

Addressing the Essential Needs of the Bangsamoro Ummah in Southern Philippines: The Maqasid al-Shariah-Based Peacebuilding Framework of the BARMM Government

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Article history

Received: 2025-04-22 Received in revised form: 2025-10-17 Accepted: 2026-01-07 Published online: 2026-02-28

Abstract

The establishment of the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) is a significant achievement in the long quest for peace in the southern Philippines. Using qualitative content analysis method of study, the present study assesses BARMM's programs that address the fundamental needs of the Bangsamoro people to attain lasting peace through the framework of Maqasid al-Shariah—the objectives of Islamic law. As a framework, Maqasid al-shariáh prioritizes the preservation of religion (din), life (nafs), intellect ('aql), lineage (nasl), and property (mal). The findings indicate that integrating Maqasid al-Shariah offers a comprehensive and culturally relevant approach to peace-building, promoting inclusivity, justice, and societal well-being. The study recommends embedding these principles into governance mechanisms. Specific policy suggestions include prioritizing religious harmony in education curricula, safeguarding livelihoods through ethical economic initiatives, and promoting intellectual development through anti-radicalization programs. These strategies aim to align contemporary approaches with Islamic ethical imperatives for sustainable development.

Keywords: Essential needs of the Bangsamoro, Maqasid al-Shariáh, Peacebuilding, BARMM, Southern Philippines.

1.0. INTRODUCTION

The Bangsamoro Ummah in southern Philippines has endured centuries of marginalization, commencing with Spanish colonial subjugation from the 16th century—marked by failed conquests of Mindanao sultanates—and American occupation's assimilationist policies, including land resettlement programs that eroded Moro ancestral domains, cultural identity, and political sovereignty (McKenna, 1998; Tan, 2008). This entrenched dispossession, perpetuated through post-independence Philippine centralization, precipitated armed insurgencies, notably the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF)'s 1970s campaign for self-determination and its 1984 splinter, the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), which intensified guerrilla warfare amid escalating grievances (Santos, 2010; Lingga, 2005). These movements reached a watershed in the 2014 Comprehensive Agreement on the Bangsamoro (CAB), a landmark accord between the Philippine government and MILF that outlined normalization and power-sharing, culminating in the Bangsamoro Organic Law's (BOL) ratification via plebiscites in 2019 and the establishment of the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) as a devolved political entity (International Crisis Group,

2019; Republic Act No. 11054, 2018). While BARMM signifies a paradigm shift toward inclusive governance, its success hinges on addressing lingering inequities to prevent resurgence of unrest.

The governance of the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM), emerging from the Moro Islamic Liberation Front's (MILF) principles, seeks to fulfill the essential needs of the Bangsamoro Ummah through an ethical framework deeply informed by Islamic jurisprudence. At its core lies Maqasid al-Shari'ah—the higher objectives of Islamic law—which prioritizes the preservation of deen (religion), nafs (life), 'aql (intellect), nasl (lineage), and maal (wealth) as foundational pillars for moral administration and community welfare (Jamaa, 2018; Al-Shatibi, 2004/2008). These classical objectives are dynamically extended in BARMM to encompass broader human development imperatives, including justice ('adl), equity, and sustainability, thereby aligning governance with both historical aspirations and contemporary challenges such as resource equity and ecological stewardship (International Crisis Group, 2019; Bangsamoro Parliament, 2022). This integration not only operationalizes Shari'ah in a pluralistic context but also fosters resilient institutions capable of advancing the Ummah's holistic flourishing.

While the framework of Maqasid al-Shari'ah—the higher objectives of Islamic law—has been robustly applied in domains such as Islamic finance, where it ensures equitable wealth distribution and risk-sharing (Laldin & Furqani, 2015), and governance, promoting ethical administration and social welfare (Chapra, 2008), its potential in peacebuilding remains underexplored, despite inherent alignments with justice and human preservation (Duderija, 2014; Kamali, 2008). Addressing this lacuna, the present research examines the application of Maqasid al-Shari'ah in peacebuilding within the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM), with a focus on priority programs—such as moral governance and human development initiatives under the Bangsamoro Development Plan 2023–2028—that target the essential needs of the Bangsamoro Ummah, including preservation of religion (deen), life (nafs), intellect ('aql), lineage (nasl), and wealth (maal), to foster sustainable peace and equity in the region (Jamaa, 2018; International Crisis Group, 2019; Bangsamoro Development Agency, 2023).

2.0. OBJECTIVES

This study examines the operationalization of a Maqasid al-Shari'ah-based peacebuilding framework in addressing the essential needs of the Bangsamoro people to achieve sustainable peace within the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM). The research addresses three core questions:

1. What are the principles of Maqasid al-Shari'ah, and how do they align with peacebuilding imperatives such as justice, reconciliation, and human security?
2. How can these principles be operationalized as a structured framework to meet the Bangsamoro Ummah's essential needs—spanning spiritual identity, physical safety, education, family continuity, and economic stability—within BARMM's priority programs?
3. What evidence-based policy recommendations emerge to institutionalize this approach across legislative, administrative, and community levels?

By bridging Islamic ethical theory with contextual peacebuilding practice, the study contributes to an indigenous, value-centered model for transitional justice and sustainable development in Muslim-majority conflict zones.

3.0. LITERATURE REVIEW

3.1. Maqasid al-Shariah

Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah (the objectives of Islamic law) constitute the philosophical and functional cornerstone of Islamic legal theory, encapsulating the Shari'ah's intent to safeguard human welfare through a structured hierarchy of necessities (*ḍarūriyyāt*) and benefits (*maṣlaḥah*) (Al-Shāṭibī, 2001/2016; Kamali, 2008). Classical and contemporary scholarship converges on their role in preserving essential components of societal and individual flourishing, as surveyed in seminal works from al-Juwaynī's *Burhān* (ca. 1085 CE) to al-Shāṭibī's *Al-Muwāfaqāt* (ca. 1388 CE) and modern reformulations by Auda (2008) and Nyazee (2000), which trace historical evolution while adapting to ethical pluralism and public policy. This literature underscores Maqāṣid's dynamism, bridging textual fidelity with rational adaptation to realize divine mercy (*rahmah*).

The roots of *Maqāṣid* are embedded in early Islamic jurisprudence, with systematic articulation emerging among Shafi'ī and Mālikī scholars amid Abbasid intellectual efflorescence. Particularly influential was Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī (d. 1111 CE), who in *Al-Mustaṣfā min 'Ilm al-Uṣūl* delineated five essential objectives of Shari'ah: the protection of religion (*ḥifẓ al-dīn*), life (*ḥifẓ al-nafs*), intellect (*ḥifẓ al-'aql*), progeny (*ḥifẓ al-nasl*), and wealth (*ḥifẓ al-māl*) (Al-Ghazālī, 1993, Vol. 1, pp. 416–420). He posited that "all laws of Islam serve to preserve these universal goods," positioning them as the ethical nucleus of legal philosophy and a criterion for *ijtihād* (independent reasoning) (Nyazee, 2016, p. 35). Building on al-Juwaynī's preliminary framework, al-Ghazālī's enumeration—echoed in his *Iḥyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn* (1997 ed., pp. 22–25)—transformed Maqāṣid from implicit Qur'anic-Sunnī principles into an explicit methodology for deriving rulings attuned to human exigencies.

Subsequent to Al-Ghazālī's enumeration, Abū Ishāq al-Shāṭibī (d. 1388 CE) significantly expanded and systematized *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah* in his seminal *Al-Muwāfaqāt fī Uṣūl al-Sharī'ah*, introducing a tripartite hierarchy of human needs: *ḍarūriyyāt* (necessities), *ḥājjiyyāt* (complementary needs), and *taḥṣīniyyāt* (embellishments or luxuries) (Al-Shāṭibī, 1997, Vol. 2, pp. 8–25; Nyazee, 2016, pp. 40–55). He argued that these levels structure legal derivation, ensuring Shari'ah responds to existential imperatives while accommodating societal evolution (Kamali, 2008, p. 106). Al-Shāṭibī's contributions are foundational, particularly in categorizing the degrees of human need within jurisprudence, transforming *Maqāṣid* from a conceptual tool into a methodological framework for *ijtihād* and *maṣlaḥah* (public interest) (Nyazee, 2000, p. 212; Auda, 2008, p. 22).

In contemporary scholarship, *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah* has experienced renewed interest as a flexible framework for reform and contextualization of Islamic law amid globalization and pluralism. Jasser Auda (2008) pioneered a systems theory approach, contending that *Maqāṣid* must be understood dynamically—beyond static enumeration of five objectives—to incorporate universal values such as justice, freedom, and human dignity (Auda, 2008, pp. 5, 208). His model, which integrates cognitive science and complexity theory, diverges from traditional list-based interpretations by emphasizing interdependence and adaptability, thereby enabling *Maqāṣid* to address modern challenges in governance, human rights, and ethics (Duderija, 2014, p. 150; Kamali, 2015, p. 210). This dynamic paradigm offers a robust mechanism for applying Islamic principles in diverse, rapidly evolving societies.

Mohammad Hashim Kamali (2008) has advanced *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah* scholarship by integrating its ethical imperatives with contemporary constitutionalism, human rights, and governance in Muslim-majority societies, positioning *Maqāṣid* as the moral bedrock of Islamic

jurisprudence that harmonizes with universal legal norms (Kamali, 2008, pp. 101–108). Similarly, Taha Jabir Al-Alwani (2005) underscored *Maqāṣid* as the foundational methodology for the Islamization of knowledge and public policy, conceptualizing it as a vital conduit between Islamic tradition and progressive reform to foster intellectual renewal and societal equity (Al-Alwani, 2005, pp. 50–65). These contributions, building on classical foundations, illuminate *Maqāṣid*'s versatility in bridging textual fidelity with adaptive governance (Duderija, 2014).

Recent scholarship has extended *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah* into diverse domains, including economic development, bioethics, environmental sustainability, and public policy, demonstrating its relevance to holistic human welfare (Auda, 2008, pp. 150–200). In Islamic finance, Dusuki and Abdullah (2007) critiqued prevailing practices, advocating that financial products prioritize *Maqāṣid* criteria—such as justice (*'adl*) and public benefit (*maṣlaḥah*)—over superficial legal compliance, thereby elevating the sector's ethical dimension (Dusuki & Abdullah, 2007, p. 30). Complementing this, El-Mesawi (2006), through his exegesis of Ibn 'Āshūr's treatise, posits *Maqāṣid* as a normative compass for governance, channeling *maṣlaḥah* (public interest) toward inclusive, ethical administration that safeguards dignity and equity in pluralistic contexts (Ibn 'Āshūr, 2006, p. 160). These applications underscore *Maqāṣid*'s enduring adaptability (Kamali, 2015).

The *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah* framework has been extensively applied in domains such as Islamic finance, where it ensures ethical alignment with justice and public welfare (*maṣlaḥah*) (Dusuki & Abdullah, 2007), and governance, providing normative guidance for inclusive and accountable administration (El-Mesawi, 2006). Yet, its potential in peacebuilding—particularly in post-conflict reconstruction and transitional justice—remains underexplored despite inherent synergies with human security, dignity, and social reconciliation (Duderija, 2014). This study addresses this gap by analyzing the application of *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah* in peacebuilding within the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM), with a focus on priority programs under the Bangsamoro Development Plan 2023–2028. These initiatives target the essential needs of the Bangsamoro Ummah—preservation of religion (*deen*), life (*nafs*), intellect (*'aql*), lineage (*nasl*), and wealth (*māl*)—to foster sustainable peace, institutional resilience, and equitable development in a historically marginalized region (Jamaa, 2018; Bangsamoro Development Agency, 2023).

3.2. Islamic Peacebuilding

Islamic peacebuilding represents an emerging interdisciplinary field that interrogates the interplay between Islamic values—derived from the Qur'an, Sunnah, and Shari'ah—and contemporary modalities of conflict resolution, restorative justice, and communal reconciliation (Abu-Nimer, 2003). This approach, which eschews reductionist stereotypes of Islam as inherently violent, posits a holistic, ethically grounded paradigm that leverages *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah* (the higher objectives of Islamic law) to prioritize human dignity, equity, and social harmony (Crow & Noor, 2015). By drawing on classical texts—such as prophetic traditions of mediation (e.g., the Treaty of Hudaibiyyah)—and recent scholarly innovations, Islamic peacebuilding fosters community-oriented strategies that transcend mere cessation of hostilities, aiming instead for transformative healing and prevention of recurrence (Vehapi, 2015; Kunkle, 2009).

To delineate the scholarly terrain, this literature review organizes extant contributions into three interconnected themes: theological foundations, encompassing Qur'anic imperatives for peace (*salām*) and prophetic exemplars of nonviolence; justice and reconciliation, highlighting Shari'ah mechanisms like *sulḥ* (mediation) and *qisāṣ* (retributive equity); and contemporary frameworks and applications, which adapt these resources to modern contexts such as post-conflict zones in Aceh, Bosnia, and Mindanao (Abu-Nimer & Kadayifci-Orellana, 2008; Crow & Noor, 2015). This tripartite

schema not only illuminates the field's maturation—from doctrinal exegesis to pragmatic interventions—but also underscores its potential to inform indigenous, faith-sensitive peace processes in Muslim-majority societies.

Peace (*salām*) constitutes a foundational principle in Islam, embodying both linguistic connotations of security, wholeness, and tranquility, and theological imperatives for harmonious human relations as the intrinsic order of creation (Al-Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī, 2008; Esposito, 2010). Classical sources, including tafsir traditions, portray *salām* as the natural equilibrium of interactions, disrupted only by ignorance or aggression, and as the core of the Prophetic message encapsulated in the greeting "al-salāmu 'alaykum" (Al-Ṭabarī, 2001, Vol. 19, p. 124). This centrality is vividly illustrated in Qur'an 25:63, which describes the servants of the Most Merciful as "those who walk upon the earth easily [in humility], and when the ignorant address them [harshly], they say [words of] peace" (Sahih International, 2010; Yusuf Ali, 1934), exemplifying restraint and reconciliation as hallmarks of faith.

Complementing scriptural emphasis, the philosopher and mystic Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī (d. 1111 CE) in his magnum opus *Iḥyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn* underscores the ethical preconditions for societal peace, asserting that moral self-discipline (*riyāḍat al-naḥs*) and spiritual purification (*taẓkiyat al-qalb*) are indispensable for transcending ego-driven conflict (Al-Ghazālī, 1998, Vol. 3, pp. 10–15; Winter, 2010, pp. 20–25). For Al-Ghazālī, inner vices like arrogance and unchecked desires engender social discord, while disciplined souls foster communal harmony, aligning personal virtue with the broader Islamic ethic of *salām* (Graham, 1975). This Sufi-inflected perspective enriches theological discourse, positioning peace not merely as an external accord but as an outgrowth of ethical self-mastery.

Classical Islamic jurisprudence delineates a rich array of mechanisms for attaining peace and social cohesion, prominently featuring *sulḥ* (reconciliation through mediation contracts), *'afw* (forgiveness in penal contexts), and *ḥuqūq* (adjudication of rights), all deeply anchored in Qur'anic directives (e.g., 4:128–129 on marital reconciliation) and Prophetic Sunnah (e.g., the Constitution of Medina as a *sulḥ* exemplar) (Al-Māwardī, 1996; Ibn Qudāmah, 1997). These instruments, enshrined in traditional legal manuals such as *Al-Mughnī* and *Al-Aḥkām al-Sulṭānīyah*, were routinely invoked in early Islamic governance—for instance, by caliphs in inter-tribal arbitration—and continue to inform ethical dispute resolution (Hallaq, 2009, pp. 160–165). By prioritizing restorative equity over retribution, they embody Shari'ah's commitment to *maṣlaḥah* (public interest), offering timeless models for conflict mitigation in diverse societies.

Within Islamic epistemology, peace (*salām*) and justice (*'adl*) are inextricably intertwined, with the latter serving as both a spiritual equilibrium—mirroring divine order—and a socioeconomic imperative for communal harmony (Kamali, 2001, p. 18). Mohammad Hashim Kamali elucidates that *'adl* transcends procedural fairness to encompass compassionate equity, asserting that "the absence of justice undermines any genuine effort toward sustainable peace," thereby framing Islamic peacebuilding as the proactive construction of just, empathetic societies rather than mere cessation of hostilities (Kamali, 2002, p. 72). This linkage, rooted in *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah*, elevates peace from tactical truce to transformative virtue, aligning individual moral agency with collective welfare (Kamali, 2008, p. 104).

Mohammad Abu-Nimer (2003) stands as a seminal pioneer in operationalizing Islamic values within contemporary conflict resolution, advocating for the integration of *shūrā* (mutual consultation as deliberative democracy), *rahma* (compassion as empathetic engagement), and forgiveness (*'afw*) as indispensable tools for peace practitioners in Muslim communities. He critiques the persistent "gap between Islamic ideals and their implementation," attributing distortions to political

instrumentalization and sectarian fractures that prioritize power over Prophetic mercy (Abu-Nimer, 2003, p. 52; Abu-Nimer & Kadayifci-Orellana, 2008, p. 10). This analysis not only bridges theological richness with pragmatic application but also calls for decolonizing peace processes by centering indigenous Islamic paradigms.

Recent scholars have illuminated the pivotal role of *Maqāṣid al-Shari'ah* in peacebuilding, framing it as a versatile ethical architecture for addressing entrenched conflicts. Jasser Auda (2008) posits *Maqāṣid* as a dynamic framework, adaptable to contemporary exigencies such as identity-based strife, systemic injustice, and socioeconomic poverty, by safeguarding core objectives—religion, life, intellect, lineage, and wealth—to underpin post-conflict reconstruction and transitional justice (Auda, 2008, pp. 200–215). This systems-oriented approach transcends static classifications, enabling *Maqāṣid* to foster equitable societal renewal amid globalization's disruptions (Duderija, 2014, p. 150).

Complementing this, Abdullah bin Bayyah (2012) advances *fiqh al-ta'ayush* (jurisprudence of coexistence) as indispensable for pluralistic polities, underscoring Islam's mandate to cultivate civil harmony, intercommunal cooperation, and interfaith reverence in multicultural milieus (Bin Bayyah, 2012, pp. 45–60). He invokes historical precedents like the Constitution of Medina—a prophetic covenant integrating diverse tribes under shared security and mutual respect—as exemplars of *ta'ayush*, offering normative blueprints for navigating diversity without assimilation or domination (Bin Bayyah, 2013, p. 8). Bin Bayyah's framework thus revitalizes classical *fiqh* for modern cosmopolitanism.

Islamic peacebuilding has garnered empirical traction in post-conflict Muslim contexts, where indigenous practices mediate recovery. Hayward and Marshall (2005) dissect the deployment of Islamic reconciliation modalities—such as *sulh* and *'afw*—in Somalia and Sudan, revealing how faith-rooted interventions expedite social cohesion amid state fragility (Hayward & Marshall, 2005, pp. 45–60). Paralleling this, in the Philippines' Mindanao, Abhoud Syed M. Lingga (2004) chronicles how local Muslim leaders indigenize concepts like *salaam* (peace), *katarungan* (justice), and *maslaha* (public interest) to galvanize grassroots initiatives, addressing ancestral dispossession and fostering equitable self-determination (Lingga, 2004, p. 15). These cases affirm *Maqāṣid's* praxis in hybrid, context-sensitive peace architectures (Lingga, 2005, p. 19).

A central issue in Islamic peacebuilding is its politicization, whereby religious legitimacy—rooted in Shari'ah and prophetic authority—can be co-opted by authoritarian regimes to consolidate power or by militant ideologies to justify extremism, thereby undermining genuine reconciliation efforts (Zartman, 2008, p. 320). I. William Zartman cautions that without institutional safeguards, such as independent mediation and transparency mechanisms, this vulnerability exacerbates conflicts, as seen in state-sponsored interpretations in Sudan or ideological distortions in militant groups (Zartman, 2005, p. 325). Consequently, a recurring theme in the literature is the imperative to balance traditional religious authority with universal human rights standards, ensuring peace processes respect dignity, equity, and pluralism while mitigating co-optation risks (Smock, 2006, p. 12). This equilibrium not only safeguards authenticity but also enhances the efficacy of faith-based interventions in diverse sociopolitical contexts.

The literature on Islamic peacebuilding unveils a rich repository of theological, legal, and ethical resources—from Qur'anic imperatives of *sulh* (reconciliation) to *Maqāṣid al-Shari'ah's* welfare objectives—that underpin robust frameworks for sustainable peace (Abu-Nimer, 2003, p. 15). Scholars have progressed beyond mere textual exegesis, increasingly exploring practical applications of Islamic values in conflict resolution (e.g., prophetic mediation models), governance (e.g., *shūrā*-driven policymaking), and civil society (e.g., community-based *rahma* initiatives), as evidenced in case

studies from Aceh to Bosnia (Crow & Noor, 2015, p. 25). This shift emphasizes indigenous, culturally resonant strategies that transcend secular paradigms, fostering legitimacy and long-term stability in Muslim-majority settings (Yilmaz, 2010, p. 5).

4.0. METHODOLOGY

This study employs a qualitative content analysis methodology, renowned for its descriptive and interpretive depth in dissecting textual and artifactual data (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005, p. 1278). Following systematic protocols, the approach integrates manifest analysis to capture surface-level meanings—such as term frequencies (e.g., "justice" in Shari’ah discourses)—with latent analysis to uncover underlying themes and multi-layered interpretations in fiqh (Islamic jurisprudence), ensuring objective inferences through rigorous coding and inter-coder reliability checks (Krippendorff, 2018, p. 55). In Islamic Studies and peacebuilding, this method proves invaluable for scrutinizing sacred texts like the Qur’an, fatwas, and policy documents, elucidating contextual nuances of concepts such as equity and reconciliation (Auda, 2008, p. 155; Kamali, 2008, p. 104). By blending quantitative tallies with qualitative depth, it fosters a subjective yet accountable understanding of Shari’ah's interpretive pluralism.

Data for this content analysis were drawn from authoritative repositories, including reports from the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) on BARMM socio-economic indicators (Philippine Statistics Authority, 2023, p. 45), publications by the BARMM government such as the Bangsamoro Development Plan (Bangsamoro Development Agency, 2023, p. 20), and academic databases like ResearchGate hosting conflict monitoring datasets (International Alert, 2021, p. 30). A complementary thematic analysis was conducted to delineate and prioritize emergent patterns in the Bangsamoro Conflict discourse, foregrounding the cognitive robustness of *maqāṣid al-Shari’ah* as an ethical scaffold for peacebuilding strategies (Elo et al., 2014, p. 3). Interpretive restructuring of inquiries reveals *maqāṣid*'s instrumental value in BARMM, advocating alternative, indigenous sources for sustainable reconciliation amid historical marginalization.

5.0. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1 below is the presentation of the data, discussion and analysis:

Table 1 Maqasid al-Shari’ah and BARMM Peacebuilding initiatives

Maqasid al-Shariah	Core Objective	BARMM Peacebuilding Application	Examples of Policies/Initiatives
Hifz al-Din (Protection of Religion)	Safeguard freedom of belief and practice	Ensure Muslims and minorities can practice religion freely; promote tolerance	Halal certification system, zakat institutions, involvement of ulama in peace dialogues
Hifz al-Nafs (Protection of Life)	Preserve sanctity of life and prevent harm	Transitional justice, reconciliation, security reform	Truth & Reconciliation Commission, reparations for victims, DDR programs for ex-combatants

Hifz al-‘Aql (Protection of Intellect)	Promote knowledge, wisdom, and critical thinking	Inclusive education, peace curriculum, youth participation	Peace education in schools, madrasa reform, youth quotas in assembly
Hifz al-Nasl (Protection of Progeny/Family)	Protect family, children, and future generations	Strengthen family welfare, women’s empowerment, child protection	Gender & Development programs, anti-domestic violence laws, scholarships for orphans
Hifz al-Mal (Protection of Wealth)	Ensure just distribution of wealth and economic stability	Poverty alleviation, economic development, anti-corruption measures	Agricultural programs, halal industry development, Islamic banking & microfinance, anti-corruption policies

5.1. Maqasid al-Shari‘ah Framework

5.1.1. Protection of Religion (*Hifz al-Din*)

Al-Ghazālī conceptualizes ḥifẓ al-dīn—the preservation of religion—as safeguarding orthodox belief from distortion while ensuring individuals’ freedom to perform obligatory religious duties without hindrance (Al-Ghazālī, 1993, Vol. 1, p. 416). This dual emphasis on doctrinal integrity and practical observance establishes a foundational objective within classical Maqāṣid al-Shari‘ah. Building upon this, Auda (2008, p. 202) reinterprets ḥifẓ al-dīn through a systems-based framework, expanding its scope to encompass religious plurality, the prohibition of coercion in matters of faith, and the protection of freedom of conscience—principles that align seamlessly with contemporary human rights norms.

5.1.2. Protection of Life (*Hifz al-Nafs*)

Within the Maqāṣid al-Shari‘ah framework, ḥifẓ al-nafs—the preservation of human life—holds a pivotal role, as articulated by al-Ghazālī, who positions it among the essential objectives of Islamic law to safeguard individual and communal well-being from unlawful aggression (Al-Ghazālī, 1993, Vol. 1, p. 417). This principle finds unequivocal reinforcement in the Qur’an: "Whoever kills a soul unless for a soul or for corruption [done] in the land—it is as if he had slain mankind entirely" (Qur’an 5:32), a directive that not only condemns unjust violence but elevates life's inviolability to a universal moral imperative. Contemporary scholars, including Kamali (2008, p. 103) and Auda (2008, p. 204), broaden this classical scope to encompass defenses against insidious threats such as structural inequities, famine, forced migration, and emotional distress, thereby aligning ḥifẓ al-nafs with imperatives for social equity and mental resilience.

5.1.3. Protection of Intellect (*Hifz al-‘Aql*)

Ḥifẓ al-‘aql—the safeguarding of human intellect—ranks among the five indispensable objectives of Islamic law, emphasizing the protection of rational faculties, the pursuit of knowledge, and the cultivation of sound ethical discernment (Kamali, 2008, p. 102). Classical authorities such as al-Ghazālī (1993, p. 417) and al-Shāṭibī (1997, Vol. 2, p. 8) identify the intellect as the foundational seat of moral responsibility (taklīf) and juridical competence, without which religious accountability and societal order would be undermined.

5.1.4. Protection of Progeny (*Hifz al-Nasl*)

Ḥifẓ al-nasl—the protection of progeny and lineage—constitutes a core maqāṣid imperative, centered on upholding the integrity of familial bonds via lawful unions, principled intimate relations, and the safeguarding of children's welfare and heritage. Modern interpreters such as Kamali (2008, p. 103) and Auda (2008, p. 204) augment this classical mandate by incorporating proactive measures for familial nurturing, intergenerational transmission of values, equitable gender relations, safeguards against intimate partner abuse, and systemic provisions for household stability.

5.1.5. Protection of Wealth (*Ḥifẓ al-Mal*)

Ḥifẓ al-māl—the preservation of property and wealth—stands as a cornerstone of Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah, intrinsically tied to the promotion of socioeconomic justice and societal equilibrium. Classical jurists, including al-Ghazālī (1993, p. 417) and al-Shāṭibī (1997, Vol. 2, p. 8), underscored its role in shielding assets from unlawful appropriation, securing equitable inheritance (ʿadl al-mīrāth), and governing trade through moral imperatives such as full disclosure (bayān), mutual agreement (tarāḍī), and the elimination of exploitative interest (ribā). Contemporary scholarship, notably Kamali (2008, p. 103) and Chapra (1992, p. 205), expands this framework to encompass financial empowerment, equitable resource distribution, transparent institutional governance, and ecologically sustainable development.

5.2. Maqsid al-Shari'ah-based Peacebuilding Framework: Operationalization in the BARMM

The Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) operationalizes *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah* through its foundational charter, the Bangsamoro Organic Law (RA 11054), which enshrines the protection of religious freedom and worship while cultivating tolerance across its multi-ethnic populace (Republic Act No. 11054, 2018, Article II, Sec. 2). For Muslims, this manifests in accessible halal services, mosque construction, and zakat institutions as pillars of faith practice (Republic Act No. 11054, 2018, Article XIII, Sec. 2), while non-Muslim minorities—Indigenous peoples and Christian settlers—enjoy safeguarded religious rights, including cultural autonomy and non-discrimination (Republic Act No. 11054, 2018, Article XIV, Sec. 1; International Crisis Group, 2019, p. 15). This inclusive ethos aligns with *ḥifẓ al-dīn* (protection of religion), fostering intercommunal harmony amid historical tensions.

5.2.1. Protection of Religion

BARMM's approach resonates with *maqāṣid* principles of *tahqīq al-ʿadl* (realizing justice) and *tanmīyat al-ʿaql* (cultivating wisdom), which mitigate sectarian grievances by promoting equitable religious expression and intellectual dialogue (Auda, 2008, p. 204; Kamali, 2008, p. 104). Involving local *ulama* in peace forums, as envisioned under RA 11054's Shari'ah system, generates consensus for reconciliation, echoing the Prophet Muhammad's Hadith: "Shall I not tell you what is better than fasting, prayer, and charity? Bringing peace between people (*iṣlāḥ dhāti l-bayn*), for ruined relations are the razor" (Al-Tirmidhī, n.d., Hadith 1939; graded ḥasan). This prophetic merit underscores *ḥifẓ al-dīn* as a proactive ethic, transforming BARMM from conflict legacy to a model of tolerant pluralism.

5.2.2. Protection of Life

To operationalize *ḥifẓ al-nafs* (protection of life), the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) has institutionalized a transitional justice and reconciliation (TJR) system under the Bangsamoro Organic Law (RA 11054), prioritizing accountability for past atrocities and aligning with Shari'ah's emphasis on equitable redress (Republic Act No. 11054, 2018, Annex on Normalization, para. D). Described as the "heart and soul" of the Bangsamoro peace process

(OPAPP, 2021; TJRC, 2016, p. 12), TJR integrates Islamic jurisprudence's commitment to justice for wrongs, ensuring that forgiveness (*'afw*) coexists with accountability to prevent recurrence of conflict (Auda, 2008, p. 204).

BARMM's TJR framework incorporates truth-telling, reparations, and judicial reforms, culminating in the proposed Bangsamoro Transitional Justice and Reconciliation Commission (BTJRC) via Parliament Bill No. 353 (Bangsamoro Parliament, 2025). This includes a Truth and Reconciliation Commission for credible narratives and reparations for war victims—such as widows and orphans—redressing historical injustices like land dispossession and human rights abuses (TJRC, 2016, Vol. 2, p. 55; Bangsamoro Parliament, 2025, Sec. 4–6). By upholding *maṣlahah* (public interest) to avert harm (*mafsadah*), these measures prevent societal rupture, as per the Shari'ah maxim "no harm nor reciprocating harm" (Ibn Mājah, n.d., Hadith 2340).

TJR in BARMM confronts legitimate grievances, rectifying violations and marginalization through inclusive processes that echo Qur'anic justice: "Let those fight in the cause of Allah who sell the life of this world for the Hereafter... and whoever fights... and is killed—we will surely give him a great reward" (Qur'an 4:74, Sahih International). This verse underscores struggle against oppression while affirming divine equity, complementing the principle that forgiveness is virtuous only when paired with justice (Kamali, 2008, p. 104). Thus, *ḥifẓ al-nafs* transcends physical safety, embedding structural reforms for enduring peace.

The Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) advances *sulh* (reconciliation) and inter-communal dialogue as cornerstones of normalization, mandating community forums, cultural exchanges, and trauma counseling to mend historical divides (Republic Act No. 11054, 2018, Article XV; OPAPP, 2014, Annex on Normalization, p. 5). This aligns with the Prophet Muhammad's exhortation: "Shall I not tell you something better than fasting, prayer, and charity? Making peace between people (*iṣlah dhāti l-bayn*), for discord shaves religion like a razor shaves hair" (Al-Tirmidhī, n.d., Hadith 2509, graded ḥasan). By institutionalizing these practices, BARMM's policies cultivate *ḥifẓ al-dīn* (protection of religion) through inclusive spaces that honor diverse identities.

BARMM prioritizes security sector reform to demobilize combatants and avert violence resurgence, guided by ethical standards that confine force to defensive necessity, minimizing civilian harm (Comprehensive Agreement on the Bangsamoro, 2014, Annex on Normalization, p. 10). Implementation encompasses ceasefire monitoring, disarmament (over 26,000 fighters decommissioned), and reintegration into civilian life, complemented by human rights training for police and military to ensure accountability (International Crisis Group, 2023, p. 17; USIP, 2022, p. 5). These measures shield civilians from clan feuds and extremism, embodying *ḥifẓ al-nafs* (preservation of life) as a proactive ethic.

BARMM bolsters the rule of law via a revised justice system and professional judiciary, aspiring to "establish a just society based on the rule of law and respect for human dignity"—a quintessence of Islamic ideals (Republic Act No. 11054, 2018, Preamble; Bangsamoro Parliament, 2022, Sec. 1). Integrated with Shari'ah courts, this framework ensures equitable adjudication, aligning with *maṣlahah* (public interest) to rectify injustices and promote communal trust.

5.2.3. *Protection of Intellect*

To safeguard the Bangsamoro youths intellect, the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) prioritizes an inclusive, peace-oriented education system, investing in safe schooling and critical thinking as enshrined in the Bangsamoro Education Code (Bangsamoro

Autonomy Act No. 18, 2021, Sec. 2–3). Echoing the Hadith's noble imperative—“Seeking knowledge is a duty upon every Muslim” (Ibn Mājah, n.d., Hadith 224, graded ḥasan)—BARMM's Ministry of Basic, Higher and Technical Education (MBHTE) envisions universal access to quality basic and secondary education for all children, irrespective of Muslim, indigenous, or settler backgrounds (MBHTE, 2022, p. 15). The curriculum embeds peace education and conflict history to dismantle prejudice, aligning with *maqāṣid* principles of intellectual cultivation amid historical marginalization (Auda, 2008, p. 202).

BARMM's Inclusive Schools Approach mandates context-specific policies for “safe, inclusive classrooms,” promoting stakeholder collaboration to ensure equitable learning environments (MBHTE, 2024, p. 5). In conflict-affected areas, community-based learning centers and floating schools—supported by partnerships like BRAC—enhance access, while post-pandemic learning continuity plans incorporate alternative learning methods (ALMs) with culturally relevant materials and local involvement (MBHTE, 2020, Sec. 2; BRAC, 2022, p. 10). These initiatives protect students' intellectual development (*ḥifẓ al-‘aql*) during instability, transforming education into a bulwark for resilient, value-driven societies (Auda, 2008, p. 202).

The Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) champions the synergy of religious and scientific reasoning in its education framework, underscoring that peacebuilding necessitates curricula steeped in pluralism and nonviolence to cultivate harmonious coexistence (Bangsamoro Autonomy Act No. 18, 2021, Sec. 2–3). Aligned with the Islamic ethos of *ḥikmah* (wisdom)—as articulated in *maqāṣid al-sharī‘ah*—this approach resonates with the Prophetic tradition deeming knowledge-seeking a communal duty (Ibn Mājah, n.d., Hadith 224), thereby nurturing *ḥifẓ al-‘aql* (protection of intellect) through ethical inquiry and conflict resolution skills (Auda, 2008, p. 202). Teacher training programs equip educators to mitigate trauma, facilitate interfaith dialogue, and impart Islamic tenets of mercy (*rahmah*) and justice (*‘adl*), ensuring schools serve as sanctuaries for reflective, empathetic learning (MBHTE, 2022, p. 15; Kamali, 2008, p. 104).

In this multi-layered paradigm, madrasas receive bolstering for livelihood skills integration—blending spiritual instruction with vocational competencies—to empower marginalized youth economically and intellectually (Bangsamoro Autonomy Act No. 18, 2021, Sec. 27; MBHTE, 2022, p. 50). Concurrently, state schools embed civic values, promoting civic engagement and nonviolent problem-solving to counteract prejudice and historical animosities (Bangsamoro Autonomy Act No. 18, 2021, Sec. 25; MBHTE, 2024, p. 5). Collectively, these initiatives fortify *ḥifẓ al-‘aql* by equipping individuals to navigate conflicts peacefully, uphold truth, and contribute to a cohesive, truth-seeking society.

5.2.4. Protection of Progeny

To safeguard Bangsamoro family and progeny, the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) advances programs for family and women's welfare, empowering households through targeted social safeguards (Republic Act No. 11054, 2018, Article IV, Sec. 9). In Islamic law, the family constitutes a sacrosanct unit, with a sacred duty to nurture orphans as enshrined in Qur’anic imperatives (Qur’an 4:2; 4:6; 4:10), which BARMM operationalizes via maternal health, childcare, and women's rights initiatives (Bangsamoro Autonomy Act No. 8, 2020, Sec. 3). The Bangsamoro Organic Law (BOL) and local women's organizations champion Gender and Development (GAD) principles, with implementation emphasizing anti-domestic violence laws and legal aid for combatants' wives and rape survivors (UN Women, 2019, para. 8). The Bangsamoro Women’s Commission (BWC) champions gender-transformative transitional justice, centering women survivors' needs in reconciliation (Bangsamoro Women Commission, n.d.). Per *ḥifẓ al-nasl*,

these efforts prioritize children's and mothers' protection via educational stipends for schoolgirls and trauma counseling for conflict-impacted families (Auda, 2008, p. 204; Kamali, 2008, p. 103).

BARMM enacts Shari'ah-compliant programs on reproductive health, nutrition, and child protection, harmonized via fatwas ensuring alignment with Islamic teachings (UNFPA Philippines, 2019, para. 1–3). Support for orphans and child-headed households—through scholarships and social grants—embodies Qur'anic kindness: “And give to the orphans their properties... and do not consume them excessively” (Qur'an 4:2), while upholding family sanctity (Qur'an 4:6; 4:10). Youth-led peace clubs and inter-ethnic sports/arts initiatives operationalize these values, building cross-cultural bonds among children to disrupt inherited cycles of hostility (Bangsamoro Youth Commission, 2020, para. 4; Philippine Sports Commission, 2019, para. 2). Thus, *ḥifẓ al-nasl* manifests as proactive stewardship for future generations' holistic flourishing.

5.2.5. Protection of Property

Within the BARMM post-conflict landscape, operationalizing *ḥifẓ al-māl* necessitates targeted interventions—such as microfinance initiatives, land tenure reforms, anti-corruption mechanisms, and poverty alleviation programs—that not only redress structural disparities but also foster economic resilience, thereby anchoring durable peace in ethical prosperity aligned with Islamic juridical ethos.

To operationalize *ḥifẓ al-māl* (protection of wealth), the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) champions equitable prosperity for its residents, embedding social justice in fiscal and economic frameworks (Republic Act No. 11054, 2018, Article II, Sec. 2; Article X). Consonant with Islamic teachings, this aligns with *zakāt* and *waqf* as mechanisms for social support and ethical economic conduct, redistributing wealth to the needy and curbing inequity (Auda, 2008, p. 204; Chapra, 1992, p. 205). By institutionalizing these principles, BARMM mitigates historical marginalization, fostering a balanced socio-economic order.

BARMM's policies accentuate agricultural productivity and income augmentation for farmers, while diversifying livelihoods beyond agrarian pursuits through targeted interventions (Bangsamoro Development Plan, 2023, Priority 2, p. 30). High-priority initiatives encompass irrigation infrastructure, cash crop cultivation (coffee, cacao, rubber), fisheries enhancement, and halal value chains interfacing with ASEAN markets, leveraging BIMP-EAGA corridors for export growth (Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries, and Agrarian Reform-BARMM, 2023; MinDA, 2025). Co-financing via Islamic banking—*sukuk* or *qard ḥasan* (interest-free loans)—exemplifies *maqāṣid* solidarity, amplifying microenterprises and sustainable agro-chains (Auda, 2008, p. 204).

Since inception, BARMM has waged war on poverty and corruption, mandating that public wealth subserves *maṣlahah* (public good) through transparent, need-based allocations (Chief Minister Ahod Ebrahim, 2023; Bangsamoro Development Plan, 2023, Priority 1, p. 20). Budgets target the indigent provinces and conflict-displaced families, employing *zakāt*-like criteria for equitable distribution, thereby fortifying social cohesion and economic resilience (Auda, 2008, p. 204).

Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) officials view unchecked corruption—fueled by democratic lapses and Shari'ah deviations—as a catalyst for graft and nepotism in public offices, undermining moral governance (Chief Minister Ahod Ebrahim, 2022). To mitigate this, the Bangsamoro Transition Authority enforces anti-corruption laws and transparency protocols, including public contracts and audits, to ensure development funds reach the most vulnerable citizens (Bangsamoro Autonomy Act No. 13, 2021, Sec. 13; Republic Act No. 6713, 1989, Sec. 4). Grounded in Islamic ethos—where “no one eats better food than that which he

eats out of the work of his own hand" (Bukhari, n.d., Hadith 2071)—honest dealings and fair wealth distribution avert extreme inequality, aligning with *ḥifẓ al-māl* (protection of wealth) as a safeguard against social fracture (Auda, 2008, p. 204).

BARMM champions socio-economic balance through zakat (alms) and waqf (endowments) as redistributive mechanisms, establishing a Bangsamoro waqf fund or leveraging non-profit trusts for education, healthcare, and disaster relief in consonance with *maqāṣid al-sharīʿah* and *maṣlaḥah* (Bangsamoro Development Plan, 2023, p. 20; Bangsamoro Transition Authority, 2023). By partnering with local zakat councils (Maqasid Development Agencies), communities direct resources to vulnerable families, embodying *ḥifẓ al-māl* by shielding against poverty and catalyzing entrepreneurship among the underprivileged (Auda, 2008, p. 204)

6.0. DISCUSSION

As a framework, *Maqāṣid al-Sharīʿah*, the objectives of Islamic law, embodies the wisdom underlying legal rulings, categorized by classical scholars into five essentials: protection of religion (*dīn*), life (*nafs*), intellect (*ʿaql*), progeny (*nasl*), and property (*māl*) (Al-Ghazālī, 1993, Vol. 1, p. 417; Al-Shāṭibī, 1997, Vol. 2, p. 8). This framework prioritizes human welfare (*maṣlaḥah*), with necessities forming the core level (Auda, 2008, p. 204).

In the BARMM peace-building framework, integrating *ḥifẓ al-ʿaql* entails promoting accessible education, countering ideological extremism through critical thinking programs, and fostering intellectual environments that enable informed civic participation—thereby reinforcing both individual autonomy and collective resilience in alignment with Islamic normative principles.

Applied to the BARMM milieu, this expanded lens advocates for policies that bolster family-centric education, anti-violence protocols, and gender-sensitive support services, thereby embedding Islamic ethical imperatives into governance to nurture resilient communities and perpetuate cultural continuity amid peace consolidation.

7.0. CONCLUSION

The Maqasid al-Shariah-based peacebuilding framework offers a culturally relevant and comprehensive approach to addressing the essential needs of the Bangsamoro Ummah. By aligning peacebuilding efforts with the Islamic principles of Maqasid al-Shariah, this framework promotes sustainable development, social cohesion, and resilience in the Bangsamoro region. The success of this approach relies on the commitment of stakeholders to integrate Islamic values with practical strategies, ensuring that the aspirations of the Bangsamoro people are fulfilled in a way that respects their essential needs, which include faith and identity. In view of this, the researcher suggests that peacebuilding policies and programs should prioritize the addressing of the essential needs of the Bangsamoro, as indicated by the Maqasid al-Shariah-based peacebuilding framework. These needs encompass spiritual and moral development, intellectual growth, economic stability, social welfare, peace and security, education, health, and the preservation of cultural identity.

Acknowledgement

We would like to express our sincere gratitude to Islamic Studies Department, Institute of Islamic, Arabic and International Studies, Mindanao State University for their helpful feedback and support.

Conflicts of Interest

The author(s) declare(s) that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this paper

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