

Life, Peace & Death, War

It all started when I was heading towards my first vote in the 2024 Indonesian presidential election. At that time, I started to have awareness on issues in my country. Issues such as the environment, social justice, the economy, poverty, unemployment, law enforcement, and so on.

I realized that those crucial aspects are somehow very fragile due to the government's incompetence and, of course, unwillingness.

My awareness grew not only in the political year (2024), but continues until now with a wider area, highlighting the injustice all over the world. From having awareness, I started to learn what happens in Indonesia. I learned that although it is a democracy, it does not always listen to what people protest. In reality, there are many cases where justice can be achieved only by going viral. The absence of justice, day by day, has led to the popular saying.

Nevertheless, I tried to see objectively how things are going on in my country, comparing the current situation to other countries. Sadly, I came to the conclusion that in current years—or perhaps current decades, the situation is generally becoming worse and worse, especially with the rise of right-wing political parties in many countries. Furthermore, I realized that when I was living peacefully in Indonesia and Malaysia, there are people in many countries who are living under wars for intervention of other bigger powers around their countries. This attracted me to know and care more about them. One issue that has especially captured my attention is Palestine.

A few weeks ago, in the midst of hopelessness and frustration of the worsening situation in Gaza, a post on Instagram grabbed my attention. It was about Madleen, a single ship launched by Freedom Flotilla Coalition to go to Gaza and deliver humanitarian aid. The post was liked and shared by millions, partially because there were some famous public figures such as Greta Thunberg and Rima Hassan. This brought a fresh and new hope to end the occupation. Although they did not hold military power, they could attract the media, people, and, therefore, shift the narratives to look at Palestinian's side.

From my perspective as a Muslim, this was both inspiring and shameful. From all 12 crews, only a few are muslim. The Muslim community is significant in number but not necessarily in action or power. However, the Madleen launching marked as a moment to think deeply and critically on what I, as a human, have done, am doing, and will do.

Suddenly, a number of questions arose in my mind. Is it enough? What else can I do? What is the most significant and effective way to help them? Have I lost my humanity, as I now seem to have grown numb to images of injured and dying people on social media?

More and more, my mind was full of questions questioning my morals, my humanity, and, lastly, my faith in Allah.

These did distract my daily life, urging me to find the answers. Meanwhile, another news reported: Madleen was intercepted by Israel's navy and all crews were detained, raising global concerns for their safety. Social media and newspaper media were highlighting this continuously, yet the crazy thing was, shamelessly, most European governments remained silent and did not take any action.

At this stage, one question arose: Why are they risking their lives to help Palestinians—people whom they never meet nor know personally? We all know that the Israeli army has a history of killing civilians, including children, without remorse after killing humans. Yet, all 12 activists chose to go to Gaza unarmed.

In the other part of the world, especially North African countries, people are organizing to march to Gaza, aiming for the same purpose as Madleen did: break the blockade and deliver humanitarian aid. Yet, again, they were stopped by the authorities of, ironically, Egypt. This is a country where most of its citizens are muslim yet prevents people from reaching Gaza to help those suffering under starvation for months. My emotions, precisely anger, peaked when I saw a video where a British non-muslim activist begged Egyptian soldiers to allow him to deliver humanitarian aid.

We failed. We all might have lost one of the most important things in our lives. One thing that values more than our lives.

We have failed our humanity...

I brought my concerns to a QnA session in an event hosted by the Religious and Social Welfare Department of PPI, wishing there I could get something that I can forgive myself. The speaker, a Palestinian, said the fact that I asked him whether I have lost my humanity or not, proves that it is still there, existing somewhere within my heart. This, at least, calmed my heart for a moment, knowing that I am forgiven for my inability to do something direct.

Many may ask, why I think about this so deeply—as if it haunts me. The answer is—other than my responsibilities to Allah—I want to be a full human being. I have been feeling that I am

lacking something truly pivotal as a human. I once, fully aware, felt nothing when I hurt someone. Therefore, I want to do something to find it, prove it, and get it, though I am unsure what it is.