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Virtual Fatwas and Viral Misreadings: Religious Authority, Digital Misinformation, and the Boycott Politics of Israeli Products in Indonesia

Alievia Robiatul Muvidah, Sri Andriani, Andi Farahdhiba Irfan

Abstract

As Israeli-Palestinian hostilities escalated in late 2023, the Indonesian Ulama Council (MUI) issued Fatwa No. 83 of 2023, a religious decree that quickly became the subject of sweeping misrepresentation across digital platforms. This study examines whether the decree constituted a legally binding prohibition on Israeli products or whether its circulation on social media generated a distorted, populist "virtual fatwa" disconnected from the original legal opinion. Using a qualitative, descriptive-analytical approach, the study draws on secondary data from Instagram, Twitter, and YouTube, supplemented by semi-structured interviews with consumers, MUI members, pro-Palestinian activists, and digital communication specialists. Findings indicate that misreadings of the fatwa produced considerable public disorder: widespread ambiguity about the decree's substantive content, social-conformity pressures that transformed boycott participation into a moral litmus test, and consumer confusion amplified by unverified digital information. The study argues that religious literacy and the institutional management of information authority are indispensable to preventing the weaponisation of religious decrees in digital discourse.

Keywords: Fatwa; public disorder; digital misinformation; FOMO.

Introduction

The intensification of Israeli military operations following the Hamas attack of October 7, 2023, produced humanitarian consequences of unprecedented scale in the contemporary Middle East conflict. Within approximately ten weeks of sustained hostilities, Gaza's Ministry of Health had recorded more than 20,000 Palestinian deaths by December 21, 2023.[1] The gravity of this toll prompted Gaza's education minister to suspend the academic year and catalysed an emergency session of the United Nations General Assembly, which adopted a humanitarian ceasefire resolution supported by 120 member states.[2] Against this backdrop, a new informal neologism, "Israeled," entered popular circulation and was first catalogued by Urban Dictionary as the act of displacing a legitimate occupant or claiming another's property as one's own.[3] Whatever one makes of this coinage, it reflects a palpable shift in international public sentiment, namely a widespread conviction that Palestinian dispossession required moral responses from ordinary citizens, not merely from state actors.

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1 Urban Dictionary, s.v. "Israeled," accessed 2023, *https://www.urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=Israeled*.

2 Cindy Mutia Annur, "Ada 14.5 Juta Warga Palestina Pertengahan 2023," *Katadata*, October 11, 2023, https://databoks.katadata.co.id.

3 Ika Sarwindaningrum, "Korban Tewas di Gaza Tembus 20.000 Jiwa," *Kompas.id*, December 21, 2023, https://www.kompas.id/baca/internasional/2023/12/21/korban-tewas-di-gaza-tembus20000-jiwa-gencatan-senjata-masih-alot.

Indonesia occupied a distinctive position within this global wave of solidarity. As the country with the world's largest Muslim population and a long tradition of diplomatic support for Palestine, whose population reached approximately 14.5 million by mid-2023,[4] Indonesia's civil society felt particular pressure to translate solidarity into concrete action. Religious institutions were among the most closely watched. In November 2023, the Indonesian Ulama Council (MUI) issued Fatwa No. 83 of 2023, addressing the legal status of supporting the Palestinian struggle.[5] On social media platforms including Instagram, Twitter, and TikTok, however, the decree was rapidly stripped of its nuances. Users began circulating the claim that MUI had formally prohibited the purchase of Israeli products. Lists of allegedly banned brands proliferated widely, generating consumer anxiety and, in several documented cases, threatening the commercial viability of domestic enterprises that had no demonstrable connection to Israel.

The boycott of Israeli-linked products is not a novel phenomenon. It has a documented history stretching back to the early 2000s and was institutionalised most prominently through the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement, established in 2005 by a coalition of approximately 170 Palestinian civil society organisations under the principal leadership of Omar Barghouti.[6] During the 2023 conflict, solidarity demonstrations unfolded across multiple continents, including gatherings in London, protests near embassies in Washington D.C., and mass mobilisations in Brazil, Malaysia, and beyond.[7] Scholarship on Indonesia's own boycott movement has documented measurable declines in stock prices for companies perceived as Israeli-affiliated, as well as reduced consumer purchase intentions toward those brands.[8] Parallel research has identified an economic upside, in which falling demand for targeted international products allowed certain domestic micro, small, and medium enterprises to record consumption gains, thereby contributing to local employment and output.[9] Scholars have also situated international solidarity patterns within the politics of collective memory, demonstrating, for instance, how Austria's equivocal stance toward BDS reflects the enduring weight of its historical trauma.[10]

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[4] CNN Indonesia, "Perang Hamas dan Israel," accessed October 30, 2023, https://www.cnnindonesia.com/internasional/20231030101022-120-1017558; United Nations, "General Assembly Resolution," October 2023, https://news.un.org/en/story/2023/10/1142932.

[5] Fauzan Zulkarnain et al., "Kebijakan Fatwa MUI Meliburkan Shalat Jumat pada Masa Darurat COVID-19," *UIN SGD* (2020): 1–11, http://digilib.uinsgd.ac.id/id/eprint/30733.

[6] Muhamad Fakhriansyah, "Fakta Aksi Boikot Produk Israel Dibuat Warga Israel Sendiri," *CNBC Indonesia*, October 19, 2023, https://www.cnbcindonesia.com/entrepreneur/20231019094338-25-481842/fakta-aksi-boikot-produk-israel-dibuat-warga-israel-sendiri.

[7] Farida Rochmah et al., "Analisis Pengaruh Media Sosial terhadap Gerakan Boikot Produk Israel di Indonesia," 1, no. 4 (2023): 23–40.

[8] Alif Nur Rahmani, "Dampak Perang Israel-Hamas terhadap Harga Saham dan Minat Beli Masyarakat Produk Pendukung Israel," 14, no. 2 (2023): 1444–1456; Aflah Laili and Muhammad Iqbal Fasa, "Analisis Hukum Ekonomi Syari'ah terhadap Pemboikotan Produk Israel," *EKSYA* 2, no. 2 (2023): 152–171.

[9] Cheryl Irene Mentari et al., "Dampak Positif Boikot Produk Asing bagi Pertumbuhan Produk Lokal (Indonesia)," 2, no. 1 (2023); Satrio Santosa, "The Impact of the Boycott of Israeli Products, Brands and Their Supporters on the Indonesian Economy," *Jurnal Ilmu Ekonomi dan Pembangunan* 24, no. 1 (2024): 7–13, https://doi.org/10.20961/jiep.v24i1.82042.

[10] Aida Humaira Khairunisa and Mohamad Fajri Arif Rosyidin, "Memori dan Trauma dalam Hubungan Internasional: Dukungan Austria terhadap Israel dalam Melawan Aksi Boikot, Divestasi, dan Sanksi (BDS)," *NBER Working Papers* 8, no. 1 (2022): 89.

Despite this accumulating body of work, the specific phenomenon of a misrepresented religious decree and its cascading effects on Indonesian public discourse remains unexamined. No prior study has addressed whether MUI's fatwa substantively concerned the boycott of Israeli products or whether that interpretation was itself an artefact of social media amplification. This study fills that gap. It investigates the divergence between what MUI actually issued and what social media audiences understood it to mean. It further examines how the Fear of Missing Out (FOMO), understood as the social-psychological anxiety of being excluded from collectively valued experiences, drove boycott participation independently of religious conviction.[11] In doing so, the study engages a question with implications well beyond Indonesia: as fatwas and other forms of religious authority migrate into digital environments, who controls their interpretation, and what are the consequences when official and popular readings diverge?

To address these questions, the study adopts a qualitative, descriptive-analytical design suited to capturing the discursive dynamics and social representations that emerge across digital media and lived human experience.[12] Two data streams inform the analysis. Secondary data were gathered from social media platforms, principally Instagram, Twitter, and YouTube, together with relevant news and organisational websites, and were subjected to thematic analysis to identify dominant public narratives, patterns of media representation, and the ideological positions of key actors. Primary data were collected through semi-structured interviews with a heterogeneous set of stakeholders, including general consumers, MUI fatwa commission members, pro-Palestinian activists, and scholars of digital communication. This multi-perspectival design follows established qualitative research protocols that treat in-depth interviewing as a method capable of surfacing reflexive meanings that documentary approaches tend to miss.[13] Thematic analysis of the interview transcripts sought patterned meanings across informants' narratives, attending particularly to tensions between official religious authority and popular digital interpretation.

The Alleged Fatwa on Israeli Products in Indonesia

Indonesia's formal response to the Palestinian crisis was shaped by a global context of extraordinary mobilisation. Solidarity events took place across multiple countries—mass prayers in London, protests outside embassies in Washington, demonstrations in Brazil, Malaysia, and beyond.[14] On social media, Indonesian users joined Twitter, Instagram, and TikTok communities organised around solidarity hashtags, making the armed conflict a component of what scholars have described as an expanding digital support infrastructure.[15]

In this climate, MUI issued Fatwa No. 83 of 2023. The document's core provisions deserve a precise statement, because the gap between what they say and what they were reported to say proved consequential. The fatwa affirms that the global Muslim community

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[11] Lexy J. Moleong, *Metodologi Penelitian Kualitatif* (Bandung: PT Remaja Rosdakarya, 2021).

[12] Sugiyono, *Metode Penelitian Kualitatif, Kuantitatif, dan R&D* (Bandung: Alfabeta, 2015).

[13] John W. Creswell, *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*, 4th ed. (Thousand Oaks: SAGE, 2017).

[14] Rochmah et al., "Analisis Pengaruh Media Sosial," 23–40.

[15] Dito Witro, "State Islamic University Students' Perceptions of Israel-Affiliated Products: A Study After the Fatwa of Indonesia Ulema Council No. 83 of 2023," *Al-Manahij: Jurnal Kajian Hukum Islam* 18, no. 1 (2024): 145–160.

holds an obligation to support Palestinian independence against Israeli aggression, and that zakat funds may, in principle, be directed toward that struggle in conditions of emergency need.[16] It declares that supporting Israeli aggression against Palestine—whether directly or indirectly—is forbidden (*haram*). And, in what became the most contested provision, it states that "Muslims are advised to avoid, as much as possible, transactions and the use of products affiliated with Israel and those that support colonialism and Zionism."[17]

That formulation—an advisory recommendation framed in the language of precaution rather than categorical prohibition—is not a *haram* ruling on Israeli products. MUI's head of the fatwa division, Asrarun Niam Sholeh, publicly clarified this distinction, and the secretary of the fatwa commission, Miftahul Huda, stated explicitly that MUI had never issued a list of products to be boycotted and had not formally verified whether goods circulating on the internet were genuinely affiliated with Israel.[18] The product lists that spread widely across social media—naming brands such as McDonald's, Starbucks, KFC, Nestlé, Coca-Cola, and dozens of others (see Table 1)—originated not from MUI but from third-party sources, including international boycott advocacy databases.[19]

What the public encountered, however, was not this nuanced legal opinion but a simplified and amplified rendering of it. As one 25-year-old consumer interviewed for this study acknowledged, almost all of his information about the fatwa came from social media, where the consistent message was that MUI prohibited its members from purchasing Israeli products.[20] He had not read the original document. This pattern is consistent with broader research on digital religious communication, which documents that social media platforms displace official sources as the primary mediator between religious institutions and lay audiences.[21]

The phenomenon is not uniquely Indonesian. Saudi clerics have described analogous dynamics in their own context as "fatwa chaos," warning that the unregulated proliferation of religious opinions produces social fragmentation rather than moral guidance.[22] Egypt's official fatwa institution, Dār al-Iftā', responded to comparable pressures by regulating the appearance of unofficial muftis on television channels, with unauthorised fatwa-issuing carrying penalties of imprisonment and substantial financial fines.[23] What distinguishes the Indonesian case is

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16 Majelis Ulama Indonesia (MUI), *Fatwa Majelis Ulama Indonesia No. 83 Tahun 2023 tentang Hukum Dukungan terhadap Perjuangan Palestina* (Jakarta: MUI, 2023), https://mui.or.id.

17 MUI, *Fatwa No. 83 Tahun 2023*, point 3 of recommendations.

18 Noval Setia Indiraphasa, "Soal Boikot Produk Israel, Akademisi Jelaskan Pengaruh Fatwa MUI ke Masyarakat," *NU Online*, November 21, 2023; Ahmad Naufa, "Terkait Seruan MUI Boikot Produk yang Dukung Israel," *nu.or.id*, 2023.

19 The Witness, *Boycott Database*, accessed December 2023, https://boycott.thewitness.news/categories/.

20 Asiyatul Fujar, personal communication, Langsa, May 15, 2024.

21 Ahmad Rif'an Hamdani, "Fatwa in the Digital Age: Online Muftī, Social Media, and Alternative Religious Authority," *Hikmatuna: Journal for Integrative Islamic Studies* 9, no. 1 (2023); Afrizal Fikri and Abdullah Abdullah, "Religious Authority in Social Media," *Al-Tahrir: Jurnal Pemikiran Islam* 24, no. 1 (2024): 147–162.

22 Al Arabiya News, "Fatwa Fight Rages Between Saudi Clerics," July 1, 2010; Muhammad Shuhufi et al., "Islamic Law and Social Media: Analyzing the Fatwa of Indonesian Ulama Council Regarding Interaction on Digital Platforms," *Samarah* 6, no. 2 (2022).

23 Waleed Abdul Rahman, "Egyptian Parliamentary Action Against 'Fatwa Chaos,'" *Asharq Al-Awsat*, March 11, 2017.

the speed and scale at which digital platforms amplified a specific misreading, and the degree to which that misreading carried measurable economic consequences.

From a comparative jurisprudential perspective, the question of whether boycotting Israeli products constitutes an Islamic obligation has attracted serious scholarly engagement. The Egyptian-Qatari jurist Yusuf al-Qaradawi argued in *Fatawa al-Muashirah* that purchasing products from entities hostile to Islam directly implicates the buyer in violence perpetrated against Palestinians, rendering such transactions impermissible.[24] That is a considerably stronger position than MUI's advisory recommendation—and it more closely resembles what many Indonesian social media users believed MUI had actually ruled. The confusion between these two positions, held by different authorities with distinct degrees of institutional standing in Indonesia, contributed to interpretive instability.

Since the Industrial Revolution, and far more so since the rise of digital media, fatwas have entered a contested public sphere in which multiple religious authorities compete for legitimacy, and in which any sufficiently popular voice can issue an opinion that functions socially as a fatwa, regardless of its formal jurisprudential grounding.[25] As sociologist Abdulhadi Khalaf observes, Muslim communities increasingly select among competing authorities, choosing the interpretation best suited to their circumstances. States and formal religious institutions must reckon with this proliferation of informal authority if they wish to maintain coherent governance of the public sphere.[26]

Table 1. Products Disseminated via Social Media in the 2023 Boycott Campaign

Category	Brands Cited
Food	Belvita, Burger King, Cadbury, Carrefour, Dairy Milk, KFC, KitKat, Cornetto, Magnum, Walls, McDonald's, Nestlé, Oreo, Pizza Hut, Snickers, Unilever
Beverages	Coca-Cola, Nestlé, Fanta, Danone, Pepsi, Oasis, Sprite, Starbucks

Source: Compiled from secondary data via boycott.thewitness.news and online media reports (October–December 2023).

Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) on Social Media and the Boycott of Israeli Products

The boycott's reach cannot be explained by religious motivation alone. Among the study's interview subjects—students, young consumers, and civic activists—a recurrent theme was the social cost of non-participation. One student activist put it candidly: if many of her peers were actively campaigning for the boycott, abstaining risked making her appear indifferent to Palestinian suffering.[27] This is a recognisable psychological dynamic. Research on the Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) consistently shows that social media amplifies the

[24] Ahmad Akbar, "Metode Ijtihad Yusuf Al-Qardhawi dalam *Fatawa Mu'ashirah*," *Jurnal Ushuluddin* 18, no. 1 (2012): 1–20; Dedi Arif Pratama, "Revisiting the Thought of Yusuf Al-Qaradawi on the Boycott of Pro-Israel Brands," *MIZANUNA: Jurnal Hukum Ekonomi Syariah* 1, no. 2 (2023).

[25] Hasan Saleh Othman, "Collective Ijtihad: Regulating Fatwa in Postnormal Times," *American Journal of Islam and Society* 41, no. 3 (2024).

[26] Abdulhadi Khalaf, "Comment on Possamai, Turner, Roose, Dagistanli and Voyce/2: The 'Fatwa' Chaos, the Multiplication of Competent Authorities, and the State," January 1, 2016, https://www.soc.lu.se/en/abdulhadi-khalaf.

[27] Ade Ayu Puspita, personal communication, Langsa, May 20, 2024.

perception that others are participating in morally or socially significant experiences, generating anxiety among those who are not.[28]

Within the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the social media campaign—epitomised by the viral hashtag "All Eyes on Rafah," which surged following an Israeli strike on the Tel al-Sultan refugee camp on May 26, 2024, by which point the cumulative Palestinian death toll had reached approximately 36,690—converted boycott participation into a public performance of solidarity.[29] Participation became visible and legible; abstention, by contrast, risked being read as moral indifference. After the ceasefire eased the intensity of social media coverage, many consumers who had been boycotting reported a gradual return to prior purchasing patterns—a trajectory consistent with FOMO-driven conformity, in which behaviour tracks the dominant register of the digital environment rather than persistent individual conviction.[30]

Research on Indonesian consumer behaviour identifies three interlocking traits relevant here: rationality, conformity, and universality. The first refers to the principled rejection of products associated with perceived aggression. The second describes alignment with group norms, even in the absence of strong personal religious conviction. The third frames solidarity as a universal human response to humanitarian crisis, one that transcends specifically Islamic obligation.[31] All three converged in the boycott campaign—but their convergence was contingent on social media sustaining the emotional intensity of the cause. When that intensity subsided, the behavioural commitments it had generated proved fragile.

A pro-Palestinian activist interviewed for this study described the boycott as a form of moral pressure against aggressors, situating it within a strategic rather than purely religious framework.[32] That framing aligns with the BDS movement's own characterisation of consumer boycotts as a tactic of nonviolent economic pressure. The distinction is consequential: when the boycott is understood as a strategic political act, its legitimacy does not depend on any specific fatwa's content, and its continuation or abandonment reflects geopolitical developments rather than religious rulings. This dual character—simultaneously a religious recommendation and a political tactic—made the fatwa particularly susceptible to selective and divergent interpretation.

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[28] Mahsa Akbari et al., "Fear of Missing Out (FoMO) and Internet Use: A Comprehensive Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis," *Journal of Behavioral Addictions* 10, no. 4 (2021); Alfina et al., "FOMO Related Consumer Behaviour in the Marketing Context: A Systematic Literature Review," *Cogent Business and Management* 10, no. 3 (2023); Ahmad Alutaybi et al., "Combating Fear of Missing Out (FoMO) on Social Media: The FoMOR Method," *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health* 17, no. 17 (2020).

[29] Siti Purnamasari Safitri, "Memahami Alasan di Balik Boikot Produk Israel, Biar Gak FOMO!" *rahma.id*, June 5, 2024, https://rahma.id.

[30] Chaim Fershtman and Neil Gandal, "The Effect of the Arab Boycott on Israel: The Automobile Market," *The RAND Journal of Economics* 29, no. 1 (1998); Jing Mao and Bing Zhang, "Differential Effects of Active Social Media Use on General Trait and Online-Specific State-FoMO," *Psychology Research and Behavior Management* 16 (2023).

[31] Noor Intan, "Heboh Aksi Boikot Israel, Masyarakat Indonesia Hanya FOMO?" *Republika*, November 5, 2023.

[32] Puspita, personal communication, May 20, 2024.

Misinformation, Informational Vacuums, and the Crisis of Fatwa Authority

When MUI's fatwa commission secretary Miftahul Huda stated that the council had not verified the product lists circulating online and had issued no official catalogue of Israeli-affiliated brands, he identified a structural vulnerability: an informational vacuum.[33] In the digital media ecology, such vacuums are filled not by institutions but by virality. Information spreads not because it is authoritative but because it is emotionally resonant, easily shareable, and compatible with pre-existing political sympathies. The result was a "virtual fatwa"—a set of popular beliefs about what MUI had ruled that diverged substantially from the actual legal opinion.[34]

The consequences were tangible. Several domestic products with no demonstrable links to Israel were targeted by boycott campaigns, causing economic harm to Indonesian MSMEs.[35] This "boycott overreach" is a documented hazard of movements whose authoritative referent is unclear: when the criteria for target selection are vague, participants fill the gap with their own classifications, and misclassification follows.[36] The credibility of the boycott movement itself was at stake, since campaigns directed at the wrong targets tend to generate backlash from producers, traders, and consumers who rightly question their fairness.

Digital influencers compounded the problem. Social media accounts with large followings produced their own lists of products they characterised as impermissible to purchase, presenting them in an authoritative register without source attribution. This created what scholars of online religious authority have described as "disintermediation"—a breakdown of the traditional transmission chain between qualified scholars and lay audiences, replaced by a horizontal network in which any sufficiently popular voice can issue something that functions socially as a fatwa, regardless of its jurisprudential grounding.[37]

The dual character of the original decree—simultaneously a religious-legal opinion and a political statement—deepened the confusion. Groups that read the fatwa as a symbol of Muslim unity found in it a mandate for collective action. Others, particularly in the business community, experienced the ambiguity about what counted as an "Israeli-affiliated product" as a concrete threat to commercial viability.[38] Without authoritative criteria or an official reference list, the boundary between targeted and untargeted products remained permanently unstable.

Several pathways toward greater institutional coherence suggest themselves. MUI could collaborate with media monitoring bodies and information technology researchers to establish a formal digital communication task force capable of clarifying, correcting, and strategically

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[33] Naufa, "Terkait Seruan MUI," 2023.

[34] Muhammad Fahmi et al., "From Fatwa to Social Media: Unleashing Global Muslim Solidarity through Fatwa and Digital Activism Movement," 9, no. 1 (2024): 111–132.

[35] Anuj Tandon et al., "Dark Consequences of Social Media-Induced Fear of Missing Out (FoMO): Social Media Stalking, Comparisons, and Fatigue," *Technological Forecasting and Social Change* 171 (2021).

[36] Shan Lv and Hao Wang, "The Effect of College Students' Boredom Proneness on Phubbing: The Chain-Mediating Effects of Fear of Missing Out and Online Vigilance," *Perspectives in Psychiatric Care* (2023).

[37] Othman, "Collective Ijtihad"; Stephen Andrew Whyte, "Islamic Religious Authority in Cyberspace: A Qualitative Study of Muslim Religious Actors in Australia," *Religions* 13, no. 1 (2022).

[38] Muhammad Ichsan, "The Role of Social Media Twitter in Delivering the Fatwa of the Indonesian Ulema Council About Covid-19 with the Concept of Al-Dharurah (Emergency)," *Lecture Notes in Networks and Systems* 812 (2024); Tatik Hidayati et al., "Digitalization of Islamic Finance: Epistemological Study of the National Sharia Board-Indonesian Council of Ulama's Fatwa," *Al-Ahkam* 33, no. 2 (2023).

disseminating its decrees across relevant platforms.[39] More broadly, there is a case for the state to play a coordinating role—not to suppress religious opinion, but to establish mechanisms of accountability and public explanation that prevent legitimate religious-legal authority from being delegitimised by misinformation. The promotion of digital religious literacy among general audiences is a complementary strategy.[40] Fatwas in the digital era face a dual legitimacy challenge: not only must they be juridically sound, but they must also be socially valid—understood, received, and communicated in terms that digital audiences can accurately process.[41]

Conclusion

The "fatwa" that circulated across Indonesian social media in late 2023 was, in the precise legal sense, an alleged fatwa: a popular misreading of an official document that had been substantially transformed in transit through digital platforms. MUI Fatwa No. 83 of 2023 recommended that Muslims avoid, where reasonably possible, transactions and products affiliated with Israel. It did not declare such products haram; it did not compile or endorse any product list; and it explicitly framed its recommendation as a matter of moral discretion rather than binding prohibition. That the public widely understood otherwise reflects not the content of the fatwa nor the intent of its issuers, but the logics of social media interpretation—speed, emotional appeal, and the absence of institutional friction.

This study demonstrates that boycott participation in Indonesia was shaped as much by social conformity and FOMO as by religious conviction. Moral peer pressure, visibility dynamics, and the fear of being seen as indifferent to Palestinian suffering drove engagement in ways that were not always grounded in accurate knowledge of MUI's actual position. The gradual attenuation of boycott behaviour following the ceasefire, and the partial return to prior consumption patterns, is consistent with FOMO-driven conformity rather than principled religious adherence.

The broader implication is that digital media poses a genuine governance challenge for religious institutions. Without proactive, participatory communication strategies—ones that engage audiences where they actually consume information, rather than simply issuing official statements—fatwas risk being systematically misread, misrepresented, and instrumentalised. Strengthening digital religious literacy and building authoritative information infrastructure are not optional enhancements to institutional communication. They are conditions for maintaining the social function of religious-legal authority in a mediated world.

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[39] Fahmi et al., "From Fatwa to Social Media," 111–132; Ahmad Suaedy et al., "Language, Authority, and Digital Media: The Impact on the Legitimacy of Fatwas," *Ahkam: Jurnal Ilmu Syariah* 23, no. 1 (2023).

[40] Syamsul Hadi Wahid, "Research Insights on Online Fatwas: A Comprehensive Systematic Literature Review," *Journal of Fatwa Management and Research* 29, no. 1 (2024).

[41] Fikri and Abdullah, "Religious Authority in Social Media," 147–162; Muhammad Syukron Wahidul Anam, "Law, Ethics, and Hadith Ahkam: An Analysis of Fatwa MUI in the Perspective of Progressive Interpretation," *Samarah: Jurnal Hukum Keluarga dan Hukum Islam* 8, no. 2 (2024): 1023.

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