

# Humanitarian Diplomacy in Action: Examining Muhammadiyah as a Model for Faith-Based Organizational Engagement

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## Abstrak

Upaya kemanusiaan internasional yang dilakukan oleh organisasi keagamaan masih belum banyak dikaji. Penelitian ini mengidentifikasi dinamika operasional Muhammadiyah sebagai Faith-Based Organization (FBO) yang cukup dikenal dengan aksi kemanusiaan globalnya—sebuah praktik yang dapat disebut sebagai diplomasi kemanusiaan. Tujuan studi ini adalah untuk menjelaskan kontribusi Muhammadiyah dalam diplomasi kemanusiaan untuk melengkapi kesenjangan literatur yang sebagian besar berfokus pada aksi kemanusiaan yang dilakukan oleh pemerintah. Kajian ini menggunakan kerangka konsep diplomasi kemanusiaan Minear dan Smith (2007). Penelitian ini menguraikan aktivitas organisasi tersebut ke dalam empat dimensi inti: orchestration of presence, the negotiation of access, the mobilization of advocacy, and the oversight of programmatic assistance. Melalui pendekatan metodologis kualitatif, kajian ini mengumpulkan data melalui wawancara dengan pimpinan Muhammadiyah dan data sekunder seperti tulisan-tulisan akademis berbasis penelitian, artikel jurnal, dan laporan berita. Temuan penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa kegiatan kemanusiaan yang dilakukan oleh Muhammadiyah sangat sejalan dengan prinsip yang dikemukakan oleh Minear dan Smith. Organisasi ini telah mengatur kehadirannya di berbagai negara, melakukan negosiasi strategis untuk akses, keterlibatan aktif dalam advokasi, untuk memperkuat kebutuhan dan hak-hak masyarakat, yang terdampak, dan monitoring terhadap program bantuan secara kolektif menunjukkan model kerja kemanusiaan yang baik. Studi ini tidak hanya memberikan kontribusi pada pemahaman yang lebih mendalam mengenai FBO dalam diplomasi kemanusiaan, namun juga memberikan contoh bagi NGOs nasional dan lokal lainnya yang berupaya mengatasi tantangan kerja kemanusiaan internasional.

Kata kunci: Muhammadiyah, Faith-Based Organization, diplomasi kemanusiaan, keterlibatan NGO, kerja kemanusiaan

## Abstract

The intersection of faith organization and international humanitarian efforts remains a relatively underexplored domain within the broader discourse of non-governmental organizational studies. This research delves into the operational dynamics of Muhammadiyah, a prominent Indonesian Faith-Based Organization (FBO), as it engages in global humanitarian endeavors—a practice herein referred to as 'humanitarian diplomacy'. The primary objective of this study is to elucidate the contributions of Muhammadiyah in humanitarian diplomacy, thereby filling a gap in the literature that predominantly focuses on International Non-Governmental Organizations (INGOs) and state actors, with scant attention to national or FBO. This study parses the organization's activities into four core dimensions, as stated by Minear and Smith (2007): the orchestration of presence, the negotiation of access, the mobilization of advocacy, and the oversight of programmatic assistance. A narrative of Muhammadiyah's operational strategies and diplomatic engagements was reconstructed through a qualitative methodological approach, including interviews with Muhammadiyah affiliates and a comprehensive review of secondary data sources such as academic theses, research articles, and news reports. The findings revealed that Muhammadiyah's humanitarian work has been closely aligned with the theoretical tenets proposed by Minear and Smith. The organization's effective arrangement of its presence in various regions, strategic negotiation for access in complex environments, active engagement in advocacy to amplify the needs and rights of affected populations, and diligent monitoring of assistance programs have collectively demonstrated a sophisticated model of humanitarian diplomacy at work. This study not only contributes to a more nuanced understanding of FBOs in humanitarian diplomacy but also provides a template for other national and local NGOs seeking to navigate the challenges of international humanitarian work.

Keywords: Muhammadiyah, Faith-Based Organization, humanitarian diplomacy, NGO engagement, humanitarian work

## INTRODUCTION

The concept of humanitarian diplomacy has gained prominence in the post-Cold War era, coinciding with the burgeoning presence of humanitarian organizations worldwide. This form of diplomacy is predicated on the capacity of influential individuals or groups to instigate transformative changes in pursuit of humanitarian goals. Jan Egeland's Turunen (2020) articulation of this term underscores the proactive exertion of power to materialize humanitarian objectives. Harroff-Tavel (2005) from the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) further expanded on this definition, depicting humanitarian diplomacy as an amalgamation of relational efforts with diverse stakeholders and strategic advocacy aimed at leveraging a network of influence for humanitarian ends.

Humanitarian diplomacy has emerged from the shadows of traditional diplomacy, particularly in its response to crises where the latter has depicted limitations. The urgency for humanitarian diplomacy is underscored by the rising incidence of disaster and conflict-induced humanitarian challenges. According to the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR, 2022), the early 21st century witnessed an alarming frequency of large-scale natural disasters and disease outbreaks, leading to profound socioeconomic repercussions and escalating vulnerabilities. Conflicts, however, remain the predominant catalysts of humanitarian crises, often exacerbating food insecurity and socioeconomic destabilization, as reported by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA, 2022). The Global Humanitarian Overview (2022) further highlights the escalating need for humanitarian aid, with an estimated 274,000,000 people requiring assistance and protection—a significant increase from the previous year.

In response to these escalating humanitarian needs, an array of actors has mobilized, comprising states and non-state entities, including Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), private individuals, and collectives. Scholarly investigations into these non-state actors have revealed their critical role in delivering humanitarian aid, monitoring crises, and facilitating

protection, assistance, capacity building, and peacebuilding initiatives. According to Minear and Smith (2007), NGOs are estimated to account for approximately 60% of humanitarian responses, with Faith-Based Organizations (FBOs) increasingly extending their humanitarian footprint. However, existing literature tends to focus predominantly on international organizations, leaving the contributions of national or local FBOs within the spectrum of humanitarian diplomacy less examined.

Against this backdrop, this study turns its lens toward Muhammadiyah, one of Indonesia's largest NGOs, with a membership estimated at 60,000,000. Since its inception in 1912, Muhammadiyah has been actively involved in international humanitarian assistance, responding to conflicts and natural disasters across diverse geographies. Its efforts have spanned continuous aid to Palestinian and Rohingya communities, peacebuilding in Mindanao, Philippines, and disaster response to seismic events in Nepal, the Philippines, Turkey, and Morocco.

While individual studies focus on specific interventions by Muhammadiyah, such as those by Shafa (2017), Medina (2017), Anisa (2018), and others, a comprehensive examination of its overarching international humanitarian activities remains absent. This study seeks to fill this scholarly void by providing a detailed account of Muhammadiyah's role in non-state humanitarian diplomacy, illustrating how a national FBO can become a pivotal player in the global humanitarian arena.

## THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

As Minear and Smith (2007) defined, humanitarian diplomacy is involved in NGO activities, such as arranging the presence of humanitarian actors, negotiating access to local citizens in need of protection and assistance, engaging in advocacy to achieve humanitarian objectives, and monitoring assistance programs.

This concept proposes that humanitarian diplomacy is performed by humanitarian actors as non-traditional diplomats since traditional diplomats joint initiatives on humanitarian by having political interests. Besides, the humanitarian diplomat is characterized by an urgency that does not view the state or political interest with the

distinction of traditional diplomats. Humanitarianism differs to an extent from political agreements pursued in traditional diplomacy by state actors (Mancini-Griffoli and Picot, 2004).

Therefore, this concept is closely suitable to identify Muhammadiyah as a non-state actor in humanitarian work. Şeyşane and Tanriverdi-Şeyşane (2022) strengthened the concept proposed by Minear and Smith by stating that non-traditional diplomats properly explain humanitarian responses by non-state actors. Meanwhile, other perspectives emerge from previous studies, highlighting humanitarian negotiations carried out by traditional diplomats (Harroff-Tavel, 2005; Lauri, 2018; Mancini-Griffoli and Picot, 2004). However, Minear and Smith were the only ones focusing on non-traditional diplomacy performed by non-state actors. Apart from that, Minear and Smith differentiated humanitarian organizations from other organizations or actors by their neutral attitude toward their mission.

The operational framework for understanding the intricacies of humanitarian diplomacy, as conceptualized by Minear and Smith (2007), is a pivotal reference for dissecting the multifaceted engagement of NGOs within this domain. It encompasses four critical activities: arranging the presence of humanitarian actors, negotiating access, engaging in advocacy, and monitoring assistance programs.

### Arranging the Presence of Humanitarian Actors

This facet of humanitarian diplomacy involves establishing a foothold within the affected area and initiating collective action on pertinent issues. It necessitates the establishment of a robust network of international relations to facilitate access and expresses the commitment to acquiring and disseminating knowledge and information crucial for delivering aid.

### Negotiating Access to Local Citizens

The negotiation is inherently political, with humanitarian actors assuming a significant role in conflict resolution. Practical negotiation entails forging agreements that guarantee the safety, access, and assistance of civilians during conflicts.

### Engaging in Advocacy

Advocacy serves as a network analytical tool, enabling humanitarian actors to comprehend the conditions and dynamics that influence state policies and behaviors. The objective is the protection of civilians and the addressing of critical issues such as violence against women.

### Monitoring Assistance Programs

Monitoring ensures that humanitarian programs adhere to their set agendas and are coordinated and implemented effectively. It may include site visits,

Figure 1 displays the framework employed and elaborated in the following section.

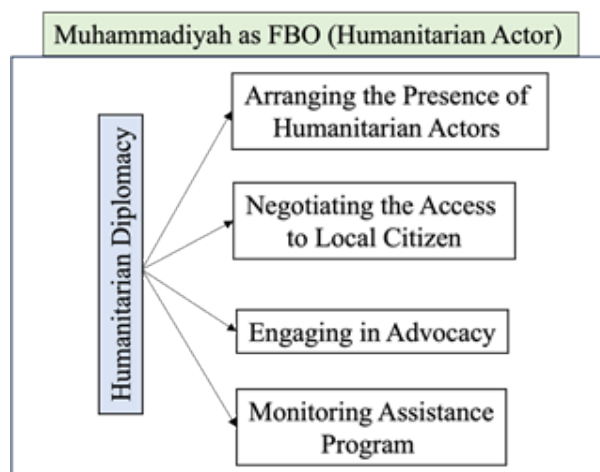


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework adapted from Minear and Smith (2007)

stakeholder discussions, and coordination with international entities.

The forthcoming section expands upon this framework, exploring the specific mechanisms by which Muhammadiyah has operationalized the tenets of humanitarian diplomacy in its endeavors. This exploration is essential for a comprehensive understanding of how national FBOs, like Muhammadiyah, navigate and contribute to the complex field of humanitarian aid.

## RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a qualitative case study approach, helping to understand a complex phenomenon of different factors (Creswell, 2015) on how Muhammadiyah works overseas. The data were collected from Muhammadiyah members in overseas responses, including the researchers—Muhammadiyah members and actors in some of Muhammadiyah's humanitarian overseas work. The researchers utilized all the information and connections to interview and collect data from all Muhammadiyah members involved in its overseas works. Eight people were interviewed for this research. In addition, secondary data, such as theses, journals and books related to the overseas humanitarian work of Muhammadiyah, online news, documents, and other sources, were collected. This study applied a data triangulation technique (Miles et al., 2014), consisting of collecting data, reducing data, presenting data, and drawing conclusions. The data collected from interviews and secondary data were classified and analyzed based on the concept adopted.

## RESULT AND ANALYSIS

Indonesia has actively contributed to the global humanitarian crisis (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia, 2022). It is part of Indonesia's commitment to implement the constitution based on humanitarian principles and global human rights. To participate and contribute to that mission, numerous NGOs have emerged year by year, reaching 390,293 in 2018 (Ariesta, 2018) and rising to 431,465 in 2019 (Novrizaldi, 2022). Although many NGOs are arising in Indonesia, only a few work overseas, particularly

concerning conflict and disaster settings.

Based on an online search, only 18 NGOs were recorded working on overseas disaster responses, and 35 NGOs working on conflict response, including Muhammadiyah (Filantropi Indonesia, 2023; Humanitarian Forum, 2018). Muhammadiyah, as one of the largest FBOs with its values, has viewed humanitarian issues as common problems that must not discriminate against groups, especially religions or beliefs. Muhammadiyah has responded to humanitarian crises in many countries. The following section discusses how Muhammadiyah works using the humanitarian diplomacy concept offered by Minear and Smith (2007), including arranging the presence of humanitarian actors, negotiating access to a local citizen, engaging in advocacy, and monitoring assistance programs. Those indicators were employed to identify Muhammadiyah and its significant role in humanitarian issues.

### ARRANGING THE PRESENCE OF HUMANITARIAN ACTOR

To be present and respond to humanitarian crises overseas, Muhammadiyah has been partnering and networking with other humanitarian actors, both domestic and international. The following section describes Muhammadiyah's partners in carrying out humanitarian work and the type of humanitarian programs.

#### Partnerships (Networking) for Humanitarian Works

The presence of Muhammadiyah in countries was carried out in two ways: participating in the Indonesian humanitarian mission coordinated by the government or part of an alliance and distributing aid independently. Table 1 lists various partners of Muhammadiyah, including the government, the UN agencies, the alliances, and NGOs.

Thus, the data demonstrate that Muhammadiyah was present in the humanitarian crisis in the past decades, partnering with several humanitarian actors both nationally and internationally. A new unit called Muhammadiyah Disaster Management Center (MDMC), aiming to respond to any humanitarian crisis both locally

**Table 1.** Muhammadiyah and Its Partnerships in Humanitarian Works

No	Country	Event	Year	Partnership	Local Partner
1.	Palestine	Palestine Conflict	2002  2007  2013-2020  2023	<p>Indonesian Committee for Indonesian Solidarity (KISPA) (20 Islamic mass organizations in Indonesia under the auspices of the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI)) (Ishom, 2016)</p> <p>Indonesia-Palestine Friendship Initiative (PIIP) Interfaith figures (Din Syamsuddin, Abdul Mu'ti, Theophilus Bella, and Phillip Wijaya) (Detik News, 2012)</p> <p>UN Partnerships (United Nations Relief and Work Agency (UNWRA) and International Education Scientific and Cultural Organization (IESCO)) (Probo, 2013) (Lazismu, 2018)</p>	Local NGOs including At Takween, Gaza, Wafaa microfinance and capacity building, Ramallah, AWC, Aqso, Jerusalem (Muhammadiyah, 2023b)
2.	Thailand	Ethnic Conflict	2007-2008	<p>Joining the invitation to discuss between the Royal Thai Government and other NGOs - (King of Royal Thai, Thai Foreign Affairs Department, Chief of South Thailand Delegation, SBPAC, five Vice Governors from five provinces in South Thailand, MUI, Indonesia Mosque Council, Council of Indonesia Islamiyah Da'wa) (Priyambodo, 2008; Syifa, 2021a)</p>	

3.	Nepal	Earthquake Disaster	2002	Part of the Indonesian Team (BNPB, SRC PB, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Health, PKPU, DD, YEU and the Indonesian Red Cross) (BNPB, 2015a; Gabrillin, 2015; Puspitasari, 2015; Tambak, 2015)	
4.	Myanmar	Rohingya Conflict	2017	Humanitarian Alliance for Myanmar (AKIM) (MDMC, DD, PKPU, LPBI NU, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and 12 other NGOs) (BBC Indonesia, 2017)	
5.	Bangladesh	Rohingya Conflict	2017	Indonesia Humanitarian Alliance (IHA) (Muhammadiyah, PKPU, NU, Dompot Dhuafa, Rumah Zakat, Dompot Peduli Ummat Daarut Tauhiid, Lazis Wahdah, Infaq Management Institute, Zakat Forum, Community Zakat Center, BAZNAS, Al Irsyad, and the MOFA) (Gumilang, 2017)	Local NGO: We are The Dreamer (WTD) (Sidik & Nadjemudin, 2017)
6.	Turkey	Earthquake Disaster	2023	Part of the Indonesian Team (BNPB, Coordinating Ministry of Human Development and Culture, Ministry of Health, and Ministry of Foreign Affairs) (Nashrullah, 2023)	Indonesian Ambassador for Turkey
7.	Sudan	Internal Conflict	2023	Part of the Indonesian Team (Coordinating Ministry of Human Development and Culture, Ministry of Social Affairs, and Indonesian Embassy in Khartoum) (Muhammadiyah, 2023c)	

Source: Processed by Authors, 2023

and internationally, was established as Muhammadiyah's humanitarian response after the 2010 National Congress. Since 2017, Muhammadiyah has set up the task force of Muhammadiyah Aid, specifically responding to the overseas humanitarian crisis.

The presence of Muhammadiyah has been recognized not only by the government of Indonesia (Coordinating Ministry of Human Resource Development, MOFA, NDMA, MOSA, MOH) but also by International NGOs and UN agencies, such as WHO, which has supported Muhammadiyah in preparing its Emergency Medical Team to be classified by WHO to respond humanitarian health services overseas using an international standard.

### Responding to Humanitarian Needs through the Activities

The presence of Muhammadiyah in various settings has been illustrated through various activities carried out by its teams or units or by aligning with other FBOs and NGOs. Hronová (2020) defined relief in humanitarian aid as a quick intervention designed to save lives, alleviate hardship, and get disaster or conflict victims back on their feet. Following the definition, the OECD (2017) has explained several activities categorizing the types of relief aid, including material assistance and services, emergency food aid, reconstruction and rehabilitation, and disaster prevention and preparedness.

**Table 2.** Types of Aid Conducted by Muhammadiyah

No	Country	Type of Aid	Activities
1.	Palestine	Development  Relief Development (Ardianto, 2021)	Building an Indonesian school in Jerusalem near the Aqsa Mosque - in partnership with PPIP (Ishom, 2016)  Giving health logistics and services (Ardianto, 2021) Providing scholarship Assisting in peacebuilding as political support
2.	Thailand	Development  Development	Building schools from elementary to high school (Swamurti, 2008) Providing university scholarships (Kompas, 2009) Assisting in peacebuilding through interfaith dialogue (Priyambodo, 2008)
3.	Philippines	Development  Relief	Sending medical experts and teachers to Mindanao to share experiences and manage education and hospitals (Rahadi, 2013) Providing scholarships and creating educational facilitation programs and economic empowerment of the Bangsamoro community (Afandi, 2021b) Redeveloping education programs for Bangsamoro (Afandi, 2021b) Sending a medical team to provide health services by establishing a field hospital with aid distribution worth IDR 125,000,000 (Nasution, 2013)
4.	Nepal	Relief	Sending a medical team consisting of doctors and nurses (as part of the Indonesian team) (Shafa, 2017)
5.	Myanmar	Relief	Distributing the aid logistics (Laksana, 2017) Building sanitation and health facilities (Sidik & Nadjemudin, 2017)

		Development (Syifa, 2021b)	Building a vocational learning center Vocational training Building a school and an inclusion market
6.	Bangladesh	Relief  Development	Providing Rohingya health assistance in Cox's Bazar until the end of 2018 Delivering aid activities focused on health, disaster response, recovery, and reconciliation Organizing workshops and lessons at the refugee camp
7.	Somalia	Relief	Distributing the primary logistics (Fajar, 2017)
8.	Lebanon	Development	Building two schools at the refugee camp (Afandi, 2021a)
9.	Kenya	Development	Building a mosque and providing educational scholarships to 20 students (Mughni, 2022)
10.	Taiwan	Relief	Distributing masks and medical for Indonesian migrant workers during a pandemic (Suara Muhammadiyah, 2020)
11.	Pakistan	Relief	Distributing logistics (140 packages each of clothing, food, and water purifier) (Muhammadiyah, 2022)
12.	Turkey	Relief (Amrullah et al., 2023)	Sending 23 volunteers as EMTs in partnering with the Indonesian Government (Nashrullah, 2023) Building two field hospitals Distributing logistics for Indonesian university students
13.	Sudan	Relief	Repatriating 924 Indonesian citizens in partnering with the Indonesian Government (Muhammadiyah, 2023c)

Source: Processed by Authors, 2023

Table 2 displays the types of relief and other humanitarian activities carried out by Muhammadiyah in several countries as a form of its presence in humanitarian diplomacy.

Muhammadiyah considered that responding to humanitarian crises was not only through relief but also aiming at development activities to help further affected people. As stated by Hronová, development activities could link to relief that aims to assist people in their efforts to lift themselves out of poverty and to mitigate further disasters or conflicts (2020). OECD (2017) also mentioned that development aid, including empowerment to strengthen national and local capacities and prevention, mediation, and peacebuilding to resolve conflict, would help the people out of the crisis. The European Union (2022) defined that humanitarian response also includes promoting policy and peace.

The tables also indicate that having a partnership in humanitarian response to gain access refers to information, communication, and coordination concerning the people or country in need is part of being *“present in humanitarian and responding to the humanitarian needs is the way of arranging the presence of humanitarian actors”* (Minear & Smith, 2007, p.1).

Muhammadiyah believed partnering with various humanitarian actors was crucial. Joining the alliance has allowed Muhammadiyah to maintain the relationship as part of humanitarian actors to obtain information, gain access to crisis areas, and be able to respond effectively. In addition, Muhammadiyah communicated with the local actors through its networks, such as Muhammadiyah's special branch in the crisis areas, Muhammadiyah university alumni, and other individuals affiliated with Muhammadiyah or a friend of Muhammadiyah.



Through this alliance, affiliation and network, Muhammadiyah has become more presence. It is in line with what UN agencies stated: coordinating with those governments or NGOs in alliance or partnership with a more visible presence in countries (OHCHR, 2011) has allowed the exchange of information. Moreover, cooperation with certain governments could also allow for cutting the long lines of bureaucracy (UNHCR, 2010).

Tables 1 and 2 also exhibit that Muhammadiyah could be considered as an FBO or an NGO physically present through delivering a service or implementing a humanitarian project during a specific period (OCHA, 2022) and deploying humanitarian actors in specific locations to assist and protect people in need (UNHCR, 2010).

## NEGOTIATING THE ACCESS TO LOCAL CITIZENS

This section discusses how Muhammadiyah gained access to countries where it responded to humanitarian needs. It was identified by how Muhammadiyah interacted with humanitarian organizations by ensuring humanitarian access to people in need to deliver humanitarian aid and implement activities.

Muhammadiyah has continued its presence in humanitarian work by negotiating access to various actors, including local government and affected communities. As stated, humanitarian diplomats need to see the dynamics of non-state actors in influencing state policies and behavior to protect civilians, especially in conflict areas (Lauri, 2018). In addition, Veuthey (2012) explained that humanitarian work also conducts a dialogue between private and public, between governments and humanitarian organizations, inter-governmental organizations (IOs), and NGOs or other non-state actors.

To gain access, Muhammadiyah has worked both with the government of Indonesia and those of the respective countries. In the case of the Rohingya crisis response in Myanmar, Muhammadiyah, as part of the Indonesia Humanitarian Alliance (IHA), has been facilitated by MOFA and the government of Myanmar to gain access, including negotiating with the local government in Rakhine State.

In the case of Nepal, the researchers were liaising with the Indonesian humanitarian mission team to gain access and work in the affected areas. The Indonesian mission team was jointly civil and military, with challenges in coordination due to different access between civil and military. Civil was under the On-site Operation Coordination Center (OSOCC), while military was under the Multi-National Military Coordination Center (MNMCC). The role of the liaison is crucial to negotiate and convince the joint team that it is not a military operation but a civil one (BNPB, 2015b).

Meanwhile, in Turkey, Muhammadiyah negotiated with the Turkish Government through the Indonesian Ambassador for Turkey to acquire a permit from the Emergency Medical Team (EMT) of Muhammadiyah (Doddy, 2023) to join in responding to the earthquake. Corona Rintawan, Muhammadiyah EMT Coordinator confirmed it.

First, the Turkish Government asked internationals to help with specific requests to send EMTs. Muhammadiyah, as the only organization with pre-qualified EMTs in Indonesia, confirmed to the Ministry of Health of Indonesia and the Indonesian Ambassador for Turkey that it was ready to help Turkey. (August 1<sup>st</sup>, 2023)

The call for the health team was similar to the response to the Philippine Typhoon Haiyan. Muhammadiyah had access to humanitarian aid in the Philippines by being facilitated by the Philippines Ambassador to Indonesia, who asked directly to Muhammadiyah and continued to inform the Philippines Government (Nasution, 2013), including the Ministry of Health and the Department of Health in Cebu. Corona Rintawan, the EMT Coordinator, stated that *"The Department of Health in Cebu had accompanied and escorted us to Tuburan Village (one of the villages affected by the disaster) and met with the Head of Village there"* (August 1<sup>st</sup>, 2023). Similar access was facilitated by the Ambassador of Kenya to Indonesia, who asked Muhammadiyah to help the Kenyan people by sending food and non-food items.

**Table 3.** Facilitators of Muhammadiyah's Access

No	Facilitator	Countries
1.	Government	Thailand, Philippines, Myanmar, Lebanon, Nepal, Turkey, Kenya, Somalia, Sudan
2.	Local Partner (NGO)	Philippines, Bangladesh, Taiwan, Turkey, and Palestine

Source: Processed by Researchers, 2023, from Table 1

Besides working with the government, Muhammadiyah also worked with the local partners to gain access to crisis areas. In countries like the Philippines, Taiwan, Turkey, Sudan, and Lebanon, Muhammadiyah worked both through the government as part of the Indonesian humanitarian mission and also by contacting and networking with Muhammadiyah special branch in respective countries (Muhammadiyah, 2023a, 2023c; Shafa, 2017; Swamurti, 2008; Wardah, 2017).

In the case of the Rohingya crisis in Bangladesh, Muhammadiyah, as part of the Indonesian Humanitarian Alliance, led the health team and cooperated with We The Dreamer (WTD), a local NGO, to deliver health services at Cox's Bazar for Rohingya Refugees (Sahroji, 2017). Corona Rintawan, the EMT Coordinator, stated that *"The WTD has assisted Muhammadiyah in gaining a permit from the local government (semi-autonomous government in Bangladesh)"* (August 1<sup>st</sup>, 2023).

In the case of crisis in Southern Thailand and the Southern Philippines, Muhammadiyah worked and communicated with the local partner and local NGO representing various groups to gain access and help build the treaty and peace process. The network with the local partners allowed Muhammadiyah to assist the affected community for the longer term, not only providing aid but also development programs such as education, livelihood, and health. It began partnering to deliver aid activities that focused on community empowerment (Saputro & Rahadi, 2017).

In addition, Muhammadiyah also gained access to the country in need by using its Muhammadiyah network, the Board of Muhammadiyah Special Branch (PCIM), to obtain information, local contact information, and access, as well as to be the first

responder. It happened during the Covid-19 response, when the Muhammadiyah Special Branch (PCIM) Taiwan distributed masks for students and the community (Ilham, 2023). Whereas in Palestine, Muhammadiyah partnered with local NGOs to gain access to work in Palestine. These NGOs included At Takween, in Gaza, Wafaa Microfinance and Capacity Building, located in Ramallah, Westbank, and Athouli Women Centre (AWC)-Jerusalem (Muhammadiyah, 2023b). Working with local partners was part of Muhammadiyah's commitment to support the Localization and Grand Bargain agenda of the World Humanitarian Summit in 2016.

To sum up, Muhammadiyah gained access to a country in crisis through various ways of negotiation. Negotiation in humanitarian has a relational component that focuses on building ongoing trusting relationships with counterparties and establishing and agreeing to specific terms and logistics (Frontline Negotiations, 2023). In addition, they stated that humanitarian workers must negotiate at different levels, both higher and lower. Professionally, at the higher level, humanitarian actors negotiate with heads of state, governors, ministers, and other government structures. At a lower level, humanitarian actors negotiate with leaders of local citizens, religious leaders, soldiers at a checkpoint, local NGOs, heads of families, and everyone in need (Frontline Negotiations, 2023). In other words, Muhammadiyah had negotiated both at higher and lower levels.

## ENGAGING IN ADVOCACY

As a big organization with a complex structure and wing organizations, special branches, units, and institutions such as universities, schools, and hospitals,

Muhammadiyah has utilized all resources to engage in advocacy to address the humanitarian crisis and work with various humanitarian actors, both state and non-state.

Advocacy refers to a set of coordinated activities (to a broader strategy) that seeks to ensure protection by promoting a peacebuilding policy (UNHCR, 2010).

There are many terms of advocacy, such as group advocacy, appeal to the government, public advocacy, private advocacy, self-advocacy, and consultative meetings (InclusionNB, 2022; Meyer, 1996; UNHCR, 2010).

The following table displays Muhammadiyah's engagement in advocacy.

**Table 4.** Types of Advocacy Conducted by Muhammadiyah

Type of Advocacy	Country	Partnership	Local Partner
Group Advocacy	Palestine	Becoming one of the mass organizations that established the Indonesian Committee for Palestine Solidarity (KISPA) (Ishom, 2016)	Domestic within Indonesia
Dialogue or Consultative Meeting	Thailand	Muhammadiyah and other NGOs conducted dialogue with the Royal Thai Government to resolve the conflict (Swamurti, 2008).	National
	Philippines (Afandi, 2021b)	Conducting a bilateral consultative meeting: MILF-ICG Muhammadiyah was actively involved in reconciling the conflict between the Bangsamoro and the Philippine Government in 2019 Muhammadiyah has sent peace mission teams regularly since 2012	National National National
Appeal to Government	Myanmar	Conducting a dialogue between Buddhists and Moslems in Rohingya, Myanmar (Maharani, 2017; Suara Muhammadiyah, 2018)	National
	Palestine (Muhyiddin and Yulianto, 2017)	Muhammadiyah and other NGOs urged the United Nations Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) and the Arab League to resolve the conflict in Palestine and impose sanctions on the Zionist Government of Israel. Appealing to the government of the Republic of Indonesia to take initiatives and diplomatic steps to resolve the Palestinian issue comprehensively with the two-state solution	International Domestic within Indonesia
	Myanmar (Prawira, 2017)	Muhammadiyah and other NGOs urged the Bangladesh Government to open the border area to the Rohingya. Muhammadiyah urged the government of the Republic of Indonesia to evaluate the diplomacy policy implemented in Myanmar. Muhammadiyah urged the government of the Republic of Indonesia to provide a particular	National Domestic within Indonesia Domestic within Indonesia

	area or place for Rohingya refugees.	
	Muhammadiyah and other NGOs urged ASEAN forces in Myanmar to stop the genocidal practices. Otherwise, it must consider freezing Myanmar's membership.	Regional
	Muhammadiyah and other NGOs urged the United Nations (UN) to take a serious part in handling humanitarian events in Myanmar.	International
	Muhammadiyah and other NGOs urged the International Criminal Court (ICC) to bring to justice those responsible for genocidal practices against the Rohingya in Myanmar.	International

Source: Processed by Researchers, 2023

The data demonstrate that Muhammadiyah has carried out several types of advocacies, such as group advocacy, dialogues or consultative meetings, and appeals to the government. The advocacies were conducted at various levels: within Indonesia (domestically), nationally (for the country in need), regionally, and internationally. Thus, Muhammadiyah's engagement in advocacy has been depicted through several terms, such as group advocacy, appeals to the government, and consultative meetings, as summarized in Table 4.

To begin with, group advocacy was performed by building coalitions or alliances with other humanitarian actors to strengthen the voice in public or political areas. As many said, building coalitions or alliances consisting of several NGOs and other humanitarian actors with similar objectives and collective voices could create articulation, often much more potent (Inclusive Security and DCAF, 2017; UNHCR, 2010).

Another type of advocacy carried out by Muhammadiyah took the form of appeals to the government. For example, Muhammadiyah's and other NGOs (such as Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), Front Pembela Islam (FPI), and Indonesian Council of Ulama (MUI)) urged regional and international levels to condemn various violence in Palestine and Rakhine Myanmar (Alam, 2019; Rahadi, 2017). For this type of advocacy, Muhammadiyah carefully selected partners with the possibility of bringing a bigger impact.

Dialogues or consultative meetings to share situational information and discuss how to solve problems emerged as the last type of Muhammadiyah's engagement in advocacy. Muhammadiyah took the initiative to conduct dialogues or fulfilled the government's invitation (Muhammadiyah, 2019). Therefore, Muhammadiyah, as an FBO, has carried out humanitarian advocacy as a strategic way to influence policies, behaviors, and practices aiming at local or national, regional, and international actors continuously to address vulnerabilities (Metcalf-Hough, 2021; UNICEF, 2023).

#### MONITORING ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

This section describes the way Muhammadiyah ensures the activity implementation is suitable to the objectives of the program. Program monitoring is critical to be carried out and employed to ascertain how the program runs, the sustainability of the existing program, and the possibility of developing the program.

To ensure the accountability of humanitarian work, Muhammadiyah performed monitoring and evaluation based on the deliverability of funds. Suppose the Muhammadiyah team carried out the program, and the field and the final report were utilized for monitoring and evaluation. The coordinator or person in charge of the program did the report. It applies to all activities performed by Muhammadiyah since 2007, starting from Thailand's assistance program until 2023 in assisting Turkiye in earthquake disaster relief (based on an

interview with Edi Muktiono as the Director of Cooperation and Fundraising Lazismu Central Board of Muhammadiyah on July 18<sup>th</sup>, 2023). It was also confirmed by Upik Rahmawati, the Director of Operation and Distribution (July 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2023), that “the humanitarian aid is only monitored through field reports by the PIC, *which has responsibility in the designated area*”.

However, if the program were implemented by Muhammadiyah’s partners, monitoring and evaluation would be carried out based on the agreement through the progress and final report. If there was a need to clarify, Muhammadiyah invited a partner to sit for a workshop. This case was applied to the Rohingya health response in Bangladesh. Corona Rintawan, a coordinator for health relief, stated, “*We conducted a workshop at Muhammadiyah Building, Menteng, Jakarta. We invited WTD, as our partner, to report the activities in Cox Bazar, including the use of the funds*” (August 1<sup>st</sup>, 2023).

The field report and workshop carried out by Muhammadiyah have become part of the routine collection and analysis of information to track progress against planned milestones (Elhra, 2014). These reports were then analyzed periodically and utilized effectively to inform future decisions to have better management and engagement. It was stated this way because delivering aid activities could not assume that humanitarian actors are doing good in helping people in need; there were several occasions when humanitarian work failed to achieve its goal (Intrac, 2021).

## CHALLENGES OF MUHAMMADIYAH IN DOING HUMANITARIAN WORK

Muhammadiyah, as a humanitarian actor, faced challenges in performing humanitarian diplomacy, as stated by Minear and Smith’s concept. The first challenge was that Muhammadiyah, as an FBO, has not possessed a legal structure compared to state actors as traditional diplomats. Hence, Muhammadiyah should have access to the Indonesian Government and the government of the country in need. Therefore, Muhammadiyah must engage various humanitarian actors broadly. Secondly, as an FBO, Muhammadiyah had to wait for the donations, alms, grants, and zakat collected by Lazismu to be able to

respond. There was no on-call budget or reserved fund yet. Third, Muhammadiyah also encountered difficulties in finding local partners, particularly in the conflict areas. It took a long process to engage and to develop trust. In addition, as a non-state actor, Muhammadiyah should establish and maintain regular engagement with political officials domestically and internationally. It was a major obstacle because the organization must face bureaucratic constraints.

Further, Muhammadiyah, as a non-state actor, had to deal with visas to enter the country in need, especially in countries of conflict. Muhammadiyah had to use a tourist visa to distribute humanitarian aid in Bangladesh and Palestine and a limited length of stay in Myanmar. Although Muhammadiyah negotiated with the ambassador, it was not easy to work with.

Concerning advocacy, Muhammadiyah emerged as a voluntary organization with a high turnover of its members. It caused inconsistency in responding or articulating issues due to a change of person in charge. Additionally, advocacy demands a strategic and evidence-based process to influence the policy at the purposive level where targeted.

Regarding monitoring and evaluation, Muhammadiyah has not possessed a fixed tool yet. Tools are one of the most commonly adopted to carry out the monitoring and evaluation to determine what outcome should be achieved by conducting the humanitarian program (Intrac, 2021).

Those challenges might be different from those of traditional diplomats, who have a formal structure and better resources. As a non-state actor, Muhammadiyah had no personnel structure to manage the aid and its operational matters. In addition, Muhammadiyah is not an international NGO, causing it to have less engagement with the international environment and be part of the international conversation, which may cause it not to be updated by the needs of the affected region and the capacity needed.

## CONCLUSION

Muhammadiyah's humanitarian work, expressed by the humanitarian diplomacy concept by Minear and Smith, consisted of (1) arranging the presence in many humanitarian crises by partnering with various stakeholders; (2) negotiating at high and low levels, including the government of Indonesia and the government where the crisis occurred, the international NGOs, the local partners and also affected community; (3) Muhammadiyah engaged in advocacy, particularly for the countries experiencing armed conflict to call domestic and international attention; and (4) Muhammadiyah performed monitoring and evaluation as part of accountability and transparency to the affected community, donor, and also to government and other humanitarian actors. The key element contributing to the success of Muhammadiyah in carrying out humanitarian diplomacy was having resources, such as skilled humanitarian workers, vast domestic experience, and infrastructure, such as hospitals, that help support a strong emergency medical team. In addition, Muhammadiyah has benefited from networking built for a long time.

These findings align with the humanitarian diplomacy concept that not only the government but also NGOs, in this case, Muhammadiyah, an FBO, have played a role in humanitarian diplomacy. This study adds to how a national NGO, Muhammadiyah, could convey overseas humanitarian work as part of humanitarian diplomacy carried out by non-state actors.

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