

THE LIMITATION OF ORGANIZATION OF ISLAMIC COOPERATION  
IN SOLVING ROHINGYA PROBLEM

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Organization of Islamic Cooperation is the second biggest organization in the world known as the Muslim representative in the world. OIC works to express Muslim voices and protect Muslim rights such as mentioned in the OIC's charter 2008. Regarding to one of humanitarian issues or discriminations towards Muslim minorities that happened in Myanmar, OIC took a part in solving the issue. However until now the problem is still going on and condition of Myanmar has not improved yet. This things triggered a statement from the chief of All Pakistan Muslim League who stated that OIC became functionless and failed in protecting Muslim rights. This research used the theory of institutionalization by Samuel P Hunting to analyze the level of an organization and the reason why it became functionless and cannot solving Rohingya problem. Institutionalization theory is used to measure the level of an organization through adaptability, complexity, autonomy and coherency stage. This research was strengthened with concept of international organization by Holsti (1992) and Archer (2002) which explains the capacity of an international organization. According to the data, there are many obstacles which are adaptability of environment between subject and object, autonomy or political organization which does not support the subject and the last is coherency or cooperativeness between subject and object. All the aspects are the reasons of OIC's limitation in addressing the conflict of Rohingya in Myanmar.

*Key words: Organization of Islamic Cooperation, Muslim minorities, Myanmar, Refugees, discrimination, limitation, institution.*

## **Introduction**

Rohingya is Muslim minority group in Myanmar that did not get recognized by the government of Myanmar. Basically Rohingya already stayed in Rakhine since 19<sup>th</sup> century, they were there in Arakan Kingdom that has been collapsed. Rohingya is being un-recognized since the independence of Myanmar in 1948. According to 1982 citizenship law, there are 3 kind societies that would be recognized by the government of Myanmar. They who have full status mean the ones who stay in Myanmar as ancestors or before 1823 and also included in 130 recognized ethnic groups in Myanmar. Second, Associate citizens are those who are both eligible and have applied for citizenship under the previous 1948 law (UNHCR, 1982). Last, naturalization is also resided before or in 1948. From those all categories, Rohingya has no space where should they belong to.

As un-recognized by the government of Myanmar, Rohingya did not get their citizenship because the government do believe that they were not included in one of the requirements in Citizenship Law 1982. So, the government of Myanmar gave the Rohingya society kind of “white card” as the alternative of identity card. The identity card has been used for long-time now, but the white card is just for temporary time since the government of Myanmar has still not recognized where they belong to.

The government of Myanmar did such kind of discrimination to Rohingya society since the independence of Myanmar, which was related to the Japan invasion and ex-British colonialism. Discrimination happens almost every time, meanwhile the crisis happened in 1978, 1992, 2001, 2009 and 2012. In 1978 the

tragedy of Dragon King appeared in Myanmar and it was done by the army of Myanmar killing people of Rohingya, rapes women of Rohingya community and destroyed religious heritage sites and buildings. The accident pushed around 200,000 Rohingya people move to Bangladesh.

Rohingya also got discrimination by Buddhist and elite militant in Myanmar. Both groups wanted to obliterate and chased away Muslim in Myanmar especially in Rakhine. Through slaughter, incendiarism and burning mosque caused the rise of tension between Buddhist and Muslim in North Rakhine at that time. Impact for Muslim there, they did not have enough facilities which make many of them were killed and lost their house.

The Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) is the second largest international organization after the United Nation, which consists of 57 countries as the member states and 5 countries as the observers. The Organization of Islamic Cooperation was established in Rabat, Kingdom of Marocco on 12<sup>th</sup> Rajab 1389 in Islamic calendar or on 25<sup>th</sup> September 1969. The Organization of Islamic Cooperation mostly consists of Muslim majority countries. They are exists as the Islamic organization which has job to represent all Muslim society in the world, to fight for Muslim rights and express Muslim voice.

According to Charter of the OIC 2008 chapter 1 article 1 point 16 *“the objective of OIC shall be to safeguard the rights, dignity and religious and cultural identity in Muslim communities and minorities in Non-Member state”*. The third charter of OIC strengthens this statement by stating *“The Organization aims to strengthen Islamic solidarity among member states, cooperation in the*

*political, economic, social, cultural and scientific fields and the struggle of all Muslim people to safeguard their dignity, independence and national rights”.*

The Organization of Islamic Cooperation fight for Rohingya to get their citizenship and recognized by government of Myanmar which was repealed in the Citizenship Act 1982. OIC held one meeting with the agenda to call on Myanmar to obey on international law and human rights covenants. OIC constrained Myanmar to restore peace and inter-communal harmony by stopping violence and discrimination towards Rohingya which related to ethnic violence which broke up in 2012.

Regarding to the all efforts which have been done by the OIC, All Pakistan Muslim League (APML) Chief and former president, Pervez Musharraf was disappointed with the result and said that *“it is unfortunate that the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC) has become functionless and has failed completely in protecting the rights of Muslims being victimised across the globe.”* (Pakistan today, 2015)

Pervez Musharraf also said that it must be handle by OIC as well, because if it was not then there will be gap among religion in the world. He considers this problem as injustice against Muslim. If this kind of problem continues to happen the impact will be on global peace especially the respect among religion. This paper will be find the reason behind why the OIC still cannot help to solve the problem that happened in Myanmar.

### **Institutionalization theory**

Institutionalization is the process by which organizations and procedures acquired value and stability (Huntington, 1968). A political organization or procedures is an arrangement for maintaining order, resolving disputes, selecting authoritative leader and thus promoting community among two or more social forces.

According to Huntington (1968) : *“The level of institutionalization of any political system can be defined by the adaptability, complexity, autonomy and coherence of its organizations and procedures.”*

So, the level of institutionalization of any particular organization or procedure can be measured by its adaptability, complexity, autonomy and coherency. If these criteria can be identified and measured, political systems can be compared in terms of their levels of institutionalization (Huntington, 1968).

a. Adaptability

Adaptability is an acquired organizational characteristic or the function of environmental challenge and age. Adaptability of an organization will influence the high institution and the rigidity. The more adaptable an organization, the higher institutionalization quality will be produced and the less adaptable an organization the more rigid it will be.

Adaptability can be measured by accounting the amount of environmental challenges and age. The more environmental challenge and the greater age will increase the stage of adaptability in organization. To simplify, old organization will be greater than the younger one because of its familiar and in facing

challenges in environment. So the writer can conclude that old organization has been tested by those two criteria.

Adaptability also works in functional term, which is the function of the organization that does not run efficiently which means that the organization will be face crisis.

b. Complexity

The complexity of an organization could influence the quality of the organization. The more complicated organization will be influence the high institutionalization. Complexity of organization consists of purpose, variety of sub-units, ability to secure and the maintenance of the loyalties.

c. Autonomy

Autonomy is the extent to which political organizations and procedures exist independently of other social groupings and method of behavior. Autonomy involves the relation between social force and political organization. Lack of autonomy will result in corruption in international organization or the decreasing quality in international organization.

d. Coherency

The more unified and coherent an international organization, the higher quality of institutionalization it will produce. So the minimum standard to know the effectiveness of international organization is by the substantial consensus on the functional boundaries in solving the dispute.

In this case, the writer tries to analyze how the Organization of Islamic Cooperation tries to help the Rohingya case and also the writer will cluster the data through the characteristics mentioned by this theory to know the stage of successfulness.

*Adaptability* can be measured by accounting the amount of environmental challenges and age. In case of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, they faced some environmental challenges which are Myanmar it-self, which is not their member state and also religion background of OIC is totally different with the majority people of Myanmar which is Muslim and Buddhist. As well as the age of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation which is old enough, OIC is already 47 years old since the establishment in 1969. Since that time, OIC is already actively involved in helping international conflict such as Libya conflict, Palestine-Israel, Syria and so on.

*Complexity* is related to the quality of the organization which consists of purpose, variety of sub-units, ability to secure and the maintenance of loyalties. In case of Rohingya, the OIC take a look back to their Charter chapter 1 article 1 point 16 “*the objective of OIC shall be to safeguard the rights, dignity and religious and cultural identity in of Muslim communities and minorities in Non-Member state*”. As mentioned before, the purpose of OIC towards Rohingya in Myanmar is clear enough that OIC will be safeguard for the minorities in Non-Member state. Variety of sub-units related to the conflict is in form of department in OIC which is International Cooperation and Humanitarian Affairs Department (ICHAD) that will be focusing on humanitarian conflict like in Rohingya

Myanmar about their right of citizenship. Maintaining the loyalties, since long time ago the OIC still kept trying to help Rohingya problem even though until now it is still not found the way to solve. The last point is ability to secure, this point the writer did not found yet the answer because the conflict still goes on and the writer will try to analyze in the next chapter.

*Autonomy* is discussing the relation between social force and political organization. In helping Rohingya problem, the OIC also includes some non-government organizations related to humanitarian issues and some international organization such as UN to push the government of Myanmar in solving the problem. However the obstacle that must be faced by the OIC is domestic political organization that is totally opposite with them.

*Coherency* is discussing how deep the interrelatedness of the issue and the organization. In case of the OIC and Rohingya, actually they are related to each other since the purpose of OIC is to cover up all the Muslim rights no matter member state or non-member state and also the problem in Myanmar itself Muslim become the main object or the victims in gaining their right and got the discrimination as the minorities in the country.

The explanation about the theory above could be related in answering the research question by implementing the theory in Rohingya's problem. The writer uses this theory to examine the successfulness of international organization, in this case the Organization of Islamic Cooperation in helping to solve the Muslim problem which is Rohingya.



## **The Reason behind the Limitation of Organization Islamic Cooperation in Protecting Muslim Minorities Rohingya**

As mentioned by Samuel P Huntington, to know the level of organization in addressing the conflict we can use those criteria. *Adaptability, complexity, autonomy and coherency* is already encompass all aspects so that it will quiet detail in analyze the level of organization. Adaptability is about the environmental challenge and age, complexity is about how complex that organization, autonomy is about the organization relation with political organization and social force and coherency is about the interrelatedness the issue and organization.

### **A. The organization of Islamic cooperation level of adaptability to Rohingya**

Adaptability come from Latin word “adaptō” which is means fit to or adjust. Adaptability is the character of a subject which tries to fit in or adjust the object character. This character exists to synchronize with other situation and condition. Adaptability can be measured by accounting the amount of environmental challenges and age. The more environmental challenge and the greater age will be increase the stage of adaptability in organization.

There are many challenges in addressing Rohingya problem, it is all based on the different background between the subject and object. First is different background in term of religion. According to CIA’s data on July 2016 majority people around 87% are Buddhist. In the other side, the OIC is an organization which focusing on Islamic issue even though in case of Rohingya they already

mentioned that they will help in terms of humanitarian issue. It has been proved by when the OIC.

The differences background among them brought the influence in resolving the conflict. Mindset among two groups is absolutely different such as in Rohingya people mindset they do believe that there's no interest instead of stay in Myanmar or they just want to living peacefully without any reason. However in contrast, the Myanmar's people believed that the Rohingya actually has any reason behind which is in developing Islam in that country so they afraid that it will be develop faster and Myanmar become Muslim majority country likes Indonesia and Malaysia.

Myanmar people also thinks that OIC is same with Rohingya, they all Muslim which want to develop Islam in Myanmar and also OIC in Myanmar just an intervention from Islamic world. However in the other side, OIC declared that they just want to help Rohingya as they mention in their charter or as their objectives of an organization. OIC also bring the name of humanitarian aid as their reason in helping to solve the problem.

Feeling bad in Muslim people especially Rohingya has been buried in Myanmar's people mindset since long time ago. Then the second challenge for OIC arise which is the phenomenon of Islamophobia in Myanmar. Islamophobia is prejudice towards or discrimination against Muslims due to their religion, or perceived religious, national or ethnic identity associated with Islam (Georgetown University).

The factors are historically territorial struggle that happen in Arakan Kingdom between Rohingya and Rakhine people which majority Buddha. This already made the people of Myanmar a bit hate people of Rohingya, then continue to their worried about Islamic development that happen in Malaysia and Indonesia. So, they feels threaten by Muslim people and their madness of Rohingya and Muslim are mixed. People of Myanmar prepared for self-defense each, while some of them establish social movement such as “969 movement”.

Third is about non-member state, Myanmar is not a member state of OIC. Problematic arises when the member state itself sometimes do not want follow the organization. At the outset of its establishment, the OIC was highly conscious not to interfere into any states affairs when the issues of Muslim minorities were raised (Waesahmae, 2012).

Based on the international organization concept by Archer, he mention three roles of international organization and there is point of international organization as the actor, which has ability, as the autonomous actor and act in their own capacity as international organization and no longer as the executor of member’s interests.

In this stage, the writer concluded that the institutionalized of OIC is not a hundred percent. The comparison between greater age and more environmental challenges is unbalance. Why ? Because the OIC is can be counted as one of the great age but in the other side the OIC cannot synchronize with the situation of much environmental challenges since the OIC also just have their own capacity and cannot intervene other. This is prove the hypothesis point *a* or the limitation

of the OIC which not give the guarantee that the case will be successful or not and just work in their own capacity, *b* or the OIC face the challenges to create peace in Myanmar due to their minim in addressing conflict and *c* the OIC with the appointing country has different background that cause they cannot unite in solving the problem.

## **B. The organization of Islamic cooperation level of complexity to Rohingya**

The complexity of an organization could influence the quality of the organization. The more high complicated of the organization will be influence highly institutionalized. Complexity of organization consists of purpose, variety of sub-units, ability to secure and the maintaining of the loyalties. Those all aspect is show the comprehensiveness an organization. All the aspects are interrelated each other, where every sub-units can be bifunctional or even multifunctional caused by it relate each other. Meanwhile, the purpose of an organization is better if more than one because it show the scope they work for and the clarity of the functional term. The complexity will be produce stability in organization.

According to the Organization of Islamic Cooperation charter made by 14<sup>th</sup> March 2008 that replaces the Charter of the Organization of the Islamic Conference which was registered in conformity with Article 102 of the Charter of the United Nations on 1<sup>st</sup> February 1974, article 1 mention the objectives of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (Organization of Islamic Cooperation,

2008). All the objectives mention in its charter concern to Muslim right and Muslim protection.

The OIC has General Secretariat that led by Secretary General. The OIC's secretary general is come from Saudi Arabia which is H.E. Dr. Yousef bin Ahmad Al-Othaimen, who shall be the Chief Administrative Officer of the Organization and such staff as the Organization requires. The General Secretariat is composed of several departments that enhance the day-to-day operations of the OIC.

To advance issues of critical importance to the Organization and its Member States, the Organization has formed the following Standing Committees (Organization of Islamic Cooperation). The OIC also have Specialized institutions which established within the framework of the Organization in accordance with the decisions of the Islamic Summit or Council of Foreign Ministers. Others structures are affiliated institutions and Islamic Summit that still take an important place in OIC.

All the organs are work based on their objectives. In case of Rohingya, several organs of OIC are took a part in helping to solve the problem. Such as when OIC provide humanitarian aid through Islamic Solidarity Fund which is also part of subsidiary organ OIC. At that time all the member state do agree to give around \$200.000 to Rohingya that spread through the NGO as the facilitator.

Beside have complex organs, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation also have some achievement and awards in their effort of media problem solving. There are some example cases handled by OIC such as Syrian crisis, success take

a part in political transition Somalia, Afghanistan, Sudan, Guinea, Mauritania and other that mentioned in OIC journal the achievement since 2005-2012.

Take a look at the objectives and the structure of OIC as the tools to measure the complexity of the OIC, the writer may say that OIC is complex enough. The OIC have some organs which are interrelated and fulfilling each other also. The organs of OIC are has been placed in almost every aspect such as social, economic, religion and other. Then, as mentioned in their chapter that OIC is actually clear enough about their objectives as to protect Muslim right and it has been approved by the member state.

The writer concluded that in this stage the OIC is high institutionalized. Because all the criteria have been fulfill by the OIC, it is also legally written in their chapter and has been prove in their action. Another prove is the implementation of “solidarity in action” when the OIC introducing the concept of preventive diplomacy and stressing on mediation technique mostly in the form of utilizing the good offices of the Secretary General in 2005 (Organization of Islamic Cooperation, 2005). Where in 2006 the OIC are success held meeting between Iraqi Sunni and Shiite religious leaders and the signing of the Makkah Document in Iraq to stop shedding Iraqi blood.

### **C. The organization of Islamic cooperation level of autonomy to Rohingya**

Autonomy is the extent to which political organizations and procedures exist independently of other social groupings and method of behavior. Autonomy

involves the relation between social force and political organization. Lack of the autonomy will be effect to the corrupt in international organization or the decreasing quality in international organization.

OIC led by Secretary General from Saudi Arabia, H.E. Dr. Yousef bin Ahmad Al-Othaimen, who shall be the Chief Administrative Officer of the Organization and such staff as the Organization requires. The secretary general of OIC always had shown good response towards the case of Rohingya. Some actions by the secretary general which is goods to be an examples are when the secretary general appointed special envoy for Myanmar, call upon the representative government of Myanmar and direct visiting the refugee of Rohingya.

The OIC also cooperate with some of their observer especially international organization in addressing the conflict. Such as United Nation that has been joined by Myanmar also, OIC and UN kept strength their relationship to face the problem. Both side conduct Annual Coordinating Meeting in concern to the case of Rohingya. Beside of that, OIC also cooperate with the international NGO. Whereas the OIC is needs them in term of humanitarian assistance.

All the outside effort has been run by OIC, another challenge is how they coordinate with internal political organization. This must be hard, since the government of Myanmar is close their door in addressing Rohingya problem. Even in some riot that happened in Myanmar, it also supported by the government and did by militant Myanmar. The OIC cannot influence the government of

Myanmar even though they already call upon the representative of Myanmar through and without UN.

Third stage of effectiveness institution has been passed well by the OIC with the outer actors. In the other side, all the effort cannot undermine the consistency of Myanmar government which stand firm preserves their domestic politics. The writer analyze that OIC truly tries to cooperate with other organization. The OIC tries in every aspects already such as UN and also INGO. Even though in the side of Myanmar, they are quiet hard to influence but at least the OIC already tried to push in many ways. Based on the efforts mentioned above, the writer sees the level of institutionalization OIC in this stage is high. However the result is rather not as expected which is cannot influence government policy to give their citizenship. This is proving the hypothesis point *d* which is the political organization in Myanmar did not fully support the OIC.

#### **D. The organization of Islamic cooperation level of coherency to Rohingya**

The more unified and coherency an international organization will be produces highly quality institutionalization. In the other side, the greater disunity will produce less institutionalized. Basically, coherent and autonomous are influenced each other even theoretical they can stand alone. However then, the autonomy can invite the spirit and style for the coherency.

The coherency of OIC and Rohingya problem is in a line as well as the main object is Islam OIC as their name and their objective is work to protect Muslim



right and for Muslim minorities while Rohingya is a Muslim minority group in Myanmar which got discrimination and being unrecognized. The line is Rohingya is a part of OIC object, OIC should take a part and responsibilities in this problem.

After see the coherency between two sides, the other important part is also unity. Are two sides uniting in addressing the conflict? the answer might be yes and no. Yes, because the main actor is Rohingya and OIC which both sides looks cohesive to end the conflict and find the better solution. The OIC is kept their contact with the Rohingya people through humanitarian assistance, visiting the refugee and push another related actor to help Myanmar. The Rohingya also try to keep the relation still in a line, whereas they make their representative as known as Arakan Rohingya Union to be a media and represent their voice. The relation is still longing until now.

In the opposite, the answer might be NO also. Rohingya is stay in Rakhine state, Rakhine state is a part of Myanmar national territorial, Myanmar Government do not want to recognize Rohingya, but they still recognize the territory. This became a dilemma, government of Myanmar just want the territory and push out the people of Rohingya. So where should the Rohingya people belong to? they are stateless.

The writer analyze that Rohingya can be count as a part of Myanmar in this case. Because in accessing Rohingya, the OIC is should come through government of Myanmar. This is caused by the territory occupied by Rohingya is legally belong to Myanmar which also as the sovereign state. The point is government of Myanmar un-cooperative in addressing the conflict. That is why

they show the disunity value. This is show the OIC with the appointing country has different background that cause they cannot unite in solving the problem.

In this stage, the writer analyze that OIC is cannot counted as highly institutionalized. Even though the OIC reached high coherency but still cannot be unite. The explanation above mention the unified between OIC and Rohingya but then the OIC and government cannot unite. In legally, OIC just can reach Rohingya through government of Myanmar because they stay in Myanmar territory.

### **The Limitation Factors of Organization of Islamic Cooperation in Solving Rohingya Problem**

Over all, the writer found any obstacles that hamper fluency of the OIC in solving the Rohingya problem. All the aspects have been analyzed by the writer used the theory and concept which mentioned in Chapter I. The writer used to mix between concept of international organization and theory of institutionalization in answering the research question. The writer also used method “Give and Get” in finishing the analysis, so not just the process but also the result that they get.

Theory of institutionalization according to Samuel P Hunting, there are 4 aspects must be analyze to know the level of an organization which are adaptability, complexity, autonomy and coherency. All the aspects are not running well except stage of complexity. The obstacles are not just in the process of their action but sometimes the result that shown is not as the expectation.

Those all obstacles has be strengthen with the concept of international organization which mentioned by Holsti and Archer. Archer mentioned the role of international organization as the instrument (tools) to get the deal, push the conflict intensity and coordination of actions, as the arena to compile, consult and initiate decision maker and formulate international agreement and as the actor, international organization which has ability is also as the autonomous actor and act in their own capacity as international organization and no longer as the executor of member's interests. Whereas, Holsti define the role of international organization was minim in addressing conflict and create peace.

Holsti and Archer's concept about international organization clarify to the reason why the OIC faced some obstacles in addressing the conflict. All the obstacles head for the sovereignty of Myanmar that prefer close their door for their internal issue and head for the international organization which has no right to press the internal issue. This all shows the minim capacity of an international organization.

## **Conclusion**

In conclusion the answer why OIC failed implementing their job as protecting Muslim right in solving case of Rohingya Myanmar is because of there are any obstacles in adaptability, autonomy and coherency of the OIC in addressing the conflict of Rohingya in Myanmar. Those obstacles also head to the capacity of an international organization which is minim and cannot intervene the

state. The result is 75:25 scale 100 say that OIC is failed and ineffectiveness in solving the Rohingya problem.

One of the important things in solving a problem is how two sides unite and supporting each other. In case of Rohingya clearly shows the side of OIC which already try to give their best in helping the problem but then in side of Myanmar they kept their domestic problem to solve by their own way. The uncooperative Myanmar cause the OIC hard to come in and help the case of Rohingya. This is might be long lasting problem and un-solving problem if both sides cannot be unite.

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