

## ISLAM AND HUMANITY

### Commodification of Aid for Rohingya in Aceh

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#### Abstract

*This study examines how Rohingya refugees in Aceh in 2015-2016 received assistance and the role of Islamic philanthropic institutions in providing aid. The paper shows that through the media, Islamic philanthropic institutions have successfully advocated for Rohingya rights and raised the issue as a religious issue so that they have collected large donations. Also, this paper finds a discrepancy between the information conveyed by the media and the reality in the field, showing significant efforts in the commodification of humanitarian aid and abuse of religion.*

*[Artikel ini membahas bagaimana pengungsi Rohingya di Aceh periode 2015-2016 mendapatkan bantuan dan peran dari lembaga filantropi Islam dalam penyediaan bantuan tersebut. Artikel ini menjelaskan bahwa lembaga filantropi Islam berhasil mengadvokasi hak Rohingya melalui media dan mengkaitkan dalam isu agama sehingga mendapatkan donasi yang berlipat. Selain itu dalam artikel ini juga menunjukkan ketidaksesuaian antara informasi di media dengan kenyataan di lapangan, bahkan terdapat indikasi komodifikasi bantuan kemanusiaan dan penyalahgunaan agama.]*

**Keywords:** Rohingya in Aceh, humanitarian aid, Islamic philanthropy.

#### A. Introduction

The world recognized the term refugees in international law during

the First World War.<sup>1</sup> At that time, millions of human were victims and suffered from the conflict that led to exploitation. This required them to move to other region to avoid these adverse effects. The League of Nations (LBB) at that time appointed Nansen as the first High Commissioner for Refugees affairs and published the Nansen Passport as a first initiative for providing assistance to refugees.<sup>2</sup> Afterwards, the High Commission for refugee affairs was appointed to determine a series of legal measures at the international level in protecting refugees. Since the appointment of the High Commissioner, the international community has the same understanding of the term refugees, correctly the people moving from their countries due to the suppression of human rights.<sup>3</sup> Refugees look for other places to reside because of compulsion and disconnection with their country due to fear and persecution.<sup>4</sup>

Although armed conflicts have occurred in several countries, according to UNHCR (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees) Rohingya are one of the most executed minority groups in the world. They have become victims of serious human rights violations committed by the Military Junta and are currently evacuating to several countries, including Indonesia. Since 2012, the number of Rohingya refugees have

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<sup>1</sup> Achmad Romsan, *Pengantar Hukum Pengungsi Internasional* (Jakarta: Badan Perserikatan Bangsa-Bangsa Urusan Pengungsi-UNHCR, 2003), p. 28..

<sup>2</sup> Edmund Jan Osmańczyk, *The Encyclopedia of the United Nations and International Relations* (New York: Taylor and Francis, 1990), p. 742; Gilbert Jaeger, “On the History of the International Protection of Refugees”, *International Review of the Red Cross*, vol. 83, no. 843 (2001), pp. 727–38.

<sup>3</sup> This statement is based on the definition of refugees stated in League of Nations, *Arrangement Relating to the Issue of Identify Certificates to Russian and Armenian Refugees*, <https://www.refworld.org/docid/3dd8b5802.html>, accessed 19 Nov 2020; League of Nations, *Arrangement Relating to the Legal Status of Russian and Armenian Refugees*, <https://www.refworld.org/docid/3dd8cde56.html>, accessed 19 Nov 2020; League of Nations, *Convention Relating to the International Status of Refugees*, <https://www.refworld.org/docid/3dd8b5802.html>, accessed 19 Nov 2020; League of Nations, *Convention concerning the Status of Refugees Coming From Germany*, <https://www.refworld.org/docid/3dd8d12a4.html>, accessed 21 Nov 2020; League of Nations, *Additional Protocol to the Provisional Arrangement and to the Convention concerning the Status of Refugees Coming from Germany*, <https://www.refworld.org/docid/3dd8d1fb4.html>, accessed 21 Nov 2020.

<sup>4</sup> Sukanda Husin, “UNHCR dan Perlindungan Hak Azasi Manusia”, *Jurnal Hukum*, vol. 7, no. 5, p. 27.

significantly increased.<sup>5</sup> Since the sea geographically surrounds it with its archipelago, Indonesia has become a transit country for refugees.<sup>6</sup>

Until 2019, Aceh was a region visited by many immigrants,<sup>7</sup> because geographically the area was close to Myanmar, Malaysia and Thailand. The Indonesian Government build some shelters/camps to protect refugees in Langsa, East Aceh and North Aceh. Although some have been relocated to other areas, Langsa Aceh still has the most number of refugees, around, with more than 200 people, including children and women. It received attention from various parties after the media reported the existence and condition of Rohingya refugees.<sup>8</sup> Various actions were initiated, from the coercive ones, such as demonstrations<sup>9</sup> to the responsive ones, such as providing assistance by both individuals and institutions.

Several philanthropic institutions contribute their thoughts, energy and property to relieve the burden of the refugees. These institutions include UNHCR (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees), IOM (International Organization for Migration), ACT (Aksi Cepat Tanggap), Dompot Dhuafa, Daarut Tauhiid, and the Indonesian Red Cross. These organizations undertake to reduce the suffering of Rohingya

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<sup>5</sup> Hardi Alunaza and M. Kholit Juani, “Kebijakan Pemerintah Indonesia melalui Sekuritisasi Migrasi Pengungsi Rohingya di Aceh tahun 2012-2015”, *Indonesian Perspective*, vol. 2, no. 1 (2017), p. 12.

<sup>6</sup> Sulaiman Hamid, *Lembaga Suaka dalam Hukum Internasional* (Jakarta: Rajagrafindo Persada, 2002), p. 39.

<sup>7</sup> Tri Wahyuni, “UNHCR: Jumlah Pengungsi di Indonesia Meningkat”, *CNN Indonesia* (29 Jul 2015), <https://www.cnnindonesia.com/nasional/20150728204221-20-68699/unhcr-jumlah-pengungsi-di-indonesia-meningkat>, accessed 26 Jan 2020.

<sup>8</sup> Lindsay Robbins, “The Rohingya Case in Aceh: Indonesia’s Role as a Destination for Refugees”, *Towson University Journal of International Affairs*, vol. LIII, no. 2 (2020), p. 1; Anne McNevin and Antje Missbach, “Hospitality as a Horizon of Aspiration (or, What the International Refugee Regime Can Learn from Acehese Fishermen)”, *Journal of Refugee Studies*, vol. 31, no. 3 (2018), pp. 296–7.

<sup>9</sup> For example, a coercive action was carried out by unidentified people who threw molotov cocktails at the Myanmar embassy building and sent members by several community organizations (mass organizations) to wage fight in Myanmar, see Adirini Pujayanti, “Indonesia dan Tragedi Kemanusiaan Rohingya”, *Majalah Info Singkat Hubungan Internasional*, vol. 9, no. 17 (2017), p. 6.

citizens.

Several existing studies related to Rohingya refugees looked at normative aspects, both national<sup>10</sup> and international.<sup>11</sup> Apart from the political aspect,<sup>12</sup> cultural and empirical aspects are one of the concerns of researchers related to assisting refugees in Aceh.<sup>13</sup> Similar to research on Rohingya refugees, many researchers view Islamic philanthropy from various aspects.<sup>14</sup>

From a legal point of view, Rahayu stated that Indonesia has an obligation to protect Rohingya refugees even though Indonesia is not part

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<sup>10</sup> Khamami Zada, “The Rohingya’s Muslim Asylum Seekers in Southeast Asia: From National to International Law Perspective”, *Abkam: Jurnal Ilmu Syariah*, vol. 1, no. 17 (2017), pp. 1–24; Rahayu, Kholis Roisah, and Peni Susetyorini, “Perlindungan Hak Asasi Manusia Pengungsi dan Pencari Suaka di Indonesia”, *Masalah-Masalah Hukum*, vol. 49, no. 2 (2020), pp. 202–12; M. Riadussyah, “Tanggung Jawab Indonesia sebagai Negara Transit bagi Pengungsi Anak Berdasarkan Hukum Internasional”, *Jurnal Hukum IUS QULA IUSTUM*, vol. 23, no. 2 (2016), pp. 330–250.

<sup>11</sup> Zezen Zaenal Mutaqin, “The Rohingya Refugee Crisis and Human Rights: What Should ASEAN Do?”, *Asia-Pacific Journal on Human Rights and the Law*, vol. 19, no. 1 (2018), pp. 1–26; Ketut Arianta, Dewa Gede Sudika Mangku, and Ni Putu Rai Yuliartini, “Perlindungan Hukum Bagi Kaum Etnis Rohingya Dalam Perspektif Hak Asasi Manusia Internasional”, *Jurnal Komunitas Yustisia*, vol. 3, no. 2 (2020), pp. 166–76.

<sup>12</sup> Asep Setiawan and Hamka, “Role of Indonesian Humanitarian Diplomacy toward Rohingya Crisis in Myanmar”, presented at the 2nd International Conference on Social Sciences, ICSS (Jakarta, 5 Nov 2019).

<sup>13</sup> Robbins, “The Rohingya Case in Aceh”; Antje Missbach, “Asylum Seekers’ and Refugees’ Decision-Making in Transit in Indonesia: The Need for In-depth and Longitudinal Research”, *Bijdragen tot de taal-, land- en volkenkunde / Journal of the Humanities and Social Sciences of Southeast Asia*, vol. 175, no. 4 (2019), pp. 419–45.

<sup>14</sup> Hilman Latief, “Philanthropy and ‘Muslim Citizenship’ in Post-Suharto Indonesia”, *Southeast Asian Studies*, vol. 5, no. 2 (2016), pp. 269–86; Kaja Borchgrevink, “NGOization of Islamic Charity: Claiming Legitimacy in Changing Institutional Contexts”, *VOLUNTAS: International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organizations*, vol. 31, no. 5 (2020), pp. 1049–62; Jamal Krafess, “The Influence of the Muslim Religion in Humanitarian Aid”, *International Review of the Red Cross*, vol. 87, no. 858 (2005), pp. 327–42; Chusnan Jusuf, “Filantropi Modern Untuk Pembangunan Sosial”, *Sosio Konsepsia*, vol. 12, no. 1 (2007), pp. 74–80; Asep Saepudin Jahar, “Developing Islamic Philanthropy for Human Rights: The Indonesian Experience”, presented at the 1st International Conference of Law and Justice-Good Governance and Human Rights in Muslim Countries: Experiences and Challenges, vol. 162 (Jakarta: 7 Nov 2017).

of the country that ratified the 1951 Refugee Status Convention.<sup>15</sup> This obligation also applies to child refugees.<sup>16</sup> Moreover, Zada considers that legally the Indonesian Government has obeyed customary international law, regional law, and national law in fulfilling the rights and protecting Rohingya refugees.<sup>17</sup>

Similar to the states, ASEAN as an international organization has an obligation to protect Rohingya refugees. Mutaqin stated that ASEAN must prioritize the existence of a workable framework to deal with the refugee crisis.<sup>18</sup> Meanwhile, Arianta viewed that legal protection for the Rohingya ethnic group has generally been regulated in international instruments such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.<sup>19</sup> From the political side, Setiawan saw the diplomacy of Indonesia towards the suffering of the Rohingya as a proactive policy in maintaining world order and peace, in addition to being one of the constitutional mandates.<sup>20</sup>

In the perspective of culture, Novialdi, for example, argues that Aceh has failed to provide protection and security for Rohingya refugees, especially in the area of the Bireun Joint Activity Center. A large number of escaped refugees from the shelter is one piece of evidence.<sup>21</sup> However, Malahayati saw the large acceptance of the Indonesian people for the presence of refugees for various reasons.<sup>22</sup> This condition is

<sup>15</sup> Rahayu, Roisah, and Susetyorini, “Perlindungan Hak Asasi Manusia Pengungsi Dan Pencari Suaka Di Indonesia”, pp. 202–3.

<sup>16</sup> Riadussyah stated that Indonesia has a normative responsibility as a transit country, even though it is not a party in the 1951 refugee convention and the 1967 protocol. Indonesia in this case is bound by the convention on children’s rights to provide protection to children who become refugees. Riadussyah, “Tanggung Jawab Indonesia sebagai Negara Transit bagi Pengungsi Anak Berdasarkan Hukum Internasional”, p. 230.

<sup>17</sup> Zada, “The Rohingya’s Muslim Asylum Seekers in Southeast Asia”, pp. 1–21.

<sup>18</sup> Mutaqin, “The Rohingya Refugee Crisis and Human Rights”.

<sup>19</sup> Arianta, Mangku, and Yuliartini, “Perlindungan Hukum Bagi Kaum Etnis Rohingya Dalam Perspektif Hak Asasi Manusia Internasional”, p. 166.

<sup>20</sup> Setiawan and Hamka, “Role of Indonesian Humanitarian Diplomacy toward Rohingya Crisis in Myanmar”, p. 1.

<sup>21</sup> Risky Novialdi, “The Failure of Providing Human Security For Rohingya Refugees (Case Study: Escaping Rohingya Refugees from Shelter in Skb Bireuen, Aceh Province)”, *Indonesian Journal of Peace and Security Studies (IJPSS)*, vol. 2, no. 1 (2020), p. 49.

<sup>22</sup> Malahayati Rahman found that most of the community (87,6%) accepted Rohingya refugees to return to Aceh, 10,9% refused, and 1,5% abstained. Indonesians

different from the response of the government and other countries which are currently implementing anti-migrant<sup>23</sup> and anti-asylum policies.<sup>24</sup> Related to this issue, Robin found that the volunteerism of the Acehnese people was due to religious motives. As Muslims, they feel obliged to help.<sup>25</sup> Setiawan found that the large public involvement was due to the condition of the Rohingya as oppressed Muslims<sup>26</sup> and as minority refugees, therefore it has invited great solidarity in Indonesia.<sup>27</sup> Indonesian government's position in this proposition is only facilitating the aspirations of the people to help the Rohingya.<sup>28</sup> This is in line with Borchgrevink's statement that religious motivation (being a good Muslim) is one of the important reasons for social workers in helping Rohingya refugees. On the other hand, Miscbah argues that religion is not the only concern the Acehnese have. He found that some of the interviewed fishermen provided assistance for humanitarian reasons. They believe that whoever is in the ocean must be helped even if they are in difficult circumstances. They believe that by helping other human beings, God will make it easier for them to fish in the sea.<sup>29</sup>

On the side of philanthropy, several studies have looked at the aspects of changing the status of Islamic philanthropic institutions, from

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take Rohingya refugees based on religious thoughts (44%), humanitarian reasons (35%), reasons of morality (14%), legality (3%), and others (4%). Meanwhile, those who reject the Rohingya refugees find economic, social, health and regulatory problems. See Malahayati Rahman, "Community's Perspectives on the Attendance of Rohingyas in Aceh", presented at the International Conference on Social Science, Political Science, and Humanities (ICoSPOLHUM), vol. 495 (Aceh, 4 Nov 2020), p. 128.

<sup>23</sup> Robbins, "The Rohingya Case in Aceh", p. 1.

<sup>24</sup> McNevin and Missbach, "Hospitality as a Horizon of Aspiration (or, What the International Refugee Regime Can Learn from Acehnese Fishermen)", p. 293.

<sup>25</sup> Robbins, "The Rohingya Case in Aceh", p. 13.

<sup>26</sup> Setiawan and Hamka, 'Role of Indonesian Humanitarian Diplomacy toward Rohingya Crisis in Myanmar', p. 1.

<sup>27</sup> McNevin and Missbach, 'Hospitality as a Horizon of Aspiration (or, What the International Refugee Regime Can Learn from Acehnese Fishermen)', pp. 296–7.

<sup>28</sup> Setiawan and Hamka, 'Role of Indonesian Humanitarian Diplomacy toward Rohingya Crisis in Myanmar', pp. 1–13.

<sup>29</sup> Missbach, 'Asylum Seekers' and Refugees' Decision-Making in Transit in Indonesia', pp. 419–45.

volunteering to becoming a profession,<sup>30</sup> from traditional philanthropic to social justice model.<sup>31</sup> Regarding this, Krafests stated that in Islam the concept of protecting refugees had been taught by the Prophet Muhammad by concept *ansor* and *muhajirin*.<sup>32</sup>

To anticipate the deviation of objectives and aid mechanisms, some experts suggest the existence of clear mechanisms and concepts. For instance, Hilman Latief asserted that the donation distribution must be accompanied by the visibility and accountability of these institutions.<sup>33</sup> According to Latief, this aims to maintain the public trust of these institutions and the philanthropic atmosphere, not *caritas*.<sup>34</sup> In this regard, it needs to be noted that some studies find that the problem of accountability and capability is evident in a number of philanthropic organizations.<sup>35</sup> Nur kholis, for an example, stated that not all zakat organisations that focus on ZIS (Zakat, Infaq, and Alms), work optimally due to the differences of the capabilities in managing organisation possessed by inter-agency organs and to also a lack of transparency

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<sup>30</sup> Borchgrevink, “NGOization of Islamic Charity”, p. 5.

<sup>31</sup> Amelia Fauzia, *Faith and the State: A History of Islamic Philanthropy in Indonesia* (Leiden: Brill, 2013).

<sup>32</sup> Krafess, “The Influence of the Muslim Religion in Humanitarian Aid”, p. 334.

<sup>33</sup> Hilman Latief, “Akuntabilitas Lembaga Filantropi Islam”, *IBTimes.id* (21 Dec 2019), <https://ibtimes.id/hilman-latief-akuntabilitas-lembaga-filantropi-islam/>, accessed 25 Jan 2020.

<sup>34</sup> *Caritas* is understood as short-term assistance with physical assistance, while philanthropy is long-term assistance by looking at the root of the problem and continuing by formulating solutions to reduce the space of injustice and poverty. See Amelia Fauzia, “Islamic Philanthropy in Indonesia: Modernization, Islamization, and Social Justice”, *Austrian Journal of South-East Asian Studies*, vol. 10, no. 2 (2017), p. 225. *Caritas* is also understood as a traditional form of philanthropy which means caring in a compassionate frame. Therefore, the assistance provided will lead to the widening of the social gap, because *caritas* will only increase the prestige or status of the aid provider. Whereas, modern philanthropy seeks to see the basis of problems and turn them into the basis for status updates, structures, policies, or whatever it is to bridge the disparity in status in society. See Jusuf, “Filantropi Modern Untuk Pembangunan Sosial”, pp. 74–5.

<sup>35</sup> Nur Kholis et al., “Potret Filantropi Islam di Propinsi Daerah Istimewa Yogyakarta”, *La\_Riba: Jurnal Ekonomi Islam*, vol. 7, no. 1 (2013), p. 62.

and accountability in its management and reporting.<sup>36</sup> Meanwhile, as Hunsaker and Hanzl statement, the goals of philanthropic institution are two faced; striving to create benefits for the community, and seeking to build a good image in the public.<sup>37</sup> Therefore, Chusnan Jusuf suggested the need to improve the quality of transparency and accountability in the management and reporting of Community grants.<sup>38</sup>

Apart from capability issues, coordination is very imperative. This coordination aims that every institution can perform maximally and achieve their objectives.<sup>39</sup> Schemell and Eberwein stated that assisting guarantees integrity and enhances the essence of philanthropy.<sup>40</sup>

Philanthropy is one of the most fundamental obligations prescribed in Islam.<sup>41</sup> It is highly encouraged and emphasized in the Qur'an and Hadith as the noblest way of spending the wealth for the sake of Allah and helping the needy. This way should be the common practice of every Muslim.<sup>42</sup> The concept of philanthropy is found in Qur'an 9: 60 which states that the eight parties are entitled to enjoy religious almsgivings.<sup>43</sup> In this case, the Qur'an teaches us to create justice in terms of the distribution of wealth. In this regard, the Qur'an also indicates th at the wealth of Muslims must be distributed to the poor, not only among the

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<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 70.

<sup>37</sup> John Hunsaker and Brenda Hanzl, *Understanding Social Justice Philanthropy* (Washington: NCRP, 2003), pp. 8–9.

<sup>38</sup> Jusuf, “Filantropi Modern Untuk Pembangunan Sosial”, p. 70.

<sup>39</sup> Arfa Wulandari Tambunan and Hermeni Susiatiningsih, “Kerja Sama UNHCR dan IOM dalam Menangani Pencari Suaka dan Pengungsi Etnis Rohingya di Indonesia”, *Journal of International Relations*, vol. 5, no. 2 (2019), p. 343.

<sup>40</sup> Wolf-Dieter Eberwein and Yves Schemell, “Coalesce or Collapse: Mandate Enlargement and the Expansion of International Organizations”, presented at the World International Studies Conference (Istanbul, 24 Aug 2005), p. 4.

<sup>41</sup> Salwa Amirah Awang et al., “The Concept of Charity in Islam: An Analysis on the Verses of Qur'an and Hadith”, *Jurnal Usuluddin*, vol. 45, no. 1 (2017), pp. 141–72.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 141.

<sup>43</sup> They eight parties are: the poor / *al-fuqara*; the needy and very poor / *al-masakin*; administrators / *amylin*; those whose hearts are made to incline (truth) / *mu'allafab qulububum*; those in bondage / *riqab*; in debt / *gharimin*; fight in the cause of God / *fi sabilillah*; and travelers / *Ibn Sabil*. Jonathan Benthall, “Financial Worship: The Qur'anic Injunction to Almsgiving”, *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, vol. 5, no. 1 (1999), p. 36.

rich.<sup>44</sup> Indeed, Bensaïd stated that charitable giving is not just a means of spiritual purification, but also as a tool for building socio-economic sustainability,<sup>45</sup> and social reforms resulting in the wellbeing of an individual and society in the world and hereafter.<sup>46</sup> In the history, the Prophet Muhammad established a golden rule for the care of refugees. He established the principle of brotherhood between «ansar» (the inhabitants of Medina) and «muhajirun» (refugees from Mecca). According to this pact, each «ansar» should protect one «muhajir».<sup>47</sup>

Latief established that the ethical spirit of Islam to help the Indonesian economy was increasingly evident after independence. However, according to him this becomes a paradox for profit institutions such as banks.<sup>48</sup> The practice of generosity which is very massive among Muslims resulted the drastic increase in aid funds,<sup>49</sup> and this also happened in 2015-2016 when hundreds of Rohingya refugees arrived in Aceh. Various islamic organisations participated in assisting refugees in Aceh. Dompét Dhuafa, for example, at that time was one of the institutions involved in assisting in Aceh. Some communities like Indonesia Community in Japan trust in Dompét Dhuafa to distribute their fund.<sup>50</sup> The Green Action Synergy did the same, they deposit their money to Dompét Dhuafa for distribution. Others Islamic philanthropy such as Ummah Charity, the Aceh Dhuafa Solidarity Community, Aksi Cepat Tanggap intervened in this humanitarian action. Now, in 2021, these philanthropic organisations still collect money to assist Rohingya

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<sup>44</sup> Jahar, “Developing Islamic Philanthropy for Human Rights”, 162: 1.

<sup>45</sup> Benaouda Bensaïd and Fadila Grine, “Ethico-Spiritual Dimensions of Charity: An Islamic Perspective”, *Middle-East Journal of Scientific Research*, vol. 13, no. Special Issue of Economics (2013), pp. 171–2.

<sup>46</sup> Awang et al., “The Concept of Charity in Islam”.

<sup>47</sup> Krafess, “The Influence of the Muslim Religion in Humanitarian Aid”, p. 334.

<sup>48</sup> Eberwein and Schemeil, “Coalesce or Collapse: Mandate Enlargement and the Expansion of International Organizations”, pp. 189–90.

<sup>49</sup> Latief, “Philanthropy and ‘Muslim Citizenship’ in Post-Suharto Indonesia”, pp. 269–86.

<sup>50</sup> “Bantu Rohingya, Masyarakat Indonesia di Jepang Salurkan Donasi ke Dompét Dhuafa”, *Dompét Dhuafa*, <http://dompetedhuafa.org/id/berita/detail/bantu-rohingya--masyarakat-indonesia-di-jepang-salurkan-donasi-ke-dompetedhuafa>, accessed 20 Feb 2021.

refugees.<sup>51</sup>

This study examines the practices of aid provision by Islamic philanthropic institutions to Rohingya refugees in Aceh. It investigates how the Islamic institutions manage and run their programs of providing aid to the refugees and what have driven them to offer the aid. Displaying the conditions of the refugees before and after being accommodated and the information on the actual practice of aid provision by those institutions within 2015 and 2016, this paper seeks to see how they attempt to collect donations and use religion as to attract more parties to donate.

This paper is based on field research conducted in Aceh. Primary data collection was carried out for one week in 2016. The data used to analyze this study gained from interviews with some stakeholders who take part on aid provision in the shelter: the staffs and Head of the Aceh Provincial Social Service, NGOs's activists from the American Friend Service Committee, Ruman Aceh and Balai Suro Aceh. An interview was also conducted with one of the Indonesian Red Cross staff who was neutral in observing both in terms of the policy as well as implementation in the field, he is also work as Director of the Aceh Community. Furthermore, the secondary data were collected from several sources, such as Core Humanitarian Standart and Annual Report of United Nations, as well as data on aid provision obtained from media. All data and sources of information were confirmed by some references of the issue of philanthropy. Therefore, this study emphasized the sociological aspects.

## **B. The Entrance of Rohingya Refugees into Indonesia**

The Rohingya refugees began entering Aceh waters in 2013 when the conflict began in Myanmar. Neither Aceh nor Indonesia is their leading destination. According to Ruman Aceh,<sup>52</sup> they settle in this

<sup>51</sup> Anggara Wikan Prasetya, "Dompot Dhuafa Ikut Terjun Langsung Selamatkan Pengungsi Rohingya di Aceh Utara", *KOMPAS.com* (29 Jun 2020), <https://nasional.kompas.com/read/2020/06/29/17212251/dompot-dhuafa-ikut-terjun-langsung-selamatkan-pengungsi-rohingya-di-aceh>, accessed 20 Feb 2021.

<sup>52</sup> RUMAN (Rumoh Baca Aneuk Nanggro) Aceh is a community of Aceh children's reading houses founded by Ahmad Arif. Ahmad Arif, "Mengenal Khidmah RUMAN Aceh (Bagian Pertama) & raquo", *dialeksis.com*, <https://dialeksis.com/aceh/>

region because they were stranded after a long time aboard the ship.<sup>53</sup> Previously, the Rohingya refugees sailed to Malaysia and Thailand to seek protection. They were not welcomed by the community and local government, and therefore they continued their voyage and finally settled in Aceh waters.<sup>54</sup> At that time, several places that became the entrance to Aceh for Rohingya refugees were coastal areas such as Kuala Pesisir, Langsa, Tamiyah, Bireun Bayeun, East Aceh and North Aceh.<sup>55</sup>

When their boats entered the Aceh waters, there was a debate between the Government and the Aceh people, most of them are fishermen. The Aceh Government and the Central Government did not accept the disembarkment of the Rohingya refugees, but the fishermen and the residents forced to accept them.<sup>56</sup> The Central Government objected the idea of accepting them because of the territorial issue, foreign nationals crossing Indonesia's borders.<sup>57</sup> This is a critical factor when viewed from a legal standpoint since it relates to state sovereignty.<sup>58</sup>

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mengenal-khidmah-ruman-aceh-bagian-pertama/, accessed 26 Feb 2020.

<sup>53</sup> Rizky Sopya (Ruman Aceh), interview (5 Dec 2016).

<sup>54</sup> Ms. Siti and Ms. Rita, interview (4 Dec 2016); Rizky Sopya (Ruman Aceh), interview (5 Dec 2016); Ruwaida, the American Friend Service Committee, interview (5 Dec 2016).

<sup>55</sup> Yanyan Rahmat, Head of the Aceh Provincial Social Service, interview (5 Dec 2016).

<sup>56</sup> Serambi TV, "Ratusan Rohingya Diselamatkan Nelayan Aceh" (2015), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=468GDjKfbF4>, accessed 22 May 2016; Rizky Sopya (Ruman Aceh), interview (5 Dec 2016).

<sup>57</sup> Khairil Razali, Director of the Aceh Community Center, interview (5 Dec 2016).

<sup>58</sup> Article 1 of the Montevideo Convention on the Rights and Duties of States (Montevideo Convention) states that the State as a subject of international law must have several elements, including 1) a permanent population; 2) a defined territory; 3) government; 4) capacity to enter into relations with the other states. The fourth element is an element that is owned by the State as a subject of international law which distinguishes it from other international law subjects. The sovereignty of the State is divided into two, including internal sovereignty and external sovereignty. Internal sovereignty is the highest power the State has to regulate internal or internal problems. Whereas, external sovereignty is the power of the State to regulate international relations, both bilateral and multilateral. See I. Wayan Parthiana, *Pengantar Hukum Internasional* (Bandung: Mandar Maju, 2003), p. 60; Khaidir Anwar, *Hukum Internasional II* (Bandar Lampung: Universitas Lampung, 2011), p. 30.

Despite the debate, finally, their boat was pulled by the fishermen with the desire to help them. The problem was escalated by the lack of response from the Indonesian government to protect them. However, due to humanitarian reasons, the immigrants were finally rescued from several ships which at the time were almost sinking due to engine failure and excess passengers.<sup>59</sup>

The Aceh Fishermen's Association insisted on helping the refugees.<sup>60</sup> They took the initiative to pull the ship to dock and rescue the people. The Aceh society then gave much aids in the form of clothes, rice, eggs and other basic needs.<sup>61</sup> The people contributed as many resources as possible, while they themselves lacked the power to comply with all the needs of the Rohingya Refugees.<sup>62</sup> After the media began to preach about the existence of the Rohingyas, the government and other humanitarian agencies, both national and international, began to help them.<sup>63</sup> The existence of the refugees received sympathy from various parties because of the support of the generosity of the Aceh people. They help without considering the legal basis for their actions.<sup>64</sup> Although the lacks of the legality of national law, the Aceh people would like to continue to help the refugees and give assistance with pleasure based on Aceh's customary law. They believe that in case anyone need

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<sup>59</sup> Official NET News, "Penyelamatan Pengungsi Rohingya oleh Nelayan Indonesia", *IMS* (2015), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fIAAkuR6K2A>, accessed 27 Apr 2017.

<sup>60</sup> Khairil Razali, Director of the Aceh Community Center, interview (5 Dec 2016).

<sup>61</sup> Interview with Usman Abdullah, Mayor of Langsa in *Aiman*, KOMPASTV, "Solidaritas Warga Langsa Terhadap Pengungsi Rohingya" (2015), [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sL1DE6\\_lc\\_8](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sL1DE6_lc_8), accessed 22 Apr 2017.

<sup>62</sup> Robbins, "The Rohingya Case in Aceh", pp. 1–13.

<sup>63</sup> Rizky Sopya (Ruman Aceh), interview (5 Dec 2016); Ahmad Arif Ginting, Qatar Charity, interview (5 Dec 2016); Robbins, "The Rohingya Case in Aceh", p. 1.

<sup>64</sup> One of the problems faced is that Indonesia has no legal protection in dealing with refugees. Indonesia is not part of the country that signed the Vienna Convention 1951 and its Protocol 1967 on the Status of Refugees. Yudhistira Dwi Putra, "Masalah Pengungsi Rohingya di Indonesia Telah Dipetakan, Ini Uraianya!", *Okezone Nasional* (5 Sep 2017), <https://nasional.okezone.com/read/2017/09/04/337/1769032/masalah-pengungsi-rohingya-di-indonesia-telah-dipetakan-ini-uraianya>, accessed 26 Feb 2020; Yanyan Rahmat, Head of the Aceh Provincial Social Service, interview (5 Dec 2016).

shelp at sea, the living creatures are obliged to be helped.<sup>65</sup> The people of Aceh provide assistance to the refugees with warm hospitality despite the various risks they face.<sup>66</sup>

The quality of the refugee's boat could not accommodate many passengers. This means that as they come in very large quantities, there is no place to sleep on their backs. They can only sit with their legs bent and cannot stretch them when they get off the boat. At the time of docking, they were cold and starving because they ran out of food stocks along the way. According to them, they faced persecution from the Bangladeshis, the guards on the ship. It is also common for children to get a punch because they whine for food or drink.<sup>67</sup> This problem started while the refugees were still in Myanmar.

When the Rohingya wanted to get out of Myanmar, they were often extorted. For example, to have space on a ship, they were asked to pay some money with the promise of compensation for work abroad. However, instead of getting a job, they were mistreated with most of them diverted to ship brokers. In general, the brokers provide minimal space on the ship with a load exceeding capacity, getting into the ocean without any guarantee and safety protection.<sup>68</sup> Some of the Bangladeshi brokers followed the immigrants' ship intending to make them more displaced. For instance, in the middle of the ocean, the brokers damaged or shut down the engines and then left.<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> Ruwaida, the American Friend Service Committee, interview (5 Dec 2016); Missbach, "Asylum Seekers' and Refugees' Decision-Making in Transit in Indonesia", p. 419.

<sup>66</sup> McNevin and Missbach, "Hospitality as a Horizon of Aspiration (or, What the International Refugee Regime Can Learn from Acehnese Fishermen)", p. 293.

<sup>67</sup> KOMPASTV, "Mereka yang Terbuang" (2015), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=16hXJnnB3sU>, accessed 13 May 2016; KOMPASTV, "Dokter di Pengungsian Rohingya" (2015), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Sc6kCWeok3s>, accessed 13 Jun 2016; KOMPASTV, "Kesaksian Pengungsi Rohingya" (2015), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8T3xkzGRvOY>, accessed 14 Jun 2016.

<sup>68</sup> Ruwaida, the American Friend Service Committee, interview (5 Dec 2016); Norma Manalu, Balai Suro Aceh, interview (5 Dec 2016).

<sup>69</sup> "Those Who Wasted", <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=16hXJnnB3sU>, access on June 13, 2016, "Rescuing Rohingya Refugees by Indonesian Fishermen", <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f1AAkuR6K2A>, accessed 27 May 2016; and "Testimony of Rohingya Refugees", <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8T3xkzGRvOY>, accessed 14

The Rohingya immigrants followed all the crew's instructions irrespective of the compulsion. They have no desire to return to Myanmar because of feeling insecure and lacking the right to live.<sup>70</sup> Although Indonesia is not their destination, they feel secure and are accepted by the people of Aceh.<sup>71</sup>

### C. Practices, Forms and Problems of Protection

#### 1. *Aid Provision by Islamic Philanthropic Organizations and Others*

Once they received assistance from the fishermen, their presence was welcomed by the Indonesian government and received support from various circles, ranging from local, national and international communities. The local community at that time, which consisted of fishermen, students, and the Aceh Alliance Cares Rohingya, provided assistance in the form of food, clothing and other emergency needs.<sup>72</sup>

Various national philanthropic organizations, including Islamic-based organizations, and international organizations also paid attention by working on diplomatic pathways and giving donations to Rohingya refugees. The assistance came from international institutions, such as IOM (International Organization for Migration) and UNHCR (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees). However, support from national institutions came from the Social Service, the Indonesian Red Cross, Ruman Aceh, and the Office for Women's Empowerment and Child Protection (KP3A). The assistance from Islamic philanthropic institutions came from Aksi Cepat Tanggap (ACT), Dompot Dhuafa, Pos

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June 2016. KOMPASTV, "Mereka yang Terbuang"; Official NET News, "Penyelamatan Pengungsi Rohingya oleh Nelayan Indonesia", *IMS*; KOMPASTV, Kesaksian Pengungsi Rohingya.

<sup>70</sup> UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, *Situation of Human Rights of Rohingya Muslims and other Minorities in Myanmar*, Annual Report, no. A/HRC/32/18 (Geneva: UN, 2016).

<sup>71</sup> Ruwaida, the American Friend Service Committee, interview (5 Dec 2016); Norma Manalu, Balai Suro Aceh, interview (5 Dec 2016).

<sup>72</sup> Denny Armandhanu, "Bantuan untuk Rohingya dari Warga Aceh Menggunung", *CNN Internasional* (20 May 2015), <https://www.cnnindonesia.com/internasional/20150520094352-106-54411/bantuan-untuk-rohingya-dari-warga-aceh-menggunung>, accessed 31 Dec 2019.

Keadilan Peduli Umat, Rumah Zakat, Baznas, Baitul Mal Hidayatullah, and *Daarut Tauhiid* and others institutions.

International Institutions (UNHCR and IOM) played a significant role in determining refugee status and seeking placement in a third country. Although Indonesia is not a signatory to the 1951 Convention, UNHCR still intervened to assist and cooperated with the Government by making temporary shelters. The IOM was tasked with the responsibility of handling refugees' entry points. This is often carried out by securitizing the refugee path.<sup>73</sup> The institution intervened to ensure the eligibility standards for refugees are met. It also provided public kitchens as well sanitation, and for daily management, IOM assigned all them to the District and Provincial Social Service. In other words, IOM and UNHCR are specifically responsible for determining the status of refugees and striving to provide basic services and seeking resettlement measures, leaving the rest to other institutions, including the government.<sup>74</sup>

The Provincial and District Social Service in Aceh is responsible for ensuring the refugees live in built-up detention based on instructions from the Central Office in Jakarta. The reason is because the Provincial Social Service at that time did not have sectoral policies related to refugees and also the issue of refugees is the authority of the Central Office.<sup>75</sup> This is in line with the mayor of Langsa assertion that everything carried out was based on instructions from the centre because Rohingya were not Indonesian citizens.<sup>76</sup> However, the issue of Rohingya refugees is not handled only by the government. Some non-governmental organizations are also involved in helping protect the Rohingya refugees.

The Dompot Dhuafa at that time helped provide goods and services to the refugees. Their assistance was confirmed by the Aceh Provincial Social Service.<sup>77</sup> A similar role was carried out by Pos Keadilan

<sup>73</sup> Alunaza and Juani, "Kebijakan Pemerintah Indonesia melalui Sekuritisasi Migrasi Pengungsi Rohingya di Aceh tahun 2012-2015", p. 12.

<sup>74</sup> Rizka Argadianti Rachmah and Zico Efraindio Pestalozzi, *Hidup yang Terbaik: Laporan Penelitian Nasib Pengungsi Rohingya di Aceh* (Jakarta: LBH Jakarta, 2016), p. 9.

<sup>75</sup> Yanyan Rahmat, Head of the Aceh Provincial Social Service, interview (5 Dec 2016).

<sup>76</sup> KOMPASTV, "Solidaritas Warga Langsa Terhadap Pengungsi Rohingya".

<sup>77</sup> Ms. Siti and Ms. Rita, interview (4 Dec 2016).

Peduli Umat, Rumah Zakat, Baznas, Baitul Mal Hidayatullah, Daarut Tauhiid, and ACT. Apart from the infrastructure and food supply provided, some activities are also carried out through private institutions such as mass circumcision, pregnancy and health checks<sup>78</sup> Medicin Sans Frontier also provides clinical psychological consultation at the Bayeun and Langsa shelters.<sup>79</sup>

Protection and assistance is also given to women and children. This is carried out by KP3A (the Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection). Some programs are carried out to fulfil children's and women's rights, for example granting access for children to receive education while in barracks.<sup>80</sup> They learn to read and write<sup>81</sup> with the help of translators from refugees with limited Malay or English language skills proficiency.<sup>82</sup>

Several institutions are involved in education assistance. For instance, Daarut Tauhiid is one of the Islamic philanthropic institutions tasked with teaching and assisting children during the evacuation. Dompét Dhuafa also provides English and Indonesian language lessons for young refugees.<sup>83</sup> In addition to education, other forms of assistance were also given family recovery. This was carried out by several institutions, including the Indonesian Red Cross by reconnecting separated families both between barracks and among countries.<sup>84</sup> The Acehnese residents, including the fishermen that previously helped the Rohingya also

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<sup>78</sup> Interview Ahmad Arif Ginting, Qatar Charity, 5 December 2016, Aceh.

<sup>79</sup> Rachmah and Pestalozzi, *Hidup yang Terbaik: Laporan Penelitian Nasib Pengungsi Rohingya di Aceh*, p. 25.

<sup>80</sup> Rizki Akbar Hasan, "UNHCR: Indonesia Patut Dicontoh Soal Penanganan Pengungsi Internasional", *liputan6.com* (17 Jul 2019), <https://www.liputan6.com/global/read/4015215/unhcr-indonesia-patut-dicontoh-soal-penanganan-pengungsi-internasional>, accessed 23 Dec 2019.

<sup>81</sup> KOMPASTV, "Pesantren Kilat Untuk Pengungsi Rohingya di Aceh" (2015), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V-eA03dq9D8>, accessed 13 Jun 2016.

<sup>82</sup> KOMPASTV, "Dokter di Pengungsian Rohingya".

<sup>83</sup> Uyang, "Asah Keterampilan Pengungsi Rohingya dengan School for Refugees", *Dompét Dhuafa*, <http://www.dompetedhuafa.org/id/berita/detail/asah-keterampilan-pengungsi-rohingya-dengan-school-for-refugees>, accessed 11 Jun 2016.

<sup>84</sup> Khairil Razali, Director of the Aceh Community Center, interview (5 Dec 2016).

participated in the restoring family. Many refugee families are in Malaysia could communicate with those in Aceh through the fishermen as intermediaries<sup>85</sup> and the Indonesian Red Cross.<sup>86</sup> The central government also took the initiative to do resettlement. This move was problematic since Myanmar soldiers killed some teenagers' families before they are successfully escaping.<sup>87</sup> All the institutions attempt to provide the assistance in accordance with their respective capabilities.

## 2. *Problems and Shortcomings*

Based on the role of each institution, there are some shortcomings in implementations. For instance, the public kitchen formed by IOM cannot fulfil the needs of the refugees, mainly due to the unavailability of cookware. The IOM standard which provides a one-day of 50,000 Rupiah per person seems to be inappropriate. This is because the menu provided is not in accordance with the needs of the refugees in terms of price, taste and serving, such as the provision of rice that has not been completely cooked<sup>88</sup> As a result, much food is wasted.

The other shortcoming is in health services. Initially, the health service was quite good in overcoming the diseases that many refugees suffered when they got off the ship, such as diarrhea, dizziness, nausea and malnutrition for children. There were health officers in the shelter. Whenever the refugees needed medical care, the doctor and the medical officer were always there, provide regular health services.<sup>89</sup> But over the next few months, the service decreased. The health services accorded to refugees is reduced after some months. However, around two months later the officers were no longer in the shelter; they only left their phone numbers to be contacted. There were no more regular health checks,<sup>90</sup>

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<sup>85</sup> KOMPASTV, "Kronologis Diselamatkannya Pengungsi Rohingya" (2015), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5TtbRVv6kOM>, accessed 13 Jun 2016.

<sup>86</sup> Khairil Razali, Director of the Aceh Community Center, interview (5 Dec 2016).

<sup>87</sup> KOMPASTV, "Dokter di Pengungsian Rohingya".

<sup>88</sup> Rizky Sopya (Ruman Aceh), interview (5 Dec 2016).

<sup>89</sup> KOMPASTV, "Dokter di Pengungsian Rohingya."

<sup>90</sup> Ruwaida, the American Friend Service Committee, interview (5 Dec 2016).

and therefore, refugees were reluctant to check their health.<sup>91</sup>

Several other problems emerged one of which is more about the impact of the presence of Rohingya refugees on people of Aceh. The Acehnese started to feel jealous to the refugees. As discussed earlier, the refugees received a very good response from the Acehnese people, but several years later jealousy arose from some of the surrounding community because the refugees continued to achieve assistance from the government and philanthropic institutions, especially regarding food, while the community, who are also often in the same need, did not obtain the aid.<sup>92</sup> Amnesty International reported that an Aceh woman complained to a non-governmental organization (NGO) worker that the standard of living in the Blang Adoe Integrated Community Shelter was better than that of local people.<sup>93</sup> In fact, Novialdi stated that the presence of refugees would lead the clashes of cultural, social, and economic in Acehnese society, and it would create new sources of conflict in society<sup>94</sup>

Within this situation, refugees became entrapped. They have unclear status whether they will be transferred to a third country as international refugees or not. This has then become one way for trafficking to commit by traffickers, some organized groups of people and agents with the promise of turning Rohingya refugees into workers in Malaysia. The refugees were sent to Batam and became victims of trafficking.<sup>95</sup> In several shelters such as in East Aceh, some refugees escape at night. Some refugees who fled to Malaysia said that they paid the agent 1,500 ringgit. The money was sent by their husbands, parents or their

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<sup>91</sup> Rachmah and Pestalozzi, *Hidup yang Terabaiakan: Laporan Penelitian Nasib Pengungsi Rohingya di Aceh*, p. 36.

<sup>92</sup> Khairil Razali, Director of the Aceh Community Center, interview (5 Dec 2016); Ruwaida, the American Friend Service Committee, interview (5 Dec 2016).

<sup>93</sup> Amnesty International, *Deadly Journeys: The Refugees and Trafficking Crisis in Southeast Asia* (London: Amnesty International Ltd, 2015), p. 40.

<sup>94</sup> Novialdi, "The Failure of Providing Human Security For Rohingya Refugees (Case Study)", p. 60.

<sup>95</sup> Suaka, "Rilis Pers SUAKA: Kasus Pengungsi Menjadi Gigolo di Batam Murni Kriminalitas", (8 Sep 2016), <https://suaka.or.id/2016/09/08/rilis-pers-suaka-kasus-pengungsi-menjadi-gigolo-di-batam-murni-kriminalitas/>, accessed 8 Jan 2020.

Family in Malaysia.<sup>96</sup> Most of them left the camp because they wanted to be with their families in Malaysia. It is also because of the economic motive that their families in Myanmar expect money to pay travel debts, as well as for daily necessities in Rohingya camps in their home country.<sup>97</sup>

Refugees who leave the camps in Aceh tend to use the services of human trafficking agents who have been operating to smuggle illegal migrant workers to Malaysia.<sup>98</sup> Witnesses informed that they were picked up by truck to Medan and sold for 5 million rupiah. Many wished to run away on their own way, but it is very difficult for refugees to get out from shelter since they have security guard.<sup>99</sup> Within this situation, the presence of trafficking agents around the shelters is an inevitable.<sup>100</sup> Though, many were fortunate and are able to leave in easy and legal way. Refugees who have received a UNHCR card have access to enter and leave the shelter. They use this privilege to sell groceries in the shelter. Again, however they remain powerless as drug agents take advantage of this position to turn the refugees into agents selling marijuana at the shelter.<sup>101</sup>

Another problem is concerned with the gender issue. In order to provide protection for women, the Indonesian government separates the needs of men and women.<sup>102</sup> However, the Indonesian government does not pay attention to psychological recovery, especially to those

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<sup>96</sup> Nurdin Hasan, "Rohingya di Aceh: Makan, Tidur dan Shalat", *Benar News*, <https://www.benarnews.org/indonesian/berita/rohingya-di-aceh-04292016151819.html>, accessed 20 Feb 2020.

<sup>97</sup> Tim Yayasan Geutanyoë, *Hidup dalam Penantian: Setahun Pengungsi Rohingya di Aceh* (Yogyakarta: The Geutanyoë Foundation, 2015), pp. 12–3.

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 17.

<sup>99</sup> Rizky Sopya (Ruman Aceh), interview (5 Dec 2016).

<sup>100</sup> Such condition continues to recent years. In 2020, for an exemple, police discovered one of the committed traffickings. See Raynaldo Ghiffari Lubabah, "Polisi Ungkap Penyelundupan Imigran Rohingya di Aceh, Empat Pelaku Diamankan", *merdeka.com* (27 Oct 2020), <https://www.merdeka.com/peristiwa/polisi-ungkap-penyelundupan-imigran-rohingya-di-aceh-empat-pelaku-diamankan.html>, accessed 6 Mar 2021; Winsyah Purba, "Ini Para Pelaku Human Trafficking Etnis Rohingya di Aceh", *TransBisnis* (23 Nov 2020), <https://transbisnis.com/2020/11/23/ini-para-pelaku-human-trafficking-etnis-rohingya-di-aceh/>, accessed 6 Mar 2021.

<sup>101</sup> Ruwaida, the American Friend Service Committee, interview (5 Dec 2016).

<sup>102</sup> Yanyan Rahmat, Head of the Aceh Provincial Social Service, interview (5 Dec 2016).

raped and impregnated while on board.<sup>103</sup> As a result, the women who experienced sexual violence looked gloomy and lethargic. Furthermore, they are obliged to wear the hijab as the Acehnese women in general. In this case, the government and philanthropic organizations did not use the victim's perspective when providing assistance.

The limited psychosocial support service has made the refugees obtain the trauma of violence which can be seen in the patterns of communication and social relations among refugees. Geutanyoë foundation found an increase in the number of cases of domestic violence in camps, as well as the number of suicide attempts carried out by refugee women.<sup>104</sup> The sustainability of the humanitarian action constitutes also a problematic issue. In general, philanthropic organizations prioritize emergency assistance such as clothing, food, teaching, and other temporary assistance. The refugees needed these items at that time, but because the aid was not well managed and eventually piled up, these items were worthless. This picture shows that the provision of assistance is highly dependent on "the sectoral ego" of each institution that is competing for existence. In other words, this assistance is very far from the aspect of responsiveness and emphasizes the electability of the institution to build public legitimacy. Meanwhile, the assistance that the refugees really need is not only for primary needs, but also for secondary needs such as access to information and having a forum for participation in decision-making, especially it impact on themselves. They require their needs met both physically and mentally. They also expect the fulfillment of their rights as citizens as well as human rights.

In the perspective of sustainable development, this humanitarian action did not show compatibility with this concept. The absence of this concept in the mentoring practice was proven in 2012-2016. So far, all agencies have only contributed in the context of emergency response, and most people have followed the pattern. There are no arrangements for providing assistance after the emergency period.<sup>105</sup>

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<sup>103</sup> Ruwaida, the American Friend Service Committee, interview (5 Dec 2016).

<sup>104</sup> Tim Yayasan Geutanyoë, *Hidup dalam Penantian: Setahun Pengungsi Rohingya di Aceh*, p. 13.

<sup>105</sup> Ruwaida, the American Friend Service Committee, interview (5 Dec 2016); Norma Manalu, Balai Suro Aceh, interview (5 Dec 2016).

As a result, UNHCR protested to the government and reminded it not to provide the same assistance. Even though at that time, the Social Service had accommodated 104 refugees in Aceh Raya in 2015 for 2 months,<sup>106</sup> while the Provincial Government also helped refugees during the emergency period, which was for approximately 7 days.<sup>107</sup> The consequence of the absence of the distribution and mechanism for providing assistance, after 3 months the aid began to decrease and the refugees received food below IOM standards.<sup>108</sup> Whereas previously, when the refugees came to Aceh, (especially to the North Aceh area) they received high solidarity from various parties so the food and logistics were abundant. According to PMI's officer, the refugees tended to be picky about food.<sup>109</sup>

## **D. The Commodification of Aid and the Abuses of Religion**

### **1. (Islamic) Religion as Tool for Aid Induction**

Apart from the absence of good concepts and mechanisms of assisting, there were other problems relating to the intentions and goals of philanthropic institutions. Other than the community, several international and national philanthropic institutions are involved in the protection of Rohingya refugees in Aceh. Some of these institutions include United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), International Organization for Migration (IOM), Aksi Cepat Tanggap (ACT), Dompot Dhuafa, Daarut Tauhiid and the Indonesian Red Cross. There are also local institutions that regularly accompany and provide assistance to refugees, including Ruman Aceh. These institutions intensively report the progress of their assistance in Aceh both in local and national media, as well as on their own institutional websites. However, there are many discrepancies between the news in the media and what is carried out

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<sup>106</sup> Ms. Siti and Ms. Rita, interview (4 Dec 2016).

<sup>107</sup> Yanyan Rahmat, Head of the Aceh Provincial Social Service, interview (5 Dec 2016).

<sup>108</sup> Ruwaida, the American Friend Service Committee, interview (5 Dec 2016); Norma Manalu, Balai Suro Aceh, interview (5 Dec 2016).

<sup>109</sup> Khairil Razali, Director of the Aceh Community Center, interview (5 Dec 2016).

practically by some of these institutions.<sup>110</sup>

The provision of assistance by large institutions such as UNHCR and IOM is in line with their programs and SOPs. This means that what is carried out is part of their work with or without altruism. They already have a standard mechanism for offering essential services. In providing assistance, they adjust to the specified standards. The UNHCR and IOM already have bilateral agreements that regulate their roles.<sup>111</sup> For instance, the UNHCR has to provide international protection, humanitarian assistance and long-term solutions to refugees. Similarly, the IOM has to ensure that refugees receive appropriate services and obtain what they need during the migration process.<sup>112</sup> Therefore, UNHCR and IOM carry out the task according to the provisions.

Once the Rohingya refugees arrived at the shelter, UNHCR collected data and determined their status, specifically called Refugee Status Determination (RSD), by interview. This process is carried out to determine whether they are entitled to status as refugees, asylum seekers or not.<sup>113</sup> IOM assisted UNHCR by providing translators to facilitate communication with the Rohingya Ethnicity. Medical assistance is also provided along with the provision of food,<sup>114</sup> water and hygiene training.<sup>115</sup>

Different from UNHCR and IOM, national Islamic philanthropic organizations such as ACT, Dompot Dhuafa and Baznas<sup>116</sup>, at first

<sup>110</sup> Some discrepancies will be conveyed further. This statement was obtained based on observations of assistants such as Ruman Aceh and confirmation with news in the media.

<sup>111</sup> Tambunan and Susiatiningsih, “Kerja Sama UNHCR dan IOM dalam Menangani Pencari Suaka dan Pengungsi Etnis Rohingya di Indonesia”, pp. 341–50.

<sup>112</sup> UNHCR, *Memorandum of Understanding between the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the International Organization for Migration* (UN High Commissioner for Refugees, 1997).

<sup>113</sup> Alunaza and Juani, “Kebijakan Pemerintah Indonesia melalui Sekuritisasi Migrasi Pengungsi Rohingya di Aceh tahun 2012-2015”, p. 14.

<sup>114</sup> In providing food needs, refugees get the help of 50,000 rupiahs per person.

<sup>115</sup> International Organization for Migration, “IOM Steps in to Aid New Rohingya Boat Arrivals in Indonesia”, <https://indonesia.iom.int/news/iom-steps-aid-new-rohingya-boat-arrivals-indonesia>, accessed 22 Jan 2018.

<sup>116</sup> The national Zakat Charity Agency (BAZNAS) as the only amil zakat institution established by the government to manage zakat, infaq and sadaqah distribution. BAZNAS can make recommendations for the establishment of similar

time, were not philanthropic institutions that are engaged in the socio-political field, such as dealing with refugees. They were born from a traditional mechanism, which were initially engaged in zakat, infaq and, sadaqah (ZIS) as well as mosque and *pesantren* (Islamic boarding house).<sup>117</sup> Later, mosques and *pesantren* were able to carry out transformations in the management of ZIS and in the empowerment of the people.<sup>118</sup> Over further development, this traditional philanthropic authority metamorphosed into social justice philanthropy. The dynamics of philanthropy moving from traditional mechanisms to philanthropy for social justice has placed philanthropy as a medium for eliminating social injustice that is rooted in poverty and social inequality. Philanthropy bridges the gap between the rich and the poor by mobilizing the potential of society (people). The enthusiasm of the Indonesian Muslim middle class to be involved in the social and political life has affected the model of Islamic philanthropy in Indonesia.<sup>119</sup> Mosques and *Pesantren* are then carried out collaboratively with social organizations, which we then know as the Islamic philanthropic institution. These Islamic philanthropic institutions are required to be professional institutions. Even Islamic philanthropic organizations previously to be voluntary have currently become NGOs. On this side, they are not only ‘doing good’, but also they are doing it in a modern and professional Islamic way.<sup>120</sup> In this regard, reforms are accordingly needed in term of regulation, management and programme.<sup>121</sup> It is also important to emphasize that the principle of

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bodies at the provincial, district or city government levels, as well as the establishment of non-governmental *amil zakat* institutions, see Abdurahim, Ahim, Hafiez Sofyani, and Sigit Arie Wibowo, “Membangun Good Governance di Lembaga Amil Zakat, Infaq dan Shadaqah (LAZ): Pengalaman Dua LAZ Besar di Indonesia”,

<sup>117</sup> Ariza Fuadi, “Towards the Discourse of Islamic Philanthropy for Social Justice in Indonesia Ariza Fuadi”, *Afkaruna: Indonesian Interdisciplinary Journal of Islamic Studies*, vol. 8, no. 2 (2012), pp. 92–102.

<sup>118</sup> Adhi Iman Sulaiman, Chusmeru Chusmeru, and Masrukin Masrukin, “Strategy of Cooperative Islamic Boarding School As Economic Empowerment Community”, *Inferensi: Jurnal Penelitian Sosial Keagamaan*, vol. 12, no. 1 (2018), pp. 25–44.

<sup>119</sup> Fauzia, “Faith and the State”.

<sup>120</sup> Borchgrevink, “NGOization of Islamic Charity”, p. 16.

<sup>121</sup> Fauzia, “Islamic Philanthropy in Indonesia”.

philanthropic social justice is charity without discrimination.<sup>122</sup>

It is definitely understandable that these Islamic philanthropic institutions are based on humanity and Islam, in term of philanthropic approach called as Islamic-social justice philanthropy. Baznas has the authority to require a good governance for Islamic philanthropic institutions in accordance with vertical<sup>123</sup> and horizontal<sup>124</sup> accountability regulations.<sup>125</sup> In practice, some NGOs (they accompanied the Rohingya refugees on a daily basis in the shelter) considered that the distribution of aid provided is not relevant to the conditions of refugees.<sup>126</sup> Some Acehese activists even viewed that the Rohingyas were made projects for raising funds.<sup>127</sup> Basing on the concepts of humanity and *ukhuwah Islamiyah*, Islamic philanthropic institutions could easily obtain humanitarian funds for Rohingya. Worse is that there is not any supervisory institution that ensures that the funds are given according to their intended objectives. Above all, religion and the religious (Islamic) concept of charity are used by these institutions as an attraction to gain public awareness. In fact, massive fundraising for the Rohingya was carried out by various institutions like ACT. Almost every corner of the traffic light in Yogyakarta was filled with banners of a particular Islamic philanthropic institution.<sup>128</sup> This, of course, is to cultivate more money in a vast and easy way as to lead the institutions to be financially strong

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<sup>122</sup> Amelia Fauzia, “Religious Giving in Indonesia: Studi Kasus Filantropi Islam”, *Dialog: Jurnal Penelitian dan Kajian Keagamaan*, vol. XXXIII, no. 69 (2010), pp. 51–64.

<sup>123</sup> Accountability to government or Baznas.

<sup>124</sup> Accountability to public.

<sup>125</sup> Ahim Abdurahim, Hafiez Sofyani, and Sigit Arie Wibowo, “Membangun Good Governance di Lembaga Amil Zakat, Infaq dan Shadaqah (LAZ): Pengalaman Dua LAZ Besar di Indonesia”, *Inferensi: Jurnal Penelitian Sosial Keagamaan*, vol. 12, no. 1 (2018), pp. 45–64.

<sup>126</sup> Rizky Sopya (Ruman Aceh), interview (5 Dec 2016); Ahmad Arif Ginting, Qatar Charity, interview (5 Dec 2016); Ruwaida, the American Friend Service Committee, interview (5 Dec 2016); Khairil Razali, Director of the Aceh Community Center, interview (5 Dec 2016).

<sup>127</sup> Rizky Sopya (Ruman Aceh), interview (5 Dec 2016); Ahmad Arif Ginting, Qatar Charity, interview (5 Dec 2016).

<sup>128</sup> The writer’s observations throughout 2015 and 2016 in Yogyakarta.

institutions and to accompany refugee in loner period.<sup>129</sup>

## 2. *Evidence of Religious Abuses*

Nothing is wrong to use Islamic concept to raise funds for refugees. Even Islam teaches to share with all human beings in the name of God (ibadah) to earn reward. Not only the obligation to pay zakat but also other pillars of Islam emphasize the crucial of sharing the wealth for mankind, such as fasting, which teaches the existence of fidyah for those who cannot pay their fast due to illness or because of breastfeeding.<sup>130</sup> In the obligation of Hajj, Islam teaches to pay dams or fines that must be issued by someone who has violated the prohibitions on the obligatory Hajj. The offender must slaughter sacrificial animals and distribute them to the poor or give alms to the poor, according to the types of prohibitions.<sup>131</sup> Of course, qurban has the same spirit to care for others.<sup>132</sup> All these pillars of Islam have the essence of humanity. However, Islam does not allow for the abuse of worship, including the intention, purpose, and implementations.

As stated in the previous sub-chapter, the birth of Islamic philanthropic institutions began with the spirit of philanthropy taught in Islamic teachings, including the pillars of Islam. Therefore, the abuse in providing assistance by Islamic philanthropy institutions, both traditional, and social justice, is not justified. If we observe at the implementation of Islamic philanthropy in Aceh in 2015-2016, all assistance provided to the Rohingya refugees appeared to be based on humanity and *ukhuwah Islamiyah*.

The media has a vital role in promoting solidarity among Muslims. The media often cite a theory that this humanitarian sentiment comes from a form of 'Muslim solidarity'.<sup>133</sup> It is also used by national philanthropic institutions to raise funds. However, many things do not match what is reported in the media. For example, when the *Eid al-Adha*, Rohingya people are supposed to be given 41 cows as reported in the

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<sup>129</sup> Ruwaida, the American Friend Service Committee, interview (5 Dec 2016).

<sup>130</sup> Qur'an 2:184.

<sup>131</sup> Qur'an 2: 196.

<sup>132</sup> Qur'an 108: 2; Qur'an 22: 36-37.

<sup>133</sup> Robbins, "The Rohingya Case in Aceh", p. 36.

media, they only receive 1 cow which is even not ready for consumption.<sup>134</sup> This case was carried out by a certain Islamic philanthropic institution that is affiliated with a regent candidate from an Islamic party. Finally, it was discovered that the other 40 cows were used by regent candidates to collect votes in regional head elections. Another 40 cows were distributed in several places where the mass of the Islamic party was based.<sup>135</sup> This is in line with Robin's finding that the concept of carrying the 'Islamic banner' was encouraged by certain political candidates associated with an NGO operating in Rohingya camps. This is their method to construct support for their political agenda.<sup>136</sup>

Inappropriate reporting also occurs when there are several refugees giving birth. The media report that they receive help from one of the Islamic Philanthropy Institutions, even mentioning the names of mothers giving birth and the names of their babies.<sup>137</sup> In fact, the institute has never been involved and has never helped the process directly. However, most of the names reported in the media were wrong.<sup>138</sup> Therefore, the Islamic label and humanity are used by institutions to obtain donations rather than focusing on handling refugees.

There are other problems in terms of religious freedom that affect refugees. In religious matters, Rohingyas are moderate Muslims. They tend to be solid and respect with each other despite their differences.<sup>139</sup> However, some assistants or volunteers at the shelter often force refugees to practice worship based on their school of thought (*mazhab*), including the readings in prayer and wirid after praying.<sup>140</sup> Apart from that, the volunteers also instructed Rohingya women to wear the headscarf (*hijab*).

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<sup>134</sup> Rizky Sopya (Ruman Aceh), interview (5 Dec 2016).

<sup>135</sup> Ahmad Arif Ginting, Qatar Charity, interview (5 Dec 2016).

<sup>136</sup> Robbins, "The Rohingya Case in Aceh", p. 38.

<sup>137</sup> Damanhuri Zuhri, "Relawan ACT Bantu Persalinan Pengungsi Rohingya di Aceh", *Republika Online* (19 Jul 2015), <https://republika.co.id/berita/dunia-islam/islam-nusantara/15/07/19/nrqt2e-relawan-act-bantu-persalinan-pengungsi-rohingya-di-aceh>, accessed 8 Jan 2020.

<sup>138</sup> Ahmad Arif Ginting, Qatar Charity, interview (5 Dec 2016).

<sup>139</sup> Ruwaida, the American Friend Service Committee, interview (5 Dec 2016).

<sup>140</sup> *Ibid.*

They claim that wearing the hijab is an obligation for Muslim women.<sup>141</sup>

Another problem related to the abuse of authority in the name of Islam is concerned with the residential development. At that time, the government, international organizations and several philanthropic organizations were involved in building shelters. The prayer room (mushala) at that time was created with funds from UNHCR and IOM. However, the mushala was later claimed to be a donation from an Islamic philanthropic institution. One of the activists from Ruman Aceh at that time witnessed one of the workers from an Islamic philanthropic organization holding up his institutional banner in front of the mushala in North Aceh and taking pictures.<sup>142</sup> This can be proven in the online media that the kind of religious claims are very incessant, especially in relation to the construction of prayer rooms.<sup>143</sup>

The wide gap between expectations and the reality in the provision of aid is caused not only by the lack of an appropriate mechanism for the distribution of aid, but also due to the lack of ethic in providing aid. The Indonesian Philanthropy Association (PFI), through holding discussions that focus on philanthropic standards and ethical codes, highlights issues of accountability and transparency.<sup>144</sup> This is because these two factors determine the level of public trust. In this case, philanthropic ethics needs to be investigated from the process of constructing issues to the management of the collected humanitarian aid funds. Construction issues need to be explored since it might have a significant effect on the level of acceptance of the institution and be a determining point of the accuracy of the program designed. Through the construction of this issue, there are specific intentions that lead to commodification.

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<sup>141</sup> *Ibid.*; Norma Manalu, Balai Suro Aceh, interview (5 Dec 2016).

<sup>142</sup> Rizky Sopya (Ruman Aceh), interview (5 Dec 2016).

<sup>143</sup> Calam Rahmat, "Masjid di Pengungsian Warga Rohingya Dapat Bantuan Renovasi Rumah Yatim", *Rumah Yatim* (18 May 2018), <https://rumah-yatim.org/masjid-di-pengungsian-warga-rohingya-dapat-bantuan-renovasi-rumah-yatim/>, accessed 10 Jan 2021; Aksi Cepat Tanggap, "Di Aceh, Muslim Rohingya Bisa Kembali Salat Berjemaah" (2020), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kkQQvEcMoH0>, accessed 10 Jan 2021.

<sup>144</sup> YAPPIKA-ActionAid Non-Governmental Organization, *Kode Etik Filantropi*, <https://yappika-actionaid.or.id/Kode-Etik-Filantropi>, accessed 9 Jan 2020.

### 3. *The Role of the Media in the Commodification of aid*

Commodification is an effort to produce commercial value by offering goods or services. Albeit the term is related to capitalism, but it is relevant to the issue of humanitarian aid. This is because the issue of humanitarian aid is related to donations collected from the community, as well as the procedures for raising them. Corrigan, as quoted by Husna, stated that currently everything has a commodity value and needs to be packaged as well as possible for high value.<sup>145</sup> Based on this opinion, information therefore has a selling value when packaged with something that touches the emotional public side. This is also carried out by philanthropic institutions in gaining donations and legitimacy.

In practice, Islamic philanthropic institutions emphasize religious perspectives through certain diction that frames the concept into religious issues. Examples of this include, “Rohingya are Muslim ethnic groups that have settled in Arakan since the sixteenth century”,<sup>146</sup> “began the destruction of the mosque”,<sup>147</sup> “crimes against ethnic Rohingya Muslims are increasing...thousands of Rohingya Muslims have fled to neighbouring countries”.<sup>148</sup> However, this issue is not religious, but an economic-political problem. Anthropologically, the Rohingya are a community that is predominantly Muslim and lives in the state of Rakhine. They are about a million, though not the most significant community group in Rakhine. Most of them are Buddhist, and all communities living in the region are culturally discriminated against, economically exploited, and politically eliminated by the central government, which is dominated by Burmese ethnic. The Rohingya are considered by Rakhine residents to be additional rivals and a threat to their own identities. This is the leading cause of tension in the state and has resulted in several armed conflicts between the two groups. Therefore, the real victims are not only Muslim

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<sup>145</sup> Asmaul Husna, “Komodifikasi Agama: Pergeseran Praktik Bisnis dan Kemunculan Kelas Menengah Muslim”, *Jurnal Komunikasi Global*, vol. 7, no. 2 (2018), p. 229.

<sup>146</sup> Aksi Cepat Tanggap, “Tentang Rohingya”, <https://act.id/rohingya/>, accessed 30 Dec 2020.

<sup>147</sup> Aksi Cepat Tanggap, “Selamatkan Rohingya”, <https://act.id/program/helprohingya/>, accessed 30 Dec 2019.

<sup>148</sup> Aksi Cepat Tanggap, “Tentang Rohingya”.

ethnic but also the Buddhist.<sup>149</sup>

The incompleteness of information conveyed by the philanthropic institution aims to construct the suitability of the agency's movement with the issue being built. Wilbr Schramm defines information as the name given to various processes, where the acceptance of a message reduces the uncertainty of the recipient.<sup>150</sup> This uncertainty is associated with several alternatives that might be contained in the information. Reducing uncertainty is the same as lessening the number of possible alternatives. Information is the result of interpretation and giving meaning to the data. In this context, the narrowness of information provided by Islamic philanthropic institutions through its website seeks to "reduce the uncertainty" of the readers. The intention is that the recipients of the information should be told that this conflict is purely single, for example, a religious issue. Therefore, the philanthropic institution continues its activities by offering solutions related to the conflict happening.

Berger argued that this was a social construction to build legitimacy,<sup>151</sup> which is an objectification of meaning. This opinion is based on the assumption that reality is the result of human creation or creativity through the power of social construction on the surrounding social world. It is a reality interconnected with human thought and the social context in which it arises. Based on Berger's opinion, philanthropic institutions try to play with public emotions through religious issues. This is because demographically the majority of Indonesia's population is Muslim, and culturally the obligation of zakat, charity, and sadaqah has been firmly rooted in the traditions of Muslim community life.

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<sup>149</sup> Some writings support this statement such as Giuseppe Forino, Jason von Meding, and Thomas Johnson, "Religion is not the only reason Rohingyas are being forced out of Myanmar", *The Conversation* (12 Sep 2017), <http://theconversation.com/religion-is-not-the-only-reason-rohingyas-are-being-forced-out-of-myanmar-83726>, accessed 12 Jan 2019; Siegfried O. Wolf, "Genocide, Exodus and Exploitation for Jihad: the Urgent Need to Address the Rohingya Crisis," Working Paper, no. 6 (Brussels: South Asia Democratic Forum/SADF, 2017); "Siapa Sebenarnya Etnis Rohingya dan Enam Hal Lain yang Harus Anda Ketahui", *BBC News Indonesia* (5 Sep 2017), <https://www.bbc.com/indonesia/dunia-41149698>, accessed 12 Jan 2019.

<sup>150</sup> Wilbur Schramm, "The Nature of News", *Journalism Quarterly*, vol. 26, no. 3 (1949), pp. 259–69.

<sup>151</sup> Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge* (London: Penguin Books, 1991), p. 183.

The demographic and cultural aspects are further used to gain as many donations as possible. Regardless of the management approach, this method was chosen to maintain the life and existence of the institution. The orientation and purpose of the institution is to become a third party that mobilizes public funds. The institution dies and loses its existence in case the community does not donate through the institution. This means commodification begins from the way the institution constructs the issue. At this level, the religious, spiritual functions are transformed into an exchange of value using its functions as a way of life and a source of normative principles or spiritual marketing.<sup>152</sup>

The management of humanitarian aid funds can be explored to determine the quality of its management. According to Terry, quality management steps can be viewed from several things, including planning, organizing, actuating, and controlling.<sup>153</sup> Planning relates to what to do, where the aid should be given, and how to distribute it. Organizing involves how much an organization has the authority to assist, as well as the facilities and work environment needed for assistance to be given. Actuating relates to how the organization moves the implementing organs to work voluntarily and with good cooperation. Controlling expects activity to match the actuating event based on a predetermined plan.<sup>154</sup>

Based on this management pattern, Islamic philanthropic institutions function within the conventional planning patterns and have not carried out any planning. Although the media reports on the implementation of their programs, the facts in the field show there are aspects that can be merged. However, they are left to overlap and ends up being irrelevant. For example, both the surrounding community and Islamic philanthropic institutions provide emergency assistance. The aid seemed wasteful, and donations that were previously expected to help refugees did not achieve the purpose.

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<sup>152</sup> Yuswohady, *Marketing to the Middle Class Muslim: Kenali Perubahannya, Pahami Perilakunya, Petakan Strateginya* (Jakarta: Gramedia Pustaka Utama, 2015), p. 170.

<sup>153</sup> George R. Terry, *Principles of Management* (New Delhi: AITBS Publishers, 1997), pp. 14–5.

<sup>154</sup> *Ibid.*

## **E. Concluding Remarks**

From the discussion several conclusions are drawn. First, there are some shortcomings in services for Rohingya refugees, especially in the fulfilling their needs in shelters such as inappropriate food standards and reduced health services. Also, Rohingya refugees are in uncertain lives, whether they sent to a third country or no. Second, there has been a commodification of humanitarian issues in providing assistance to Rohingya Refugees in Aceh, 2015-2016. The existence of Rohingya refugees is used by several Islamic philanthropic institutions to raise donations. While such is religiously acceptable, actual practice shows abuse of the use of (Islamic) religion. Third, that media has pivotal role in augmenting the abuse. In fact, a number of websites of many Islamic philanthropic institutions arouse public interest by claiming that the issue of refugees is purely religious. While such this thought is also not wrong, there is however a discrepancy between report in media and the the amount of aid in the shelter leading us to safely argue that the spiritual marketing and religious abuse is happening.

As this research has the specific point to examine the objective of aid and the implementation in helping Rohingya in Aceh, our findings encourage further research to investigate the intention and motivation of Islamic philanthropy in collecting funds and percentage of distribution in aid. This study also recommends the Indonesian government to be rightly involved in regulating and controlling philanthropy organisations and encouraging the media and philanthropic organizations to provide a tangible information and relevant religious and international organizations to propagate that charity is universal concept of humanity which is compatible to Islamic teachings.

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