

Whither Israel's Annexation Plan: An Indonesian Perspective

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ABSTRACT

This article provides an empirical analysis on Israel's plan to annex the West Bank and its subsequent reaction from Indonesia, both on the governmental and non-governmental level. The first half of the article discusses annexation as a concept in international law and as a policy of Israeli expansionism. Specifically, it explains how the strategic and symbolic value of land drive Israel to view the annexation plan, despite being illegal, as serving its national interest. The second half addresses the Indonesian perspective towards the plan. It discusses the role of Indonesia—as an anti-colonial and Muslim-majority country—in counteracting Israel's annexation plan, in connection to the domestic factors behind the country's pro-Palestine commitment. Observing that the traditional gestures of solidarity (e.g., diplomacy in the UN) alone is insufficient to prevent the annexation, the article recommends Indonesia to consider mediating intra-Palestine reconciliation talks and effecting BDS strategy to maximize the necessary pressure against Israeli expansionism.

Keywords: annexation, Israeli-Palestinian conflict, Indonesian foreign policy, BDS

The principle of non-aggression and the prohibition against territorial conquest are among the most fundamental pillars of the post-1945 international order. These pillars are under threat by Israel's plan to formally annex parts of the West Bank, which has raised serious international concern. The plan is condemned by numerous states, international organizations, and traditional Israeli government allies in a rare turn of events.

While the annexation plan only began to attract wide international attention in early 2020, the Israeli aspiration to permanently control the Occupied Palestinian Territory (OPT) has been on the table for decades. From the 1970s, Israel has gradually extended its *de facto* sovereignty over the West Bank, mainly through the construction of illegal Jewish settlements, in a process aptly described as “creeping annexation.”² These settlements began to soar after Likud, Israel's ruling party (as of 2020), ascended to power in 1977. Likud's founder, Menachem Begin, unapologetically maintained that complete Israeli sovereignty over the West Bank was an inalienable Jewish people's right.³ The new course of US foreign policy under President Donald Trump, in this context, provided Israel a critical momentum to “step up” its annexationist agenda. The Trump administration has issued a series of unprecedented decisions that harm the prospect for a just and lasting peace in the region. These include the decision to move the US embassy in Israel to Jerusalem (2017), to recognize Israel's annexation of the Golan Heights (2019),

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² Nir, Ori, and Debra Shushan. "From Creeping to Leaping: Annexation in the Trump-Netanyahu Era." *Palestine-Israel Journal of Politics, Economics & Culture* 23, no. 4 (2018): 49-61.

³ Masalha, Nur. *Imperial Israel and the Palestinians: the politics of expansion*. London: Pluto Press, 2000.

and to issue the signature “Trump Peace Plan” (2020).⁴ Trump, personifying the chutzpah to accomplish the unthinkable, is seen as *the* US president who would grant Israel the green-light to extend its sovereignty over the West Bank.

As a member of the UN Security Council (2019-2020), Indonesia has played a crucial role in protecting Palestinian rights from the specter of Zionist expansionism. Jakarta’s effort in convening urgent meetings in the Security Council and sending letters of appeal to different states has helped to solidify an international consensus against annexation. Confronted by this worldwide criticism as well as domestic disagreements in Israel and the US, the plan, scheduled to begin on 1 July 2020, was eventually postponed.⁵ Despite the suspension, Indonesia remains vigilant in pushing for Israel’s accountability for its continued offense to international law, stressing that annexation persists in the West Bank is anything but a name.

The current article provides an empirical analysis of the Israel annexation plan and the Indonesian standpoint towards it. Informed by the theoretical discussion on the strategic and symbolic value of territories, the article explains why Israel views the annexation of the West Bank as serving its national interest despite the illegality of the action; in tandem, the historical background of the plan and the factors behind its eventual suspension are also discussed accordingly. The second half of the article deals with the Indonesian side of the story. It elaborates on Indonesia’s role—based on its identity as an anti-colonial and Muslim-majority country—in combatting the annexation plan while shedding light on the country’s domestic imperatives pro-Palestine commitment. Despite the positive record of Indonesia’s contributions by far, the article shall make the case that traditional gestures of solidarity alone are insufficient. Mediating the reconciliation of internal Palestinian factions and implementing a targeted boycott against Israel, the article argues, form two examples of uncharted initiatives that merit Indonesia’s immediate consideration in order to maximize the pressure needed to push Israel to rescind its expansionist ambition.

Annexation: a primer

Loosely defined, annexation is the act of a state in forcibly and permanently appropriating another state’s territory. Notwithstanding the variety of the pertaining state practices, every annexation features two basic characters: the use of force and the intent for permanent control.⁶ The use of force differentiates annexation from other types of territorial acquisition. The American purchase of Alaska

⁴ Gilboa, Eytan. “Trump: The Most Pro-Israel President in American History”. 8 July 2020. Retrieved from: <https://spectator.clingendael.org/en/publication/trump-most-pro-israel-president-american-history>

⁵ Halbfinger, David M. “Netanyahu’s Annexation Day Arrives, but All That Emerges Is Delay”. 1 July 2020. Retrieved from: <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/01/world/middleeast/israel-annexation-netanyahu-johnson.html>

⁶ Hofmann, Rainer. “Annexation”. *Max Planck Encyclopaedia of Public International Law* [Online]. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020. Retrieved from: <https://opil.ouplaw.com/view/10.1093/law:epil/9780199231690/law-9780199231690-e1376>

from Russia in 1867, for instance, is a case of cession, where the latter consensually transferred its territory to the former. Annexation, in contrast, is a non-consensual form of territorial change that comes about from the use of force by a state against another. The forcible imposing of a state's control over another state's territories does not amount to annexation until a clear intention for their permanent appropriation is established. Such intent distinguishes annexation from military occupation. In theory, the latter has a temporary status and does not involve formal claims of sovereignty. In practice, however, a state may protract the occupation to a certain duration, at which point its control already seems irreversible; this is why annexation is frequently preceded by military occupation.⁷

Under the current regime of international law, annexation is considered an illegal act. Article 2 of the United Nations Charter unequivocally prohibits using force between states, which, by extension, regards any claim and right deriving from such acts as null and void.⁸ It can thus be implied that annexation, while not mentioned in the Charter per se, violates international law. This position is reflected in UN bodies' numerous decisions condemning annexation, such as Security Council Resolution 497 on the Golan Heights and General Assembly Resolution 68/262 on Crimea.

In framing their desire to acquire territories, states often invoke their perception of national interest through annexation or otherwise. Subject to the interpretative divergence between states, the term national interest itself can be "devoid of substantive meaning and content."⁹ Theories of International Relations (IR), in this context, are a helpful framework to systematize our understanding of this otherwise hollow concept. Through theories, one can identify a pattern of "regularities and recurrences" from observable state practices and explain not only their rational decisions but also the irrational ones.¹⁰ This is important so as to not essentialize the drive for annexation as inherently unique to Israel, detaching it from the broader pattern applicable to other countries.

On the topic of territories and their values to states, the Realist and Social Constructivist theories of IR are arguably most instructive. The concept of power is at the center of Realism and its branches. The Mearsheimerian school of Offensive Neorealism, specifically, posits that states' fundamental objective is not only the preservation of power but also the maximization thereof.¹¹ This pursuit is often expressed in geographical terms.¹² The control of new lands allows a state to construct new military bases, discover natural resources, and expand its industrial facilities. By strengthening its military and economy, considered the basic currencies of power, territorial expansion may increase a

⁷ Hofmann, "Annexation", 28

⁸ Hoffman, "Annexation", para. 4.

⁹ Burchill, Scott. *The National Interest in International Relations Theory*. New York: Springer, 2005.

¹⁰ McClelland, Charles A. "The function of theory in international relations." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 4, no. 3 (1960): 303-336.

¹¹ Snyder, Glenn H. "Mearsheimer's world—offensive realism and the struggle for security: a review essay." *International Security* 27, no. 1 (2002): 149-173.

¹² Fozouni, Bahman. "Confutation of political realism." *International Studies Quarterly* 39, no. 4 (1995): 479-510.

state's likelihood of survival.¹³ Meanwhile, social constructivism stresses the immaterial and symbolic aspects of territories and how those, too, may incentivize states to seek expansion.¹⁴ Territory often becomes the basis of identity in the formation of nations, ethnicities, and religions. Sacralization of and reverential attachment to a territory, encapsulated in "geopiety," strengthens these groups' solidarity—more so in times of conflict. Social constructivist emphasis on contextual analysis elaborates on why the territorial factor, despite its importance to all power-seeking states as Realists suggest, "is more prominent in [the symbolically saturated land of] Israel-Palestine than elsewhere."¹⁵

The two theories help explain why states may see annexation as serving their national interest and, accordingly, why they still pursue this action despite its illegality. Through a geohistorical review, the following section inspects the motive and conduct of Israel's control over the West Bank, which, as it shall be made clear, stems much from a narrative of security necessity and ideology-infused primordial attachment to an ancient homeland.

West Bank: a strategic and symbolic gem

Israel began to control the West Bank in 1967 following its victory in the Six-Day War. Apart from Jerusalem's city, which Israel has formally annexed, the West Bank is administrated under military occupation. Due to its prolonged character and the grave human rights violations that took place therein, the Israeli occupation over the West Bank is widely regarded by the international community as illegal.¹⁶ Israel has partaken in various illicit actions to cement its permanent control over the OPT. The current Netanyahu-led government, in particular, subscribes to an expansionist ideology that envisions exclusive Jewish sovereignty not only in "Israel proper,"¹⁷ Israel's internationally recognized territories delineated by the pre-1967 Green Line but also the OPT. Of these territories, the West Bank is seen as paramount in importance both strategically and symbolically.

In contrast to Israel proper's mainly flat and coastal areas, the West Bank is a highly elevated territory filled with hills and mountains. This topography provides an advantage for Israel's enemies to attack its exposed territories from a higher position, inflicting a fatal blow to Israel's densest cities and strategic infrastructures. Fully aware of this vulnerability, Israeli leaders have viewed the control of the West Bank as imperative to secure "defensible borders."¹⁸ This doctrine is famously attributed to

¹³ Forsberg, Tuomas. "Explaining territorial disputes: from power politics to normative reasons." *Journal of Peace Research* 33, no. 4 (1996): 433-449.

¹⁴ Hassner, Ron E. "The path to intractability: Time and the entrenchment of territorial disputes." *International Security* 31, no. 3 (2007): 107-138.

¹⁵ Newman, David. "The geopolitics of peacemaking in Israel-Palestine." *Political Geography* 21, no. 5 (2002): 629-646, 631.

¹⁶ Ben-Naftali, Orna, Aeyal M. Gross, and Keren Michaeli. "Illegal occupation: Framing the occupied Palestinian territory." *Berkeley Journal of International Law*. 23 (2005): 551.

¹⁷ Newman, David. "Borders and Conflict Resolution." *A Companion to Border Studies* (2012): 249-265.

¹⁸ Allon, Yigal. "Israel: The Case for Defensible Borders." *Foreign Affairs* 55, no. 1 (1976): 38-53.

Yigal Allon, a celebrated Israel Defence Force general and a senior member of the Knesset. His so-called “Allon Plan,” released after the Six-Day War, envisaged the annexation of most areas in the West Bank, specifically the Jordan Valley. The Allonist doctrine, in one form or another, still resonates to this day among advocates of Israeli expansionism.

While the West Bank’s strategic importance is acknowledged across political lines, its symbolic value prevails more prominently among Israel’s right-wing parties. Unlike the modern cities of Tel Aviv and Haifa, the West Bank is esteemed as the cradle of the Jewish civilization: the land of “Judea-Samaria,” where the four holy cities of Jerusalem, Hebron, Safed, and Tiberias are located.¹⁹ Driven by this understanding, and made possible by Israel’s territorial conquest, Israeli nationalists began to settle in the West Bank after 1967. Despite these settlements’ illegality, Israel continues to incentivize the inflow of Jewish settlers in the West Bank by providing house subsidies unavailable in Israel proper.²⁰ The deliberate promotion of these settlements is part of a systematic attempt to establish “facts on the ground,”²¹ ultimately aimed at permanently appropriating the territory in question.

Israel’s right-wing parties are ardent opposers of the two-state solution.²² In contrast to the Israeli leftists such as the Labour Party and Meretz, the sheer idea of Palestinian statehood, let alone its realization, is an anathema for the Right. After the left-wing Yitzhak Rabin became prime minister in 1992, the Israeli government began to view its military occupation as too costly to maintain and damage the country’s Jewish and democratic character. This acknowledgment foregrounded the Oslo Accords, which led to the partial Israeli withdrawal from the West Bank. However, before the peace process brought about an independent Palestine, it was halted by Ariel Sharon, a hawkish right-wing politician who rose to power in 2002.²³ Benjamin Netanyahu, who assumed the premiership in 2009, has similarly remained steadfast in preventing a Palestinian state’s establishment. The Likud, currently led by Netanyahu, endorses in its party constitution the exclusive Jewish claim over “Greater Israel” of which the West Bank is an integral part.²⁴

¹⁹ Mnookin, Robert H., and Ehud Eiran. “Discord behind the table: The internal conflict among Israeli Jews concerning the future of settlements in the West Bank and Gaza.” *Journal of Dispute Resolution*. (2005): 11-34.

²⁰ Guarinieri, Mya. “Israeli settlers lured by subsidies”. 24 August 2012. Retrieved from: <https://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/2012/08/201282211420708214.html>

²¹ UN News. “Hopes for Palestinian State hit by ‘facts on the ground’: senior UN official”. 22 January 2019. Retrieved from: <https://news.un.org/en/story/2019/01/1031042>

²² The two-state solution envisions the settlement of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict based upon the co-existence between Israel and Palestine as two mutually recognizing independent states, a more specific interpretation of which delineates their boundaries along the pre-1967 Green Line. It is the peace formula officially endorsed by the UN and virtually all of its member states.

²³ Aronoff, Yael S. “From Warfare to Withdrawal: The Legacy of Ariel Sharon.” *Israel Studies* 15, no. 2 (2010): 149-172.

²⁴ “Likud, A National Liberal Movement: The Constitution of the Movement [Ha-Likud Tenu’ah Leumit Liberalit: Chuqat Ha-Tenu’ah]”. July 2016. Retrieved from: <https://www.likud.org.il/images/huka/huka0716.pdf>

The annexation plan and its suspension

As the previous section has sketched briefly, a careful reading of history would show that Israel's plan to annex the West Bank is not brand new. It is not an exaggeration to say that in the West Bank, in particular the 60 percent areas where Israeli law has been applied, *de facto* annexation has *already* taken place.²⁵ While this reality has been ongoing for decades, the issue of annexation has resurfaced and gained currency in the media since the 2019 Israeli election when Netanyahu made a campaign promise to "extend sovereignty," a right-wing euphemism for *de jure* annexation, over all the settlements and areas of military and historical importance in the West Bank.²⁶ The shift from *de facto* to *de jure* annexation is of significant concern for several reasons. For one, this action would undermine the prevailing international norms' dignity and set a dangerous precedent that might normalize future transgressions by other states.²⁷ Another implication is that Israel would alter what has been ambiguously presented as a temporary territorial control to a permanent one through formalization.²⁸ This would abandon the "land for peace" formula, which has been at the foundation of any Israeli-Palestinian negotiation for a two-state solution.²⁹

During the Oslo peace process, Israel committed to retreat from some areas of the West Bank. Pushed by the 1995 Interim Agreement, the Israeli military eventually withdrew from Area A (18 percent of the West Bank), which had previously been under its complete *de facto* control. This development did not unfold in the case of Jerusalem and the Golan Heights, formally annexed in 1980 and 1981, respectively. The withdrawal from these locations was never a point in any agreement Israel has signed, for they are viewed as integral to the territories under its sovereignty. This precedent illustrates that *de jure* annexation diminishes, if not completely erases, the possibility of a particular territory to become a bargaining chip for peace negotiations because from a domestic-legal perspective, they have been permanently subsumed to Israel proper.

²⁵ Ashly, Jaclynn. "Has Israel already annexed the West Bank?". 7 May 2019. Retrieved from: <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2019/05/israel-annexed-west-bank-190506160016495.html>

²⁶ CBS News. "Netanyahu vows to annex "all the settlements" in West Bank in 11th-hour re-election bid". 16 September 2019. Retrieved from: <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/benjamin-netanyahu-israel-annex-all-the-settlements-palestinian-west-bank-ahead-election-do-over-2019-09-16/>

²⁷ Marsudi, Retno L. P. "Statement of The Minister for Foreign Affairs of The Republic of Indonesia Security Council VTC Meeting on The Middle East Peace Process Including the Palestinian Question". 24 June 2020. Retrieved from: <https://kemlu.go.id/portal/%20id/read/1447/pidato/statement-of-the-minister-for-foreign-affairs-of-the-republic-of-indonesia-security-council-rtc-meeting-on-the-middle-east-peace-process-including-the-palestinian-question>

²⁸ PLO Negotiations Affairs Department. "From Temporary Occupation to Permanent Annexation: Israel's Acquisition of Palestinian Territory by Force". October 2019. Retrieved from: <https://www.nad.ps/sites/default/files/10152019.pdf>

²⁹ The "land for peace" formula, within the Israeli-Palestinian context, maintains that the conflict settlement requires Israel's comprehensive withdrawal from the OPT to allow for the establishment of an independent Palestine and the conclusion of a peace treaty between them. It was introduced as a politico-legal concept with the adoption of UN Security Council Resolution 242 in 1967.

The announcement of Trump's "Peace to Prosperity" Vision in early 2020 shaped a permissive setting, a now-or-never momentum, for Netanyahu to realize his long-aspired annexation with minimum repercussions. Hailed as the "deal of the century," the Vision seeks to impose peace by "buying off" the Palestinian aspiration for full independence with the promise of foreign aids and economic development under Israel's tutelage. The Palestinian Authority, never an invitee to the plan's discussion, unsurprisingly rejected the Vision. Allies of Trump and Netanyahu have defended the Vision as consistent with the two-state solution. This is detached from the reality in which the proposed Palestinian "state" would have its airspace and border crossing controlled by Israel and its territories enclaved by Israel-annexed areas—reminiscent of apartheid-era South Africa. Netanyahu and Benny Gantz, his former electoral rival, endorsed the Trump Vision as part of their coalition agreement, setting 1 July 2020 as the date to begin the annexation. The Jordan Valley comes first in priority in the list of to-be annexed areas. Comprising 30 percent of the West Bank, the Valley is central to the future Palestinian state as its main water and food production source. The annexation would prove detrimental to more than 65,000 Palestinian civilians residing in the Valley; they would live inside Israel but, unlike Arab Israelis, without any right to vote and freedom of movement.³⁰

As of December 2020 (the time of writing), the annexation plan is still suspended. The postponement stemmed from the international condemnation against the plan and the internal chasm over its implementation in Israel and the US.

Pushed by seminal works under the rubric of Neo-classical Realism and Foreign Policy Analysis, the saying "foreign policy starts at home" has become a staple theme in IR. Domestic factors ranging from leaders' profile to national ideology have a two-pronged influence on foreign policy preferences, *shaping* and *constraining* them.³¹ In democratic countries, particularly, public opinion is an immensely salient domestic factor. Prevailing aspiration of the mass constructs normative expectations and sets the unacceptable for foreign policymakers' red line.³² Israel, itself a parliamentary democracy, is no exception to this. Historian Avi Shlaim compellingly maintained that changes in Israel's foreign policy preference, especially on matters pertaining to war and territory, found their root in domestic dynamics.³³ One explanation lies in Israel's politically fragmented character. Since Israel's inception, no ruling party has ever secured a full majority in the parliament. This means that every Israeli government has to be formed by a coalition which, since 1977, has always included small parties with

³⁰ Times of Israel Staff. "Netanyahu: Palestinians in Israeli-annexed Jordan Valley won't get citizenship". 28 May 2020. Retrieved from: <https://www.timesofisrael.com/rejecting-settler-fears-pm-says-annexation-plan-wont-mention-palestinian-state/>

³¹ Hagan, Joe D. "Domestic political explanations in the analysis of foreign policy." *Foreign Policy Analysis: Continuity and Change in Its Second Generation* (1995): 117-43.

³² Baum, Matthew A., and Philip BK Potter. "The relationships between mass media, public opinion, and foreign policy: Toward a theoretical synthesis." *Annu. Rev. Polit. Sci.* 11 (2008): 39-65.

³³ Shlaim, Avi, and Avner Yaniv. "Domestic politics and foreign policy in Israel." *International Affairs* 56, no. 2 (1980): 242-262.

diverging interests.³⁴ At times, the ruling party has to fulfill these small parties' specific demands to prevent a collation-breakdown, at the expense of long-term national imperatives.

With regard to annexation, domestic disagreements in Israel mainly transpire along the left-right ideological line. In June 2020, hundreds of Israeli leftists poured into Tel Aviv's Rabin Square, carrying out a popular protest against the annexation plan.³⁵ Former Air Force General Amos Yadli, who spoke in the rally, stressed that the plan would entail serious security risks. Many Israelis believe that a two-state formula is the only hope to maintaining the country's Jewish and democratic character and achieving permanent peace; a unilateral annexation would be the death knell to this hope. Surprisingly, the plan faced opposition from the right-wing camp as well.³⁶ The plan appears unideal to Jewish settlers who deem annexation in parts, and not all, of the West Bank as insufficient. To them, the Jewish people are entitled to settle in the entirety of "Greater Israel." Netanyahu is also confronted by Gantz and the US government, who require strict adherence to the Trump Vision. That the Vision permits annexation if, and only if, it is in tandem with the establishment of an independent Palestine proves dilemmatic to Netanyahu, to whose constituents the latter is shunned. Meanwhile, in the US, 191 Congress members have signed a petition protesting the annexation, including Rep. Ted Deutch, who previously supported the American embassy move to Jerusalem.³⁷ This sheer opposition to Israeli action, unprecedented in many respects, is something Trump cannot regard in passing.

Indonesian rejection of the plan

The support for Palestinian rights and interests is a central agenda for two overlapping ideological currents in the Third World: anti-colonialism and pan-Islamism. The Non-Aligned Movement and the Organization for Islamic Cooperation, where both worldviews find each's an institutional facet, have historically regarded the solidarity for Palestinians as a matter of consensus. Despite their non-binding effect, the declarations and resolutions initiated by the Third World countries have helped push the establishment of an independent Palestine as an international norm, hindering the Israeli attempt to reduce the Palestinian question as a local matter.³⁸

³⁴ Israel Democracy Institute. "Why are there so many parties, and is there anything wrong with that?". 27 January 2019. Retrieved from: <https://www.timesofisrael.com/why-are-there-so-many-parties-and-is-there-anything-wrong-with-that/>

³⁵ Shezaf, Hagar. "Hundreds of Israelis Protest in Tel Aviv Against Netanyahu's West Bank Annexation Plan". 24 June 2020. Retrieved from: <https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/.premium-hundreds-of-israelis-protest-in-tel-aviv-against-netanyahu-s-west-bank-annexation-pl-1.8943348>

³⁶ Halbfinger, David M., and Adam Rasgon. "Netanyahu's Annexation Plans Meet Surprise Opponent: Israeli Settlers". 1 June 2020. Retrieved from: <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/01/world/middleeast/israel-annex-netanyahu-westbank.html>

³⁷ "Press Releases 191 House Members Express Concern over Push for Unilateral Annexation in Israel", 25 June 2020. Retrieved from: <https://teddeutch.house.gov/news/documentsingle.aspx?DocumentID=402848>

³⁸ Graubart, Jonathan, and Arturo Jimenez-Bacardi. "David in Goliath's citadel: Mobilizing the Security Council's normative power for Palestine." *European Journal of International Relations* 22, no. 1 (2016): 24-48.

A pioneering state of these organizations, Indonesia is a traditional ally to Palestine. As such, the country is firmly committed against Israel's expansionism in the OPT, be it through annexation or otherwise. Two weeks after the Trump Vision's announcement, Vice President Maaruf Amin declared Indonesia's rejection of the one-sided proposal, adding that Indonesia must cooperate with other nations sharing the same view to strengthen its standpoint.³⁹ When the Netanyahu-Gantz coalition officially endorsed the Vision in May 2020, Foreign Minister Retno Marsudi immediately sent letters to more than forty countries and several international organizations calling them to reject the annexation plan. The foreign ministers of China, Japan, France, Russia, Saudi Arabia, and many other states have responded to Marsudi's call positively.⁴⁰ As a Security Council member (2019-2020), Indonesia has ensured that the United Nations does not silently watch Israel's potentially norm-changing move. Together with Tunisia and South Africa, Indonesia initiated in June 2020 a Security Council meeting in which it elaborated on three reasons to not treat the plan lightly: first, inaction vis-à-vis the annexation plan may set a harmful precedent in which a violation of international law is normalized; second, the plan poses a test of credibility for the Security Council; and third, the annexation may permanently shut the window for a just and lasting peace.⁴¹

Indonesia's diplomatic initiative has helped amplify the global message that unilateral annexation is unacceptable and would face serious ramifications. This international pressure is inseparable from the set of considerations that eventually forced Israel to put the plan on hold. For Indonesia, however, the mere suspension is not the finishing line of its initiative.

The anti-annexation campaign has continued unabated in the country after 1 July 2020, visible not only from government actions but also at a more popular level. Fadli Zon, Chairman of the Committee for Inter-Parliamentary Cooperation (BKSAP), has gathered 242 signatures from parliament members worldwide condemning the annexation. He stated that political and economic isolation is crucial to exert effective pressure against Israel.⁴² Meanwhile, Commission I of the People's Representative Council (DPR) has requested the Foreign Ministry to go beyond simply rejecting the annexation but also voice the Palestinian rights of return. These parliamentary actions reflected the wide aspiration of mass organizations, such as Nahdlatul Ulama and the Indonesian Council of Ulama (MUI).⁴³ The latter has convened a conference attended by prominent Palestinian leaders, which issued

³⁹ Purnamasari, Deti Mega. "Soal Proposal Trump, Indonesia Pastikan Tetap Bela Palestina". 13 February 2020. Retrieved from: <https://nasional.kompas.com/read/2020/02/13/21075751/soal-proposal-trump-indonesia-pastikan-tetap-bela-palestina>

⁴⁰ As reported by Marsudi in the "Stop Israel's Imperialism" online conference organized by MUI on 16 July 2020.

⁴¹ Marsudi, "Statement of the Minister".

⁴² DPR RI. "Perlu Terobosan Selesaikan Konflik Palestina - Israel". 10 Juli 2020. Retrieved from: <http://www.dpr.go.id/berita/detail/id/29371/t/Perlu+Terobosan+Selesaikan+Konflik+Palestina+%E2%80%93+Israel>

⁴³ Setiawan, Kendi. "PBNU Kecam Israel atas Rencana Aneksasi Palestina di Tepi Barat". 30 June 2020. Retrieved from: <https://www.nu.or.id/post/read/120886/pbnu-kecam-israel-atas-rencana-aneksasi-palestina-di-tepi-barat>; Republika. "MUI

a 7-points resolution condemning the annexation as “imperialistic.” That the resolution endorses the two-state solution, which affirms Israel’s eventual recognition when it settled peace with Palestine—is noteworthy. In a context where many Indonesian Muslims view as illegitimate not only Israel’s military occupation but also its existence as a state, the MUI resolution can be considered as progressive.

While at the surface, Indonesia’s anti-annexation campaign seems to stem from a broader global trend, relying primarily on the language of international law and human rights, scrutiny would reveal at least two aspects specific to the Indonesian case.

First is the historical and emotional salience of Indonesia’s relations with the Arab world. Indonesia is indebted to the Arab nations who were the foremost in supporting its struggle for independence. This is particularly true regarding the Palestinians who, through a 1944 statement by the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem, were the first people to support the Indonesian aspiration for freedom. The five earliest states formally recognizing Indonesia’s independence were all Arab: Egypt (1946), Syria and Lebanon (1947), Yemen (1948), and Saudi Arabia (1950). The Arab League’s unanimous resolution foregrounded these recognitions in 1946, which declared “its sympathy for Indonesia and its wish that it would secure full independence,” even predating by several months a similar resolution in support of its fellow Arab brethren in Tunisia and Morocco.⁴⁴

Common identity as fellow Muslim co-religionists has been an important, if not primary bridge between Indonesia and Arab countries whose history stretched far before their respective independence. Contrary to some scholarly perceptions, historian Kevin W. Fogg affirms that Islam played a central role in Indonesia’s foreign policy to the Arab world, especially in its first, formative decade.⁴⁵ Indonesian Muslim students in Arab states, particularly in Egypt, partook in a successful campaign to lobby their host-countries to recognize Indonesia’s independence. Without the Arab recognitions, the Dutch might have prevented the internationalization of the 1945-1949 decolonization war in the UN, framing it as a matter of internal affairs. Given this profound historical debt, Palestine’s support, as a central Arab and Muslim cause, is one that Indonesia cannot neglect.

Second is Indonesia’s own internal discourse and dynamics. Stemming from the centuries of bitter experience under foreign domination, the Indonesian people have stood fiercely against colonialism. Indeed, the Indonesian anti-colonialist standpoint is explicitly enshrined in the constitution and are instructed in schools at an early stage as a part of Civic education. From the Sukarno era to this day, Israel has remained a “colonizer” in Indonesia’s government and popular

Keluarkan Resolusi tentang Sikap Imperialistik Israel”. 17 July 2020. Retrieved from: <https://republika.co.id/berita/qdm807430/mui-keluarkan-resolusi-tentang-sikap-imperialistik-israel>

⁴⁴ Fogg, Kevin W. *Indonesia’s Islamic Revolution*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019, 212.

⁴⁵ *ibid*

discourse. As such, while the materialization of support to Palestinians may have waxed and waned, the general pro-Palestine standpoint among Indonesians is firm and solid.

Indonesian public figures often use the catchphrase “mandat konstitusi” to convey a national duty to support Palestine. Indonesia’s self-perception as an active protagonist in the global struggle against colonialism is integral to the unique worldview through which its foreign policy has historically been shaped.⁴⁶ The so-called “Spirit of Bandung,” the proclaimed capital of Asia-Africa, encapsulates the Indonesian aspiration for leadership in that global struggle. Perceived as a colonial power, Israel is an anathema to this worldview and, as such, formally recognizing it is widely interpreted as unconstitutional,⁴⁷ despite some opining to the contrary.⁴⁸ Israel is not a unique case; the same worldview prevented Indonesia from establishing diplomatic relations with South Africa until 1994, only after the Mandela-led African National Congress replaced the apartheid regime. As the only member of the Non-Aligned Movement still without independence, it is almost expected that Palestine captures the current focus of Indonesia’s anti-colonial mission.

While the national anti-colonialist outlook is indeed pivotal, the sentiment of Muslim solidarity, symbolized in the slogan of *bebaskan* (liberate) *Al-Aqsha*, is immensely salient. Being profoundly emotional for Indonesian Muslims, the issue of Palestine can thus become a political capital to increase the government’s legitimacy vis-à-vis the country’s majority group. By expressing solidarity for the Palestinians, political figures can strengthen their credibility in front of Muslim constituents “without committing them to domestic Islamist causes that are more controversial.”⁴⁹ In the face of opposition groups such as *Persatuan Alumni 212* and the Prosperous Justice Party (PKS), to whom Palestine and its symbols are effective mobilizing tools, the government’s strict actions against Israel can also simultaneously carry the effect of appeasing internal adversaries. As demonstrated in the 2008 controversy of Indonesia’s plan to support the Iran sanction, Islamic political groups are capable of reversing a foreign policy deemed contradictory to the spirit of Muslim solidarity.⁵⁰ Against the

⁴⁶ Tan, Paige Johnson. “Navigating a turbulent ocean: Indonesia’s worldview and foreign policy.” *Asian Perspective* (2007): 147-181.

⁴⁷ Erdianto, Kristian. “Hubungan Diplomatik dengan Israel Dinilai Akan Langgar Konstitusi RI”. 31 March 2016. Retrieved from: <https://nasional.kompas.com/read/2016/03/31/10102151/Hubungan.Diplomatik.dengan.Israel.Dinilai.Akan.Langgar.Konstitusi.RI;Murdianingsih,Dwi.‘‘TakBerhubunganDiplomatikdenganIsraeladalahAmanatKonstitusi’’>. 28 May 2016. Retrieved from: <https://republika.co.id/berita/o7ufl0368/tak-berhubungan-diplomatik-dengan-israel-adalah-amanat-konstitusi>

⁴⁸ Balachandran, Niruban & Tuchrello, William. “Recognizing Israel Aligns with Indonesia’s Interests, Ambitions, & Constitution” [Asia Pacific Bulletin No. 450]. 23 January 2019. Retrieved from: <https://www.eastwestcenter.org/publications/recognizing-israel-aligns-indonesia%E2%80%99s-interests-ambitions-constitution>

⁴⁹ Lukens-Bull, Ronald A., and Mark R. Woodward. “Goliath and David in Gaza: Indonesian myth-building and conflict as a cultural system.” *Contemporary Islam* 5, no. 1 (2011): 1-17, 5.

⁵⁰ Gindarsah, Iis. “Democracy and foreign policy-making in Indonesia: A case study of the Iranian nuclear issue, 2007–08.” *Contemporary Southeast Asia* 34, no. 3 (2012): 416-437.

backdrop of these domestic considerations, no Indonesian administration has ever entirely abandoned the issue of pro-Palestinian solidarity, both in rhetoric and policy.

Diplomacy and aid now: what is ahead?

Observing the records thus far, it is evident that diplomacy forms the backbone of the Indonesian effort against the annexation plan. In tandem with its initiative in the Security Council, Indonesia also appealed bilaterally to several key states, such as the UN P-5 and Palestine's immediate neighbors, to form a common rank against the plan. This government-to-government track was also complemented by non-state institutions' campaign, which has proliferated since the 1998 democratization. Transpiring in mass organizations and aid agencies, particularly targeting Muslim donors, this grassroots activism has helped de-eliticize the Palestinian cause while opening a channel for more popular contributions, both material and symbolic, to that cause. The construction of the Indonesia-Gaza Hospital, the largest in north Gaza,⁵¹ using the USD 9 million fund collected entirely through fundraising, is, alongside the long list of other mass donations, a concrete testimony to the profound salience of this non-government track.

However, solely relying on these traditional gestures of solidarity is unlikely to persuade Israel to rescind its expansionist aspiration in the West Bank. This assessment is due to several reasons. For one, the fact that Israel still came up with the annexation plan despite the long list of UN resolutions condemning its practices in the OPT demonstrates the inadequate deterrence of these decisions. In the Security Council, specifically, Israel enjoyed relentless protection from the US, which has aborted more than 44 resolutions criticizing Israel since 1970—the first its veto power was used—a number bigger than the amount of veto protection afforded to any other country.⁵² This is not to say that diplomacy in the UN does not affect Israel's behavior at all, but rather emphasizes that it alone has limited power. Meanwhile, although the provision of aids has helped alleviate the hardship of the occupied Palestinians, it has primarily targeted the symptoms and not the cause of their plight. The assumption that financial support can somehow solve the Palestinian question is no different from the patronizing mindset which underlies the Trump Vision: the illusion that what the Palestinians need is development (under Israel) and not independence. At the root of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, beyond the issue of economic injustice, is an unfulfilled political issue: the Palestinian right to self-determination. The

⁵¹ Anadolu Agency. "Indonesian hospital inaugurated in Gaza". 10 January 2016. Retrieved from: <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/world/indonesian-hospital-inaugurated-in-gaza/503094#:~:text=The%20%249%2D%20million%20In,donesia%20Hospital,function%20as%20a%20general%20hospital.>

⁵² Shahwan, Najla M. "US support for Israel blocks peace process with Palestinians". 21 November 2019. Retrieved from: <https://www.dailysabah.com/op-ed/2019/11/21/us-support-for-israel-blocks-peace-process-with-palestinians>

conflict-resolution, thus, can only be achieved through a fair, equal, and representative political settlement.

As the Palestinians are unabatedly pushed to the edge of the cliff, the cost of inertia is too high. Identifying *unchartered* avenues of contribution, those that reinforce the existing diplomatic and aid support and maximize their impact, has now become imperative. The following section elaborates on two such avenues that merit Indonesia's consideration in the immediate future.

First is mediating internal rivals in Palestine. Since the Palestinian Civil War in 2007, the West Bank and Gaza have been governed separately by the Fatah-led Palestinian Authority and Hamas. Without a common front of resistance, the Palestinians are ever vulnerable to Israel's unilateral actions. A unity government is a *sine qua non* for the Palestinian struggle for independence and prosperity to move forward. Indeed, the perpetuation of internal discord would not only give way to the longevity of Israel's occupational regime but also weaken the legitimacy of the Palestinian struggle in front of its allies and supporters.⁵³

On top of fulfilling the Palestinian aspiration for a unity government, a successful Fatah-Hamas reconciliation would simultaneously serve Indonesia's national interest by elevating its soft power as a reliable broker. The path to achieving this objective is surely not a smooth one; the attempts by Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Yemen, and other Arab countries over the years to reconcile the two factions have not borne fruit yet, demonstrating the task's difficulty. Counter-intuitively, the looming annexation might actually be a blessing in disguise to break the impasse. Apart from the rare joint statement against annexation on 2 July 2020, Fatah and Hamas planned to hold a historic mass rally in Gaza to protest Israel's expansionist plan.⁵⁴ Two months later, Fatah and Hamas held another high-level meeting joined by other smaller factions to discuss how their rejection of the plan would translate into practical actions. They agreed that time was of the essence, more so in a context where the Israeli success to normalize relations with the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain, who backed the unveiling of the Trump Vision, seems to further alienate the Palestinian cause. With Sudan and Morocco joining the UAE-Bahrain's path of normalization, and a strong indication that Oman and Saudi Arabia may follow suit, the Palestinians have now regarded its traditional allies of the Arab world with unprecedented distrust. This is demonstrated, among other things, by its unprecedented decision to quit chairing the Arab

⁵³ Tasci, Ufuk Nescat. "Does the Hamas-Fatah rivalry serve Israel and weaken the Palestinian cause?". 31 December 2019. Retrieved from: <https://www.trtworld.com/middle-east/does-the-hamas-fatah-rivalry-serve-israel-and-weaken-the-palestinian-cause-32620>

⁵⁴ Boxerman, Aaron. "Fatah and Hamas to hold 'historic' joint rally in Gaza against annexation". 20 July 2020. Retrieved from: <https://www.timesofisrael.com/fatah-hamas-to-hold-joint-rally-in-gaza-against-annexation/>

League in September 2020.⁵⁵ Indeed, Palestine appears to be looking beyond its own region for more reliable partners to help mediate the much-desired internal reconciliation.

For Indonesia, this should not be a missed opportunity. While maintaining a cordial relationship with the West Bank-based Palestinian Authority, Indonesia, unlike many Arab and Western countries, neither has an official anti-Hamas position nor designates the faction as a terrorist organization. This can leverage Indonesia's credentials as an impartial and honest broker in front of the Palestinians. Moreover, as foreign policy analyst Niruban Balachandran evaluated, Indonesia is "arguably skilled at negotiating long-term peace treaties."⁵⁶ Balachandran noted that the conflict-settlements that Indonesia undertook—such as the Indonesia-Portugal agreement on East Timor and the Indonesia-Free Aceh Movement memorandum—ranked high in the *Peace Accords Matrix*, with 85 to 95 percent implementation scores. These records should increase Indonesia's chance of success in mediating Fatah and Hamas. Such success can be instrumentalized as an asset of soft power by way of elevating the country's image as an experienced and effective peace-broker.⁵⁷

The second is targeted boycotts against Israeli products. The strategy, popularized by the BDS (Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions) Movement since 2005, refers to the concentration of boycott campaigns on a select number of companies having a direct role in Israel's illegal activities. BDS aims to "to pressure Israel to comply with international law," specifically demanding Israel to (1) end its prolonged occupation, (2) grants full equality to its Arab-Palestinian citizens, and (3) fulfill the right of Palestinian refugees to return to their homes.⁵⁸

The assessment of whether a boycott would exert enough economic pressure for Israel to fulfill the above demands is mixed. Some point that the Israeli economy is still flourishing despite the boycott,⁵⁹ while others stress that notwithstanding the economic growth, there exist latent impacts that are not discernable through the official statistics.⁶⁰ Suffice it to say that BDS has, at the very least, entered the risk-calculus of Israel's policymaking. In 2017 alone, Israel, alongside a prominent Jewish organization, spent more than USD 72 million to fund numerous lobbying efforts, "solidarity visits" by influencers to Israel, and a pro-Israel social media presence to counteract the BDS campaign and rectify

⁵⁵ Sawafta, Ali, and Nidal al-Mughrabi. "Angered by Arab-Israel ties, Palestine quits chairing Arab League sessions - World - The Jakarta Post". 23 September 2020. Retrieved from: <https://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2020/09/23/angered-by-arab-israel-ties-palestine-quits-chairing-arab-league-sessions.html>.

⁵⁶ Balachandran, *Recognizing Israel*, para. 6

⁵⁷ Stokke, Kristian. "Peace-building as small state foreign policy: Norway's peace engagement in a changing international context." *International Studies* 49, no. 3-4 (2012): 207-231.

⁵⁸ BDS National Committee. "What is BDS?". Accessed on 21 September 2020. Retrieved from: <https://bdsmovement.net/what-is-bds>

⁵⁹ Efrati, Amit. "Who's Afraid of BDS? Economic and Academic Boycotts and the Threat to Israel." *Strategic Assessment* 19, no. 4 (2017): 43-5.

⁶⁰ White, Ben. "BDS' effect on Israel". 29 November 2017. Retrieved from: <https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20171129-international-day-of-solidarity-with-the-palestinian-people-2/>

the reputational damage it had incurred.⁶¹ Meanwhile, in early 2020, the UN issued a list of 112 companies involved in Israeli activities in the illegal settlements, pursuant to the Human Rights Council (HRC) Resolution 31/36, which urges all states not to support these business activities; the list resembles that which the BDS had previously publicized. Whether Israel acknowledges it or not, these developments show that the BDS impact is not as peripheral as its opponents would want to frame it.

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Boycotting Israel is not so much about impoverishing its economy than challenging its reputation abroad, “its most vital asset,” according to historian Rashid Khalidi.⁶³ The history of apartheid-era South Africa taught Israel that BDS, despite its seemingly dismissible economic impact, should not be treated mildly. When the anti-apartheid boycott began to emerge in the 1960s, South Africa was at first unaffected by the action; its economy was, in fact, rapidly growing for the next two decades. It was not until a certain threshold in the early 1990s when South Africa’s international reputation crumbled and reached a point of no return, resulting in global isolation and the regime’s collapse.⁶⁴ The same fate, argued former PLO spokesperson Diana Buttu, would befall Israel if the OPT’s status quo persists. “The French in Algeria [in the 40s] and apartheid’s leaders in South Africa [in the 80s] thought they had the situation wrapped up, with a pretty ribbon on the package. They did not realize that in a few years, everything would utterly change”, she remarked.⁶⁵

It is one thing to acknowledge BDS’s merits, but entirely different to implement the strategy effectively. In Indonesia, unfortunately, the notion of the *targeted* boycott is still foreign. By far, Indonesian boycotts have generally stemmed from emotional sentiments and without a measurable goal. Angered by the Israeli invasion of Gaza in 2014, thousands of student protesters closed a KFC chain in Tasikmalaya under the pretext of solidarity for the Palestinians;⁶⁶ a similar incident occurred in Tangerang Selatan to McDonald’s following the 2017 US embassy move to Jerusalem.⁶⁷ Starbucks, which opens in 22 cities in Indonesia, also faced allegations as a major donor to Israel and became a boycott target.⁶⁸ A pro-Zionist letter, which amplified the boycott calls in 2010—allegedly written by

⁶¹ Jewish Telegraphic Agency. “Israel okays \$72 million anti-BDS project”. 29 December 2017. Retrieved from: <https://www.timesofisrael.com/israel-okays-72-million-anti-bds-project/#gs.glyh0g>

⁶² McCarthy, Conor. “Academic freedom and the boycott of Israeli universities: on the necessity of angry knowledge.” *College Literature* 43, no. 1 (2016): 264-274.

⁶³ Khalidi, Rashid. *The Hundred Years’ War on Palestine: A History of Settler Colonialism and Resistance, 1917–2017*. New York: Metropolitan Books, 2020.

⁶⁴ Munayyer, Yousef. “BDS and Palestinian Rights: An Assessment”. 18 July 2018. Retrieved from: http://arabcenterdc.org/policy_analyses/bds-and-palestinian-rights-an-assessment/

⁶⁵ Cook, Jonathan. “ Hamas and Fatah: Why the two groups are failing”. 12 May 2018. Retrieved from: <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2018/05/hamas-fatah-groups-failing-180512082001713.html>

⁶⁶ Nugraha, Irwan. “Bela Palestina, Ribuan Santri Tasik Segel KFC dan McDonalds”. 15 July 2014. Retrieved from: <https://regional.kompas.com/read/2014/07/15/19264731/Bela.Palestina.Ribuan.Santri.Tasik.Segel.KFC.dan.McDonalds>.

⁶⁷ Kirom, Salviah Ika Padmasari, and Rizky Andwika. “Protes Donald Trump di restoran cepat saji”. 12 December 2017. Retrieved from: <https://www.merdeka.com/peristiwa/protes-donald-trump-di-restoran-cepat-saji.html>

⁶⁸ Safitri, Dini. “Seruan Boikot Starbucks: Kampanye Negatif Atau Kampanye Hitam?”. *Jurnal InterAct* 4, no. 1 (2015): 11-20.

Starbuck's former CEO—was found to be forged.⁶⁹ Neither of these companies is in the carefully researched list of target companies by the BDS National Committee. Without a coordinated targeting, the boycott campaign would be prone to prematurely accusing companies as pro-Israeli and become sparse and disorganized, thereby hindering the deliverance of maximum impact.⁷⁰

When several BDS listed companies have a solid presence in Indonesia's market, the country cannot afford to carry on the status quo in which substantial discussions on such a timely subject are still absent. Whether Indonesia would legally require boycotting products from Israeli illegal settlements, as Ireland has, is an issue for later. For now, what is urgent is for pro-Palestine civil societies to conduct a study on the feasibility of BDS in Indonesia while communicating and learning from activists in neighboring countries where this strategy has been exercised, such as Malaysia and Thailand. Moreover, the public has to be educated on the difference between an emotional, reactive boycott and a targeted, coordinated one, persuading them to transition from the former to the latter.

The BDS campaign in Indonesia, shall the conditions ripened for its establishment, has to lobby the government to support the strategy in its foreign policy abroad. Mere boycotting in Indonesia would have an isolated impact as, statistically speaking, the strategy would not incur the desired pressure against Israel without "anything short of official sanctions" by its most important trade partners: the US and the European Union.⁷¹ Thus, the Indonesian government should—at least—reiterate to its American and European counterparts the call by UNHRC Resolution 31/36 to cease transactions with the listed 112 companies involved in Israel's settlements or—at most—require the compliance to the said resolution as a condition to approving new trade deals with them. To be clear: the BDS campaign is considered successful not when every pro-Israel company in Indonesia is boycotted, but when it—through coordination with similar campaigns worldwide—shifts the global discourse to one where Israel's image as "the only democracy,"⁷² "oasis of freedom,"⁷³ and "bastion of human rights"⁷⁴ in the Middle East—through which it has enjoyed protection and support from the

⁶⁹ Svetlova, Ksenia. "Coffee libel in Egypt". 30 July 2020. Retrieved from: <https://www.jpost.com/Features/Magazine-Features/Coffee-libel-in-Egypt>

⁷⁰ Sudarsono, Heri. "Telaah Dampak Boikot Produk Amerika terhadap Perekonomian Nasional." *Unisia: Jurnal Ilmu-Ilmu Sosial* 31, no. 70 (2008): 417-430.

⁷¹ Bahar, Dany, and Natan Sachs. "How much does BDS threaten Israel's economy?". 26 January 2018. Retrieved from: <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2018/01/26/how-much-does-bds-threaten-israels-economy/>

⁷² Koplow, Michael J. "Netanyahu Just Destroyed One of Israel's Key National Security Assets". 21 February 2019. Retrieved from: <https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/.premium-netanyahu-just-destroyed-one-of-israel-s-key-national-security-assets-1.6958545>

⁷³ Handlin, Daniel A., and Joseph Mandelbaum. "An Oasis of Freedom". 13 April 2020. Retrieved from: <https://www.thecrimson.com/article/2010/4/13/israel-one-middle-peace/>

⁷⁴ Zucker, Bat-Ami. "The Genesis of the Special Relationship Between the United States and Israel, 1948-1973." *American Jewish Archives* 44 (1992): 565-582, 569.

West—no longer lasts. For such a far-reaching goal to be realized, the alignment between popular activism on one hand and state-level diplomacy on the other is indispensable.

To conclude, Indonesia has rightly rejected Israel's plan to annex the West Bank as an intolerable offense to international law and a grave threat to its Palestinian ally. Adhering to the expansionist ideology of "Greater Israel," the right-wing parties in the current Israeli government are unlikely to retract unreservedly its aspiration for permanent control over the West Bank, more so considering the territory's strategic and symbolic value. While the annexation might be suspended, for now, its specter still lingers on the horizon. Given such circumstances, the trend of continued Indonesian resistance against the plan is sensible and should not cease. This commitment—driven by the notion of "*hutang sejarah*" (historical debt) to the Arab world and Indonesia's identity as an anti-colonial and Muslim-majority country—has led to positive strides for the Palestinian cause. Nevertheless, as one local proverb puts it, "above the sky, there are skies." Indonesia must explore other channels of contribution—of which internal mediation and targeted boycott are central—to complement and maximize the impact of its traditional gestures of pro-Palestinian solidarity. Against the background of unprecedented Israeli unilateralism and disregard for existing norms, our complacency is no longer an option.

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