

# The Concept of Conflict Management in the Medina Charter

Abdul Malik Ghozali<sup>1\*</sup>

<sup>1</sup>*Faculty of Ushuluddin and Religious Study, Universitas Islam Negeri Raden Intan Lampung, Bandar Lampung, Indonesia*

*\*Corresponding author. Email: [abdul.malik@radenintan.ac.id](mailto:abdul.malik@radenintan.ac.id)*

## ABSTRACT

This study discusses the formulation of conflict management the Medina Charter, a treaties on peace created by the Prophet Muhammad in the early period of Islam. In this regard, the prophet presented a real experience in handling the conflict through the Medina charter. Medina society is highly diverse, consisting of various ethnics and religious adherents. The diversity of the Medina community caused friction among its residents. This research exerts a content analysis method with several approaches; takhrij, fiqh of hadith, sociology, and history. This study found out that the Medina charter has enormous multiculturalism values. In conclusion, the Medina charter is able to provide solutions to the diverse society and seek to mediate and deliver conflict solutions. It can be used as a model for conflict management rules amid diversity.

**Keywords:** *Conflict management, the Medina charter, and Islam*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Religion is frequently used as a reason to trigger a community conflict. According to Syukri, religion as a path to God not merely assigns privacy for its adherents, but it is challenged to dialogue with the intelligence and mental change of its adherents. Therefore, religion is studied, understood, and even debated and criticized. Dissenting religions will be the origin of the dispute[1]. order to resolve these issues, there are several patterns in managing conflict, i.e. patterns of compromising, collaboration, domination, avoidance and persuasion with regards to conflicting situations[2].

Historically, Islam was revealed in the Arab lands, whose people live in nomadic and tribal manners, with intermittent clashes between the tribes. Not rarely, conflicts between the Arab tribes were sharpened by their primordial attachments to Islam, thus making Islam associated as a religion of conflict. Off course, this association is misleading, considering that Islam was revealed to mankind as a mercy for all creatures (QS. Al-Anbiya: 17).

When the Prophet moved to Medina, the city was of highly diverse communities, consisting of various tribes and religious adherents. Therefore, in the pluralistic society of Medina, Muhammad made an agreement among the tribes in Medina, called "*Mitsaq/Shuhuf al-Madinah*", or popularly known the Medina charter. In the course of Islamic history, this charter, which consists of 47 items[3] that granted the basic rights of the state and every citizen, is proved to be able to reduce discordance in society. According to Abdul Hamid Abu Sulaiman, an Islamic international relations scholar, many theories can be drawn from the early Islamic history, especially with regard to

the efforts of the Prophet and his companions to create a peaceful communion between local, regional, bilateral and international communities. For instance, Abdul Hamid claims the *dārul 'ahd* and *dārul aman* theory, which regulates non-Muslims wishing to live in an Islamic state, that is, as long as they obey the laws, they are entitled to security and welfare guarantees[4].

In this context, it is quite interesting to explore the concept of management conflict formulated in Islam through the Medina charter, and use it as an input for peaceful and prosperous arrangement of the national and state life. The Madinah charter is allegedly the forerunner to state laws that develop civil society systems. Civil society systems have been developed by modern countries in the west and east. It is ironic if Islam which has a brilliant history is confined in an endless conflict. For this reason, the exploration of the messages of peace and harmony manifested in the Medina charter is worth doing, especially for the context of Indonesian society, which has no less diverse ethnicity and culture than that of the Arab society. Moreover, this case can be used as an enlightenment particularly for Indonesian Muslims, generally for the world's communities. The main questions of this research is as follows. What are the contents of the Medina charter? And how is the concept of conflict management formulated by the Medina Charter?

## 2. RESEARCH METHOD

This study uses several methodological steps. They are, firstly, identification and classification of the hadith on the Medina charter, with the *takhrij* (critics of hadith) method. Secondly, studying the contents of the hadith on the Medina charter through the use of *fiqh* hadith, sociology, communication, and the historical approaches. This

research is based on a hypothetical statement that if Islam[5] is a teaching full of grace, it will certainly educate its people to be a man of mercy for other creatures and for the universe. In Islam, ritual piety is equivalent to social piety. Therefore, a Muslim who is ritually pious, according to Islam, he should be socially pious too[6].

### 3. FINDING AND DISCUSSION

#### 3.1. Conflict Theory and Management Conflict

Conflict can be interpreted as a disagreement between two or more members of an organization, community, or group, which is usually triggered by their competition over an access to resources and power, and or because of their difference in status, goals, values and perceptions. People who are in disagreement usually insist on seeing what they agreed upon from their point of view. In sociology, there are several theories about a conflict:[7]

1. Public Relations Theory: it assumes that conflict is caused by continuing polarization, distrust and animosity between different groups in a society.
2. Human Needs Theory: it assumes that rooted conflicts are caused by the disruption of human basic needs (physical, mental and social). The major conversation is security, identity, recognition, participation, and autonomy.
3. Principle Negotiation Theory: it assumes that conflict is caused by positions that are not aligned, and by differences in views among the concerned parties on issues being argued.
4. Identity Theory: It assumes that conflict is caused by an identity threatening, which is often rooted in the loss of something, or the unresolved past suffering. The solution is through workshop facilities and dialogues between parties experiencing conflict, hence as to identify threats and fears among these parties and construct empathy and reconciliation.
5. Inter-cultural Misunderstanding Theory: It assumes that conflict is caused by a miss-communication between different cultures.
6. Conflict Transformation Theory: It assumes that conflict is caused by inequality and injustice that arise as social, cultural and economic problems[2]. When viewed from a function, conflicts can be divided into

functional conflicts, conflicts that support group goals and improve performance and dysfunctional conflict, conflicts that hinder group performance[8].

Basically, various forms of conflict prevention mechanisms can be divided into two categories, namely conflict management and conflict transformation. Conflict management generally has the task of reducing or controlling the destructive consequences of a conflict that has occurred, rather than trying to find a completion to the conflict. In other words, conflict management involves control, not a resolution. This approach is frequently adopted if resolution seems impossible.

Conflict management is a series of actions and reactions between actors and outsiders in a conflict. Conflict management includes a process-oriented approach that directs to forms of communication (including behavior) from actors and external parties and how they affect interests and interpretations. For outsiders (outside the conflict) as third parties, what is needed is accurate information about the conflict situation. This is because effective communication between actors can occur if there is trust in a third party.

According to Ross, conflict management is the measures taken by actors or third parties, in order to lead the disputes towards certain outcomes that may or may not produce an end in conflict resolution, and may or may not produce calmness, positive results, creativity, consensus, or aggressiveness[9]. Conflict management can involve self-help, cooperation in solving problems (with or without third parties assist) or decision-making by third parties. An approach oriented to the conflict management process refers to the communication patterns and how they affect conflict interests and interpretation. In the meanwhile, according to Minnery, conflict management is a process, just as an urban planning[10]. Minnery believes that the urban planning process of conflict management is a rational and iterative part, meaning that this model is continually refined until it reaches a representative and ideal model[10]. Fisher et. al. generally uses the term conflict transformation for describing the integral situation[11].

Conflict theorists and practitioners, including John Paul Laderbach, offer to use conflict transformation as a substitute for conflict management approaches[11].

#### 3.2. Medina Charter, Origin and Content

The Medina Charter or Medina *Shahīfah* is not explicitly detailed in the hadith compilation books. Generally, there are several narrations about it, as in Sahih Muslim, hadith number 1507[12]. A similar hadith is narrated by an-Nasa'i in his Sunan (hadith number 4844)[13]; Ahmad in his Musnad (hadith number 14819)[14], with almost the same editorial, as well as his *sanaad* which leads to Ibn Juraij from Abu Zubair from Jabir bin Abdullah. Likewise, it is found in as-Sunan al-Kubra by Imam al-Baihaqi (hadith

number 16808) [15] charter with more concise material than those listed below, and also the hadith *maqtu'* only at the *tabi'i* level. In the al-Baihaqi history, points of the Medina charter are incomplete, only containing 12 chapters[15], [16]. Imam Qasim bin Salam al-Harawi narrated almost complete points of the charter of Medina in his book 'al-Amwāl', (hadith number 443)[16], but with a different transcription.

In addition, Ibn Janjaweh also reported the Medina Charter in the book 'al-Amwāl', Hadith number 574[15], with the same *sanad* (chain of narration): Ibn Janjaweh from Humaid from Abdullah bin Salih from Laits from Uqail from Syihab. The *sanad* of Qasim bin Salam al-Harawi and that of Ibn Janjaweh met with the narrator Abdullah bin Salih and led to the narrator Syihabuddin az-Zuhri, a *tabi'i*. Hadiths with this sort of *sanad*, in *ulum al-hadith* (hadith study) are called *mursal hadith*, that is, a hadith whose narrators at the companion level are not mentioned or aborted. The *mursal hadith* is categorized as the '*munqathi hadith*', or a hadith that is disconnected from its *sanad*. However, according to Abu Hanifah, Malik, Shafi'i, Ahmad and followed by Ibn Katsir, the *mursal hadith* becomes *hujjah* (strong) when narrated by the Great *Tabi' i* whose *tsiqah* (strength) is at the level of Syihabuddin az-Zuhri, Sa'id bin Musayyab[17].

While the subject matter of the entire Medina charter is more narrated in the Books of Sirah Nabawiyah, such as in Sirah Ibn Hisham [3, pp. 502–503] as-Sirah an-Nabawiyah Ibn Kathir[18] which is sourced from the narration of Ibn Ishaq. From various paths held in the Hadith of the Medina charter, it is mentioned 47 articles which regulate social life in Medina.

Historians refer to political texts made by the Prophet Muhammad with various appellations. Montgomery Watt called it "The Constitution of Medina"[19, p. 93] Majid Khadduri with "treaty"[20] R.A. Nicholson as "charter"[21] Zainal Abidin Ahmad as "charter"[22] and Philip K. Hitti as "agreement"[23] According to Yasin Ghadban, the city of Madinah, which was previously named Yathrib, was initially inhabited by Arabs from the Amaliq tribe; Banu Haf[24]. Then Jews, Arabs from Yemen and Muslims. According to Sofiyurrahman, the treaties that the Prophet applied to the Medina charter, were oftentimes implemented to various tribes and groups from both Arabs and Jews[25].

Sukarja, analyzing each article of the Medina charter, has concluded general principles of thoughts contained in the charter. They are as follows:[26]

1. Monotheism: it is contained in the preamble of the chapter, and in chapters 22, 23, 42, and the end of article 47.
2. Unity: it is contained in articles: 1, 15, 17, 25 and article 37
3. Equality and Justice: it is reflected in articles: 13, 15, 16, 22, 23, 24, 37 and article 40
4. Freedom of religion: it is clearly depicted in article 25.

5. Defending the state: it is contained in articles 24, 37, 38 and article 44.
6. Culture Preservation: in articles 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10. The Medina charter clearly mentions various groups in Medina and their customs which may be carried out continuously; namely, assisting each other in diyat payments and ransom war.
7. Shariah supremacy: it is stated that the settlement of contraventions is determined according to the Allah provisions and the Prophet Muhammad decision which is stated in articles 23 and 42.
8. Truce politics and protection: the peace concepts and internal protection are summarized in articles 17, 36, 37, 39, 40, 41 and article 47. And the peace action is externally affirmed in article 45 of the Medina charter.

When traced within the points of the Medina charter, thirteen groups are bound in this statement:

1. Believers and Muhajirin Muslims from the Meccan Quraysh Tribe.
2. Believers and Muslims from Yathrib/Medina
3. Jews of Awf
4. Jews of Bani Sa'idah
5. Jews of Bani al-Hars
6. Bani Jusyam
7. Jews of Bani al-Najjar
8. Jews of Bani 'Amr ibn Auf
9. Bani al-Nabit
10. Bani al-Aus
11. Jews of the Bani Tha'labah
12. Jafnah tribe of the Bani Tha'labah
13. Bani Syuthaybah

Sukarja confirmed that the mention in the Medina charter of tribal names and several customs prevailing among the peripheral tribe, is a proof that the Prophet Muhammad was realistic. The prophet acknowledged the existence and influence of these tribes, and allowed customary deeds to continue[26, p. 99].

Furthermore, according to Sukarja, the tenets contained in the Medina charter, reflect the essence of the Qur'an relating to the fostering of political entity[26, p. 116]. Harun Nasution comprehend that the principles in the Medina charter are what Muslims need as a guide in dealing regulating Islamic societies according to current

development[27]. It is no exaggeration if a Western constitutional expert, Montgomery Watt in "Mohammad: The Prophet and The Statesman" concluded that the Prophet Muhammad, besides being an Apostle, was also the head of state[19].

### **3.3. Conflict Management Formulation in the Medina Charter**

Medina Charter is similar to a constitution, in a sense that it is a set of rules made democratically to regulate rights and obligations for individuals and groups who are bound in it. Historical facts verify that Medina was inhabited by many ethnicities and tribes, which had previously been a frequent conflict. For example, the conflict between Bani Khajraj and Bani Aus[18, p. 175]. There are several methods of handling conflicts:[2, p. 33]

1. Negotiation Method: it asks the involved parties to sit face to face and find a solution, under the witness of outsiders.
2. The Mediation Method: it assume both parties to reveal their problem to a mediator team. This team will encourage discussion and ensure that the conflicting parties continue to work to find a solution that is mutually agreed upon.
3. Arbitrary Method: It is a situation in which each conflicting party is asked to present their arguments, and the mediator team will win the team with the best argument.

Those statements assure that three conflict resolution methods are contained in this charter. For example, the negotiation method can be seen in article 45 which reads: "*If they (supporters) are invited to make peace and they (the opposing party) fulfill peace and carry out that peace, then that peace must be obeyed. And if they are invited to do so, the believers are obliged to fulfill the invitation and carry out the peace, except for those who attack religion*". From this article, it can be seen how this charter provides a space for negotiation over disputes, by proposing a 'win-win-solution'.

Moreover, the mediation method can be seen in article 42 which reads: "*If an event or dispute occurs between supporters of this charter, which is feared to incur costs, then the settlement will be returned according to the (stipulation) of Allah and (the decision) Muhammad SAW. And verily, Allah maintains and regards the contents of this charter*". In this chapter, it is stressed the need for mediation if disputes transpire by appointing the most competent mediator to manage this matter wisely and fairly. In this article, the mediator is Allah's provisions law and the Prophet Muhammad's decision. Nevertheless, the arbitration method, as summarized in article 17 which reads: "*Surely the peace of the believers is one. A believer must not make peace without joining other believers in a war in the way of Allah, except based on equality and*

*justice between them*". This charter aims to achieve peace integrally which must entangle the parties involved in it.

In managing conflicts, there are three stages: conflict stimulation, suppress conflict and conflict resolution[28]. The Medina charter points represent a diverse, multiple way of conflict management. To settle the conflict that is happening, several formulations in conflict resolution are found. This is the so-called, NJEP formulation, (*Nilailah Situasi, Jelaskan Persoalan*, or assess the situation, explain the problem, evaluate alternative approaches and solve the problem). In a group or organization, communication has four main functions: control, motivation, emotional expression, and information.[8, p. 5].

In this context, the Medina charter is an implementation of conflict management performed by the Prophet Muhammad, focused on several things. They are as follows:

#### *1) Fostering unity and equality.*

In real life, among Muslims in Medina, mosque, besides as a place of worship, is also used as a place to convey Islamic teachings and gatherings. A sense of unity in faith and a group solidarity is formed through activities that are centered in the mosque. Thus, through the mosque, the application of fostering unity proceeds to be nurtured increasingly stronger[26, p. 138]. In the Medina charter, the relationship between Muslims and non-Muslims is regulated and stipulated strongly tolerant, as stated in articles 15, 16, 25, 40 and article 47.

In fostering a political community, the Prophet interwove all religious adherents. *Dakwah* (Islamic proselytizing) is done seriously, and there should be no coercive action in one's intention to convert Islam. Freedom of religion was enlisted to all parties. Muslims, Jews, and Christians may practice their respective religions. Provisions in the Medina charter are tolerant for other religions adherents, followed by the implementation of lenient as well[26, p. 142]

#### *2) Security Development and Regional Expansion*

To strengthen unity, it is necessary to foster security and expansion of the region as the implementation of the Medina charter points. According to Sukarja, in the Medina charter, many sentences that indicate the need for salvation and order are upheld. Regarding security and order, it is stated, Muslims must be united in facing and punishing people who commit violations, wrongdoing, hostility or causing destruction (article 13). God's protection is equal (article 15). It is not allowed not help a criminal or preserve him (article 22). Joining a war needs a permission from Muhammad (article 36). Jews and Muslims have to help each other in encountering enemies (article 37). Neighbors need to be protected (article 40)[26, pp. 146–147]

#### *3) Law and Religious Freedom*

In the Medina Charter, there are formulations related to the contradiction settlement that occurs between elements, entangled in the charter, as in article 23 in the case of *diyat* payments and ransom of captives, and article 42 in arbitration terms according to Allah's provisions and

Prophet Muhammad decision. As an Apostle, Muhammad had the conditions of prophethood; namely *fathonah* (intelligence), *amanah* (Trust), *shidiq* (honesty) and *tabligh* (ability to communicate well). According to Sukarja, in article 12, the word "*yuhallif*" means to form a partnership, article 17 says the word "*salima*" means to make peace and article 45 mentions the word "*shulhun*" meaning truce. These three words indicate the existence of conflict settlements in the form of agreements and approvals which refer to the covenant law. Thus, it can be concluded that several provisions summarized into 4 types of law: the law of God, customary law, law of strategy, and law of agreement[26, p. 165].

In article 25 of the Medina charter, it is explicated "*for Jew is their religion, and for Muslims is their religion*". From this article, it can be concluded that religious freedom is amplified by Islam and guaranteed by the State. Shapes of religious freedom are the practice of worship according to each religious teaching without any restraints from any party. This article is also accentuated that the Jews are a people along with the believers. This mention implies that the Jews are parallel with the believer community as long as they nurture commitments that have been mutually agreed upon.

Article number 20 states that "*the polytheists in Medina must not protect the lives and property of the Quraysh polytheists*". The word polytheism here signifies the state's recognition of the paganists who indeed at the beginning of Islam had a large number in Medina. In the Medina charter, they were not declared as Muslim enemies. As long as Prophet Muhammad lived, there was never a war due to religious differences, even with the polytheists[26, p. 168].

#### 4) *Peace, Sanctions, and War*

It relates to the peaceful atmosphere and the application of the sanction against state violators, including in state affairs that the government has to do. Because if truce cannot be conducted, there will be warfare that will harm many parties concerned. According to Sukarja, in the Medina charter, many sentences were aimed at addressing a peaceful circumstance, both with internal political boundaries, as well as with external parties around Medina. In the internal community, for instance, all believers must unite against or punish traitors, this is illustrated in article 16.

Furthermore, article 17 reinforces that peace for all believers is one. Nevertheless, in article 24, it is stated that the Jews bear the war costs together with the believers. And in article 45, it is emphasized that peace agreement with outsiders or enemies is at the initiative of the Islamic side[26, p. 173]. In the early days of Islam in Medina, Prophet Muhammad, took steps of social convergence in Medina, therefore the city of Medina seemed to be peaceful and secure. Various groups in Medina coexist under the Prophet political leadership. Every religious' adherent is able to execute worship and rituals without feeling any interference or obstacles from other parties, even from the Muslims who were the ruling group in Medina at that time.

But the harmonious relations that are fostered between Muslims, Jews, and Christians in Medina, do not always run smoothly. Many parties are attempting to destroy this harmony because of political and group interests. And this was read by the Prophet, hence when he made the Madinah charter, the rules for sanctions were laid. Many formulations denounce acts of treason or violation, including articles 13, 25, 31, 33, 36, 37, 40, 42 and article 46. Perpetrators of violations must be punished and must not be protected, as stipulated in articles 13 and 22. Medina city must be respected and defended from enemy attacks, as explained in article 39 and article 44.

These provisions must be made and explained to avert betrayal and violations from within. This arrangement was truly applied by the Prophet when three tribes were from the Jews; Bani Nadhir, Bani Quraizah, and Bani Qaynuqa 'committed treason and treachery, then, without hesitation, the Holy Prophet imposed sanctions on these three tribes[18], [29]–[31].

On the other hand, it can be clearly seen that the birth of the Medina charter is a direct outcome of the Prophet's leadership style. In this particular case, the Prophet has a diverse style of leadership: persuasive, participatory, innovative, motivating, educative.[28, pp. 100–1003]. The Prophet's diverse leadership style placed him as the world's top leader[32].

## 4. CONCLUSION

To conclude, the Medina charter was produced during the time of the Prophet's preaching and state. This research found out that the Medina charter has a number of noble values of multiculturalism. The points in the Medina charter provide enormous information in uncovering the life facts of the compounding Medina inhabitants. Moreover, freedom of religion, and harmonious relations between society elements, are framed in one truss. Aspects that can minimize conflict in society are fostered through unity in society, and establishment of the equality principle among them. Furthermore, the Medina charter present management rules and conflict resolution in the form of rights and obligations that must be obeyed by every bound element. It also offers strict sanctions for parties who violate this rule. It means that the Medina charter encourages the law to be affirmed in society for equality, justice, prosperity, harmony, freedom and human.

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