

# The Challenges of Solidity in the Islamic World at the International Level

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**Article's History:**

Received: 28 February 2022  
Accepted: 15 April 2022  
Published: 30 April 2022

**Abstract**

Humans must face numerous obstacles in today's global globe, whether as individuals or communities. Islam is one of the religions that have very rapid population growth in the current era, and it is also one of the religions that have a massive number of adherents in the current era. The method used in this study was a bibliometric and descriptive evaluative analysis, wherein data was collected by using the Publish or Perish application, and then processed with VOSviewer application software. Islam was highly developed, and many pioneer scientists in numerous fields arose from it. However, the present difficulty that the Islamic religion must face is how strong Islam is in the worldwide world today. If we talk about strength today, it is not just quantity but quality. Indeed, Islam is one of the largest religions in the world, but if we look at the condition of countries with a Muslim majority, of course, they have not yet fully united to move forward, so their solidity is in question. This study was conducted using bibliometric and descriptive evaluative analysis methods. In this journal, the author explains the challenges of solidity in the Islamic world at the international level.

**Keywords:** challenges; solidity; Islamic world; international level

## Introduction

Globalization necessitates our participation in a dynamic and competitive global civilization (Aman, 2001). Without these two characteristics, we as a nation will be unable to compete with other nations worldwide. Improving the quality of our human resources is a crucial aspect of following the progress of other nations in science and technology. Society tends to evolve and develop, and these changes will always apply to all people, wherever they are, at any time (Backstrom, Huttenlocher, Kleinberg, & Lan, 2006). These changes might occur abruptly and concurrently at times.

Westerners are thought to control the rapid flow of information, lifestyle, cultural values, and the advancement of science and technology. This control results in technological items deemed value-free by a subset of the population so that the traits of Western culture are not apparent in the product. Meanwhile, other perspectives indicate that a technology product is still not value-free. The presence of these things reflects particular ideologies, lifestyles, conventions,

value systems, and civilizations indirectly. Furthermore, if a product has been packaged according to culture, the technology producer's name is worth it (Sardar, 1996).

The advancement of technology and knowledge, especially human social sciences, has narrowed the gap between cultural differences between regions (Landeta, 2006). Such phenomena significantly impact the human perception of the phenomenon known as religion. Religion in the modern period cannot be viewed and understood just via a theological-normative lens (Gaztambide-Fernández, 2012).

This occurred because, at the end of the nineteenth and especially in the twentieth century, there was a paradigm change in understanding religion from ideals to historicity, from doctrine to sociological entities, and from essence discourse to existence. In other words, religion must explain not only the link between humans and God but also the consciousness of living in communities (sociological), the awareness of the quest for religious beginnings (anthropological), and the fulfillment of humans' urge to build a strong personality (psychological) (Hussain et al., 2022).

Religion faces a significant challenge in this area, which is the result of the accumulation of problems that bear the name of religion, such as violence, terrorism, modern culture, the economy, living together, and difficulties of self-comfort. All of these issues are manifestations of the interaction between humans and humans, as well as humans and culture, which religion cannot fully explain (Abdulla, 2018).

When religion is no longer considered relevant, humans value materialistic life over spiritual life, resulting in the spread of permissive culture among humankind, individualistic attitudes, less promising educational institutions, conflicts in social values, and cultural polarization. This situation creates dialectical contradictions between materialist or modern cultures and religious imperatives to preserve transcendental features.

Even though changing times have generated a new culture that compels Muslims to adjust fast, the role of religion in Muslim life remains relevant and gives real solutions to challenges faced in many civilizations. This is crucial because renowned personalities such as Al-Ghazali, Al-Farabi, Ibn Rushd, Al-Kindi, Ibn Arabi, and Ibn Khaldun advanced Islamic civilization in ancient times. It adjusts to changing times so Islam's teachings can still be balanced with a changing culture (Kurmanaliyeva, 2021; Sweeney, 2011).

On the other hand, Western people are incessantly making changes and developments in all fields, including politics, society, education, religion, economy, and cultural religion globally; Islam is no exception. Culture. The archipelago and local culture are also affected, so that modern culture appears amid religious people. However, Islam and its culture influence the West's constant expansion. In essence, life on this planet influences one another; hence Machasin's statement that human groupings, civilizations, religions, traditions, and other forms of togetherness "cannot be isolated from the universal community" is correct. Everything exists in a single global community, and everyone is influenced by and/or influences the lives of others. There should be no one among these things who believe they have the correct viewpoint and imposes it on others. Apart from those who are extras or even objects of pain, there are always groups, civilizations, or perspectives that determine (Hussain et al., 2022).

This interplay of life makes Islamic religions in the world, especially Islam, always have to be aware of the growth of modern culture, which almost certainly always leads to individualistic and indifferent behavior towards religion (Abdullah, 2017). Moreover, the words of the classical and modern anthropologist August Comte believe that religion is a stage of evolution. According to this idea, religion was once considered essential for society, but now religion has become obsolete due to modern developments (Dallmayr, 2011).

Even though this secular view has penetrated the lives of Muslims and modern culture, Islam must seek to take a firm stance and try to fortify itself from secular matters. Islam must maintain its teachings when dealing with modern culture because humankind always needs the presence of religion in him. Religion provides significance to individuals and societies and the prospect of eternal life and happiness in the hereafter. Religion has the potential to free him from the burdens of this world and bring him spiritual independence. Religion reinforces collective norms and moral consequences for individuals and serves as the foundation for society's common aims and ideals (Dallmayr, 2011).

In the current period of globalization, Islam is one of the religions whose supporters or adherents are rising. In the Middle East, particularly in Saudi Arabia, where the cities of Mecca and Medina are located, Islam has historically developed at a rapid pace. Until now, Islam has established itself as a dominant religion. According to the Pew Research Center report, Islam's adherent population is expected to expand or develop twice as much between 2015 and 2060 (Hussain et al., 2022).

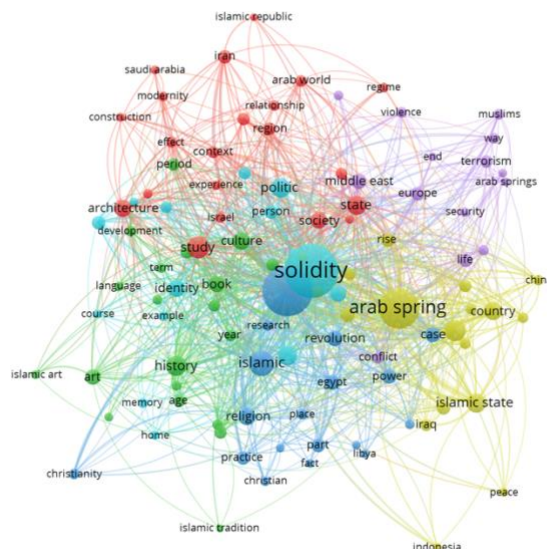
Even a report from 2015 stated that Muslims made up 24.1 percent of the world's population at the time, implying that nearly half of the population was Muslim. We also need to know about the demographics and growth of Muslims. In Islam, disciplinary norms state that a youngster must follow in his parents' footsteps, notably among others who share his faith. The advancement of industrialization and globalization has aided different events, including the world community's attitude toward Muslims (Hussain et al., 2022).

Until finally, we are in the phase of discussing the solidity of the Islamic world in today's international environment. Currently, the international world seems to be influenced by western culture, which is closely related to the growth of Christians or Jews. Meanwhile, the solidity of Islam is still widely doubted by the international community, even though if we examine the history of Islam, Islam has triumphed or is called the golden age. Nevertheless, in this world, there are still many who question the solidity of Islam itself. Islam has created an organization that represents Islam's power, namely the OIC, or the Islamic Conference Organization. This is also accompanied by various challenges faced by the solidity of Islam itself, so this study will be discussed how the challenges of Islamic solidity in the international world in the current era.

## Research Methods

This study was conducted using bibliometric and descriptive evaluative analysis methods. The study population is primary data for journal articles from 2015-2022 taken from search results conducted in February 2022 through the Google Scholar database using the Publis or Peris application with abstract keywords; solidity Islamic and Arab spring database obtained is 1000 articles, the

data is exported with the format Research Information Systems (RIS).



**Figure 1.** Research Gap and Novelty Islamic Solidity

The data is taken from the Publis or Peris application, then imported into the VOSviewer data management application. The next step is to extract the title and abstract by using the binary counting method and using a minimum of 10 times the appearance of a term (Eck & Waltman, 2021). The data processing results show that research on how to challenge Islamic solidarity in the international world in the current era is feasible because there is a research gap that supports this research (see Figure 1).

## Results and Discussions

Many factors influence Islamic solidarity; the fluctuations in Islamic solidarity since the time of Prophet Muhammad SAW, seeds of division among Muslims have also emerged, especially after Prophet Muhammad SAW's death, where there are, of course, more and more disagreements. This weakens Islam's foundation. Then, with the establishment of a state government system, what was formerly a job became a type of state with a government pattern.

Several Muslim-majority countries still employ the royal pattern today, although many other countries retain traditional forms of government. Naturally, this alters the standing position that Muslims must maintain. The pattern of development and change in countries throughout the world is changing, from how to gather resources, enhance the economy, military elements, and many other disciplines. Including how they interact with one another, in short, the creation of international cooperation and organizations like the UN, OIC, ASEAN, NAFTA, etc. (Mottaghi & Khoy, 2016). The following are the challenges of solidity that will be faced by the Islamic world, as follows:

### Islamic Sect Split

Today, conflicts or even wars have erupted due to disagreements between Sunni and Shia Muslims. In the Middle East and other Islamic countries throughout the world, including Indonesia, the conflict between the two opposing primary streams of Islam has expanded. Shia Islam is now generally identified with heretical *bid'ad* or unbelievers, even though it is a minority group.

Since the death of the Prophet Muhammad in 632 AD, the discord seeds between these two major sects in Islam have been sown. The Prophet lacked a son or heir who might be named his successor till the end of his life. Of course, this generates concerns among his followers about who will succeed him as the leader. The Prophet Muhammad died without designating a successor, leaving his followers with a diverse range of viewpoints and interests. The majority of Allah's Messenger's followers believe that the Ummah is sacred in and of itself and that whatever decision is made is correct.

On the other hand, the Prophet was said to have been prompted by the Divine to choose his successor from among his closest male relatives, particularly his cousin and son-in-law Ali bin Abi Talib. Signs of separation began to emerge, with the main faction merging into a Sunni group. Because this sect emphasizes the copying of the Prophet Muhammad's life, the term Sunni is derived from the word *sunnah*. In the meantime, the small group that became Ali's followers was Shiat Ali or Shi'a (Siegler, 2020).

**Period of Khulafaur Rashidin** After the Prophet Muhammad's death, the Sunni voice prevailed, and Abu Bakr, the Prophet's friend, was elected as the first caliph of Khulafaur Rashidin, or the first Islamic caliphate. As Shiites refer to him, Ali rose to become the fourth caliph of Khulafaur Rashidin or the Imam. However, like his two predecessors, he died as a result of a murder. During a heated power battle between the Sunnis and the Shiites, Ali was slain in 661 AD. At this time, their feud is no longer simply about control of the Prophet Muhammad's religious and political legacy but also about money (in the form of taxes and tributes). For a century after the Prophet's death, his followers successfully established an Islamic empire that spanned Central Asia to Spain. At the same time, the conflict between Sunnis and Shiites is intensifying.

The Battle of Karbala was fought in Iraq. After being taken over by the Umayyad dynasty, Khulafaur Rashidin's influence crumbled. Husein, Ali's son, attempted to seize the caliphate throne in 680 AD. The reason behind this is that Muslims were quite dissatisfied with Yazid's reign during the Umayyad Dynasty. Husayn and the Sunni Umayyad soldiers fought at Karbala (present-day Iraq). During this conflict, Husayn and his allies, which included the Prophet Muhammad's closest family members, were slaughtered by the Umayyad army. Husayn, the Prophet Muhammad's grandson, and his close relatives died in a tragic accident, which horrified the Islamic world.

Even though both factions grieved, the impact of the Battle of Karbala on Sunni and Shia Islam was vastly different. In this conflict, the Shia group has been declared the loser. Meanwhile, the Sunnis, who disapproved of Yazid's leadership, were victorious. As a result, after the Battle of Karbala, tensions between Sunnis and Shiites rose even more across the Islamic world. Even today, this conflict is seen as the catalyst for the split between Sunni and Shia Islam. Because since then, the Sunni and Shi'a groups have effectively split into two opposing camps due to growing divisions between the two (Siegler, 2020).

### **Islam is Experiencing Turmoil in the Economic Field**

Furthermore, the Middle East's economic status is inextricably linked to oil. Many of the world's oil suppliers are currently based in the Middle East, demonstrating that the region has significant oil reserves. Kuwait, the UAE, Iraq, and the Arab Kingdom of Saudi Arabia are among the Islamic countries in the Middle East with which Kuwait, the UAE, Iraq, and the Arab Kingdom of Saudi Arabia have established diplomatic relations. Although eastern society is

generally connected with bouncing riches, no industrialized country in our era is capable of developing cutting-edge technology. In the end, Middle Eastern countries are frequently thought to be overly reliant on oil. In the long run, this has harmed the cohesiveness of the Islamic world in the international arena.

If we pay attention to current events, we can see that Middle Eastern countries are still plagued by conflict, which is fought for oil reserves in a particular area. For more than 30 years, the President of Libya outlasted President Soeharto (Indonesia) during the new order era. Libya was truly tormented by clashes between one faction and another after Gaddafi's own rule fell until it became an issue for the stability of Middle Eastern countries.

Ultimately, many individuals and the world community questioned how an international class organization like the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) and the Arab League could not help or lessen conflicts like those faced by Middle Eastern countries. Finally, the state of strife that continues to push the conditions of these Middle Eastern countries has forced the international community to doubt Islam's solidity ([Johansson-Nogués, 2020](#)).

### **Proxy Wars are Getting Rifer**

This proxy war is the result of the fight between Sunni and Shia Muslims and the economic situation in Middle Eastern countries that are deemed unstable. Radical organizations, such as ISIS or Hezbollah, emerge in the Middle East, where, presumably, small organizations like these receive the funding to arm or feed their members. As international political analysts may have foreseen, such organizations will need the support or assistance of third parties with interest in the Central Timor region to make use of it. Even in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, it is a well-kept fact that America was the driving force behind aiding Israel, whether by finance or protection, until the international community realized that America was attempting to control the Middle East region, which is rich in oil and deposits, with the support of Israel.

This makes it impossible for the Islamic world to unite since the Muslim-majority countries in the Middle East, which should serve as the Islamic world's center or axis, cannot do so. In the region, people quarrel with each other since it is thought that intra-regional stability can be a proxy for regional stability. State-based conflicts, such as the Iraq-Kuwait conflict, which is colored by political issues, causes colonialization in the Middle East, and competes with France, are one type of conflict in the Middle East. For a decade, this struggle raged. Arabs and Israelis have also been involved in state-based confrontations sparked by ethnic tensions. Conflicts with state bases are not the only thing in the Middle East. However, within society, there exist tensions; Israel and Palestine's case is an illustration.

Various variables contribute to the frequent occurrence of conflicts in Middle Eastern countries, including the border issue, which causes the migratory process to be highly intensive. The second aspect is religious factors; Middle Eastern countries have a dense religious culture with a nuanced concept of religion. The existence of two schools of thought, namely Sunni and Shia philosophies, which occurred in Iraq, Iran, and Lebanon, illustrates the second element. The rise of Political Zionism is an ideology that contributes significantly to conflict in the Middle East. Natural income is the third factor in Middle Eastern countries.

The Middle Eastern country is rich and famous as a supplier of oil, making it



an area targeted by large regions. Near-large countries imposed an embargo on industrial countries as a form of protest against significant countries' unjust attitudes against Israel, such as the United States and the Soviet Union (Farhadinasab & Jafari, 2016).

### **Western System of Government is Always Considered Better**

Remember that democracy has always been favored by the West, or rather from America and Europe. On the other hand, the world does not see how this political system will grow. Meanwhile, Islam has consistently been underestimated because many acts of violence are associated with Islam. One of them is how the paradigm that women in Islam are always oppressed, even though, in reality, if we know Islam, women are considered people of Allah SWT who are most dear to him. At the same time, democratic politics as it is known today is the result of an act of violence or bad events that occur in the world. For example, when the Europeans came to America, they oppressed the Native Americans, namely the Native Americans, by fighting them with sharp weapons or even taking their women captive. Alternatively, on the other hand, we seem to forget how in mainland Europe in the 10-19 century, in Europe there were still many acts of slavery, even slavery in the name of religion.

This should be considered for the world community, even if a system that is considered perfect itself must go through a dark history or what is called human error (Nuruzzaman, 2018). In Islam itself, actually how Islam does politics has been explained in the Qur'an. One of the teachings of Islam in politics today is discussion (known as *musyawarah*), and Indonesia is one of the countries that implement this in its country's ideology. Deliberation is a way of doing politics by negotiating all decisions or policies from all perspectives. Nevertheless, the strength of the solidity of Islam itself in the international environment is currently still being questioned.

Nation-state versus Islamic universal order, rationality versus morals and ethics, secularism versus integration of faith and politics, God's sovereignty versus human sovereignty/authority, and then the causes of the renewed conflict between Islam and the West thus lie in fundamental questions of power and culture. Lenin's central issue of politics is the root of the contest between Islam and the West (Huntington, 1991). They are some of the areas where they clash. Despite common ties between Western and Islamic thought, such discrepancies persist. Certain Western and Islamic philosophy strains share similar fears about modern rationalism, instrumental rationality, and liberal capitalism, but it hardly puts them on the same page. The conflict is between Eurocentrism and Islamic universalism, which aspires to establish a global Islamic moral system.

Internal dissenting voices exist in both sets of beliefs. However, they were and are not powerful enough to warrant a theoretical overhaul to change the primary ways of initiating and promoting communication and collaboration between Islam and the West. Non-traditionalist thinkers have left their imprints in the Islamic tradition, but they have not succeeded in forcing traditionalists to take a back seat. In the Western IR tradition, critical, postcolonial, and postmodern scholars have shaken up epistemological boundaries, but they have never successfully crossed them to open up spaces for the non-West, including the Muslim world. Islamic and Western international ideas continue to be characterized by theoretical disputes and confrontations, with the occasional actual fight (Nuruzzaman, 2018).

As the three Islamic approaches and perspectives thoroughly discussed in this article demonstrate, Islam, like its Western counterpart, offers a variety of IR theories. Until the 1960s and 1970s, many Western IR experts claimed that Islam was unrelated to IR because it was primarily based on Divine sources and was uninterested in reason and positivistic research techniques. Muslims see Islam as complete guidance for people, from politics to economics to human-state interactions, and the Qur'an encourages Muslims to develop and promote a moral order from the local to the global level. Islam has created its ideas and theories to cope with and strike a balance between religion and the practical world due to its historical growth.

Religious beliefs and ideals shaped the three Islamic IR approaches of traditionalism, modernism, and jihadism, just as the anarchical environments of different periods. In terms of epistemological understandings and explanations of world realities, the three methods and perspectives differ, yet they are all firmly grounded in the Qur'an and Hadiths. The inter-paradigm arguments that characterize Western IR theory—between idealism and realism, science and traditionalism, and positivism and post-positivism—are reflected in the differences and debates between the approaches. Western and Islamic IR theories are competing models for explaining world politics because of their divergent ontological foundations and epistemological approaches.

Finally, the jihadists' use of violent struggle to liberate Muslim areas from the West and its local accomplices, and finally proclaim the dominance of Islam in the globe, as the IS intended, has placed it in direct opposition to the West-led world order. The theoretical disagreements between Islamic and Western IR theories will persist even if ISIS is no longer there. Although the Islamic State has been defeated militarily, its ideology has the potential to influence other extreme Muslims in the future ([Nuruzzaman, 2018](#)).

### **The Clash of Arab And Middle Eastern Ideologies Through the Arab Springs**

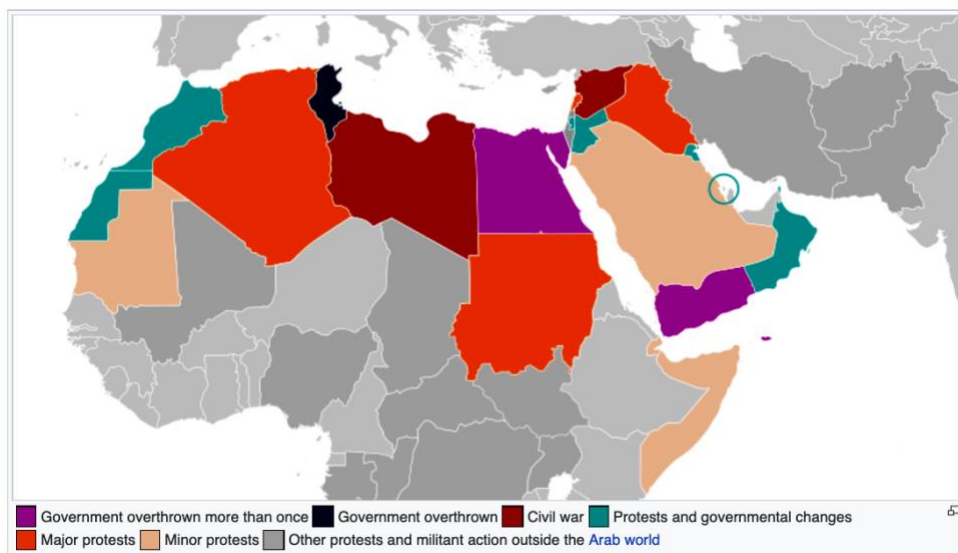
Many people believe that the "Arab spring/awakening" marks the beginning of the Middle East's enlightenment. Arabs have taken to the streets to protest their government's lack of democracy, human rights, and decent existence. Many articles in various media and even books argue that the Arab Spring is a dynamic produced by Arab citizens who are conscious of their rights. Social media's existence also expedited the Arab Spring's unrest. If the prior author's reasoning is correct, all of this occurred due to the breakdown of the political and economic systems detailed by the previous author.

Specifically, social issues such as urbanization, population growth, unemployment, and poverty have sparked protests from Tunisia to Yemen. The failure of western ideological principles in both the economic system and government regimes has resulted in a slew of divisions that could jeopardize global peace. The essential ingredients for rulers in the Middle East to construct an authoritarian regime are Western ideology in the form of nation-states, nationalism, and economic liberalization. As a result, the Arab Spring illustrates the regime's and economic system's collapse.

For example, the fight in Libya was one of the most exciting developments following Muammar Gaddafi's ouster in 2011, commonly known as the "NATO revolution." Libya's terrible civil war was essentially a fight of clans ([Agbaenyi, Obiorah, & Nwagbo, 2018](#)). The war over Libya's natural riches between the



tribes/tribes in Bengazi and Trablusgarp. On the other hand, this dispute invited the French colonial state to join in upholding the "democracy" that the "Libyan people" desired. The involvement of France in the Libyan conflict also pushed NATO to join the war against Gaddafi, who was deemed a dictator. In terms of economics, France has a stake in Libya. Total, a French corporation, is in charge of one of Libya's primary oil resources. As a result, Gaddafi's dictatorship was eventually overthrown by foreign intervention at the hands of the Libyan people (Levin, Ali, & Crandall, 2018).



**Figure 2.** Summary of Conflicts by Country

This is one of the "Arab Awakening" endings that the western media is particularly proud of (Costello, Jenkins, & Aly, 2015). What is happening in Libya, according to the author, is a conflict between western and eastern philosophies. Kaddafi, who adheres to socialist beliefs and controls a significant portion of the world's oil reserves, does not create possibilities for pro-westerners. When the capitalist economy's rotation source is in the hands of communist dictatorial governments, the West is quite upset. The West exploits the benefits of democratic ideals to assassinate Gaddafi with the help of its citizens. So, what transpired in Libya was not a natural occurrence but rather a worldwide ideology to depose Gaddafi (Levin et al., 2018).

The following is a brief explanation of why there are so many solidarity challenges that Islam must face in today's international environment. Maybe it will be challenging, but we also have to understand how the pattern of world politics and how Europe had fallen in the 17-18 century and experienced many challenges. So it is the same with Islam which is likely to face a revival in the future.

## Conclusion

The solidity situation in the Islamic world is very complex, with many challenges from internal and external. The concept is also diverse; people cannot blame the Islamic world first because the biggest problem is that the Islamic world itself has different understandings so that they are used as tools to ignite the spirit of conflict. Indeed, every form in this modern state has its national importance; The current situation in the Middle East is caused by internal factors of Islam and from outside.

Islamic countries have entrenched challenges, such as authoritarianism. Some Islamic countries also depend on oil; oil is a non-renewable energy source, so it can run out. Currently, many developed countries are developing renewable energy, which can shift the income of Islamic countries that rely on oil or natural resources as the country's primary income.

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