

# Muhammadiyah Diaspora Diplomacy in Protecting Indonesian Migrant Workers in Malaysia

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## Abstrak

Malaysia merupakan salah satu negara tujuan utama bagi pekerja migran Indonesia (PMI). Meskipun kontribusinya cukup besar bagi pembangunan kedua negara, PMI, khususnya pekerja perempuan di sektor informal, masih mengalami berbagai kekerasan dan perlakuan diskriminatif. Upaya perlindungan melalui diplomasi antar dua negara belum dapat efektif melindungi PMI di Malaysia tanpa melibatkan aktor non-negara. Muhammadiyah sebagai aktor non-negara berbasis agama telah banyak terlibat dalam pengentasan masalah kelompok rentan, termasuk PMI di Malaysia. Namun, belum banyak studi yang secara khusus membahas peran diplomasi Muhammadiyah dalam perlindungan PMI di Malaysia. Artikel ini bertujuan untuk menjelaskan peran diplomasi diaspora Muhammadiyah terhadap perlindungan PMI di Malaysia sebagai agenda internasionalisasi Muhammadiyah, salah satunya melalui pembentukan Pimpinan Cabang Istimewa Muhammadiyah (PCIM). Data yang digunakan berasal dari data sekunder yang mengeksplorasi frekuensi pemberitaan tentang aktivitas PCIM Malaysia di empat media daring terpilih. Media tersebut meliputi dua media nasional, Antara dan Tribun, dan dua media Islam, Suara Muhammadiyah dan Republika. Artikel ini juga menggunakan data primer hasil wawancara dengan anggota PCIM dan Pimpinan Cabang Istimewa Aisyiyah di Malaysia yang dianalisis menggunakan software NVivo 12. Artikel ini berpendapat bahwa PCIM Malaysia melakukan diplomasi diaspora kepada PMI di Malaysia melalui mediasi, advokasi, dan representasi, serta Internasionalisasi Muhammadiyah.

**Kata Kunci:** Diaspora Diplomasi, PCIM Malaysia, Pekerja Migran Indonesia, Internasionalisasi Muhammadiyah.

## Abstract

Malaysia is one of the main destination countries for Indonesian migrant workers (PMI). Although their contribution is large for developing the two countries, PMI, especially women workers in the informal sector, still experience violence and discrimination. Protection efforts through diplomacy between the two countries have not effectively protected PMI in Malaysia without involving non-state actors. Muhammadiyah as a religion-based non-state actor, has been heavily involved in alleviating the problems of vulnerable groups, including PMI in Malaysia. However, only a few studies specifically discuss Muhammadiyah diplomacy's role in protecting PMI in Malaysia. This article aims to explain the role of Muhammadiyah diaspora diplomacy toward protecting PMI in Malaysia as part of the Muhammadiyah internationalization agenda through Pimpinan Cabang Istimewa Muhammadiyah (PCIM). The data used in this article came from secondary data that explored the frequency of reporting about PCIM Malaysia activities in four selected online media. The media included two national media, Antara and Tribune, and two Islamic media, Suara Muhammadiyah and Republika. This article also utilized primary data from interviews with PCIM and Pimpinan Cabang Istimewa 'Aisyiyah Malaysia, which were analyzed using NVivo 12 software. This article argued that PCIM Malaysia carried out diaspora diplomacy to PMI in Malaysia through mediation, advocacy, representation, and Muhammadiyah internationalization.

**Keywords:** Diaspora Diplomacy, PCIM Malaysia, Indonesian Migrant Workers, Muhammadiyah Internationalization.

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## INTRODUCTION

Sending Indonesian Migrant Workers (PMI) to other countries contributes greatly to solving the problem of unemployment and foreign exchange earnings through remittances. By working abroad, the workforce, both men and women with only 12 years of basic education, can be absorbed by the global job market in the informal

sectors in plantations, factories, and households as unskilled laborers, maids or caregivers, local workers, opening up opportunities for foreign workers. However, working in the informal sector for foreign workers is a high risk, especially for women. The low bargaining power of women workers makes them vulnerable to violence and trafficking in persons. To increase the protection of PMI, the Indonesian Government has carried out coercive diplomacy by issuing a moratorium policy. The two countries targeted by this policy were Saudi Arabia in 2011 and 2015 and Malaysia in 2009. Besides the moratorium policy, the Indonesian Government has completed its PMI protection strategy through legislation and improved governance.

The support of non-state actors in protecting PMI abroad is urgent to guarantee their security. The government can involve influential religious organizations in implementing more persuasive diplomacy. One of the Islamic-based organizations whose diplomatic role is visible in Malaysia is Muhammadiyah. Muhammadiyah often collaborates with foreign partners on international issues, such as conflict, humanity, disaster, and *ukhuwah Islamiyah*. Muhammadiyah also has a role in mediating the Moro Nation and the Philippine Government regarding conflict resolution.

In the humanitarian and disaster context, Muhammadiyah collaborates with foreign agencies to carry out emergency response, rehabilitation, and disaster mitigation. Muhammadiyah works hard to be alert for humanitarian action in various disaster events in various parts of Indonesia and abroad, such as the Aceh Tsunami, Yogyakarta Earthquake, Merapi Eruption, Earthquake in Nepal, and Hurricane in the Philippines. Then, in interfaith cooperation, Muhammadiyah leaders deliberately invite other religious leaders to work hand in hand in promoting peace between fellow believers to minimize the risk of religion-based conflict.

For *ukhuwah Islamiyah*, the Tarjih Council and Tajdid Muhammadiyah take advantage of scientific meetings with Muslims from other countries to discuss the idea of a global calendar. Muhammadiyah is assisted by Pimpinan Cabang Istimewa Muhammadiyah (PCIM) abroad and has expanded Muhammadiyah Educational Institutions abroad.

However, Muhammadiyah has not been dealing with PMI issues a lot. The institutionalization of PMI protection in Muhammadiyah and disaster does not yet exist. Muhammadiyah has not widely discussed the plan for discussing the PMI issue with partners abroad. Muhammadiyah has not had a sustainable program to help PMI problems. However, the Malaysian Special Branch Manager (PCIM) has carried out diplomacy to lighten the burden of PMI in Malaysia. This research explains how the diaspora diplomacy of Malaysia's PCIM contributes to PMI and makes Malaysia the main destination country in Southeast Asia.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Based on the degree of vulnerability, women migrant workers in the informal sector have a greater chance of receiving violent behavior than men. Therefore, the government's and civil society or non-state actors' role in dealing with female Indonesian Migrant Workers (PMI) is urgently required. In this article, several non-state actors of concern regarding the protection of female PMI are domestic advocacy organizations such as Migrant Care and international organizations, including IOM, ILO, Tenaganita, and AOHD (Malaysia).

Khurun'in (2017) specifically examined several local agencies in Malaysia that are actively advocating for protecting female migrant workers in the domestic sector, such as Women's Aid Organization (WAO), Tenaganita, North-South Initiatives (NSI), and Archdiocesan Office of Human Development (AOHD). Although the missions of the four agencies are similar, each has different tendencies. WAO is more inclined to gender equality, Tenaganita focuses on labor rights, NSI concentrates more on human rights, and AOHD is on humanitarian issues based on Christian doctrine. The study did not mention the role of Muslim agencies. In Indonesia, research on NGO advocacy for migrant workers leads to Migrant Care (Arifiartiningasih 2016; Dewi and Yazid 2018; Wijayanti and Windiani 2016).

Besides Migrant Care, several researchers also discussed the role of labor unions. Susanti and Nugroho (2018) examined the empowerment and protection of the Indonesian Migrant Workers Union (SBMI) against

workers. SBMI held entrepreneurship training for migrant workers who returned to their homeland (Ari Susanti, 2018). Protection efforts are carried out by NGOs in the receiving or sending countries and demonstrated by international organizations. Valensy (2017) examined the role of the ILO in protecting female PMI in Saudi Arabia. In his research, Valensy explained several roles of the ILO, such as drafting conventions to provide a decent working environment, technically assisting Indonesia in drafting legislation to protect migrant workers, and disseminating information on migrant workers' rights (Valensy 2017).

Apart from the ILO, several researchers discussed the role of the International Organization for Migration (IOM) in protecting PMI. Oktavian, Haryadi, Poerwantika, and Windary (2018) explained IOM's role in reducing trafficking. IOM's involvement in Indonesia is due to a large number of human trafficking, driving IOM to assist Indonesia in drafting legal instruments, providing technical assistance to the Indonesian Government and local NGOs, as well as with the police in supervising the crime of human trafficking (Alif Oktavian, Aswan Haryadi, Tine Ratna Poerwantika 2018). Andayani (2015) investigated IOM's role in Malaysian-oriented PMI. IOM performed three things in protecting PMI in Malaysia. First, IOM raises public awareness of the risks as a migrant worker through information dissemination. Second, IOM provides pre-departure information services, including conducting joint training with BNP2TKI. Third, IOM monitors PMI recruitment together with BNP2TKI (Andayani 2015). Paying attention to several studies on the role of civil society, studies on the role of Muhammadiyah on PMI issues have not been a concern.

Associated with diplomacy and other approaches, the researchers applied a variety of perspectives to explain the protection of female PMI. Alfadh (2013) offered an NGO Diplomacy approach in looking at the involvement of NGOs in protecting PMI in Malaysia. This approach emerged because official diplomacy did not meet expectations or faced a deadlock. This concept indirectly requires well-established institutionalization and strong partnerships among NGOs in the host country. The

NGO that Alfadh utilized as an example is the partnership between the Consortium for the Defenders of Migrant Workers (Kopbumi) with Tenaganita in Malaysia. This approach cannot look at Muhammadiyah because the institutionalization of the issue of migrant workers is still weak.

Multi-track diplomacy is another diplomatic approach that reaches a wider role for non-state actors. In this approach, the government's official diplomatic track (track-one) runs simultaneously with the non-government track (track-two). One example of multi-track diplomacy was written by Dewi (2020). She explained Wilfrida Soik's release, who once worked in Malaysia. In research, non-state actors, both institutions and individuals, acted simultaneously in carrying out diplomatic functions. Several non-state actors involved were Migrant Care, Melanie Subono, Pastor Goris, Rieka Diah Pitaloka, residents, business groups, and public opinion in the form of a petition (Dewi 2020). This approach is unsuitable for portraying Muhammadiyah's role because its involvement is not carried out simultaneously with official diplomacy.

A new diplomatic approach to looking at protecting migrant workers is digital diplomacy. Dharossa and Rezasyah (2020) revealed that digital diplomacy is digital information technology by the government to maximize the protection of Indonesian citizens abroad. In protecting Indonesian migrant workers, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs integrates labor data with BNP2TKI to detect problems through the software application developed quickly. This approach cannot describe Muhammadiyah's role because of the state's main actor.

This study proposes a diaspora diplomacy approach to look at Muhammadiyah's role, PCIM in Malaysia, in protecting migrant workers. Diaspora diplomacy bridges diplomatic and diaspora studies (Ho and McConnell 2017). The argument for diaspora diplomacy is to place the diaspora as a strategic actor in carrying out diplomatic functions: advocacy, representation, and mediation. However, actors in diaspora diplomacy are not one hundred percent non-state actors but also state ones who take advantage of the diaspora. Therefore, diaspora diplomacy is divided into two: (1) diplomacy through the

diaspora – which means public diplomacy, and (2) diplomacy carried out by the diaspora independently (Ho and McConnell 2017). In the second type of diaspora diplomacy, three modalities are related to how the diaspora conducts diplomacy: advocacy, mediation, and representation (Ho and McConnell 2017).

Diplomatic diaspora was selected because PMI protection has not been strong enough for Muhammadiyah, but activities demonstrating protection for PMI have been carried out first. In explaining the diplomatic role of Muhammadiyah, this research focuses on the second type of PCIM diaspora diplomacy, explaining the role of advocacy, mediation, and PCIM representation. However, this research also sees if there are facts showing that the Indonesian Government's diplomacy is carried out by utilizing (through) the diaspora to protect PMI abroad.

## RESEARCH METHOD

This research utilized a qualitative descriptive approach to explain the role of protection against groups of migrant workers from Indonesia performed by PCIM in Malaysia. PCIM diaspora diplomacy was seen from three main aspects: advocacy, mediation, and representation. The first stage of this research is data collection. This research mostly used secondary data sourced from electronic news media, such as *Antaranews.com*, *Republika*, *Suara Muhammadiyah* and the *Central Java Tribune*. The four media were selected because the frequency of each media's reporting on PCIM activities was quite high. In addition, the data were complemented by interviews conducted with PCIM and PCIA administrators in Malaysia.

After data collection, the next step was to classify the data relevant to diaspora diplomacy's role. The data were selected according to the variables of advocacy, mediation, and representation. This data classification was intended to ease researchers to obtain valid information to support the objectives. The next stage was data analysis to interpret the data. The data analysis employed a content analysis chosen to determine the relationship between the classified data and the diplomatic diaspora variables with Nvivo 12 Plus software.

The research took place in Yogyakarta and Malaysia through interviews and data collection through electronic media with a research period of June 2021 to August 2021. Yogyakarta was chosen as the research location because the documents and reports on Muhammadiyah's activities are centered on the Central Leadership (PP) Muhammadiyah. In addition, the structural majority of PP Muhammadiyah and PP Aisiyah is located in Yogyakarta, making confirmation of secondary data could be easily done. Malaysia was selected as the research location because the research object was PCIM and Indonesian Migrant Workers in Malaysia.

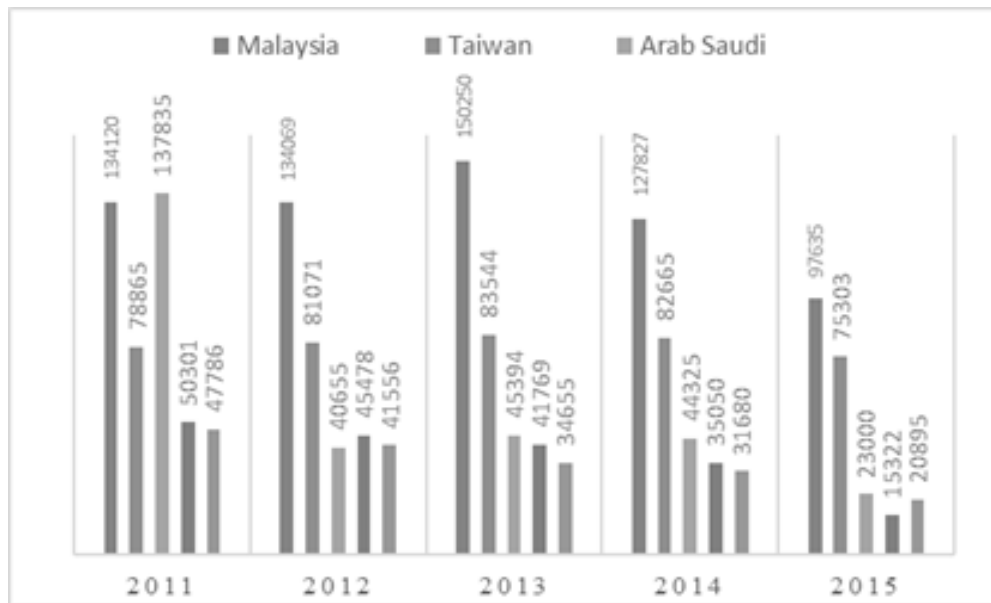
## RESULT AND ANALYSIS

### PMI PROTECTION ISSUES IN INDONESIA

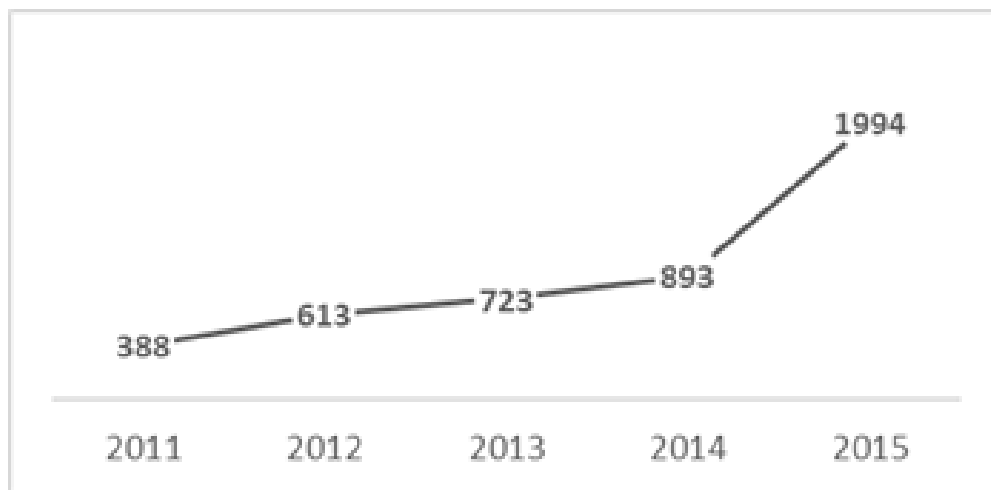
In the Southeast Asian Region, Indonesia and the Philippines are the two largest exporting migrant workers to receiving countries in Asia and the Middle East, such as Malaysia and Saudi Arabia (Silvey 2004). After the Indonesian Government set a moratorium policy on Saudi Arabia in 2011 and 2014, the population of PMI working in Saudi Arabia based on data from the Indonesian Migrant Workers Protection Agency (BP2MI), formerly known as the National Agency for the Protection and Placement of Indonesian Migrant Workers (BNP2TKI), decreased drastically. In contrast, the PMI population in Malaysia occupied the top position.

BP2MI data also noted that from 2011 to 2015, the number of PMI complaints, especially in the informal sector, in Malaysia increased. In the data concluded by BP2MI, the problems encountered are (1) unilateral termination of employment contracts, (2) the health problems of migrant workers, which required inpatient treatment and, (3) treatment of the bodies of migrant workers. The following illustrates the complaints of Indonesian migrant workers in Malaysia and the three problems that most often arose according to BP2MI's version.

The three problems recorded by BP2MI were only superficial because the rest of the migrant workers faced much more serious problems. An activist with TENAGANITA, a Malaysian NGO that focuses on the issue of migrant workers, said that Malaysia is a dangerous place for foreign domestic workers



**Figure 1.** Indonesian Migrant Worker Population 2011-2015 (Processed from BNP2TKI 2011-2015 data)

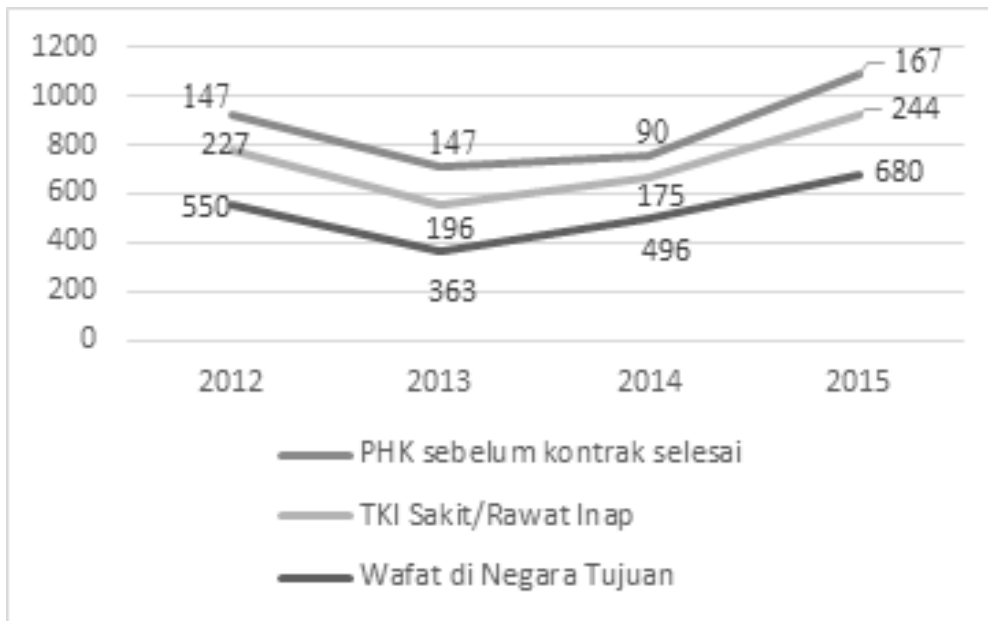


**Figure 2.** Trends in PMI Complaints in Malaysia 2011-2015 (Processed from BNP2TKI data, 2011-2013 and 2012-2015)

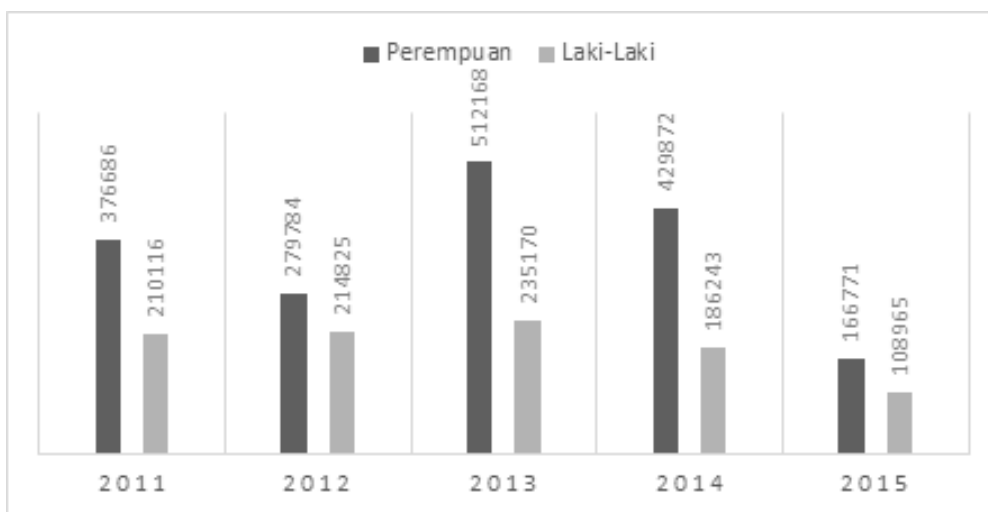
workers because they were treated inhumanely, such as being beaten, raped, and held captive for days without adequate food supplies. The relationship between master and worker is between master and slave (Kuppusamy 2012). Moreover, employers or labor agents often hold domestic workers' travel documents to limit workers' freedom (Netto 2007).

Malaysia does have several regulations regarding migrants, but these regulations are not intended to protect groups of migrants but Malaysian citizens from

the negative impacts that may be caused by migrants (Lasimbang, Tong, and Low 2016). In Sabah, the fate of female workers is worse than males. They are discriminated against by differentiating the amount of salary they receive. They are not allowed to marry and become pregnant, and they face the threat of deportation, which can be imposed at any time. In addition, they sometimes receive physical, psychological, and sexual violence (Lasimbang et al., 2016).



**Figure 3.** The Big Three Problems of Indonesian Migrant Workers in Malaysia 2011-2015 (Processed from 2012-2015 BP2MI data)

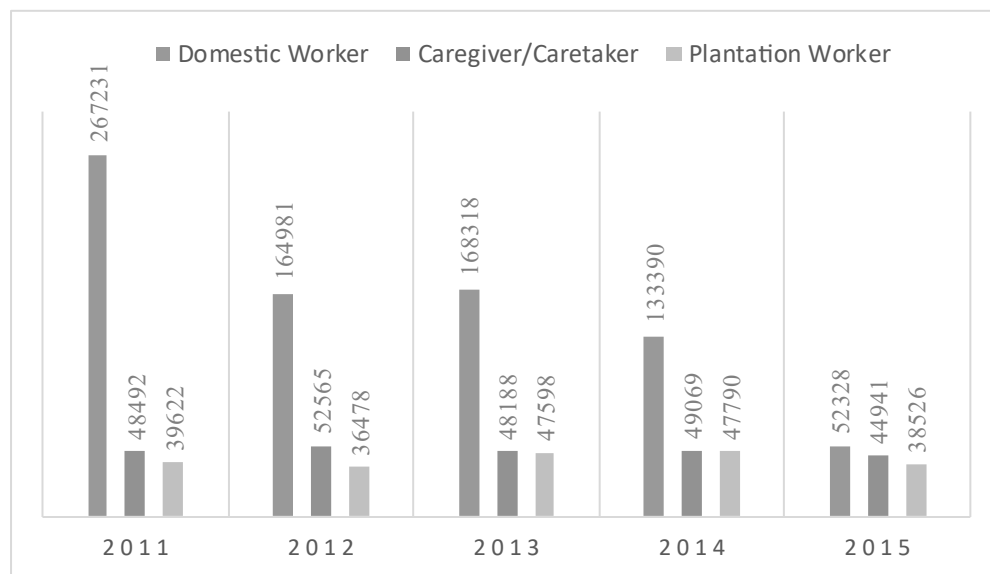


**Figure 4.** PMI by Gender 2011-2015 (BNP2TKI, 2015)

Factors of violence against migrant workers in Malaysia can be due to the receiving country's policies. This kind of problem appears in Malaysia as a country that uses informal migrant workers and other Asian countries. For example, Japan and Korea do not protect domestic workers because the household is not categorized as a workplace (Ball and Piper 2002). The Gulf Region countries in the Middle East have labor norms for domestic sector migrant workers, counterproductive to

International Convention No. 189 on Employment Eligibility (Khan 2008).

Quantitatively, the data presented by BP2MI related to gender and the position chosen by Indonesian workers from 2011-2015, the period of the first Indonesian moratorium policy (2011) and the second (2014) to Saudi Arabia, revealed that women and domestic work dominated. Therefore, female workers are the group most vulnerable to all forms of violence, especially those



**Figure 5.** The Big Three Positions of Indonesian Migrant Workers 2011-2015 (Processed from BNP2TKI data in 2013 and 2015)

from receiving countries that do not wish to ratify the Migrant Workers Convention (Devasahayam 2010). Supposedly, sending countries can be more proactive and have a big role in protecting the interests of migrant workers, which are not provided proportionally by receiving countries because they refuse to ratify many international norms on the rights of foreign migrant workers (Devasahayam 2010).

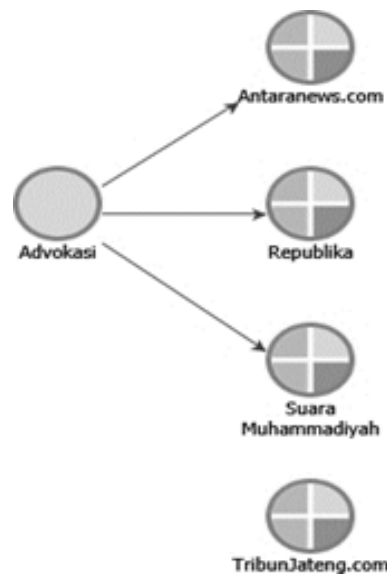
The Indonesian Government in 2009 announced a moratorium policy on Malaysia to protect PMI from violence. Responding to the policy issued by Indonesia, the Malaysian side is willing to negotiate. The Indonesian Government asks Malaysia to give informal workers, especially domestic workers, the same rights. In 2011, the two countries signed a joint agreement in a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU). The Malaysian Government, in the deed, is willing to improve the work environment and provide one day off a week. Meanwhile, the Indonesian Government wants to improve salary standards and protect Indonesian migrant workers (Elias 2013).

Although the MoU has been agreed, the number of complaints from Indonesian migrant workers in Malaysia is still relatively high, and the number of Indonesian migrant workers in Malaysia who returned home due to

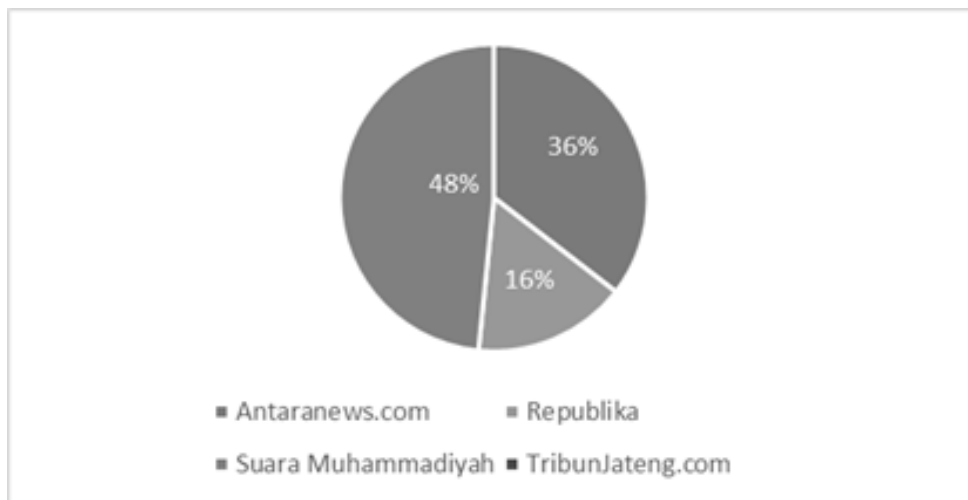
problems in 2015 still dominates. In the 2017 Domestic Workers Roadmap, Fernandez stated that Indonesia wants domestic workers to be treated equally with other workers when abroad. However, Malaysia wanted slaves to complete household chores. Instead of respecting workers' rights and providing a proper place, Malaysia is looking for other countries vulnerable to exploitation. While the Malaysian Government does not have the opportunity to get Indonesian workers from official channels, they still have the opportunity to recruit them through private agents outside the supervision of the Indonesian Government (Kuppusamy 2012). Therefore, the Malaysian Government can utilize non-state actors (labor brokers) to recruit. Meanwhile, the Indonesian diaspora can assist the Indonesian Government in optimizing protection for PMI.

### PCIM MALAYSIA DIPLOMACY IN PMI PROTECTION

This section describes the findings and discusses online media data and interviews on the role of Malaysian PCIM diaspora diplomacy, oriented toward protecting female migrant workers. There are four media selected for this research: Antara, Republika, Suara Muhammadiyah, and Tribune. The criteria for selecting



**Figure 6.** Online Media and PCIM Malaysia Advocacy for PMI (Authors' Analysis, 2021)



**Figure 7.** PCIM Malaysia Online Media and Advocacy (Authors' Analysis, 2021)

the four media were based on the frequency of reporting on PCIM Muhammadiyah activities. In addition, the four media represent different ideological tendencies. Republika and Suara Muhammadiyah have a national-Islamic ideology. Meanwhile, Antara and Tribune represent the national-secular ideology. This section also describes the findings from interview data with PCIM and PCIA Malaysia administrators. The role of the Malaysian PCIM diaspora diplomacy is seen from four indicators: advocacy, mediation, representation, and collaboration.

#### Advocacy

After the data were analyzed using the project map feature in NVivo 12 Plus, 75% of online media confirmed that PCIM Malaysia carried out advocacy activities except for TribunJateng.com. The findings are illustrated in Figure 6

Figure 6 displays that TribunJateng.com does not report PCIM Malaysia's advocacy for migrant workers. Then, the media informing the PCIM Malaysia advocacy the most in sequence are Suara Muhammadiyah, Antara.com, and Republika.



Suara Muhammadiyah and Antaranews.com reviewed several PCIM Malaysia's advocacies for Indonesian migrant workers. The first form is disaster advocacy by raising funds and distributing logistics for Indonesian migrant workers who lack necessities due to the Movement Control Order (PKP) policy. The COVID-19 pandemic has forced the state to strictly limit the mobility of the people to reduce the rate of transmission of the virus. The policy of stopping community activities resulted in a temporary suspension of physical development projects. Indonesian daily laborers who work on projects should be given a day off. They live in inns without jobs and salaries, making it difficult to meet their basic needs.

At the beginning of the implementation of the PKP policy by the Malaysian Government, food aid from the Indonesian Embassy in Malaysia for Indonesian workers had not been widely distributed. PCIM Malaysia took the initiative as a non-state actor who also functions independently as an extension of the government to distribute aid for basic needs to the pockets of Indonesian migrant workers to prevent their condition from worsening. According to Khoiruddin, Chairman of the Council for Social Services and People's Welfare of PCIM Malaysia, PCIM and PCIA are pioneers in advocating basic needs for PMI as stated as follows.

*"Muhammadiyah itu bikin acara duluan, yaitu bakti sosial terhadap PMI yang ada di Malaysia semua belum ada yang bikin pak itu. Jadi, belum ada inisiatif kesana. Nah, waktu Maret kalau nggak salah 2019 pertama Covid ada lockdown yang mencekam karena baru pertama harus seperti itu terjadi kan kita meeting pimpinan-pimpinan kita ada inisiasi untuk bikin bantuan dan alhamdulillah setelah kita bikin sampai sekitar 1 minggu, 2 minggu, dari KBRI" (Khoiruddin 2021).*

*"Muhammadiyah made social services for PMI in Malaysia when no one has made it yet. So, I see it as an initiative there. Well, in March, if I am not mistaken, the first COVID-19 outbreak, there was a tense lockdown. We had a meeting with our leaders to make assistance and thank God after we made it for about one week, two weeks, from the Indonesian Embassy." (Khoiruddin 2021)*

From the information conveyed by Khoiruddin, the assistance from the Indonesian Embassy was only distributed one or two weeks after PCIM Malaysia initiated it. Therefore, PCIM and PCIA effectively advocated disaster advocacy for vulnerable Indonesian citizens in Malaysia to the Indonesian Government. In carrying out its disaster advocacy function related to the COVID-19 pandemic, PCIM Malaysia also has disaster mitigation by building awareness of zakat management for communities affected by the pandemic. Through a recitation held with Lazismuh (Lembaga Infak, Zakat, Infak, dan Sedekah Muhammadiyah), PCIM Muhammadiyah hopes that zakat can be used more widely to buy personal protective or medical equipment and stimulus funds to help those who have lost their jobs (Majelis Pendidikan Seni dan Olah Raga PCIM Malaysia 2020).

PCIM Muhammadiyah empowers PMI, sympathizers, Muhammadiyah administrators, and other Indonesian citizens to have the opportunity to increase their income. PCIM Malaysia organizes various courses according to PMI's specialization, including entrepreneurship, cupping, and acupuncture techniques. Several PCIM Muhammadiyah members who took a typical Korean needle stick course got a certificate and received additional income from their new knowledge (Zulhuda 2020). Nuriyah, a member of PCIA Malaysia, through an interview on June 17, 2021, about the benefits of the training, said,

*"Ya, Alhamdulillah saya pergi ke Malaysia ikut suami. Saya juga kerja di sini ikut suami. Anak saya tiga, dua warga negara Malaysia, satu tidak. Suami sudah meninggal 3 tahun lalu dan saya sekarang single parent. Saya bersyukur bisa ikut pelatihan bekam yang diadakan oleh PCIA dan sekarang menjadi pendapatan saya. Alhamdulillah saya bisa memberikan manfaat pada kesehatan ibu-ibu" (Nuriyah 2021).*

*"Yes, thank God I went to Malaysia with my husband. I also work here with my husband. I have three children, two Malaysian citizens, one not. My husband passed away three years ago, and I am now a single parent. I am grateful to participate in the cupping training held by PCIA, and now it is my income. Thank God I can provide benefits to the health of mothers." (Nuriyah 2021)*

The second form of strategic advocacy by PCIM Malaysia provides education for PMI children who do not have access to formal education in Malaysia or do not have official citizenship status because their parents come and work in Malaysia illegally. PMI's illegal status is due to two possibilities: from the beginning, not taking official procedures to work or running away. Khoiruddin (2021), Ketua Majelis Pelayanan Sosial dan Kesejahteraan Umum, stated that PMI who run away are not solely because of their wishes, but some are taken away, generally female PMI, and are married without following government regulations.

According to Khoiruddin, the Malaysia PCIM Learning Center provides a better alternative environment for PMI children without an identity. They live in an environment not conducive to psychic growth, let alone spirituality. Khoiruddin asserted:

*"Kemudian, ketika saya masuk, saya usulkan ada Majelis MPSKU (Majelis Pelayanan Sosial dan Kesejahteraan Umat). Dengan majelis itu, menurut pandangan saya, bisa menolong sekaligus mengembangkan PCIM Malaysia. Majelis itu dapat memperhatikan aspek sosial dan human resources dan mengatasi kejahatan dan kondisi buruk anak Indonesia yang ilegal tadi dengan kita merepresentasikan mereka dalam sanggar belajar tadi. Keberadaan sanggar untuk menampung anak-anak yang tidak jelas tadi dari segi material dan moral. Kita sediakan mereka sekolah agar dapat mengenyam pendidikan selaras dengan pendidikan formal. Kita didik mereka dalam lingkungan yang baik, karena sebagian besar dari mereka hidup dalam lingkungan rawan."*

"Then, when I joined, I proposed a Majelis Pelayanan Sosial dan Kesejahteraan Umat (MPSKU) Council. This assembly, in my view, can help and develop PCIM Malaysia. The assembly can pay attention to social and human resources and overcome illegal Indonesian children's crimes and bad conditions by representing them in the learning studio. A studio accommodates the children who are in need. We provide them with schools to receive education in line with formal education. We educate them in a good environment because most of them live in a vulnerable environment."

The procurement of the Malaysian PCIM Learning Center also fulfills PMI's children's right to education, which the state guarantees. Therefore, in its development, the Indonesian Embassy in Malaysia has collaborated to build a Pusat Kegiatan Belajar Masyarakat (PKBM) for PMI children due to PCIM Malaysia's advocacy for PMI in education.

Then, the third form of advocacy for PCIM Malaysia is labor advocacy. One of the difficulties of labor advocacy related to salary payment cases is the employment contract. So far, PMI has rarely or almost no written contract. They only have a verbal contract. As a result, the company cannot be held liable when salary payments are delayed, or the amount is different from what was originally promised. In this context, PCIM Malaysia through Khoiruddin can only help negotiate informally with companies in Malaysia. Meanwhile, according to Nuriyah (2021), female domestic sector workers who run away from their employers without carrying official documents rely more on networks between workers to accommodate and find new jobs.

According to Khoiruddin (2021), working illegally in Malaysia is still in demand by some Indonesians because they do not need to pay for a work permit. The work permit fee is expensive, reaching 3500-4000 Malaysian Ringgit. Thus, Indonesians dare to take risks as illegal workers even though they are threatened with imprisonment if caught. The choice of Indonesian workers to work illegally in Malaysia is a factor in the complexity of protecting PMI in Malaysia.

The illustration of PCIM Malaysia advocacy summarized using the project map feature in NVivo 12 Plus is as follows.

### **Mediation**

The role of diaspora diplomacy described in this section refers to Malaysia's PCIM forms of mediation. In the media collected, several mediating roles have been carried out, as illustrated in Figure 9.

Figure 9 describes the target of PCIM Malaysia mediation covering PMI, refugees, and students. PCIM Malaysia's mediation action, especially during COVID-19 on PMI, facilitated the recalibration process

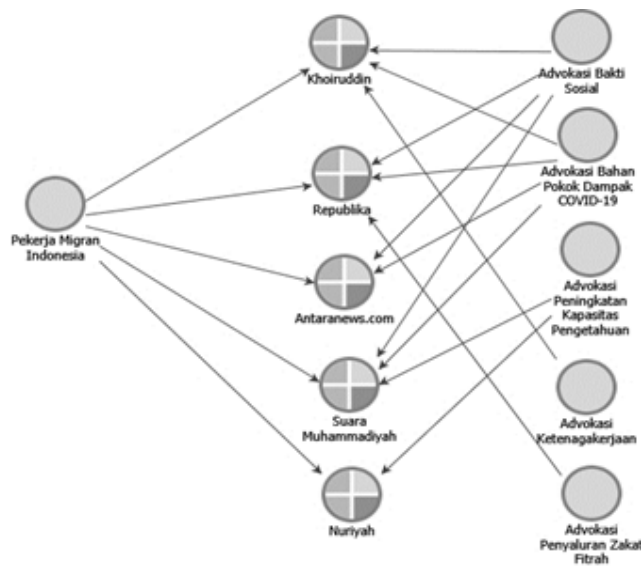


Figure 8. PCIM Malaysia Online Media and Advocacy (Authors' Analysis, 2021)

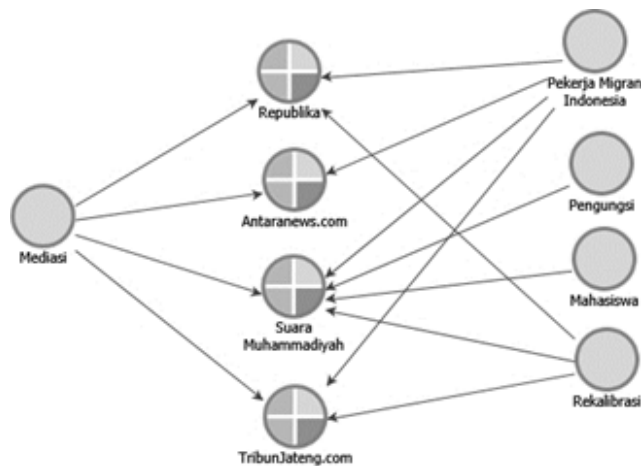


Figure 9. PCIM Malaysia Online Media and Mediation (Authors' Analysis, 2021)

or returned home. When it comes to reporting data in online media, recalibration activities are not a priority for Antaranews.com, in contrast to Republika, Suara Muhammadiyah, and TribunJateng.com, which provide an adequate portion of the recalibration agenda.

The recalibration agenda is a Malaysian Government program that aims to repatriate illegal workers (Zulhuda 2021). PCIM Malaysia, joining the Alliance of Indonesian Mass Organizations (AOMI) in Malaysia, has greatly helped this agenda. PCIM Malaysia mediation was realized with the success of PCIM Malaysia in facilitating illegal workers by hiring Malindo airline (Khoiruddin 2021). Furthermore, Khoiruddin did not advise workers

to buy tickets independently without the coordination of PCIM Malaysia because of the risk of harming them.

Zulhuda (2021) mentioned that the recalibration program could not be realized without the active involvement of Indonesian citizens in mobilization, socialization, and assistance. Therefore, these three roles were mostly carried out by PCIM Malaysia and other organizations in AOMI. The priority of recalibration for Muhammadiyah members is given to vulnerable groups such as the elderly, sick people, and minors. Khoiruddin, Chairman of MPSKU PCIM Malaysia, mentioned the seriousness of PCIM Malaysia in facilitating vulnerable groups as follows.

“... Itu juga difasilitasi, tapi Alhamdulillah dari PCIM, kita sendiri pun memfasilitasi itu, dorongan itu yang untuk orang sakit terus di PCIM juga kebetulan kemarin yang yang sakit-sakit itu ada yang struk, ada yang sakit sudah tua di sini, nggak bisa pulang itu kita pulangkan secara gratis. Dan ... Itu kita mintakan bantuan bantuan kepada kawan-kawan kita semua yang mampu itu saling membantu dan kita kumpulkan Akhirnya bisa memulangkan ada yang namanya Pak Supadi itu dari Jawa Timur dari Gresik. Itu kita pulangkan gratis ke rumah, kita kasih uang saku 2 juta terus makan di sini selama menunggu penerbangan itu saya kirim juga makannya supaya bisa makan terus utang-utangnya itu sebagian utang yang saya tahu saya bayar supaya nggak punya utang tapi bukan saya yang bayar tapi uang bantuan yang melalui MPSKU tadi kita bayarkan jadi dia pulang itu sudah sudah bersih Pak. Jadi, nggak ada sangkutan utang piutang apa sudah nggak ada.” (Khoiruddin 2021)

“... Alhamdulillah, we also facilitate for PCIM. We keep facilitating for sick people. Yesterday, I found a man with a stroke. They could not go home, and we helped them for free. That is why we ask for help from our friends to help each other. Finally, we could repatriate someone named Supadi from Gresik, East Java. We sent him home for free. We gave him 2 million IDR pocket money and a meal here while waiting for the flight. I also sent some food supplies. I paid half of the debts through MPSKU earlier, so he came home clean.” (Khoiruddin 2021)

In several cases of medical equipment assistance to pay, PCIM Malaysia has provided obligations for vulnerable groups taking part in the recalibration program. PCIM's role in Malaysia in the recalibration of the Malaysian Government's succession program proves the mediation modality owned by PCIM Malaysia.

PCIM Malaysia also helps other vulnerable groups such as refugees and students. In Republika, PCIM Malaysia's mediating role for students and refugees is the distribution of zakat and qurban meat. Apart from these two groups, PCIM Muhammadiyah distributes sacrificial meat to Indonesian migrant workers in dire need and residents. PCIM Malaysia also facilitates Muhammadiyah citizens in Indonesia to channel donations for PMI

established in Malaysia through Lazismuh (a. Setiawan 2020).

PCIM Malaysia's social da'wah in the form of *qurban* strengthens Indonesia-Malaysia relations. Zuhhuda asserted that several Malaysians entrusted their sacrificial animals to PCIM Malaysia. Even a member of the Malaysian Parliament donated sacrificial animals to PCIM Malaysia (Zuhhuda 2017). PCIM Malaysia also used the sacrifice organization to introduce Muhammadiyah's essential ideas in Progressive Islam. It is a physical-spiritual balance, worldly-*ukhrawi*, a vertical relationship to Allah SWT and a horizontal relationship with others.

PCIM Malaysia has cooperated with Islamic banking to mediate financial services for PMI in the economy. The cooperation program between Bank Muamalat Indonesia and PCIM Malaysia was held through joint sports activities by Indonesian students, and PMI participated. On occasion, Zuhhuda, who represented PCIM Malaysia, said the PCIM Muhammadiyah missionary agenda required strategic partners from various circles, including financial institutions that offer financing and asset management. Meanwhile, BMI requires partners to realize empowerment programs (Tim Media PCIM Malaysia 2020b).

The mediating role of PCIM Muhammadiyah is necessary for supporting the capacity building of Muhammadiyah's charitable businesses. PCIM Muhammadiyah assists Muhammadiyah universities in conducting international KKN programs, as illustrated in Figure 10.

Figure 10 is the result of data analysis using the project map feature on Nvivo 12 Plus, explaining the Malaysian PCIM mediation map that serves the interests of Muhammadiyah educational institutions and vulnerable groups in Malaysia. Muhammadiyah Higher Education wants to provide broad experience to its students by implementing community empowerment programs in foreign countries in need. PCIM Malaysia plays an essential role in connecting vulnerable groups in Malaysia with Muhammadiyah Universities. They have carried out various activities for migrant workers, students at Indonesian schools, indigenous Malaysians, and local Malaysian communities for about a month.

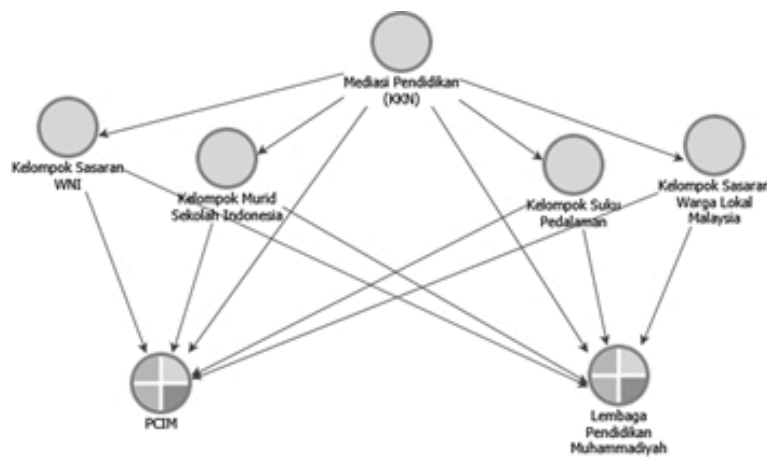


Figure 10. Mediation of International Community Service Program at Muhammadiyah Universities (Authors' Analysis, 2021)

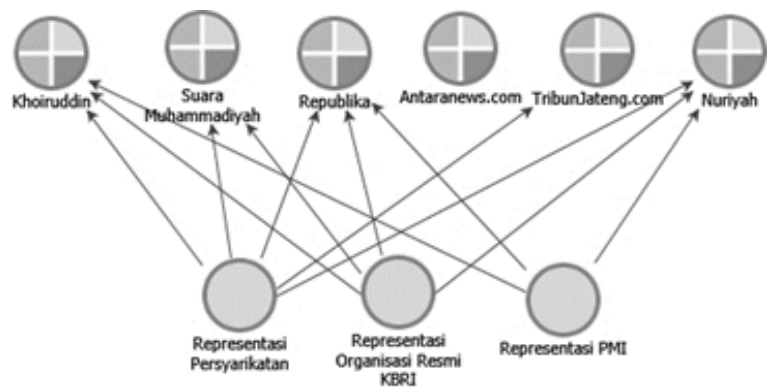


Figure 11. PCIM Malaysia Representation (Authors' Analysis, 2021)

### Representation

The relationship between data and representational variables is illustrated in Figure 11 after being analyzed using the project map feature in Nvivo 12 Plus.

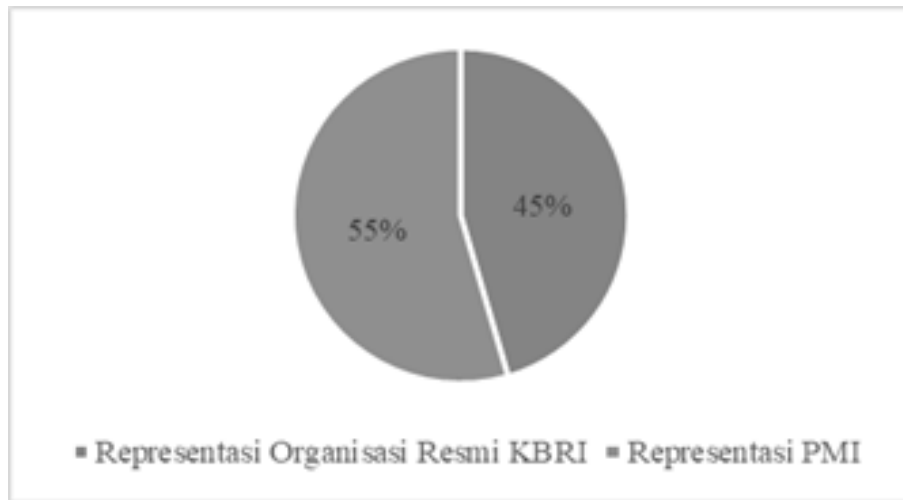
Antaranews.com did not report the Malaysian PCIM representation variable among the four online media analyzed. All primary data obtained through interview techniques confirmed the results of the Malaysian PCIM representation. Then, Figure 12 depicts the relationship between Organizational Representations, Indonesian Embassy Official Organizations, and PMI in the data.

The pie chart above, generated from a modified analysis of matrix coding from Nvivo 12 Plus, briefly explains that both secondary data, except Antaranews.com, and primary data, mention the relationship between the variables of association representation, PMI representation, and the official organization of the Indonesian Embassy.

There is a stronger relationship between the variable representation of the association with the 55% variable PMI representation.

PCIM Malaysia has at least two main tasks. First, PCIM Malaysia is tasked with gathering all potential Muhammadiyah residents in Malaysia. Second, PCIM Malaysia seeks and organizes cooperation opportunities between Indonesia and Malaysia. PCIM Malaysia represents Muhammadiyah as a member of the Indonesian Mass Organization Alliance (AOMI) in Malaysia. AOMI is inseparable from the role of representatives of PCIM Malaysia from the Majelis Pelayanan Sosial dan Kesejahteraan Umat (MPSKU), who actively participates in meetings at the Indonesian Embassy.

PCIM Malaysia has succeeded in forming the Muhammadiyah Branch Leadership (PRM), which has expanded its membership. Malaysian PRM has five



**Figure 12.** Relation of Representation of Organizations, Official Community Organization of the Indonesian Embassy, and PMI (Authors' Analysis, 2021)

branches, three of which are located in the PMI base from Lamongan, and one branch is growing in the PMI base from Gresik, East Java (Yulianto 2017). Similarly, PCIA Malaysia already has two branches. The Malaysian PCIM and PCIA activists consist of three categories: lecturers, students, and expatriates and migrants who already have permanent resident identities, most of whom are migrant workers from Indonesia.

In seeking a solution to the PMI problem, PCIM Malaysia made institutional improvements by developing a special division termed the Majelis Pelayanan Sosial dan Kesejahteraan Umat (MPSKU). Khoiruddin, Chair of MPSKU, considered that the division was critical because the social and humanitarian role of PCIM Malaysia became more organized and measurable (Khoiruddin 2021). In addition, PCIM Malaysia as a representative of Muhammadiyah, organizes education for PMI children who do not have an identity and are underprivileged.

The Indonesian Embassy asked PCIM Malaysia to establish a Community Learning Activity Center (PKBM) for PMI children, in synergy with the Kuala Lumpur Indonesian School (Tim Media PCIM Malaysia 2021). The Indonesian Embassy entrusts this collaboration because it understands the professionalism of Muhammadiyah in the management of education. The educational mission of PCIM Malaysia is strongly motivated by the desire to

preach to realize Progressive Islam so that children are not only cognitively enlightened but mentally and morally awakened better (Khoiruddin 2021).

Like Muhammadiyah in Indonesia, PCIM Malaysia coordinates with its autonomous organizations in social *da'wah*. Social *da'wah* is carried out collaboratively with other Indonesian Islamic organizations, such as the Malaysian PCNU, organizing mass circumcision. This joint activity is specifically intended for orphans, poor people, and PMI (Firmansyah 2016). This activity also involves local organizations, such as the Komunitas Rukun Tetangga (KRT) and Komuniti 1 Malaysia (KIM).

### **Muhammadiyah Internationalization**

All PCIM, including those in Malaysia, play a central role in supporting the internationalization program of Muhammadiyah, adapted to the organized movement. The scope of the internationalization of Muhammadiyah covers three fields, education, health, and Progressive Islamic discourse. In the four selected online media data, only Republika and Suara Muhammadiyah discussed the contribution of PCIM Malaysia in the internationalization of Muhammadiyah in education.

Republika focuses on initiating the Muhammadiyah University in Malaysia. Muhammadiyah's desire to establish a university received a positive response from

the Malaysian Government, represented by the Minister of Education, Maszlee Malik. The Malaysian side has offered Muhammadiyah's willingness to establish a university in Perlis (Nashrullah 2019). The meeting between PP Muhammadiyah and the Malaysian Minister of Education was not limited to the universities but also wider educational cooperation. For example, Malaysia wants to send students to Muhammadiyah universities to study at the Faculty of Medicine. Hearing PP Muhammadiyah from the Malaysian Government began with PCIM Malaysia's contact with the Malaysian side.

In contrast to *Republika*, *Suara Muhammadiyah* saw more assistance from PCIM Malaysia to succeed in the international KKN of Muhammadiyah universities. The international KKN took place, including teaching and mentoring, counseling and training, and a knowledge and da'wah forum by visiting a shelter belonging to the Indonesian Embassy (Tim Media PCIM Malaysia 2020a). Students have the opportunity to explain to the Indonesian Embassy the problems PMI faced. As an illustration, the image below describes *Republika* and *Suara Muhammadiyah*, which reported on the role of PCIM Muhammadiyah in the internationalization of Muhammadiyah in education.

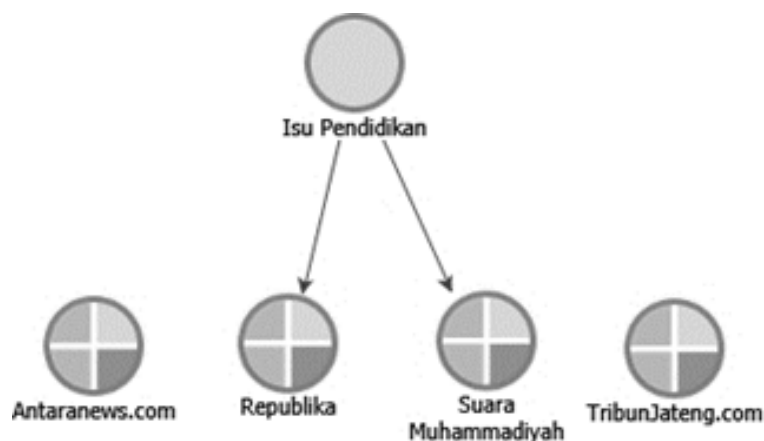
In the health sector, Central Executive (PP) Aisyiyah asked PCIA Malaysia to play an active role in easing the burden on people affected by COVID-19. So far, PP Aisyiyah has assessed that PCIA Malaysia has been proactive in helping Indonesian citizens affected by the

pandemic through health checks (S. D. Setiawan 2020). PCIA Malaysia has also conducted health checks on Indonesian citizens or PMI after the fire disaster in 2014. In collaboration with Gadjah Mada University Alumni Families, PCIA Malaysia visited victims to provide free examination and treatment services. PCIA Malaysia also distributed basic materials and appropriate clothing (PCIM Malaysia 2014).

The women's health issues that Aisyiyah also considered were reproductive health, such as cervical cancer, receiving minimal attention from the government. This issue was one of the cooperation agendas between Universitas Muhammadiyah Semarang with PCIM and PCIA Malaysia, along with empowerment programs including entrepreneurship training, business knowledge, and batik skills (Tim Media PCIM Malaysia 2020c)

In Figure 14, the data came from the internationalization of health issues in *Suara Muhammadiyah* only. Two other media, *Antarnews.com* and *Republika*, discussed other internationalization issues. Meanwhile, *TribunJateng.com* did not mention health issues at all.

Furthermore, regarding the discourse of Progressive Islam, PP Aisyiyah views the existence of PCIA and PCIM Malaysia to facilitate the efforts and performance of the association, namely to facilitate PP Muhammadiyah in broadcasting Progressive Islam (S. D. Setiawan 2020). Progressive Islam provides ample space for women to contribute to solving societal problems.



**Figure 13.** Online Media and Internationalization of Education (Authors' Analysis, 2021)

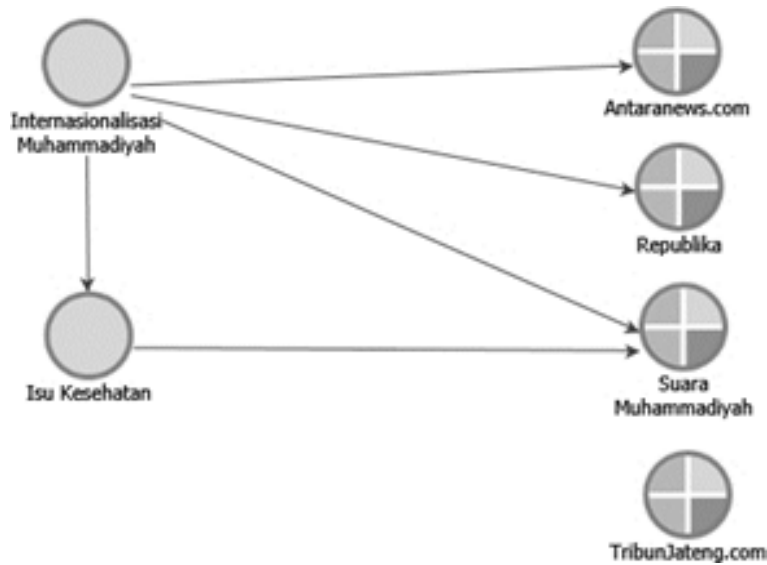


Figure 14. Online Media and Internationalization of Health Issues (Authors' Analysis, 2021)

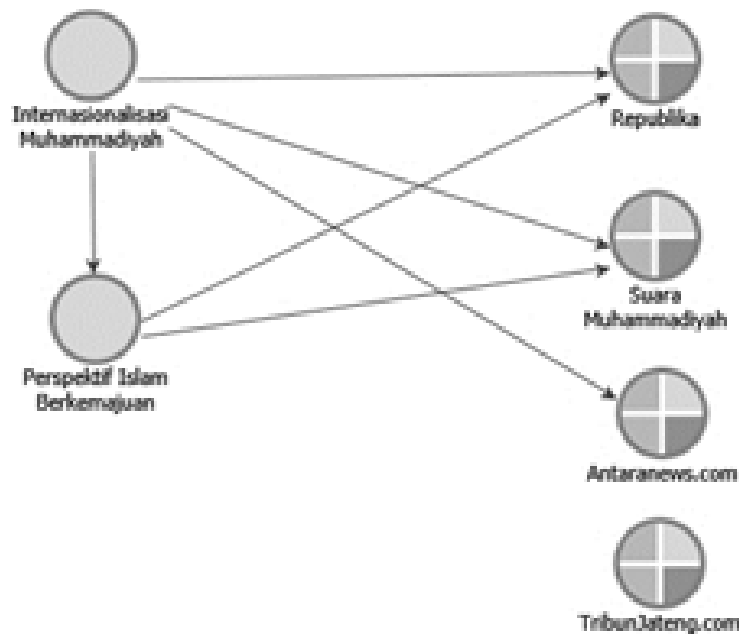


Figure 15. Online Media and Internationalization of Advanced Islamic Discourse (Authors' Analysis, 2021)

Progressive Islamic Discourse upholds the value of balance and gender equality that remains proportional according to their respective capacities. The concept of balance in Progressive Islam, as expressed by Sonny Zuhuda, Chairman of PCIM Malaysia, in his remarks at the 2017 qurban event, is a balance between *habluminallah* and *habluminanas* (Zuhuda 2017). This balance will foster

individual piety and social holiness simultaneously. With this balance, Zuhuda hoped that PCIM and PCIA Malaysia members can develop international ta'awun (cooperation) (Suara Muhammadiyah 2020).



## CONCLUSION

There are three forms of diaspora diplomatic activity: advocacy, mediation, and representation. PCIM and PCIA Malaysia, as organizations run by Indonesian citizens living in Malaysia, carry out the same function with these three activities. This study uncovered that PCIM and PCIA Malaysia's advocacy activities varied: advocacy for disaster due to the COVID-19 pandemic, advocacy for education for PMI's children with no identity, and employment advocacy for unpaid PMI.

Then, PCIM and PCIA Malaysia play a mediating role for vulnerable groups not only intended for Indonesian citizens. PCIM and PCIA Malaysia mediate the interests of refugees, mostly Rohingya and students. Regarding PMI mediation, the dominant role of PCIM and PCIA Malaysia during the pandemic is to assist the recalibration process. The mediation role also accommodates the interests of Muhammadiyah universities to carry out an International Community Service Program for their students. KKN participants benefit PMI, Indonesian school students, indigenous Malaysians, and residents.

Furthermore, regarding representation, PCIM and PCIA Malaysia are the official extensions of the association in Malaysia. Therefore, this research disclosed that PCIM and PCIA Malaysia have represented Muhammadiyah as an official member of Malaysia's Alliance of Indonesian Community Organizations (AOMI). PCIM and PCIA Malaysia are also representatives of PMI because PMI fully supports the Muhammadiyah and Aisyiah branches that developed in PMI bases. PCIM and PCIA Malaysia, with the Indonesian Embassy, have built a Community Learning Activity Center for PMI children having no education in formal Malaysian educational institutions.

This article discovered additional functions outside the internationalization of Muhammadiyah. Meanwhile, PCIM and PCIA Malaysia have played a role in internationalization in education, health, and the discourse of Progressive Islam. In addition to International KKN, the role of PCIM Malaysia is also to assist in establishing a Muhammadiyah university in Malaysia. The health sector has collaborated with Muhammadiyah universities and other institutions for

examination, treatment, and reproductive health services. Meanwhile, Progressive Islam is integrated into social *da'wah* activities to build international *ta'awun*.

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