

OFFERING PEACE IN THE HOLY LAND: THE DIPLOMACY OF THE VATICAN IN ISRAEL-PALESTINE CONFLICT

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Abstract

The issue of Israel and Palestine has been going on for almost 70 years, and there is still no sign of lasting reconciliation. However, since 1948, several countries have taken part in the peace process between the two countries. Apart from state actors, non-state actors also contribute to Israeli-Palestinian reconciliation, one of which is the institution of the Catholic Church, the Holy See. With its unique status, the Holy See has a slightly different style of diplomacy. This difference can be seen in the presence of dual status, where the Holy See is both a state and a world religious institution. With the presence of this double-status, the Holy See has a wider diplomatic space than state actors, especially in conducting diplomacy related to the peacebuilding process. Therefore, this research aims to analyze the Holy See's diplomatic efforts in Israeli-Palestinian reconciliation. This research uses a qualitative approach by utilizing data sources from the internet and official documents. It finds that The Holy See plays a very important role in peace process in the Holy Land through religious institutions. It plays roles not only in bridging political friction between Israel and Palestine through normalizing relations, but also in undertaking humanitarian cases through social assistance.

Keywords: *diplomacy; Israel-Palestine; The Holy See; The Holy Land*

Abstrak

Isu Israel dan Palestina sudah berlangsung hampir 70 tahun dan masih belum ada tanda-tanda rekonsiliasi yang bertahan lama. Namun sejak tahun 1948, beberapa negara telah andil dalam proses perdamaian kedua negara. Selain aktor negara, aktor non-negara juga berkontribusi dalam rekonsiliasi Israel-Palestina, salah satunya adalah institusi Gereja Katolik, Tahta Suci Vatikan. Dengan statusnya yang unik, Tahta Suci mempunyai gaya diplomasi yang sedikit berbeda. Perbedaan tersebut terlihat dengan adanya status ganda, dimana Tahta Suci merupakan aktor negara sekaligus lembaga keagamaan dunia. Dengan hadirnya status ganda tersebut, Tahta Suci memiliki ruang diplomasi yang lebih luas dibandingkan aktor negara, khususnya dalam melakukan diplomasi terkait proses binadamai. Oleh karena itu, penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis upaya diplomasi Tahta Suci Vatikan dalam membangun rekonsiliasi Israel-Palestina. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan memanfaatkan sumber data dari internet dan dokumen resmi. Kemudian temuan dari riset ini adalah bahwa Tahta Suci Vatikan memainkan peran yang sangat penting dalam proses perdamaian di Tanah Suci melalui institusi keagamaan. Institusi ini berperan tidak hanya dalam menjembatani perselisihan politik antara Israel dan Palestina melalui normalisasi hubungan, tetapi juga dalam menangani kasus-kasus kemanusiaan melalui bantuan sosial.

Kata Kunci: diplomasi; Israel-Palestina; Tahta Suci Vatikan; Tanah Suci

INTRODUCTION

The issue of Palestine and Israel is not a new one. Recently, escalation was created in the Holy Land area through the latest air attack launched by Israel on the Rafah area in Gaza. Due to this escalation, at least 67 Palestinians were reported killed (Siddiqui & Osgood, 2024). In fact, as of February 2024, the daily death rate in Gaza was the highest among other conflict-affected areas throughout the 21st century (Oxfam International, 2024). This figure also adds to the list of victims on each side. Based on data from the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, as of 2018 alone, the total number of deaths due to this conflict has claimed 6,779 Palestinian lives, with the highest number of cases being in the Gaza Strip region, which reached 79% (United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, 2018).

Meanwhile, Israeli casualties reached 319. With so many victims falling, this conflict that has been going on for more than 70 years has made the world community open their eyes to participating directly in resolving related conflicts. The world body, the UN, has actually made several attempts to reach the term "joint resolution" through various official forums. There are at least more than 800 resolutions carried out by the UN, through its general assembly forum, regarding the Palestinian issue (United Nations, n.d.). The latest resolution approves humanitarian assistance to Gaza residents. Apart from that, the resolution adopted on December 12, 2023, also calls for a ceasefire, the protection of civilians in Israel and Palestine based on international law, and the release of hostages (United Nations, 2023).

That being said, the international body's efforts have not yet produced results. Therefore, it is not surprising that a more "personal" approach—that is, an approach started directly by a nation—is beginning to somewhat substitute the international organization approach. For example, the role of the United States in resolving the conflict between Israel and Palestine, which has a very strategic role and attitude in it. In terms of quality, the United States government has initiated several peace agreements and negotiations several times, one of which is the Camp David agreement. The United States, as a peace broker at that time, wanted a resolution of tensions after the second Intifada. Apart from Egypt's recognition of Israel, the agreement also resulted in Israel's recognition of the rights of Palestinians (Aronson, 2013). Apart from that, the contribution of the United States to the process of resolving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is also very large (Pratiwi, Qomara, Aryo, & Syarafi, 2020). Apart from the contribution of state actors, the resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict also received the attention of non-state actors, one of which was the Holy See. As a religious-based entity, the Holy See also plays a role in the international political arena, such as having the status of "non-member state permanent observer at the UN, which makes the Holy See enjoy several privileges, along Palestine. The significant role of the Vatican in international affairs could be traced back to 1929, which was signed with the Lateran Accords. After signing that treaty, the Holy See has judicial and exclusive rights to contribute to international affairs with state actors (Byrnes, 2017). As an entity recognized by international law, the Holy See does not hesitate to collaborate with several countries. As of 2013, there were 182 state actors who had established diplomatic relations with the Vatican (Randriamanantena, 2020). Despite having great diplomatic relations with state actors, the Holy See also maintains open relations with multilateral institutions and conferences, which expands their network (Byrnes, 2017).

With this relatively large diplomatic network, the Holy See has become a non-state entity whose role is quite well taken into account. The role of the Holy See is reflected in several things, including building international peace, upholding human rights, and carrying out negotiations, both bilaterally and multilaterally (Rivera, 2015). With the existing capabilities and possibilities, the Holy See, as a non-state actor, has a significant role in resolving various global issues, one of which is the issue regarding Israel and Palestine, which has long been unresolved.

Therefore, this research aims to find out the role of non-state actors, such as the Holy See, in dealing with global problems, especially in the Israeli and Palestinian conflict. Then, to find out the novelty of this research, the authors have reviewed several previous literature studies, including: (1) F. Michael Perko (2001), which only discusses the role of Vatican diplomacy in general in the Middle East region; (2) Bartłomiej Secler (2016), discussing the relation between Israel and the Holy See only without explaining more Palestine and diplomatic conflict-resolution; and Angeli Francis S. Rivera (2016), who only examines the Holy See's contribution to the conflict resolution and peacebuilding process.

Based on the literature study above, the authors can conclude that there are still not many studies that discuss the role of the Holy See's diplomacy in resolving Israeli and Palestinian issues. Moreover, the recent development of the Israel-Palestine conflict has bring the spotlight back to the region. Such a development makes it all the more important to be responded to by the international community, which includes the Holy See as another actor in it. Therefore, the authors feel that this research can fill this gap.

RESEARCH METHOD

To support this research, the authors used a qualitative approach to help the authors understand the issue of Vatican diplomacy in resolving problems between Israel and Palestine (Lamont, 2015). Apart from that, this qualitative approach also provided space for researchers to develop interpretations of the data that has been collected (Creswell & Creswell, 2020). Through this qualitative approach, the authors also used a historical approach in compiling, analysing, and interpreting the data of what the Vatican has done so far for the resolution of the Israel and Palestinian conflict. Moreover, the authors could draw a line between historic events and contemporary issues (Lange, 2013).

Then, to support the interpretation results, we used two qualitative methods, namely the analytical descriptive method and the historical method. Through the use of analytical descriptive methods, the authors could obtain wider data from various sources, including opinions, perspectives, and ethics (Nassaji, 2015).. Then, with the historical method, the authors could obtain relevant sources from events that have occurred, which have implications for our current research object (Lune & Berg, 2017).

The data collection techniques we utilized include the following: (1) Archival: in this case, the authors obtained sources in the form of treaties, official reports, and even policy statements. For example, we utilized sources from several official Vatican documents and peace treaties between Israel and Palestine. (2) Internet-based research has several types of sources available, such as journal articles, online news sites, the official Holy See government website, and several official websites of international organizations, such as UN agencies. After all the data had been obtained, in the end, we validated the data using data triangulation techniques. Through data triangulation, researchers could confirm existing data findings and minimize the use of data that is less relevant and inconsistent (Bans-Akutey & Tiimub, 2021).

RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Papal Diplomacy: Between the Church and the Humanitarian Actions

The Vatican's involvement in the international political arena can be traced back to 1964 where it was admitted to the United Nations as a non-member state. Now, the Vatican has a permanent observer mission to the United Nations headquarters in New York (Sekerák & Lovaš, 2022). Back in 2002, the United Nations wanted the Vatican to be a full member but the idea was turned down by Pope John Paul II. The reason was so that the Vatican can better maintain its neutrality as it is not there as a state, not as a religion. Putting aside

its presence in the United Nations, the Vatican also maintains ties with around 183 states around the world. Hence, by seeing its membership in international organizations like the United Nations and the many ties it has established with states around the world, the Vatican can be deemed as one of the important agents in international affairs (Sekerák & Lovaš, 2022).

Despite being the smallest state in the world, the Vatican's diplomatic capacity is not to be trifled with. The small number of embassies does not hinder its ability to learn events taking place across the world. While it can solely not rely on the information stream from that channel, it can still rely on others like the Christian community and churches across the world. It has also built good relations with other religious communities as a result of numerous interfaith overtures. This particular trait of the Vatican makes it unique as despite being a state, it can also be seen as a religious institution in the international system we live in today (Troy, 2018). Therefore, the Holy See diplomacy can remain a relevant force in international affairs as it remains aware of the dynamics.

In its engagement on the international stage, the Vatican has its differences that set it apart from other states. In numerous international fora or interactions, many if not all states would push for the attainment of their own national interests. Unlike them, the Vatican would set on to pursue a greater goal of international common good as apparent in its effort to serve the people across the globe. Against that backdrop, the Vatican's involvement in international affairs is not locked by regional concerns alone, rather it has its eyes on issues around the globe. Not only that, the issues that it can be concerned with can range from those involving the state actors or the communities that form it.

Apart from the initiatives of the Vatican, there is also another term that is worth noting, that is the papal diplomacy or the Holy See diplomacy. If the Vatican is the state actor, then the Holy See can be understood as the universal government of the Catholic church. As opposed to the previous Vatican diplomacy that serves as a means for the Vatican as a state, the Holy See diplomacy serves as the diplomatic instrument of the Catholic church. It is through the conduct of said diplomacy that the Vatican can better build its moral legitimacy and build better relations with the world through active engagements as well as interfaith dialogues (Arceneaux, 2023). However, despite the difference, the two are nonetheless done or guided by the pope himself.

Conflicts and its resolution are some of the areas that the Holy See diplomacy is concerned with. In its engagement in numerous negotiations for peaceful resolutions or humanitarian actions, the Holy See could leverage on the Catholic social doctrine as well as experiences it has garnered over the course of its existence. One of the principles that can be followed in numerous negotiations for conflict resolution is related to how it views the outcome. It believes that negotiations should not end with winners and losers. With the aforementioned principle and experience, the Vatican could participate in many endeavors to address conflicts across the world. There have been many instances where its involvement played an important role in bridging the belligerents.

The Holy See's overtures in pushing for peace can be seen in meetings involving relevant state leaders to its role as mediators in ongoing conflicts. In 2019, amidst the civil war in South Sudan, a spiritual retreat for peace was held by the Vatican. One of the things that caught the international community's attention was Pope Francis's act to kiss the feet of South Sudan leaders. The gesture served as a plea to the leaders of South Sudan to respect the armistice they had signed as well as to commit themselves into forming a unity government. Pope Francis also pressed on the wellbeing of the people as the key consideration for any step the leaders wish to take. Throughout the civil war, the people's security has been jeopardized and with such a landscape in mind, the leaders have the responsibility to develop the new state. Then there is also the involvement in the Chile-Argentina's Beagle Channel dispute, a territorial dispute which had lasted for decades. The conflict eventually was solved in 1984 after years of deliberation between the governments

of Chile, Argentina, and the Vatican. The resolution is enshrined in the Treaty of Peace and Friendship that was signed in the same year at the Vatican. Apart from that, the Holy See also has its share of opportunities to highlight its concern on humanitarian crises across the globe in international fora provided by the United Nations or its agencies, like the United Nations High Commissioner's Programme for Refugees (UNHCR) (Merlo, 2023). Some of the prominent traits inherent to the way it acted as a mediator range from institutional patience, confidentiality, to flexibility (Muzas, 2023). Amidst such a hard power riddled landscape as seen in some of its entanglements, the Holy See can also be perceived as a political actor that also interacts with the international moral framework (Kelly, 2023).

From the aforementioned entanglements, the diplomatic capacity and outlook of the Holy See and Vatican can be perceived to be helpful. It also demonstrates how despite the absence of hard power, its reliance on soft power is still adequate to go about its endeavors on the international stage. In the past decade, the Holy See has been given the spotlight in numerous international opportunities, from the United Nations General Assembly to state leaders in their respective territory, that allows it to highlight issues it is concerned with. In the present international system, one of the issues that has brought the attention of the international community, including the Holy See of the Vatican, is the perennial conflict between Israel and Palestine. In recent times, the conflict between the two has taken the turn for the worse with growing aggressions by Israel that has witnessed many loss of lives on both Palestine and Israel sides.

The Holy Land in Peril: The Perennial Conflict

The Holy Land is a term that refers to an area in the Middle East, specifically around the Mediterranean Sea and the Jordan River. The area holds an important value for many religious communities, like Christians, Muslims, and Jews. Said value can be understood as some religions have their share of ties with it, like in Christianity where the Holy Land is the very place Jesus Christ was born. The same ties are also present in the Jews community that sees the Holy Land as an inheritance as mentioned in the Old Testament. Meanwhile, Muslims believe that this place is the third-most sacred place after Mecca and Madina.

In present times, the Holy Land encompasses the area that is now known as Israel and Palestine. Given the conflicting interest and outlook the two have, they both have been involved in numerous conflicts, at many occasions involving other states, to gain more land or at worse, to eliminate the other. In the modern international system, the conflict between the two states has taken place following Israel's independence that saw the Arab-Israeli war. Tensions between the two states have amounted to numerous conflicts later down the road. However, as we have all witnessed, the two states would remain intact except for some changes on the share of territories.

In the past, there have been numerous overtures to bring peace to the belligerents. A good example is the initiative done by Norway dubbed the Oslo Accords (Soleimani, 2020). Taken together, it initially has brought some good strides like Israel's recognition of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) as well as the latter's recognition of Israel's right to exist. It also encompasses other practical matters like the Palestinian self-governance as well as negotiations on other matters. Unfortunately, both accords (the first and second one) failed to bring about a fruitful implementation (Burgis-Kasthala, 2020). Despite its lack of progress in bringing in the results, the effort underlines the way to go with the issue. One of the most popular way to go with the conflict is to push for a two states solution where the two can coexist in peace. Some of the issues that make any attempt to settle the dispute in the negotiation table stuck on the track are the refugees, borders, security, and the issue of Jerusalem (Pratiwi, Syarafi, & Nauvarian, *Israeli-Palestinian Conflict Beyond Resolution: A Critical Assessment*, 2022). The many things inherent to the nature of the

two states can be seen as one of the key features that makes it remain a perennial issue.

Combined with the already intricate web of interests and security considerations in the region, the ongoing conflict is even harder to be solved. In recent times, conflicts between the two have been sparked on different scales by some events. One of them is the recognition that the US gave to Israel on Jerusalem's status as its capital (Munabari & Hamdani, 2023). The growing Israel presence around Palestine would also push non-state actors, like Hamas, to enact their own attacks on Israel. The rise of non-state actors like Hamas cannot be looked at without assessing said regional intricacy. What is meant by that is how the conflict also encompasses the interests of other states in the region, like Iran that has actively backed Hamas (Rezeg, 2020). Eventually, the many tensions that have occurred between the two states would be too much to bear as it led to another violent development.

In late October 2023, Israel began its invasion of Gaza by mobilizing its forces into the strip. The goal is to shatter Hamas, a militant and political group that resides in Gaza, which has led numerous attacks on Israel. Despite the aforementioned aim, the result on the ground shows a whole different thing. Many attacks performed by the Israeli forces have raked up enormous loss of civilian lives. Not only that, Israel has also enacted strikes on areas that should be left combat free like hospitals (Polglase, et al., 2024). Because of the aforementioned occurrences, Israel has been rained with criticisms from the international community. However, Israel has brushed them off by justifying it as the result of Hamas's trickery in using the civilians as human shields.

The consequences of the attack have left the Holy Land with more turmoil and bloodshed as apparent in the high casualty rates from both sides. That number is dwarfed in comparison to that of the Palestinians. Up to February 2024, close to 30.000 people in Gaza have been killed with another 70.000 people wounded (Al Jazeera Labs, 2023). As if that is not enough, many infrastructures critical to sustaining life in the area have been demolished as a result of the indiscriminate attack by Israel.

The ongoing conflict taking place over the land demonstrates an immense chaos and suffering that rakes up human lives. Such a palpable event should be one of the things to be addressed by the international community, including the Holy See in the Vatican. While it is true that despite many international initiatives that have been made in for a and international courts are yet to bear any fruit, the Holy See can nonetheless bring something to the table given its unique characteristics and past experience in navigating through conflicts.

The Holy See's Diplomacy for The Holy Land: From Faith-Based Diplomacy to Humanitarian Diplomacy

The ties between the territories now known as Palestine, Israel, and Christianity are indeed very strong spiritually. Departing as a land that witnessed the birth and resurrection of Jesus Christ and became a silent witness to the footsteps of Jesus' disciples in spreading Christianity, making the region of Israel, Palestine, and its surroundings a reference for Christians to undertake a spiritual journey (Sofía Saínz de Aja , 2018). This religious reason is what makes the Holy Land one of the central areas for the authority of the Catholic Church, the Vatican. The urgency of the Holy Land for the Holy See is neatly illustrated by the Church's efforts to internationalize Jerusalem (as a *corpus separatum*), amidst post-World War II political uncertainty, to secure the rights of Christians there (Santucci, 2024).

After the partition of Israel and Palestine, the Vatican Catholic Church still has urgency regarding the Holy Land. This urgency is reflected in several policies towards the Holy Land. Pope Pius VI's visit to the Holy Land, including Jerusalem as the heart of the holy

land, in 1964 (Zinkow, 2021). Pope Pius VI's visit was part of the Vatican's diplomacy toward religious freedom and peace. During his visit, Pope Pius VI emphasized the existence of harmonization in the Jerusalem area, especially regarding freedom in managing places of worship for three religions, namely Islam, Judaism, and Christianity. Then Pope Pius VI's ideals were continued through the pontificate of Pope John Paul II, who emphasized several elements of the Vatican's policy towards Jerusalem, especially in maintaining the identity and proper function of Jerusalem, including providing guarantees for the survival of cultural and religious identity and providing guarantees of religious freedom and rights to the pilgrim population (O'Mahony, 2007).

In addition to diplomatic policies aimed at freedom of religion, the Holy See also uses its diplomatic rights for the political peace process in the Holy Land, especially in efforts to resolve the Israeli and Palestinian conflict. We can trace the Holy See's involvement in the Israeli and Palestinian conflict after the 1967 War—even the Holy See's involvement existed in United Nations Resolution 181 (Santucci, 2024). Since Pope John Paul II was appointed in 1978, the Vatican has tried to bridge a more intimate relationship between Christianity and Judaism. These efforts also target the normalization of relations between the Vatican and Israel (Secler, 2016). In other words, the Vatican is trying to build relations with Israel through a historical and religious approach.

The peak of political relations between Israel and the Vatican only began in 1993 with the presence of a fundamental agreement. The points of the agreement can be divided into the following points: (1) Points of a political nature, such as the Vatican's recognition of sovereignty over Israel; (2) The point of religious freedom, with the Israeli authorities guaranteeing basic human rights, such as freedom of worship, and fighting extremist ideology and antisemitic efforts; (3) Points to fulfill the Vatican's interest in managing property and religious institutions in Israeli territory (Vatican, 1994).

In addition to the three general points above, the Vatican, under Pope John Paul II, also began to pay full attention to the rights of Palestinians affected by political instability as a novel diplomatic instrument (Santucci, 2024). This was then followed up through a General Basic Agreement in 2000 with the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), where the contents of the agreement spoke a lot about the urgency of preserving and safeguarding Christian holy sites as well as fulfilling the rights of Christians in Palestine. Apart from that, the agreement also provides support for the Palestinian people to have their own sovereignty (Hammer, 2017).

More than a century after the Vatican recognized Israel's sovereignty, as of 2015, the Vatican also recognized Palestine as a state. This recognition of Palestinian sovereignty not only helps secure the interests of the Catholic Church in the Palestinian Authority but also has an impact on regional peace (Ravid, 2015). Therefore, the importance of fulfilling the rights of both Israeli and Palestinian citizens remains a point of Vatican diplomacy to this day (Perko, 2001). In this never-ending conflict resolution process, the Vatican's de jure recognition of Israel and Palestine's states was crucial. The Vatican can conduct diplomacy with them in a wide range of ways by forging official diplomatic ties.

For instance, in 2015, the Palestinian Authority government signed an agreement with the Holy See through the 2015 Comprehensive Agreement. Apart from gaining recognition as a sovereign state, Palestine also received support for Israel's unilateral actions in moving its capital to Jerusalem and several inhumane incidents in the West Bank (Hammer, 2017). In other words, the Vatican officially recognizes and supports the two-state solution system.

However, in addition to faith-based diplomacy and negotiations with Israel and Palestine, the Vatican has also recently promoted humanitarian diplomacy in various forms, such as moral support—reciting prayers for the victims in the Holy Land—and calls for humanitarian aid, directly conveyed by Pope Francis (Vatican News, 2023). Apart from

that, the Catholic Church, through several of its affiliated organizations, also contributes to humanitarian aid, such as the Church's Network of Charitable Organizations, the Pontifical Missions, the Caritas institution, and the Latin Patriarchate institution. Even pastoral organizations in Gaza provided shelter assistance and evacuation places for 600 refugees (Allen, 2024).

The Future Contribution of the Holy See for the Land: Can This Type of Diplomacy Solve This Endless Conflict?

In the face of a monumental conflict like the present conflict in the Middle East, one may lose sight of the light at the end of the tunnel. This grim picture is also present in the ongoing Israel-Palestine conflict which has witnessed growing escalation and casualties from both sides. Such a possibility is not made out of naught given the long trails of destruction said conflict has left over the decades. However, one can place their hope on the resolve of the international community to persevere in the face of such a problem. Such a spirit also imbues the many overtures that the Holy See has undertaken in the international system.

An important feature of the Holy See diplomacy lies in its neutrality. Of the many moves that have been made to address the Israel-Palestine conflict, one can look how many of them are imbued with partition to either sides of the conflict. We have come to know states like the US which would stand steadfastly behind Israel and its Palestinian counterparts like many states in the global south (Tant & Larb, 2024).

This salient feature also encompasses the Holy See's uniqueness as an international actor devoid of national interests like state actors. The Holy See does not have a seamless web of national interests that could range from military to economic aims for itself (Wooden, 2023). In this sense, the Holy See's initiatives are imbued with the spirit of positive neutrality that strives to voice the common good of all people regardless of their nationality and background. The aforementioned point is also supported by the Holy See's steadfast support for a two-state solution as the means to a lasting peace for the conflict (Allen, Palestine envoy to Holy See calls on 'Catholic world' not to lose 'hope' and to remember 'baby Jesus' during Gaza conflict, 2023).

Returning to the contribution to the ongoing humanitarian crisis, the Holy See can engage in numerous overtures to call out the involved parties and the international community to focus on bringing about a just peace. This role, similar to that of a beacon, can already be seen in the Holy See's engagement with the international community to that end. As the Israel-Palestine conflict continues on its course, the Holy See has undertaken numerous endeavors to voice the need for ceasefire and an end to the escalation. Moreover, the Holy See also highlights and urges the UNRWA (United Nations Relief and Works Agency) to remain in its trajectory as a valuable resource for the Palestinian refugees in need (Aduloju, 2023).

Hence, while it can't be denied that the sole diplomatic overture of the Holy See won't put an abrupt end to the conflict and bloodshed, it is nonetheless a welcomed effort. Such a move can be further appreciated upon taking a step back to acknowledge the bigger picture, a picture filled with said overture by the Holy See which is also accompanied by its counterparts across the globe, either state or non-state actors. It is also important to note how the Holy See can serve as a sphere of influence from which message for peace for the conflicting parties can emanate towards the religious communities across the world, something that permeates traditional state borders and identity. This overture, among many things, can also be perceived as another spark of the international community's hope and desire to bring peace to the conflicting parties so as lasting stability can emerge for all to enjoy. At the end of the day, the Holy See is still another actor, albeit a non-state one, with its limited capacity in a convoluted international system. However, in the face of a

dire conflict like that between Israel and Palestine, it can still go about its endeavors to call for peace and engage with relevant parties.

CONCLUSION

Based on the discussion above, it can be seen that reconciliation between Israel and Palestine is not only carried out by state actors; non-state actors are also involved, in this case the institution of the Catholic Church, the Holy See. As an area consecrated by Christians, the Israeli-Palestinian region is now receiving more attention from the authorities of the World Catholic Church.

Based on a religious spirit, the Holy See, which initially only focused on fulfilling the rights of Christians in the Holy Land, is now starting to play in the political arena. This is proven by the presence of normalization between the Holy See and Israel, as well as the Palestinian Authority government by opening the formal relations. With these formal relations, the Holy See can carry out its diplomacy more freely. Apart from that, the role of church authority is also very visible through its humanitarian diplomacy, especially in providing food aid and shelter for refugee victims in Gaza.

In this research, the authors feel that there are still many shortcomings. Said shortcomings can be the ground for future endeavors on the topic that could enrich studies on it. Therefore, the authors hope that further research can add to this deficiency, especially regarding the study of the role of religious institutions, as non-state actors, in reconciling global issues.

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