

Protection of the Economic Rights of Online Motorcycle Taxi Drivers (Difabike Yogyakarta) in the Midst of Rising Fuel Prices Due to the Iran-Israel Conflict: An Analysis of National Energy Law and Policy

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Abstract

The Iran-Israel conflict has contributed to the instability of the global energy market, resulting in fluctuations in world oil prices and potentially affecting fuel pricing policies in Indonesia. This situation poses significant challenges for vulnerable groups in the informal sector, including people with disabilities who work as online motorcycle taxi drivers. This study aims to analyze the impact of the increase in fuel prices due to the Iran-Israel conflict on the fulfillment of the economic rights of online motorcycle taxi drivers of people with disabilities in Indonesia and to examine the legal protection provided to them based on international human rights instruments and Indonesian national law in the midst of the global energy crisis. This research uses normative legal methods with statutory and international legal approaches. The findings show that rising fuel prices have adversely impacted the economic well-being of online motorcycle taxi drivers with disabilities by increasing operational costs and limiting their ability to maintain a decent standard of living. Although legal protection for their economic rights has been recognized within international and national legal frameworks, its implementation is still inadequate. Therefore, an energy policy that is inclusive of persons with disabilities and based on human rights is needed to ensure sustainable economic protection for persons with disabilities during periods of global energy instability.

Keywords

Economic Rights; Energy Policy; Fuel Price Increases; Human Rights; Online Motorcycle Taxi Drivers; Persons with Disabilities.



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INTRODUCTION

The Strait of Hormuz is one of the international shipping lanes that has a strategic role in the distribution of oil and natural gas worldwide. Geographically, this strait is located in the Middle East, between the territory of Iran and Oman, and serves as a link between the Persian Gulf and the Gulf of Oman and the Arabian Sea. From the

perspective of international relations, the Middle East region occupies a very important position because it has abundant reserves of energy resources and is the main route of global energy trade. This condition makes this region not only have high economic value, but also strategic value from the political and international security aspects. Therefore, the Middle East is often an arena for competition of interests between various countries, including Iran and the United States. The dynamics of the two countries' relations are marked by various tensions rooted in each side's efforts to maintain and expand its strategic influence in the region, particularly with regard to the control of energy trade routes and regional security stability (Daniezha Rachelia Rangkuti et al., 2026, p. 181).

In the provisions of the Regional Regulation of the Special Region of Yogyakarta Number 4 of 2012, persons with disabilities are defined as any individual who experiences disorders, abnormalities, damage, or loss of function of physical, mental/intellectual, and sensory organs, both temporary and permanent, so as to face various obstacles in interacting with the physical and social environment. In the development of more inclusive terminology and oriented towards respect for human dignity, this group is also often referred to as people with disabilities (different abilities), which emphasizes the existence of different abilities without reducing their rights and position as equal citizens before the law (Ningrum, 2021).

Based on data published by the Central Statistics Agency (BPS) in 2020, the number of people with disabilities in Indonesia is estimated to reach 22.5 million people. Meanwhile, the results of the 2020 National Socio-Economic Survey (Susenas) show a higher number, which is around 28.05 million people. In line with this data, the World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that around 10 percent of Indonesia's total population, or approximately 27.3 million people, are people with disabilities. At the regional level, data from the Regional Development Planning Agency (Bappeda) of the Special Region of Yogyakarta (DIY) in 2023 shows an increasing trend in the number of people with disabilities during the 2019-2022 period. In 2022, the number of people with disabilities in Yogyakarta was recorded at 28,137 people. The increase emphasizes the importance of more serious attention from the Yogyakarta Regional Government in ensuring the protection and fulfillment of the rights of persons with disabilities as mandated in the Regional Regulation of the Special Region of Yogyakarta Number 4 of 2012 concerning the Protection and Fulfillment of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. One form of implementation of these regulations can be realized through the implementation of inclusive and accessible public services,

including the provision of public transportation services that are able to accommodate the needs of people with disabilities equally (Rohmi, 2023, p. 591).

People with disabilities still face various obstacles in obtaining decent and equal jobs. These obstacles are not only in the form of structural obstacles in the employment system, but also influenced by social stigma and the lack of optimal provision of an inclusive and accessible work environment. This condition has implications for the low level of participation of people with disabilities in the job market compared to other community groups. Although the government has implemented a number of policies aimed at improving employment opportunities and the welfare of people with disabilities, their implementation has not been able to completely eliminate the existing gaps. In practice, most people with disabilities are still concentrated in the informal sector, which tends to have limitations in terms of legal protection, social security, and economic certainty for workers (Wardana, 2025).

Relations between Iran and the United States have long been marked by political tensions rooted in a crisis of trust since the Iranian Revolution in 1979. The revolution turned what had previously been relatively harmonious bilateral relations into one full of conflict and hostility. These tensions are inseparable from various historical events, such as the involvement of the United States in the political dynamics of Iran during the reign of Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi and the occupation of the United States Embassy in Tehran by Iranian student groups. The decades-long conflict escalated after the United States unilaterally withdrew from the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) nuclear agreement in 2018. The United States' decision to withdraw from the JCPOA not only had a significant impact on Iran's economic conditions through the reimposition of economic sanctions, but also encouraged Iran to formulate various political measures and defense strategies to safeguard its national interests. In the face of this pressure, Iran does not solely rely on conventional military power, but implements an asymmetric defense strategy that utilizes geographical advantage as a strategic instrument. One form of implementing this strategy is the use of the strategic position of the Strait of Hormuz as a tool of pressure on external parties. Iran has repeatedly threatened to close the Strait of Hormuz in response to various policies and actions deemed to threaten the country's sovereignty. Given that the Strait of Hormuz is an international shipping lane that is very important for the world's oil distribution, the threat of closing the strait raises various international legal issues, especially related to freedom of navigation, the right of transit, as well as the stability of international security and trade (Daniezha Rachelia Rangkuti et al., 2026, p. 181).

Based on this description, this study aims to analyze the rise of petroleum in the escalation of the conflict between the United States and Iran through the perspective of international relations. This study also seeks to examine the impact faced by disabled online motorcycle taxi drivers on economic empowerment. Thus, this research is expected to make an academic contribution in understanding the relationship between international conflicts, pragmatic politics, and global energy interests which also have an impact on the economy of people with disabilities in the work of online motorcycle taxi drivers (Difabike) in Yogyakarta.

METHODS

The writing of this study uses the literature method, or commonly called literature review which is based on books, research results, journals, and articles related to education and learning evaluation. With this literature research, the data collected relies on theories from several literature and research that has been conducted by several researchers. Reference searches are performed on electronic databases on several research reports in the Google Scholar database.

The journals that have been searched in the search engine database are then downloaded and filtered. Screening is done by reading the abstract first. Abstracts that do not meet the criteria are eliminated. Furthermore, journals that meet the criteria are read thoroughly to determine whether the journal is still suitable for use or not. This research uses a literature study by studying various reference sources from several research results, both national and international journals which are used as the basis of theory. The researcher analyzes, compares, and concludes related to topics relevant to the researcher's title.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The impact of the increase in fuel prices on the empowerment of the driver's economy (Difa Bike) due to the conflict between Iran and the United States

The Strait of Hormuz has long been a major transit route for cargo, connecting the Persian Gulf to the Arabian Sea and further to the Indian Ocean. The strait has long been considered strategically important, and the change in control of the strait has historically led to conflict. Potter (2014) and Ghazvinian (2021) also offer a detailed historical study of the Strait. In terms of ancient and colonial-era trade routes, Potter points out what he sees as the significance of the settlement for all parties involved in the Strait. The regional dynamics of the Middle East have changed a lot over these decades, due to changes from within and intervention from outside. Kamrava (2013) and Lynch (2016) discuss these changes. Kamrava assesses the Arab Spring and its impact: how the uprising changed the political dynamics by creating opportunities for Iran and Saudi Arabia (Tariq et al., 2025, p. 6).

According to data from the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), Iran is one of the largest oil producers in the world. In 2022, Iran was able to produce about 2.55 million barrels of crude oil per day, which is equivalent to 3.5% of total global oil production. With this amount of production, Iran occupies the position of the ninth largest oil producer in the world. In addition to having a high production capacity, Iran also has very large crude oil reserves, which are around 208.6 billion barrels in 2022 or around 13.3% of the world's total oil reserves. This number places Iran as the country with the second largest oil reserves after Venezuela and Saudi Arabia. The abundant availability of energy resources makes the oil and gas sector one of the main pillars of the Iranian economy. Such energy wealth not only contributes to the development of the national economy, but also strengthens Iran's position in international relations. In practice, Iran uses oil as a strategic commodity to establish economic and trade cooperation with various countries, including countries outside the Middle East region. Thus, oil resources play an important role as an economic instrument as well as a means of diplomacy in supporting Iran's national interests at the global level (Suhayatmi et al., 2024, p. 60).

Based on Law Number 8 of 2016 concerning Persons with Disabilities, a person with a disability is any person who has physical, intellectual, mental, and/or sensory limitations that last for a long time, so that in interacting with the environment they face obstacles that can reduce full and effective participation in community life based on the principle of equal rights. As an integral part of Indonesian citizens, persons with disabilities have the same position, rights, and obligations as other citizens. The guarantee of equality is a constitutional mandate as affirmed in Article 27 paragraph (2) of the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia which states that every citizen has the right to obtain a decent job and livelihood for humanity. Thus, the state is obliged to ensure the fulfillment of the rights of persons with disabilities, including the right to work without discrimination (Law of the Republic of Indonesia Number 8 of 2016 concerning Persons with Disabilities, 2016).

In the framework of inclusive development, economic empowerment for persons with disabilities is one of the fundamental aspects in realizing social justice and equal access to economic activities. The involvement of persons with disabilities in economic activities, especially through the Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) sector, has a strategic role in increasing their independence, productive capacity, and well-being. However, studies have shown that groups of people with disabilities still face various obstacles in obtaining equal access to economic opportunities. These obstacles include limited access to training programs, sources of financing or capital, the use of technology, and marketing networks needed for business development (Sandi et al., 2026, p. 151).

The fulfillment of economic rights for persons with disabilities is a form of implementation of human rights as well as the realization of the principle of social justice which is the responsibility of the state. According to Marshall (1998:45), economic rights, social rights, and cultural rights are inseparable parts of the concept of citizenship so that the state is obliged to ensure the fulfillment of these rights for all citizens, including persons with

disabilities, in order to participate equally in social life. In its implementation, the existence of Difabike Yogyakarta is a form of inclusion practice through the provision of job opportunities that provide access for people with disabilities to earn income and increase economic independence. However, these efforts have not been fully able to overcome the various obstacles faced by people with disabilities in obtaining decent jobs. These barriers do not only come from structural aspects, such as limited access to job opportunities, but are also influenced by cultural factors in the form of stigma, stereotypes, and discriminatory practices that are still developing in society. In line with that, Sari (2021:55) explained that discrimination in the transportation and employment sectors is still the main obstacle that hinders the fulfillment of the economic rights of people with disabilities. This condition shows that the implementation of inclusiveness-oriented policies has not been fully effective, so that there is still a gap between normative arrangements regarding the protection of the rights of persons with disabilities and the reality of their implementation in the field. In addition to various structural and cultural barriers, global economic conditions also affect the fulfillment of the economic rights of persons with disabilities. The increase in fuel oil (BBM) prices as a result of the escalation of the conflict between Iran and the United States in the Middle East region has driven up the operational costs of the transportation sector. According to one of the resource persons, motorcycle taxi drivers with disabilities, such as those who are members of Difabike Yogyakarta. Based on the information of one of the speakers who is a member of Difabike Yogyakarta, the increase in fuel prices has caused an increase in vehicle operating costs, a decrease in people's purchasing power, and a decrease in demand for transportation services. This condition has an impact on the decrease in income of motorcycle taxi drivers with disabilities so that they tend to prioritize services to regular customers who are considered able to provide income certainty. From a juridical perspective, these conditions show that there are obstacles in the fulfillment of the economic rights of persons with disabilities as guaranteed in Law Number 8 of 2016 concerning Persons with Disabilities. Article 5 recognizes that persons with disabilities have the right to employment, entrepreneurship, and cooperatives, while Article 11 affirms the right to obtain employment opportunities, develop businesses independently, and obtain fair treatment without discrimination. Therefore, the state is not only obliged to provide normative recognition of these rights, but also to ensure that there are policies that are able to protect the sustainability of the livelihoods of persons with disabilities when economic conditions occur that have an impact on their income (Albar & Kurniawan, 2025, p. 5).

Forms of Protection of Drivers' Economic Rights Based on International Human Rights Law Instruments and National Law in the Midst of Rising Fuel Prices Due to the Global Energy Crisis

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) is an international instrument adopted by the United Nations General Assembly (UN) through Resolution 217 A (III) on December 10, 1948 at the Chaillot Palace, Paris. This declaration contains 30 articles that are the universal basis for the protection and respect of human rights. Its ratification was

supported by 48 countries, while 8 countries abstained and 2 countries were absent from the voting process. As a normative declaration, the DUHAM functions as a general guideline in the implementation of human rights protection, so its provisions require further regulation through binding legal instruments. As a follow-up to the DUHAM, on December 16, 1966 the UN General Assembly adopted two major international treaties in the field of human rights, namely the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and its Optional Protocols and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) and its Optional Protocols. The two covenants complement the substance of the DUHAM by providing more detailed and binding arrangements regarding the protection of human rights. Each instrument has a different regulatory scope, where the ICCPR focuses on the protection of civil and political rights, while the ICESCR regulates the fulfillment of economic, social, and cultural rights as an integral part of the international human rights legal regime (Nisa & Dharmawan, 2025, p. 12).

In a report by the National Council on Disability (2011), employment conditions for people with disabilities still face various obstacles. The low absorption rate of the workforce of persons with disabilities is influenced by the lack of awareness and understanding of employers, who still consider persons with disabilities to have lower productivity than other workers. In addition, discriminatory practices in the recruitment process and in the work environment are still the main obstacles to the fulfillment of the right to work for people with disabilities. As a form of protection for these rights, Law Number 8 of 2016 concerning Persons with Disabilities regulates provisions in the field of employment based on the principle of human rights. The law requires governments, local governments, state-owned enterprises (SOEs), and regionally-owned enterprises (BUMD) to employ at least 2% of people with disabilities out of the total number of employees. Meanwhile, private companies are required to employ at least 1% of people with disabilities from their entire workforce. In addition to setting these obligations, the government also provides incentives to companies that employ people with disabilities as an effort to encourage the realization of more inclusive employment opportunities. In Law No. 8 of 2016 in the regulation of the labor sector, it is:

1. Based on human rights.
2. The government, local governments, SOEs, and BUMDs are obliged to hire people with disabilities 2% of the total number of employees.
3. The private sector is obliged to hire people with disabilities from the total number of employees.
4. There are incentives for companies that hire people with disabilities.

Thus, the provision shows that persons with disabilities have the same right to obtain employment and participate in economic activities without discrimination, so that the state is obliged to ensure the fulfillment of the right to work as part of the protection of human rights (Nopiah & Islami, 2022, p. 9).

CONCLUSION

The Iran-Israel conflict that has triggered global energy market instability has had an indirect impact on the economic conditions of the people in Indonesia, one of which is through the potential increase in fuel prices. For online motorcycle taxi drivers with disabilities, these conditions increase operational costs, decrease real income, and make it difficult to fulfill economic rights and achieve a decent standard of living. This situation shows that groups of people with disabilities have a higher level of vulnerability to the impact of the global energy crisis than other groups of workers. From a legal perspective, the protection of the economic rights of persons with disabilities has gained a strong foundation both in international instruments, especially the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), as well as in national law through Law Number 8 of 2016 concerning Persons with Disabilities and various laws and regulations related to human rights and social welfare. However, in the implementation stage, these norms have not been fully able to provide effective protection against the economic impact caused by fluctuations in fuel prices. Therefore, more responsive, inclusive, and human rights-based policies are needed so that the state can fulfill its obligations to respect, protect, and fulfill the economic rights of persons with disabilities, especially during the global energy crisis.

The government needs to formulate an energy policy that considers the needs of vulnerable groups, including people with disabilities who work in the informal sector as online motorcycle taxi drivers. This policy can be realized through the provision of operational assistance, targeted subsidies, economic incentives, and sustainable social protection programs so that the impact of rising fuel prices does not directly reduce their welfare. Therefore, in addition, it is necessary to strengthen coordination between the government, application-based transportation service provider companies, and organizations of persons with disabilities in developing inclusive policies. Supervision of the implementation of Law Number 8 of 2016 concerning Persons with Disabilities must also be increased so that the guarantee of protection of economic rights is not only normative, but is actually implemented in practice. Thus, legal protection for persons with disabilities can be realized effectively in accordance with the principles of justice, equal rights, and respect for human rights.

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