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Hashtag War in Gaza: An Analysis of the Role of Indonesian Citizens in #JulidFisabilillah from the Transnational Conflict Dimension

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ABSTRACT

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict not only has an impact on land but also extends to cyberspace. This research investigates the digital landscape of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, specifically focusing on online activism surrounding the Gaza conflict. This research investigates the hashtag #JulidFisabilillah, a leading online movement originating from Indonesian citizens. Through comprehensive analysis, this research aims to uncover the motivations, narratives, and impacts of #JulidFisabilillah in the broader context of the Israeli-Palestinian War. By examining digital discourse, social media trends, and the role of Indonesian society in shaping online narratives, this research provides insight into the transnational dimensions of the conflict and the influence of digital activism on public opinion. These findings contribute to a deeper understanding of the role played by Indonesian netizens on online platforms in mobilizing global support and shaping perceptions during geopolitical conflicts.

Keywords: Cyberspace, Indonesia, Israel-Palestine Conflict, Online War.

ABSTRAK

Konflik Israel-Palestina tidak hanya berdampak di darat, tetapi juga meluas hingga di dunia maya. Penelitian ini menyelidiki lanskap digital dari konflik Israel-Palestina, secara khusus berfokus pada aktivisme online seputar konflik Gaza. Penelitian ini menyelidiki tagar #JulidFisabilillah, sebuah gerakan online terkemuka yang berasal dari warga negara Indonesia. Melalui analisis yang komprehensif, penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengungkap motivasi, narasi, dan dampak dari #JulidFisabilillah dalam konteks yang lebih luas dari Perang Israel-Palestina. Dengan mengkaji wacana digital, tren media sosial, dan peran masyarakat Indonesia dalam membentuk narasi daring, penelitian ini memberikan wawasan tentang dimensi transnasional dari konflik tersebut dan pengaruh aktivisme digital terhadap opini publik. Temuan-temuan ini berkontribusi pada pemahaman yang lebih dalam tentang peran yang dimainkan oleh warganet Indonesia dalam platform online dalam memobilisasi dukungan global dan membentuk persepsi selama konflik geopolitik.

Keywords: Cyberspace, Indonesia, Israel-Palestine Conflict, Online War.



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1. Introduction

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict is one of the most complex and prolonged conflicts in the modern era. This conflict, which has been going on for more than 100 years, originated in the early 20th century (Gelvin, 2014). At that time, the British Foreign Minister, Arthur Balfour, wrote a letter addressed to Lionel Walter Rothschild, a figure in the British Jewish community. The letter was short, only 67 words, but its contents had an impact on Palestine that is still felt today. (Djuyandi et al., 2021). After World War II, demands emerged for the establishment of a Jewish state on land that was considered the Land of Israel according to Jewish historical and religious traditions. Meanwhile, the Arab population of the region rejects these claims, stating that they are the rightful owners of the land (Miller, 2018). Finally, the Arab-Israeli Wars of 1948, 1956, 1967, and 1973, also known as the Six Day War, (Mohammad & Bali, 2017) The Sinai War, Six Day War, and Yom Kippur War, respectively, gave a new dimension to the conflict this and shapes regional dynamics. The results of these wars, such as Israel's occupation of the West Bank, Gaza Strip, and East Jerusalem, are a source of international controversy and disapproval to this day.

Currently, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict has spread not only through armed confrontation on land, sea, and air. The Israeli-Palestinian war extended to the world of cyberspace (Evans, 2016; Siapera et al., 2015). Along with advances in information technology and internet penetration, parties involved in these conflicts use digital platforms as a means to advance their agendas, influence public opinion, and involve supporters from all over the world (Raza et al., 2023). In modern conflicts, social media such as Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram have become the main stage where pro-Israel and pro-Palestinian groups voice their views. Specific hashtags, online campaigns, and multimedia content are used as tools to mobilize support, celebrate victories, or condemn specific attacks (Hassan & Elaiza, 2016). One striking example is the use of hashtags such as #FreePalestine (Cervi & Marín-Lladó, 2022) and #Israel Under Attack which became the center of attention online during a series of violent incidents.

Recently it appeared #JulidFisabilillah from Indonesian netizens who had made various accounts of Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) soldiers 'terrified'. Via X's account (formerly called Twitter) @Greschinov, he uploaded "Operation Technical Announcement #JulidFiSabilillah Hassan bin Thabit Brigade".(*Julid Fi Sabilillah, Online War Supporting Palestine That Makes Zionists Distraught / Republika Online Mobile*, n.d.). This movement targets the Israeli army and police. Apart from that, there are also citizens and bodies with anti-Palestinian narratives. This movement is proof that the escalation of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict can be seen from a transnational dimension.

2. Research Method

This research used qualitative methods with a netnography approach. The netnography is a method adopted from ethnography which has been adapted to use social media (Kozinets, 2006). We focused our research on the phenomenon that occurred on social media regarding the #JulidFiSabilillah hashtag war. We try to analyze how the spread and impact of the hashtag in the transnational conflict that occurred. The primary data used is data from social media, namely Instagram from @greschinov, which is the main focus of the research and is supported by books, journals, and supporting theories. Secondary data in this research is supporting information sourced from news pages and YouTube related to the main conflict that we raised.

This approach is used to find out how the digital movement spreads to voice the conflict in Palestine. In collecting data on the distribution of the hashtag #JulidFiSabilillah, we used a digital application called Brand24 which helps in analyzing the existence of usage and mentions of this hashtag. Apart from that, the author collected books and accredited journals to strengthen the research data. We then reduced the data and presented it in the form of tables and figures. Finally, the author carries out the process of concluding as a result of the research conducted.

3. Result and Discussion

3.1. #Julidfisabilillah; History, Role, and Motives of the Movement

Hashtag #Julidfisabilillah is a pro-Palestinian Manifestation Movement that operates on social media. This hashtag was initiated by Erlangga Greschinov as a form of emancipation towards genocide that occurred in Palestine. The genocide that occurred in Palestine is a phenomenon that has become a public secret. The attacks carried out by Israel from ancient times on Palestine heated up again on October 7, 2023. This became the world's spotlight, making Erlangga Greschinov take the initiative to make a breakthrough through social media. According to Erlangga, this movement initially only organized attacks on Indonesian social media, but as this

operation progressed, netizens from Malaysia to Turkey provided support and joined in the Julid Fi Sabilillah operation. The man who is familiarly called Gres started the Julid Fi Sabilillah operation because of the anxiety he experienced as a result of the rise of IDF individuals who were proud of their success in carrying out attacks on Palestine. One proof of the popularity of the IDF account is @guy_niceguy who posted the IDF's pride in carrying out genocide in Palestine.



Figure 1. Posts from IDF accounts that are proud of committing genocide

In his interview on TV One station, Gres said that the IDF's action was an action that violated morality and was devoid of humanity.

The philosophy behind the formation of the name Julid Fi Sabilillah is based on a play on Jihad Fi Sabilillah. In Islamic teachings, Jihad Fi Sabilillah is defined as fighting in the way of Allah (Ridho, 2019). However, changing Jihad to Julid is an adoption of an abbreviation of the word trend *millennial* which means being honest even though it's difficult. The analogy of Julid Fi Sabilillah is an operation that attacks pro-Israel sentiment armed with social media such as Instagram, X, and TikTok.

Intalk shown Arie Untung's YouTube page, Gres revealed that Julid fi Sabilillah's operation was divided into several strategies which had general *goals* as a resistance movement to the pro-Israel atmosphere through social media. These strategies include *First*, Operation Stand With the Fussy. The main objective of this operation was to obtain secret Israeli information using direct *Messenger* to IDF accounts. IDF is the Israel Defense Force which is an army unit belonging to the state of Israel (Gelvin, 2014). This strategy is carried out by seeking Israel's confidence that we will be in their camp and supporting those who aim to give sweet bait to Israel. If this trust is in favor of Netizens, they will gradually give space to the IDF story under the guise of acting as a role so IDF doesn't feel alone. Psychologically, having a storytelling space will support a person's self-confidence (Wahyuni, 2017). However, as time goes by their stories will become more numerous and add additional information *private* for the public in cyberspace. This is used to provide information about strategies and plans carried out by the Zionists.



Figure 2. Interview with Erlangga Grechinove
(Source: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vUVMdX0tb_I)

Second, attack pro-Palestine, This operation was carried out by asking for government assistance to carry out policies limiting various economic and government interactions with Israel. The concrete evidence that Gres did was sending a letter to the President of the Republic of Indonesia, Joko Widodo, to revoke the sailing permits for Israeli ships crossing Indonesian waters. Media which has the advantage of translating communication (Sulianta, 2015) proves that within 1x72 hours the policy was answered directly by the Ministry of Transportation (Kemenhub) that with genocide What Israel has done to Palestine means that Israeli ships are prohibited from sailing through Indonesian waters.

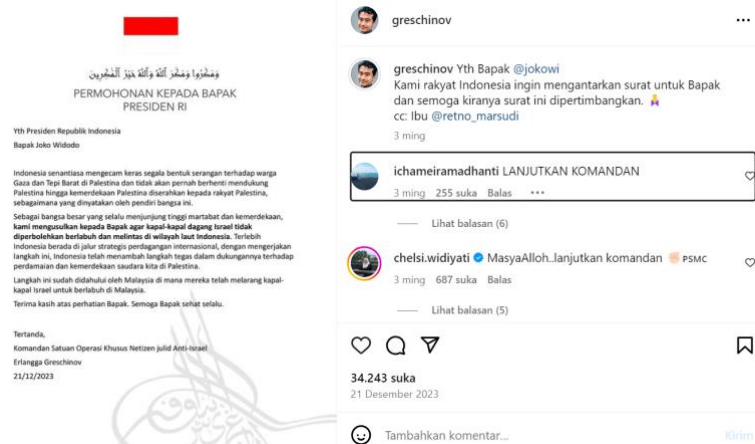


Figure 3. Application Letter from Erlangga Greschinov

(Source: https://www.instagram.com/p/C1G_hyGSvim/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link&igsh=MzRIODBiNWFIZA==)

Third, on January 11-12 2024 a call for action to speak out circulated *End Israel Genocide*. Coinciding with this date, the International Court of Justice (ICJ) has opened a case against genocide carried out by the state. *Apartheid* Israel. The ICJ is an international court that has a role as an international legal organ (Dewanto, 2005). The realization of the attack was carried out by posting as many crimes as Israel could commit to international media accounts. The hope is that it can open the world's eyes to the crimes committed by Israel against Hamas forces.



Figure 4. Third Strike Operation

(Source: https://www.instagram.com/p/C18XQMdxcd/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link&igsh=MzRIODBiNWFIZA==)

Not only did JFS announce this attack, but the Republic of South Africa also announced information aimed at *atcyber* which their country has to carry out attacks via social media to coincide with the ICJ case hearing on that date.



Fourth, controlling such as bullying, insults, hacking, and reporting mass attacks on Zionist accounts. In his operations, Gres emphasized not to carry a narrative of antisemitism. Antisemitism is an example of a vague ideological pattern based on religious fanaticism and nationalism (Kharismawati, 1907). Gres said "Because what we are doing is fighting Israel's atrocities, not the Jewish nation or race," he said in Katadata.id (*Getting to Know Julid Fi Sabilillah: Hacking and Defaming Pro-Israel Social Media Accounts - Technology Katadata. Co.Id*, n.d.). Gres believes that when carrying out an attack there is no need to bring up race or bring up the Holocaust that occurred in the past. The Holocaust was a genocide against approximately 6 million European Jews during World War II (DHINI, 2015).

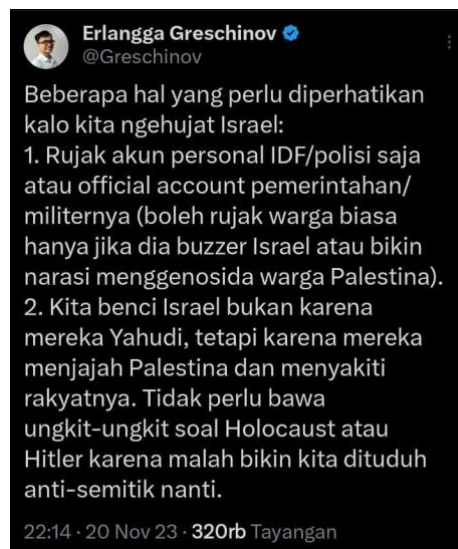


Figure 6. Erlangga Greschinov's tweet
(Source: <https://images.app.goo.gl/swAUQHcdyfF9ECnp8>)

Finally, Gres always updates information related to genocide carried out by Zionist Israel. This aims to provide updated information to Jihad Fi Sabilillah troops so that they understand the conditions of the attacks that occurred in Palestine. That way, they know how the dynamics of attacks are shaped by war policies on social media. Implicitly and surely the IDF will realize that they are hated by the eyes of the world.

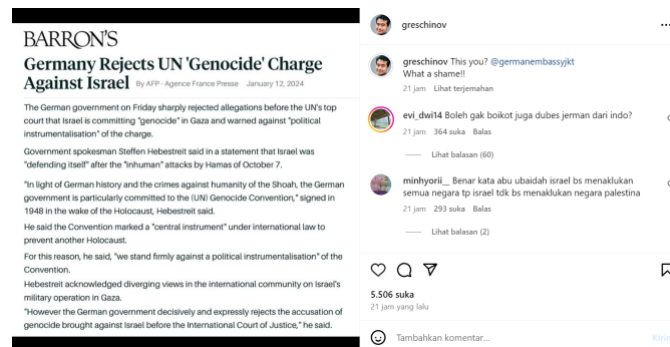


Figure 7. Erlangga Greschinov's IG post

(Source: https://www.instagram.com/p/C2C7bYwyfCx/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link&igsh=MzRIODBiNWFiZA==)

With the hashtag #Julidfisabilillah This makes it easier for the Indonesian people and the world to start meaningful solidarity actions for the Palestinian people. "It's Time for Fingers to Give Meaning" is a slogan of continued encouragement built by Gres as operations leader Julid Fi Sabilillah. In this way, community support, initially in the form of individuals, can be well organized and agree to become one voice for Palestine.

3.2. Hashtags as a Tool of Resistance: Involvement of Indonesian Netizens in the #Julidfisabilillah Trend on Page X

Netizens are increasingly discussing the Julid Fi Sabilillah (JFS) operation on several social media pages. Various responses from the cyber community or what are often called netizens are crucial in supporting the JFS attack strategy. From the analysis carried out by the author via the Brand24 website, the author obtained the following data:

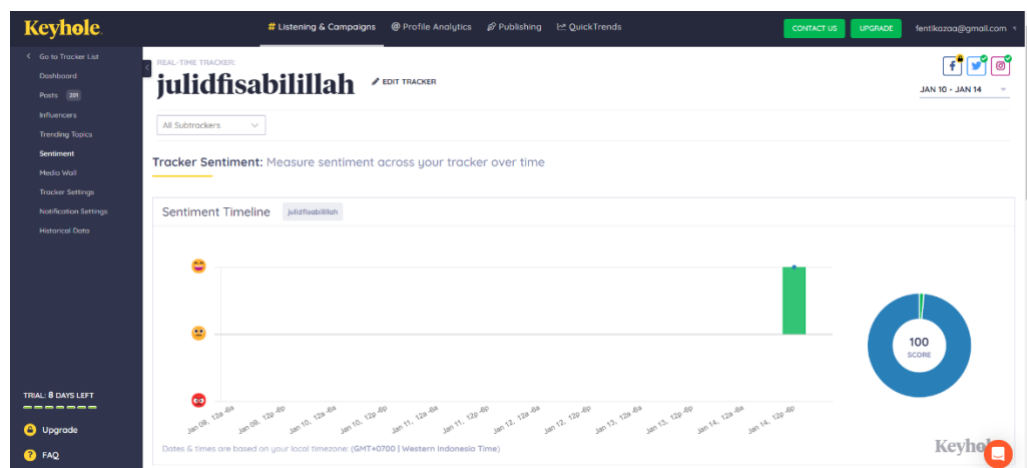


Figure 8. JFS Sentiment Analysis

(Source : Personal Documents)

From the data above, it is clear that in the last 1 month, Julid Fi Sabilillah has reaped positive sentiment. This proves that the emergence of this action received positive support from many parties.

Impact The feelings felt by the IDF and the pro-Israel community vary, ranging from feelings of discomfort to the frustration they often feel due to slanderous attacks from JFS. Gres added that this action was by his desire to attack the pro-Israel atmosphere and make them aware that this is not to the humanitarian principles that apply in society. They responded to the insults they reaped in various ways, such as closing the comments column, closing their social media accounts, and even sending an apology and asking them to stop attacking their social media accounts. Of course, this indicates that JFS can create a feeling of discomfort and overwhelm for Israel's supporters.

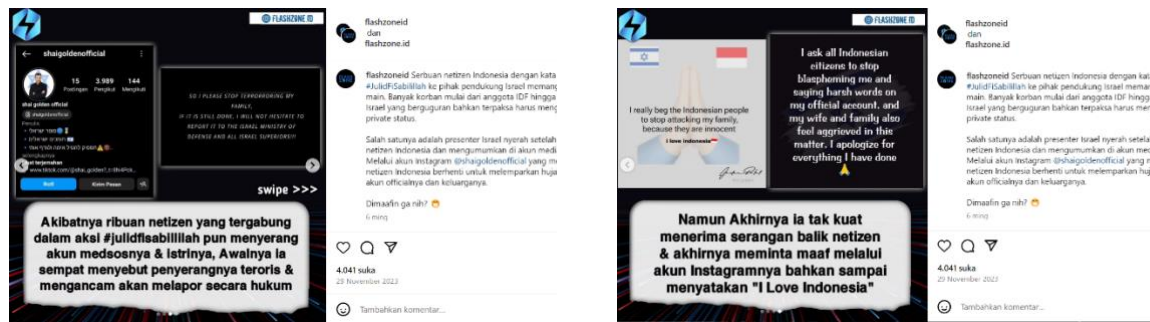


Figure 9. JFS operation target's request for forgiveness
(Source: Personal Document)

Psychologically, a situation where someone feels tired from the impact of verbal insults and hate speech can cause feelings of frustration (Choirudin, 2015). Not only frustrating, but the impact of the JFS operation is disrupting the mental *health* of the operational target. This is normal, how could it not be, verbal insults continue to attack their accounts gradually. Gres admitted that this online war operation had the aim of attacking their morale to influence the mentality and level of self-confidence of the pro-Israel atmosphere.

This hashtag doesn't just make an impact negative on Israel but also has a positive impact that is being felt by the Palestinian people. By entering the realm of Trending *Topic* various media have made them aware that the Palestinian public needs a lot of support to continue to fight against Israel. In this way, the community continues to provide material and non-material support, such as raising funds, supporting Palestinian media accounts, and providing combat equipment that is distributed to Palestine.

Apart from that, international courts or ICJ as of January 26, 2024, issued an initial decision regarding South Africa's demands for Israel to stop the genocide they were carrying out. The verdict was read directly in The Hague with six important points that prevented Israel from moving. One of them is in the initial decision point 5 which reads "*The State of Israel shall take effective measure to prevent the destruction and ensure the preservation of evidence*". The intent of "*ensure the preservation of evidence*" emphasized to Israel that it must preserve existing evidence of crimes and must not destroy them.

(5) By fifteen votes to two,

The State of Israel shall take effective measures to prevent the destruction and ensure the preservation of evidence related to allegations of acts within the scope of Article II and Article III of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide against members of the Palestinian group in the Gaza Strip;

IN FAVOUR: President Donoghue; Vice-President Gevorgian; Judges Tomka, Abraham, Bennouna, Yusuf, Xue, Bhandari, Robinson, Salam, Iwasawa, Nolte, Charlesworth, Brant; Judge ad hoc Moseneke;

AGAINST: Judge Sebutinde; Judge ad hoc Barak;

Figure 10. ICJ decision on genocide case in Palestine
(Source: https://www.instagram.com/p/C2mx-yYRQLO/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link&igsh=MzRIODBiNWFIZA==)

This decision certainly caused a stir in the hashtag movement #JulidFisabilillah and instructed to immortalize moments of Israeli crimes on social media and organize them with this hashtag. The hope is that this will make a deep contribution to "*ensure the preservation of evidence*" and voicing evidence of Israel's crimes. This is certainly a very logical thing to do because digital traces will never be lost or destroyed, they are eternal traces (Rizkinaswara, 2021).

Here the author encounters the syntactic value or opinion description (Juditha, 2015) contained in the hashtag action phenomenon #julidfisabilillah to assume that this hashtag has supernatural powers that can influence genocide plans in Palestine. Julid Fi Sabilillah hashtag is a superstructure where every step and strategy is neatly arranged. Superstructure itself has the meaning of a series of schematic texts and runs according to the plot order (Suparman, 2020). Level *influence* This hashtag is quite stable, as proven by the analysis results

over the last 1 month, that the graphing *and mention* There is no visible significant decrease, it's just that the dynamic presentation numbers always change every second.

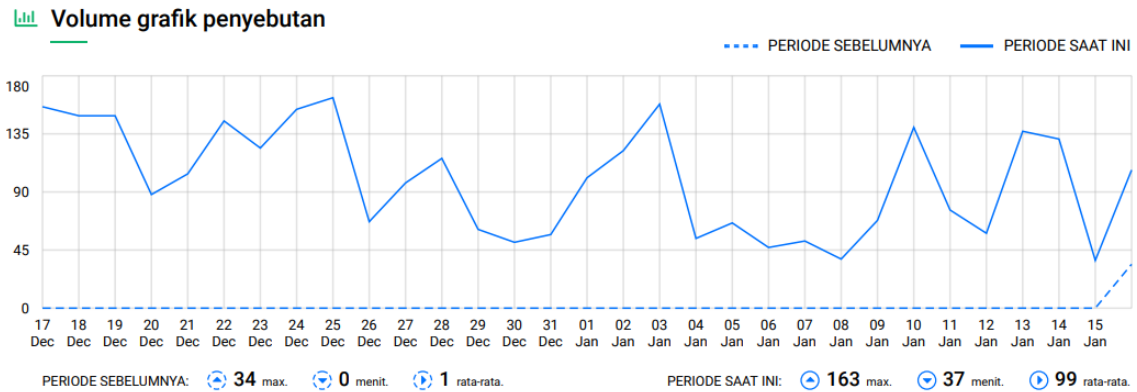


Figure 11. Mention Graph
(Source: Personal Document)

Recalling Merry Riana's words in her Facebook account "Don't underestimate the small things, big things can be achieved because of the small things first," it can be concluded that in the era of digitalization, No matter how small a good movement is, it will have a big impact on the surrounding environment. *Hashtag* which has a functional nature organizational *Hashtag* (Reilly & Vicari, 2021) can unite the humanitarian movement for Palestine starting from micro *habits* to becoming defenders of genocide.

With this function, forming a social network structure in cyberspace begins with analyzing relationship patterns that can connect to targets and audiences (Jovanica et al., 2022). In this hashtag, there are actors and relationships, where the actor is the mastermind Greschinov himself, while the relationship formed accounts who voiced and contributed to this hashtag, such as @aheryawan, @Channelcatur, and @IslamicQoutes. These three accounts are important rhetoric for influencing and providing a persuasive impact on other groups. From actors to relationships, each has an attachment that can form points or unifying for other actors. Meanwhile, in other cases, such as netizens and netizens who enliven the post, it can be said to be the second element. And also the final element is the attitude, and response of each actor who transforms into Like, *Comment*, as well as Retweet. From this analysis, it can be understood that these three elements mutually build and support each other, as evidenced by Brand24's analysis producing positive sentiment reaped from the hashtag movement #Julidfisabilillah.

4. Conclusion

Movement #Julidfisabilillah is a pro-Palestinian manifestation started by Erlangga Greschinov as a form of protest against the genocide that occurred in Palestine. This movement initially focused on social media attacks in Indonesia but gained support from netizens from Malaysia to Türkiye. The name Julid Fi Sabilillah is taken from a play on Jihad Fi Sabilillah, with the meaning "honest even though it is difficult." Erlangga Greschinov led this operation with a strategy of various attacks, including the Stand With Fuss operation to obtain secret Israeli information, asking for government support to limit interactions with Israel, calling for End Israel Genocide action, trolling Zionist accounts, and providing updated information about events in Palestine. The impact was visible in the positive sentiment generated, but it also caused discomfort and frustration on the Israeli side. This movement also provides positive support to the Palestinian community and creates international awareness of the crimes that occur. As a result, the International Court of Justice opened a case against Israel's genocide, and calls to immortalize evidence of the crimes on social media gained support. Overall, the movement #Julidfisabilillah become an effective tool of resistance through social media, providing support to Palestine, and urging action against crimes that occur.

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