geopolitics of identity, it is evident that Western geopolitics, characterized by the unity of the United States and its allies in addressing global issues, particularly those related to regional security and stability, is in direct conflict with the Islamic world (Peters, 1999) (Flint, 2021). For instance, the formation of US relations with Middle Eastern countries in the post-millennial period has been accompanied by military intervention in Afghanistan, Iraq, the Syrian conflict, Yemen, as well as the establishment of close alliances in the region, including Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Jordan, Bahrain, the United Arab Emirates, and military bases in these friendly countries.

From these geopolitical studies, it can be seen that geopolitics has evolved from a focus on physical space to a more flexible approach driven by issues and ideas. In the context of the Palestine-Israel matter, the Ummah represents a potential geopolitical driver amid the minimal political orientation change since the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948. If Western geopolitics is characterized by how the West builds relations with the Islamic world and forms alliances in the Middle East, then the Ummah can emerge to represent the Islamic world - as a whole, not just limited to the Middle East - to respond to the dynamics of the Islamic world.

The term "Ummah" refers to Muslims or Muslim community. It is not bound to a specific geographical area, such as countries or organizations, but is defined by Islamic principles. The bond between Muslims is based on aqeedah, which signifies that every Muslim is a brother and like one body (Denny, 1975). If one part is injured, the rest of the body feels pain. The concept of Ummah is not limited to the Middle East; rather, it represents the global Muslim community. Ummah is all Muslims throughout the world. This definition implies that the Islamic world is should be seen as a comprehensive meaning, and therefore it is necessary to be clearer and more precise in describing the Islamic world and in discussing the Ummah.

In geopolitics, the Ummah is also understood in the context of its political consciousness (Jomaa, 2021). Consequently, the discussion of the Ummah is observed since the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) established the state of Medina, after uniting the Anshar and Muhajirin, Arab tribes that were previously divided. Aqeedah is a set of beliefs governed by Sharia, God's law, which regulates the three dimensions of human interaction: the relationship between humans and God, the relationship between humans and themselves, and the relationship between humans and other creatures (Sheikh Obid & Demikha, 2012) (Johnson & Sergie, 2014). This also includes the implementation of Sharia within the state, encompassing both domestic and foreign affairs.

The state of Medina served as the foundation for the development of Islamic civilization (Muttaqin & Matin, 2022). The political legacy of the Ummah, inherited by the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), continued during the Rashida Caliphate (632-661). The Prophet's leadership was carried on by his Companions: Abu Bakr Ash-Shiddiq, Umar bin Khattab, Uthman bin Affan, and Ali bin Abi Talib. The Rashida Caliphate continued the implementation of Sharia, thereby establishing political and administrative stability, as the foundation for the spread of Islam (Anderson & Pruitt, 2017). This included the first liberation of Baitul Maqdis from Byzantium Empire in 637, led by Umar bin Khattab (Hadi, 2019).

After the Rashida Caliphate, the Ummah continued to benefit from the institutional shield of power provided by the Umayyad Caliphate, Abbasid Caliphate, and later the Ottoman Caliphate. During the Umayyad era (661-750), the

Islamic institution expanded to include Spain in the west and India in the east. The Umayyad period was run by the adoption of administrative practices from Persia, allowing for more effective management of the vast territories (Anderson & Pruitt, 2017). The Abbasid period (750-1258) marked the Islamic golden age of education, science, and technology (Anderson & Pruitt, 2017). During the Ottoman period (1299-1924), the Caliphate faced waves of imperialism and colonialism. The Ottoman Caliphate maintained a military fleet that supported colonized Islamic countries, including Nusantara (Liebl, 2009) (Pandawa, 2021).

The Caliphate faced significant challenges during the Ottoman era. In addition to the imperialist countries, which grew in strength through the mass weapon production and control over colonized lands, the Ottoman also confronted the spread of the idea of freedom influenced by the French Revolution, which was adopted in the educational institutions that educated the younger generation. This ideology infiltrated educational institutions and shaped a new secular generation of Young Turks, which weakened the Islamic understanding and the Ottoman itself (Özbek, 2007). The decline of the Ottoman was precipitated by its involvement in World War I, which resulted to its defeat. This led to the collapse of the Ottoman Caliphate in 1924 and the establishment of the Turkish Republic (Liebl, 2009). Since then, the Ummah has been without a unified institution, leading Muslims to focus on each own nationality.

At present, there are 57 countries with majority Muslim populations. Given the divided authority, it is rational for Western geopolitics to seek dominance in its power relations with the Islamic world, including the West's unconditional support for Israel (Gilboa, 2023). Nevertheless, the Ummah remains an entity, an entity with geopolitical potential, as the experience of thirteen centuries of history has shown. To uncover this potential, it is essential to re-emphasize the unity of the Ummah and how the Ummah can liberate itself from Western hegemony.

The unifier of the Ummah is aqeedah. The spark of unity comes from issues that also inspires faith. While the United States and the West build unity on cooperation and temporary material elements, the Ummah should not be concerned with the distinction between different citizenship statuses, as they are all ultimately the same, and the Ummah is essentially one entity. The position of the Ummah is not determined by tangible material factors but rather by devotion. The strength of this idea lies in the geopolitical potential of the Ummah.

Based on the principles of aqeedah and sharia that Islam has to unite the ummah, Komara (2021) defines the geopolitics of ummah as the organization of the living space of the Ummah of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) according to Islamic rules governing both domestic and foreign affairs (Komara, 2021a). This organization aims for the Ummah to become the best people, guided by Islamic Sharia, exerting control over its geographical zone.

To realize its geopolitical potential, the Ummah must be aware of the elements of geopolitics, including the Islamic world's position in current international politics, key issues, and its strengths, particularly Islamic solutions. The Ummah must, therefore, reorganize its mind, freeing it from the non-universal and temporary ideas of materialism and popularity that Western geopolitics promotes. Instead, it should adopt Islam and its universal ties of aqeedah.

1.1.2 Liberation of Mind: First Stage in Liberating Baitul Maqdis

The geopolitics of ummah in liberating Palestine can be more specifically understood through the Baitul Maqdis Barakah Circle Theory. El-Awaisi (2022) introduced this theory, which abstracts QS Al-Isra, verse 1 (17:1) into international political theorization (El-Awaisi, 2022). The concept of blessing in the Prophetic Sunnah is defined as "*to grow, to remain, to continue*" operationalized as the idea that whoever controls Baitul Maqdis will control the world. Baitul Maqdis holds geopolitical significance due to the various struggles that take place around it, determining the actions of numerous countries triggering various global political symptoms.

The circles represent the centralization of blessings. The first circle, or the center of the circle of blessings, is Baitul Maqdis, extending 85 km in multi directions from the Old City of Al-Quds. The second circle of blessings is the Egypt, the Syam (currently Jordan, Lebanon, Syria), and Cyprus, which play a role in determining the political stability of Baitul Maqdis. The third circle of blessings encompasses Mecca, the starting point of the Isra' Mi'raj (El-Awaisi, 2022).

The geopolitics of Baitul Maqdis has a roadmap of liberation that mirrors the historical presedents of the first liberation by Umar bin Khattab and the second liberation by Shalahuddin Al-Ayyubi, extending to the anticipated liberation from Israeli occupation, namely the liberation of mind, political liberation, and military liberation (El-Awaisi, 2022). The liberation of mind is a scientific strategy rooted in construction of the principle of Baitul Maqdis within the concept of struggle (El-Awaisi, 2022). This understanding has been fully elucidated in Islamic teachings and is relevant to international politics. The Ummah is obliged to contribute to the liberation of Baitul Maqdis, as it is bound by political obligations in Islam (El-Awaisi, 2022).

Political liberation is a tactical strategy aimed at delegitimizing the power of the enemy by aligning statements and the political stance in the struggle of Baitul Maqdis and refusing to recognize the occupier's authority (El-Awaisi, 2022). One of the stances that the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) once implemented was to prohibit the Companions in

Mecca from visiting Al-Aqsa Mosque while it was under occupation (El-Awaisi, 2022). This concept is relevant today, as Muslims outside the first circle of blessings are advised not to visit Al-Aqsa Mosque, Muslims outside the first circle of blessings are advised not to visit Al-Aqsa Mosque, since doing so requires Israeli permission, which could imply recognition of Israeli control over the mosque. The process of military liberation involves preparing troops, equipment, strategies, and military instruments (El-Awaisi, 2022). his preparation is necessary because military action will naturally follow once the political institution is based on the premise of the obligation to liberate Baitul Maqdis.

This research focuses on the liberation of mind, aligning with its purpose to reveal the geopolitical potential of the Ummah. To achieve this, it is necessary to undertake a fundamental transformation of thought, moving away from the understanding that has prevailed since the collapse of the Ottoman Caliphate in 1924. This outdated perspective must be replaced with one that takes into account the events that have occurred since that time, including the Gaza genocide.

Currently, the Baitul Maqdis Barakah Circle theory is being operationalized by the United States, the main force of Western geopolitics, to subjugate the countries surrounding Baitul Maqdis. For example, after Israel, most US foreign aid in the region goes to the countries directly bordering Israel, namely Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, and Syria. This strategy can be read as an effort by the United States to protect Israel in its attempt to conquer the first circle of blessings (Gultom & Miftah, 2024). Additionally, the United States established military bases in countries within the third circle, including Saudi Arabia (Wallin, 2022). The United States has also supported Arab-Israeli normalization, which has been successful in the cases of the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain (Rehman, 2020).

The dominance of Western geopolitics in the Islamic world has contributed to the marginalization of the ideals of a liberated Palestine. In light of its commitment to Palestine, the Ummah must urgently free its mind from the influence of Western ideas and align it with the geopolitical order of the Ummah. By liberation of mind, the Ummah must recognize Islam's mandate of Baitul Maqdis and understand that the liberation of Baitul Maqdis is an obligation for the Ummah as a global actor (LOKMAN & NOR, n.d.). Knowledge of Baitul Maqdis will guide the Ummah in understanding the direction of the struggle and enable the formation of a unified mindset. This will clarify that Baitul Maqdis is currently in an occupied state and that its liberation requires the unity of the Ummah.

Unity of the Ummah is of utmost importance to face the West, which is also united in its geopolitics and currently dominant. The Ummah needs to recognize the full range of instruments at its disposal to liberate Palestine. These include tangible elements, such as military power and resources, as well as intangible elements, such as aqeedah and sharia-based solutions. The goal of liberation of mind is to establish the identity of the Ummah as a unified entity, which in turn will unleash the geopolitics of the Ummah.

1.1.3 Collective Identity Formation

In international politics, the liberation of mind can be understood through the lens of collective identity, in how education and knowledge will shape identity and interest. From constructivist perspective, the identity and interest of actors are not seen as fixed or predetermined, but are instead shaped and influenced by social interactions and norms in the international arena (Wendt, 1994). Social interaction is posited as the primary explanatory factor of social reality, which is constituted by ideas, norms, and social interactions.

The international system is not a fixed entity but is shaped by the practices and interactions of actors, as Wendt puts it, "*Anarchy is what states make of it*". Identity plays a central role in shaping how actors perceive themselves and others, as well as how they define their interests and goals in international relations. Wendt (1994) argues that actors' identity and interest are not inherently fixed but rather emerge from the process of social interaction (Wendt, 1994). Collective identity develops when actors or among actors share a common understanding that forms the basis for collective action.

In this approach, we will examine social interactions through three types of interaction processes: internalization, socialization, and institutionalization. The internalization process explains the intensity of relationships in which actors share expectations and exhibit stable pattern of behavior. The process of socialization involves the internalization of dominant norms and values derived from the outcomes of interaction. Institutionalization refers to the formation of institution that practice shared norms and understanding, thereby strengthening collective identity (Wendt, 1994).

The geopolitical potential of the Ummah will be determined by the extent to which the Ummah internalizes its geopolitical understanding. This process involves mapping the Ummah's position, problems, and strengths to socialize the liberation of mind of the Ummah, shifting from the current international system perspective to the Islamic worldview. This transformation will enable the Ummah to emerge as a global political actor.

Building upon the insights derived from the background and literature review, this study introduces a novel approach by addressing a gap in the discussion of geopolitics through capturing the Gaza genocide, which is driving changes in the Ummah's movement. Moving beyond reliance on current international values, the Ummah is beginning to awaken and recognize its eternal bonds of Aqeedah and Sharia as the solution to its problems, through peaceful action, education, and political da'wah. This research employs El-Awaisi's (2022) liberation of mind approach to form Ummah's collective identity. The Islamic teachings, which have not been fully internalized since the collapse of Ottoman Caliphate, are now beginning to be revived to uncover the geopolitical potential of the Ummah.

2. RESEARCH METHODS

This research examines the geopolitical potential of the Ummah through the liberation of mind provided by the formation of collective identity through Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). CDA is a method to examine the construction of discourse, which is influenced by several factors, including power, ideology, and socio-political situations (Van Dijk, 2015). CDA aims to understand the linguistic elements present in media texts and political communication that are used to establish, maintain, or challenge power relations (Fairclough, 2013). This research examines how the geopolitical discourse of the Ummah is constructed and presented to influence the thinking and behavior of Ummah in the effort to liberate Palestine. It presents an analysis of the geopolitics of Ummah to gain insight into how this discourse influences the dynamics of power and ideology at the international level.

The main themes and narratives of this research is identified as geopolitics of the Ummah, Gaza genocide, liberation of mind, collective identity, and unity of the Ummah. A discourse analysis was conducted on the aforementioned main themes and narratives, examining the elements of keywords, metaphors, and sentence structures used to form maxims (Wodak, 2014). From these contextualized themes and keywords, the research will also determine the meanings of some of the terms derived from them, including "Western", "aqeedah", "sharia", "da'wah". These terms are neutral and have become important to explain the subsequent calls for the Ummah unity within the geopolitical framework.

The aim is to reinforce the ideas of geopolitics in the Ummah by distributing and sustaining the defining themes in the text, thereby supporting the dominant narrative of the geopolitics of the Ummah. Discourse analysis also includes intertextuality, which is the study of how texts respond to and are influenced by other texts, as well as the historical and social contexts that shape the interpretation of Ummah's geopolitical discourse.

Data will be collected through a literature review. The purpose of the literature review is to gather key texts and discourses, which include books, journal articles, reports, online media, and social media. The use of online media and social media is crucial for the completeness of the research data, as one of the primary theme, "Gaza genocide", is a current and ongoing event.

Consequently, factual data will be updated from media networks such as Middle East Eye, Al-Jazeera English, and TRT World. In addition to the media, various reports and survey results are also important data sources for examining changes in the outcomes of support for Palestine. Meanwhile, social media was monitored for evidence of discourse surrounding the Gaza genocide and the broader Palestine-Israel matter.

The analysis of the geopolitical potential of the Ummah is organized based on three systematic parts, following the research objectives, the framework (geopolitics of the Ummah, liberation of mind, collective identity formation), and the research map. First, the Ummah must internalize its geopolitical consciousness by mapping the position of the Islamic world in current international politics, identifying the central issues facing the Ummah, and recognizing the Ummah's strengths (such as numbers, comprehensive solutions, natural resources, and military capabilities) that must be mobilized through the liberation of mind.. Second, the socialization of the Ummah to liberate its thinking from the perspective of the current international system, which has failed to solve the Palestinian and Muslim world problems, to an Islamic way of thinking. This liberation begins with a chain of reactions that includes the transformation of the Ummah through peaceful action, education, and political da'wah strategies. Third, the institutionalization framework that recognizes the potential of the Ummah to become a global political actor.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The Geopolitics of the Ummah outlines the trends that have engulfed the Ummah regarding the Gaza genocide, including the Ummah's borderless network. This trend illustrate the reality and distribution of domestic politics, highlighting Islamic world's position in current international spheres, the central issues that plague the Ummah, and the strengths possessed by Muslim-majority countries. From these trends, it can be argued that the Ummah's understanding of itself can be internalized.

3.1. Islamic World's Position in Current International Spheres

Since the dissolution of the Ottoman Caliphate in 1924, Muslims have lacked a unifying institution to guide and lead them. The conditions of war and the wave of decolonization that followed the First and Second World War further hindered the emergence of Islam as a major actor in the international arena. With the establishment of the United Nations in 1945, the countries of the world, including Muslim-majority countries, became practically governed by the values, norms, and rules of this largest international organization (Salame, 1993).

Regarding the international system, the current situation of Muslim-majority countries can be described as follows: they are divided into 57 sovereign nation-states, with nationalism serving as the basis for their political ideology (Hossain, 2012). This includes the Palestinian question. The Israeli occupation demonstrates the absence of the Islamic world, as both the political statements and actions of the Muslim-majority countries have been insufficient to support Palestine, even in matters concerning the Al-Aqsa Mosque as a holy site. These conditions highlight the fragmented state of the Ummah and clarify the position of the Islamic world in the international arena today. The inadequate OIC and the Arab-Israeli normalization further reveal these weaknesses. This understanding is crucial for the Ummah to recognize the primary issues and develop the awareness needed to change the situation.

3.1.1. The Inadequate OIC

The Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) is an intergovernmental organization composed of 57 member states with a majority Muslim populations. As such, it is committed to address issues of concern to the Islamic world, including economic, social, and security matters. OIC was founded in 1969 in response to the burning of the Al-Aqsa Mosque by Australian Jewish extremist Denis Michael Rohan (Bacik, 2011). Since its inception, the OIC has been instrumental in supporting the Palestinian cause and protecting Al-Aqsa Mosque. It has also championed the independence of Muslim countries, which has been threatened by the establishment of the state of Israel. Over the years, the OIC has issued numerous resolutions on Palestine and the Al-Aqsa. However, in practice, these resolutions have been unable in protecting Baitul Maqdis from Israeli violations.

The Rabat Declaration of 1969 was the first to emphasize full support for the rights of the Palestinian and the liberation of the Al-Aqsa Mosque. This was followed by the Cairo Ministerial Conference in 1970, which stressed the importance of preserving the Islamic identity of Al-Aqsa Mosque and rejected any attempt to change the status as the Waqf land. The 1974 Lahore Conference supported the Palestinian armed struggle as a legitimate right to liberate their homeland and protect Al-Aqsa and called on Muslim countries to provide military and financial support. The 1994 Casablanca Summit condemned the digging of tunnels around Al-Aqsa Mosque and called for a two-state solution based on the pre-1967 borders.

In response to the second intifada, an emergency meeting was held in Jeddah in 2001, condemned Israeli violence and called for international protection of the Palestinian and holy site. This was followed by the Mecca Extraordinary Summit, which urged on Palestinian factions to engage in dialogue and reconciliation while calling on the international community to halt Israeli construction of illegal settlements on Palestinian land. The Istanbul Extraordinary Summit later condemned the United States' recognition of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel, reaffirming that East Jerusalem must remain the capital of Palestine as a prerequisite for peace.

Subsequently, the Foreign Ministers' Summit in Niamey in 2020 condemned the normalization of relations with Israel by certain member states without the prerequisite of a two-state solution and the protection of the Al-Aqsa Mosque. The Riyadh Summit in 2023 also called on the international community to take decisive action against Israeli human rights violations in the occupied territories (OIC / Home, n.d.). Most recently, in response to the genocide in Gaza, the OIC welcomed the United Nations Security Council's call for the immediate implementation of a full ceasefire, the withdrawal of Israeli occupation forces, the return of refugees, the guarantee of access for humanitarian aid, and the rejection of demographic and territorial changes in the Gaza Strip (Cooperation, 2023). The OIC considers the adoption of the resolution an important step towards the international community's responsibility for stopping the genocide.

From the description of the OIC's work, it can be seen that the resolutions for Palestine and Al-Aqsa have been consistently formulated. However, it is still unable to stop the genocide perpetrated by Israel. Furthermore, there is no indication that Israel responds the calls from the Islamic world, as demonstrated by the continued intensification of aggressions and the increasing number of victims. This points a gap between political statements and political actions. The OIC's political statements unequivocally support Palestine, they do not translate into coordinated political actions by Muslim-majority countries, such as uniting to mobilize the military - as mandated by the 1974 Lahore Conference - against Israel's disproportionate attacks on the Palestinian.

Looking at the broader context, the problem can be traced back to the OIC member states themselves, many of which have a dependent relationship with the United States, particularly from economic and ideological perspectives. Economically, the OIC member states bordering Palestine and the occupied territories rely heavily on the United States foreign aid. The order of the United States bilateral foreign aid to the Middle East region is directed to Israel (\$3,300 million), Jordan (\$1,450 million), Egypt (\$1,437 million), and Lebanon (\$282 million) for the 2024 request (Sharp et al., n.d.). Ideologically, the Arabian Peninsula is currently undergoing fundamental reforms inspired by Western modernization. With considerable resources, several Middle Eastern countries, such as Qatar, Bahrain, the United Arab Emirates, and Saudi Arabia, are transforming themselves into centers of international racing events (Amara & Bouandel, 2023). This ideological shift is evident in the fact that, although these countries prohibit champagne at venues, alcohol sponsors and even pornographic websites appear as sponsors of the teams participating in the championship.

The Arab world is undergoing significant transformations, including the construction of some of the world's tallest buildings, such as the Burj Khalifa, the Jeddah Tower, and even the Clock Tower at the holy site of Mecca (Elbakheit, 2013). These changes reflect the social infrastructure in Saudi Arabia, where the Saudi Vision 2030 project is driving economic reforms and revitalizing the technology, entertainment, and tourism industries (Moshashai et al., 2020). This shift is being realized by introducing greater freedom for people to pursue their passions. One notable social change is the emergence of events that allow the free mixing of men and women, such as international music concerts.

Two aspects of this phenomenon, when viewed through the lens of material factors, appear to offer significant potential for assisting Palestine. However, when viewed through the lens of worldview, they suggest a lack of genuine desire to liberate their Muslim brothers in Palestine. Furthermore, the Muslim countries are not currently playing a significant role in creating world peace, as the blessing is centered on Baitul Maqdis, which is currently under occupation by Israel. It is therefore obvious that the OIC, despite its huge 57 member states, is unable to stop Israel due to its economic and ideological dependence on Western civilization. The OIC's vocal support for Palestine does not translate into a tangible political stance.

An-Nabhani (2001) explains the OIC's failure, attributing it as a consequence of movements that lack clear thinking and boundaries, methods that are not straightforward, a reliance on individuals who are not fully conscious, and a lack of appropriate connections (An-Nabhani, 2002). Although in 2011 the OIC declared that Sharia is the sole basis for the representing Muslims in the international political arena, its inadequacy reveals that the OIC does not apply Islamic identity and interest in its political interactions.

Some of the OIC's resolutions regarding Baitul Maqdis were influenced by Islamic thought, including the concept of Al-Aqsa as the waqf for the Ummah, the use of armed and military instruments, and the reconciliation of Palestinian factions. However, the liberation of mind that needs to be internalized is how the OIC forms its power, including in the military aspect. This is shown by the economic power used to host various international events and build tall buildings. To move away from material ideology and popularity, a more independent and self-sufficient approach is necessary. Moreover, the OIC has endorsed the two-state solution, first in 1994 and again in 2020, indicating that its approach is no longer based solely on Islamic principles but is increasingly shaped by the perceived interests of the West within the current international system.

3.1.2. Arab-Israeli Normalization

The Arab-Israeli normalization has had a profound effect on the Islamic world. Initially, Arab countries recognized only Palestine, but they have since extended recognition to Israel. This shift in foreign policy has significant implications for the region. It suggests that countries that previously prioritized Palestinian interests are now aligning themselves with Israel, whose interests are often at odds with those of Palestine.

The history of Arab-Israeli normalization can be traced back to the 1978 Camp David Accords between Egypt and Israel, which resulted in Egypt becoming the first Arab state to officially recognize Israel and Israel's military withdrawal from the Sinai Peninsula (Huber, 2022). However, a pivotal yet less recognized moment is the 1994 Oslo Accords, the PLO's peace agreement with Israel, which paved the way for the Arab world to consider closer relations with Israel (Lustick, 1997). In 2020, the Abraham Accords marked a series of Israeli normalization agreements, with the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Sudan, and Morocco (Rehman, 2020). These four countries followed Egypt and Jordan, which had already established diplomatic relations with Israel.

The primary motivations for normalization is associated with regional security concerns. The United Arab Emirates and Bahrain view Israel as a potential ally in the face of threats from Iran, while Sudan seeks to remove its designation as a state sponsor of terrorism. Morocco seeks international recognition of its sovereignty over Western Sahara, and economic considerations, including the potential for technological cooperation, tourism, investment, and

trade. The United States plays an key role as a broker, offering political influence and economic incentives, such as the lifting of sanctions and territorial recognition for countries that normalize relations with Israel (Rehman, 2020).

In addition to the normalization resulting from the Abraham Accords, Saudi Arabia has also adopted a more lenient attitude toward Israel, along with a shift in political and socio-economic views (Khan & Shahzad, 2021). Saudi Arabia seeks the presence of friendly countries to achieve its goals outlined in Saudi Vision 2030, which is built on three pillars: positioning the country as the heart of the Arab and Islamic world, becoming a global investment powerhouse, and establishing Saudi Arabia as a hub connecting Asia, Europe, and Africa. The United States plays a key role in facilitating this process, emphasizing the importance of strategic partnerships to address Saudi Arabia's regional threats, such as those posed by Yemen and Iran. One example of Saudi Arabia's relatively accommodating stance is its decision to open its airspace to Israeli aircraft (Rehman, 2020).

While some view normalization as a potential pathway for negotiations on the Palestinian-Israeli matter, efforts to negotiate solutions since 1948 have consistently failed due to the inherent imbalance between the recognized state, supported by the United States as a global superpower, and the authority whose being occupied. The process of normalization effectively supersedes the Palestinian struggle in favor of national interests. The current trend of normalization can be seen as a consequence of the 1994 Oslo Agreement. Additionally, the division of power between Fatah in the West Bank and Hamas in the Gaza Strip poses a significant challenge to internal Palestinian unity (Shikaki, 2022). Palestine itself must also eliminate the nationalistic spirit and replace it with the Islamic vision.

When the nation-state is no longer viable, this aspect becomes the instrument for the Ummah's internalization. Based on historical evidence and the current situation, it seems unlikely that the Israeli occupation will be ended using a similar instrument to Israel, namely the nation-state. The nation-state becomes a weak variable when one nation is supported by a superpower, while the other struggles alone. In this context, Palestine is essentially reliant on the armed resistance movement. A positive development is the growth of this movement in the West Bank, with the emergence of resistance in Jenin, Nablus, Tulkarm, and Qalqilya. The military wings of the resistance movement have expanded, indicating that the Palestinian understand that the way to defeat Israel is through unity. The popular support of the resistance also shows that the understanding of Baitul Maqdis can be internalized and must be spread worldwide.

3.2. Current Issue Facing: the Stateless Ummah

The conditions experienced by the Ummah in Palestine are a reflection of the global condition of the Ummah today, where they often like guests and strangers in the countries they live. This sense of being outsiders reflects the discrimination faced by the Ummah. In the Middle East, intra-Muslim conflicts are often caused by differences in the interpretation of Islam. In regions outside the Middle East, conflicts are seen as the result of alienation in the practice of Islam, which is viewed as a potential threat to the stability of the ruling powers.

Discrimination and violence are currently affecting Rohingya Muslims, Uyghur Muslims, and Indian Muslims. Rohingya Muslims have been targeted by Myanmar's military, resulting in a mass exodus to neighboring countries. Myanmar's military junta views the Rohingya as a threat to the purity of the country's identity (Md Shahin & Hasan, 2023). The government denies the Rohingya citizenship and labels them with biased narratives, contributing to a negative perception of the refugees arriving in countries of refuge, such as Indonesia (Ananda & Suryono, 2024). As a result, the Rohingya are one of the largest stateless groups in the world.

Uyghurs living in China's Xinjiang region are subject to severe repression by the authorities, including mass detention in re-education camps, strict monitoring of religious practices, political indoctrination, forced adoption of Han culture, and attempts to erase their cultural and religious identity (Khoiriyah, 2023). The Chinese government justifies this policy as an effort to combat extremism. Despite international condemnation of this discrimination, the world remains unable to intervene with China to stop it (Liusuan, 2023).

The Indian Muslim community has also faced various forms of discrimination and violence, particularly under the Hindu nationalist government led by the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). Most recently, the Citizenship Amendment Bill 2019 has exacerbated discriminatory policies against Muslims. The law facilitates the acquisition of Indian citizenship by non-Muslim minorities from neighboring countries, furthering the economic and social marginalization and religion-based violence perpetrated by Hindu nationalist groups on Muslim (Sikka, 2022).

The Rohingya crisis demonstrates how ethnic and religious identities can influence state policies and international responses. For human rights to be universally applied, society must change the narrative. The opinion of the Ummah and its unity is essential, as evidenced by the Chinese government's attempts to control the narrative about Uyghurs through public diplomacy, such as outreach to Islamic organizations in Indonesia. Meanwhile, Uyghur diaspora

activists are working to influence international opinion and advocate for policy change through media campaigns and advocacy. In India, the narrative of Hindu nationalism is being shaped and used to marginalize Muslims.

From the Rohingya, Uyghur, and Indian Muslim crises, we can observe global conditions with similar patterns of discrimination. For instance, a French U16 national team player was banned from playing for his country due to wearing a shirt with the phrase "Allah is Great" during his goal celebration (*A Player Banned from French Football Team for "Allah Is Great" Shirt*, n.d.). In another case, Mostafa Mohamed, was fined by his club, Nantes, for refusing to wear a jersey with rainbow colors during "pride month" as it contradicts Islamic teachings regarding same-sex relationships (*Nantes Striker Mostafa Mohamed Fined For Refusing To Wear Rainbow Jersey | Football News*, n.d.). This celebration is against Islamic teachings because it promotes same-sex relationships. Another soccer player, Dutch national Anwar El-Ghazi had his contract terminated by his club, Mainz 05, for posting an Instagram story in support of Palestine during the Israeli aggression in Gaza (Timur & Panja, 2024).

This condition of the ummah as outsiders can be reflected in the impact of the global war on terror campaign. This includes military operations, security policies, and media narratives that affect Muslims worldwide (Lee, 2023). Political and media rhetoric that associates Islam with terrorism has created negative stereotypes about Islam and prejudices against Muslims. These views are not only held by non-Muslims but have also led to segregation within Islamic organizations, distancing themselves from Islamic teachings (Herdiansah et al., 2023).

For example, the unfounded labeling of Rohingya refugees has been readily accepted by some Indonesian individuals. Another example is the term "Sharia", which is perceived as a restrictive and dangerous force that threatens diversity. Recently, the president of Tajikistan banned the wearing of the hijab under the pretext of protecting local culture and preventing extremism - an irony in a country where over 90% of the population is Muslim (*Tajikistan Passes Law Banning Hijabs in Attempt to Stop Extremism - The Jerusalem Post*, n.d.).

In essence, Sharia is a set of rules from the Creator meant to guide human beings in managing their lives. This includes regulating their relationship with God, their relationship with themselves, and their relationship with other creatures (Al-Zubaidi & Ahmed, 2024). It follows that if life is based on the Sharia, then an orderly and just life will result for both Muslims and non-Muslims as evidenced by the peace between Muslims, Christians, and Jews during the Islamic rule in Baitul Maqdis (Hussam et al., 2014). This is because Sharia recognizes the Creator as an omniscient being.

The current state of the Ummah and the causes of its crisis, along with the campaign against terrorism, indicate that conditions and changes can be created through narrative and education. Therefore, it is obvious that the Ummah itself must initiate change, reflecting on the failure of international efforts to end violence around the world. Furthermore, the spirit of nationalism is rooted beyond concern for fellow human beings, and has not yet aligned with the principles of aqeedah and ukhuwah. Consequently, it is imperative for the Ummah to internalize the understanding that the path to justice requires the dissolution of materialistic ideologies, which are inherently transient, and the restoration of bonds based on aqeedah and ukhuwah, guided by the principles of Sharia.

3.3. Strength of the Ummah

Although the current state of the Ummah is not advantageous, it possesses the necessary components to become a key actor in world politics. This strength lies in the worldwide Muslim population, which continues to grow with the increasing number of reverts. In addition, the Ummah has the capacity to implement comprehensive solutions to multidimensional problems, including the Israeli occupation, the management of natural resources in Muslim-majority countries, and the enhancement of Muslim military capabilities.

3.3.1. Muslim Population and Wave of Reverts

The Muslim population can be defined in two ways: in terms of its tangible and intangible aspects. Tangible aspects refer to the physical number of Muslims, which is significant in forming a large and unified community, especially when bound by common ideas and interests. Intangible aspects refer to the widespread acceptance of Islam since the time of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) and its continued propagation by ulama and preachers to this day.

The Muslim population in the 57 member countries of the OIC is approximately 1.7 billion (Amhar & Prima, 2023). If the 200 million Indian Muslims, 25 million Chinese Muslims, and Muslims in various other countries are added, the global Muslim population is estimated to be about 2 billion, or 25% of the world's population. A significant portion of the growth in the Muslim population is predicted to come from reverts. In the United States, for example, 23% of American Muslims are reverts, meaning that one in four American Muslims converted to Islam from another religion or no religion (Sciupac, 2018). In the United Kingdom, approximately 5,000 to 10,000 people reverted to Islam each year between 2016 and 2019, following a major influx of 100,000 reverts in 2011 (*Record Numbers Convert to Islam*

in UK, n.d.). In France, there were 100.000 reverts in 2013, compared with about 50,000 in 1986 (*Rise of Islamic Converts Challenges France - The New York Times*, n.d.).

From the Palestinian cause, the Israeli aggression in has sparked a surge of interest in learning about Islam among Western societies. In Andalusia, one to two citizens revert to Islam every week (*Israeli Attacks on Gaza Stirred up More Interest in Islam in Spain: Muslim Leader*, n.d.). In the United States there has been a phenomenon of young people studying the Quran after the Israeli aggression. They sought to understand the resilience, faith, and incredible moral strength of Palestinian Muslims, who, despite relentless bombardment, expressed gratitude to Allah even when everything was taken away from them (Demopoulos, 2023). A video on TikTok with the search query "*quranbookclub*" shows users holding their newly purchased Quran and reading a verse for the first time. It has been viewed 1.9 million times, an unprecedented number of views on the platform.

Once again, ideas and education play an important role, rather than inviting people through the Western way with material goods. Instead, Western and media narratives of terrorism have inspired non-Muslims to study Islam and eventually revert. The patterns of conversion show that Islam is not exclusive to Middle Eastern people. The event in Gaza has opened the door for people to learn Islam, and the Ummah should have a greater impact in spreading Islam as the solution to the world's problem.

3.3.2. Comprehensive Solution

Islamic solutions are needed to address the multifaceted nature of the problem of occupation. The current international system, consisting of the United Nations, OIC, Arab countries, and the United States, has been ineffective for decades and has been unable end the Israeli occupation.

The United Nations has been unable to implement its decisions due to the influence of its members, who have vetoed resolutions and membership applications unfavorable to Israel (Bishnoi, 2023). This indicates that the United Nations lacks the authority to enforce its decisions. The OIC has also failed to protect Palestine due to its inadequate political stance and the fact that it bases its interests on the individual agendas of its member states. Moreover, many OIC countries depend on political and economic relations with the United States. Arab countries have not succeeded in upholding Islamic identity and interests, as evidenced by their normalization with Israel and their softening stance toward the United States' interest for Israel's continued existence in the region. These shifts are influenced by advancements in various sectors offered by the Western world. The United States, acting as the world's police, has allowed Israel to build illegal settlements and has even facilitated the genocide in Gaza by supplying imported weapons and soldiers.

The primary foundation of the Islamic solution is justice and rahmatan lil alamin (*mercy to all creation*), which achieved through the complete implementation of Sharia (Mariya et al., 2021). In Islam, justice is one of the life's main pillars. In the context of occupation, justice means restoring the rights that have been taken away by the occupier. The just means to obtain these rights is through resistance, as outlined in the teachings of Islam and the Qur'an:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَأْمُرُ بِالْعَدْلِ وَالْإِحْسَانِ وَإِيتَايَ ذِي الْقُرْبَىٰ وَيَنْهَىٰ عَنِ الْفَحْشَاءِ وَالْمُنْكَرِ وَالْبَغْيِ يَعِظُكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَذَكَّرُونَ

"Allah commands righteousness, good deeds, and generosity to relatives, and He forbids all shameful deeds, injustice, and rebellion: He instructs you that you may receive admonition." (TQS An-Nahl 16:90).

Resistance is part of the concept of jihad, which can be defined as the human struggle in the way of Allah to uphold truth and justice. Jihad is a neutral term that refers to human efforts to preserve the dignity of life (Abduruohman et al., 2024). Colonizers are entities that apply unequal power relations, and therefore, a negotiation approach will not succeed unless there is a resistance force that compels the occupier to negotiate. So far, only the condemnation to Israel has come from both the West and the Islamic world, indicating a lack of effort to equalize the occupier and the occupied.

The most appropriate means of resisting the occupier is through the use of armed forces. The aim of armed resistance is to weaken and strip Israel of its military power and legitimacy, thereby preventing it from continuing its occupation. As Allah says:

وَقَاتِلُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ الَّذِينَ يُقَاتِلُونَكُمْ وَلَا تَعْتَدُوا ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ الْمُعْتَدِينَ

"Fight those who fight you in the cause of Allah, but do not overstep bounds, for Allah does not love transgressors." (TQS Al-Baqarah 2:190)

Obviously, the Ummah cannot engage in armed resistance alone or in a compartmentalized manner. It is imperative that the Ummah reaffirm its fundamental identity, based on the bond of Muslim unity and the common principles of aqeedah and sharia. Allah says:

نَمَا الْمُؤْمِنُونَ إِخْوَةً فَأَصْلَحُوا بَيْنَ أَخَوِيكُمْ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُرْحَمُونَ

"The Believers are but a single Brotherhood: So make peace and reconciliation between your two (contending) brothers; and fear Allah, that ye may receive Mercy." (TQS Al-Hujurat 49:10)

The Ummah requires the establishment of the Islamic entity in the form of a unified movement under one command. This leadership requires the appointment of a leader to address the challenges currently facing the Ummah, which is divided into factions based on national interests rather than the collective interests of Muslims as one community and Islam its identity. Allah says:

وَإِذْ قَالَ رَبُّكَ لِلْمَلٰٓئِكَةِ اِنِّيْ جَاعِلٌ فِى الْاَرْضِ خَلِيْفَةً ۖ قَالُوْۤا اَتَجْعَلُ فِيْهَا مَنْ يُفْسِدُ فِيْهَا وَيَسْفِكُ الدِّمَآءَ وَنَحْنُ نُسَبِّحُ بِحَمْدِكَ وَنُقَدِّسُ لَكَ ۗ قَالَ اِنِّىْۤ اَعْلَمُ مَا لَا تَعْلَمُوْنَ

"[Prophet], when your Lord told the angels, "I am putting a successor on earth," they said, "How can You put someone there who will cause damage and bloodshed, when we celebrate Your praise and proclaim Your holiness?" but He said, "I know things you do not."" (QS Al-Baqarah 2:30)

Furthermore, Allah also says,

وَمَا خَلَقْتُ الْجِنَّ وَالْاِنْسَ اِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُوْنَ

"I have only created Jinns and men, that they may serve Me." (TQS Adh-Dhariyat 51:56)

Islamic leadership refers to the act of organizing and mobilizing the entire Ummah, regardless of geographical origin, by Sharia (Abbasi et al., 2023). This process is intended at guiding humanity and rightness back to its original purpose, which is the worship of Allah.

The preceding analysis has identified the Islamic solutions that could be employed to end the Israeli occupation. The historical experiences of the Baitul Maqdis, as exemplified by the leadership of Umar bin Khattab and Shalahuddin Al-Ayyubi, provide evidence that these solutions could be effective in addressing the issue. It is imperative for the Ummah to re-internalize the need to practice Islam completely and recognize Islam as a comprehensive solution to the occupation.

3.3.3. Resources & Military Capabilities

The 1.7 billion Muslims in the OIC member states sited an area of 32 million square kilometers, which is larger than the combined area of the United States, the European Union, and China. This vast territory should be recognized by the Ummah as a potential source of land and wealth. If the United States, the European Union, and China can exert significant influence over the global economy through cooperation with the Islamic world, it stands to reason that the Islamic world, if it adopts a unified approach to natural resource management based on Islamic principles, would be in a much stronger position.

The total oil reserves of all Islamic countries amount to 998 billion barrels, with crude oil production reaching 12 billion barrels per year in 2019 (Amhar & Prima, 2023). The Islamic world includes numerous oil-producing countries, such as Saudi Arabia, Iraq, the United Arab Emirates, Iran, Kuwait, Qatar, Oman, Algeria, Nigeria, Libya, Egypt, Equatorial Guinea, Sudan, Kazakhstan, Azerbaijan, Indonesia, and Malaysia. In terms of regional production, the Middle East is the leading contributor.

Natural gas reserves in OIC countries are estimated at 117 trillion cubic meters, with annual production reaching 1.3 trillion cubic meters (Amhar & Prima, 2023). About half of the oil and gas production, or 20.8 billion barrels, is exported to non-OIC countries, including the United States, the European Union, and China (Amhar, Prima, 2023). This export volume is significantly higher than the total energy consumption in Muslim countries, which is estimated at 10.4 billion barrels per year (Amhar & Prima, 2023).

As for food, the production of staple grains in OIC countries is 425 million tons per year, or 670 grams per day per person, which is still below the average requirement of 750 grams per day (Amhar & Prima, 2023). To improve this situation, it is necessary to address the issue of exporting grain products to developed countries, as agricultural land has been contracted by foreign companies, reducing the amount of land available for domestic needs (Amhar & Prima, 2023). Estimated meat production (camel, cow, goat) is 36.8 million tons per year, or 58 grams per person per day, which is a minimalist figure for daily nutritional requirements (Amhar & Prima, 2023).

The above statistics show that Muslim-majority countries have the potential to meet both domestic and foreign needs. However, it is evident that not all members of the Muslim community currently have a prosperous and just life. The ongoing famine in Yemen and Gaza is a clear indication that food security remains a challenge in many Muslim countries, pointing to a lack of proper resource management. When natural resources are sufficient to meet the needs

of foreign countries, yet the local community is not as prosperous as those receiving the resources, it reveals a discrepancy in the distribution of wealth. The Islamic world must be led by individuals who are capable of managing its natural resources under sharia.

This management cannot be entrusted to the West. A prime example is the Freeport gold mine in Papua, Indonesia, which is managed by the United States' company Freeport-McMoRan Inc. This arrangement has led to numerous problems, including the repatriation of profits to the United States rather than benefiting local communities, pollution of rivers, damage to environmental ecosystems, and social and human rights concerns (Kusumaryati, 2021). The Ummah has been provided with a set of rules, including the belief that the unity and leadership, as promised by Allah, will bring success if His laws are practiced. It is therefore incumbent upon the Islamic world to take responsibility for managing its resources to ensure the collective well-being of the Ummah.

It is noteworthy that a March 7, 2018 report by the Middle East Media Research Institute (MEMRI), titled "*Turkish Newspaper Close to President Erdogan Calls To Form Joint Islamic Army To Fight Israel*", sheds light on the military capabilities of the Islamic world. The report indicates that the Turkish daily Yeni Safak, which is close to President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, is considering the formation of a joint military force consisting of 57 member states of the OIC with the aim of launching attack on Israel (*Turkish Newspaper Close To President Erdogan Calls To Form Joint Islamic Army To Fight Israel*, n.d.). According to the report, the proposed joint army would surpass the Israeli Defense Forces in terms of personnel, equipment, and budget. While this initiative has not yet materialized, it is interesting to note the focus on "personnel", "equipment" and "military budget".

The combined military forces of the Islamic world is estimated to have at least 5,206,100 active soldiers, 17,400 tanks, 1,500 combat aircraft, 71 submarines, and a military budget of \$174,728,420, not including nuclear and other advanced military technologies (*Turkish Newspaper Close To President Erdogan Calls To Form Joint Islamic Army To Fight Israel*, n.d.). In comparison, Israel has only 160,000 active soldiers, 1,600 tanks, 600 warplanes, 5 submarines, and a budget of \$15,600,000 (*Turkish Newspaper Close To President Erdogan Calls To Form Joint Islamic Army To Fight Israel*, n.d.).

The Islamic world has the potential to become a formidable force if its military capabilities are unified. However, a rough comparison suggests that its strength and explosive power may still be inferior to the Western Allies. But reflecting the months of Israeli aggression in Gaza, despite Israel's considerable resources at its disposal, including the support of the United States and its allies, Israel was unable to prevail against the military wing of the Palestinian resistance movement. This shows that the liberation of Palestine does not depend solely on numerical strength and physical capabilities.

However, the unity of the Ummah has enabled the Palestinian to adopt the right mindset in their struggle against the occupation. They have been able to muster a force that is both decent and balanced, capable of fighting the aggressor on an equal footing. This transforms the fight into a battle between two forces, rather than a state against a group whose territory is blockaded. The leaders of the Islamic world would do well to reflect on the Palestinian resistance movement, which has demonstrated its ability, resilience, and strength in the fight against Israel.

3.4. Liberation of Mind: Understanding Baitul Maqdis

The capacity of Islamic thought is needed to facilitate the development of the Ummah as a geopolitical actor. The current situation is characterized by the infiltration of non-Islamic ideas into the Ummah's thinking, resulting in a lack of alignment between its practices and its Islamic identity and interests. The genocide in Gaza is, on one hand, a humanitarian catastrophe. On the other hand, it has the potential to raise awareness of the need for the ummah to unite. The Ummah must respond better once the international community has reached a consensus on the root cause of the problem, which is the Israeli occupation. To achieve this, the Ummah must be equipped with the knowledge of Baitul Maqdis.

Although not as fundamentalist as the *ukhuwah Islamiyya*, Western movements have shaped the commonly accepted knowledge and ideas about the Israeli occupation of Palestine. The author's observation that the Instagram post in support of Palestine, "*All Eyes on Rafah*" has been shared by more than 50 million Instagram users, compared to the counter-post by pro-Israel users, "*All Eyes on 7 October*" which has only been shared 180,000 times.

In this context, the dissemination of knowledge from the West has become a tool for socializing ideas that are beneficial to the Palestinian and Ummah struggle. The boycott movement has also succeeded in influencing public opinion and mobilizing people to contribute to the cause, although it has not succeeded in curbing Israeli aggression. The Ummah must harness this momentum to collectively liberate their mind, using the Islamic worldview as its foundation.

In the context of Ummah geopolitics, the liberation of mind becomes an ideology and a tool for operationalizing material strength. The abundance of natural resources can be seen as a form of capital that contributes to country's political power. However, this potential will remain untapped if human resources lack in capacity to utilize its geopolitical opportunities. The most important geopolitical power is the human mind, not location, natural wealth, industrial or developmental power (Komara, 2021b). Ultimately, it is the people who determine the management of their country's natural resources.

If the human resources are not able to adopt the right attitude, the adoption of an inappropriate approach will have disastrous consequences. Imperialists can easily access and exploit natural wealth, leading to indigenous people losing control over their own resources. The systematic imposition of colonialist ideologies results in the structural violence, impoverishing and starving the indigenous population. The pursuit of basic needs, which are often difficult to meet, leads to the neglect of spiritual needs.

The ability to recognize a country's potential and manage it according to Islamic principles becomes the primary asset for awakening the Ummah. In Islam, the concept of development is ultimately derived from the fundamental purpose of human existence: the worship of Allah. The foundation of development must be anchored in the guide from the Creator, with a clear prioritization of human development over spatial and physical development.

Development actors facilitate the process of value circulation through Aqeedah and the equitable distribution of development assets under Sharia (Komara, 2021b). A vivid example of successful development based on aqeedah, going beyond material development, is how the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) built a state starting from the modest box-shaped building Kaaba. While the physical material was not as grand as those of other civilizations like Persia, Babylon, and Rome, the legacy of the civilization and His teachings remain evident today.

The most fundamental aspect of the revival of civilization is the individual. Individuals within society must be provided with a basic and universal awareness of aqeedah and tawhid. Aqeedah is the foundational unit for constructing the Muslim self and serves as the basis for all subsequent attitudes and speech. Islamic aqeedah encompasses the six pillars of faith, which are then operationalized in daily life. Aqeedah is also required as the foundation for building political frameworks, serving as the basis for both domestic and foreign political practices.

The four main legal principles of the Quran, Hadith, Ijma', and Qiyas must be used in the practice of Islamic politics. In addition to aqeedah, the aspect of thought is crucial to the consciousness of the Ummah (Trisakti, 2022) (Fawwaz, 2024). The cultivation of thought is a valuable heritage that can contribute to the advancement of civilization. Moreover, it is essential to inculcate moral values to promote solidarity within the society, enabling a unified approach to the root causes of the Palestinian problem and its solution. By bringing back the brilliant Islamic thought that has been lost, the Ummah can operationalize Islam to address the Palestine matter based on truth.

Once individuals and the Ummah have acquired Islamic thought and an understanding of their identity as Muslims, the next step is for the community to recognize its geopolitical potential in the international political arena to fully liberate Palestine. The Palestine-Israel issue is not just a matter of occupation or genocide; Zionism represents an entity implanted and maintained to strengthen the position of the United States and its allies while preventing the rise of the Muslim world. This is indicated by the events since October 7, during which the United States Secretary of State, Antony Blinken, undertook a diplomatic mission to various Middle Eastern countries. The purpose of this mission was to discuss three key issues: (1) limiting the conflict to the occupied territories; (2) the release of hostages held by Hamas; and (3) expanding humanitarian logistical aid (*Antony Blinken in Middle East, Says He Is Focused on Gaza Ceasefire Deal | Israel-Palestine Conflict News | Al Jazeera*, n.d.).

The first point indicates that the West is attempting to limit the Palestinian matter to a conflict between Hamas and Israel, despite the Israel's considerable military superiority. The United States and Israel have thus far avoided involving other countries, especially those bordering the region, such as Egypt. The second point illustrates the United States' pro-Israel stance and its reluctance to recognize Palestine as a legitimate entity. The third point undermines how armed resistance is a means of fighting the occupation by endorsing the notion of humanitarian aid as a substitute. The actions of the United States can be seen as an indication of the international community's recognition of Israel's true face.

The international community is beginning to acknowledge that the Palestinian-Israeli issue is not an ordinary dispute, but a case of occupation and genocide. Demonstrations and online campaigns have been held in numerous locations around the world, involving a diverse range of people from different ethnic, racial, and religious backgrounds.

On May 9, 2024, the CRUE announced its intention to sever all ties with universities and research centers affiliated with Israel. The CRUE oversees 76 Spanish private and public universities in a mass movement in defense of the

Palestinian cause. This movement was accompanied by the establishment of a mass camp as a form of protest. In addition, 2,000 lecturers participated in the demonstration (*CRUE Statement on the Situation in the Gaza Strip - CRUE*, n.d.). In the digital realm, public figures also shared content on Instagram in support for Palestine. The boycott movement was widely disseminated by social media influencers, who created content promoting the use of alternative food products instead of those affiliated with Israel.

Initially, support for Palestine was based on empathy and emotional response. However, for a Muslim, struggling for Palestine is a practice of aqeedah grounded in Sharia - a genuine and unwavering conviction, not dependent on fleeting emotions and feelings. Thus, the transformation of the Ummah's struggle is based on the acquisition of faith through reason, which is then guided by the principles of Sharia (An-Nabhani, 2002). The intellect is used to recognize the geopolitical potential of the Ummah that can be harnessed to liberate the blessed land.

In the Baitul Maqdis Barakah Circle theory, Palestine is regarded as the pride and glory of the Ummah worldwide, representing the land of the Prophets, previously liberated through the sacrifice of the martyrs. The destruction of Palestine is a humiliation for the Ummah, while its victory would signify glory for the Ummah. According to the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), the example of believers in mutual love, compassion, and understanding is like that of a human body - when one part of the body feels pain, the entire body responds with pain as well.

مَثَلُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ فِي تَوَادِهِمْ وَتَرَاحُمِهِمْ وَتَعَاطُفِهِمْ مَثَلُ الْجَسَدِ إِذَا اشْتَكَى مِنْهُ عُضْوٌ تَدَاعَى لَهُ سَائِرُ الْجَسَدِ بِالسَّهَرِ وَالْحُمَى

"If one part of the body is affected, the whole body is affected and the pain is felt by all." (HH Bukhari No. 6011 and Muslim No. 2586, n.d.)

This Hadith indicates that the Ummah is a unified entity that cannot be divided by distance or spatial limitations, and even less so by the constraints of nationalism. Muslims are one body, united by the bond of aqeedah. When a Muslim brother in Palestine suffers and struggles, it is incumbent upon all Muslims to feel the pain and to make efforts to heal it.

The Palestinian issue shows the shortcomings and desperation of the international community regarding the United Nations solutions, which are often vetoed by the United States. Calls for support of Islamic solutions have been heard from Western countries, traditionally viewed as the barometers of secularism. Germany a country with high levels of anti-Muslim sentiment, has also spread this message. This has led to the emergence of an anti-Semitic movement, driven by Israel's perceived illogical political stances that contradict humanitarian values. Representative studies indicate that between 32% and 68% of the population engage in anti-Semitic stereotypes and actions. In addition, respondents identified Israel as the greatest threat to world peace (Or et al., 2014).

In April 2024, the Criminological Research Institute of Lower Saxony (KFN) in Germany conducted a survey of German Muslim students aged 14 to 19. The results were interesting. The majority of respondents (67.8%) stated that they believe the Quran is superior to the German constitution and laws. In addition, 51.5% of respondents expressed the view that Islam is the only complete solution to today's problems, while 45.8% agreed that the caliphate is the only complete solution. The survey also found that 36.5% of respondents believed that implementing sharia in Germany would make the country stronger, while 35.3% understood the concept of defending religion when Allah and the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) are insulted (*Kompak! Mayoritas Generasi Muda Jerman Anggap Penerapan Hukum Islam Lebih Baik*, n.d.).

The trend of defending Palestine must be redirected towards a comprehensive solution for the liberation of Palestine. The current movement to defend Palestine reflects a lack of confidence in the United Nations' solution. And what other solution is there if not Islam? The struggle for Palestinian liberation has been going on for quite some time, and it is evident that a better approach is needed.

In 1964, the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) was established to represent the aspirations of the Palestinian in expelling the Israeli occupation. The PLO participated in the 1974 Arab League meeting in Rabat and subsequently became the official representative of Palestine in international forums. However, the PLO's influence began to wane as it failed to align with the true aspirations of the Palestinian and instead pursued negotiations with Israel for a two-state solution. This proposal resulted in Palestinian territory being limited to the West Bank under the Oslo Accords (Rudnitzky, 2023).

In response to the distortion of the struggle, Hamas emerged as an Islamic resistance movement that fought for Palestine through military means. Meanwhile, the PLO morphed into Fattah, which adopted a softer approach toward Israel. This shift was a logical consequence of the fact that Fattah was given power in the West Bank, even though Hamas won the general elections in 2006 (Hammaduddin et al., n.d.). This outcome exposed that democracy cannot solve the occupation.

From our observations on social media, we noticed a unique fact: many Palestinians do not choose to support the government and are more inclined to support Hamas, which is fighting through armed resistance (Sari, 2020). This is despite the fact that they often pay with their lives. Palestinians are preparing themselves as martyrs rather than surrendering their land and the holy land to the Zionist entity. This spirit serves as a reflection for the Ummah to understand the essence of the struggle to liberate Palestine.

The liberation of Palestine is part of a broader historical comparison between the rise of the West and the development of Islamic civilization. The West emerged from the Dark Ages by declaring an anti-religious revolution, which led to the Industrial Revolution and the French Revolution, producing ideologies such as secularism, capitalism, modernism, and imperialism. Meanwhile, the decline of Muslims occurred because they abandoned the teachings of Islam. This underscores the crucial role of the ulama in guiding and organizing the awakening of the Ummah.

Therefore, it is essential to have ulama who not only understand the four main madhhabs for deriving Islamic law but also possess statesmanship and the ability to apply Islamic teachings (*turots*) within Ummah's life. This is important because, during the collapse of the Ottoman Caliphate, many fuqaha ignored the variety of Sharia implementation. They ignored the reality of the separation of the Imarate from the Imamate. In many cases, they even permitted the de facto separation of the regions of the Ottoman Caliphate. This problem stemmed from the ulama's flawed understanding of the imamate, the adoption of secularism, and the inculcation of nationalism by certain thinkers (An-Nabhani, 2002). Changes in Islamic governance, led by nationalist thinkers like Jamaluddin al-Afghani, Muhammad Abduh, their disciples, and the sheikhs in Syria, led their region into a situation inconsistent with Sharia. Syria eventually came into conflict with the Ottomans and broke away from central leadership.

To liberate Palestine, it is necessary to integrate Muslim regional states, including those in the Barakah Circle. This area was once victorious in the power of the Caliphate. The awakening of the Ummah is a religious phenomenon, revealed by the absolute essence of Islam, which transcends the boundaries of space, time, ethnicity, and social class. The first key to the liberation of Palestine is the unity of Syam (Wathani & Abdillah, 2022).

The liberation of Palestine also requires the liberation of the world from the grip of the thoughts that have contributed to the multidimensional crisis that is afflicting the world and humanity. In today's world order, three main factors must be eliminated: (1) the khurafat (hegemony) of the international elite, (2) the domination and influence of superpowers, and (3) imperialism and monopoly (An-Nabhani, 2002). These three elements serve as the unifying tools of the West, which is currently ruling the world. Therefore, if the West is unified, the Ummah has to also be unified, and its geopolitical power will align to liberate Palestine. The unity of the Ummah is supported by a clear and permanent framework: aqeedah and sharia.

3.5. The Geopolitical Potential: Unity of the Ummah

The pursuit of Ummah unity faces some challenges, the most important of which is the influence of the thoughts introduced by colonialism, such as secularism and capitalism. These have caused divisions within Islamic organizations, both in terms of Islamic methodology and organizational practices. To overcome this generational problem, stemming from the collapse of the Ottoman Empire and the rise of nationality-based republican systems, the Ummah must strive to counter sectarianism and restructure Islamic values, interests, and practices in society. By revisiting its historical experiences and development current spatial awareness, the Ummah can work together to foster greater unity.

3.5.1. Heightened Awareness of the Liberation of Mind

The concept of Ummah, or Muslim community, is a fundamental tenet of Islamic teachings, rooted in the Quran and the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). Ummah is an image of a cohesive body bound by shared beliefs and practices that transcend geographical, cultural, and linguistic boundaries. In the context of the development of communication technology, the media plays a crucial role in disseminating and controlling opinions. The challenges and potential of collective power today are heavily influenced by media perspectives, where narratives about religious interpretation, religious practice, leadership, and the battle of ideas over global solutions are accessible to all. Therefore, it is essential for the ummah to revitalize the principles of unity as outlined in the Qur'an and the teachings of the Prophet (PBUH).

The Ummah is a unifying power for achieving world harmony, peace, justice, and prosperity. The development of *ijma'* (consensus) further emphasizes the unity and agreement within the Ummah, despite differences in madhhab. The Ummah's response to the Gaza genocide has demonstrated that the Ummah requires unity. This unity has allowed Islamic movements to gain recognition and influence, such as Julid fi Sabilillah, boycotts, and other educational

processes that express Islamic solutions. The Gaza genocide has provided the Ummah with an opportunity to reflect on its approach to Islamic unity and the implementation of Islamic solutions.

The Ummah's awareness that Islam's current position in the international world is not advantageous - both for the protection of citizens within its territory and for the liberation of other Muslims under occupation - will lead to two paths. First, the Ummah will cease relying on approaches that has proven failed for decades. Second, the Ummah will recall that it was once victorious in implementing Islamic solutions.

Although some scholars claim that today's circumstances are different from those of the past and that Islam needs to adapt to the present, the reality is that Islam currently possesses all the necessary elements to become a key global actor once again. These include a large population, Islamic syiar, comprehensive solutions, resources, and military capabilities. The Ummah has all these elements, but it lacks unity and the liberated mind. This lackings pose a geopolitical challenge to the Ummah. The revolutionary response in the form of peaceful action, education, and political da'wah facilitates the familiarization of Islamic teachings, including solution to Palestine matter.

3.5.2. Ummah's Potential Role in Global Politics

As Victor Hugo observed, "*The strength of any army is no match for the rise of an idea whose time has come*" (McCarthy, n.d.), resonates profoundly within the context of the ummah's true wealth, which lies fundamentally in the Islamic teachings. It is through this intellectual foundation that other resources, including the ummah's capacity to act as an influential global entity, can be cultivated and sustained. The power of idea is not merely a tool but the catalyst for nurturing a society capable of meaningful action, embodying values, and driving change. In essence, the intellectual robustness of the ummah serves as the bedrock for its potential influence, transcending mere material resources and empowering it to navigate and impact the broader global landscape.

The Baitul Maqdis Barakah Circle theory posits that control over Baitul Maqdis equates to influence over global power dynamics, emphasizing the strategic and spiritual significance of this region. This perspective suggests that the unity and leadership potential of the ummah on a global scale could be galvanized by addressing the situation in Baitul Maqdis. The recent atrocities in Gaza underscore a pivotal moment in global consciousness, marking an escalation of violence unprecedented since the Israeli occupation in 1948.

The Gaza genocide has highlighted the urgent need for a unified response from the ummah, revealing deep fractures in the effectiveness of the OIC. Despite being a coalition of Muslim-majority nations, the OIC's efforts have been hindered by a detachment from core Islamic principles in its practice, resulting in a faltering influence in addressing issues critical to the Muslim world. This failure points to a need for a renewed approach, rooted in the authentic values of Islam, to realize a unified stance on Baitul Maqdis and broader challenges faced by the ummah.

As Muslims entrusted with the duty to liberate Baitul Maqdis, the ummah must strive for unity. This unity should manifest in all spheres of influence - both tangible and digital - as advancements in communication technology offer an unprecedented platform to shape and share perspectives globally. Just as the occupation has impacted the collective mindset of the ummah, so too must the ummah work to liberate the minds of its brothers and sisters through an Islamic worldview, fostering a generation primed for change and grounded in authentic values. By continuously narrating the pressing issues and presenting solutions rooted in Islamic principles, the ummah can counter narratives that have historically marginalized it, including the failed approaches offered by the West. Such narratives not only expose the inefficacy of these models but also assert a pathway toward liberation and self-determination that is both ideologically and practically distinct, nurturing the spirit of unity among Muslims worldwide.

The two-state solution exemplifies the inherent inequities within the international system, underscoring how Israel's repeated violations of international law remain unaddressed (Uchôa & Van Vossle, 2024). These violations encompass a wide range of injustices, including the maltreatment of Palestinian prisoners, disproportionate targeting of attacks, expansion of illegal settlements, blockades on humanitarian aid, and violations of children's and women's rights. The full extent of these breaches would be vast if enumerated.

Furthermore, the two-state solution is unattractive to Israel, which has a longstanding desire for a Jewish state. Even if forced to recognize it, Palestine would likely be denied to control its borders, manage its natural resources, have military instruments, or determine the state's law. The two-state solution also contradicts the United Nations Charter, in Chapter VII, Articles 39-42, which mandate military intervention against aggressor state to neutralize its threat (Paige, 2019). Israel, as the evident aggressor, paradoxically remains shielded by the international community's endorsement of a two-state approach, exposing the strength of Israel's lobbying and influence. Unlike other nations, such as Russia, which faced swift and far-reaching sanctions and international isolation, Israel retains substantial global sway (Jamali et al., 2023). This situation underscores Israel's quasi-superpower status and suggests that the two-state solution is both ineffective and unjust, failing to address the occupation or secure a just peace.

The only viable solution is to mobilize military force to disarm and dismantle the Israeli forces. It is the war of idea that makes Islamic solutions seem foreign. For instance, the ummah has become unfamiliar with the term "war". In reality, the United States is engaged in wars and military interventions in various countries, including Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya, Syria, and Yemen. Although not all of its military efforts have been successful - such as the defeat from the Taliban in Afghanistan - it is the United States that is currently controlling wars and carrying out armed conquests in many countries (Gordon, n.d.).

Within the ummah, there is no absolute consensus on the concept of military mobilization, reflecting the diverse perspectives within the global Muslim community. Meanwhile, the United States has solidified its own unity through alliances like the NATO defense pact, effectively ensuring Western hegemony and a cohesive military response when its interests are threatened. This contrast raises a critical question: if the United States can engage in warfare under a unified alliance without facing censure, why should it be considered taboo for the ummah to empower itself in a similar manner? Islam, fundamentally a religion of peace and mercy for all mankind, promotes justice and defends against oppression. Yet, when discussions within the ummah turn to unity or self-defense, these notions are often stigmatized, sidelining the ummah's potential to assert its principles on the global stage. By fostering unity grounded in Islamic values, the ummah could redefine its narrative, challenging double standards and advocating for a peace that is just and balanced.

Pursuing peaceful action, education, and political da'wah rooted in the unity of the ummah provides a powerful and viable path forward. This approach resonates deeply with the Islamic identity within the ummah, which integrates both spiritual and political dimensions that transcend geographical borders, bound by a timeless connection that unites Muslims worldwide. Such an effort aligns with Islam's principles, emphasizing peace, knowledge, and advocacy as foundations for societal transformation. By reinforcing unity through these methods, the ummah not only strengthens its own identity but also conveys Islam's comprehensive message, which speaks to justice, compassion, and holistic solution.

One of the manifestations was the Aksi Bela Palestina in Yogyakarta on Monday, June 3, 2024. The response from the Ummah was positive. The comments collected from the Instagram reel of Satlantas Polresta Yogyakarta (@satlantasjogja) <https://www.instagram.com/reel/C7v7lcZRvz8/?igsh=MWZ0aW1vc3o3YmtpY>. As of June 27, 2024, the video had received 497 likes and 69 comments. All of the comments expressed appreciation for the Aksi Bela Palestina as an educational effort for the public and gratitude to the police for their role in ensuring the safety of the event. One such comment stated:

"MasyaAllah tidak mengganggu pengguna jalan, cowok cewek dipisah (tdk ikhtilat), dan tertib. Terima kasih pak polisi. Respect!"

Which translated as *"MashaAllah, it did not disturb road users, men and women were separated (no ikhtilat), and it was orderly. Thank you police officer. Respect!"* This display of unity, discipline, and collaboration exemplifies how peaceful, organized advocacy can convey the ummah's values and enhance societal awareness on important issues, while fostering a respectful, supportive relationship with local authorities. The Aksi Bela Palestina highlights the ummah's role as a global actor, engaging in educational initiatives and political da'wah aimed at liberating minds and shaping the understanding of Baitul Maqdis and Islam. By conducting peaceful, organized advocacy, the ummah fosters awareness and unity, demonstrating a proactive commitment to justice and knowledge-sharing on a global scale.

The Palestinian cause is of deep concern to the Ummah. Palestine holds immense spiritual significance, as it is associated with the preaching of the Prophets, who have aroused the land through worship and preaching. It is also home to Al-Aqsa Mosque, Islam's first qibla, and is associated with pivotal events in Islamic belief, such as Al-Isrâ' - Al-Mi'raj, the miraculous night journey of Prophet Muhammad PBUH from al-Masjid al-Haram to Al-Aqsa Mosque to Sidrat al-Muntaha (Tanjung, 2022).

Baitul Maqdis has been liberated twice in Islamic history: first by Umar bin al-Khattab and later by Salahuddin al-Ayyubi. Today, efforts toward a third liberation are perceived as an ongoing mission. Should the ummah achieve unity and succeed in liberating Baitul Maqdis, it would signify not only a victory but also a transformative shift, positioning ummah as the global leader. Enacting Islamic rule would address and resolve the issues of occupation, discrimination, and resource deprivation. Such a society would be founded upon the principles of unity within the ummah and guided by the practice of Sharia, fostering a social order rooted in justice. This unity and adherence to Islamic teachings would transcend borders, that emphasizes collective well-being, equitable resource distribution, and a harmonious community.

This unity within the ummah should be harnessed as a strategic approach for da'wah, emphasizing the Islamic solutions that shape the collective identity of the ummah. These solutions provide a meaningful entry point for fostering the internalization of Islamic perspectives on the liberation of Palestine, encouraging their acceptance not only among the general public but also among influential actors and those in positions of power, including the rulers themselves. By promoting these values broadly, the ummah can work toward releasing the full potential of its geopolitical influence.

4. CONCLUSION

The genocide in Gaza has brought global awareness to a critical understanding: the root issue in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict is the ongoing Israeli occupation. Recognizing this fundamental cause is essential, yet it will only yield meaningful change if it inspires an effective solution. Given Israeli current state, the only way forward is to unite, and it is the Ummah's obligation to call for unity and to unite itself.

The Gaza genocide has exposed Israeli crimes. With all of Israeli violations, there is a common understanding that the problem is not the event of 7 October, but the Israeli occupation since 1948. Global support for Palestine is growing. In both Western and Muslim societies, there is an increasing awareness that justice in Palestine requires addressing the occupation's root causes. The momentum of global solidarity signals a shift in public consciousness, where liberation is seen not only as a regional matter but as a universal demand.

The ummah must actively engage in the battle of ideas, contrasting the flawed two-state solution with the pursuit of a complete resolution through struggle in the way of Allah. This struggle is including physical (military), political, intellectual, and spiritual endeavor, demanding that the ummah recognize its power. This power is rooted in the eternal bond of aqeedah and the guidance of sharia, which together provide framework for organizing life in a way that fulfills the vision of rahmatan lil alamin. The Islamic solution can only be achieved if the Ummah is united.

The potential of the geopolitics of ummah hinges on its awareness that unity, coupled with the mobilization of its strength (population, resources, solutions, and military capability), positions it as a key actor in addressing global challenges. This includes the great agenda of liberating Baitul Maqdis. Developing this awareness requires a collective identity that fosters the liberation of mind, freeing the ummah from the prevailing hegemonic narratives which have thus far failed to end the Israeli occupation. By embracing an Islamic worldview as the way of life, the ummah can overcome not only the occupation but also the global challenges as well, as successfully practiced during the times of Umar bin Khattab and Shalahuddin Al-Ayyubi.

Future research on this topic can expand in two directions. The first approach involves field research through in-depth interviews with political da'wah actors, providing a reality-based assessment of the ummah's geopolitical potential. Such research will offer nuanced insights into how these actors perceive and harness this potential in practical terms, deepening our understanding of the role of da'wah in shaping geopolitical outcomes.

The second direction builds upon El Awaisi's theory of Baitul Maqdis liberation, progressing to the stage of political liberation. While this research aims to influence the ummah's mindset and behavior, political liberation focuses on influencing policymakers. It emphasizes that state leaders must go beyond mere political rhetoric in support of Palestine; they must ensure that the policies reflect meaningful political stances. This involves advocating for concrete actions, not only by individuals (da'wah, education, demonstrations, camps, and boycotts), but also at the state level, such as abandoning normalization, halting cooperation, banning transportation access, and other measures against the occupying authority, collectively. By pursuing both these research avenues, the ummah can develop a more comprehensive, multi-level strategy for advancing the liberation of Baitul Maqdis.

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