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# CENTRIS E-BULLETIN

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## From the Editor's Desk: Islamic Epistemology, Ontology, Axiology, and Teleology (I-EOAT)

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**The discourse of Islamisation** of Human Knowledge (IoHK) needs to be revived from time to time. Generally, this is the obligation bestowed upon every Muslim. Particularly it is the responsibility of those in academia, and since it is the University's unique philosophy, we must ensure its continuation. The main purposes are to break free from the colonization of knowledge by the Western-secularized capitalist-driven framework and create our own framework that is in line with Islamic belief and precepts. Since it is a continuous project, as we proceed, we must be dynamic without neglecting its fundamentals or guidelines.

**As an academic** who works in IIUM, sometimes I came across others who complained that they could not understand the steps in doing IoHK. One of the typical reasons given was that the steps outlined by IoHK founding fathers were too "complicated" and "complex."

**Hence**, I humbly would like to offer perhaps a simpler guideline to doing it - without neglecting the importance for us to study the founding fathers' works - which I believe can be done by everyone. In fact, realized it or not, as Muslim academics, such a guideline has been followed by many of us for years. It is called as a guideline because if we ensure that all the elements in the guideline are in line with Islamic teachings, then we can, to a certain extent, say that we have done IoHK.

**The guideline is called EOAT**, the acronym for epistemology, ontology, axiology and teleology. The first time I heard about this acronym was from the Dean of AbdulHamid AbuSulayman Kulliyah of Islamic Revealed Knowledge and Human Sciences (AHAS KIRKHS), Prof. Dr. Shukran Abd Rahman. When I heard about it and reflected upon it, I realized that this was what I had been doing. In research, I had been searching

for a term that can explain the guideline that I used. It was the guideline that guided the whole research, from the theoretical framework to the research findings and suggestions. The guideline was of course had to be Islamic since as a Muslim, I must not do anything outside the Islamic teachings.

**It was EOAT** that encapsulated my works, imbued with Islamic faith and teachings. Hence, it was an Islamic EOAT or I-EOAT, which guided the whole discourse.

**Basically, epistemology** is about how we arrived at the knowledge that we have. As Muslim researchers, we based our knowledge on the Revelations, which are the Qur'an and Sunnah. Our knowledge vis-à-vis the way we think and reasoning, must be in lined with Islamic teachings.

**Then ontology** is about the definition given to a being or a

concept. For example a leader, a state, or a constitution. When defining anything, Muslim researchers supposedly will automatically put aside any properties or features that are not in line with Islamic precepts.

**Next, axiology** is about what we value when we do our analysis. Of course, as Muslim researchers, we will value correctly i.e. those elements that are considered as good and promoted in Islam will be the ones that we appreciate in our research.

**Lastly, teleology** is about the objective of anything, including research. As mentioned by Aristotle when he conceptualized *telos*, everything has its objective or purpose in this world. Therefore, as Muslim researchers, we must ensure that our research objectives are within the Islamic guidelines and serve the Ummah.

**Hence**, if we ensure that we are following this Islamic EOAT, every devoted Muslim researcher can do IoHK. Not only academics, but administrative staff can also do it too. However, the question of whether this is a “low level” or a “high level” stage of doing IoHK is another matter. Nonetheless, the most important point is that Muslim researchers can always do it if we are sincere and steadfast in the Islamic faith. This is despite the challenges that we may face from other secular schools of thought or “conventional” academic practices that are dominant in academia and can be antagonistic toward our Islamic approach. This is also why I include the word “Islamic” in the EOAT, to differentiate it from other secular or religious perspectives, and thus will arrive at different findings and conclusions.

**Therefore**, we invite all the University's community to contribute to this CENTRIS E-bulletin by channeling your thoughts through article writing. Hopefully, the E-bulletin can be the platform for us to showcase our perspective on issues that happened throughout the world, thus countering the hegemonic non-Islamic paradigms surrounding us.

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## Beyond the Barricade: Social Media as a Catalyst for International Protests on Palestine-Israeli Conflict

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**In 2023**, the Palestinian-Israeli conflict witnessed a dramatic escalation in violence, marking one of the most devastating years in recent history. At the heart of this surge in conflict were the actions in the Gaza Strip, where civilians faced attacks of an unprecedented scale. Gunmen led by Hamas, launched an attack in southern Israel. Simultaneously, the Israeli military response was intense and far-reaching, with air strikes relentlessly bombarding Gaza. Vital infrastructures, including schools and hospitals, were hit, leading to entire neighbourhoods being reduced to rubble. Some of these strikes appeared to have been conducted without regard to the principles of distinction and proportionality, making them apparently unlawful under international law.

**Compounding the tragedy in Gaza is the ongoing blockade**, now in its 16th year, imposed by Israel. This blockade has severely restricted the movement of people and goods into and out of Gaza, exacerbating an already dire humanitarian situation. The 2.2 million Palestinians living in Gaza have seen their right to freedom of movement severely curtailed, alongside dramatic limitations on access to essential services such as electricity, healthcare, and water. The blockade has also wreaked havoc on the local economy, leaving deep scars on the socio-economic fabric of Gaza. The physical toll of the conflict is starkly evident in the destruction of Gaza's housing. Over 46,000 housing units were destroyed, and 234,000 others were damaged, affecting 60% of the housing stock in the region. The human cost is equally grievous, with Israeli forces killing 464 Palestinians, including 109 children, from the start of 2023 up to December 12. This figure represents more than twice the number of fatalities recorded in any year since 2005, with reports of unlawful killings and the excessive use of lethal force being alarmingly common.

**Amidst this**, the practice of administrative detention by Israeli authorities has reached a three-decade high, with 2,873 Palestinians being held without charge or trial, based on undisclosed evidence. This practice raises significant human rights concerns and contributes to the broader pattern of severe and discriminatory restrictions on Palestinians' rights. Furthermore, the Israeli government's policies in the occupied West Bank have continued to fuel tensions. In the first half of 2023 alone, the approval of 12,855 new housing units in settlements underscores an ongoing strategy to facilitate the unlawful transfer of Israeli citizens into the occupied territories, further entrenching the occupation and exacerbating the conflict.

## ● Current Affairs | Beyond the Barricade

Following the vivid depiction of the ongoing crisis in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, it is crucial to explore the transformative role of social media in shaping global perceptions and responses to these events. In an era where billions are connected online, platforms like TikTok have emerged as powerful conduits for political discourse, particularly among the younger generation. Contrary to the often-curated narratives of mainstream media, TikTok and similar platforms offer a raw, unfiltered glimpse into the realities on the ground. This democratization of information dissemination has empowered individuals in Gaza and beyond to share their firsthand experiences, painting a stark, immediate picture of the conflict.

The profound impact of social media on the global perception of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict cannot be overstated. As images and stories from Gaza flooded platforms like TikTok and Facebook, the world was given an unvarnished look into the dire circumstances faced by those caught in the crossfire. This unfiltered access has shattered the traditional barriers of distance and politics, making the suffering of civilians not just a distant news story but a vivid, personal reality for viewers worldwide. The immediacy with which these narratives spread across the digital landscape has transformed passive observers into active participants in a global dialogue on justice and human rights.



PHOTO BY IIUM TODAY

**This wave of digital activism** also represents a significant evolution in the dynamics of global solidarity movements. Historically, international protests and support campaigns were often coordinated by established organizations with the resources to mobilize people. However, the current surge in support for Palestine, fuelled by social media, has been markedly grassroots in nature. Individuals, moved by the stories and images they encounter online, have taken it upon themselves to organize, protest, and spread awareness, leveraging their networks and communities to amplify the call for change. Furthermore, the role of social media in this context has extended beyond mere awareness to become a tool for real-time advocacy and aid. Hashtags and viral campaigns have successfully pressured governments and international bodies to take notice, and in some cases, act. Crowdfunding campaigns have been initiated to support humanitarian efforts on the ground, demonstrating how digital platforms can translate global empathy into tangible support.

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**...the role of social media in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict can be seen as a transformative force, shaping not just the narratives but also the responses from a global audience.**

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**In addition, the digital outpouring** of support for Palestine also challenges the narratives presented by mainstream media, offering a counterpoint to often sanitized or biased reporting. This condition has enabled a more nuanced discussion about the conflict, encouraging a critical examination of its roots, the policies perpetuating it, and the human cost of inaction. It has given voice to those who have long been marginalized in international discourse, shifting some of the power dynamics traditionally seen in global media. As this digital movement grows, it not only underscores the potential of social media as a force for good but also highlights the responsibilities of these platforms in moderating content to enable meaningful and informed discussions. The surge in digital activism in response to this conflict is a testament to the changing landscape of global solidarity, where empathy, informed by the unvarnished truths shared online, can lead to collective action and, potentially, a real change. This shift towards a more engaged and empathetic global community could mark a new era in how humanity responds to crises, emphasizing the power of shared humanity over the divisiveness of conflict.

**Furthermore, social media** serves as a potent tool for advocacy and applying pressure on key decision-makers. The direct visual and narrative accounts of human rights violations and the daily struggles faced by Palestinians galvanize public opinion and engagement. It could be seen that activists harness the power of social media to launch global campaigns to demand action from governments, international bodies, and corporations. This global advocacy is pivotal in challenging and possibly altering the policies and stances of influential entities.

**In conclusion,** the role of social media in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict can be seen as a transformative force, shaping not just the narratives but also the responses from a global audience. The journey through this exploration of the conflict and the digital activism surrounding it has revealed a complex interplay of information, emotions, and actions. As the profound impact of social media on the Palestinian-Israeli conflict is multifaceted, with the platform serving as both a beacon of hope and a potential breeding ground for misinformation. The immediacy of real-time information exchange has transformed how we perceive and respond to conflicts, allowing activists and concerned individuals to stay intimately connected with the developments on the ground. This, in turn, creates a foundation for more effective conflict resolution efforts and support for grassroots movements.

