

REVISITING THE THOUGHT OF YUSUF AL-QARADAWI ON THE BOYCOTT OF PRO-ISRAEL BRANDS

Dito Alif Pratama

Fakultas Syariah dan Hukum – Universitas PTIQ Jakarta

Correspondence: ditoalifpratama@ptiq.ac.id

Abstract

In the complex tapestry of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, this paper embarks on a qualitative exploration of Yusuf Al-Qaradawi's endorsement of the fatwa promoting the boycott of pro-Israel brands. As one of Egypt's distinguished Muslim scholars, Qaradawi's stance holds significant weight in shaping opinions within the Islamic community. This research employs a qualitative methodology to unravel the intricacies of Qaradawi's viewpoint on the boycott and, concurrently, sheds light on his reflections concerning the roots of the prolonged conflict between the Palestinian and Israeli peoples. Delving into Qaradawi's perspectives requires a nuanced understanding of the cultural, historical, and religious dimensions he incorporates into his endorsement of the boycott. Through a qualitative content analysis of Qaradawi's writings, speeches, and sermons, this study seeks to decipher the layers of his convictions, providing a human touch to the academic exploration. It aims to revisit and describe how the notion of boycotting pro-Israel brands intertwines with the ongoing struggles in the region from Qaradawi's lens, offering a more relatable and contextualized comprehension of his position. The paper further engages in a qualitative analysis of Qaradawi's arguments endorsing the fatwa, unraveling the motivations and ideological foundations that underpin his advocacy. As a comparative qualitative analysis, this study extends its exploration to include the perspectives of the Majelis Ulama Indonesia (MUI), offering a rich tapestry of Islamic viewpoints on the matter. This comparative lens not only highlights the diversity within Islamic scholarship but also humanizes the discourse surrounding the pro-Israel brands boycott.

Keywords: Yusuf Al-Qaradawi; Fatwa; boycott; pro-Israel brands

INTRODUCTION

The dispute between Israelis and Palestinians remains unresolved to this day. In fact, these opposing groups continue to engage in frequent confrontations that have claimed many innocent lives, including children, and have directly or indirectly destroyed public infrastructure and services. Academics from all around the world have studied this dispute in great detail, looking at its root causes as well as potential solutions. Many claim that it is difficult to identify the fundamental causes of the conflict between Israelis and Palestinians due to its complex character. As a matter of fact, it is challenging to pinpoint the initial causes of this conflict because it most likely combines social, religious, and economic elements (Burr & Smith, 2007).

Yusuf Al-Qaradawi, a prominent Egyptian Muslim scholar, has exhibited a keen interest in the ongoing conflict, particularly through his issuance of a fatwa. Qaradawi underscores the imperative of jihad for Palestinian Muslims against the Israeli population, thereby persuading Palestinian Muslims that their engagement in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict constitutes a sacred religious obligation (Ibrahim, 2014).

As highlighted by (Shemer, 2016), Qaradawi contends that the foundational cause of the contemporary conflict between Palestinians and Israelis is closely intertwined with theological discourses. Qaradawi asserts that the primary catalyst for the recent Israeli-Palestinian conflict can be traced back to the lives of Abraham's wives, Hagar and Sarah, ultimately resulting in the expulsion of Hagar and her son, Ishmael. This is elucidated in Genesis chapter 21: 8-21, where Hagar's banishment is attributed to Sarah's plea. Sarah desires Ishmael, Hagar's son, to share in the inheritance alongside her own son, Isaac. Hence, Sarah urges her husband to expel Hagar and her son, stating, *'Cast out this slave woman with her son; for the son of the slave woman shall not inherit along with my son Isaac'* (Genesis 21:10).

Undoubtedly, from the Muslim perspective, the primary impetus for Hagar's migration is theologically rooted in obedience and loyalty to the commands of God. Subsequently, Abraham brought Hagar and Ishmael to Mecca. At a certain point,

Abraham, feeling a longing for his son Ishmael, visited him in Mecca. During one of these visits, Abraham and Ishmael collaborated in the construction of the Kaaba in Mecca, designating it as a place of worship dedicated to the singular God. The significance of Abraham and Ishmael in establishing the Kaaba is paramount in Islam, as it serves as the focal point toward which all Muslims are required to physically direct their daily prayers. It is imperative to recognize Abraham as the initial monotheistic (hanif) figure, and Arabs are believed to be descendants of Ishmael (Shemer, 2016).

Concerning the land of Palestine, Israeli people, predominantly of the Jewish faith, assert that Palestine (and/or the present Israeli government) is the territory divinely sworn and promised to them and their progeny. Quoting Deuteronomy 34: 1-4, Moses ascends Mount Nebo, and God reveals to him the vast expanse of land promised to the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, reinforcing the Israeli belief in their divine entitlement to the region.

From a historical perspective, the area that is now Israel and Palestine has seen the domination of multiple empires as well as the presence of a broad range of populations. The locals experienced religious conversions at various times, such as when they converted to Islam after the Arab conquest and to Christianity during the Byzantine era. By the 20th century, the vast majority of people followed Islam, with smaller populations of Jews and Christians. The Jewish community around the world split after two millennia of living in the diaspora, with some calling for integration into the host nation's culture and others outright supporting the creation of a Jewish state in Palestine. Even though the vast majority of Jews lived outside of Israel, the horrific events of the Holocaust and pressure from the US were key factors in the establishment of a Jewish state (Burr & Smith, 2007, pp. 219–224).

This movement is inextricably related to Zionism, which aims to build a Jewish state in a manner consistent with Western democracy in a region that has traditionally been ruled by the kingdoms of Judah and Israel for roughly five centuries. There are those among the Jews who contend that the area that surrounds

Jerusalem (Israel and Palestine) is theirs by divine right and that they must take responsibility for its settlement and defense. Furthermore, the United Nations suggested in November 1947 splitting the so-called "disputed land" into two sections, one for Arabs and the other for Jews, subject to population changes. Furthermore, on May 14, 1948, the Jews were able to effectively establish the State of Israel. As a result, a great number of Arab-Palestinians were not only dispossessed but also did not actively seek out a secular state based on freedom and justice, even though they were forbidden by Islamic law from practicing their faith (Burr & Smith, 2007).

Moreover, Baroudi further argues that Qaradawi's viewpoints are crucial in forming the Islamist interpretation of international affairs. These opinions find common ground with the beliefs of righteous realism and neoclassicalists, as well as secular Arab nationalists and Third World and Western critics of the current international order. This junction highlights Qaradawi's theories' wider influence on several ideological frameworks in the international relations debate (Baroudi, 2014).

A study by Bartal, (Bartal, 2016) conducted a study that emphasizes Qaradawi's viewpoint that Israeli's imperialism towards Palestinians represent a real danger to the Islamic world, especially to Palestinian Muslims. According to Qaradawi, Muslims see Israelis as their biggest enemies, and the Israelis government is seen as the most dangerous in the world when it comes to Muslim populations. Qaradawi further reveals that Israel's territorial expansion extends beyond Palestine to include Iraq, Egypt, and Hejaz.

This paper 'Revisiting the Thought of Yusuf al-Qaradawi on the Boycott of Pro-Israel Brands' holds significance as it delves into the influential ideas of Yusuf al-Qaradawi and their impact on the call for boycotting pro-Israel brands. Investigating Qaradawi's perspective is crucial for understanding the ideological underpinnings of this boycott movement, shedding light on its theological, social, and economic dimensions. Analyzing al-Qaradawi's ideas on boycotting pro-Israel brands provides an insightful lens for understanding how such notions resonate in

Indonesia, a predominantly Muslim nation. The juxtaposition of Qaradawi's perspectives with Indonesian fatwas enriches the discussion, offering a nuanced exploration of how global ideologies translate into local contexts.

DISCUSSION

What is Boycott? A brief Discussion

The decision to stop buying something, as well as the prohibition and deliberate avoidance of buying something, are all considered forms of boycotting. In fact, there is a notable dearth of study on boycotts in both Indonesia and overseas countries (Hendarto, 2013). A boycott constitutes a form of advocacy that raises public awareness regarding issues and rights championed by specific entities.

According to Forno, as is cited by (Yunus et al., 2020) In essence, a boycott is a collective action, involving one or more parties, aimed at a particular objective by encouraging abstention from purchasing specific goods or utilizing particular services. Consequently, academic discourse on a fundamental and lucid introduction to the concept of boycott remains relatively limited. Hence, this paper explores the concept of boycott, encompassing its terminological history and background. The ensuing discourse delves into various facets of boycott, including its categories, approaches, operational aspects, types of boycotted products, and the objectives underlying boycott campaigns.

A boycott, moreover, is defined as a concerted and intentional refusal on the part of individuals or organizations to buy specific products or use specific services, usually as a form of protest or to support social and political change. With a long history and a strong foundation in the concept of using economic support to affect change, boycotts are an effective means of expressing disapproval.

The word "boycott" had its historical beginnings during the Irish Land War in Ireland in the late 1800s. The phrase is named after Captain Charles Boycott, an English land agent who, because of his harsh and exploitative methods, was generally shunned by the farmers in the area. The word was first used in this

instance, and it has subsequently spread as a popular activism tactic (McNamara, 2019).

The effectiveness of boycotts lies in their capacity to generate public awareness and rally support for particular causes. Over the years, boycotts have been employed to address various issues, including civil rights, labor rights, environmental concerns, and social justice. Notable historical examples include the Montgomery Bus Boycott during the American civil rights movement, where African Americans refused to use segregated buses, and the global boycott against South African apartheid. Boycotts are not confined to national borders; they often take on an international dimension. The anti-apartheid movement, for instance, mobilized global efforts to boycott South African goods and services until apartheid was dismantled. In recent times, social media has facilitated the rapid spread of information, enabling the swift organization of global boycotts in response to perceived injustices (McNamara, 2019; Yunus et al., 2020).

Alongside societal developments, the boycotting tactic has also changed. Modern boycotts can take on digital forms, using internet channels to spread information and rally support, in contrast to historic boycotts that required physical presence and group action. Boycotts are a vital tool for holding firms responsible for their behavior as consumers' awareness of ethical issues grows. They force many businesses to review their policies and procedures in order to conform to public expectations. The definition and history of a boycott, taken together, essentially highlight the boycott's capacity to be a flexible and dynamic mode of protest that can have an impact on local and international social and economic environments. Boycotts, as a tactic used by both individuals and groups, are still shaping stories about justice, equity, and ethical business practices in our globalized society.

Is The Boycott of Pro-Israel Brands Part of Jihad? Qaradawi's Point of View

The call for The Boycott of Pro-Israel Brands is obviously much influenced by Qaradawi's Fatwa on *jihad* in Palestine. According to (Lahoud, 2009), in the view of Qaradawi, the word of *jihad* deals with an effort to reach the goals of life,

the mercy of God. Qaradawi, further, distinguishes two types of *jihad*, namely the civil *jihad* and military *jihad*. The civil *jihad* spiritually encircles many aspects of human's needs, such as educational, social, economic and the medical needs. This type of *jihad* is an attempt to develop the social awareness of Muslims so that they become more sociable, educating the ignorant people, providing a job for the unemployed, feeding the hungry, giving clothes to the naked, building schools for students, mosques for worshipping Allah, and hospital for medical care. This what Qaradawi sees as the basic idea of the civil *jihad* (Lahoud, 2009).

Furthermore, Qaradawi defines military *jihad* as fighting against people who disturb or attack the life of Muslims. The military *jihad* is classified into defensive *jihad* and offensive *jihad*. Defensive *jihad* deals with the act of defence from the attack of those who want to combat Muslims, while offensive *jihad* is understood as a *jihad* to protect Muslims' dignity against their enemies. Hamas, a Muslim-Palestinian army, for example has seemed to intensively look at the ruling of *jihad* in the perspective of Qaradawi (Gardner & Rich, 2007). The important points of Qaradawi's fatwa on *jihad* in Palestine are:

إنني مع جماعة حماس في حصر المعركة في أرض فلسطين المحتلة، ومقاتلة العدو المحتل المباشر، وعدم جواز نقل المعركة خارج فلسطين لأن منطق حماس هنا مستمد من القرآن الكريم الذي يقول وقاتلوا في سبيل الله الذين يقاتلونكم ولا تعتدوا إن الله لا يحب المعتدين
إن هذا الحادث الفظيع لا يستفيد منه فلسطيني ولا عربي ولا مسلم، بل هو يشوه صورة الإسلام إذا صدر عن مسلم، ولا يستفيد من هذا العمل غير إسرائيل وحدها، التي استغلت انشغال العالم بالمأساة الحالية، لتضاعف ضرياتها للفلسطينيين، وتطويق مدينة جنين وغيرها، وتكثف قصفها وقتلها الجماعي للشعب الفلسطيني المحاصر عسكرياً، واقتصادياً، والمهدد بالبطالة والجوع

Roughly translated, the above-mentioned text means: 'I am standing for the group of *Hamas* in the inventory of the battle to occupy the land of Palestine, and the direct fighter against the enemy, and the inadmissibility of taking the fight outside Palestine. Hamas employs a very logic reason that is derived from the Quran which says (*Fight in the cause of God those who fight you not transgress Allah love not any*

aggressors). This horrifying incident actually does not benefit the Palestinians nor Arab nor Muslim, but it distorts the image of Islam if issued by a Muslim, does not benefit from this work is not only Israel, which took advantage of the world preoccupied with the current tragedy, doubling its strikes to the Palestinians, and encircle the city of Jenin and elsewhere, and intensified shelling The mass killing of the Muslim-Palestinian people besieged militarily, economically and threatened by unemployment and hunger.'

According to the above-mentioned statement, Qaradawi emphasizes that the Palestine is a land that belongs to Palestinian people. He further also discusses his personal reaction to the accord of future peace dealing with the pre-1967 territory consideration: 'The so-called peace accords involved recognizing the Jew's right to the usurped lands which means that Haifa, Jaffa, Acre, Al-Ladd Ramallah, Beer Sheba and even Jerusalem will be considered as Israeli Lands. Such cities that have been part of the Muslim world for more than thirteen hundred years will become part of the Zionist Jewish state. Hence, we will never be able to claim them back and after being taken by force, such places will be legitimately given to the enemy.' Thus, it is the responsibility of future generations to protect and care for this territory in the event that the Palestinian Muslims of today are unable to do so due to Israeli attacks. It is undeniable that the conflict between Israel and Palestine is not just one of territory; ultimately, it is a struggle for survival (Gardner & Rich, 2007).

Another consideration is Qaradawi's viewpoint, asserting that the conflict between Palestinians and the Israeli population is not merely a matter of choice but a defensive struggle— a war to secure the establishment of Palestinian-Muslim territory. Consequently, Qaradawi urges the entire Palestinian-Muslim community, encompassing women and children, to intensify their efforts in confronting Israelis individuals who pose a threat and engage in hostilities. Addressing the Jewish belief in God's promise of the land to Israel and its descendants, it is crucial to interpret this commitment as conditional. Analysis reveals that the entitlement to the land is contingent upon the people of Israel maintaining loyalty to the commands and decrees of God (Shemer, 2016).

Regarding with the boycott of pro-Israel brands's movement, Qaradawi has been acknowledged as the most famous fatwa to support the "The Boycott of Israeli and American Commodities with his Jihad's Declaration of Jihad (Halevi, 2012, p. 8). According to Qaradawi, boycotting is not merely an economic strategy but a form of resistance against perceived enemies of the Islamic faith and the Muslim community. He asserts that the conflict between Palestinians and Israelis extends beyond a war of choice to a defensive struggle—a battle for the establishment of Palestinian-Muslim territory. Qaradawi urges the entire Palestinian-Muslim community, including women and children, to intensify efforts in countering Jewish individuals who are perceived as adversaries (Al-Qaradawi, 2002).

Qaradawi elucidates the legal perspective on boycotting products from the Pro-Israel Brands, deeming it impermissible to purchase goods from these nations that contribute to the funding of conflicts in Palestine. This prohibition, as cited in his work *"Fatawa al-Muashirah,"* contends that every monetary unit used to buy Israeli or American products swiftly transforms into bullets that maim and kill Palestinian youth and children. Therefore, Qaradawi prohibits Muslims from purchasing items or products from these enemies of Islam, asserting that such transactions amount to supporting the tyranny, colonization, and murders perpetrated by these adversaries against the Muslim community. Qaradawi grounds his legal stance on two justifications. Firstly, he refers to *Surah al-Mumtahanah*, verse 9, which states, *"Indeed, Allah only forbids you from those who fight you because of religion and expel you from your homes and aid in your expulsion - [forbids] that you make allies of them. And whoever makes allies of them, then it is those who are the wrongdoers."* Secondly, he cites the approval of Prophet Muhammad (SAW) regarding the boycott of wheat shipments from Bani Hanifah imposed by Tsumamah, the king of Yamamah, upon the Quraysh of Mecca. Despite eventually asking Tsumamah to end the boycott due to the famine faced by the Quraysh, the wheat boycott had previously been executed. Earlier, when Prophet Muhammad lived in Mecca, he and his companions were boycotted by the residents of Mecca.

Abu Lahab even urged traders to raise prices for Muslims, causing suffering to the Muslim community. Qaradawi underscores that boycotting is the sole weapon available to civilian populations, emphasizing that governments cannot force citizens to buy products from specific sources (Read more discussion: Gardner & Rich, 2007; Nashrullah, n.d.).

This Egyptian-born scholar urges the utilization of boycotts against enemies of religion and the Muslim community, emphasizing that adversaries should feel the impact of such boycotts, at the very least recognizing that the Muslim community is alive. According to Qaradawi, boycotting represents not only economic resistance but also an early lesson for Muslims to liberate themselves from dependence on non-beneficial preferences. Boycotting is an expression of solidarity and unity among the Muslim community, serving as both a form of passive resistance and support for the active resistance carried out by mujahideen in the Palestinian jihad. He cites the Quranic verse (Surah al-Anfaal: 73) emphasizing that failure to adhere to Allah's commandments may result in chaos and immense corruption on Earth (Al-Qaradawi, 2002; Nashrullah, n.d.).

The Boycott of Pro-Israel Brands Movement in Indonesia

The recent issuance of Fatwa No. 83/2023 by the Indonesian Ulama Council (MUI) has sparked a critical discourse on the boycott of pro-Israel brands in Indonesia. The fatwa strongly recommends Indonesian Muslims to abstain from transactions and the use of products affiliated with Israel, framing it as a religious duty. The discourse centers on the prohibition of supporting entities linked to Israel's occupation and Zionism. Furthermore, the fatwa not only emphasizes material support but also encourages Muslims to actively engage in humanitarian efforts for Palestine. This includes fundraising, prayers for victory, and performing absentee prayers for the martyrs in Palestine. The discourse intertwines religious duties with humanitarian gestures, showcasing a holistic approach to the Palestinian cause (MAJELIS ULAMA INDONESIA, n.d.).

The Fatwa No. 83/2023, issued by the Indonesian Ulama Council (MUI), I would argue, has ignited a critical discourse surrounding the boycott of pro-Israel brands in Indonesia. The fatwa's cornerstone lies in religious imperatives, urging Indonesian Muslims to refrain from transactions involving products affiliated with Israel, framing such abstinence as a religious duty. This highlights the convergence of faith and consumer behavior, underscoring the influence of religious authorities on personal choices. Moreover, the fatwa, I believe, categorically declares that supporting the Palestinian struggle against Israeli aggression is a legal obligation for Muslims. Financial contributions, including zakat, infaq, and sedekah, are highlighted as means of fulfilling this duty. The fatwa's legal framing seeks to institutionalize the boycott within the framework of Islamic law, reinforcing the notion that the boycott is not merely a suggestion but an obligatory act. Acknowledging the dynamic nature of crises, the fatwa exhibits flexibility by allowing the distribution of zakat funds to more distant locations, such as supporting the Palestinian struggle in emergency circumstances. This pragmatic approach adapts religious guidance to the evolving exigencies of the situation.

A common thread unites Fatwa No. 83/2023 from the Indonesian Ulama Council (MUI) with Qaradawi's fatwa on boycotting pro-Israel brands: they both call for a boycott of organizations connected to Israel. With an emphasis on the moral and legal necessity of abstaining from supporting Israel's activities, both religious directives portray the boycott as a religious obligation. Furthermore, they go beyond personal conduct, advocating for official intervention and global diplomatic measures to exert pressure on Israel. The fatwas show how to fully express one's support for the Palestinian cause through economic means by combining political activism with religious requirements.

CONCLUSION

In summary, Yusuf Al-Qaradawi's thoughts on boycotting pro-Israel brands extend beyond mere economic strategy; he views it as a form of resistance against

perceived enemies of Islam. He emphasizes the defensive struggle for the establishment of Palestinian-Muslim territory, urging the entire community, including women and children, to counter Israelis adversaries actively. Qaradawi grounds his legal stance on religious justifications, citing Quranic verses and the historical precedent of Prophet Muhammad's approval of a boycott.

The recent Fatwa No. 83/2023 issued by the Indonesian Ulama Council (MUI) mirrors Qaradawi's principles, framing the boycott of pro-Israel brands as a religious duty. The fatwa emphasizes the prohibition of supporting entities linked to Israel's occupation and Zionism, aligning faith with consumer behavior. It goes further, declaring the support for the Palestinian struggle as a legal obligation for Muslims and integrating financial contributions as a means of fulfilling this duty. This fatwa, akin to Qaradawi's, intertwines faith and activism, adapting religious guidance to the evolving exigencies of the situation. Both Qaradawi's and MUI's fatwas share a common thread, advocating for a boycott of organizations connected to Israel, portraying it as a religious obligation, and urging political activism alongside individual conduct. These directives demonstrate a holistic approach to expressing support for the Palestinian cause through economic means, combining religious principles with political and diplomatic measures.

REFERENCES

- Al-Qaradawi, Y. (2002, April 4). *Boycott Israel Campaign*.
- Bartal, S. (2016). The danger of Israel according to Sheikh Yusuf Qaradawi. *Israel Affairs*, 22(2), 479–491. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13537121.2016.1140343>
- Burr, E. Geraldine., & Smith, D. W. (2007). *Understanding World Religions: A Road Map for Justice and Peace*. Rowman & Littlefield.
- Gardner, M., & Rich, D. (2007). *Fatawa on Palestine by Sheikh Yusuf Al-Qaradawi*. Al-Falah Foundation.
- Halevi, L. (2012). THE CONSUMER JIHAD: BOYCOTT FATWAS AND NONVIOLENT RESISTANCE ON THE WORLD WIDE WEB. *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 44(1), 45–70. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0020743811001243>
- Hendarto, K. A. (2013). Stakeholder Analysis on Boycott Movement: A Preliminary Study Using Media Contexts. *ASEAN Marketing Journal*, 3(2). <https://doi.org/10.21002/amj.v3i2.2024>
- Ibrahim, R. (2014, January 31). Top Islamic Leader Calls on U.S. to Wage “Jihad for Allah.” *Middle East Forum*, *FrontPageMagazine.com*. www.meforum.org

- Lahoud, N. (2009, October 26). *Qaradawi on Jihad*. www.jihadica.com/qaradawi-on-jihad-1-of-3
- MAJELIS ULAMA INDONESIA. (n.d.). *FATWA MAJELIS ULAMA INDONESIA Nomor: 83 Tahun 2023 TENTANG HUKUM DUKUNGAN TERHADAP PERJUANGAN PALESTINA*.
- McNamara, R. (2019, August 14). *Boycott*. <https://www.thoughtco.com/definition-of-boycott-1773364>
- Nashrullah, N. (n.d.). Ini 2 Dalil Syekh Yusuf Qaradhawi Boikot Produk Israel-AS. *October 14, 2019*. <https://khazanah.republika.co.id/berita/pzd1rt320/ini-2-dalil-syekh-yusuf-qaradhawi-boikot-produk-israelas#:~:text=Syekh%20Qaradhawi%20menjelaskan%2C%20boikot%20merupakan,musuh%20agama%20dan%20umat%20Islam>
- Shemer, N. R. (2016, April 29). *Qaradawi's View of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict*. *Hudson*. <https://www.hudson.org/node/39679>
- Yunus, A. M., Chik, W. M. Y. W., Abd Wahid, N., Daud, K. A., & Abd Hamid, M. N. (2020). The Concept of Boycott: A General Introduction. *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences*, 10(9), Pages 962-971. <https://doi.org/10.6007/IJARBS/v10-i9/7889>