
Failed Diplomacy to Blame? Cases in Ukraine and Gaza

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Kata Kunci :

Diplomasi; Gagal; Gaza;
Keamanan; Ukraina

Abstrak

Kasus konflik dan perang di dunia internasional telah menjadi perhatian hampir setiap negara di dunia karena dampaknya terhadap sosial dan ekonomi yang tidak pernah berakhir. Penyelesaian konflik secara teoritis dapat dilakukan dengan tindakan diplomatik yang melibatkan konflik baik antara pihak yang berkonflik maupun oleh pihak ketiga, meskipun upaya ini tidak selalu berakhir dengan cara damai. Dalam hal ini, kasus keamanan yang masih terjadi di Ukraina dan Gaza akan menjadi kajian utama untuk dibahas karena dampaknya yang paling besar bagi dunia internasional. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengeksplorasi apakah diplomasi yang gagal menjadi penyebab kasus keamanan Ukraina dan Gaza yang telah berlangsung dan terjadi sejak lama dengan menggunakan data sekunder melalui tinjauan pustaka dan observasi. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa isu-isu yang lebih dalam seperti nasionalisme, perbedaan ideologis, dan disparitas kekuasaan telah menghasilkan situasi di mana diplomasi sulit untuk berhasil. Pengaruh ideologis dan historis yang lebih besar yang memengaruhi masalah ini paling baik ditunjukkan oleh pandangan dunia Zionis Israel, yang sering bertentangan dengan klaim Palestina, dan persepsi historis Rusia tentang Ukraina yang berada dalam lingkup pengaruhnya.

Keywords :

Diplomacy, Failed, Gaza,
Security, Ukraine.

Abstract

The conflict and war cases in the international world have become a concern for almost every country in the world due to their impact on the social and economic that has never ending. The conflict resolution theoretically can be done by diplomatic acts involving the conflict either between the conflict parties or by a third party, although this effort does not always end up in a peaceful way. In this case, security cases that still happening in

Ukraine and Gaza will become the main study to be discussed due to the biggest impact on the international world. This study aims to explore does failed diplomacy is to blame in the Ukraine and Gaza security cases, which have been on going and have been happening for a long time by employing secondary data through literature review and observation. The result of the study shows that deeper issues like nationalism, ideological differences, and power disparities have produced situations in which diplomacy finds it difficult to be successful. The larger ideological and historical influences influencing these problems are best shown by Israel's Zionist worldview, which frequently conflicts with Palestinian claims, and Russia's historical perception of Ukraine as falling within its sphere of influence.



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INTRODUCTION

The security issues in Gaza and Ukraine are prime examples of contemporary humanitarian and geopolitical crises, each of which has significant ramifications for regional and international stability. With Russia's annexation of Crimea in 2014, the crisis in Ukraine intensified, leading to a full-scale invasion in 2022. Millions have been displaced by this conflict, which has also caused economic disruptions and heightened tensions between Russia and Western allies. Similarly, the Gaza conflict is marked by cyclical violence, ideological disagreements, and geographical concerns. Some view the Israel-Palestine conflict as religious, while others believe it is primarily political with spiritual roots (Rusanti et al., 2025). In addition to causing great misery to civilians, the continuous blockade and fighting in Gaza have also contributed to Middle East instability (Pratiwi et al., 2022).

Conflicts that cannot be resolved via international negotiation can be settled by a third party in modern diplomacy. One of the third parties frequently engaged in mediation to settle disputes is the mediator. By agreement of the two parties involved in the disagreement, the mediator as a connector who is not interested in the conflict is appointed. However, in the current digital age, the social media war frequently causes two nations to cease fighting over an extended period. The reason is that careless individuals frequently incite conflict in the media on behalf of the two warring nations, making it harder to resolve (Khairunnisa, 2021).

Diplomacy is widely recognized as an essential tool for preventing conflicts, fostering dialogue and reducing tensions. The Oslo Accords in Gaza and the Minsk Agreements in Ukraine serve as examples of attempts to mediate peace. However, mistrust, external influences, and unsolved historical grievances have frequently caused these endeavours to fail (Casier, 2023). This paper explores whether the main cause of these crises is the fundamental elements like nationalism, power imbalances, and old grievances equally contribute to the violence.

METHODS

This study utilised an exploratory qualitative research method by dividing the data into background, diplomatic efforts and obstacles as well as comparing the similarities and differences between the two cases, including what is happening in Gaza and Ukraine in where the data was obtained through observation and literature reviews. It aims to gain and explore other factors that led to diplomatic failure in solving both security issues. Furthermore, focus group discussions and triangulation were conducted in this study to prevent a misleading conclusion.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The Role of Diplomacy in Conflict Prevention

Diplomacy serves as a vital tool for preventing conflicts, fostering dialogue, trust-building, and addressing tensions before they escalate into violence. Theoretically, preventive diplomacy employs negotiation, mediation, and confidence-building initiatives to avoid conflicts. These strategies depend on prompt action, collaborative participation, and efficient early warning systems to detect and mitigate possible flashpoints (Zyck & Muggah, 2012). One of diplomacy's strengths is its ability to establish forums for mutual understanding and transparency. As demonstrated in post-Cold War European and Asian contexts, defence diplomacy, which includes cooperative exercises and the exchange of military doctrines, reduces mistrust and the possibility of miscalculation. Similarly, intergovernmental organizations like the OSCE have employed "quiet diplomacy" to manage ethnic and political tensions, as evident in Ukraine and Macedonia.

However, diplomacy also faces significant limitations. In both the Ukraine and Gaza conflicts, efforts were undermined by mistrust, non-compliance, and external influences. According to the UN, the humanitarian and economic costs of full-scale wars are higher than those of early diplomatic intervention (Young et al., 2022). Despite its limitations, diplomacy is nevertheless essential to promoting long-term peace and world stability.

Ukraine Security Issue: Background

The NATO enlargement in the post-Cold War era was one of the primary justifications offered by the Russian government for the invasion of Ukraine. During the Cold War, NATO was created in 1949 as a military alliance to protect Western Europe's interests. It was initially successful because it was able to keep the peace, stop the Soviet Union's growth, and make it easier for Western Europe to unite politically and economically (Siddiqi & Khairunnisa, 2023). The 1991 fall of the Soviet Union, which left Ukraine as an independent state, is where the origins of the Russia-Ukraine conflict lie. Ukraine's independence was seen by Russia as a loss of its strategic buffer zone, which was crucial to its influence and security in Eastern Europe (Hanappi, 2022). Moscow's fears of Western encroachment increased as

Ukraine's geopolitical alignment shifted towards the West over time, especially through its ambitions to join NATO and the EU (Richter, 2022).

Tensions escalated in 2014 with Russia's annexation of Crimea, which Moscow justified as defending its Black Sea Fleet and ethnic Russians. This was followed by support for separatist movements in Donetsk and Luhansk, which led to an armed conflict in the Donbas region. Russia framed its actions as defensive by claiming that NATO had breached previous non-expansion agreements and portraying Ukraine's alliance with the West as a direct threat to its sovereignty (Casier, 2023).

Diplomatic Attempts and Challenges

Diplomatic efforts, such as the Minsk Agreements in 2014-2015 (Caucasus Survey, n.d.), aimed to de-escalate hostilities by bringing about political reforms and establishing ceasefires in Donbas. The agreements, which were negotiated in the Normandy model involving Ukraine, Russia, Germany, and France, sought to restore Ukrainian sovereignty while granting autonomy to areas controlled by separatists. However, accusations of non-compliance from both parties hampered these efforts. Russia accused Kyiv of failing to implement important clauses like decentralisation and constitutional reforms. Whereas Ukraine perceived the accords as favouring Russia's strategic objectives (Arbatova, 2022).

Western mediation further complicated diplomacy. Moscow saw NATO's continued expansion and military assistance for Ukraine as existential threats. This undermined trust and increased tensions between Russia and the West. Meanwhile, the EU's inability to enforce compliance weakened the agreements' effectiveness (Lossovskiy, 2019). Due to limited access and rising violence, the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), which was entrusted with overseeing ceasefires, was unable to successfully mediate. By 2022, when Russia launched a full-scale invasion of Ukraine, diplomatic attempts completely failed. Peace talks came to an end when Moscow justified its attack by pointing to NATO's encroachment and Ukraine's support for Western policies (Casier, 2023).

The failure of diplomacy was central to the outbreak of the Russia-Ukraine conflict. However, deeper structural issues also played a decisive role. Moscow's vision of "Greater Russia" and its refusal to recognize Ukraine's sovereignty fuelled its aggression. While Kiev's insistence on Western alignment further entrenched the divide between Moscow and Kyiv. These factors indicate that while diplomacy failed to resolve the conflict, nationalism, power disparities, and old grievances were equally important contributing factors

Gaza Security Issue: Background

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict is rooted in territorial and ideological disputes between two national movements. Jewish claims to the land are based on biblical promises and historical ties, while Palestinians emphasise their continuous residence and majority population during significant historical periods. The 1917 Balfour

Declaration, which contradicted earlier British guarantees of Arab independence and promised a Jewish homeland in Palestine, further complicated the situation (Waldman, 2011). With the creation of Israel in 1948, the conflict grew more intense, forcing hundreds of thousands of Palestinians to flee their homes and resulting in long-lasting refugee problems. Israel's occupation of Gaza, the West Bank, and East Jerusalem throughout later battles, such as the 1967 Six-Day War, solidified territorial disputes (Parmaar, 2024). Due to conflicting narratives of victimhood and sovereignty, Gaza, which is currently under Hamas rule and under blockade, continues to be a site of recurrent violence and political deadlock (Abdullayev, 2024).

The case in Gaza can also be seen through what is happening in Indonesia where society creates some alliance to support each other and gain strength but in a different manner. Due to the fact that though Gaza case started with a religious basis but it led to a political case due to the involvement of other countries to support the strikes which became human rights issues due to Israel's inhuman attack without considering conflict laws that civilians are forbidden to be invaded. In Indonesia as an example, the Islamic Social Movement first appeared to respond to various conditions that occurred in Islamic society, both social and political, with the main goal of making the social conditions of society more civilised, qualified, and capable of reflecting Islamic prophetic values. The Islamic Social Movement moved the social and political conditions to be full of Islamic values and ethics. The Islamic Social Movement's intellectual framework comprises, among other things, perspectives on revivalism, Salafism, and Islamism, political culture, structuration and agency, and integration.

The Islamic Social Movement in Indonesia, or commonly abbreviated as GSI in Indonesian, was born from the Wahhabism ideology brought by Muhammad ibn 'Abd Wahab, where he assumed that all things outside the Qur'an and Hadith of the Prophet Muhammad PBUH were heresy and wrong. The signs of the emergence of this movement in Indonesia are religious problems accompanied by the social and political conditions of the nation that are in decline. Thus, it can be stated that the movement of the Islamic Social Movement is very influential and dependent on the social, economic, political and Islamic conditions in the nation's society. In other words, this movement will continue to metamorphose as time goes by, by following the development of the existing social and political conditions of the nation.

On the other hand, groups with Islamic identities emerged after the fall of the New Order regime. These Islamic groups moved to voice and uphold Islamic values, both in terms of political parties and outside the party. Nonetheless, this group is better known as Political Islam or the Political Islamic Movement. Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia (HTI) is one example of this movement, which believes that the democratic system violates Islamic law. This is why they do not participate in elections, as citizens in democratic nations do. The condition of this movement defines Islam as a political religion, in which Western systems should not be used in terms of social and political aspects.

According to previous studies in the transnational Islamic movement, it was found that a movement must have a certain ideology due to the fact that the existence of a movement is formed eventually based on the goals of each group and with different visions and missions from one movement to another. Although there will be movements with nearly identical mindsets, there will be different visions and missions from one movement to the next, both in terms of ideology and social practices, because without ideology, there is nothing that can be considered a group characteristic. In other words, it is difficult for a group of individuals to establish a movement without sharing the same objectives, visions, missions, or ideologies and a desire to achieve them together.

This is due to the presence of the same goal and mission, which is also held by a particular movement, a movement that undoubtedly needs ownership of a certain manhaj or way of movement. A movement or group undoubtedly has the same goal, and in order to achieve that goal, a group must have the same manhaj, because if only one person in the movement runs with a different manhaj, even if they have the same goal, the results will undoubtedly be different, either in the context of the period of achievement or overall. This is what motivates activists in various movements to frequently congregate with their groups or movements to remind them of the accomplishments they have or have not achieved. As a result, the manhaj and tactics used by each member of the movement will be consistent.

Diplomatic Attempts and Challenges

The Oslo Accords 1993 represented a constituted a major attempt to end the conflict by establishing mutual recognition between Israel and the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) and creating the Palestinian Authority to govern parts of Gaza and the West Bank. However, there was a great deal of mistrust and non-compliance because the accords did not address fundamental issues like borders, refugees, and Jerusalem's status (del Sarto & Klein, 2023). Subsequent efforts, such as the Camp David Summit 2000, failed because of incompatible goals and mutual mistrust. Prospects for further diplomatic advancement were undermined by the second Intifada, which was triggered by the summit's failure (Lewin, 2016). Moreover, peace prospects have been further undermined by recent proposals, such as the "Deal of the Century," which have been criticised for favouring Israel and ignoring Palestinian ambitions (Pratiwi et al., 2022).

Although track-two diplomacy, which involves civil society actors, has had some effectiveness in fostering dialogue, it lacks the grassroots influence required to transform public perceptions. These efforts have been overshadowed by settlement expansions and on-going violence, making it more difficult to establish trust and ensure that peace will last (NOHRA, 2022). It is clear that the diplomatic breakdowns have significantly contributed to the persistence and escalation of the Gaza conflict. However, deeper issues like ideological divides, religious narratives, and historical grievances exacerbate tensions. The exclusion of Palestinians from key agreements,

such as the Abraham Accords, further destabilises the region. This highlights the need for sustained and impartial diplomatic engagement.

Similarities in Diplomatic Challenges

Due to external influences, entrenched historical grievances, and geopolitical complexities, the crises in Gaza and Ukraine have similar diplomatic challenges. Russia's fear in Ukraine has increased due to NATO's eastward expansion and Western assistance for Kyiv, which has escalated tensions over spheres of influence. Similarly, Palestinians now view mediation attempts as biased due to the United States' persistent backing for Israel, which undermines their trust in diplomacy (Palik, 2023). Historical grievances are central to both conflicts. While Palestinians perceive Israeli policies as erasing their history and denying them the right to self-determination, Russia sees Ukraine's shift towards the West as a rejection of their common cultural and historical ties. Since both conflicts are presented as existential struggles as well as territorial disputes, these long-standing grievances make negotiations more difficult. Geopolitical interests exacerbate tensions in both cases. The Ukraine conflict reflects global competition between NATO and Russia, while the Gaza conflict represents a regional power struggle involving Israel, Hamas, and their international allies. In both conflicts, diplomacy is hindered by competing priorities, including strategic dominance and security guarantees (Arbatova, 2022).

Differences in Diplomatic Challenges

Despite similarities, the Ukraine and Gaza conflicts exhibit unique dynamics that influence their diplomatic challenges. In Ukraine, the presence of strong regional alliances like NATO and the EU provides Kyiv with substantial economic and military backing, which grants it leverage in negotiations. In contrast, Palestinians lack comparable networks of influential allies. Agreements like the Abraham Accords have further isolated the Palestinian cause by normalizing relations between Israel and Arab states without addressing core Palestinian concerns. There are also notable differences in economic issues. Ukraine is strategically significant because it is a major hub for energy transit, drawing conflicting interests from the West and Russia. On the other hand, Palestinians are now reliant on foreign aid due to Gaza's economic isolation and siege, which is frequently employed as a political leverage tactic rather than as a means of achieving fair negotiations. The two conflicts are further distinguished by ideological differences. Western narratives are shaped and support for Kyiv is justified by framing the Ukraine issue as a struggle between democracy and tyranny. Compromise on delicate topics like Jerusalem and settlements is particularly challenging because the Gaza conflict is firmly entrenched in national and religious identities (Lewin, 2016).

Other Contributing Factors beyond Diplomacy

The Ukraine and Gaza conflicts are shaped not only by diplomatic failures but also by non-diplomatic factors, including nationalism, power imbalances, and historical grievances. In Ukraine, Russian nationalism is rooted in its perception of Kyiv as the "cradle of Russian civilization." This cultural and historical attachment drives Moscow's insistence on controlling Ukraine, compounded by its fear of NATO expansion (Hanappi, 2022). Similarly, Israeli nationalism, expressed through Zionism, emphasizes the right to a Jewish state, which often alienates Palestinians who see this as erasure of their claims to the land (Musthafa, 2024).

Power imbalances also exacerbate both conflicts. Russia's military superiority allows it to assert its will over Ukraine. Whereas Israel's advanced military and economic capabilities limit Palestinian bargaining power. These asymmetries create environments where diplomacy often reflects the will of the stronger party rather than fostering equitable solutions (Hakim et al., 2023). Historical grievances further deepen divides. Palestinians view their displacement since 1948 as an ongoing injustice, while Ukrainians regard Russian actions as a denial of their sovereignty. These unresolved traumas perpetuate mistrust and hinder progress toward peaceful resolutions.

CONCLUSION

The Ukraine and Gaza conflicts highlight the complex relationship between diplomacy, historical grievances, and geopolitical interests. In Ukraine, efforts such as the Minsk Agreements failed due to mistrust, mutual violations, and external influences like NATO's expansion and Russia's pursuit of "Greater Russia". Similarly, in Gaza, initiatives such as the Oslo Accords were undermined by structural weaknesses, unresolved issues of sovereignty, and biased mediation favouring Israel, leaving the conflict unresolved and perpetuating cycles of violence. While the failure of diplomacy played a significant role in both conflicts, it is not the sole cause. Deeper factors including nationalism, ideological divides, and power imbalances, have created environments where diplomacy struggles to succeed. Russia's historical view of Ukraine as part of its sphere of influence and Israel's Zionist vision, often at odds with Palestinian claims, exemplify the broader ideological and historical forces shaping these crises. For future diplomatic efforts to succeed, they must address the underlying causes of these conflicts, such as security guarantees in Ukraine and equitable statehood solutions for Palestinians. Only by tackling these foundational issues can diplomacy evolve into a more effective tool for sustainable peace and conflict prevention.

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