



**THAILAND – THE ORGANIZATION OF ISLAMIC
COOPERATION (OIC) RELATIONS ON THE ISSUE OF
RESURGENCE OF VIOLENCE IN THE SOUTHERN
BORDER PROVINCES OF THAILAND**

BY

1st Lt. SORNTHEPRIT SILLAPABANLENG

**A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF
ARTS IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS
FACULTY OF POLITICAL SCIENCE
THAMMASAT UNIVERSITY
ACADEMIC YEAR 2015
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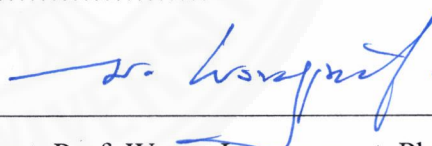
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ABSTRACT

This paper aims to study the relationship between Thailand and the OIC on the issue of the latest resurgence of violence in the southern border provinces of Thailand, in order to know the significance of the OIC in these contemporary international politics and societies, and the importance of having a good relationship with the OIC for Thailand. Additionally, it is the purpose of this paper to evaluate the total perspectives, standpoints and requests of the OIC toward the issue of the unrest in southern Thailand. Finally, this paper aims to suggest suitable policies for the Thai government to maintain a good relationship with the OIC during the time of this ongoing violence.

The methods of this thesis are based on the pattern of qualitative research, using descriptive analysis from Islamic conceptual frameworks, including Islamic philosophies and Islamic Theories in international relations, in an effort to analyze the issues under consideration of the thesis, and for providing the thesis' recommendations.

The methodology was based on the in-depth analysis of primary and secondary data, collected by documentary research from various sources of related

information. The time period of this study has ranged from the first OIC's engagement in the year 2004 until the involvement of the OIC at the end of the year 2014.

After having conducted research using the methods aforementioned, the following results, which have fulfilled the objectives of this study, broadly include:

First, how is the OIC significant in regards to the international community in general, and the Muslim world in particular, in contemporary international politics and societies?

Answer: As the OIC is the largest and the only inter-governmental religious organization, the OIC has become one of the “very significant actors” on the international stage for at least three reasons:

First, the OIC is the “Principal Spokesman” of the largest religion in the world, and can veritably claim to represent about three-fourths of the followers of Islam who live in the OIC member states. (Khan, 2001, 1)

Second, OIC membership is spread across ten geographical regions in four continents; Asia, Africa, America and Europe. (Khan, 2001, 2) From recent surveys, more than one in four (25.55%) of the world's population is Muslim. Islam is the largest religion in Africa, as about 58.88% of the African population is Muslim. In Asia, approximately 27.91% of the population is Muslim. On other continents, Islam is the second largest religion. (Maluleem, 2012, 22)

Third, the OIC contains very enormous subsidiary and specialized organs, including approximately 48 agencies. This expanded structure can nearly compare with the United Nations (UN) and other intergovernmental organizations. With these applications, the OIC can boast several organs and committees, working for cooperation in economic, educational, and scientific research oriented and political fields. (Khan, 2001, 22)

Second, How has the OIC come to be involved with the issue of the resurgence of violence in the southern border provinces of Thailand?

Answer: Referencing from the new OIC charter: **Chapter 1: Objectives and Principles:**

Article1/No.16: To maintain the Rights, Honor, and Identity in Religion and Culture of Muslim Communities and Minorities in Non-OIC member states. (Maluleem, 2012, 404)

Hence, this means the protection of rights in this sense: human rights, honor, and the identity of Muslim communities and minorities is one of the main objectives of OIC, that need to be accomplished successfully, for the sake of Muslim Communities and Minorities in Non-OIC member states all over the world, as they are an important part of the same *Ikhwa* under the same *Ummah*.

For sure, the resurgence of violence in the southern border provinces of Thailand has become one of the OIC's major concerns, due to questions about violence and possible violations of the rights, honor, and identity of Muslim minorities in Thailand. In this regard, Ethnic-Malay Muslims are considered to be members of the "Muslim-Minority" compared to Thai citizens nationwide, despite being a majority of the population in the southernmost provinces of Thailand. However, this Muslim minority group is a part of a global Muslim "Brotherhood" by the Spirit of "*Ikhwa*" under the same "*Ummah*". Hence, this is one of the main duties of the OIC to engage with this problem, in order to help this Muslim minority according to the new OIC charter Article1/No.16.

Third, why is it important for Thailand to have good relations with the OIC in various aspects?

Answer: Apart from various fields of cooperation that Thailand has had with the OIC, in regards to this particular cooperation, it is very necessary for Thailand to maintain a good relationship with the OIC and its members, because Thailand is interdependent with them in many aspects, especially in at least these two important aspects:

Firstly, from an "**economic perspective**":

On **Energy Aspect**: as Islamic states who are OIC members possess 2/3 parts of world's energy sources, and possess 70% of world reserved energy, (Oil and Natural Gas) it is essential for Thailand to have a good relationship with these OIC member states, as Thailand is an energy-importing nation that derives oil and natural gas from these OIC member states, which are essential economic factors in the Thai national economy.

Secondly, from a “**religious perspective**”: for Thailand, today, approximately 10% of Thai citizen are Muslims, and are regarded by Muslims around the world as their “brothers”, as a part of Muslim’s “*Ikhwa*” under the same “*Ummah*”. This means that Thailand needs to have cooperation with Muslim countries in many aspects, especially in Islamic affairs, in order to serve the Thai Muslim population, as they are also Thai citizens. A significant example includes the promotion of “Hajj Affairs” where every Muslims must once time in their life undertake the pilgrimage to Mecca in Saudi Arabia, one of the world’s most powerful oil exporting countries, and one of the most influential OIC-member states.

Understandably, this means that Thailand has to cooperate closely with Saudi Arabia in Hajj Affairs for the religious sake of Thai Muslims.

Hence, there are reasons why it is critical for Thailand to have and maintain good relations with the OIC and its member states, as Thailand has to cooperate with the OIC and its members in various aspects as mentioned above. Therefore, if there are any problems that occur in the relationship between Thailand and OIC, including with OIC-member states, Thailand will risk damage to Thai National interests. In addition, in regards to Thai–OIC relations on the latest resurgence of violence in the southern border provinces, if the Thai government doesn’t take decisive measures in bringing about an end to the conflict via sustainable peaceful establishment in accordance with the OIC’s requests, this could lead the OIC to become unsatisfied and disappointed with Thailand, which may lead to declines in Thai–OIC relations, which might finally result in damages to Thai national interests as previously presented.

Fourth: How does the OIC view Thailand on the current situation of the resurgence of violence in the three southernmost provinces of Thailand? And **what** are the OIC’s standpoints and requests, toward the issue of the violent conflict in southern Thailand?

Answer:

The OIC’s perspectives:

At first, the OIC has understood that the violence in the southern border provinces of Thailand was not the product of religious conflict between Islam and Buddhism, nor was it originated from religious circumstance, but that the true original

cause was deeply rooted from the neglectfulness of the history, culture, identity, language, ways of life and justice of the local Malay Muslims in the area.

Moreover, the OIC has complained about the Thai juridical process in that the legal process on security-related cases that happened in the southern border provinces of Thailand was too time-consuming, and the progress was very slow.

Furthermore, The OIC presented its regret in regards to the “continued” application of the “Emergency Law” in most southern areas, including with the limited progress in introducing the language of local populations (Malayu-Javi language) as a language of instruction in schools of the South.

In addition, the OIC has suggested that the misleading use of extensive military operations in the Thai southern area can cause a terrible impact on the normal life of local Muslim people in this area, and the repeated use of undisciplined paramilitary militias accused of illegal acts can also lead to the result of increasing ethnic and religious polarization.

The OIC’s standpoints and requests:

Standpoints:

1. The OIC understood that the southern Thai violence is a part of Thai domestic affairs, and promised to not interfere in Thai domestic affairs directly, out of respect for Thai sovereignty and territorial integrity.
2. The OIC will not support separatism.
3. The OIC strongly condemned any use of violence against innocent civilians by any parties.
4. The OIC is ready to offer its cooperation in establishing peaceful settlement through welfare, economic, social, and educational initiatives.

Requests:

The OIC has seriously requested Thai government:

- 1) To lift the Emergency decree in the future, because this kind of special law allowed human rights violations by state officials to persist, and created a climate of impunity.
- 2) To address the “Truly Ultimate” root causes of the problem.
- 3) To allow the southern local Muslims to have a greater say in managing their own affairs.

4) To resolve this violent conflict through “Peaceful Dialogue & Negotiation”

5) To open spaces for Local Muslims in the area to have enough opportunities to participate with the Thai government and related state officials in policy formation and implementation.

6) To respect cultural differences in order to resolve the conflicts effectively.

7) To provide the truly sincere recognition of the cultural uniqueness of the local ethnic-Malay Muslims in the area, which is one of the very essential basic elements that must be respected to establish peaceful settlement in the area.

Analysis and Interpretation:

The OIC requested these formulated these standpoints and requests because, according to the new OIC charter: Chapter1: Objectives and Principles; Article1/No.16, it is one of the organization’s main objectives to maintain the rights, honor, and identity in religion and culture of Muslim communities and minorities in Non-OIC member states.

The resurgence of violence in the Southern Border Provinces of Thailand has become one of the OIC’s intensive concerns, because this violence has enormously and terribly violated the rights, honor, and identity of Muslim minorities in Thailand mostly living in the southern Border Provinces of Thailand. Hence, it is the duty of the OIC to engage with this problem, in order to help this Muslim minority in accordance with the New OIC Charter.

It’s important to understand that the OIC operates internationally based on four Islamic Theories in international relations: 1) *Tau-hid* (Oneness of God), 2) *Ald* (Justice), 3) *Jihad* (The Struggle), and 4) Caring and Accomplishing of Responsibilities, for the sake of Global Muslims *Ummah*, as all Muslim globally are “Brothers” together under the fraternal spirit of *Ikhwa*.

Lastly, but importantly, how should Thailand deal with the OIC from now on? It is important to know the answer to this question in order to maintain and strengthen good relationships and cooperation, in all aspects and especially on the issue of the resurgence of violence in the southern border provinces of Thailand during the time of this ongoing violent conflict.

Answer: First and foremost, the Thai government should show sincere dedication to solving this violent conflict to local ethnic-Malay Muslims in the area, Thai citizens nationwide, the OIC, and to the international Muslim community. The first crucial task is for the Thai government to give a great and formal apology to local ethnic Malay Muslims for the long duration of oppression and negligence committed by the Siamese rulers and Thai governments towards their history, culture, identity, religion, ways of life, and economic and social welfare, with an invitation to the OIC delegation to participate as a witness.

Secondly, the Thai government must create policies on this issue and follow through in implementation in accordance with the OIC's standpoints and requests above, as well as maintain frequent updates about progress on conflict resolutions with the OIC with actual evidence.

Thirdly, essentially, the Thai government should invite the OIC to participate with the Thai government to be a part of a working committee in solving this violent conflict, in order to show the sincerity of the Thai government to the OIC, and to gain mutual trust with the Local ethnic-Malay Muslims in the area, and to encourage a positive attitude and acceptance from the international Muslim community as a whole.

Additionally, before the final resolution of the conflict, in regards to the issue changing Thailand's status from the OIC Observer to be a full-member of the OIC, it is important to ask: how will Thailand receive approval by consensus from the OIC-member states at the conference of the Council of Foreign Ministers?

First, domestically, Thailand must prove to the eyes of OIC-member states that Thailand has treated its Muslim population well enough and has provided enough space for the Muslim population to represent themselves in the state's structure of Thailand. Especially on the issue of the resurgence of violence in the southern border provinces of Thailand, the Thai government must resolve these problems successfully as fast as it can do.

Second, internationally, the Thai government must prove to the OIC-member states that Thailand will support the Muslim *Ummah* on the international stage, and not just for its own interests.

Third, before submitting an application for membership to the CFM, the Thai government must push its hardest efforts to lobby all OIC-member states who are going to participate in the CFM, and make sure they will vote for Thailand by consensus.

Keywords: The Organization of Islamic Cooperation, OIC, the Southern Thai violence, Thailand – OIC Relations,



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May true sustainable peace be concretely and truly established in the Thai southern Border Provinces, the land of diversity and unconditional love.

With full of My Sincerity

1st Lt. Sorntheprit Sillapabanleng

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ABSTRACT	(2)
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	(10)
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS	(18)
CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Background and Significance of Issue	1
1.2 Objective of the Study	
1.3 Research Questions	3
1.4 Theoretical and Conceptual Framework	3
1.4.1 Islam Theories	3
1.4.1.1 Islam Principles and Philosophies	3
(1) <i>Ikhwa</i>	3
(2) <i>Ummah</i>	3
1.4.1.2 Islam Theories in International Relations	4
(1) <i>Tau-hid</i> (The Oneness of the God)	4
(2) Adl (Justice)	5
(3) Jihad (Struggle)	5
(4) Caring and Accomplishing of Responsibilities	6
1.5 Research Methodology	7
1.6 Methods in Research	7
1.6.1 Documentary Research	7
1.6.1.1 Primary Data	7
1.6.1.2 Secondary Data	8
1.7 Scope of the Study	8

CHAPTER 2 THE ORGANIZATION OF ISLAM COOPERATION (OIC): THE FIGHT FOR GLOBAL MUSLIM	11
2.1 The Establishment of the OIC	11
2.1.1 The First Effort	12
2.1.1.1 Mecca Conference	12
2.1.1.2 Al-Quds Convention	12
2.1.1.3 Geneva Convention	13
2.1.2 The Post-World War 2 Effort	14
2.1.2.1 General Islamic Congress	14
2.1.2.2 Reasons for the Increasing of Islamic Appeal	15
2.1.2.3 Al-Quds Tragedy	16
2.1.3 The Formative Period of the Establishment of the OIC	16
2.1.3.1 The Establishment of the Secretariat	17
2.1.3.2 Islamic Conference	17
2.2 The Significance of the OIC on This Contemporary International Arena	19
2.3 OIC and Its <i>Ummah</i> Identity	22
2.4 Framework, Structure, and Operational Mechanism of the OIC	24
2.4.1 Islamic Summit	25
2.4.1.1 Working Process of Islamic Summit	25
2.4.2 The Council of Foreign Minister	27
2.4.2.1 Time Period and Hosting Place of Regular Conference	27
2.4.2.2 Extraordinary Session and Other Convention	27
2.4.2.3 The Main Duties	27
2.4.2.4 Working Process	28
2.4.3 The General Secretariat of the OIC	28
2.4.3.1 Chief Executive and Its Election	28
2.4.3.2 Authority of the Secretary General	29
2.4.3.3 The Selection of Assistance Secretary General	30
2.4.3.4 Authorities of the Secretary General	30

2.4.3.5 Code of Conduct of the Relations between the Secretary General and OIC Member States	30
2.4.3.6 The Organizational Structure of the General Secretariat	31
2.5 The OIC Charter	33
2.5.1 The Core Principles of the OIC Charter	33
2.5.2 The New OIC Charter (The Latest One, OIC Charter 2008)	36
2.5.2.1 Evolution	36
2.5.2.2 Highlight of the New OIC Charter 2008	36
2.6 The Roles of OIC toward the Issue of “Human Rights”	38
2.6.2.1 Human Rights and Good Governance	39
2.6.2.2 Islam – The Religion of Neutrality and Generosity	39
2.7 The Roles of OIC toward the Issue of “Terrorism”	40
2.8 The OIC’s Clear and Concrete Standpoints toward the Issue of Muslim Minorities and Communities in Non-OIC Member States	45
2.9 The Process of the OIC’s Operations for the Sake of Muslim Communities and Minorities in Non-OIC Member States	47
2.9.1 Categories of Muslim Minorities and Communities	47
2.9.2 The Process of Implementing Steps of the OIC in Handling with Muslim Minorities Issue	48
2.9.3 Driving Mechanism	50
2.9.4 Ways and Standpoints of the OIC toward This Issue on the International Arena	50
2.9.5 OIC’s Patterns of Operation Process	51
 CHAPTER 3 THAILAND – OIC RELATIONS IN GENERAL	 54
3.1 The Protocol of Being Guest and Observer of the OIC	54
3.2 Thailand as an “OIC Observer”	55
3.3 The Overview of Thailand – OIC Relations in General	55

3.3.1 Support from the OIC to Muslims in Thailand	56
3.3.1.1 Trade and Industry	56
3.3.1.2 Education	56
3.3.1.3 Trading Cooperation	57
3.3.1.4 Disaster Relief Assistance	57
3.4 The Whole View of Thai Strategy toward the OIC	58
3.5 Upgrading Thailand's Status... "From Observer to be Full Member"	
... Opportunity and Challenge of Thailand	63
 CHAPTER 4 THAILAND – OIC RELATIONS ON THE ISSUE OF RESURGENCE OF VIOLENCE IN THE SOUTHERN BORDER PROVINCES OF THAILAND	 66
4.1 Year 2005	66
4.2 Year 2006	68
4.3 Year 2007	68
4.4 Year 2008	69
4.5 Year 2009	69
4.6 Year 2010	70
4.7 Year 2011	71
4.8 Year 2012	72
4.9 Year 2013	78
4.10 Year 2014	79
 CHAPTER 5 ANALYTICAL DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS	 81
5.1 Analyzing and Critizing the Thesis Issue	81
5.2 Recommendations	88
 REFERENCES	 91

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: The 2007 OIC Charter

96

BIOGRAPHY

111



LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Symbols/Abbreviations	Terms
CFM	The Council of Foreign Minister
DEP	Department of Export Promotion
ICCI	Islamic Chamber of Commerce and Industry
ICFM	Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers
IDB	Islamic Development Bank
MFA	The Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
OIC	The Organization of Islamic Cooperation
OSMEP	The Office of Small and Medium Enterprises Promotion

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background and Significance of Issue

The unrest in the deep south of Thailand is like a contemporary and classical conflict, which has entrenched Thailand through a tragic period of history for a long time. There have been a variety of horrible experiences in this ongoing conflict: deaths, demanding protests, various grievances, rebellions, fighting, killing, torture, violence, and so on. Upon this stage of drama, however, it seems that the southern fire is close to reaching the ending scene. Unfortunately, the violence in the southern border provinces of Thailand (Pattani, Yala, and Narathiwat province and some districts of Songkhla provinces) has emerged again in early 2004, and this time, it was even worse than before.

This latest resurgence formally began in 2004 with an army camp raid in Narathiwat province on January 4th, 2004. In the early hours of that day, a group of gunmen assaulted an army camp in Narathiwat Province, stealing hundreds of weapons and assassinating four soldiers. At roughly the same time, insurgents set fires at 20 schools and two unmanned police posts in the provinces. Simultaneously, in Yala province, many tires were burnt on many roads, and the planting of fake explosives occurred at many locations, which were taken seriously by the police, who then had their attention diverted from the army camp raid. On the following day, two police officers were killed in a series of bomb attacks in Pattani province. The Thai government, headed by Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra, responded by declaring martial law in several districts of Narathiwat, Pattani and Yala provinces. This marked the beginning of the latest resurgence of violence in the southern border provinces of Thailand, led to approximately more than 6,321 deaths and 14,741 people being injured since 2004 until now (These numerical estimates are of insurgency-related deaths and injuries between January 2004 to January 2014.) and threaten to escalate further.

There are two significant incidents that have drawn attention from the international Muslim community worldwide with panic and anger, which are the 1) Krue Se mosque incident, and the 2) Tak Bai incident.

First, the Krue Se Mosque incident happened on April 28th, 2004, when more than 100 suspected insurgents, most of them lightly armed, were killed after coordinated attacks against 11 police stations in Pattani, Yala and Narathiwat provinces. Approximately 30 insurgents in Pattani then took refuge in the historic Krue Se mosque. They were surrounded by the security forces and killed with grenades after a stand-off that lasted several hours, when the security force decided to launch a sudden attack on this respected religious place. Many questions were raised globally about these tactics used by the Thai security forces. Many argued that the Thai authorities looked down on and disrespected Muslim values and Islamic holy places.

1.2 The Objectives of the Study

1) To study the significance of the OIC in contemporary international politics and societies in order to know the importance of having good relations with the OIC for Thailand in all aspects, and especially on the issue of the resurgence of violence in the southern border provinces of Thailand.

2) To evaluate the total perspectives and standpoints of the OIC toward the issue of the resurgence of violence in the southern border provinces of Thailand.

3) To recommend the most suitable policies and implementations for the Thai government in dealing with the OIC, in order to maintain and strengthen good relationships and cooperation with the OIC in all aspects, especially on the issue of the resurgence of violence in the southern border provinces of Thailand, during the time of this ongoing violent conflict.

1.3 Research Questions

1. **How** is the OIC significant toward the international community in general and the Muslim world specifically in contemporary international politics and societies?

2. **Why** does the OIC have to be involved with the issue of the resurgence of violence in the southern border provinces of Thailand?

3. **Why** is it very important and necessary for Thailand to have good relations with the OIC in various aspects, and especially on the issue of the resurgence of violence in the southern border provinces of Thailand?

4. **How** does the OIC view Thailand, specifically, the Thai authority, on the current situation of the resurgence of violence in the three southernmost provinces of Thailand?

5. **What** are the OIC's standpoints and requests on the issue of the violent conflict in southern Thailand?

6. **How** should Thailand deal with the OIC from now on? In order to maintain and strengthen good relationships and cooperation in all aspects, and especially on the issue of the resurgence of violence in the southern border provinces of Thailand, during the time of this ongoing violent conflict.

1.4 Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

1.4.1 Islamic Theories

1.4.1.1 Islamic Principles and Philosophies

(1) *Ikhwa*

Ikhwa means the “brotherhood” of all Muslims around the world, created from the common faith and practice of Islam as their religion. (Yusuf, 2007, 319)

(2) *Ummah*

Ummah refers to a “community or a nation”, but not in the modern sense of nation (Khan 2001, 2) according to the concept of the Westphalian

modern nation-state system. In this case, *Ummah* means a “group of beings” which has some characteristics, or is facing some situation in common (Maluleem, 2012, 26). So, *Ummah* can be explained in this sense as a group that conveys the ideology among its citizens (Naz) to act in some righteous way or to just encourage the same beliefs. (Maluleem, 2012, 27) Then, the custom of *Ummah* is the strong feeling of affinity generated from the sense of belonging to the same community among Muslims. (Maluleem, 2012, 25)

Hence, *Ummah*, in this Islamic sense, refers to a single group of people, bound together in unity and concentration through the fraternal spirit of *Ikhwa*. In other words, *Ummah* represents the single united community of Muslims all over the world as only one community under the same *Ummah*.

Applying *Ikhwa* and *Ummah* to the Thesis:

The theoretical concepts of *Ikhwa* and *Ummah* are used to explain how to know and understand the strong identity, core values, and the driving forces of the OIC itself in various aspects of this organization, as well as the history of its establishment and purposes, its charters, its roles on the international arena in various issues. It is especially important for understanding the aspects that engage with the issue of the resurgence of violence in three southernmost provinces of Thailand, which are “Terrorism”, “Human Rights”, and specifically, the issue of “Muslim Minorities and Communities in Non-OIC member states”, so that we can realize the significance of the OIC in our contemporary international politics, in order to know 1) Why the OIC pays attention to the well-being of all Muslim minorities and communities in Non-OIC member states, and, in this case, in the deep south of Thailand 2) Why the OIC is a significant international governmental organization for Thailand to have a good relationship. 3) How to create a good relationship with the OIC, both in general and on the issue of the latest resurgence of violence in the southern border provinces of Thailand.

1.4.1.2 Islamic Theories in International Relations

(1) *Tau-hid* (The Oneness of the God)

Tau-hid means the oneness, or the Unity of the creator (God), that everything on this earth is one with God. Hence, every constructed thing is a part of each other, integrated on levels of oneness and being equal. In this case, we can

expand the consideration to the level of international relations among Muslim groups and non-Muslim groups. When people believe in this principle, it will lead to the abandonment of differences and discriminations originating from the different bases of race, language or wealth, because at the truly ultimate level, everything is a part of each other, and is one with God. On the issue of equality of mankind, *Tau-hid* has placed this issue in the form of Tolerance and mutual co-existence, by preserving of the Highness of God. Importantly, this principle will lead to the Freedom of destiny, not only in the individual level, but also the social level, that is the “Rights of Self-Determination” (Maluleem, 2012, 44).

(2) Adl (Justice)

The principle of Justice and honesty motivates all Muslims to support justice for all Muslims. The belief in this principle leads to the values of the essential relationship, which are: No invasion, No Persecution, No Tyranny, no corruption, and No Extremist behavior (Maluleem, 2012, 44).

(3) Jihad (The Struggle)

Jihad - the struggle and fighting against all kinds of “Evil”. In this regard, the meaning of Jihad has gone far beyond the fighting by weapons, but rather, it implies the preparation of Mankind for using their highest effort, both at the level of individual and of social groups, internally, externally and personally, in order to concretely do good deeds and strongly defend against evil, concluding the fight on the battle field. Furthermore, the meaning of Jihad according to the teaching of Islam in the concept of “Greater Jihad” or “Jihad Akbar” is the Jihad as the fighting on the way to God for resisting any evil things. At the international level, Jihad can refer to the general presentation of the realization at the universal level of the “Right of Self-Defense” (Maluleem, 2012, 43).

Importantly, Jihad should not be perceived as the struggle by violent means, because the true greatest fighting is the fight with evil inside the Human mind in order to achieve pure moral and religious good. However, the abandonment of this philosophical view embedded behind the principle of Jihad can lead to horrible, evil things; for instance, invasion, injustice, and waging war claiming to be in the name of Islam (Maluleem, 2012, 43, 45).

4) Caring and Accomplishing of Responsibilities

When considering the unity of Mankind as the oneness with God according to the principle of Tal-Hid, the thing that determines individuals is “responsibility”, since every human is in a state of oneness with all, and as each part of the same entity, if a man is not responsible to his duty based on Adl and Jihad, then, it will affect others and himself. This principle will help in constructing the sense of moral responsibility to all Muslims both at the individual level and the level of societies to fulfill their responsibilities. Moreover, the violation of any agreement will be condemned according to the Islamic principle because it means the rejection of responsibility to all mankind as the single oneness with the God (Maluleem, 2012, 45).

Applying Tal-Hid (The Oneness with the God), Adl (Justice), Jihad (The Struggle), and Caring for and Accomplishing the Responsibilities to the Thesis:

Tal-Hid (The Oneness with the God), Adl (Justice), Jihad (The Struggle), and Caring and Accomplishing of Responsibilities, are used to explain the core principles of the OIC, which are its establishment, purposes, policies and implementations. Understanding of these principles helps to understand the reasons why the international Muslim community needed to establish the OIC use it as an international mechanism working for solidarity and cooperation among Muslims, and why the OIC must globally fight for the sake of Muslim; for instance, their recognition, their human and national rights, and their dignity, justice, and independence. This will answer the question why the OIC has to pay serious attention to and be active in the issue of the latest resurgence of violence in the southern border provinces of Thailand, because the majority of people in this area are Muslims, which are a part of the Muslim minorities and communities in Non-OIC member states. In this regard, Thailand, that is one of the OIC’s duties to fight for their rights, accelerating Non-OIC member states to provide tolerance and mutual co-existence, supporting Muslim Minorities to gain the rights of self-determination, for example.

1.5 Research Methodology

“QUALITATIVE RESEARCH”

The research methodology of this Thesis will be conducted in the pattern of “Qualitative Research” to study Thailand – OIC Relations, emphatically focusing on the issue of the resurgence of violence in the southern border provinces of Thailand, where the majority population is Malay-Muslim. By using descriptive analysis to study the roles and significance of the OIC in our current international arena that have enormous influence on Thai–OIC relations, to evaluate the OIC’s perspectives and stand points toward this mentioned issue, and to recommend the most suitable policies, and patterns of implementations for Thai government in order to maintain and strengthen good relations and cooperation with the OIC in all aspects, especially on the issue of the resurgence of violence in the southern border provinces of Thailand, during the time of this ongoing violent conflict.

1.6 Methods in Research

This Thesis will be based on in-depth analysis of both primary and secondary data. In this regard, the methods of collecting data will be operated by documentary research.

1.6.1 Documentary research:

By collecting all documents with content related to the OIC, the violence in the southern border provinces of Thailand, and Thai–OIC relations, both in general and those that focus on these issues and any other required content, which are:

1.6.1.1 Primary Data; for instance,

- Speeches and statements from the OIC, Thai government and any other actors related to the issue
- News reports from various news agencies, both in Thailand and abroad
- Data from the internet on various Thai government agencies, the OIC, and any other related organizations, such as NGOs, civil societies and so on.

1.6.1.2 Secondary Data; for example, textbooks, general books, academic articles, journals, theses, news articles, editorials, websites...etc.

1.7 Scope of the Study

Since the resurgence of violence in the southern border provinces of Thailand emerged in January 2004, and following the horrible Kru-Se and Takbi incidents in Pattani provinces, in which manymany local Muslims had been killed, the OIC thus issued several press releases and statements regarding these violent conflicts.

Furthermore, the OIC had increased their participation to address this Muslim issue by sending a high-level delegation to Thailand on the Agenda of protecting all rights of the local Muslims residing in the southern border provinces of Thailand on this terrible violent conflict three times over nine years, from 2004-2013, over the course of several historical transitions in the Thai governments.

First, during June 2nd – 13th, 2005, a delegation led by H.E. Ambassador Sayed Qasim El-Masri, the special envoy and advisor of the OIC's secretary-general, , was sent to the southern border provinces of Thailand to observe and evaluate the conditions of Muslims in the area.

Second, Mr. Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu, the OIC's secretary-general, visited Bangkok from April 30th-May 2nd, 2007, to discuss the unrest in the southernmost provinces of Thailand.

Third, most recently, a high-level delegation headed by H.E. Ambassador Sayed Qasim El-Masri made a visit to the Thai deep south from May 7th-12th, 2012, to examine the current situation and the progress of peace settlement, five years after the second visit, specifically conveying three topics of concern: 1) Indiscriminate attacks against civilians, 2) The continuity of enforcement of Special Security laws, and 3) The dialogue to achieve peace.

However, throughout these nine years the violence in the southernmost part of Thailand continued, with no possibility of true peace yet established.

Significantly, at every OIC conference, both CFMs and Summits, the issue of resurgence of violence in the southern border provinces of Thailand is always a part of critical discussion, since 2004 until the latest 41st ICFM, June 16th-19th, 2014.

Hence, in order to achieve the objectives of this study, the analysis of this Thesis will be focus on the time period since the first participation of the OIC in 2004 until the involvement of the OIC at the end of the year 2014.

Second, the Tak Bai incident happened on October 25th, 2004 during the Muslim fasting month of Ramadan, when approximately 1,000 local Malay Muslims rallied at a protest outside the Tak Bai District Police station to request the police to release six suspects who were arrested for allegedly supplying weapons to insurgents. At that time, the police called the military for reinforcements. The military rounded up all of these demonstrators, threw them shirtless into military trucks several layers deep, and transferred them to the next district of Pattani Province. When the convoy arrived at the military camp, seventy-eight of the demonstrators had died; most of them died from asphyxiation as a result of being smothered by the other bodies of the detainees.

After the Tak Bai incident, the violence in the southernmost provinces of Thailand escalated sharply, both in the number of incidents and the brutality of the violence. The Thaksin administration responded by intensifying its efforts to suppress the insurgency. Unfortunately, the government could not control the situation at all. The daily killing was never reduced.

Absolutely, this evil tragedy happened to “Local Muslims” in the southernmost provinces of Thailand, and it drew strong and enormous attention from the international Muslim community, because all Muslims perceive themselves as an “*Ummah*” – a worldwide Muslim community that binds every Muslim together by the fraternal spirit of “*Ikhwa*” – brotherhood emerging from common faith and practice of Islam as their religion.

The southern unrest is a very significant problem for Thailand that needs to be solved successfully since Thailand is an international actor which still has to survive in an international arena that contains approximately 1.3 billion Muslims – more than one fourth (25.88%) of the world’s population. This socio-political body

has many strong influence on many issues and situations in contemporary international societies, especially on Muslim-related issues.

International mechanisms have operated to serve the intention and willingness of the worldwide Muslim Community in practice, but the most influential of which is the “OIC” (Organization of Islamic Cooperation), which is the most powerful international governmental organization, second to the United Nations (UN), and which operates as the “Global Representatives” of the worldwide Muslim community for the sake of all Muslims in every aspect, and which has many influence on the international arena today.

Though Thailand has observer status in the OIC, and has developed strong relationships and cooperation with the OIC and its members in many aspects, the issue of the latest resurgence of violence in the southern border provinces of Thailand has had a strong effect on Thai-OIC relations.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1 The Establishment of the OIC

The Islamic concept of *Ummah* – the worldwide Muslim Community, is the great Islamic principle that binds all Muslim together globally as the a single one united group. From AD 632-1924, the “Caliphate” is the Islamic institution that served as the center of spiritual unity of the Muslim *Ummah* (Khan, 2001, 11). However, this Caliphate had shown its sign of weakness and decay (Khan, 2001, 11). During 1837-1897, “Pan-Islamism” – the ideology of uniting worldwide Muslims to fight against Western imperialism as proposed by the famous Muslim thinker Jamaluddin al-Afghani (Yusuf, 2007, 319-320) began to gain popularity. (Khan 2001, 11) In practice of this Pan-Islamism, Afghani gained popularity and acceptance from the Muslim world in the liberation of Muslim land from Western imperialism. The core concepts of Afghani were to bring the Muslims back to Islamic fundamentals and concretely follow the precepts of Islam, and, simultaneously, to call Muslim rulers to unite in a confederation (A Western modern international political concept) and accept Western development in science and technology (Khan, 2001, 11). This means that Afghani was an Islamic Reformist.

Therefore, after the end of World War I, there were two types of pan-Islamic concepts: First, the “Caliphate”, or the Caliph and his supporters, standing for the conservation of the Institution of the Caliphate, and second, the Muslim reformers, who had long-term pan-Islamic goals and movements (Khan, 2001, 11; Maluleem, 2012, 51). The latter proved to be more powerful than the former, leading to the abolishment of the institution of the Caliphate by Turkey’s Grand National Assembly on March 3rd, 1924 (Maluleem, 2012, 51). This is the reason why pro-Caliphate groups kept trying to call for ways and procedures to handle the weaknesses and gaps in efficiency of the Caliphate, through various power transformations and meetings of various Muslims leaders from 1924-1969 (45 years). Thus, we can say that the OIC is

a pattern of empire ruling institution of the Caliphate in the 20th Century (Maluleem, 2012, 51-51).

2.1.1 The First Effort

In 1924, there was an initial effort to seek a new symbol of the identity of the Muslim community lead by the “Ulema” (or the cult). This first effort happened on the same day that the ruling system of the Caliphate was abolished. Some of the most famous Ulemas met in Cairo, Egypt (Maluleem, 2012, 52). In their meeting, they realized that the abolished Ottoman Caliphate was not harmonious with the Islamic precepts and that loyalty to it was not valid under Islamic law (Khan 2001, 12). So, they made a decision to call for a conference of Muslim representatives to consider finding a person who would be in charge of taking care of the Caliphate. To serve this purpose, the Rector of Al-Azhar University established a permanent secretariat attached to the Administrative council of Great Islamic Congress for the Caliphate (Maluleem, 2012, 52). Still, the Egyptian government headed by Saad Zaghul Pasha didn’t have much interest in this affair (Khan, 2001, 12).

2.1.1.1 Mecca Conference

The Mecca conference was held in Mecca, Saudi Arabia in July, 1924. During that time, Sharif Hussain, the leader of the rebellion against Ottoman rule in Arabia (Khan, 2001, 12), declared himself the Ruler of Hijaz, and the Caliph (the supreme leader of Muslims). However, the Muslim world didn’t accept his declaration. So, in order to gain acceptance from the Muslim world, he decided to organize this conference, and invited many leading Islamic scholars and ulemas to attend. The conference was arranged during the Hajj season. The conference agreed on the Charter, especially on the issue of the Unity of Muslims being the Ultimate goal, and raised the issue of the significance of Arab unity as a strong base for unity of all Islamic states as a whole. However, the charter didn’t mention the Caliphate, and all Hussain’s efforts were denied by the conference. Hussain was finally kicked out by Abdul Aziz of the Al-Saud clan and replaced as the ruler of Hijaz (Khan, 2001, 12; Maluleem, 2012, 52-53).

In January, 1926, King Abdul Aziz formally established himself as the ruler of Hijaz. In order to legitimize his rule and remove misperceptions about his

clan's Wahabi activism in the Muslim world, he chose to support the international Islamic Conference in June 1926. King Abdul-Aziz clearly stated at the beginning of the conference that Saudi Arabia had no engagement at all in any considerations of any political issues, or the Ruling in Hijaz. Therefore, this conference then was limited to economic issues, welfare of Hijaz, and Hajj affair management (Khan, 2001, 12-13; Maluleem, 2012, 53).

This conference reached two consensuses: First, to give King Abdul-Aziz responsibility in Hajj Affair management. And second, to organize itself as a permanent mechanism for making a World Muslim Congress, which would arrange the conference annually in Mecca during the Hajj period. Though the conference had elected Shakib Arsalan as its secretary general, this mechanism didn't receive much enthusiasm from its members (Khan, 2001, 13; Maluleem, 53- 54).

2.1.1.2 Al-Quds Convention

In July 26th, 1931, Amin al-Hussaini, The Grand Mufti (the religious arbitrator) of Palestine, organized the second World Muslim congress in Jerusalem (Al-Quds). Instead of discussion only of religious issues, as Hussaini had promised the British high commissioner earlier, the conference did discuss political issues in the Muslim world. This conference succeeded in establishing the executive council of the World Muslim congress, comprising 25 member states, Mufti Amin al-Hussaini was elected as the president, and Syed Ziauddin Tabatabai, a famous Persian politician also appointed as the Secretary of the Central Bureau of this executive council of World Muslim Congress. In 1934 this mechanism was a main tool in creating the end of the Yemen-Saudi Arabia War (Khan, 2001, 13; Maluleem, 2012, 54).

2.1.1.3 Geneva Convention

In 1935, the conference took place again in Geneva, Switzerland. There were many representatives from various states, including The Soviet Union, Palestine and North Africa. The main objectives in the beginning of this conference were to build the spirit of cooperation, bonds of fraternity and Islamic virtues for all Muslim brothers in every part of the world. However, later, the theme of discussion deviated to political issues including the condemnation of Zionism and the impacts of colonialism over occupied Muslim lands. There were no clear results gained from this conference (Khan, 2001, 13; Maluleem, 2012, 54-55).

2.1.2 The Post-World War 2 Efforts

After the Second World War ended, efforts in establishing pan-Islamism began again. The World Muslim Congress convened at Karachi in 1949 and 1951, respectively. Many issues were discussed at these two conferences many, such as education, commerce, and social welfare. The conference reached a consensus on the founding two relief organization, the Inter-Islamic Volunteer Corps and The Red Crescent Society, under the leadership of Ghulam Mohammad, the Pakistani Finance minister at that time. The first ever Islamic Economic conference was arranged at Karachi in 1949, followed by another at Tehran in 1950, in order to establish procedures and ways of strengthening economic cooperation among Muslims (Khan, 2001, 13; Maluleem, 2012, 55).

At the same time, many Muslim states had started to pay attention to the idea of Pan-Islamism. For instance, during 1946, Egypt tried to form a Worldwide Islamic League. At an unofficial level, in April 1953, many religious leaders had gathered together at Maidan, Indonesia, and requested the establishment of a Commonwealth of Muslim states (Khan, 2001, 14; Maluleem, 2012, 55).

2.1.2.1 General Islamic Congress

In 1955, three Muslim State leaders: King Saud of Saudi Arabia, Anwar Sadaat of Egypt, and Ghulam Mohammad of Pakistan, collaboratively made a historic decision to found the General Islamic Congress, with the congress's charter then rectified in March 1956. This founding of the General Islamic Congress counted as the first clear result of the attempts of Muslim States, with its headquarters based in Cairo, Egypt. Though this congress was short-lived, it could be said that this was the first Islamic association of sovereign states, a precursor of the OIC (Khan, 2001, 14; Maluleem, 2012, 55-56).

However, the roles and duties of this conference were still limited in the area of education and culture, and not many other Muslim states participated in it. In 1958, the congress became paralyzed because of the conflict between Saudi Arabia and Egypt, and the withdrawal of Pakistan (Khan, 2001, 14; Maluleem, 2012, 56).

A significant movement during this time can be seen in 1960 when Soekarno, the Indonesian president, proposed an Afro-Asia intergovernmental conference with permanent headquarters in Jakarta, Indonesia. Moreover, the World

Muslim congress held its 5th conference in Baghdad, Iraq in 1962, and its 6th in Mogadishu, Somalia in 1964. Simultaneously, the Muslim World League was founded in Mecca, Saudi Arabia in 1962, and the joint resolution of its annual conference in April 1965 requested for an Islamic summit, which was concretely endorsed by King Faisal of Saudi Arabia and the Nigerian Statesman Sir Ahmadu Bello (Khan, 2001, 14; Maluleem, 2012, 56).

2.1.2.2 Reasons for the increasing of Islamic Appeal

During the time mentioned previously, there were approximately 5 reasons why the Muslim world was alert and turned to increase cooperation among Muslim states.

First, there were many new-born independent sovereign states, including many new-born Muslim states, as a result of decolonization. So, these newly independent states then were very enthusiastic in exercising their freedom in various ways (Maluleem, 2012, 56).

Second, owing to the long-term struggle for independence in many new-born independent sovereign states, including new-born Muslims states, their leaders were typically very nationalistic, and the feeling of Nationalism was presented through the way of making mutual concrete collaboration and unity among the Third World and the Muslim world (Maluleem, 2012, 56).

Third, there was also a mutual economic motive among newly independent Muslim states. In the time of colonization, most of the hugely mono-cultural economies of the colonies had forcefully made colonized Muslim states closely integrated with and dependent upon the imperialist powers. This technical and economic dependency had made many colonized Muslim states terribly exploited. These reasons opened up the eyes of wisdom among newly independent Muslim states to realize that, 1) Economic independence was very important for political independence; 2) Economic independence could be accomplished through economic cooperation between Muslim states; and 3) As the Muslim world bound together by the spirit of *Ikhwa* under the same *Ummah*, generated from the common faith and practice of Islam as their common religion, so, this was a powerful potential for the Muslim world to create concrete cooperation and to build joint forums in negotiating with other economic powers with more bargaining power (Khan 2001, 15).

Fourth, many liberation movements had used Islamic principles as a strong driving force in the struggle against Imperialism and colonialism. Then, many secular leaders who possessed leading positions in Muslim states began to implement two dual policies: Domestically, this included brutal suppression of their Islamist opposition on the one hand, while the use of confirmation of being Muslim themselves was used internationally on the other (Maluleem, 2012, 57).

And Fifth, the founding of Israel on Palestinian land, believed to have been created by the strong and cunning support of Western powers, had enormously raised the anger and disappointment on a large scale among Muslim people and Muslim leaders all over the world, which lead to the call for Islamic solidarity to fight against Israel (Khan, 2001, 15; Maluleem, 2012, 57).

2.1.2.3 Al-Quds Tragedy

On August 21st, 1969, the Al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem (Al-Quds), the third holiest place of Muslims, was set on fire by an arsonist. Though the Israeli government denied involvement in this incident, its behaviors and practices, concluding with only symbolic punishment of the culprit, showed that the Israeli government was behind this arson incident. This incident a great turning point to the evil of Israel after its 1967 victory over the Arabs, and how the unity of worldwide Muslim is essential in defending against these evils (Khan, 2001, 18; Maluleem, 2012, 57).

In response to the Al-Quds incident, the conference of Arab league foreign ministers took place in Cairo, Egypt on August 25th, 1969. The conference agreed that the Al-Quds tragedy was a great issue for all Muslims, not just Arab countries. King Faisal of Saudi Arabia and King Hassan of Morocco became supporters of the proposed Islamic summit and decided to host the Islamic Summit in Rabat, Morocco (Khan, 2001, 18; Maluleem, 2012, 57).

2.1.3 The formative Period of the Establishment of the Organization of Islamic Conference

King Hassan of Morocco invited 35 heads of Muslim states to join this Islamic Summit. Though the conference would emphasize the Al-Quds tragedy and the problem of Palestine, the issue of preparation of a permanent mechanism of

Islamic conferences was proposed as the first agenda of the conference. However, the radical states of United Arabs (Egypt and Syria), Libya and Algeria, strongly resisted this proposal, as they feared that this permanent mechanism would become another pro-West international organization in the Middle East, since the conservative Muslim states which had sheer weight of numbers, would come to dominate this organization. This conference ended with the acceptance of creating inter-Muslim state cooperation, and the decision to establish a permanent organization, including the consideration of measures for establishing its secretariat (Khan, 2001, 18-19; Maluleem, 2012, 57-58).

Conclusively, in short, the Organization of Islamic Conference (The Organization of Islamic Cooperation in this present day), was established upon a decision of this historical Islamic summit in September 25th, 1969 (OIC, 2014), by the leading roles and efforts of King Faisal of Saudi Arabia (Yusuf, 2007, 331) and King Hussan of Morocco, as a result of the criminal arson of the Al-Aqsa Mosque in occupied Jerusalem (Al-Quds) (OIC, 2014).

2.1.3.1 The Establishment of the Secretariat

The establishment of the Secretariat, having been initiated at the 1st Islamic Conference of Foreign ministers (ICFM), took place in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia on March 1970, comprising representatives from 22 Muslim states. The Conference considered the results of the First Islamic Summit in Rabat, and made a decision to establish the Secretariat. The conference also discussed two important issues: First, the conference emphasized the need of restoration of occupied Arab territories, and provided a promise to support the just struggle of Palestine and free Jerusalem campaign. Second, the conference decided to establish the office of Secretariat in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, and Malaysia was promoted to be the first Secretary General (Khan, 2001, 19; Maluleem, 2012, 58).

The 2nd ICFM was held in Karachi, Pakistan, in December, 1970. At this time, Tunku Abdul Rahman, the first prime minister of Malaysia, was elected to be the first Secretary General. Each member donated 10,000 US dollars, resulting in 450,000 US dollars to use as the first budget of the administration of the Secretariat. In addition, there was discussion about the establishment of an Islamic Bank, a news agency, and Islamic Cultural Centers in this conference (Khan, 2001, 19; Maluleem, 2012, 58).

The 3rd ICFM was organized in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia in February 1972. The essence of this conference was to establish a truly formal organization, concluding with the decision in principle to set up an Islamic Development Bank, Islamic News Agency, and Islamic Cultural Center. Importantly, the conference appointed Jeddah as the location of the office of the Secretariat of this new organization, formally named as “The Organization of Islamic Conference” in English, “Organization de la Conference Islamique” in French, and “Munazzamah al-Mutamr al-Islami” in Arabic (Khan, 2001, 20; Maluleem, 2012, 59). Today, the Organization of Islamic Conference is known as “The Organization of Islamic Cooperation” (OIC).

2.1.3.2 Islamic Conference

In the OIC, there are 3 ultimate types of conferences, which are the core heart of the OIC, including:

1) **The Islamic Summit:** composed of Kings and Heads of States and governments of OIC member states. This is the supreme authority of the OIC, organized every three years to discuss their common goals, policies, and issues to achieve the objectives of the OIC, and to consider any other issues of concern to OIC member states and all Muslim people around the world (Maluleem, 2012, 59; “History,” n.d).

2) **The Council of Foreign Ministers (ICFMs):** The ICFMs will be held once every year, to consider ways of implementation of the general policy of the OIC, into two tracks:

1. Applying into practice of decisions and resolutions on matter of common interest in the implementation of the objectives and the general policy of the OIC.

2. Examining progress of the implementation of the decisions and resolutions applied at the previous summits and ICFMs (“History,” n.d.).

Significantly, in practice, the ICFMs are mainly responsible for policy decisions and implementation, for four reasons:

Firstly, as the Islamic Summit is held once every three years, this length of time is quite long, which is not effective in tackling urgent problems that the Muslim *Ummah* is facing.

Secondly, the ICFMs can organize extraordinary sessions anytime there are Emergency situations in Muslim communities which urgently need to be discussed on the stage of ICFMs, while the Islamic summit cannot.

Thirdly, the ICFM is comprised of high-ranking representatives from OIC member states, who are suitable and enthusiastic for joining the conference.

Fourth, the Islamic Summit lasts three days per conference, which mostly are spent providing speeches and statements to the conference, while the ICFMs use 5 days for each conference which gives the delegates more time to consider further any other issues also (Maluleem, 2012, 59-60).

2.2 The Significance of the OIC on this Contemporary International Arena

The Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) is the largest and only legitimate intergovernmental organization of the Muslim world, (Khan, 2001, 1) comprised of 57 sovereign Muslim States, from four continents: Asia, Africa, South America and Europe, including:

South American Continent:

1) the Republic of Suriname,

European continent:

2) the Republic of Albania, 3) the Republic of Turkey,

Asia continent:

4) the Republic of Azerbaijan, 5) the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, 6) the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, 7) the State of the United Arab Emirates, 8) the Republic of Indonesia, 9) the Republic of Uzbekistan, 10) the Islamic Republic of Iran, 11) the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, 12) the Kingdom of Bahrain, 13) Brunei-Darussalam, 14) the People's Republic of Bangladesh, 16) Turkmenistan, 17) the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, 18) the Syrian Arab Republic, 19) the Republic of Iraq, 20) the Sultanate of Oman, 21) the State of Palestine, 22) the Kyrgyz Republic, 23) the State of Qatar, 24) the Republic of Kazakhstan, 25) the State of Kuwait, 26) the Republic of Lebanon, 27) the Republic of Maldives, 28) Malaysia, 29) the Republic of Yemen

African continent:

30) the Republic of Uganda, 31) the Republic of Benin, 32) Burkina-Faso (then Upper Volta) 33) the Republic of Chad, 34) the Republic of Togo 35) the Republic of Tunisia 36) the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria 37) the Republic of Djibouti 38) the Republic of Senegal 39) the Republic of The Sudan 40) the Republic of Sierra Leone 41) the Republic of Somalia 42) the Republic of Gabon 43) the Republic of Gambia 44) the Republic of Guyana 45) the Republic of Guinea 46) the Republic of Guinea-Bissau 47) the Union of The Comoros 48) the Republic of Cameroon 49) the Republic of Cote D'Ivoire 50) Libya 51) the Republic of Mali 52) the Arab Republic of Egypt 53) the Kingdom of Morocco 54) the Islamic Republic of Mauritania 55) the Republic of Mozambique 56) the Republic of Niger and 57) the Federal Republic of Nigeria ("Member states," n.d.)

Furthermore, there are more than 20 organizations, including sovereign and non-sovereign states, who have gained observer status from the OIC; for example:

Sovereign states:

Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Central African Republic, the Kingdom of Thailand, the Russian Federation

Non-Sovereign States:

the Republic of North Cyprus (under the protectorate of Turkey), Azad, Jamu, Kashmir

International Organizations:

The United Nations (UN), the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), the League of Arab States (LAS), the African Union (AU), the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO),

Muslim Communities/Organizations:

the Moro National Liberation Front,

Islamic Institutions:

the Parliamentary Union of the OIC Member states (PUOICM)

...etc. ("Observers," n.d.)

In addition, the OIC is the international organization that has brought such diverse states such as Indonesia, Lebanon, Maldives and Albania together as OIC members. On the common bond of faith and practice of Islam of the OIC members, and the OIC's claim of being representative of the worldwide *Ummah*, the OIC has become the largest and only true religious association of nation-states on our planet (Maluleem, 2012, 20-21; Khan, 2001, 1).

Due to this status, we can consider the OIC as a significant international actor on our international arena today, for at least three reasons:

First, OIC is the "Principal Spokesman" of "Islam", the largest religion in the world, and can veritably claim to represent about three-fourths of the followers of Islam who live in OIC member states (Khan, 2001, 1; Maluleem, 2012, 21).

Second, OIC membership is spread across ten geographical regions on four continents: Asia, Africa, South America and Europe (Khan, 2001, 2; Maluleem, 2012, 21), including:

1. Arabian Peninsula: Saudi Arabia, Yemen, United Arab Emirates (UAE), etc.
2. South Asia: Pakistan, Bangladesh, Maldives,
3. Iran and Caucasus: Iran, Azerbaijan,
4. Central Asia: Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, etc.
5. South East Asia: Indonesia, Malaysia, Brunei,
6. North Africa: Libya, Algeria, etc.
7. West Africa (Sahel Region): Guinea, Senegal, Gambia, etc.
8. Horn of Africa: Mozambique, Djibouti, etc.
9. Europe: Turkey, Albania,
10. South America: Suriname

From a recent survey, Muslims account for approximately 25.55% of the world population. Islam is the largest religion in Africa, where about 58.88% of the population is Muslim, and also in Asia, where approximately 27.91% of the population is Muslim. On other continents, Islam is the second largest religion (Maluleem, 2012, 22).

Third, the OIC contains outstanding numbers in its subsidiary and specialized organs, with approximately 48 agencies. This expanded structure can

nearly compare with the United Nations (UN) and the European Union (EU). With these applications, the OIC can boast of several organs and committees working for cooperation in economic, educational, scientific research-oriented and political fields (Khan, 2001, 22).

2.3 OIC and its *Ummah* Identity

Ummah refers to a “Community or a Nation”, but not in the modern sense of the Westphalian nation-state (Khan, 2001, 2). In this case, *Ummah* means a “Group of Life Being” which has some characteristics, or that faces some situation in common (Maluleem, 2012, 26), so, *Ummah* can be explained in this sense as a group that conveys the ideology among its citizen (Naz) to act in some righteous way or in shared belief (Maluleem, 2012, 27). Therefore, the concept of *Ummah* is the strong feeling of affinity generated from belonging to the same international Muslim community (Maluleem, 2012, 25).

Hence, *Ummah* in the Islamic sense, refers to a single group of people, bound together in unity and concentration, through the fraternal spirit of *Ikhwa*.

On the international level, especially in the OIC’s documents, the word “*Ummah*” is used loosely to refer to “Nation”, in order to claim representation for the Muslim World, and anything those Muslims are comprised within, in this present day.

OIC operates under the framework of modern intergovernmental organizations, based on the principle of sovereign states of each Islamic member states bound by mutual understanding. Also, in Islamic history, *Ummah* did not call for political integration of Muslim communities, which is another way that this term differs from the contemporary meaning of Nation in Westphalian Systems (Maluleem, 2012, 32).

Considering the teaching in the Qur’an and the teaching of Prophet Mohammad, we can see the mutual feeling of affinity and unity among Muslims and the interdependence of Muslim communities (Maluleem, 2012, 33).

For instance, in the Qur’an, it says that:

“... Believers are no one else but brothers, so, believers must all together bind with the rope of Allah, and don’t become divided. ...” (Qur’an 10:49)

Moreover, there are teachings of the Prophet Mohammad, which are reiterated on the common faith of Islam among Muslims, the feeling of brotherhood among Muslims, and the feeling of unity among Muslims; for example:

... In having inter-relationship, Muslims can be compared as a building in which every part of that building supplements each other as the same building. ...” (Maluleem, 2012, 34)

“ ... There are no one among you all will be the true believer, if one has no desire for one’s Muslim brothers as like one desire to oneself. ...” (Maluleem, 2012, 34)

The OIC Charter, too, has claimed for this truth, written on the early contents, having said that, mutual belief is one of the strong factors in order to achieve agreements and solidarity among Muslims. (Maluleem, 2012, 34)

However, while there is the acceptance of affiliation of Islam in the OIC, generated from the feeling of close affinity of Muslims, and the desire to settle their unity within the concept of *Ummah*, in parallel, we have to accept that, the characteristic of inter-governmental organizations, as well as close diplomatic relationships, are products of a modern system, claimed previously that, OIC is an international organization of sovereign states who have faith in Islam (Maluleem, 2012, 34).

In regards to the above, Islamic believers who can be OIC members aren’t limited only to Islamic states which have Islam as their national religion. In this case, the OIC is quite open for the issue of membership. In general, any state with a majority Muslim population can be an OIC member. It is also possible for any states where half of their citizens, or for even states that have Muslim leaders but a minority Muslim population, to be OIC members. Essentially, if there are some Islamic Characteristics, OIC can accept providing the status of OIC membership because of Islamic connectivity. Thus, Islamic connectivity has led to the mutual basics of each states to cooperate within the OIC framework their mutual benefits, as best as modern international integration can allocate (Maluleem, 2012, 35).

Today, OIC is comprised of more than fifty Islamic sovereign states, which are diverse in culture, language, race, and conflicts of national interest. Nevertheless, the feeling of *Ummah* still persists among them. This means that the

OIC has become an inter-governmental organization which contains a diverse group under a single union by using classical Islamic ontology to consider the *Ummah* identity of the OIC (Maluleem, 2012, 35).

2.4 Framework, Structure, and Operational Mechanism of the OIC

According to the New OIC charter, **Chapter 3: Organs, Article 5**, it is stated that The Organization of Islamic Cooperation shall consist of:

1. Islamic Summit (The Conference of Kings and Heads of State)
 2. Council of Foreign Ministers (Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers: ICFM)
 3. Standing Committees
 4. Executive Committee
 5. International Islamic Court of Justice
 6. Independent Permanent Commission of Human Rights
 7. Committee of Permanent Representatives
 8. General Secretariat
 9. Subsidiary Organs
 10. Specialized Institutions
 11. Affiliated Institutions
- (“History,” n.d.; Khan, 2001, 22)

The OIC has three levels of structure. On the top level, there are four main organs, which are: the Islamic Summit, Council of Foreign Ministers, General Secretariat, and the International Islamic Court of Justice (Khan, 2001, 22).

The Second Level is comprised of standing committees, the executive committee, Independent Permission of Human Rights, the Committee of Permanent Representatives, and any other specialized committees, such as the permanent Finance Committee, etc. (Khan, 2001, 22).

The Third Level includes various specialized and subsidiary organs, such as the Islamic Bank, Islamic News Agency, ISESCO, etc. (Khan, 2001, 22).

Moreover, there are also many independent institutions affiliated with the OIC; for instance, the Islamic Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI), the Islamic

Ship Owners Association (OISA), the Islamic Cement Association (ICA), etc. (Khan, 2001, 22).

However, the three most significant organs of the OIC, which are the OIC's greatest mechanisms for working for the sake of the Muslim *Ummah*, and for being the essential factors in the international Islamic movement on this contemporary international stage, are the Islamic Summit, the Council of Foreign Ministers, and the General Secretariat.

2.4.1 Islamic Summit

The Islamic Summit is the supreme authority of the OIC (Article 6, Chapter 4th: Islamic Summit, OIC Charter 2008). This summit is the first of the principal organs of the OIC (Khan, 2001, 22).

The Islamic Summit is responsible for the duty of deliberating, taking policy decisions, and providing guidance on all issues concerning the realization of the objectives as provided in the Charter, and for considering other issues of concern to the Member States and the *Ummah* (Article 7, Chapter 4th: Islamic Summit, OIC Charter 2008). The summit is organized every three years in one of the Member States (Article 8/1, Chapter 4th: Islamic Summit, OIC Charter 2008), and the preparation of the agenda and necessary arrangements for the convening of the summit will be created by the Council of Foreign Ministers with the assistance of the General Secretariat (Article 8/2, Chapter 4th: Islamic Summit, OIC Charter 2008).

In regards to the extraordinary sessions of the Summit, they can take place whenever the interests of *Ummah* warrant it, to consider matters of vital importance to the *Ummah* and to coordinate the policy of the organization accordingly. An extraordinary session may be held at the recommendation of the Council of Foreign Ministers or on the initiative of one of the Member States or the Secretary-General, provided that such an initiative obtains the support of a simple majority of Member States. (Article 9, Chapter 4th: Islamic Summit, OIC Charter 2008)

2.4.1.1 Working Process of Islamic Summit

The summit is always arranged in one of the member states, and a pledge of one of member states to be the host country for the next summit will be chosen at the end of the present summit (Khan, 2001, 22).

The Chairman of the conference at each summit will be elected by the member states, and is typically the head of government of the host country, while three more Vice-Chairmen will be also appointed, elected by member states in the way of providing equitable representation to the Asian, African and Arabic groups of states (Khan, 2001, 22).

The opening day of the summit starts with the recitation of from the Holy Quran. After that, there will be an election for the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the conference as mentioned above. Next is the opening speech by the leader of the host-state and customary speeches of heads of delegations from OIC-member states (Khan, 2001, 22). Usually, the UN secretary General is also invited to participate and make a speech at the summit (Khan, 2001, 23).

The next day, general discussion will be held. However, this discussion is usually not emphasized on the agenda set by the preparatory committees, but covers a wide range of issues important to the Muslim world (Khan, 2001, 22-23).

Then, the Secretary General of the OIC will present the report on the progress and activities of the OIC since the last summit, and provide information to the conference about the progress of implementation of each resolution from previous summits (Khan, 2001, 23).

However, the history of previous summits shows that many leaders of OIC-member states not only debate the problems encountered by the *Ummah* and OIC affairs, but also use this conference to defend their states' positions on some controversial issues, or to blame their rival states (Khan, 2001, 23).

The scores of resolutions to be adopted will be finalized by the Foreign Ministers' preparatory meeting which precedes every summit. Thus, almost all the resolutions are adopted word by word on the concluding day of the conference (Khan, 2001, 23).

Finally, the Islamic Summit will conclude after adopting a final declaration and issuing a communiqué, which is the summary of all the decisions taken by OIC-member states. The declarations on this final day, generally, are named after the venue of the conference, for example, "Lahore Declaration", "Rabat Communique" etc. (Khan, 2001, 23).

2.4.2 The Council of Foreign Minister (Islamic Conference of Foreign Minister)

The Council of Foreign Ministers (CFM, or the Islamic Conference of Foreign Minister: ICFM) is the second main organ of the OIC. Even though formally, the role of CFM is subordinate to the Islamic Summit according to the OIC charter, in real practice, through its characteristics of conferences and working process, it is the true practical decision-making structure of the OIC due to the council's ability to hold more frequent and extraordinary sessions, as previously mentioned.

2.4.2.1 Time Period and Hosting Place of Regular Conference:

The CFM shall be convened once a year in one of the Member states (Article 10/1, Chapter 5: Council of Foreign Ministers, OIC Charter 2008).

2.4.2.2 Extraordinary Session and other Convention:

An extraordinary session of the CFM may be convened at the initiative of any Member State or of the Secretary-General if such initiative is approved by a simple majority of the Member States (Article 10/2, Chapter 5: Council of Foreign Ministers, OIC Charter 2008).

The CFM may recommend convening other sectorial Ministerial meetings to deal with the specific issues of concern to the *Ummah*. Such meetings shall submit their reports to the Islamic Summit and the Council of Foreign Ministers (Article 10/2, Chapter 5: Council of Foreign Ministers, OIC Charter 2008).

2.4.2.3 The Main Duties

According to Article 10/4 of the new OIC Charter the CFM shall consider the means for the implementation of the General policy of the Organization by:

- a. Adopting decisions and resolutions on matters of common interest in the implementation of the objectives and the general policy of the Organization.
- b. Reviewing progress of the implementation of the decisions and resolutions adopted at the previous summits and CFM.
- c. Considering any issue affecting one or more Member States whenever a request to that effect by the Member State concerned is made with a view to taking appropriate measures in that respect.

d. Considering any issue affecting one or more Member States whenever a request to that effect by the Member State concerned is made with a view to taking appropriate measures in that respect.

e. Recommending the establishment of any new organ or committee.

f. Electing the Secretary General and appointing the Assistant Secretaries General in accordance with Articles 16 and 18 of the Charter, respectively.

g. Considering any other issue it deems fit.

(Article 10/4, Chapter 5: Council of Foreign Ministers, OIC Charter 2008)

2.4.2.4 Working Process

The CFM convenes in one of the OIC member states, and elects the foreign ministers of the host states as the chairman of the conference, and elects some vice-chairmen also. At the beginning of the session, the conference will be opened by the prime minister or the president of the host state, and follow with the presentation of annual reports by the OIC Secretary General. The quorum will be created in any session of the CFM by two-thirds of the OIC member states. In making decisions and resolutions, they will be accepted with a vote of at least a two-thirds majority of the OIC member states, where each member has one vote. However, the CFM prefers to run the conference on a consensus basis. The convention discusses many important agendas issue by issue. There are usually between fifty to ninety-five issues, categorized variously; for instance, political, economic, cultural, financial, and Muslim minority issues, etc. Furthermore, the CFM will also approve the following year's budget for the OIC and determine the allocations for subsidiary organs of the OIC, including the implementation of past decisions and the adoption of new resolutions on a wide range of issues (Khan, 2001, 25-26).

2.4.3 The General Secretariat of the OIC

The General secretariat is the third main structure of the OIC, and it is patterned after the UN Secretariat. This is the executive and administrative organ of the OIC (Khan, 2001, 26).

2.4.3.1 Chief Executive and its Election:

According to Article 16, Chapter 11: General Secretariat of the OIC Charter 2008, which has stated that:

The General Secretariat shall comprise a Secretary-General, who shall be the chief Administrative Officer of the Organization and such staff as the Organization requires. The Secretary General shall be elected by the Council of Foreign Ministers for a period of five years, renewable once only. The Secretary-General shall be elected from among nationals of the Member states in accordance with the principles of the equitable geographical distribution, rotation and equal opportunity for all Member states with due consideration to competence, integrity and experience (“History,” n.d.).

2.4.3.2 Authority of the Secretary General:

Article 17, Chapter 11: General Secretariat of the OIC Charter 2008 has declared that:

The Secretary General shall assume the following responsibilities:

- a. bring to attention of the competent organs of the organization matters which, in his opinion, may serve or impair the objectives of the Organization;
- b. follow-up the implementation of decisions, resolutions and recommendations of the Islamic Summits, and Councils of Foreign Ministers and other Ministerial meetings;
- c. provide the Member States with working papers and memoranda, in implementation of the decisions, resolutions and recommendations of the Islamic Summits and the Council of Foreign Ministers;
- d. coordinate and harmonize, the work of the relevant Organs of the Organization;
- e. prepare the programme and the budget of the General Secretariat;
- f. promote communication among Member States and facilitate consultations and exchange of views as well as the dissemination of information that could be of importance to Member States;
- g. perform such other functions as are entrusted to him by the Islamic Summit or the Council of Foreign Ministers;
- h. submit annual reports to the Council of Foreign Ministers on the work of the organization (“History,” n.d.).

2.4.3.3 The Selection of Assistance Secretary General:

According to Article 18, Chapter 11: General Secretariat of the OIC Charter 2008:

The secretary-General shall submit nominations of Assistance Secretaries General to the Council of Foreign Ministers, for appointment, for a period of 5 years in accordance with the principle of equitable geographical distribution and with due regard to the competence, integrity and dedication to the objective of the charter. One post of Assistant Secretary General shall be devoted to the cause of Al-Quds Al-Sharif and Palestine with the understanding that the state of Palestine shall designate its candidate.

2.4.3.4 Authorities of the Secretary General and the General Secretariat

The Secretary-General may, for the implementation of the resolutions and decisions of the Islamic Summits and the Council of Foreign Ministers, appoint special representatives. Such appointments along with mandates of the special representatives shall be made with the approval of the Council of Foreign Ministers. (Article 18/2, Chapter 5: Council of Foreign Ministers, OIC Charter 2008)

The Secretary-General shall appoint the staff of the General Secretariat from among nationals of Member-states, paying due regard to their competence, eligibility, integrity and gender in accordance with the principle of equitable geographical distribution. The Secretary-General may appoint experts and consultants on temporary basis. (Article 18/3, Chapter 5: Council of Foreign Ministers, OIC Charter 2008)

The General Secretariat shall prepare the meetings of the Islamic Summits and the Councils of Foreign Ministers in close cooperation with the host country insofar as administrative and organizational matters are concerned. (Article 20, Chapter 5: Council of Foreign Ministers, OIC Charter 2008)

2.4.3.5 Code of Conduct of the Relations between the Secretary General and OIC-member states:

In performance of their duties, the Secretary-General, Assistant Secretaries General and the Staff of the General Secretariat shall not seek or accept instructions from any government or authorities other than organization. They shall

refrain from any action that may be detrimental to their position as international officials responsible only to the organization. Member states shall respect this exclusively international character, and shall not seek to influence them in any way in the discharge of their duties. (Article 19, Chapter 5: Council of Foreign Ministers, OIC Charter 2008)

2.4.3.6 The Organizational Structure of the General Secretariat:

The General Secretariat is divided into four main parts, those are: 1) Secretary General's Office, 2) Section of Political Affairs, 3) Section of Science and Technology and Economic Affairs, 4) Section of Cultural, Social, and Information Affairs, and 5) Section of Al-Quds Al-Sharif, with the second through fifth groups headed by Assistant Secretary Generals, and with each part also divided into departments headed by Director Generals (Khan, 2001, 27).

Functions and Responsibilities of these four main parts:

1. Secretary General's Office: Being taken care by a cabinet headed by a director. Its duties are to run all work of the office of Secretary General, to coordinate the meetings and conferences, and to follow up of the activities of the organ (Khan, 2001, 27).

The Secretary General's Office is divided into seven departments, those are:

1.1 *Department of Administration and Finance*: Being responsible in personnel matters, prepares and executes the budget, and manages the accounts.

1.2 *Department of Protocol and Public Relations*: In charge of protocol matters and handles contacts concerning privileges and immunities of the OIC.

1.3 *Department of Coordination*: Authorizing in coordinating activities of the General Secretariats with subsidiary and specialized organs.

1.4 *Department of Conferences*: Having duties in planning and coordinating all arrangements for meetings and conferences.

1.5 *Da'wa Department*: Working in coordinating activities of various organizations in the field of Da'wa (Preaching of Islam) to avoid overlapping or duplication.

1.6 *General Services Unit*: being authorized in centralization of correspondence to ensure proper liaison.

1.7 *External Office*: There are three external offices located in Geneva, new York, Islamabad, which are in charge of coordinating the OIC's diplomatic missions with the United Nations (Khan, 2001, 27).

2. Section of Political Affairs: Authorizing in searching for harmonizing political actions of OIC member states taking care of the implementation of political decisions, having two departments:

2.1 *Department of Muslim Minorities*: Being responsible for collecting data and statistics on Muslim minorities, promotes contacts with them and taking care of their interests.

2.2 *Department of Legal Affairs*: Servicing in legal counsel the General Secretariat and its organs, examines international draft treaties, and prepare legal texts of conventions to be signed within the OIC member states (Khan, 2001, 27).

3. Section of Science and Technology and Economic Affairs:

In Charge of drawing up plans and working on development studies to foster economic, technical, and trade cooperation in priority fields designated by Islamic summit, containing of two department:

3.1 *Department of Economic Affairs*: Being responsible for searching in speeding up the economic progress of Muslim states, and to protect their natural resources.

3.2 Science and Technology department: Functioning in promoting development of science and technology in the Muslim world and ensuring implementation of decisions in this regard (Khan, 2001, 27-28)

4. Section of Cultural, Social, and Information Affairs: also having two departments:

4.1 *Department of Social and Cultural Affairs*: Having duties in promoting cooperation among OIC member states in cultural and sport fields through publications, meetings and other cultural frameworks.

4.2 *Information Department*: Being responsible for keeping the public informed about the OIC activities, disseminates information about Islamic

history and culture, and to push effort to bring Muslim peoples closer (Khan, 2001, 28).

5. Section of Al-Quds Al-Sharif: In charge of coordinating activities of the OIC toward the Liberation of Palestine, and including with the duty of looking after the Islamic Bureau of Boycott of Israel and the Islamic Bureau for military Coordination with the Frontline states against Israel (Khan, 2001, 28).

2.5 The OIC Charter

(The New OIC Charter 2008, see in Appendix)

Considering the OIC Charter, both the first and the latest one, we can realize that there are two concepts which relate to each other. The first concept mentions the intra-relationship among OIC member states, and the second is about inter-relationship between OIC member states and non-OIC member states (Maluleem, 2012, 63)

2.5.1 The Core Principles of the OIC Charter:

Moreover, there are approximately five main principles in the framework of OIC policies under the international environment unfolded in the charter, which are (Maluleem, 2012, 63):

1) To support international understanding and cooperation

In the aspect of relations between OIC member states and non-OIC member actors, the charter emphasizes the creation of suitable conditions in order to promote mutual understanding and cooperation. This principle is constructed to enhance the general purpose of OIC members, for building and maintaining peaceful external relations with other non-OIC member states, because promoting understanding and cooperation won't be established if any aggressions and evil wills still dominate inter-state relations. This principle accords with the Islamic theory in international relation "Jihad" as explained previously (Maluleem, 2012, 63-64).

2) To safeguard international peace and security

The introduction of the OIC charter has declared the collection of OIC-member states' attempt to protect universal peace and assurances of security, freedom and justice for Muslims all over the world, including Muslim minorities and communities in non-Muslim states. In this regard, the OIC charter has mentioned the objective of taking required measures to promote international peace and security, based on the principle of justice (Maluleem, 2012, 64).

Moreover, the OIC also emphasizes the main goal of the UN Charter in order to maintain international peace and security. However, though the UN charter mentions measures to safeguard international peace and security, which need to be in accordance with the principles of justice and international law, the OIC Charter only mentions justice (Maluleem, 2012, 64).

Nevertheless, this principle reflects the care of the OIC Charter to the UN Charter. At the same time, it also reflects the teachings of Islam about the respect and responsibility to the assigned mission. In other word, OIC member states are also UN member states, with duties under the UN Charter, too, especially the duty of pushing efforts to safeguard international peace and security (Maluleem, 2012, 65).

3) Issue of Palestine

The OIC charter has strongly stated that it is one of the essential goals of the OIC charter to support Palestinian citizens to achieve their Rights and Liberty on their own homeland, concluding with the protection of the Holy Place – Jerusalem. This clearly implies that the issue of Palestine in the OIC Charter has been raised from the Arab regional level to the global level, with which all Islamic states must be concerned (Maluleem, 2012, 65-66).

In general, Palestinian land, including Jerusalem, has been occupied under Israeli armed force since the mid-20th century to the present day. So, the request of OIC-member states is to support Palestinians to reclaim their rights and liberate their land (Maluleem, 2012, 66).

This principle reflects two Islamic Theories in international relations: “Ald” (Justice) and “Jihad” (The Struggle). The land occupation of the Israeli military violates the rights of Palestinians, and suppresses the population. The OIC-member

states have tried very hard to liberate their Palestinian brothers under the same Muslim *Ummah* from Jewish violation and suppression (Maluleem, 2012, 66).

4) To support the peaceful struggle of Muslims

The OIC charter has considered the struggle of Muslims to maintain their honor, independence, and national rights, which are main goals supported by OIC-members. This concern always involves the definition of Muslim people under the colonial system, or military occupation, and includes Muslim minorities who reside in non-Muslim states, such as in the southern border provinces of Thailand. In this regard, the OIC emphasizes the Islamic principle that gives recognition to the legitimacy of having international relations, while at the same time reflecting the right of self-determination of Muslim people themselves in any part of the world, especially Muslim minorities in non-Muslim states who are violated and suppressed, according to the Islamic principles of justice (Ald) and equality (according to “*Tauhid*” – Oneness with the God). This is also in accordance with the UN Charter and various declarations of many states about human rights and the acceptance of justice and equality of minorities (Maluleem, 2012, 68-69).

5) To eliminate ethnical discrimination and colonization

In this case, there are two principles under the OIC charter;

First is the principle of non-discrimination, which is expressed by the concept of self-realization” and the promotion of fundamental human rights, and which aims to help all Muslims globally (Maluleem, 2012, 69-70).

If we review international agreements concerning the termination of all kinds of ethnical discrimination, we will find that the definition of ethnic discrimination means difference, separation, strictness, or any privilege rights giving based on color or ethnicity, which aims to reduce or damage any specific colors or ethnicities, including respecting lack of respect for the basic equality of human rights and basic freedom in political, economic, social, cultural and any other aspects related to human ways of life (Maluleem, 2012, 70). This principle is in accordance with *Tauhid*, and which the OIC Charter has used in international relations time and again (Maluleem, 2012, 70).

The second important principle is that of self-determination. This principle also reflects the concepts of *Tau-hid Ald*. These two principles have served to expand the scope of international relations (Maluleem, 2012, 70).

Notably, there is also a claim on the OIC Charter that the OIC has adopted and applied both Islamic principles and the international law system equally. So, the OIC will deal with any situations based on these two in equal consideration (Maluleem, 2012, 70).

2.5.2 The New OIC Charter (The Latest One, OIC Charter 2008)

2.5.2.1 Evolution:

The discussion about the improvement and amendment of the OIC Charter started in 1996, in which issues of good governance, democracy, and other sensitive issues were brought into attention (Maluleem, 2012, 87).

Later, in the Extraordinary OIC Summit of the year 2005 held in Mecca, Saudi Arabia, the convention had resolutions to endorse the OIC Charter Amendment, in order to expend the capabilities of the OIC for the globalized era (Maluleem, 2012, 87).

Finally, the OIC has launched a New OIC charter, which resulted from the 11th OIC summit at Dhakhar, Senagal, on March 2008. At this summit, the New OIC charter was unanimously ratified by OIC members, which is one of the most remarkable successes in the organization's history. This success proved the ability of political elites among OIC members to be coordinated on their role in maintaining the survival of OIC member states, as well as Muslim minorities and communities in non-Muslim states (Maluleem, 2012, 89).

2.5.2.2 Highlights of the 2008 OIC Charter:

There was an imminent need for the Muslim *Ummah* to seek suitable ways to face the challenges of the 21st Century, surrounded by the currents of globalization. Being economic partners and knowledge sharing between OIC-member states must be considered urgent priorities to achieve this. The OIC Charter Amendment has opened opportunities for the OIC to increase its effectiveness, strengthening the relationship among OIC-member states, and realizing many NGOs which formally deploy in each OIC-member states (Maluleem, 2012, 91).

Visions of the Muslim world have been reflected in the New OIC Charter 2008 include the issues of good governance, human rights, and democracy, which are sensitive matters for some OIC member states in the Middle East. At the same time, OIC member states have realized the necessity of adopting the Universal Human Rights Principle, which includes women's and children's rights, which are problems in some countries, as well as the protection of human rights and democracy. In addition, the New OIC Charter provides the authority to establish an Independent Permanent Commission on Human Rights, too (Maluleem, 2012, 91).

In the Economic Aspect, the New OIC charter emphasizes the effort to increase economic cooperation among OIC-member states. This economic cooperation aims to increase welfare and provide aid to poor countries. At the same time, OIC also has the goal to open a free market for OIC-member states, though it may not cover all OIC-member states in its initial stages (Maluleem, 2012, 87).

In regards to the promotion of "Jihad for Peace", which has become an essential mission of the OIC in the current international situation, in which Muslims have been suffering under foreign occupation; for example, the cases of Palestine, Iraq and Afghanistan. In this sense, OIC always condemns every form of terrorist action claimed to be in the name of God. At the same time, the OIC's standpoint is on the request for the clear separation between terrorism and Muslim liberation movements against foreign occupation, such as the violent unrest in the deep south of Thailand, the conflict in Kashmir, and the recognition of the independence of Kosovo, for example (Maluleem, 2012, 92).

In conclusion, the New OIC charter concretely highlights the Agenda for peace, human rights, justice, self-realization, self-determination and the peaceful struggle of all Muslims for their honor, independence, and national rights. All of these are OIC objectives for the sake of Muslims worldwide, and for living harmoniously with non-Muslim people all over the world, in order to accomplish to achieve success for the OIC's *Ikhwa* under its single *Ummah*.

2.6 The Roles of the OIC toward the issue of “Human Rights”

In contemporary International Relations, there is a debate about what is the true meaning of “human rights”, which has become one of the most important issues in the post-Cold War era. Western countries have tried to present principles of human rights, according to their perspectives, as “universal principles”, and use this principle as an essential “tool” to judge Muslim countries that don’t pay attention at all to this definition of human rights, whether or not they act in accordance with the harmonious principles of. Hence, the characteristics of the OIC reaction to this issue has become a way of pushing the efforts to define Muslims’ perspective on the issue of Human Rights, simultaneously with specifying the similarities and differences between Islamic and Western definitions of human rights (Maluleem, 2012, 187).

The conclusion on the issue of Human Rights according to the OIC’s view was expressed at the 19th CFM in Cairo, Egypt in 1990 by releasing the Cairo Declaration on Human Rights in Islam. This declaration is comprised of 25 articles, which explain the true essential Human Rights in Islam. Moreover, it also insists that humans have freedom from the time of their birth, and that no one has the right to suppress and exploit others, and that the surrender of humans can only rightfully be provided to God. Every human is equal under Islamic law, colonization is prohibited, and the full rights of people to struggle for their own freedom from colonialism is supported (Maluleem, 2012, 187).

Furthermore, the OIC has also submitted a declaration on child rights in Islam. This declaration has emphasized to OIC-member states to follow principles written in the UN declaration about child rights, declaration of survival, protection, and development of children including the action plan presented on the UN convention on children organized in September 1990. Later, in 1993, the OIC participated in the Vienna convention on human rights. In this convention, the OIC presented its points of view about human rights in accordance with Islamic principles to the world community. (Maluleem, 2012, 188)

2.6.1 Human Rights and Good Governance:

The OIC has three measures about this issue:

1. To seriously support the expansion of political participation, combined with the guarantee of equality, freedom of citizens, and social justice, in order to promote transparency and the elimination of all corruption among the OIC-member states (Maluleem, 2012, 189).

2. To request the CFM to consider the possibility of establishing a permanent Islamic organization for supporting human rights in Islam, as well as to call for the coordination in a legal context on the OIC Charter toward the issue of human rights, including the presenting of the Amendment of National laws, rules and regulations of the OIC-member states, in order to confirm the respect for human rights among OIC-member states (Maluleem, 2012, 189).

3. To provide authority to the OIC General Secretariat, and to cooperate with international and regional organizations, in order to confirm the rights of Muslim communities and minorities in Non-OIC member states, promoting close cooperation with governments those who take care of Muslim communities (Maluleem, 2012, 189).

2.6.2 Islam – The Religion of Neutrality and Generosity:

In this case, the OIC has confirmed:

1) Commitment to the expansion of the righteous ideas about Islam as the religion of neutrality and tolerance, in order to reinforce strength and resistance to extremism and smugness (Maluleem, 2012, 189).

2) Condemnation of every form of extremism, as it conflicts with Islamic and human values, and presents political, economic and social root causes of problems through development programs and stand points, providing conflict resolutions by ways of good reasoning, invitations, and recommendations. (Maluleem, 2012, 190)

3) The guarantee that the inter-cultural dialogue which is based on mutual respect and understanding, and equality among people, will be the first priority in settling international peace and security, including the guarantee of peaceful co-

existence and participation in developing mechanisms for this dialogue (Maluleem, 2012, 190).

4) The promotion of inter-Religious dialogue (Maluleem, 2012, 190).

5) Confirmation of the participation of the OIC and specialized organizations as an offensive participation mechanism in inter-religious and inter-cultural dialogue (Maluleem, 2012, 190).

6) Use of the utilities from various media for servicing and protecting the missions of the Muslim *Ummah*, supporting Islamic values and principles, and correcting any misunderstandings to be righteous (Maluleem, 2012, 190).

7) Struggle for the teaching of Islam, and to call for the collaboration among OIC-member states to their educational courses which balance the promotion of generosity, human rights, openness, and the understanding of other religions and cultures, and combining with rejecting religious extremism and pride in Islamic identity (Maluleem, 2012, 190).

2.7 The Roles of the OIC on the issue of Terrorism

To tackle the issue of terrorism, the OIC has created two mechanisms, which also reflect the OIC standpoints toward this issue, which are:

1) the OIC convention on Combating International Terrorism, adopted at the 26th CFM in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, in July 1999, and

2) Kuala Lumpur Declaration on International Terrorism, adopted at the extraordinary session of the CFM on Terrorism, April 1st – 3rd, 2002 (Yusuf, 2007, 10)

First, the OIC convention on Combating International Terrorism declared that:

Pursuant to the tenets of the tolerant Islamic Sharia which reject all forms of violence and terrorism, and in particular those based on extremism and call for protection of human rights, which provisions are paralleled by the principles and rules of international law founded on cooperation between peoples for the establishment of peace;

Abiding by the lofty, moral and religious principles, particularly the provisions of the Islamic Shariah as well as the human heritage of the Islamic *Ummah* (Yusuf, 2007, 11).

Moreover, this convention has given the meaning of terrorism and terrorist crimes in Article 1(2, 3) as:

1. "Terrorism" means any act of violence or threat thereof notwithstanding its motives or intentions perpetrated to carry out an individual collective criminal plan with the aim of terrorizing people or threatening to harm them imperiling their lives, honor, freedoms security or rights or exposing the environment or any facility or public or private property to hazard or occupying or seizing them, or endangering a national resource, or international facilities, or threatening the stability, territorial integrity, political unity or sovereignty of independent states.

2. "Terrorist Crime" means any crime executed, started or participated in a terrorist objective in any of the Contracting States or against its nationals, assets or interests or foreign facilities and nationals residing in its territory punishable in its internal law (Yusuf, 2007, 11).

However, this Convention has reflected another OIC standpoint toward the issue of terrorism, from a part of its declaration, which is:

Confirming the legitimacy of the right of people to struggle against foreign occupation and colonialist and racist regimes by all means, including armed struggle to liberate their territories and attain their rights to self-determination and independence in compliance with the purposes and principles of the Charter and resolutions of the United Nations. (Yusuf, 2007, 12)

Furthermore, to convincingly support the above declaration, the OIC has clarified this concept in the Article 2 of this Convention:

Article 2

a) People struggles including armed struggle against foreign occupation, aggression, colonialism, and hegemony, aimed at liberation and self-determination in accordance with the principles of international law shall not considered a terrorist crime.

b) None of the terrorist crimes mentioned in the previous article shall be considered political crimes.

c) In the implementation of the provision of this convention the following crimes shall not be considered political crimes even when politically motivated:

1) Aggression against Kings and head of state of Contracting States or against the spouses, their ascendants or descendants.

2) Aggression against Crown Prince or vice-presidents or deputy heads of government or ministers in any of the Contracting States.

3) Aggression against persons enjoying immunity including Ambassadors and diplomats in Contracting States or in countries of accreditation.

4) Murder or robbery by force against individuals or authorities or means of transport and communications.

5) Acts of Sabotage and destruction of public properties and properties geared for public services, even if belonging to another Contracting State.

6) Crimes of Manufacturing, smuggling or possessing arms and ammunition or explosives or other materials prepare for committing terrorist crimes.

d) All forms of international crimes, including illegal trafficking in narcotics and human beings, and money laundering aimed at financing terrorist objectives shall be considered terrorist crimes (Yusuf, 2007, 12-13)

In this regard, it obviously shows that this convention has emphasized the right of self-determination of Muslim people and any people in general all over the world who are under occupation, and also accepts the struggle of these people against occupation as legitimate and not terrorist (Yusuf, 2007, 11). Hence, this convention has reflected the clear support of the Muslim liberation struggle in the Philippines, Palestine, and the struggle of Muslims in the southern border provinces of Thailand (Yusuf, 2007, 12).

Secondly, the Kuala Lumpur Declaration on International Terrorism, adopted at the extraordinary session of the CFM on Terrorism, April 1st – 3rd, 2002, has presented the OIC's standpoints toward the issue of Terrorism as follows:

1. We reject any attempt to link Islam and Muslims to terrorism, and terrorism has no association with any religion, civilization or nationality (Yusuf, 2007, 15-16);

2. We reiterate that preventive action taken to combat terrorism should not result in ethnic or religious profiling or the targeting of particular community (Yusuf, 2007, 15-16);

3. We unequivocally condemn acts of international terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, including state terrorism, irrespective of motives, perpetrators and victims as terrorism poses a serious threat to international peace and security and is a grave violation of human rights (Yusuf, 2007, 15-16);

4. We reiterate the principled position under international law and the charter of the United Nations of the legitimacy of resistance to foreign aggression and the struggle of peoples under colonial or alien domination. In this context, we underline the urgency for an internationally agreed definition of terrorism, which differentiates such legitimate struggles from acts of terrorism (Yusuf, 2007, 15-16);

5. We also underline the imperative of respect for international humanitarian law protecting civilian populations (Yusuf, 2007, 15-16);

6. We reject any attempt to link terrorism to the struggle of the Palestinian people in the exercise of their inalienable right to establish their independent state with Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its capital (Yusuf, 2007, 15-16);

7. We reject any attempt to Associate Islamic States or Palestinian and Lebanese resistance with terrorism, which constitutes an impediment to the global struggle against terrorism (Yusuf, 2007, 15-16);

8. We condemn Israel for its escalating military campaign against the Palestinian people, including the daily brutalization and humiliation of its civilians, resulting in mutual casualties, strangulation of the Palestinian economy, systematic and indiscriminate destruction of houses and residential facilities as well as infrastructure, institutions and structures of the Palestinian National Authority (Yusuf, 2007, 15-16);

9. We emphasize the important of addressing the root causes of international terrorism, convinced that the war against terrorism will not succeed if the environment that breeds terrorism, including foreign occupation, injustice and exclusion, is allowed to thrive (Yusuf, 2007, 15-16);

10. We reaffirm our commitment to international action in combating international terrorism undertaken in conformity with the principles of the Charter of

the United Nations, including the principles of non-intervention in internal affairs and respect for sovereignty and international integrity, as well as international law and relevant international conventions and instruments (Yusuf, 2007, 15-16);

11. We reject any unilateral action taken against Islamic country under the pretext of combating international terrorism, as this will undermine global cooperation against terrorism (Yusuf, 2007, 15-16);

12. We reiterate our call for the convening of an international conference under the auspices of the United Nations to formulate a joint organized response of the international community to terrorism in all its forms and manifestations (Yusuf, 2007, 15-16);

13. We thus reaffirm our commitment to action at national level and through international cooperation in combating terrorism and agree to the following plan of Action (Yusuf, 2007, 15-16).

This declaration's description of terrorism doesn't include the struggle of people and their movements against foreign hegemony, aggression, colonialism and occupation, where the goals of these movements are to liberate themselves or to gain the rights of self-determination, according to the principles of international law (Yusuf, 2007, 2).

Hence, in accordance with the principles of these two instruments of the OIC toward the issue of terrorism, we can realize that, whether any of the struggles and movements of Muslim people (whether or not is an armed struggle), especially including Muslim minorities and communities in non-OIC member states all over world, will be considered as terrorism or not from the viewpoint of the OIC, depends on:

First, the Objective of the struggle or movement; if the objective is to struggle for the legitimate rights of Muslim people against foreign occupation, colonialism, aggression or hegemony, in order to gain their liberation or self-determination, this struggle or movement is not counted as terrorism, but instead, as freedom fighting. However, if the struggle or movement is conducted by Islamic Radical Fundamentalists, aiming to establish Islamic radical states and against Muslim states under the Westphalian system, this will be terrorism.

Second, the target of the struggle or movement; if the target is to struggle against the actors who engage in or are tools of foreign occupation, colonialism, aggression, or hegemony, this struggle will be recognized by the OIC as a legitimate freedom struggle. However, if the targets are any “innocent” actors or people who are not engaged at all in the foreign occupation, aggression, oppression, colonialism or hegemony, especially by the violent means, this will be condemned by the OIC as terrorism.

2.8 The OIC’s Clear and Concrete Standpoints on the Issue of Muslim Minorities and Communities in Non-OIC Member States

According to the Purposes and Principles of the OIC mentioned previously, there is one issue to which we need to pay attention, which is the issue of Muslim Communities and Minorities in Non-OIC member states (including any states that have gained “Observer Status” in the OIC) This is a significant issue regarding the OIC’s main roles toward the resurgence of Violence in the southern border provinces of Thailand, where many Muslims have come to harm.

Referenced from the new OIC charter: Chapter1: Objectives and Principles;

Article1/No.16: To maintain the Rights, Honor, and Identity in Religion and Culture of Muslim Communities and Minorities in Non-OIC member states. (Maluleem, 2012, 404)

This means the protection of “Rights” in this sense: the human rights, honor, and identity of Muslim communities and minorities is one of the main objectives of the OIC for the sake of Muslim communities and minorities in Non-OIC member states all over the world, as they are an important part of the same *Ikhwa* under the same *Ummah*. To achieve this purpose, in 1978, OIC ratified the Establishment of The Department of Muslim Communities and Minorities in Non-Muslim states (Maluleem, 2012, 186).

Moreover, the OIC expresses deep concern about the rights of Muslim minorities, which has been a major part of the agenda at every OIC conferences. In this regard, the main issue is that Muslim minorities residing in some non-Muslim

states are inappropriately treated, and are lacking political and religious rights, the fundamental rights which must be guaranteed according to the principle of international law. Thus, requesting these non-Muslim states to pay respect to the culture and beliefs of these Muslim minorities is a concrete means of the protection of their rights, according to the UN Charter and the Declaration of Universal Human Rights (Maluleem, 2012, 187).

Therefore, the OIC has established principles of Muslim communities and minorities in Non-OIC member states, which can be summarized into 9 points as follows:

1) OIC-member states must collaboratively support the maintenance of the religious and cultural identity of Muslim communities and minorities in Non-OIC member states, so that they can get the rights, including religious rights, and be treated equally.

2) The protection of the right of Muslim minorities is the Duty of those states they live in, which must be in accordance with the principle of international law.

3) OIC-member states, mechanisms and sub-organizations of the OIC must monitor the situations and problems of Muslim minorities in Non-OIC member states, and present the information, opinions and considerations of this issue to the Office of the OIC Secretariat.

4) To pay attention specifically to any Muslim minority to those who are oppressed and suppressed because they are Muslims, and also to provide financial, humanitarian, and any other aid to them.

5) To coordinate with governments of states that have Muslim minorities, in order to consider the problems and cooperatively seek cooperation for supporting them especially in states which are under emergency situations, where Muslim minorities must be helped immediately.

6) If there are any violations of the rights of Muslim minorities in any state, it is the duty of OIC to push those states to stop the problem.

7) To promote Muslim minorities, especially youths, to preserve their religious and cultural identities by providing educational scholarship and by supporting educational media. Furthermore, to promote Muslim minorities in Non-

OIC member states to participate in economic and social development in the states they live in, while simultaneously respecting the law, traditions and culture of the states they live in, also.

8) To collaborate with the United Nations (UN), especially with the Sub-Committee for the Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities, and the Commission on Human Rights, in order to protect Muslim minorities.

9) To consider the issue of Muslim communities and minorities case by case, with careful concern for the sovereignty of states those Muslim minorities live in (Maluleem, 2012, 292-293).

For sure, the resurgence of violence in the southern border provinces of Thailand has become one of the OIC's major concerns, because this violence has violated the rights, honor, and identity of Muslim minorities in Thailand living in the southernmost provinces of Thailand. Hence, it is the duty of the OIC to engage this problem in order to help this Muslim minority according to the New OIC Charter Article 1 No. 16 and Principles of the OIC about Muslim communities and minorities in non-OIC member states as mentioned previously.

2.9 The Processes of the OIC's Operations for the Sake of Muslim Communities and Minorities in Non-OIC Member States

2.9.1 Categories of Muslim Minorities and Communities:

According to the OIC's perspective, the OIC has categorized Muslim minorities and communities into five groups:

1) Being a minority compared to the nationwide religious demographic makeup of the non-OIC member state they are residing in, but being majority in particular parts of these, where this kind of Muslim minority often campaigns for secession, such as in the southern border provinces of Thailand, as well as in Kashmir, Philippines, and Eritrea, for example (Khan, 2001, 150).

2) Muslim Minorities who are suppressed and oppressed by state policies of non-OIC member states they are residing in, both unconsciously, such as in the case of India, or consciously, as in the case of Bulgaria, for instance (Khan, 2001, 150).

3) Muslim Immigrants from developing or underdeveloped states or recent converts living in developed states such as the U.S.A, France, the U.K., etc., which are discriminated against by non-Muslim people in these state (Khan, 2001, 150).

4) Muslim people in non-OIC member states who are politically marginalized and are victims of civil wars; for instance, Sri Lanka, Cambodia, and Liberia (Khan, 2001, 150).

5) Muslim minorities residing in non-OIC member states in small numbers compared to the majority population of those states. This type of Muslim minority mostly faces the problem of cultural and educational assimilation (but not political) as a result of being assimilated by the mainstream culture of the majority population. We can see this problem occurring with Muslim minorities in most of Latin America, South Korea, and South Africa, for example (Khan, 2001, 150).

2.9.2 The Process of Implementing Steps of the OIC in Handling the Muslim Minority Issue:

In taking care of these five categories of Muslim minorities and communities in non-OIC member states, according to the principles of the OIC in dealing with the issue of Muslim Minorities and communities in non-OIC member states, we can realize that there are essentially three main steps:

1) The Realization Step:

First and Foremost, all OIC members must always realize as their great task that OIC member states must collaboratively support the maintenance of the religious and cultural identity of Muslim communities and minorities in non-OIC member states, so that they can have equal rights, including religious rights, as the majority in the countries they live in (Maluleem, 2012, 292-293).

However, OIC member states must still always keep in mind that the direct protection of the rights of Muslim minorities is the direct duty of the non-OIC member states they live in, which must be in accordance with the principles of international law (Maluleem, 2012, 292-293).

2) The Monitoring Step:

According to the realization step, the main duty of the OIC member states, mechanisms and sub-organizations is to “monitor” the situations and problems of Muslim minorities in non-OIC member states, and present the information, opinions, and considerations of the issue to the Office of OIC Secretariat (Maluleem, 2012, 292-293).

In this regard, OIC-member states must pay attention specifically to any Muslim minorities that are oppressed and suppressed because they are Muslims, and also provide financial or any other type of aid to them (Maluleem, 2012, 292-293).

In addition, the OIC-member states must consider the issue of Muslim communities and minorities case by case, and give careful concern to the sovereignty of states those Muslim minorities live in (Maluleem, 2012, 292-293).

3) Action Step:

In this step, if there are any situations or problems with effects on Muslim minorities and communities in non-OIC member states, it is the main duty of the OIC to take action in coordinating with governments of those states to consider the problems and cooperatively seek resolution, especially in the states which are under emergency situations, where Muslim minorities are in urgent need of assistance (Maluleem, 2012, 292-293).

Moreover, if there are any violations of the rights of Muslim minorities residing in any state, it is the duty of the OIC to push that state to solve the problem (Maluleem, 2012, 292-293).

In addition, another duty of the OIC is to promote Muslim minorities, especially youths to preserve their religious and cultural identities, by providing educational scholarship, and supporting educational media. At the same time, 'it's important to encourage Muslim minorities in non-OIC member states to participate in economic and social development in the states they live in, and simultaneously respect the law, traditions and culture of the states they live in also (Maluleem, 2012, 292-293).

Importantly, the OIC must also collaborate with the United Nations (UN), especially with the sub-Committee for the prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities, and the Commission on Human Rights, in order to protect Muslim minorities (Maluleem, 2012, 292-293).

2.9.3 Driving Mechanisms:

The main unit that drives the mechanisms of the OIC in the implementation toward this issue is The Department of Muslim Communities and Minorities in Non-Muslim States, which is attached to the Section of Political Affairs of the office of the OIC General Secretariat.

2.9.4 Ways and Standpoints of the OIC toward this issue on the international arena:

As the true characteristics of the OIC in dealing with the cabinet of non-OIC member states for the sake of Muslim Minorities, there are always two tracks operated in parallel and simultaneously. The first track is paying respect to the sovereignty and territorial integrity of those non-OIC member states, and the second track is the demand for the just rights and interests of Muslim minorities and communities residing in those non-OIC member states (Khan, 2001, 149).

On the first track, first and foremost is that the OIC always guarantees that non-OIC member states that the OIC deals with the acknowledgement of their sovereignty and territorial integrity. In this regard, the OIC always acts in accordance with its standpoint that the OIC never supports any kind of secessionism even if it is campaigned for by Muslim minorities and communities in non-OIC member states.

On the second track, in acting on behalf of Muslim minorities and communities for the sake of their rights, the OIC always pressed the central government of non-OIC member states to provide justice, respect, and recognition of Muslim communities and minorities. Moreover, the OIC also provides various kinds of supporting funds, economic aid, and humanitarian aid. Internationally, on stage of Islamic Summit and CFM, the OIC sometimes recognizes particular groups of leaders who claim to be representatives of some Muslim minorities and communities in some non-OIC member states, even granting them observer status.

However, the OIC's strategy on operating these two tracks is a compromise between the actors the OIC is dealing with in order to balance satisfaction on both sides, the central government of non-OIC member states and Muslim minorities and communities. For instance, the OIC never supports

secessionist ideas operated by Muslim communities and minorities, to satisfied non-OIC member states, but simultaneously, the OIC also requests the providing of regional autonomy from non-OIC member states to satisfy those Muslim communities and minorities, also.

2.9.5 OIC's Patterns of Operational Process:

Now, when there are any situations or problems affecting Muslim minorities and communities in any non-OIC member states, the OIC will usually bring this situation to the attention among OIC-member states at the Islamic Summit or ICFM (on the Ordinary or Extraordinary session), in order to seek the prior brief total views and standpoints of OIC-member states toward the issue, and calling for all OIC-member to collaboratively come to solve the problem.

After that, the OIC will make contact and coordinate with those focusing non-OIC member states to discuss the problems affecting Muslim minorities and communities in order to cooperatively find the root causes of the problems and mutual resolution. In this regard, in practice, the OIC usually sends delegation teams to visit those non-OIC member states, and even in turn, invites representatives of the government of those focusing non-OIC member states to meet the OIC's secretary general. For instance, in the case of Muslim minorities in the Philippines, the OIC sent its delegation team, called the four-member OIC ministerial mission, which later transformed into the OIC permanent committee on the Philippines, to visit the government of the Philippines, and having accomplished in persuading Marcos, the president of Philippines to accept for negotiation with the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF), which was claimed as the representative of the Philippine Muslim Minority in Philippines. In return, on 28 January 1975, President Marcos sent a delegation team to meet the with OIC secretary general and accepted on the good office of the OIC on Muslim Minority also (Khan, 2001, 151).

Then, the OIC likes to show its concerns sending to any non-OIC member states and international stage in general toward the problems occurred with Muslim minorities and communities in those focusing non-OIC member states, especially when there are Human Rights Violation oppressing against them, and coordinate closely with those focusing non-OIC member states. For example, on 20th ICFM

taken place in Cairo, Egypt, in 1990. On the issue of Kashmir problem between India and Pakistan, the OIC strongly express its concern over Human Rights Violation against Kashmiri Muslims (Khan, 2001, 154)

Sometimes, the OIC even releases its condemnation to the international world if the situation toward any Muslim minorities and communities in non-OIC member states is very terrible; for instance, on the 25th ICFM, on March 1998, the OIC condemned India on human rights violations committed by India against Kashmiri Muslims and requested India to stop its action of “State Terrorism” (Khan, 2001, 156).

In almost every case of the issue of Muslim minorities and communities residing in non-OIC member states, the OIC always requests many actions from those non-OIC member states to solve the problems that those Muslim minorities and communities are facing, mostly in regards to peaceful means, all-around participation in peaceful dialogue and negotiation, acknowledging cultural diversity, cultural recognition, etc. For example, at the 5th ICFM, the OIC called on the Philippine government to seek a political and peaceful solution through negotiations with the Muslim leaders of Muslim minorities and communities in Philippine, particularly with the representatives of the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF), acceptably claiming to be representatives of Filipino Muslims nationwide, in order to reach the most suitable solution for the violent problems (Khan, 2001, 151).

In helping Muslim minorities and communities in non-OIC member states, to have better quality of life, the OIC often provides financial support in the form of economic and humanitarian aid, such as in the case of war between the Philippine government and the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF), the Muslim leading group who acceptably claim to be representatives of Muslim minorities and communities in Philippine. During the war, the OIC provided economic and humanitarian aid to them (Khan, 2001, 152).

Importantly, according to the latest **OIC Charter** Chapter 15 **Article 27**:

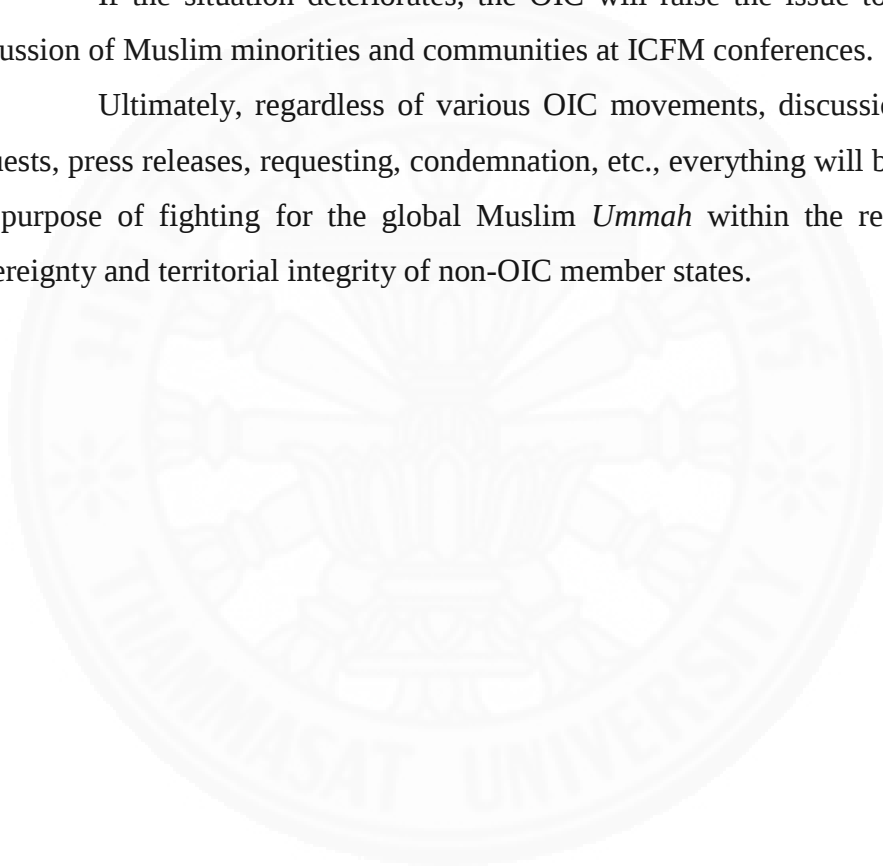
The Member States, parties to any dispute, the continuance of which may be detrimental to the interests of the Islamic *Ummah* or may endanger the maintenance of international peace and security, shall, seek a solution by good offices, negotiation, enquiry, mediation, conciliation, arbitration, judicial settlement or

other peaceful means of their own choice. In this context good offices may include consultation with the Executive Committee and the Secretary-General (“Charter,” n.d.).

This means that, in resolving any problems or disputes between Muslim minorities and communities in non-OIC member states, the OIC operated as a middle man in solving the problems of involved parties, such as in the case of the MNLF in Philippines, Kashmir conflicts, or in the resurgence of violence in the southern border provinces of Thailand.

If the situation deteriorates, the OIC will raise the issue to the level of discussion of Muslim minorities and communities at ICFM conferences.

Ultimately, regardless of various OIC movements, discussion, concerns, requests, press releases, requesting, condemnation, etc., everything will be done under the purpose of fighting for the global Muslim *Ummah* within the respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of non-OIC member states.



CHAPTER 3

THAILAND – OIC RELATIONS IN GENERAL

3.1 The Protocols of Being Guest and Observer of the OIC

The OIC has protocols and rules about being a guest and having observer status in the OIC, which are:

1) **Guest or Guest Observer:** the OIC General Secretariat, through discussion with OIC member states, is available to invite representatives from Muslim states, organizations, institutions, or individuals from any non-OIC member states to participate in any OIC conferences on behalf of guests of the OIC at each conference, on an ad hoc basis (Maluleem, 2012, 291).

2) **Request for receiving “Observer status”:** categorized into 2 types; The first are Islamic states and any states that have Muslim minorities as their citizens, and the second are international and regional organizations. Both of these must submit an application to the OIC, and must gain the acceptance by resolution from the ICFM, with a supporting vote from at least two-thirds of OIC member states (Maluleem, 2012, 291-292).

However, OIC observers today can be largely categorized into three groups, which are:

1) Observer states: Thailand, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the Central Republic of Africa, etc. (Maluleem, 2012, 292).

2) Muslim Communities and Minorities: For example, the Moro National Liberation Front – MNLF) and the Turkish Muslim Community of Kibris (Maluleem, 2012, 292).

3) International and regional organizations: the United Nations (UN), the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), and The Arab League, etc. (Maluleem, 2012, 292).

3.2 Thailand as an “OIC Observer”

Thailand has had a relationship with the OIC prior to gaining Observer Status in 1997, with objectives of making the OIC understand Thailand’s attitudes on policy implementation toward Thai Muslims, to expand interconnection with the Muslim world, to seek for various cooperation with the OIC and its members, and to defend against the insurgent or separatist groups in the southern border provinces of Thailand, in order to make the issue of the southern violence a part of an international agenda (Maluleem, 2012, 296).

As a result of the former Thai foreign minister and the former ASEAN secretary general H.E. Dr. Surin Pitsuvan’s efforts, Thailand gained “Observer Status” from the OIC on October 1st, 1998, replacing the Pattani United Liberation Organization (PULO), who possessed this position previously (Maluleem, 2012, 296).

After having joined the OIC membership as an “Observer”, Thailand used the OIC as a multilateral stage to create good understanding and strengthen the productive relationships with the Muslim world. Since 1998, Thai delegations have participated in many significant OIC conferences; for instance, almost every Islamic Summit and Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers (ICFM), resulting in the development of relations with many OIC member states. Moreover, by using this observer status, Thailand has secured cooperation in various aspects, such as education, trade and industry, and disaster relief assistance.

3.3 The Overview of Thailand – OIC Relations in General

Thai representatives have presented The Thai standpoint on the relationship with the OIC and the *Ummah* Islam in total won’t be limited only to the issue of the conflict in southern Thailand, but will also be expanded to a wide range of economic aspects and other forms of cooperation (Maluleem, 2012). In general, Thailand has enjoyed strong relations, support and cooperation with the OIC in many aspects.

3.3.1 Support from the OIC to Muslims in Thailand

3.3.1.1 Trade and Industry

For example, the Thai Islamic Trade and Industrial Association gained member status of the Islamic Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI), which is an affiliated institution of the OIC, located in Karachi, Pakistan (Maluleem, 2012, 327).

From January 24th-26th, 2005, the ICCI collaborated with the Thai Islamic Trade and Industrial Association, the Islamic Bank of Thailand, and the Department of Export Promotion (DEP) and the Ministry of Commerce of the Kingdom of Thailand organized a Meeting of the Organization of Islamic Conference in Bangkok, Thailand, in order to discuss the promotion of economic, trade and industrial cooperation between Thailand and ICCI (Maluleem, 2012, 327).

In this meeting, a Memorandum of Understanding was signed by the ICCI and the Office of Small and Medium enterprises Promotion (OSMEP) of Thailand on the objective of joining in alliance on the promotion of SMEs business and industry, especially in the aspects of the halal food industry, the gem and ornament industry, fashion products, etc. (Maluleem, 2012, 327)

3.3.1.2 Education

The Islamic Development Bank (IDB), a specialized organ of the OIC, has provided educational support to Thai Muslims, by donating funds for building schools called Private Islamic Teaching Schools (Maluleem, 2012, 326).

Moreover, the IDB has also given educational funds to Thai Muslim students to study in higher education in various fields, especially in the fields of medicine, pharmacy, engineering, and science (Maluleem, 2012, 326).

The biggest project in helping Thailand of the IDB was the Yala Islamic University Building Project, which was the first Islamic educational institution in Thailand. In 1985, the IDB donated 1.2 million US dollars, approximately 32 million Thai baht, to construct buildings and an infrastructure system for the university. The construction finished in 1989, and in 1990, the IDB president came to join the opening ceremony of the university. Today, the university has approximately 1,000 students (Maluleem, 2012, 326 - 327).

Importantly, the IDB had approved unconditional donation funds to support the construction of more than 10 Islamic schools in Thailand, such as Santichon Islamic School in Bangkok, Altagiya Islamiya School in Narathiwat Province, and Darulhudha Wittaya School in Yala province, etc. (Maluleem, 2012, 327)

3.3.1.3 Trading Cooperation

The Organization of Islamic Conference on Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) originated from the ambitions of the Islamic Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) in developing Trade and Industries. The ICCI presented this initiation to the 27th ICFM, which took place in Malaysia in 2000, and received approval from the 9th Islamic Summit held in Qatar in the same year. Moreover, the special committee responsible for this issue was teamed up by H.M. Dr. Abdelouahed Belkeziz, the Secretary General of the OIC (at that time) in the same year also. (Maluleem, 2012, 328)

For Thailand, the Thai Islamic Trade and Industry is a member of the ICCI, and always participates in discussions with the ICCI to seek suitable ways to develop Thai Muslim industry. Significantly, in 2005, Thailand hosted the 4th ICCI conference at The Landmark Hotel in Bangkok. In this conference, The Office of Small and Medium Enterprises Promotion (OSMEP) of Thailand had the opportunity to sign a Memorandum of Understanding with the ICCI on the objective of joining in alliance on the promotion of SMEs business and industry, especially in the aspects of the halal food industry, and the public relations and marketing promotion of Thailand to 57 Muslims states. Consequently, Thailand has received support from the OIC in SME affairs (Maluleem, 2012, 328).

3.3.1.4 Disaster Relief Assistance

In terms of disaster relief assistance, the IDB also donated 180,000 USD to help tsunami victims in Thailand through the World Muslim Youth Parliament in Thailand and Muslim leaders in southern provinces of Thailand, which were affected by tsunami (Maluleem, 2012, 331).

3.4 The Whole View of Thai Strategies toward the OIC

In addition to having a long history of interrelationships with the Muslim world, Thailand also pays attention to the Muslim world for other reasons, including:

Firstly, in geographic and demographic politics, the citizens of the Muslim world account for approximately 1/5 of the world's population, and many Islamic states are located in important strategic geographic points, so, they are essential to international politics and economy (Maluleem, 2012, 332).

Secondly, from a cultural perspective, the Islamic world constitutes one of the most significant civilizations in the world, having increased in importance and attention after the 9/11 incident (Maluleem, 2012, 332).

Thirdly, considering the economic perspective, Islamic states who are OIC members possess 2/3 parts of the world's energy sources, and possess 70% of the world's reserved energy. In this regard, Saudi Arabia contains 1/4 of the world's reserved crude oil, approximately 260 billion barrels. The other OIC member states, for example, Brunei, Malaysia, Iraq, Egypt, Indonesia, Libya, Kuwait, Qatar, Bahrain, The United Arab Emirate and Algeria, are also main producers and exporters of oil. Moreover, OIC member states are also the source of 40% of economic materials (Maluleem, 2012, 332).

Fourth, in Thailand today, approximately 10% of Thai citizens are Muslims, and are regarded by Muslims around the world as their "brothers", as a part of Muslim's "*Ikhwa*" under the same "*Ummah*", so, it is necessary for Thailand to have cooperation with Muslim countries in many aspects; for example, in Islamic Affairs promotion such as Hajj affairs, which requires tight cooperation with Saudi Arabia, or in education (Maluleem, 2012, 332-333).

Hence, in order to have good relations and cooperation with the worldwide Muslim community via the OIC, Thailand has developed five main strategies:

1) To promote dialogue and good understanding with Muslim world, and to promote Neutrality in Islam

By using both bilateral and multilateral diplomacy, for example, visiting exchanges, there was an invitation to Islamic religious leaders from seven Muslim

countries to visit Thailand during 9-14 September 2006, on the occasion of the celebration of the 60th anniversary of the reign of King Bhumibhol. Moreover, representatives from Thai Islamic agencies have visited Islamic countries, such as when Chularajimotri visited Malaysia in 2005. Furthermore, news reporter teams from more than 10 Middle Eastern countries visited Thailand as guests of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Kingdom of Thailand from September 3rd-10th, 2006, and in exchange, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs also sent its representatives to make contact with important media agencies in the Muslim world, such as Aljazeera in Qatar, and broadcasting stations and news agencies in Dubai, for example. In addition, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs established an official website in the Arabic language that formally opened on September 8th, 2006 (Maluleem, 2012, 333).

At the multilateral diplomatic level, Thailand has participated in various meetings and conferences about the Dialogue Among Civilizations and Interfaith Dialogue under the framework of Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM), and has collaboratively joined activities with the OIC, and strongly pushed for cooperation in the Asia Cooperation Dialogue (ACD) and the Asia Middle East Dialogue (AMED) (Maluleem, 2012, 333).

2) To extend Alliances, Relationships, and cooperation with the OIC member states in every dimension, as a part of Thai Look-West Policy

The Look West Policy is a foreign policy which in essence is about diplomatically paying attention to West Asian countries. The important activities of the Thai Look West Policy include, for example (Maluleem, 2012, 334):

The exchange of visits between Thai government leaders and the heads of state of Islamic countries, such as the visit of the 2nd King Abdullah of Jordan to Thailand in 2004 and 2005 are essential for increasing political, diplomatic, economic, trade, social, cultural, educational, and tourism cooperation between Thailand and Muslim countries (Maluleem, 2012, 334).

Additional examples include providing technical and economic assistance to Islamic countries, especially in Africa (Maluleem, 2012, 334), and giving assistance to Muslim countries in crises; for example, Thailand donated 15 million US dollars for Humanitarian assistance to Lebanon via the International Committee of Red Cross (ICRC) (Maluleem, 2012, 333).

3) To build Knowledge Base and Understanding about Islam

In this strategy, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) of the Kingdom of Thailand has been actively operating to achieve purpose stronger base of knowledge about Islam and Islamic affairs. Significant activities initiated by the Thai MFA include, for example, the establishment of the Islamic Study in the Thai MFA, aiming to study, understand, and provide knowledge about Islam to the MFA officers and people in general. Moreover, in 2005 and 2006, respectively, the Thai MFA has opened its officer recruitment Examination to Thai citizens who have knowledge of the Arabic language, to serve as 3rd diplomats, with the conditions that those who come to be candidates in this position must graduate with a Bachelor's degree from Arab countries or any institutions that use the Arabic language as their language of instruction (Maluleem, 2012, 334).

4) To Seek support from the Global Muslim Community and from International Organizations of the Muslim World in solving the Violent Problem in the southern Border Provinces of Thailand

Though the southern unrest is a Thai domestic issue, it still requires the understanding and cooperation from the international community, especially from Islamic countries. Therefore, many of the significant activities taken by Thailand on this issue internationally involve raising understanding and awareness in neighboring Muslim countries, as well as OIC member states in general (Maluleem, 2012, 335).

In accordance with the framework of the OIC, Thai Foreign ministers have visited many OIC member states, such as Jordan, Qatar, Bahrain, Egypt, Turkey, Malaysia and Indonesia, to make them understand the facts of the situation and to seek cooperation on this issue. Moreover, the Thai Ministry of Foreign Affairs has also informed the OIC on a regular basis to encourage mutual understanding (Maluleem, 2012, 335).

5) To increase Economic cooperation, to expand into new markets, and to promote Energy cooperation

Islamic states, including states in the Middle East, are essential trading partners, markets, and energy sources for Thailand. Combined with the “Look East Policy” used by many Middle Eastern countries at this time, there are strong

opportunities for Thailand to strengthen and enhance cooperation in various aspects with countries in this region (Maluleem, 2012, 336)

There are approximately four aspects of focus for economic cooperation in this regard, which are trade/tourism, energy, investment, and labor (Maluleem, 2012, 336).

Trade/Tourism

First, the establishment of Free Trade Areas (FTA) with countries in this region who have potential capabilities or are able to get benefits from the FTA; for instance, 1) joining the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership such as Turkey, Palestine, Algeria, Morocco, Egypt, Syria, Lebanon, Tunisia, and Israel, and 2) participating in the Greater Arab Free Trade Area of Arabic countries (Maluleem, 2012, 337).

Second, to maintain export markets and increase re-export markets that Thailand already possesses and leads, such as seafood, canned and instant foods, household electric devices, clothes, pickup trucks, and air conditioners. By mainly focusing on countries in the Gulf of Persia Cooperation council (GCC), Thailand has accelerated expansion into other markets, such as in Lebanon, Morocco, Jordan, Libya, Yemen, and Syria (Maluleem, 2012, 336).

Third, to expand cooperation with Islamic countries that are new markets for Thailand, such as Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, as well as Islamic countries in Africa, such as Togo, Gambia, Uganda, Niger, Somalia, Senegal, Mali, and Mozambique (Maluleem, 2012, 336).

Fourth, to increase gateways, business interaction points, and goods distribution places in the region. Thailand has already established a Thailand Business Center (TBC) in Bahrain, and aims to establish more, possibly in Jordan or Kuwait in the future (Maluleem, 2012, 336).

Fifth, to expand Thai products market in suitable fields, such as halal food, Thai cuisine restaurants, and the spa industry (Maluleem, 2012, 336).

Sixth, to promote tourism, since tourism markets from the Middle East are growing. Statistically, after 9/11, the number of tourists from the Middle East who came to Thailand increased by 52%. One reason for this is that Thailand has an advantage in medical tourism, and medical treatment in Thailand is gaining popularity and acceptance from Arabic people and Muslims in other countries such as Pakistan

and Bangladesh, and importantly, for today, Thai government has also had a policy of pushing Thailand to be the Asian hub of medical tourism and medical treatment (Maluleem, 2012, 336-337).

Energy

To extend cooperation in Energy and energy reserves, by supporting PTT exploration and Production Public Company Limited (PTTEP) in investing in potential markets such as in Libya, Oman, Iran, Algeria and Bahrain (Maluleem, 2012, 337).

To promote Middle Eastern countries to invest in Thailand; Oman has invested in buying stock in Thai Refinery businesses, and to increase cooperation in Liquid Natural Gas (LNG) with Qatar and Iran, for example (Maluleem, 2012, 337).

Investment

To promote Foreign Direct Investment from Middle Eastern countries which have a capital surplus, to invest in their fields of interest in Thailand; for instance, tourism, monetary investments and banking, hydro carbon, and property (Maluleem 2012, 337).

Labor

To expand the Thai labor market into markets with demand for Thai labor, such as in Bahrain, Qatar, Libya, Kuwait, and the United Arab of Emirates (Maluleem, 2012, 338).

6) To support and promote Thai Muslim Students overseas, including Muslim Students in the Southern Border Provinces of Thailand

6.1 There are many projects and activities that have been created by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to achieve this purpose (Maluleem, 2012, 338).

6.2 To promote academic scholarship through cooperation with Islamic countries, such as Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and Egypt (Maluleem, 2012, 338).

6.3 To distribute information and guidelines of occupations for Thai Muslim students in overseas, such as in Sudan and Egypt (Maluleem, 2012, 338).

6.4 Organizing training courses and study visits in various fields for Muslim students in Thailand's southernmost provinces (Maluleem, 2012, 338).

3.5 Upgrading Thailand's status...“From Observer to be Full Member”

....Opportunity and Challenge of Thailand....

According to the Latest OIC Charter,

CHAPTER II

Membership

Article 3

1. The Organization is made up of 57 State members of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation and other States which may accede to this Charter in accordance with Article 3 paragraph 2.

2. Any State, member of the United Nations, having Muslim majority and abiding by the Charter, which submits an application for membership may join the Organisation if approved by consensus only by the Council of Foreign Ministers on the basis of the agreed criteria adopted by the Council of Foreign Ministers.

3. Nothing in the present Charter shall undermine the present Member States' rights or privileges relating to membership or any other issues.

Article 4

1. Decision on granting Observer status to a State, member of the United Nations, will be taken by the Council of Foreign Ministers by consensus only and on the basis of the agreed criteria by the Council of Foreign Ministers.

2. Decision on granting Observer status to an international organisation will be taken by the Council of Foreign Ministers by consensus only and on the basis of the agreed criteria by the Council of Foreign Ministers. (“Charter,” n.d.)

In regards to the definition of states that have a “Muslim Majority” as referred to in Article 3 paragraph 2, however, the OIC is flexible in order to consider the acceptance of any states as new OIC members, by providing four conditions for consideration (Khan, 2001, 53), which are:

1) Islamic States, such as Saudi Arabia, Iran, Pakistan, etc. (Khan, 2001, 53)

2) Secular States with Muslim majorities, such as Turkey and Indonesia (Khan, 2001, 53).

3) States where the numbers of the Muslim and non-Muslim populations are almost equal, and the Muslims have an essential share in the cabinet, such as Lebanon, Kazakhstan, etc. (Khan, 2001, 53)

4) Non-Muslims Majority states, categorized into 2 types:

4.1) Those where Muslims are still the largest community, or form a substantial minority (Khan, 2001, 53).

4.2) Those where the head of state is a Muslim or has converted to Islam, such as Uganda and Gabon (Khan, 2001, 53).

Thailand had received observer status from the OIC in 1998 and actively participates in many OIC conferences, especially the OIC summit and ICFM, resulting in cooperation from the OIC and many OIC-member states in many aspects, such as education, trade and industry, and disaster relief assistance. However, there are still some limitations that Thailand would not encounter if it can become a full member of the OIC.

Why should Thailand be the OIC Full member?

In order to answer this question, we need to see the different participatory rights between observer status and Full-member:

Observer status:

1) Available to participate in various kinds of conferences, especially the OIC summit and ICFM

2) Unable to provide opinions and discussions in the conference

3) No right to vote on any resolution

Full-member:

1) It is the basic right to participate in all kinds of conferences of the OIC, especially the OIC summit and ICFM

2) Has full rights to present ideas, opinions or any other perspectives in conferences

3) Has complete rights to vote on every resolution

Hence, we can see that the Observer status contains severe limitations, as although it can participate in conferences, an Observer state cannot state their opinion during discussions or vote on resolutions, which is why Thailand should attempt to acquire full-member status with the OIC.

How will Thailand become a full member of the OIC? See the answer in Chapter5



CHAPTER 4

THAILAND – OIC RELATIONS ON THE ISSUE OF THE RESURGENCE OF VIOLENCE IN THE SOUTHERN BORDER PROVINCES OF THAILAND

The latest resurgence of violence in the southern border provinces of Thailand has had a strong impact on Thai-OIC relations. After the Krue Se and Tak Bi incidents in Pattani province as mentioned previously, the OIC issued several press releases in regard to Southern Thailand (Yusuf, 2007, 23). Moreover, the OIC also requested the safeguarding of Muslims' rights to make sure that they are treated on equal footing with other citizens, and assisted to achieve a higher economic and social standard of living (Yusuf, 2007, 23). To bring this desire into action, the OIC invited the Thai government to accompany OIC representatives on consultation and discussion to find ways to establish a peaceful settlement to this violence (Maluleem, 2012, 300).

4.1 The Year 2005

On March 5th, 2005, the Thai government sent representatives, led by H.E. Nissai Vejjajivadh, to meet the OIC secretariat. At this meeting, the Thai representatives welcomed the OIC secretariat's idea to send an OIC committee to Thailand to seek the truth and the root causes of the problem occurring with the local Muslims (Maluleem, 2012, 300-301).

To advance Thai-OIC cooperation on this issue, the Thai government, too, offered an official invitation for a high-level OIC delegation to visit Thailand during June 2nd-13th, 2005 (Maluleem, 2012, 301). OIC secretariat Prof. Dr. Ekmeleddin Ihsanoghu appointed Ambassador Syed Qasin Al-Masri as Head of the delegation (Maluleem 2012, 301). The objectives were to observe and evaluate the conditions of Muslims in Southern Thailand, and report its findings to the 32nd Islamic Conference

of Foreign Ministers (ICFM) to be held in San'aa, Yemen, at the end of June 2005 (Yusuf, 2007, 23).

During this OIC delegation's visit, H.E. Sayed Qasim Al-Masri remarked that the deployment of military troops with ineffective operations following the Krue Se and Tak Bai incidents was insufficient, and requested sufficient compensation for the victims and their families (Yusuf, 2007, 332). On this visit, the OIC delegation summarized that the violence in the southern border provinces of Thailand was not the product of religious discrimination against Muslims, nor did it originate from religious factors, but rather was rooted in the negligence of the culture, identity, language, history and justice of the local Muslims in the area (Yusuf, 2007, 332).

Before the 32nd ICFM, which would take place on June 27th – 30th, 2005, the Thai government tried to lobby many OIC member states to not bring up the issue of the unrest in southern Thailand as a part of the main agenda at the ICFM's session of Muslim Communities and Minorities in Non-OIC member states (Maluleem, 2012, 303). This measure succeeded, and the issue wasn't mentioned on conference's main agenda, and only emerged in general discussion of Al-Masri's report on his visit to southern Thailand. 57 foreign ministers, one from each OIC member state, had asked the OIC secretariat to cooperate closely with the Thai government in solving this conflict peacefully, and to continue monitoring the situation further (Maluleem, 2012, 306). However, it is important to note that Ambassador Al-Masri emphasized in his report at the 32nd ICFM that, although religion was not a factor in the violence, it didn't mean there was no problem in the south. He also underlined that the Thai government should allow the southern local Muslims to have a greater say in managing their own affairs, and receive the rights to practice their culture and language freely, also (Yusuf, 2007, 32).

In October 2005, the OIC issued another press release which demanded addressing the root causes of the problem and resolving the issue through the dialogue and recognition of the legitimate aspirations of the population of the south. In this press release, the OIC general, Prof. Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu, expressed his regret over the casualties among innocent civilians. Thai Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra retorted immediately to the OIC that, since Islam requires all Muslims to respect the law of the countries in which they reside, and to live peacefully with others, hence,

the OIC should also have expressed regret for the killings of Buddhist monks, not just the Muslims (Yusuf, 2007, 25).

4.2 The Year 2006

Later, at the opening of the 33rd ICFM, held in Baku, Azerbaijan on June 19th-22nd, 2006, the OIC general secretariat warned Thailand to respect cultural differences in order to resolve the conflict effectively. Moreover, the OIC released a five-page report on the Thai situation, too (Yusuf, 2007, 332).

Suddenly, the Thai political wind unexpectedly changed, when General Sondhi Boonyaratkalin, the Royal Thai Army Commander-in-Chief (at that time), led a Coup d'état, kicking the Thaksin administration out on September 19th, 2006. The military-supported interim government was established, with General Surayudh Chulanon as the interim prime minister. One of the impacts of these events on Thai-OIC relations was that the Surayudh administration released a message of apology to the southern local Muslims. In response, the OIC issued a statement welcoming this positive change on the part of the Thai government, and also that it was ready to provide its services on finding measures to establish security and stability within the framework of negotiations between the Thai government and the representatives of Muslims in Southern Thailand (Yusuf, 2007, 332).

4.3 The Year 2007

As practical evidence of positive signs from the OIC, Prof. Dr. Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu, the OIC general secretariat, visited Bangkok from April 30th-May 2nd, 2007, for the objectives of discussing the violent conflict in the Thai deep south. Though he did not visit the southernmost area, he expressed satisfaction with the change in approach implemented by the Surayudh Administration. He also offered cooperation from the OIC in establishing peaceful conflict settlement through welfare and economic, social and educational initiatives. In addition, the OIC general secretariat also asked Thai Muslims to respect the law, and advised the Thai government to treat them with equal rights (Yusuf, 2007, 332).

Later, at the end of the 34th ICFM, which took place in Islamabad, Pakistan, from May 15th-17th, 2007, a communiqué on Thailand was created, requesting the acceleration of the process of accountability for building confidence among the local Thai Muslim population, and granting them the responsibility to manage their own affairs within the sphere of the constitution of the Kingdom of Thailand (Yusuf, 2007, 332).

4.4 The Year 2008

The 2008 OIC resolution passed at the 35th ICFM, organized in Kampala, Uganda, June 18th-20th 2008, titled *Safeguarding the Rights of Muslim Communities and Minorities in Non-OIC member states*, called upon the OIC general secretariat to continue his efforts to monitor the situation of Muslims in the deep south of Thailand, and requested him to extend the field of cooperation between the OIC and the Kingdom of Thailand in all aspects, as well as in the expansion of assistance to the Muslims in this area to achieve their legitimate and just causes, with respect to Thai sovereignty and Thai territorial integrity (Yusuf, 2007, 27).

However, this didn't mean that all OIC member states had positive attitudes on the issue, such as the Saudi Arabian delegation, one of the most influential OIC-member states which has incredible influence in the OIC, and who wanted this resolution to be more strongly worded against Thailand, finally walking out of the resolution approving session in protest (Yusuf, 2007, 27). The protest of this Saudi Arabian delegation showed that Saudi Arabia didn't accept this resolution, and absolutely, in specifics, didn't accept Thailand on this issue.

4.5 The Year 2009

At the 36th ICFM, which took place in Damascus, Syria, from May 23rd-25th, 2009, the OIC pressured the Thai government to seriously handle the unrest in the deep south of Thailand, through a resolution titled *Muslim Communities and Minorities in Non-OIC member states*, which addressed the decision to defer consideration of draft resolution No. OIC/CFM-36/2009/MM/DR/RES.5/REV.1

regarding the situation of the Muslim Community in Southern Thailand until the next session of Foreign Ministers, to allow ample time for contact between the Secretary General and the government of the Kingdom of Thailand, with a view to expedite the implementation of the government's plan to address the root causes of the problems, as contained in the joint statements issued at the end of the visit of the Secretary General to Thailand on July 1st, 2007, and called upon the Muslim states enjoying close relations with Thailand, to support the efforts of the Secretary General in this regard (Yusuf, 2007, 28).

Importantly, this joint statement indicated that the OIC was looking for three things to occur in the deep south of Thailand: 1) A greater level of Self-Governance, 2) Comprehensive economic and social support from the Thai government, and 3) greater expression of different cultural identities (Yusuf, 2007, 28).

Additionally, at the 36th ICFM, Thailand succeeded in stopping the efforts of Pattani United Liberation Organization (PULO) in pushing the OIC to separate the issue of the violence in the three southern border provinces of Thailand as a specific issue of discussion, instead of combining this issue as a part of a broad discussion of the Muslim communities and minorities in Non-OIC member states (Maluleem, 2012, 324).

4.6 The Year 2010

At the May 18th-20th, 2010 ICFM in Dushanbe, Tajikistan, in a resolution on Muslim Communities and minorities in Non-OIC member states, the OIC stated that it was satisfied with the communication and discussions operated by the secretary general with the representatives of the Thai government during discussion on the Abhisit administration's plan to search for peaceful settlement in the southern border provinces of Thailand (Yusuf, 2007, 29).

The OIC suggested three basic elements that the Thai government must implement for the local Muslims to participate seriously with this implementation, if the Abhisit administration truly desired successful peace settlement (Yusuf, 2007, 29).

- 1) Recognition of the cultural peculiarities of the ethnic-Malay Muslims in the area.
- 2) Provision of justice to them and giving due respect to their traditions and customs.
- 3) Economic and social development of the region (Yusuf, 2007, 29).

Furthermore, the OIC also advised that the peace process for this case should show strong collaboration between both the representatives of local Muslims in the deep south of Thailand and other relevant segments. Importantly, the process should be accomplished via national reconciliation (Yusuf, 2007, 29).

Fortunately for the Thai government, again, the OIC decided to defer its consideration on the adoption of a resolution on the situation of the Muslim community in Southern Thailand to the next ICFM, in order to provide sufficient time for the further cooperation between the OIC secretary general and the Thai government on tackling this problem (Yusuf, 2007, 30).

4.7 The Year 2011

At the 38th ICFM, held June 28th-30th, 2011, in Astana, Kazakhstan, the Thai Foreign Minister H.E. Kasit Piromya joined the conference and received the honor of providing a speech on the opening day. H.E. Kasit Piromya presented the success of the Kingdom of Thailand in increasing the participation of citizens as promised at the 37th ICFM in Tajikistan, emphasizing that the development of democracy was an important key factor in bringing peace and wealth to all people in the southern border provinces of Thailand (“การประชุมรัฐมนตรีต่างประเทศ”, 2011).

H.E. Kasit stated that the Thai government valued the lives and participation of local Muslims in Thailand's southernmost areas, which could be seen from the Ratification of the Thai Parliament of Southern Border Provinces Administration Act 2010, which authorized the establishment of a new form of Southern Border Provinces Administration Center, and the creation of an operational plan for tackling social and economic problems of local Muslims in the southern border provinces. In accordance with this Act, the core issue was the provision of

people's participation in the policy-making process of the Thai government on southern border province affairs (“การประชุมรัฐมนตรีต่างประเทศ”, 2011).

Moreover, the Thai government had already removed martial law and the Emergency Decree of 2005 in some areas of the deep south of Thailand, using the 2008 Internal Security Act instead. Some articles of this Act authorized the Thai court to have the power to order any members of insurgent groups who voluntarily give themselves up to Thai officials and who have made a promise to not join the insurgent groups again, to have an opportunity to receive career training courses instead of being sentenced in the Thai juridical process (“การประชุมรัฐมนตรีต่างประเทศ”, 2011).

H.E. Kasit also explained to the OIC that the living conditions of local Muslims in the southern border provinces of Thailand had become more comfortable in many aspects, which could be seen from the ongoing writing process of Thai law about the enforcement of Islamic law in civil cases that are related to the issues of family affairs and succession, including the intention of Thai government to expand the Thai-Malay education system to many schools, with an aim to achieving this in all schools in the southern border provinces of Thailand sometime in the future (“การประชุมรัฐมนตรีต่างประเทศ”, 2011).

4.8 The Year 2012

On March 31st, 2012, three deadly car bomb attacks occurred in the southern border provinces of Thailand, killing 11 people and wounding an estimated 416. the first explosive went off in a parked pickup truck and ripped through an area of restaurants and shops in a busy area of Yala city district, which was a main commercial hub of the deep south. Then, about 20 minutes later, just as crowds began to gather at the bombed site, a seconded car bombed exploded, causing many more to be wounded (“Bomb in Southern Thailand”, 2012). Finally, a car bomb exploded in the basement parking lot of Lee Gardens Plaza hotel in Hat Yai district, Songkhla province (“OIC condemns bombing”, n.d.), which was another commercial hub of the deep south.

In response to these Tragedies that caused the deaths and injuries of many local Muslims, the OIC released a statement that condemned these terrorist acts and denounced the indiscriminate violence against civilians from any quarter (“Bomb in Southern Thailand”, 2012).

On May 7th-12th, 2012, the OIC secretary general sent another high-level delegation to visit Thailand, headed by H.E. Sayed Kassem El-Masri, the special envoy and advisor of the secretary general of the OIC, to examine the situation in the deep south, five years after his last visit (Chalermripinyorat, 2012).

On his third trip, H.E. El-Masri and his team had two separate meetings with the Thai Foreign Minister Surapong Tovichakchaikul and the National Security Council Secretary General Police General Wichien Potphosri in Bangkok. Afterwards, they moved to the southernmost provinces of Thailand to examine the progress of the peace building operation since the previous visit, and to find out the truth about the human rights violations in the area, as well. During this visit, H.E. El-Masri had the chance to meet Pol. Col. Thawee Sordsong, secretary general of the Southern Border Provinces Administration Center (SBPAC), as well as governors from five southern border provinces, and Muslim representatives (“OIC wants emergency”, 2012).

H.E. El-Masri expressed his appreciation for the resolution process on the violence in region, which he felt was moving on the right track. He also stated that he was impressed with the Thai government’s attention to modifying the education system in the area that granted recognition of the local language, Malayu-Javi, in governmental educational institutions.(Whangni, Ramansiriwong & Isra News Team, 2012). H. E. El-Masri also explained that the violence in the region was not the result of a clash of different religions, but rather was a normal problem occurring in many countries that have minority groups. He advised that the promotion of mutual understanding, mutual respect, and mutual recognition will be the right approach in order to resolve the problem (“OIC wants emergency”, 2012).

Moreover, H.E. El-Masri also said that the OIC had been playing attention to the violence and was studying and searching for ways to build joint cooperation with the Thai government (Whangni, et al., 2012) in order to find a solution for constructing a sustainable peace in region. In this regard, the OIC strongly condemned

any use of violence by all parties, saying that killing innocent people, be they Muslim or Buddhist, is “against the Koran” (“OIC wants emergency”, 2012). In a speech to the crowd in Yala provinces in Arabic, he said that:

“...The Koran states that whoever kills an innocent, it is as if he has slain all mankind...” (Chalermripinyorat, 2012)

Significantly, the special envoy of the OIC said in a speech that the OIC’s standpoint is that:

“...We (the OIC) will not support for separatism, and we condemn for the use of violence to civilian. The OIC understand that the Insurgency in the southern border provinces of Thailand is Thai domestic affairs which OIC cannot to interfere with the domestic affairs in respect of Thai sovereignty and territorial integrity. Nevertheless, we will provide recommendations and ways to establish the fund for social and economic development in the area, and agree that, the implementation by Thai government must be under the framework of law and constitution...” (Isra News Team, 2012, May 12)

However, as the representative of the OIC secretary general of the OIC, H.E. El-Masri requested lifting the Emergency Decree in the future (“OIC wants emergency”, 2012), because this kind of special law allowed human rights violations by state officials to persist, and created a climate of impunity. The reason is that, this special law, imposed in Pattani, Yala and Narathiwat provinces since 2005, permits security forces to hold suspects for up to 30 days without charge, and during these 30 days, suspects are also denied access to a lawyer. Furthermore, in conditions of normal law, security forces need to receive a court warrant every time before making any arrest of any suspects. However, under the conditions of the Emergency decree, issuing a court warrant requires “less evidence” than those issued under the Thai criminal procedure code (Chalermripinyorat, 2012).

In addition, in a meeting with a group of victims in this violent conflict in Nok Chick district of Pattani province, H.E. El-Masri emphasized that the remedial measures to ease the hardship of victims, although appreciated, could not be the key mechanism to resolve the problem of unrest (“OIC wants emergency”, 2012). Instead, two of the most important requirements to create peace settlement were to promote

the strength of local communities, and equitable application of the juridical process, without state protection of state officials culpable of violent crimes themselves (Whangni et al., 2012). Notably, on the issue of justice, the OIC delegation complained that the Thai juridical process that legal process on security-related cases happened in the southern border provinces of Thailand was too time-consuming, with extremely slow progress (“OIC wants emergency”, 2012).

Finally, the OIC envoy warned the Thai government that problems of political conflict and improper military operations are related to the insurgency in this area, and that this violent unrest should be resolved as fast as possible, as the longer this unrest is allowed to continue, the more dangerous it would become, with increased risk of external interference that would make the situation harder to control (Isra News Team, 2012, May 12).

During this delegation’s trip, two noticeable incidents occurred:

First, on May 9th, 2012, approximately 20 representatives from the Network of student Youth and Civil Society for Patani Peace Process, accompanied by the Southern Border Provinces Student Network and the Yala Province Student Federation, handed an open letter to H.E. El-Masri at the front of the Multi-purpose building of the Southern Border Provinces Administration Center (SBPAC) (Whangni et al., 2012). In the letter, these network groups called the OIC to review the following issues and recommendations;

- 1) The OIC should establish a specialist committee to support the peace process in Pattani.

- 2) The OIC should provide opportunities for civil societies, youth groups and student networks to propose their recommendations for the peace process (The Network of Students, Youth and Civil Society for Pattani Peace Process, 8th May 2012).

Second, 21 civil societies and human rights organizations, both from the central and southern parts of Thailand, released the statement titled “*Opinions to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) on the Rejection of the Participation of Human Rights Activists in Solving Problems of the Southern Border Provinces of Thailand*”, during the deep south of Thailand visit of the OIC’s high-level delegation on May 7th – 12th, 2012 (Isra News Team, 2012, May 18).

This Statement stated that the high-level OIC delegation had already expressed their intention obviously and clearly in requesting to meet with civil societies, human rights organizations, including lawyers who worked on cases related to the violence in the deep south, to know the true facts of the situation and obstacles in the access of justice, and about the protection of civil rights and freedom, in order to determine suitable means of resolution (Isra News Team, 2012, May 18).

However, the MFA didn't give any space for workers from civil societies and human rights activists to have the formal opportunity and enough time to present their information, data on the problems and obstacles, or information on the impact on local people in the area that the special laws were declared (Isra News Team, 2012, May 18). The evidence was that, on May 11th, 2012, the MFA invited National Human Rights Committee and Civil Society Organizations that were **"NOT"** involved in the field of human rights in the southern border provinces of Thailand, to meet with the OIC's secretary general advisor, despite the clear statements by the delegation of the desire to know about the human rights problems in the area, especially in the impact from enforcing the Emergency Decree in the area (Isra News Team, 2012, May 18).

Furthermore, although some of their organizations were finally able to join the meeting with the OIC's special envoy, none of them were invited by the MFA, and it was difficult to coordinate with the MFA's officials to get this chance. Moreover, the OIC advisor H.E. El-Masri informed these civil society organizations and the MFA that he desired to meet these civil society organizations again on May 12th, 2012 at 14:00 hrs. However, the appointment was cancelled by the MFA without any explanation (Isra News Team, 2012, May 18).

Hence, this OIC visit had only one way to receive information, from the Thai government, and the actions of the MFA clearly reflected the rejection of participation of all sectors in collaboratively presenting procedures for resolving the violence, and having performed the objection of truthful fact providing from civil sectors. These actions of the MFA violated the rights of participation and freedom of opinions, and destroyed transparency and confidence in the inspection mechanism of state power by people sector (Isra News Team, 2012, May 18).

At the 39th ICFM in Djibouti, November 15th-17th, 2012, during a session on resolutions on Muslim communities and minorities in Non-OIC member states, the OIC's foreign ministers strongly criticized Thailand on the issue of its civil unrest in the south.

At first, the OIC expressed concern at the meager progress achieved so far, five years after the issuance of the Press Communique in 2007 ("Resolution No.1/39-MM", 2012, 5-6) which made a request for the empowerment of the local community, and the need for cultural space for the Malay-ethnicity of local Muslims (Pathan, 2012).

Moreover, the OIC expressed regret over the continued application of the Emergency Law in most southern areas, as well as regret over the limited progress in introducing the language of local populations as a language of instruction in schools of the South ("Resolution No.1/39-MM", 2012, 5-6)

In this regard, the OIC noted that the continued extensive presence of armed forces throughout the southern border provinces could cause a negative impact on the local population's normal lives ("Resolution No.1/39-MM", 2012, 5-6).

The OIC showed also concern at the mounting reliance on undisciplined paramilitary militias accused of illegal acts, and warned of its consequences on increasing ethnic and religious polarization ("Resolution No.1/39-MM", 2012, 5-6).

As a result, the OIC called on the Thai government to work actively in order to reach a just and permanent solution to the problem, in accordance with the 2007 Joint Press Communique, and to hold a dialogue with leaders of Muslims to reach a solution allowing the legitimate rights of Muslims in Southern Thailand ("Resolution No.1/39-MM", 2012, 5-6).

However, the OIC still decided to defer consideration of the resolution on the situation of Muslims in Southern Thailand to the next session of the ICFM in 2013 for the same reasons as before ("Resolution No.1/39-MM", 2012, 5-6).

After this resolution released, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Thailand expressed its disappointment ("OIC ignored govt", 2012), and responded with a press release stating on the issue of the violent situation in the southern border provinces of Thailand that:

First, the Thai government gives urgent priority to resolving the situation in the southern border provinces of Thailand, and had constructively engaged and cooperated with the OIC on this issue. In May of 2013, the high level delegation led by H.E. Ambassador Sayed Kassem El-Masri, advisor and special envoy of the OIC secretary general, had been invited to visit Thailand. The OIC delegation had been of the view that there have been positive developments on the issue since 2007, and that Thailand was moving on the right direction (Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA), Thailand, 2012).

Second, OIC member states such as Bahrain, Indonesia, Malaysia, Brunei Darussalam, Palestine and Tajikistan, as well as the OIC secretary general and the current chair of the OIC, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Djibouti, had expressed their understanding and support toward the efforts by Thai government to resolve the issue of southern unrest. They had agreed that development could be achieved only after the problem was solved and peace was maintained in the area. On this note, none of the statements had been delivered by the OIC member states had made reference to the situation with the exception of that of the delegation of Turkey, which had expressed appreciation of the positive developments in the situation (MFA, Thailand 2012).

4.9 The Year 2013

The next year, the OIC action on the issue of the resurgence of violence in the southern border provinces of Thailand unfolded at the 12th OIC Islamic Summit in Cairo during February 6th-7th, 2013. In Cairo Final Communiqué No.76, the OIC member states provided gratitude to the effort of the OIC secretary general in following up on the situation of Muslims in Southern Thailand, and were encouraged by the Thai government's efforts to overcome the obstacles in the implementations of the commitments from the 2007 joint communiqué ("Cairo Final Communiqué", 2013, 14). Furthermore, the OIC member states also hoped that the Thai government will create further productive steps and request the OIC secretary general to continue a creative dialogue with the Thai government in the interests of Muslims in southern

Thailand towards the accomplishment of peace and stability in the area (“Cairo Final Communiqué”, 2013, 14).

At the 40th ICFM session in the Republic of Guinea held in December 2013, during a discussion on the resolutions on Muslim Communities and Minorities in Non-OIC member states, according to Resolution No.1/40-MM, it’s fortunate for Thailand that not only did OIC members not pressure the Thai government’s policies and implementations toward this issue, but they also expressed appreciation for the successful initiative of the government of Thailand in Starting the Peace Dialogue Process with the National Revolutionary Front (BRN), one of the most influential and powerful insurgent groups in the southernmost provinces of Thailand, on February 28th, 2013. However, OIC members had called on the government of Thailand to extend the dialogue to include all parties, organizations, and representatives of local Muslims in the areas and any other stake holders engaged in this issue, in order to accomplish a just and permanent solution to these latest problems, in accordance with the 2007 joint press communiqué, and based on a well-defined and clear program to discuss all issues concerning Muslims (“Resolution No.1/40-MM”, 2013, 5).

4.10 The Year 2014

At the most recent conference, held in Jeddah from June 18th-19th, it was fortunate for Thailand again that OIC didn’t put much pressure on the issue, and mostly just re-stated their previous concerns. The OIC still praised the continuity of efforts of the OIC secretary general, in collaboration with the Thai government and local Muslim community in southern Thailand in improving living conditions in the area in various essential aspects, including giving them more freedom to practice their own religious, language, and cultural uniqueness in their ways of life, and with more opportunities to administrate their domestic affairs and natural resources, with full respect of the Thai constitution and territorial integrity (“Resolution No.1/41-MM”, 2014, 6).

Moreover, the OIC emphasized its support for the continuation of the process of Peace dialogue between the Thai Government and the representatives of Local Muslim communities in the southernmost provinces of Thailand, which also

includes the Barisan Revolusi Nasional (BRN), or National Revolutionary Front in English, and requested that this dialogue cover all other stake holders who are representatives of local Muslims in the area and discuss all pending issues concerning their problems (“Resolution No.1/41-MM”, 2014, 6).

Once again, the OIC asked the Thai government to continue its efforts in seeking a sustainable and just solution to resolve all problems in southern Thailand (“Resolution No.1/41-MM”, 2014, 6).



CHAPTER 5

ANALYTICAL DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Analytical Discussion

Having provided adequate background in chapters 1-4, and in combination with Islamic Philosophy and Islamic theories in international relations as a conceptual framework in analyzing and interpreting the problems postulated by the thesis, we can begin to answer the original five questions of this research as follows:

1. How is the OIC significant in the international community in general and the Muslim world in particular in contemporary international politics and societies?

Answer: Study of the OIC shows that it is the largest international organization of the Muslim world (Khan, 2001, 1), and can justifiably be referred to informally as “The United Nations of Muslim World”, comprising fifty-seven sovereign Muslim states (Yusuf, 2007, 331) spread across four continents: Asia, Africa, Europe and South America (Maluleem, 2012, 21), binding all members together with the strong feeling of “*Ikhwa*” under the same “*Ummah*”.

In addition, members with Observer status encompass other sovereign states, non-sovereign states, and international organizations, such as the UN, the OAU, the Non-Aligned Movement, etc. (Khan, 2001, 1). Thus, the OIC is widely involved with and has relations in socio-political and diplomatic aspects with both OIC member states and other members of the global community (Maluleem, 2012, 3).

OIC is the most legitimate intergovernmental organization comprised of sovereign Muslim states, and acts frequently as the representative of Islam in the international arena (Maluleem, 2012, 3). With the common bond of Islam, hence, OIC has become the largest, and one religious association of nation-states in the world (Khan, 2001, 1).

Given this unique status, the OIC has become a very significant actor on the international stage due to the fact that it is the principal spokesman of the largest religion in the world, the members of which represent approximately 25.5% of the world’s population, with membership spread across ten geographical regions on four

continents, and that it's organizational infrastructure is vast, with a multitude of subsidiary and specialized organs, working for cooperation in a variety of fields, including economic, educational, scientific and other issues, that allows for comparisons with the structures of the UN or the EU.

The most three significant organs of the OIC are the Islamic Summit, the Council of Foreign Ministers (ICFM), and the office of the General Secretariat. The ability of the Islamic Summit tri-annual conferences to express the contemporary concerns of the Muslim world with unquestionable legitimacy, combined with the ICFM's regular and extraordinary sessions that allow for frequent dialogue on international issues addressing Muslims around the world, and the executive powers of the office of the General Secretariat allow for effective and rapid action on issues concerning Muslims.

Considering the efficacy of the organization, and the diversity of the member states as well as Muslim minorities in non-OIC member states reflected in linguistic, economic, social and other characteristics, issues related to the Muslim world that are addressed by the OIC include those such as the conflicts in Palestine, Kashmir, Chechnya, and, the topic of this research, the resurgence of violence in the southernmost provinces of Thailand. Concerns about these issues are generally interpreted by the Global Muslim *Ummah* as part of the result of the religious oppression of Muslims, and are open to varied worldwide Muslim interpretations, ranging from the instances of the oppression of Muslims to the suppression of Muslim minority populations by non-Muslim states (Yusuf 2007, 319). In this regard, the Muslim world views these conflicts through the lens of Pan-Islamism, an ideology of worldwide unity of Muslims presented by Jamaludddin – Afghani (1838 – 1897) during the colonized period of Muslim History (Yusuf, 2007, 319 – 320), and the OIC is currently the ultimate and most powerful international mechanism for serving the International Muslim Community's standpoints and desires.

Thus, these are reasons how the OIC is significant for the international community in general and the Muslim world in particular in contemporary international politics and societies.

2. Why has the OIC come to be involved in the issue of the resurgence of violence in the southern border provinces of Thailand?

Answer: Quite simply, the main mission of the OIC is to be the principal representative of Islam, for the purpose of working for solidarity and constructing cooperation among the Muslim member states, and is committed to stand up for the national rights, dignity, and independence of all Muslim peoples in different countries of the world, including Muslim communities and minorities in non-Muslim states (Yusuf, 2007, 331), for the sake of *Ikhwa* - the fraternal spirit of Muslim brotherhood, under the same *Ummah* – the world wide Muslim community.

These main principles are reflected in the OIC Charter as explained in Chapter 2, and the notions of supporting the peaceful struggle of Muslims in maintain their honor, independence, and national rights, as well as the believe in the right of self-determination, and the desire to eliminate ethnic discrimination and colonization through support of the ideas of fundamental human rights, make it clear that the OIC, by necessity, should be involved in the struggle of the local Muslim population in the southernmost provinces of Thailand.

The OIC's understanding of the importance of Human rights has not only been showcased via the organization's own charter, but also via the Cairo Declaration on Human Rights in Islam at the 19th ICFM in 1990, as well as through participation in the 1993 Vienna Convention on Human Rights, as previously explained in Chapter 2 of this thesis.

Furthermore, the OIC's clarification of its stance on its viewpoint of the differences between terrorism and liberation movements, as outlined at the OIC convention on Combating International Terrorism, adopted at the 26th CFM in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, in July 1999, as well as the Kuala Lumpur Declaration on International Terrorism, adopted at the extraordinary session of the CFM on Terrorism, April 1st – 3rd, 2002, in combination with the fact-finding missions of the high-level delegations sent by the OIC to explore the situation in Thailand, has made it clear that the OIC considers the southern conflict to not be religious in nature, but rather a legitimate struggle for the right to self-determination and against unequal treatment in terms of culture, language, economics, and so on.

Understanding of the root causes of this struggle and of the principle aims of the liberation movements in the south of Thailand has brought the OIC to consider it an example of discrimination and oppression of a Muslim minority in a non-OIC member state, the members of which are still valued as being a part of the same *Ikhwa* under the same *Ummah*, and therefore a priority for the OIC to support. Protection of the rights, honor and identity of Muslim minority communities is affirmed in Chapter 1, Article 1, Paragraph 16 of the OIC new charter, and has adopted the protection of these minorities on the main agenda of every OIC conference.

For these reasons, and due to the verdict of the OIC that the conflict in southern Thailand violates the rights, honor, and identity of Muslim minorities in the area, and that these Muslims are a part of the global Muslim brotherhood by the spirit of “*Ikhwa*” under the their same “*Ummah*”, hence, it is the duty of the OIC to engage this problem, in order to help this Muslim minority in accordance with the New OIC Charter Article 1 No.16 and Principles of OIC about Muslim Communities and Minorities in Non-OIC member states as mentioned previously.

3. Why is it important and necessary for Thailand to have good relations with the OIC in various aspects, and especially on the issue of the resurgence of violence in the southern border provinces of Thailand?

Answer: There are two main reasons that Thailand values good relations with the OIC: religion and economy.

As previously mentioned, approximately 10% of the population of Thailand is Muslim, therefore, a strong relationship with the primary organization with interests in the quality of life of Muslims around the world is a high priority. Receiving either condemnation or support from the OIC has a huge impact on the legitimacy of Thailand’s policies towards its Muslim population, especially in regards to the conflict in the southernmost provinces.

Additionally, economic concerns cannot be understated. In addition to the fact that Thailand is a net importer of energy resources, and that the Muslim states represented by the OIC account for a large portion of the world’s oil reserves and resources, those same countries also represent important potential markets for Thailand, especially in regards to small and medium enterprises like the halal food

industry, the jewelry and ornament industry, and fashion products, but also in terms of tourism, especially medical tourism.

Understanding of the importance of economic factors with the OIC are evidenced by Thailand's long-standing relationship with the organization, especially by the efforts of H.E. Dr. Surin Pitsuwan to acquire Observer status for Thailand in the OIC, as well as in the establishment of such bodies as the Thai Islamic Trade and Industrial Association. Other strategies that Thailand has already utilized in the attempt to make use of economic opportunities with the member states of the OIC include joining the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership Free Trade Area, the extension of cooperation in Energy and Energy reserved sources via supporting PTT exploration and Production Public Company Limited (PTTEP) in investing in potential capable markets, and the expansion of cooperation with Islamic countries that are new markets for Thailand, especially in Africa and Central Asia. None of these opportunities would have been possible without careful integration into and cooperation with the OIC.

Finally, **How can Thailand be a Full-Member of the OIC?**

Answer: The OIC has clear rules and conditions on membership, as stated in Charter Chapter 2: Membership, Article 3(2):

...Any State, member of the United Nations, having Muslim majority and abiding by the Charter, which submits an application for membership may join the Organization if approved by consensus only by the Council of Foreign Ministers on the basis of the agreed criteria adopted by the Council of Foreign Ministers...

(OIC, n.d.a)

Thailand is already a member of the United Nations. Furthermore, in regards to the condition of having a Muslim Majority as stated above, there are four flexible categories of consideration for the OIC when accepting any state to be a new OIC-member as mentioned previously in the Chapter 3, and Thailand clearly falls under the 4th category: a non-Muslims majority state where Muslims form a substantial minority and community in the state, being the biggest community in specific area (Khan, 2001, 53). As 10% of Thai citizens are Muslim, the country fulfills the requirement of a substantial minority according to the stated conditions.

Moreover, of this Muslim population, most of them live in the southern border provinces of Thailand, and make up the majority population in the area.

Therefore, Thailand fulfills the conditions for applying to be a full member of the OIC. So, in order to achieve this purpose, according to the latest OIC Charter Chapter 2: Membership, Article 3(2) Thailand must submit an application for membership to the ICFM, and show its willingness to OIC-member states that Thailand is ready to abide by the OIC Charter. Importantly, Thailand must be approved by consensus at the Council of Foreign Ministers. The question of how Thailand can receive approval by consensus from OIC-member states is explained in section 5.2 **Recommendations**.

4. How does the OIC view the Thai government in regards to the current situation of violent unrest in the three southernmost provinces of Thailand?

Answer: Through delegation visits, conference communiques, and other forms of communication, the OIC has made it clear that they see the conflict in southern Thailand as not religious in nature, but rather that it springs from neglect towards historical, cultural, linguistic and other considerations of the Malay Muslim community in the area. The OIC has also officially expressed its understanding of the conflict as being a domestic affair of Thailand, while also expressing frustrations over the slow progress of the Thai judicial system in adjudicating justice in the region, as well as regrets over the continued application of Emergency Law in the area.

Furthermore, the OIC has warned Thailand about the possible ramifications of a continued improper military presence and the slow development of educational institutions in the traditional language, as well as expressing the necessity of empowerment for the local community, and the need for cultural space for the Malay Muslims residing in the southern border provinces of Thailand.

Nevertheless, the OIC has stated its appreciation for the successful initiative of the Thai government in starting the peace dialogue process with the National Revolutionary Front (BRN), one of the most influential and powerful insurgent groups in the southernmost provinces of Thailand, on February 28th, 2013.

5. What are the OIC's standpoints and requests, toward the issue of the violent conflict in southern Thailand?

Answer: While stating that it understands that the unrest in southern Thailand is a domestic issue, and that therefore the OIC won't directly interfere out of respect for Thai sovereignty and territorial integrity, the OIC has requested the Thai Government to allow the southern local Muslims to have a greater say in managing their own affairs and to receive the right to practice their culture and language freely. Furthermore, the organization has stated its demand for the Thai Government to sincerely address the root causes of the problem. In no way does the OIC endorse any separatist movement.

While maintaining the need to resolve this violent conflict through peaceful dialogue and negotiation, the OIC has also stressed that it is ready to provide its services in finding measures to establish security and stability within the framework of negotiations between the Thai government, representatives of Local Muslims in the area and all other parties related to this issue, and that is also ready to offer its cooperation in establishing peaceful settlement through welfare, economic, social, and educational initiatives.

The OIC has also advised the Thai government to respect cultural differences in order to resolve the conflicts effectively, and also emphasized the need for the Thai government to provide sincere recognition of the cultural uniqueness of the local ethnic-Malay Muslims in the area.

Furthermore, the OIC has stressed that equitable measures must be taken on the issue of justice, and that while the crimes of Malay Muslims may justly be brought before court, crimes committed by state officials must be treated with the same respect for law, with no extra protections afforded owing to their office.

The OIC also finds importance in lifting the Emergency decree, as this law creates a sense of impunity for state officials, further propagating human rights violations.

Finally, the OIC condemned any use of violence against innocent civilians by any party, saying that killing innocent people, regardless of whether they are Muslim or Buddhist, is "against the Koran".

5.2 Recommendations

6. How should Thailand deal with the OIC in the future, in order to maintain and strengthen good relations and cooperation in all aspects, and especially on the issue of the ongoing resurgence of violence in the southern border provinces of Thailand?

Answer: First and Foremost, the Thai government should show its sincere desire to solve this violent conflict to local ethnic-Malay Muslims in the area, to Thai citizens nationwide, to the OIC, and to the international Muslim community, by giving a formal apology to the local ethnic Malay Muslims for the oppression and negligence of their history, culture, identity, religion, ways of life, and economic and social welfare under the Siamese rulers and Thai governments, with the invitation of the OIC delegation to participate as a witness, in order to show that the Thai government understands the true causes of the problem, accept its mistakes, and to show that the Thai government truly sympathizes with local ethnic-Malay Muslims, and has a sincere commitment to solve this problem. It must also show its appreciation of the fact that there has heretofore been a lack of understanding in the different cultural identities in the context of Thai-ness and of the disregard for accepting these differences.

Second, the Thai government must create and implement policies on this issue, in accordance with the OIC's standpoints and requests above, and provide frequent updates on the progress of the conflict resolutions to the OIC with real evidence, and use various media channels to present this information to the international Muslim community in general.

One effective way of showing sincere commitment to the resolution of this situation would be to foster an increase in popular participation in the conciliatory process. Although there are many possible strategies for achieving this, one clear signal to Thai Muslims, Thai citizens in general, and to the Muslim community worldwide would be to encourage the development of a democratic Thai Muslim political party to represent the specific interests of the majority population in the southernmost provinces, as advocated and outlined by Prof. Dr. Maluleem (2010).

Thailand has no choice but to accept that it is a plural society, comprised not only of a monolithic Theravada Buddhist Sino-Thai cultural identity, but also of many others that must be treated equally as Thai citizens regardless of race, ethnicity, religion, culture, language, etc. Although our nation has much progress to make in this area, the acceptance, both formally and informally, of the Malayu culture of Thai Muslims is a necessary element in the promotion of a harmonious social system that can address the inequities in the south and elsewhere, leading to peaceful resolution of the conflict.

The need to accept the pluralistic nature of contemporary society is a fact of life for all modern nations, and is in no way unique to Thailand. It is important for the Thai government that the Malayu Muslim minority can cherish both its ethnic and its national identities, with no sense of conflict between the two, and with equal value placed upon both.

There are a variety of ways that Thailand could express its appreciation for and endorsement of this country's pluralistic nature, especially with regards to the Malay Muslim community in the south. One of the most important involves education; not only of the establishment of proper educational services for the Muslim community in the south, but also for providing proper cultural education to state officers working the south in order to foster mutual cultural understanding and to help avoid discriminatory and other biased practices. It is of utmost importance for the rule of law to be upheld equally upon all citizens, and education is an important way of making sure that state officers don't treat Muslim citizens unfairly; additionally, it's a critical method for reducing social biases and discrimination in private as well as public sectors, the elimination of which should also be enshrined in law.

It would also go a long way towards reparations for the Thai government to offer recognition of a variety of important aspects of Islam, granting legitimacy to Thai Muslim citizens. This could include recognition of religious holidays, a National Office of Islamic Affairs, the provision of prayer rooms in all public buildings and offices, and even the possibility of fostering the development of Sharia courts, Islamic educational institutions, and Islamic banking systems for Muslim citizens who desire to completely abide by the traditions of their faith.

It is important to recognize that the Thai government must include the OIC in the process of solving this violent conflict, in order to show the sincerity of the government and to gain mutual trust with the local ethnic-Malay Muslims in the area, and to foster a positive attitude and acceptance from the international Muslim community as a whole. However, Thailand would have an even stronger ability to pursue this objective if it were to have full member status in the OIC, which leads to the final question of this thesis:

How will Thailand receive approval of full-member status by consensus from the OIC member states at the conference of the Council of Foreign Minister?

The case of Suriname is a good example of how a state with a Muslim minority can become a full member of the OIC. Although this country's Muslim population only constitute 35% of the total population, and there has never been a Muslim head of state in Suriname, this country was still able to obtain full member status by proving that the welfare of Muslim citizens was a high priority, and they were well represented in official state organizations and structures. Furthermore, on the international level, such as on the conference of the UN General Assembly, Suriname always voted for the interests of the global Muslim *Ummah* on issues such as Kashmir, Palestine, Bosnia, etc. (Khan, 2001, 53-54).

Hence, if Thailand is able to show proper care and consideration of its own Muslim population, and backs this support with dialogue and actions on the international stage for the sake of the Muslim *Ummah*, becoming a full member state of the OIC is a possibility. Undoubtedly, Thailand would also have to persistently lobby the assorted current member states of the OIC for the decision as well, but these still remain the most important pre-conditions for acquiring the acceptance of the community represented by the OIC, and, thus, legitimacy in showing dedication towards resolving the conflict of the resurgence of violence in the southern border provinces of Thailand.

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APPENDICES



APPENDIX A

THE 2007 OIC CHARTER

In the name of Allah, the most Compassionate, the most Merciful
We the Member States of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation, determined:

To acknowledge the Conference of Kings, Heads of State and Government of the Member States convened in Rabat from 9 to 12 Rajab, 1389 H, corresponding to 22 to 25 September 1969, as well as the Conference of Foreign Ministers held in Jeddah from 14 to 18 Muharram 1392 H corresponding to 29 February to 4 March 1972;

To be guided by the noble Islamic values of unity and fraternity, and affirming the essentiality of promoting and consolidating the unity and solidarity among the Member States in securing their common interests at the international arena;

To adhere our commitment to the principles of the United Nations Charter, the present Charter and International Law;

To preserve and promote the lofty Islamic values of peace, compassion, tolerance, equality, justice and human dignity;

To endeavour to work for revitalizing Islam's pioneering role in the world while ensuring sustainable development, progress and prosperity for the peoples of Member States;

To enhance and strengthen the bond of unity and solidarity among the Muslim peoples and Member States; to respect, safeguard and defend the national sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of all Member States;

To contribute to international peace and security, understanding and dialogue among civilizations, cultures and religions and promote and encourage friendly relations and good neighbourliness, mutual respect and cooperation;

To promote human rights and fundamental freedoms, good governance, rule of law, democracy and accountability in Member States in accordance with their constitutional and legal systems;

To promote confidence and encourage friendly relations, mutual respect and cooperation between Member States and other States;

To foster noble Islamic values concerning moderation, tolerance, respect for diversity, preservation of Islamic symbols and common heritage and to defend the universality of Islamic religion;

To advance the acquisition and popularization of knowledge in consonance with the lofty ideals of Islam to achieve intellectual excellence;

To promote cooperation among Member States to achieve sustained socioeconomic development for effective integration in the global economy, in conformity with the principles of partnership and equality;

To preserve and promote all aspects related to environment for present and future generations;

To respect the right of self-determination and non-interference in the domestic affairs and to respect sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of each Member State;

To support the struggle of the Palestinian people, who are presently under foreign occupation, and to empower them to attain their inalienable rights, including the right to self-determination, and to establish their sovereign state with Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its capital, while safeguarding its historic and Islamic character, and the holy places therein;

To safeguard and promote the rights of women and their participation in all spheres of life, in accordance with the laws and legislation of Member States;

To create conducive conditions for sound upbringing of Muslim children and youth, and to inculcate in them Islamic values through education for strengthening their cultural, social, moral and ethical ideals;

To assist Muslim minorities and communities outside the Member States to preserve their dignity, cultural and religious identity;

To uphold the objectives and principles of the present Charter, the Charter of the United Nations and international law as well as international humanitarian law while strictly adhering to the principle of non-interference in matters which are essentially within the domestic jurisdiction of any State;

To strive to achieve good governance at the international level and the democratization of the international relations based on the principles of equality and mutual respect among States and non-interference in matters which are within their domestic jurisdiction;

Have resolved to cooperate in achieving these goals and agreed to the present amended Charter.

CHAPTER I

Objectives and Principles

Article 1

The objectives of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation shall be:

1. To enhance and consolidate the bonds of fraternity and solidarity among the Member States;
2. To safeguard and protect the common interests and support the legitimate causes of the Member States and coordinate and unify the efforts of the Member States in view of the challenges faced by the Islamic world in particular and the international community in general;
3. To respect the right of self-determination and non-interference in the domestic affairs and to respect sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of each Member State;
4. To support the restoration of complete sovereignty and territorial integrity of any Member State under occupation, as a result of aggression, on the basis of international law and cooperation with the relevant international and regional organisations;
5. To ensure active participation of the Member States in the global political, economic and social decision-making processes to secure their common interests;
6. To promote inter-state relations based on justice, mutual respect and good neighbourliness to ensure global peace, security and harmony;
7. To reaffirm its support for the rights of peoples as stipulated in the UN Charter and international law;
8. To support and empower the Palestinian people to exercise their right to self-determination and establish their sovereign State with Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its capital, while safeguarding its historic and Islamic character as well as the Holy places therein;
9. To strengthen intra-Islamic economic and trade cooperation; in order to achieve economic integration leading to the establishment of an Islamic Common Market;
10. To exert efforts to achieve sustainable and comprehensive human development and economic well-being in Member States;
11. To disseminate, promote and preserve the Islamic teachings and values based on moderation and tolerance, promote Islamic culture and safeguard Islamic heritage;

12. To protect and defend the true image of Islam, to combat defamation of Islam and encourage dialogue among civilisations and religions;
13. To enhance and develop science and technology and encourage research and cooperation among Member States in these fields;
14. To promote and to protect human rights and fundamental freedoms including the rights of women, children, youth, elderly and people with special needs as well as the preservation of Islamic family values;
15. To emphasize, protect and promote the role of the family as the natural and fundamental unit of society;
16. To safeguard the rights, dignity and religious and cultural identity of Muslim communities and minorities in non-Member States;
17. To promote and defend unified position on issues of common interest in the international fora;
18. To cooperate in combating terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, organised crime, illicit drug trafficking, corruption, money laundering and human trafficking;
19. To cooperate and coordinate in humanitarian emergencies such as natural disasters;
20. To promote cooperation in social, cultural and information fields among the Member States.

Article 2

The Member States undertake that in order to realize the objectives in Article 1, they shall be guided and inspired by the noble Islamic teachings and values and act in accordance with the following principles:

1. All Member States commit themselves to the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter;
2. Member States are sovereign, independent and equal in rights and obligations;
3. All Member States shall settle their disputes through peaceful means and refrain from use or threat of use of force in their relations;
4. All Member States undertake to respect national sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of other Member States and shall refrain from interfering in the internal affairs of others;
5. All Member States undertake to contribute to the maintenance of international peace and security and to refrain from interfering in each other's internal affairs as

enshrined in the present Charter, the Charter of the United Nations, international law and international humanitarian law;

6. As mentioned in the UN Charter, nothing contained in the present Charter shall authorize the Organisation and its Organs to intervene in matters which are essentially within the domestic jurisdiction of any State or related to it;

7. Member States shall uphold and promote, at the national and international levels, good governance, democracy, human rights and fundamental freedoms, and the rule of law;

8. Member States shall endeavour to protect and preserve the environment.

CHAPTER II

Membership

Article 3

1. The Organisation is made up of 57 Member States of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation and other States which may accede to this Charter in accordance with Article 3 paragraph 2.

2. Any State, member of the United Nations, having Muslim majority and abiding by the Charter, which submits an application for membership may join the Organisation if approved by consensus only by the Council of Foreign Ministers on the basis of the agreed criteria adopted by the Council of Foreign Ministers.

3. Nothing in the present Charter shall undermine the present Member States' rights or privileges relating to membership or any other issues.

Article 4

1. Decision on granting Observer status to a State, member of the United Nations, will be taken by the Council of Foreign Ministers by consensus only and on the basis of the agreed criteria by the Council of Foreign Ministers.

2. Decision on granting Observer status to an international organisation will be taken by the Council of Foreign Ministers by consensus only and on the basis of the agreed criteria by the Council of Foreign Ministers.

CHAPTER III

Organs

Article 5

The Organs of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation shall consist of:

1. Islamic Summit
2. Council of Foreign Ministers
3. Standing Committees
4. Executive Committee
5. International Islamic Court of Justice
6. Independent Permanent Commission of Human Rights
7. Committee of Permanent Representatives
8. General Secretariat
9. Subsidiary Organs
10. Specialized Institutions
11. Affiliated Institutions

CHAPTER IV

Islamic Summit

Article 6

The Islamic Summit is composed of Kings and Heads of State and Government of Member States and is the supreme authority of the Organisation.

Article 7

The Islamic Summit shall deliberate, take policy decisions and provide guidance on all issues pertaining to the realization of the objectives as provided for in the Charter and consider other issues of concern to the Member States and the *Ummah*.

Article 8

1. The Islamic Summit shall convene every three years in one of the Member States.
2. The Preparation of the Agenda and all necessary arrangements for the convening of the Summit will be done by the Council of Foreign Ministers with the assistance of the General Secretariat.

Article 9

Extraordinary Sessions will be held, whenever the interests of *Ummah* warrant it, to consider matters of vital importance to the *Ummah* and coordinate the policy of the Organisation accordingly. An Extraordinary Session may be held at the recommendation of the Council of Foreign Ministers or on the initiative of one of the Member States or the Secretary-General, provided that such initiative obtains the support of simple majority of the Member States.

CHAPTER V

Council of Foreign Ministers

Article 10

1. The Council of Foreign Ministers shall be convened once a year in one of the Member States.
2. An Extraordinary Session of the Council of Foreign Ministers may be convened at the initiative of any Member State or of the Secretary-General if such initiative is approved by a simple majority of the Member States.
3. The Council of Foreign Ministers may recommend convening other sectorial Ministerial meetings to deal with the specific issues of concern to the *Ummah*. Such meetings shall submit their reports to the Islamic Summit and the Council of Foreign Ministers.
4. The Council of Foreign Ministers shall consider the means for the implementation of the general policy of the Organisation by:
 - a. Adopting decisions and resolutions on matters of common interest in the implementation of the objectives and the general policy of the Organisation;
 - b. Reviewing progress of the implementation of the decisions and resolutions adopted at the previous Summits and Councils of Foreign Ministers;
 - c. Considering and approving the programme, budget and other financial and administrative reports of the General Secretariat and Subsidiary Organs;
 - d. Considering any issue affecting one or more Member States whenever a request to that effect by the Member State concerned is made with a view to taking appropriate measures in that respect;
 - e. Recommending to establish any new organ or committee;
 - f. Electing the Secretary General and appointing the Assistant Secretaries General in accordance with Articles 16 and 18 of the Charter respectively;
 - g. Considering any other issue it deems fit.

CHAPTER VI

Standing Committees

Article 11

1. In order to advance issues of critical importance to the Organisation and its Member States, the Organisation has formed the following Standing Committees:

- i. Al Quds Committee
- ii. Standing Committee for Information and Cultural Affairs (COMIAC)
- iii. Standing Committee for Economic and Commercial Cooperation (COMCEC)
- iv. Standing Committee for Scientific and Technological Cooperation (COMSTECH).

2. The Standing Committees are chaired by Kings and Heads of State and Government and are established in accordance with decisions of the Summit or upon the recommendation of the Council of Foreign Ministers and the membership of such Committees.

CHAPTER VII

Executive Committee

Article 12

The Executive Committee is comprised of the Chairmen of the current, preceding and succeeding Islamic Summits and Councils of Foreign Ministers, the host country of the Headquarters of the General Secretariat as well as the Secretary-General as an ex officio member. The Meetings of the Executive Committee shall be conducted according to its Rules of Procedure.

CHAPTER VIII

Committee of Permanent Representatives

Article 13

The prerogatives and modes of operation of the Committee of Permanent Representatives shall be defined by the Council of Foreign Ministers.

CHAPTER IX

International Islamic Court of Justice

Article 14

The International Islamic Court of Justice established in Kuwait in 1987 shall, upon the entry into force of its Statute, be the principal judicial organ of the Organisation.

CHAPTER X

Independent Permanent Commission on Human Rights

Article 15

The Independent Permanent Commission on Human Rights shall promote the civil, political, social and economic rights enshrined in the organisation's covenants and declarations and in universally agreed human rights instruments, in conformity with Islamic values.

CHAPTER XI

General Secretariat

Article 16

The General Secretariat shall comprise a Secretary-General, who shall be the Chief Administrative Officer of the Organisation and such staff as the Organisation requires. The Secretary-General shall be elected by the Council of Foreign Ministers for a period of five years, renewable once only. The Secretary-General shall be elected from among nationals of the Member States in accordance with the principles of equitable geographical distribution, rotation and equal opportunity for all Member States with due consideration to competence, integrity and experience.

Article 17

The Secretary General shall assume the following responsibilities:

- a. bring to the attention of the competent organs of the Organisation matters which, in his opinion, may serve or impair the objectives of the Organisation;
- b. follow-up the implementation of decisions, resolutions and recommendations of the Islamic Summits, and Councils of Foreign Ministers and other Ministerial meetings;
- c. provide the Member States with working papers and memoranda, in implementation of the decisions, resolutions and recommendations of the Islamic Summits and the Councils of Foreign Ministers;
- d. coordinate and harmonize, the work of the relevant Organs of the Organisation;
- e. prepare the programme and the budget of the General Secretariat; f. promote communication among Member States and facilitate consultations and exchange of views as well as the dissemination of information that could be of importance to Member States;
- g. perform such other functions as are entrusted to him by the Islamic Summit or the Council of Foreign Ministers;

h. submit annual reports to the Council of Foreign Ministers on the work of the Organisation.

Article 18

1. The Secretary-General shall submit nominations of Assistant Secretaries General to the Council of Foreign Ministers, for appointment, for a period of 5 years in accordance with the principle of equitable geographical distribution and with due regard to the competence, integrity and dedication to the objectives of the Charter. One post of Assistant Secretary General shall be devoted to the cause of Al-Quds Al-Sharif and Palestine with the understanding that the State of Palestine shall designate its candidate.

2. The Secretary-General may, for the implementation of the resolutions and decisions of the Islamic Summits and the Councils of Foreign Ministers, appoint Special Representatives. Such appointments along with mandates of the Special Representatives shall be made with the approval of the Council of Foreign Ministers.

3. The Secretary-General shall appoint the staff of the General Secretariat from among nationals of Member States, paying due regard to their competence, eligibility, integrity and gender in accordance with the principle of equitable geographical distribution. The Secretary-General may appoint experts and consultants on temporary basis.

Article 19

In the performance of their duties, the Secretary-General, Assistant Secretaries General and the staff of the General Secretariat shall not seek or accept instructions from any government or authority other than the Organisation. They shall refrain from taking any action that may be detrimental to their position as international officials responsible only to the Organisation. Member States shall respect this exclusively international character, and shall not seek to influence them in any way in the discharge of their duties.

Article 20

The General Secretariat shall prepare the meetings of the Islamic Summits and the Councils of Foreign Ministers in close cooperation with the host country insofar as administrative and organizational matters are concerned.

Article 21

The Headquarters of the General Secretariat shall be in the city of Jeddah until the liberation of the city of Al-Quds so that it will become the permanent Headquarters of the Organisation.

CHAPTER XII

Article 22

The Organisation may establish Subsidiary Organs, Specialized Institutions and grant affiliated status, after approval of the Council of Foreign Ministers, in accordance with the Charter.

Subsidiary Organs

Article 23

Subsidiary organs are established within the framework of the Organisation in accordance with the decisions taken by the Islamic Summit or Council of Foreign Ministers and their budgets shall be approved by the Council of Foreign Ministers.

CHAPTER XIII

Specialized Institutions

Article 24

Specialized institutions of the Organisation are established within the framework of the Organisation in accordance with the decisions of the Islamic Summit or Council of Foreign Ministers. Membership of the specialized institutions shall be optional and open to members of the Organisation. Their budgets are independent and are approved by their respective legislative bodies stipulated in their Statute.

Affiliated Institutions

Article 25

Affiliated institutions are entities or bodies whose objectives are in line with the objectives of this Charter, and are recognized as affiliated institutions by the Council of Foreign Ministers. Membership of the institutions is optional and open to organs and institutions of the Member States. Their budgets are independent of the budget of the General Secretariat and those of subsidiary organs and specialized institutions. Affiliated institutions may be granted observer status by virtue of a resolution of the Council of Foreign Ministers. They may obtain voluntary assistance from the subsidiary organs or specialized institutions as well as from Member States.

CHAPTER XIV

Cooperation with Islamic and other Organizations

Article 26

The Organisation will enhance its cooperation with the Islamic and other Organizations in the service of the objectives embodied in the present Charter.

CHAPTER XV

Peaceful Settlement of Disputes

Article 27

The Member States, parties to any dispute, the continuance of which may be detrimental to the interests of the Islamic *Ummah* or may endanger the maintenance of international peace and security, shall, seek a solution by good offices, negotiation, enquiry, mediation, conciliation, arbitration, judicial settlement or other peaceful means of their own choice. In this context good offices may include consultation with the Executive Committee and the Secretary-General.

Article 28

The Organisation may cooperate with other international and regional organisations with the objective of preserving international peace and security, and settling disputes through peaceful means.

CHAPTER XVI

Budget & Finance

Article 29

1. The budget of the General Secretariat and Subsidiary Organs shall be borne by Member States proportionate to their national incomes.
2. The Organisation may, with the approval of the Islamic Summit or the Council of Foreign Ministers, establish special funds and endowments (*waqfs*) on voluntary basis as contributed by Member States, individuals and Organisations. These funds and endowments shall be subjected to the Organisation's financial system and shall be audited by the Finance Control Organ annually.

Article 30

The General Secretariat and subsidiary organs shall administer their financial affairs according to the Financial Rules of Procedure approved by the Council of Foreign Ministers.

Article 31

1. A Permanent Finance Committee shall be set up by the Council of Foreign Ministers from the accredited representatives of the participating Member States which shall meet at the Headquarters of the Organisation to finalize the programme and budget of the General Secretariat and its subsidiary organs in accordance with the rules approved by the Council of Foreign Ministers.
2. The Permanent Finance Committee shall present an annual report to the Council of Foreign Ministers which shall consider and approve the programme and budget.

3. The Finance Control Organ comprising financial/auditing experts from the Member States shall undertake the audit of the General Secretariat and its subsidiary organs in accordance with its internal rules and regulations.

CHAPTER XVII

Rules of Procedure and Voting

Article 32

1. The Council of Foreign Ministers shall adopt its own rules of procedure.
2. The Council of Foreign Ministers shall recommend the rules of procedures of the Islamic Summit.
3. The Standing Committees shall establish their own respective rules of procedure.

Article 33

1. Two-third of the Member States shall constitute the quorum for the meetings of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation.
2. Decisions shall be taken by consensus. If consensus cannot be obtained, decision shall be taken by a two-third majority of members present and voting unless otherwise stipulated in this Charter.

CHAPTER XVIII

Final Provisions

Privileges and Immunities

Article 34

1. The Organisation shall enjoy in the Member States, immunities and privileges as necessary for the exercise of its functions and the fulfilment of its objectives.
2. Representatives of the Member States and officials of the Organisation shall enjoy such privileges and immunities as stipulated in the Agreement on Privileges and Immunities of 1976.
3. The staff of the General Secretariat, subsidiary organs and specialised institutions shall enjoy privileges and immunities necessary for the performance of their duties as may be agreed between the Organisation and host countries.
4. A Member State which is in arrears in the payment of its financial contributions to the Organization shall have no vote in the Council of Foreign Ministers if the amount of its arrears equals or exceeds the amount of the contributions due from it for the preceding two full years. The Council may, nevertheless, permit such a Member to vote if it is satisfied that the failure to pay is due to conditions beyond the control of the Member.

Withdrawal

Article 35

1. Any Member State may withdraw from the Organisation by notifying the Secretary-General one year prior to its withdrawal. Such a notification shall be communicated to all Member States.
2. The State applying for withdrawal shall be bound by its obligations until the end of the fiscal year during which the application for withdrawal is submitted. It shall also settle any other financial dues it owes to the Organisation.

Amendments

Article 36

Amendments to the present Charter shall take place according to the following procedure:

- a. Any Member State may propose amendments to the present Charter to the Council of Foreign Ministers;
- b. When approved by two-third majority of the Council of Foreign Ministers and ratified by a two-third majority of the Member States, it shall come into force.

Interpretation

Article 37

1. Any dispute that may arise in the interpretation, application or implementation of any Article in the present Charter shall be settled cordially, and in all cases through consultation, negotiation, reconciliation or arbitration;
2. The provisions of this Charter shall be implemented by the Member States in conformity with their constitutional requirements.

Article 38

Languages of the Organisation shall be Arabic, English and French. Transitional Arrangement

RATIFICATION AND ENTRY INTO FORCE

Article 39

1. This Charter shall be adopted by the Council of Foreign Ministers by two-third majority and shall be open for signature and ratification by Member States in accordance with the constitutional procedures of each Member State.
2. The instruments of ratification shall be deposited with the Secretary General of the Organisation.

3- This Charter replaces the Charter of the Organisation of The Islamic Conference which was registered in conformity with Article 102 of the Charter of the United Nations on February 1, 1974.

Done at the city of Dakar (Republic of Senegal), the Seventh day of Rabi Al-Awal, One Thousand Four Hundred and Twenty-nine Hijra, corresponding to Fourteenth day of March Two Thousand and Eight.

From: Charter of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation. (n.d.). Retrieved from <http://www.oic-oci.org/english/charter/OIC%20Charter-new-en.pdf>



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