



INDONESIA'S ROLE IN STRENGTHENING THE COMMITMENT TO EMPOWER WOMEN TO SUPPORT THE PEACE PROCESS IN AFGHANISTAN

Arief Rachman, Indonesia Defense University, Jakarta, Indonesia

Muhammad Syaroni Rofii, Universitas Indonesia, Jakarta, Indonesia

Marissa Aulia, Indonesia Defense University, Jakarta, Indonesia

Nigin Ayeen, Kardan University, Afghanistan

Abstract - The long-term armed conflict has shaken Afghanistan's social order. In the armed conflict in Afghanistan, women and children are the victims most affected by this situation. In the transitional period, conflict resolution in Afghanistan can only be achieved when the transitional government uses a development approach rather than a security approach. In the conflict in Afghanistan, Indonesia is one of the countries directly involved in guarding the peace process by involving the participation of ulama and empowering women. In this study, it was found that the development approach by cooperating with scholars and women is an important key to the success of peace building in Afghanistan. This research is a qualitative study, the data used to support the conclusions based on the monthly report of the Indonesian Embassy in Kabul, Afghanistan.

Keywords: Afghanistan's social order, armed conflict, empowering women

I. INTRODUCTION

Afghanistan is a country that is going through a post-war transition period. The war that took place in 2003 changed the political landscape of Afghanistan as a whole. The fall of the Taliban regime completely changed the social order. The government, which previously adopted a theocratic system, has turned into a democratic system. Public participation is expanded, including the involvement of women in government affairs (William Byrd, 2012). Even though the changes have been taken to bring Afghanistan into a better position, however until now the expected peace has not really materialized. There are still terror attacks in public spaces. There are still women who are denied their rights.

Afghanistan as a country that is on the rise needs assistance from other countries. Moreover, the United Nations has made Afghanistan a country that needs to be the focus of attention in order to guard the post-war development process. Indonesia as a country committed to peace in Afghanistan has initiated a number of initiatives to safeguard the peace process in Afghanistan. Starting from providing training for general election organizers, mediating dialogue between rival political factions, empowering women and development initiatives in the education and health sector (Report of the Indonesian Embassy in Afghanistan, 2020).

In order to build peace, not a few efforts have been made by the Afghan government to resolve the existing conflict through the active role of women in supporting the peace process. These efforts were carried out together with men to be active, starting from the discussion to get the word peace even to the signing of a peace agreement. All these efforts are carried out in the hope of creating peace. However, all that has been done has not resolved the conflict in Afghanistan to date. One conflict is drowned, then another conflict will emerge which is triggered by a new problem. However, the new hope for peace in Afghanistan was born at the same time as the visit of the High Peace Council (HPC) or High Peace Council for Afghanistan to Indonesia in November 2017. The HPC chairman openly expressed his hope that Indonesia could become a mediator and mediator in resolving the conflict in Afghanistan (Waluyo, 2017). This research itself seeks to explain the role of Indonesia in peace building in Afghanistan by emphasizing the empowerment of women.

II. METHODS

This study used a qualitative approach where the existing data were obtained through observations, interviews, and archival documents belonging to the Indonesian Embassy in Afghanistan. Selection of informants by in-depth interviews using sampling theory. Data analysis was performed using interpretive

qualitative data analysis, through the stages of open coding, axial coding, and selective coding. While at the concept level, researchers use constructive theory which emphasizes the importance of the identity of a community or nation in influencing the paradigm and choice of policies. In addition, diplomacy theory is also used to explain how Indonesia uses its influence to provide assistance for the peace process in Afghanistan.

III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Regarding the issue of peace in Afghanistan, there are several studies that discuss Afghanistan, as conducted by Merkel (2011) which also discusses how to achieve peace in Afghanistan. However, what distinguishes this research is that Merkel (2011) seeks to find solutions related to peace in Afghanistan through development pathways, not soft power currency. In addition, there is research conducted by Vishwakarma (2017), it's just that in Vishwakarma's research discusses the role of the United Nations in peace in Afghanistan. Vishwakarma's findings are that the role of the United Nations in peace in Afghanistan is more inclined to the peacebuilding process by taking into account the security, political, social and military dimensions. In the social field, it does not mention the importance of empowering women. Recently the peace deal between the Afghanistan government and Taliban brokered by the United States of America focus on withdrawal of foreign troops while neglecting the participation of woman for development in Afghanistan who suffered the most during the war (Heather Barr, 2020; John R. Allen & Vanda Felbab Brown, 2020). Indonesia itself realizes that its involvement in efforts to participate in maintaining world peace can be very important for the implementation of its foreign policy. Indonesia's existence in peace efforts also helps maintain its international commitment by participating in sending world peacekeeping troops so that it places Indonesia in a strategic position in international politics. Included in the problems in Afghanistan, Indonesia has an important role in the peace process (Rachmat, 2016). So, to strengthen Indonesia's role in the peace process in Afghanistan and continue to maintain its commitment to empowering women, Indonesia consistently uses a soft power or diplomatic approach. According to Joseph Nye, Soft Power is the ability to influence other parties using a non-military approach, namely promoting the good values of a country (Joseph Nye, 2004).

3.1 Religious Approach in Peace Process

Through the Afghan Nahdlatul Ulama (NUA), Indonesia has been present in the region as an institution in order to bring closer and convey the message of Islam as *rahmatan lil alamin (blessing to the universe)* to resolve the conflict between the Taliban and the Afghan government. The presence of the NUA is also seen as the face of Indonesian Islamic identity with a blend of tolerance. The most respected concept in Indonesia. It is hoped that the presence of Indonesia and the scholars can build a foundation for peace through peaceful opinions and exchange ideas in the form of dialogues, forums and conferences as well as laying the foundation of trust between related parties through religion. Cultural diplomacy is also needed in helping to change the policy or political environment of the target country, in this case Indonesia through its scholars and ideas can bring some political maneuvers in the Afghan government that can help defuse the conflict and possible escalation of the conflict itself (Report of the Indonesian Embassy in Afghanistan, 2020).

3.2. Afghanistan Commitment to empower women

There have been several developments, including a national constitution that guarantees equal rights of women, the adoption of the National Plan for Advancement of Women in Afghanistan 2008-2018, the adoption of the National Action Plan for Afghan Women (NAPWA) and the subsequent law on the Elimination of Violence against Women were the Ministry's greatest achievements. Afghan women. In terms of women's empowerment, MOWA oversees the implementation of NAPWA, which was launched in 2008 with a 10-year mandate, and aims to strengthen gender equality and women's empowerment. NAPWA is a multi-sector plan that emphasizes access to education and health services, economic empowerment, security, political participation, and the elimination of violence against women, and the growth of civil society organizations working to advance women's rights and provide services that are urgently needed for women (Report of the Indonesian Embassy in Afghanistan, 2020).

There has also been significant progress that women are barred from attending schools under the Taliban, enrolled in public schools. Today, more than two million girls attend school, representing 35 percent of the total student population, and enrollment of women in universities is also increasing. Four hundred women were contested in the 2010 parliamentary elections and for the first time ever, women are serving as election observers in all provinces in Afghanistan. Afghanistan now has the highest number of women in senior government positions in its history. Women make up 28% of the Lower House of Parliament in

Afghanistan and 18% of the Upper House, including four women ministers and nine women deputy ministers, 20% of public sector jobs are held by women.

3.3. Indonesia's Role in Women's Empowerment Efforts to Support Conflict Resolution in Afghanistan.

Indonesia has proven its commitment to maintaining world peace, one of which is by taking part in efforts to realize women's empowerment to support the peace process in Afghanistan. The role that Indonesia plays is manifested in several mutual visits, several forms of Indonesian assistance to Afghanistan, and several collaborations between the two countries. In particular, Indonesia's role in peace is related to the approach to empowering women in Afghanistan, constructively, gradually and continuously according to development and momentum, both diplomacy and soft power currencies approach through culture and intercultural communication.

Move by Indonesia to participate in the process such as the initial approach has been made since the visit of the Afghanistan cleric to Indonesia about ten years ago. Then in more depth began with the visit of the Minister of Women Empowerment and Child Protection of Indonesia to Afghanistan, on 15-16 May 2017, the Minister of PPPA (Women's Empowerment and Child Protection), Republic of Indonesia, Mrs. Yohana Yembise to attend the Symposium on the Role and Contribution of Afghanistan Women for Peace, in Kabul, Afghanistan in order to fulfill an invitation from the First Lady of the Republic of Afghanistan, HE Rula Ghani to be the keynote speaker at the international symposium.

The visit of Afghanistan First Lady, Rula Ghani to Indonesia, on 4 September 2017 for 2 days. During her visit to the First Lady of Afghanistan in the framework of an invitation and to attend and become the Keynote speaker for the National Symposium on the Role of Women in Peace. After that she held meetings with groups of religious leaders and women's alliances. Rula Ghani's visit shows Afghanistan's commitment to continuing to improve relations and work. same both countries. In addition, Rula Ghani also asked for Indonesia's support to help bring peace in Afghanistan, which has been facing conflict for nearly 40 years. From this visit, Indonesia's efforts have been felt by the first lady and Afghan women, the need for increased cooperation in women's empowerment is felt right and lessons are needed from Indonesia.

Then, the State visit of President Joko Widodo and the First Lady to Afghanistan on January 29 2018 was a high-level soft power diplomacy effort and had a tremendous impact on the peace process at the regional and international levels. During the visit, President Joko Widodo was accompanied by the First Lady. President Joko Widodo said "Without peace there will be no prosperity. Without prosperity, peace will not last long. Therefore, when we work together to build peace, economic cooperation must be increased in parallel ". With that, development efforts in Afghanistan must be in line with economic development in the country. This is done to create prosperity in Afghanistan. Indonesia's role in realizing peace through a soft power approach, namely through welfare and education. The President of Indonesia on this occasion promised to provide scholarships for Afghan students and students. This is a form of sympathy and concern for the Indonesian government and the Indonesian people for the realization of peace.

Besides, the presence of women at the Annual Nahdatul Ulama Afghanistan Conference (Role of Ulama In Durable Peace, Development and Economy) on 11-12 August 2018 in Kabul. The two-day NUA annual conference starting on Saturday 11 August, 2018 with the title (The Role of Ulama in Durable Peace, Development and Economics) was held at the ASSA Hotel in Kabul. The conference was attended by 100 Ulama (70 men and 30 women), NUA Shura members from Kabul, another province, representatives from the Indonesian Embassy, media groups, government authorities and members of the security department. At the Conference the Ulama showed their full support for this initiative and expressed their readiness to cooperate with the Government of Afghanistan and similar organizations for Peace, reconciliation and development. The conference ended with a press release that emphasized the role of NUA and Ulama in supporting the peace process that upholds Indonesia's role in this process.

Likewise, President Asraf Ghani's statement during his visit to Jakarta on April 6, 2017, which stated that the President of Afghanistan has special feelings for Indonesia for its progress in the fields of democracy, security and political stability as well as moderate, harmonious, tolerant and moderate values and principles of the Islamic religion. equitable participants with various differences and united in differences. Indonesia has managed to resolve various problems and conflicts with ease, "live and let live". Therefore, Afghanistan in various fields including women's empowerment will be able to learn and receive sustainable lessons learned from Indonesia to be able to support its peace process.

IV. CONCLUSIONS

This study also confirms Indonesia's position in strengthening the role of women in the development process in Afghanistan. The ongoing peace process will only have an impact if the participation of all parties including women is represented. During the peace process, researchers discovered that the peace agreement only focused on the matter of withdrawing foreign troops from Afghanistan and provided space for national troops to take part and at the same time listen to the aspirations of the Taliban group which had been an opposition. In the process of maintaining peace in Afghanistan, Indonesia uses a cultural and religious approach to attract sympathy from all parties involved in the conflict. The training and capacity building of Afghan women is an added value that can be offered by Indonesia. More than that, Indonesia has the capital of being the largest Muslim country in the world as well as having the attributes as a stable democracy.

REFERENCES

1. Ang, I., Isar, Y. R., & Mar, P. (2015). Cultural diplomacy: beyond the national interest? *International Journal of Cultural Policy*, 2015 Vol.21, 365-381.
2. Allen, John R. and Vanda Felbab-Brown. 2020. The fate of women's rights in Afghanistan. Retrieved from <https://www.brookings.edu/essay/the-fate-of-womens-rights-in-afghanistan/>.
3. Barr, Heather. 2020. A crucial moment for women's rights in Afghanistan. Retrieved from <https://www.hrw.org/news/2020/03/05/crucial-moment-womens-rights-afghanistan>. Byrd, William. Lessons from Afghanistan's History for the Current Transition and Beyond
4. USIP Special Report, 2012, <https://www.usip.org/sites/default/files/resources/SR314.pdf>.
6. Ihsanudin. (2018, Januari 29). *Bertemu Presiden Afghanistan, Jokowi Dorong Upaya Perdamaian dan Hubungan Dagang*. Retrieved September 16, 2020, from Kompas.com: <https://nasional.kompas.com/read/2018/01/30/10140391/bertemu-presiden-afghanistan-jokowi-dorong-upaya-perdamaian-dan-hubungan>.
7. Khurun'in, I. (2016). Tantangan Binadamai: Kegagalan Demokratisasi Pasca Konflik Sipil di Afghanistan. *Jurnal Transformasi Global*, Vol. 3, No.1.
8. Mustaqim, A. H. (2020, Maret 10). *Konflik Politik Terus Berlanjut, Pelantikan Presiden Afghanistan Ditunda*. Retrieved September 14, 2020, from SindoNews.com: <https://international.sindonews.com/berita/1551238/43/konflik-politik-terus-berlanjut-pelantikan-presiden-afghanistan-ditunda>
9. Nye, J. S. (2004). *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics*. United States: PublAffairs.
10. Rahmad, Y. J. (2019). Peran International Commite of Cross (ICRC) Menangani Korban Konflik Bersenjata Internasional di Afghanistan Tahun 2013-2016. *eJournal Ilmu Hubungan Internasional*, Vol. 7, No. 1, 509 - 520.