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## Minister Claim Israel Visit is Pro-Palestine



Yahya Cholil Staqf. TEMPO/Subekti.

**TEMPO.CO, Jakarta** - Foreign Affairs Minister Retno Marsudi said that the visit of a member of the President Advisory Council Yahya Staqf to Israel does not affect the Indonesian government's stance in supporting the struggle of Palestinians. Retno claimed that the government will be strengthening its support to Palestine through a number of diplomatic steps.

"I have said this at the State Palace," Retno said to *Tempo* on Friday, June 15, 2018. "There is no changes in Indonesia's stance in relation to Palestinians' struggle, [the visit] bolster it instead," Retno state.

A number of figures and public organizations have launched criticism toward the government for allowing Yahya Staqf to visit Israel. The prominent figure of Nahdlatul

Ulama was reported to participate in a general lecture on 'Shifting the Geopolitical Calculus: From Conflict to Cooperation' during the America Jewish Committee event.

One of the criticism came from Speaker of the People's Representatives assembly Zulkifli Hasan, who asserted that the international community will assume that Yahya Staqf presence in Israel has double standards. "The government will be accused of having contacting Israel," Zulkifli stated.

Chief of Commission I of the House Representatives Abdul Kharis Almasyhari asserted that Yahya Staqf visit was a diplomacy blunder. The visit, according to Abdul, disrupted Indonesia's relationship with Palestine and will violate the trust of the international community that has appointed Indonesia as the non-permanent member of the United Nations Security Council.

"Yahya Staqf visit to Israel, have humiliated Indonesia in front of the countries that have voted for Indonesia," Abdul said.

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