

## Reviewing The OIC's Response And Challenges to The Issues of Normalization of Arab State – Israel Relation in The 2020-2021 Pandemic Era (Metaverse)

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### Abstract

*The normalization of relations between Arab countries and Israel in such a way has become a frightening specter for Palestine and also most of the Muslim community in the world, this issue of course raises a perception that the two countries that are said to be opening this cooperative relationship will in the future and eliminate the existence of Palestine, and also weakens the solidarity of Islamic countries towards the independence of Palestine, and does not rule out the possibility that other Islamic countries will also open up opportunities for cooperation with Israel. Therefore, as an Organization that supports international peace and security, the response or attitude of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation is felt to be urgently needed in order to revitalize the unity of the Islamic state in order to assist the struggle for the establishment of an independent and sovereign Palestinian state.*

*Keywords: OIC, Arab, Israel, Palestine, Pandemic, Metaverse, Normalization.*

### Introduction

Normalization is an object that is often the main topic in the discussion of the scope of international politics until now. Normalization can be defined as an attempt to manifest a resolution or agreement whose aim is to be able to end tensions in a mutually agreed manner, this includes an agreement to cool conflicts, regenerate peace, and establish diplomatic relations. The existence of an agreement or agreement to normalize relations between Arab countries and Israel was initially based on speculation that the United Arab Emirates and Israel have long sought "covert" relations and there have also been several discourses that they want to formalize their relations (Dhea, 2020).

Until finally the decision to normalize relations between the United Arab Emirates and Israel was made on August 13, 2020, through a phone call between Trump and Abu Dhabi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Zayed and Israel Prime Minister Netanyahu, an agreement was passed to establish a new relationship between the two countries. that country. The decision also gave birth to the United Arab Emirates as the third Arab country to have full relations with Israel, after Egypt and Jordan. Unlike the Arabs, Egypt and Jordan, they never had a complex relationship with Israel, so the relationship between the three was not filled with war. Prior to the United Arab Emirates, Israel had established

diplomatic relations with Egypt in 1979 and with Jordan in 1994. The decision to normalize relations between the United Arab Emirates and Israel was continued on 14/8/2020. The two countries have agreed to establish diplomatic relations in an agreement mediated by US President Donald Trump. Israel and the United Arab Emirates are known to have secret relations. This idea has come up many times over the last ten years and was finally realized in 2020. Israel and the United Arab Emirates signed an agreement at conferences in the fields of investment, tourism, security, aviation, telecommunications and Covid-19 research.

The United Arab Emirates is the first Gulf Arab state and the third Arab country to announce the establishment of ties with Israel, after Egypt and Jordan. This phenomenon has certainly raised many doubts and even criticism of the peace agreement between Arab countries and Israel, because it is considered to have threatened the existence of Palestine. (White House, 2020) In general, diplomatic relations between countries are a form of cooperation between countries and are one of the many processes by which a country can increase its existence in the international sphere. Basically, cooperation between countries is made so that these countries can maintain the ropes of peace. Cooperation has actually been carried out for a long time, even when the concept of the nation-state was not yet born. In the case study of Israel and Palestine, the international community, especially Islamic countries that are gathered in the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, strongly condemns Israel's actions. Therefore, Islamic countries have cut off their network with Israel in all forms of communication, and have never even opened diplomatic relations with that country.

On the other hand, some time ago, three countries that were members of the OIC which previously cut ties with Israel have finally opened a network with Israel which is considered as a normalization of the Middle East, including Morocco, UAE, Sudan, and Bahrain. Thus, the decision that the two countries, in this case Arab and Israel, have opened relations, has shown sharp tensions in the international world, especially the Middle East region, of course this phenomenon is considered a bitter gift received by Palestine and raises many doubts and even criticisms of these countries. Arab countries for reflecting their recognition of Israel's sovereignty (Ananda, 2020).

From 2018, the UAE has shown an escalation of its relationship with Israel, in this case Israel is a country that disturbs the existence of Palestine. This escalation can be seen when the Israeli Ambassador to the UN, Danny Danon, visited the UAE in November 2016 under the pretext of attending a development conference in his capacity as chairman of the UN Legal Committee (Siadari, 2016). The visit eventually resulted in subsequent meetings, for example at the judo Tournament in the UAE in 2018, Israeli representative athletes were allowed to attend the tournament, (Israel, 2018) until its peak in 2020.

This change in foreign policy from the UAE is basically the influence of global political dynamics. In the analysis of foreign policy, the dynamics of global politics is also one of the variables that can affect a country's foreign policy. Facing the dramatic transfiguration that occurs in any era, international politics does not always have immunity, because a country's foreign policy will certainly face instability caused by many variables which in the end a country will inevitably change its foreign policy, as well as in the UAE's decision-making in normalization of relations with Israel. The UAE's policy in conducting

diplomatic relations with Israel has also raised many assumptions regarding the UAE's special reasons for opening relations with Israel (A Rizki Tahmi, 2022).

In the author's analysis there are several things that influence the UAE to normalize Israel, these are none other than the UAE's national interest, including economic interests, security interests, and political interests. In political interests and security interests, the author can analyze that why the United Arab Emirates has diplomatic relations with Israel because this interest is an urgency that can be categorized as Defense of Homeland, this interest is classified as a vital interest and can have an influence on stability. from UAE.

If analyzed the UAE's national interest, according to Dr. Donald E. Nuechterlein and Dr. James N. Rosenau. It can be seen that the political interests and security interests of the UAE are called vital, due to the dominance by Iran of the nuclear project which is considered disturbing and can be a threat to the UAE as one of the countries in the Middle East region. Therefore, one form of cooperation from the normalization of relations between the UAE and Israel is that the two countries seek to close Iran's nuclear program by lobbying at the United Nations (UN). In addition, there are economic interests which are categorized as Economic Well-being. Basically, even this economic interest cannot pose a threat to the stability of the UAE directly even though the UAE does not open normalization to Israel, but just like other countries, cooperation is useful so that the economy of a country can progress, as well as what the UAE does so that its economy can be better. and is long term.

The United Arab Emirates is known as a country with a high economy, especially in oil sales and of course this economy maintains the stability of the UAE in the future, even without normalizing relations with Israel. However, the normalization of its relations with Israel and the initiation of large-scale trade relations will further help the UAE to strengthen its domestic economy. Since the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic, the economy of the United Arab Emirates and other countries in the world has of course experienced a crisis or declined due to declining oil demand from other countries. Therefore, how the UAE takes action to cooperate with Israel will certainly have a positive impact, especially for the UAE's economic development, even considering the transitional era between pandemics. Therefore. Seeing the existence of a normalized relationship that is getting stronger between the UAE and Israel, therefore this paper is useful to see how the Effectiveness of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) during 2020 until now and to see how the view of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation as an Organization of the Unity of Nations is Islam in the world in responding to the normalization phenomenon.

## **Literatur Review**

There are several journals and articles that have made similar research. One of them is the Middle East International Social Science Journal (MEIJSS) article, which was written by Aziz Ur Rehman. Where in the article sees the Israel Agreement as a very progressive new breakthrough and can be a mouthpiece in peace from the conflict between Palestine and Israel. After signing the agreement, many political parties urged Israel to accept Palestinian peace terms. This agreement must continue to be emphasized by the United States to emphasize the realization of this policy (Rehman, 2020).

Then the next article is Normalization of relations between the UAE and Israel which was investigated by Wicaksono in 2020 in the journal MEIS. This paper examines the flow

of the formation of the agreement which became the beginning of the diplomatic normalization of the two countries. The diplomatic normalization that exists is a form of similarity in the internal affairs of the two countries, namely in response to the dangerous threat from Iran's nuclear program. The existence of Israel's national interest in the UAE stems from various factors, one of which is the global economy and international politics. Israel sees the UAE as a good platform to increase economic expansion and also internationally can provide a recognition. The UAE's interests, on the other hand, are focused on Israel's scientific and academic fields as well as its state-of-the-art military technology and industry. Then normalization with Israel could open up new UAE trade channels. This could lead to regional stabilization in the Middle East (Wicaksono, 2020).

This paper certainly has differences from the research that has been carried out by Raden Mas Wicaksono and also Aziz Ur Rehman, the author realizes that there are general similarities, therefore the author realizes the importance of updating the writing This paper was made with a focus on presenting an analysis of the UAE's national interests in Israel's normalization relationship which is also in line with the research from Wicaksono and Ur Rehman, but the author is updating this paper through two main points that the author tries to analyze, namely the effectiveness of the OIC as an Islamic Organization in responding to the issue of Normalization. In addition, the author also looks at how actions are taken during the Pandemic, which in fact is the era of peaking digitalization (metaverse).

## Research Method

The research method used in this study is qualitative descriptive research with a library approach, this study seeks to show the reader an overview of the groups related to the relationship between two or more symptoms, in this case the Organization of Islamic Cooperation. opportunities for cooperation with Israel.

## Analysis Framework

Liberalization thinkers generally have a positive view of humanity, believe in human reason, and rely heavily on rational principles that can be used in global issues. On the other hand, the basic premise of classical liberal thinkers also recognizes that human nature also has a selfish personality or only focuses on their own interests, but liberalism has the belief that people or individuals have great intentions and engage in cooperative and collaborative social behavior. domestically and globally (Baylis, 2005). The theory of institutional liberalism referred to by Professors Robert Keohane and Joseph Nye is that the emergence of this approach is a persuasive or supportive measure to create countries that continue to cooperate and to improve security stability and the management of international organizations. Institutional liberals believe that systems and institutions should be emphasized to explain international affairs relations, especially to persuade states to enter into cooperative agreements.

The institutionally liberal approach to observing the flow of international relations maintains the idea that states are expected to play a very important role in observing situations in an anarchic international framework. However, institutional liberals assume that the nation will always be in a chaotic world situation. To avoid this, it is possible to cooperate. For institutional liberals, building cooperative systems and regimes can slow the

pace of an anarchic world. (S. Burchill 2005). Basically, if we look at the politics of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) in an institutional and liberal perspective, the OIC considers all positive forms and wants to achieve goals both individually and collectively. or cooperation. (Mahbubani, 2013) This is also believed when considering nations as cooperating entities. Institutional liberalism argues that the purpose of cooperation or agreement between countries in a chaotic world system is self-defense, but according to Liberals themselves, a chaotic world situation is a realistic perspective (Burchill, 2005).

The basic assumptions of Liberalists in viewing the Organization of Islamic Cooperation are a cooperative organization in the form of interdependence or cooperation that has mutual dependence on one another that will provide benefits. Dependence in international politics is caused by two-way activities that exist between states or actors in other countries. The existence of this influence is a reflection of the emergence of an agreement that occurs, namely the flow of money, people, goods, and the existence of communication messages that are able to penetrate the boundaries of a region.

The potential that can be created thanks to the existence of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation with its member countries actively fulfilling the main objective of this cooperation is a matter of optimism about the results that can be obtained. Talking about this kind of international cooperation organization can be considered through the lens of Liberalism. Liberalism itself with its main characteristic is the creation of an even distribution of hegemony through international institutions or international organizations is the right practice to create collective security. This Islamic Cooperation Organization is able to become a perfect forum in achieving benefits for member countries through joint cooperation in harmonization (Andi Annur Aisyah, 2021).

### **Organization of Islamic Cooperation in the UAE-Israel Normalization Phenomenon**

The spread of various conflicts in the world, especially in the Middle East, is caused by religious factors that cause polemics in the East, this gives an attachment to a country whose population is predominantly Muslim to unite with other Islamic countries to form an Islamic organization. The main target of this organization is to create a sense of unity towards Islamic countries, then cooperate in the fields of economy, politics, culture and science. In addition, this organization is together to summarize the resources of Islamic countries and then promote their interests and consolidate so that the countries that are members of the organization can use the same language to further encourage peace and security efforts in the Muslim world. In addition, this organization is especially useful in strengthening the sense of solidarity among members of Islamic countries (Hermawan Arisusanto, 2016).

Seeing the background of the founding of the OIC, indirectly it raises the assumption that this organization is devoted to protecting and providing services to Arab and Middle Eastern interests. This assumption actually cannot be completely rejected. Because this is based on the fact that the conflict in the Middle East has long been a global conflict that has attracted the attention of the international community, then there is a prominent issue,

namely the Palestinian-Israeli conflict because it is related to debates and pressures based on the interests of religion and Muslims around the world. It should be noted that most of the OIC members are Arab countries.

However, other international issues still receive proportional attention. For example on political issues, the OIC continues to pay attention to the conflict between Pakistan and India, then problems related to Afghanistan, the Philippines, South Africa and others. The effectiveness of the OIC as an organization so far is quite significant, this can be seen where the OIC has created various Subsidiary Bodies or elements such as agencies that deal with problems related to culture, law, technology, and education, whose roles are exclusively similar to special agencies. formed by the United Nations. (Reydian, 2016) In a case study of normalizing relations between the UAE and Israel, the OIC has specifically stated that the OIC authorities will not normalize with Israel, this was seen when the OIC held an Extraordinary Meeting at the level of foreign ministers virtually open which was held on Sunday 4 Shawwal. 1442 H, coinciding with May 16, 2021 at the meeting Of course the OIC issued statements including;

1. That no relationship should be normalized with Israel, before Israel agrees and no longer violates the Arab Peace Initiative which was ratified at the Arab Summit in Beirut, Lebanon in 2002,
2. The OIC also condemned the inhumane attacks on the Palestinian people and their holy places by Israeli forces, then the OIC called for a complete cessation of Israel's actions against attacks that affect innocent civilians and their property, which is a serious violation of international law. and UN resolutions on the Palestinian question. And the continuation and incitement of these attacks and provocations poses a threat to the lives of innocent civilians, causes great suffering to them, has serious implications for security inside and outside the region, and increases the risk of instability.
3. The OIC warns against the negative effects of Israel's continued and deliberate incitement and provocation on the religious sensitivities and sentiments of Palestinians and all Muslims, especially through the increase in attacks against Muslims since the beginning of Ramadan. To Masjid Al-Aqsa / Al-Haram and blocking Muslims, who would access holy places for religious ceremonies, such as access to Al-Aqsa Mosque by Muslims and access to the Church of the Holy Sepulcher by Christians during Easter celebrations
4. To sue Israel for neglecting and not respecting the holy places, especially Al-Aqsa Mosque, and demanding all violations committed by Israel as an occupier, including having damaged history and law, Israel is an occupying state and has no legal rights in the Palestinian territories including East Jerusalem and Al-Aqsa / Al-Haram Masjid Mosque
5. Opposition to and condemnation of Israel's continued occupation of the Palestinian territories it occupies, including East Jerusalem, and especially through settlement building, demolition of Palestinian property and expansion walls, and confiscation of land, all of these acts constitute serious violations of international law, tantamount to war crimes. and crimes against humanity, and reiterates that the Israeli authorities must be held accountable, boycotted and sanctioned, for their colonial system.

6. Re-emphasizing that the failure of the Security Council to take responsibility for dealing with this crisis requires assistance from the UN General Assembly including resuming the process of the 10th Emergency Special Session to deal with Israel's invasion of the Occupied Palestinian Territories, including Al-Quds Al-Shareef, as well as ensure the international protection of Palestinians, and hold Israel accountable for crimes and serious violations of international law and human rights
7. Take steps and actions to pressure the entire international community, including the major Parties to the Geneva Agreement, to comply with their collective obligations and to compel the Israeli authorities to comply with obligations including guaranteeing protection for the Palestinian people. The OIC stressed that it is time to take serious action to hold Israel accountable for serious violations and to stop liberating Israel from the same rules that bind the whole world.

Decides to immediately move and make the necessary contacts to implement this resolution and communicate its contents to all relevant bodies, to mandate the Secretary-General to contact the President of the European Commission, the Secretary-General of the United Nations, the High Commissioner for Human Rights and other representatives of organizations and groups relevant international organizations to convey the contents of this resolution, and to invite the council of ambassadors of the OIC group of countries in the world and in international organizations to act immediately to convey the contents of this resolution to countries and their accrediting organizations. (Cooperation, 2021)

### **OIC's Effectiveness and Challenges Against Arab-UAE Normalization in the Pandemic Era**

The outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, of course, has caused many crises from various sectors, but it must be understood carefully that the world has long experienced changes on a large scale in the international development order. This has resulted in developments in the country shifting towards multipolar developments where this development is no longer towards traditional development.

This can be seen, how the pandemic in such a way creates a distortion of human life during and after the pandemic. The Covid-19 pandemic that has been going on since 2019 has resulted in various changes in the lifestyle of both individuals and groups. Among other things are restrictions on social interaction. Along with that, the metaverse era was introduced and soon entered the commercial period in a matter of years. (Utama, 2022)

The number of policies implemented by the international community to limit mobility and interaction between individuals and groups in this case is a Win-win solution that can be done is by utilizing the metaverse. By utilizing the metaverse, a person can still carry out their activities and not increase the number of virus spreads because the interaction is carried out virtually.

However, to reduce the spread of the virus, it is correlated with the number of cases of individuals and groups who have difficulty adapting and socializing in real life (Rahman, 2022). This also applies to the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, which is still trying to

adapt. It can be seen how the intensity of Virtual meetings conducted by Muslim countries in 2020 to 2021 related to the Israel-Palestine Conflict.

**Table 1.1 OIC Virtual Meeting to Discuss Israel-Palestine Issues**

Year	Virtual Meeting
2020	07/06 OIC Executive Committee holds Extraordinary Ministerial Meeting on Israel's Threat to Annex Palestine Bagian
	10/06 Resolution Adopted by the Extraordinary Open Virtual Meeting of the OIC Executive Committee at the Foreign Ministerial Level on the Threat of the Israeli Occupation Government to Annex Part of the territory of the Occupied Palestinian State in 1967
2021	12/05 Last Communique Adopted by Virtual Emergency Meeting OIC Permanent Representative Committee To Discuss Aggression By Israel, Occupying Powers, in the Palestinian Territories, in particular, Al-Quds Al-Shareef (East Jerusalem)
	13/05 OIC Holds Open Ministerial Executive Committee Meeting to Discuss Developments in Palestine
	16/05 Resolution Adopted by the Extraordinary Virtual Open-Ended Meeting of the OIC Executive Committee at the Foreign Ministerial Level to Discuss Aggression by Israel, The Occupying Power, in the Palestinian Territories, In particular, Al-Quds Al-Shareef (East Jerusalem)

Source: Official Website of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC)

Quoted from the OIC Official Website, during 2020 to 2021 the OIC has held several virtual meetings that specifically discuss OIC issues, but from the table listed, the author can conclude that the OIC meeting's intensity to discuss the Israeli-Palestinian issue during the pandemic is very less than that of the OIC. years before the pandemic. (OIC) This is because when discussing the issue of Palestine and Israel, the countries that participate in normalizing Israel actually have a different view from the views of other countries that are members of the Organization so that when the OIC holds the meeting it is not impossible that it will lead to a confrontation between countries. member.

In addition, when looking at the very low OIC meeting entity, it is likely that it will affect and also have an impact on the condition of Palestine, because if seen in the table above, even though the OIC held a Virtual meeting, there was absolutely no further discussion regarding the normalization of Israeli relations carried out by the UAE. It should also be noted that this Organization of Islamic cooperation aims to seek the independence of Palestine, but when there is weak solidarity between Islamic countries that are members of the Organization, it threatens the sovereignty of Palestine if the voices of Islamic countries are divided (Zuhad, 2021).



Although the OIC itself mentioned and stated loudly that there was no normalization for Israel before ending its occupation of the Palestinian territories which was conveyed by the OIC secretary general Yousef Al-Othaimen (Dikarma, 2020), but with differences of opinion from the countries that are members of the OIC, it becomes a challenge for the Organization, because the OIC is basically dominated by the oil countries, and especially after Bahrain and the UAE, Israel will continue to try to encourage Saudi Arabia. collaborate with them (Sekarwati, 2020).

## Conclusion

Normalization is an issue that is often the main topic of debate in international politics. Normalization can be interpreted as an effort to express resolutions or agreements aimed at ending tensions by consensus, including agreements to cool conflicts, restore peace, and establish diplomatic relations. Agreements or arrangements for normalizing relations between Arab states and Israel were initially based on speculation that the United Arab Emirates and Israel had long sought "secret" relations and wanted to formalize them. In the author's analysis, there are several things that influence the UAE to normalize its relationship with Israel. This includes the UAE's national interests, including economic, security and political interests. The United Arab Emirates is trying to maintain diplomatic relations with Israel because of the urgency of trying to shut down Iran's nuclear program.

In a case study of normalizing relations between the UAE and Israel, the OIC has specifically stated that the OIC authorities will not normalize with Israel, this was seen when the OIC held an Extraordinary Meeting at the level of foreign ministers virtually open which was held on Sunday 4 Shawwal. 1442 H, coinciding with May 16, 2021, So the author doubts the effectiveness of the OIC's role on the issue of Israeli Normalization by the UAE, this can be seen how during the Pandemic the OIC never held an official meeting to discuss the issue of the UAE's normalization towards Israel, but held an official meeting only to discuss the follow-up response to the Israeli-Palestinian problem. However, the author can understand that this is actually part of the OIC's challenge to revitalize the unity of the Islamic state in order to assist the struggle for the establishment of an independent and sovereign Palestinian state, because we all know that in the Israeli-Palestinian discussion, we can find differences of opinion, especially in the Israeli-Palestinian countries. countries that have normalized relations with Israel

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