

| Research Article |

The 2025 IUMS Fatwa on Israeli Aggression in Gaza: Examining the Muslim-Majority Countries' Foreign Policy through *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'a* and Political Realism

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Abstract: This article examines the gap between Islamic legal norms and the foreign policy practices of Muslim-majority countries by analyzing the case of the International Union of Muslim Scholars (IUMS) fatwa regarding Israeli aggression in Gaza in 2025. The fatwa sets forth fifteen directives, including calls for *jihād*, a total boycott, the cessation of normalization with Israel, and the formation of a military alliance among Muslim-majority countries. In practice, however, most Muslim-majority countries—such as the UAE, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Morocco, and Turkey—continue to maintain diplomatic and economic relations with Israel and its allies. Therefore, this article investigates why the 2025 IUMS fatwa, as a representation of Islamic legal ideals within the framework of *maqāṣid al-sharī'a*, has had only limited influence on the foreign policy responses of Muslim-majority countries, which are largely shaped by the principles of political realism. The research employs a qualitative approach, utilizing content analysis of the fatwa text and comparative policy analysis of the foreign policies of those Muslim-majority countries, focusing on diplomatic, economic, and security-related responses based on official statements, agreements, and documented actions. The findings demonstrate that geopolitical, security, and economic considerations are more dominant than commitment to Islamic legal principles, thereby explaining the weak influence of the fatwa on Muslim-majority countries' policies. The implications of this research affirm the necessity of an integrative approach that connects Islamic legal norms with international political realities, so that strategic fatwas do not remain merely within the moral-normative realm but can be operationalized into realistic and effective foreign policies.

Keywords: IUMS Fatwa, Gaza, *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'a*, Political Realism, Muslim-Majority Countries.



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Introduction

Israeli military aggression against Gaza has persisted over recent years with repeated escalations, causing massive casualties and widespread destruction of civilian infrastructure. In the latest phase of this conflict, which reached its peak in 2025, the International Union of Muslim Scholars (IUMS) - founded in 2004 under the leadership of Yūsuf al-Qaraḍāwī as a Qatar-based transnational body whose fatwas carry symbolic but non-binding authority in Sunni Islam - issued a fatwa containing 15 points of appeal that affirms the obligation of *jihād*, total boycott, prohibition of normalization of relations, formation of military alliances, and unconditional humanitarian support for Palestine (International Union of Muslim Scholars, 2025). This fatwa represents a manifestation of Islamic legal ideals grounded in *sharī'ah* legitimacy, aimed at protecting the religion, lives, and homeland of the Muslim *ummah*.

However, the response of most Muslim-majority countries does not demonstrate follow-up actions that align with these calls, and there are even policies that clearly contradict these appeals (Dolatabadi & Damyar, 2025; Gunning & Valbjørn, 2025; Valbjørn et al., 2024). This phenomenon raises questions about the interaction between religious authority and foreign policy responses of Muslim-majority countries in the Palestinian issue. Therefore, this article aims to analyze the gap between the IUMS fatwa on Gaza aggression and the foreign policy responses of Muslim-majority countries, using *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* as a normative framework and political realism as an analytical framework for international politics. Accordingly, the central research question of this article is: How is the 2025 IUMS fatwa on Gaza understood within the framework of *maqāṣid al-sharī'a*, and to what extent does it influence—or stand in contrast to—the foreign policy practices of Muslim-majority countries when analyzed through the lens of Political Realism?

The selection of *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* and political realism variables in this research has strong methodological justification. *Maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* provides a normative framework for assessing the IUMS fatwa as an Islamic legal instrument with strategic objectives, such as protecting religion (*ḥifẓ al-dīn*), life (*ḥifẓ al-nafs*), intellect (*ḥifẓ al-'aql*), wealth (*ḥifẓ al-māl*), and lineage (*ḥifẓ al-nasl*) (al-Shāṭibī, 2005, II: 8). In the context of Gaza, each of these *maqāṣid* is directly threatened: *ḥifẓ al-dīn* by restrictions on religious freedom and attacks on mosques, *ḥifẓ al-nafs* by the high civilian death toll, *ḥifẓ al-'aql* by the disruption of education and psychological trauma, *ḥifẓ al-māl* by the destruction of infrastructure and economic blockade, and *ḥifẓ al-nasl* by the displacement and endangerment of families. This analysis positions the fatwa not merely as a political document, but also as a manifestation of *sharī'ah* objectives targeting the welfare (*maṣlaḥah*) of the *ummah*. Meanwhile, political realism is employed to interpret the behavior of Muslim-majority countries driven by national interests, security, stability, and strategic alliances, often sidelining religious norms (Leader Maynard, 2022; Navot et al., 2023; Philp, 2010; Spegele, 2004). Combining these two frameworks allows for a balanced interpretation between moral-normative

considerations and geopolitical realities, thereby explaining why the gap between the ideals of the fatwa and the foreign policy responses of Muslim-majority countries remains significant.

Previous studies on Palestine have consistently highlighted fatwas and *jihād* as instruments of political mobilization and Islamic legal legitimacy. al-Zuhaylī (2011) emphasizes the legal aspects of war in Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*), including civilian protection and international humanitarian law, while Peters (2018) elaborates on the transformation of the *jihād* concept from classical to modern times. Bartal (2015; 2022) adds a political perspective by demonstrating how Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) functions as a religio-nationalist organization that forms strategic partnerships with Iran, while Ḥamās is viewed as more pragmatic as a *wasatiyyah* movement that adapts *sharī'ah* principles for political and military objectives (Polka, 2017). Recent research even examines Abū 'Ubayda's oratory as a representation of *jihād* in resistance discourse, capable of inspiring mass mobilization at both local and global levels (Sulaiman, Anshory, Muntaqim, & Ḥasaniyah, 2024). Additionally, the study by Luhuringbudi et al. (2025) demonstrates how digital visual campaigns such as #AllEyesonRafah play a role in mobilizing international public opinion, affirming that *jihād* and resistance now occur not only in the military realm, but also through social media as an instrument of global mobilization.

Meanwhile, Political Realism literature in the Middle East highlights diplomatic strategies and state interest calculations. Navot, Hindi, and Khlaile (2023) show the tendency of Arab political actors to choose realistic approaches for stability. Fulton and Yellinek (2021) view UAE-Israel normalization as a pragmatic response to regional pressures, while Dolatabadi and Damyar (2025) assess that Arab state attitudes toward the Gaza war are influenced by declining Arab nationalism. Gunning and Valbjørn (2025) add that Arab Islamist responses are also influenced by geopolitical calculations. All of this confirms that security, regime stability, and relations with great powers remain the primary orientation of states in the region. However, no study has integratively connected the normative dimension of Islamic law—particularly *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah*—with the political realism framework to explain the gap between transnational fatwas such as IUMS and the foreign policy responses of Muslim-majority countries. This gap constitutes the main contribution of this research.

This article emerges to fill this void by offering an interdisciplinary analysis that combines *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* and Political Realism as an analytical framework. By analyzing the content of the 15 points of the 2025 IUMS fatwa and comparing it with the responses of Muslim-majority countries, this research maps in detail the gap between normative appeals and practical actions. The main contribution of this research lies in revealing the factors that cause the weak influence of fatwas on Muslim-majority countries foreign policies. This approach also enables critical evaluation of the relevance of contemporary political fatwas in an international system

dominated by power calculations. Furthermore, this article contributes on two levels. Theoretically, it offers an interdisciplinary framework by integrating *maqāṣid al-sharīʿa* and Political Realism, a combination rarely employed in Islamic legal and international relations studies. Practically, it evaluates the contemporary relevance of the IUMS fatwa within the context of foreign policy, highlighting the obstacles that prevent its full implementation and offering insights into how Islamic legal ideals can be positioned within a realist international system. Thus, this article is not only descriptive, but also analytical and solution-oriented toward the problematic relationship between Islamic law and geopolitical realities.

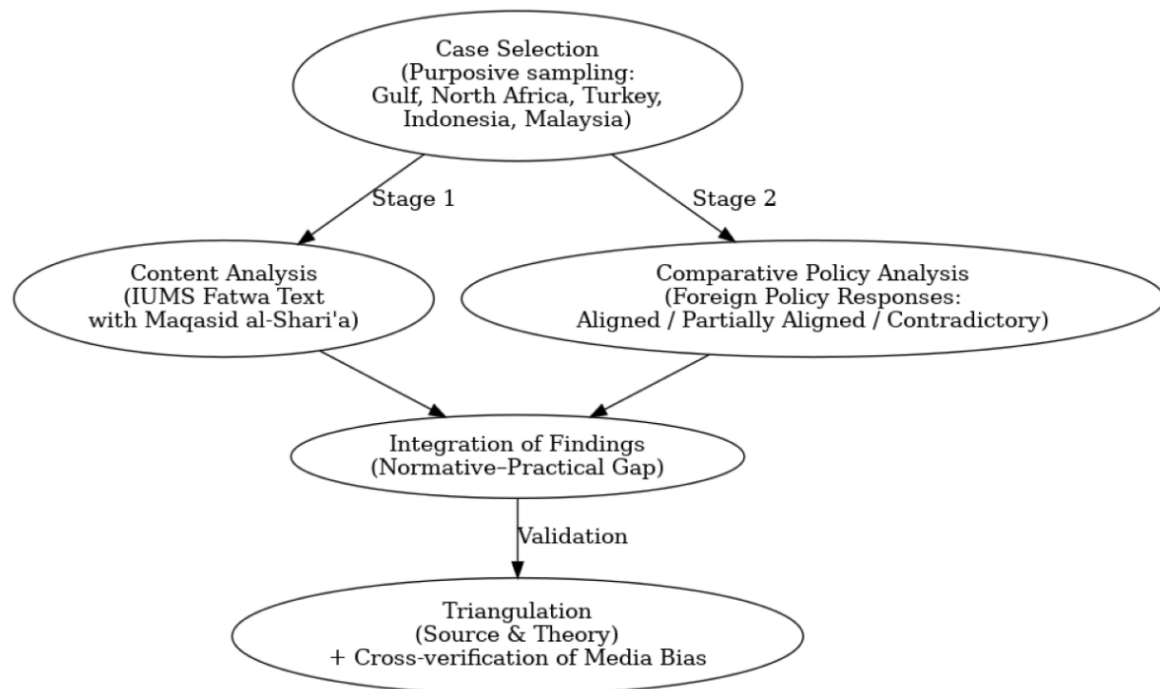
Method

This research employs a qualitative approach with a content analysis design to examine the text of the International Union of Muslim Scholars (IUMS) fatwa and comparative policy analysis to assess the responses of Muslim-majority countries. The selection of this approach is based on the nature of the problem, which is both normative and empirical, requiring simultaneous analysis of texts and policies. Primary data are obtained from the official IUMS fatwa document dated March 28, 2025, which contains 15 points of appeal regarding Gaza. Secondary data are obtained from official government statements, international organization reports, credible media news, and academic publications related to Muslim-majority countries' foreign policies toward Palestine. Data is collected through documentation techniques while considering source validity and information accuracy. For the case selection, this research employs purposive sampling, focusing on Gulf states (such as Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the UAE), North African countries (such as Egypt and Morocco), and other influential Muslim-majority countries, including Turkey, Indonesia and Malaysia, as they represent diverse geopolitical positions and varying degrees of alignment with the fatwa. This approach enables researchers to systematically identify gaps between fatwa content and its field implementation.

For the case selection, this study adopts a purposive sampling strategy structured around four strategic categories: (1) countries directly bordering Israel, including Egypt and Jordan; (2) Gulf states with major regional influence, particularly Saudi Arabia and Qatar; (3) states that have normalized relations through the Abraham Accords, such as the United Arab Emirates and Morocco; and (4) countries consistently supportive of Palestine, such as Iran and Turkey. To broaden the analysis, Indonesia and Malaysia are also incorporated to represent the Southeast Asian perspective, as both states have demonstrated consistent diplomatic advocacy for Palestine despite their geographical distance from the conflict. This categorization captures a spectrum of geopolitical positions and varying degrees of alignment with the fatwa, thereby strengthening methodological transparency. Through this approach, the study is able to systematically identify the gaps between the normative content of the fatwa and its practical implementation in state policies.

Data analysis is conducted in two main stages to ensure integration between Islamic legal dimensions and international politics. The first stage is content analysis of the fatwa text using the *maqāṣid al-sharīʿa* framework to identify the *sharīʿah* objectives contained in each point, such as *ḥifẓ al-dīn* and *ḥifẓ al-naḥs*. Each fatwa point is given thematic coding that reflects the relevance of *sharīʿah* objectives. The second stage involves comparative policy analysis, which compares fatwa content with actual Muslim-majority countries policies, utilizing the Political Realism perspective to assess factors of national interest, security, and strategic alliances. In this stage, state responses are categorized into three levels: “aligned” (policies or actions directly supporting the fatwa, such as breaking relations or providing military/humanitarian aid), “partially aligned” (symbolic or humanitarian gestures without deeper strategic shifts), and “contradictory” (policies that strengthen ties with Israel or openly reject the fatwa). This typology is applied consistently across diplomatic statements, military actions, economic policies, and public rhetoric. This process involves mapping states whose responses align, partially align, or contradict the fatwa. The results of these two stages are then integrated to produce a complete picture of the normative-practical gap.

Data validity is maintained through the use of source triangulation and theory triangulation techniques. Source triangulation is conducted by comparing data from official documents, academic publications, and international media reports. Recognizing the potential bias in media sources, this research cross-verifies news reports with official government statements and peer-reviewed academic studies to minimize subjectivity. Theory triangulation is performed by integrating *maqāṣid al-sharīʿa* and political realism analysis to provide comprehensive explanations of findings. The analysis process is conducted iteratively, where preliminary results are re-evaluated based on input from both theoretical frameworks. Research ethics are maintained by only using authentic sources and avoiding biased interpretations toward certain parties. All research steps are designed to ensure that the obtained results can be academically accountable. Thus, this method is expected to reveal the complex relationship between *sharīʿa* norms and political realities in the context of IUMS fatwa implementation.

Figure 1. Research Method

IUMS Fatwa

The International Union of Muslim Scholars (IUMS) fatwa dated 28 Ramadan 1446 AH / March 28, 2025 CE was issued as a response to the continued Israeli aggression in Gaza and violations of the ceasefire. This fatwa contains 15 points that firmly emphasize the obligation of *jihād* against the Zionist entity and all parties cooperating with it. The *jihād* referred to is not only military in nature, but also encompasses logistical support, weaponry, intelligence, and other strategic assistance. The primary responsibility is placed upon the Palestinian people, followed by neighboring countries such as Egypt, Jordan, and Lebanon, and then all Arab and Muslim nations. The fatwa also strongly condemns the neglectful attitude and betrayal of countries that remain silent or actually assist the aggressor. Its main message is that abandoning Gaza amid the massacre constitutes a grave sin and betrayal of the trust of leadership (International Union of Muslim Scholars, 2025). It should also be noted that the IUMS, while influential in some Muslim scholarly circles, is perceived as controversial or even politicized by several governments, which affects the perceived legitimacy and weight of its fatwas.

Another important point in this fatwa is the absolute prohibition of assisting the enemy in any form, whether militarily, logistically, or diplomatically. The fatwa affirms the obligation to impose a total blockade against Israel through land, sea, and air routes. Furthermore, it prohibits supplying resources such as oil, gas, food, and water that could strengthen Israel's war machine, especially when Gaza residents are suffering from starvation. Assistance to the enemy carried out due to love and the

intention to weaken resistance is categorized as *riddah* that nullifies guardianship rights (*walāyah*) in Islam. If such assistance is provided for profit, it is considered a grave sin and serious betrayal. This prohibition is based on Qur'anic verses that remind Muslims not to take enemies as allies (International Union of Muslim Scholars, 2025).

The fatwa also contains appeals for the formation of a unified military alliance of Muslim-majority countries to defend Islamic lands, protect religion, lives, wealth, sovereignty, and the honor of the *ummah*. This appeal is urgent because delay will cause widespread *fasād* and *fitnah*. Additionally, Muslim-majority countries that have agreements with Israel are asked to review such cooperation and use their influence to pressure the aggressor. The fatwa affirms the obligation of financial *jihād* for capable Muslims, including financing weaponry, logistical support, and maintaining the families of fighters (*mujāhidīn*). The prohibition of normalization of relations with Israel is reaffirmed, along with the obligation to sever all forms of diplomatic, economic, cultural, and academic relations. The fatwa concludes its appeals with calls for prayer, *qunūt nāzilah*, *ummah* unity, and appreciation for those who support Palestine (International Union of Muslim Scholars, 2025). Nonetheless, it must also be recognized that not all Muslim scholars or institutions necessarily endorse the IUMS's interpretations, particularly on sensitive issues such as the classification of *jihād* as *farḍ 'ayn* or the declaration of *riddah* for economic cooperation.

Table 01: 15 Points of the IUMS Fatwa on Gaza Aggression and Ceasefire

No.	Fatwa Content	Description / Textual Evidence	Maqāṣid al-Sharī'a Category
1	Obligation of <i>jihād</i> against Zionists	<i>Jihād</i> is <i>farḍ 'ayn</i> for Muslims in Palestine, neighboring countries, and the entire Muslim <i>ummah</i> . Evidence: Qs. al-Nisā' 4:75 & Qs. al-Anfāl 8:27.	<i>Ḥifẓ al-dīn, ḥifẓ al-nafs</i>
2	Prohibition of supporting the enemy	<i>Ḥarām</i> to provide military, logistical assistance, or transportation facilities to Israel.	<i>Ḥifẓ al-dīn, ḥifẓ al-nafs</i>
3	Prohibition of supplying resources	Forbidden to sell oil, gas, food, or water to Israel. If with intention to support Zionists → <i>riddah</i> ; if for profit → grave sin. Qs. al-Mā'idah 5:51.	<i>Ḥifẓ al-māl, ḥifẓ al-nafs</i>
4	Obligation of Muslim military alliance	Muslim-majority countries must form military alliance for collective defense. Evidence: Qs. al-Anfāl 8:60, 8:73.	<i>Ḥifẓ al-nafs, ḥifẓ al-dīn</i>
5	Review agreements with Israel	Agreements are only valid if in accordance with <i>ummah maṣlahah</i> ; if Israel violates → must be reviewed.	<i>Ḥifẓ al-dīn, ḥifẓ al-māl</i>

No. Fatwa	Content	Description / Textual Evidence	Maqāṣid al-Sharī'a Category
6	Financial <i>jihād</i> (<i>jihād māl</i>) is obligatory	Wealthy Muslims must finance <i>mujāhidīn</i> beyond <i>zakāh</i> , including supporting fighters' families. Evidence: Qs. al-Tawbah 9:41; ḥadīth “ <i>man jahhaza ghāziyan faqad ghazā.</i> ”	<i>Ḥifẓ al-māl, ḥifẓ al-nafs</i>
7	Prohibition of normalization	Political normalization with Israel is <i>ḥarām</i> ; states engaging in it must sever relations. Qs. al-Mā'idah 5:80–81.	<i>Ḥifẓ al-dīn, ḥifẓ al-nasl</i>
8	Scholars must speak out	' <i>Ulamā'</i> must admonish rulers, call for <i>jihād</i> , and oppose the silence of Muslim governments.	<i>Ḥifẓ al-dīn, ḥifẓ al-'aql</i>
9	Comprehensive boycott	Obligatory to sever political, economic, cultural, academic relations with Israel and its supporters. Investment in pro-Israel companies = betrayal.	<i>Ḥifẓ al-māl, ḥifẓ al-dīn</i>
10	Appeal to US government	Reminding the U.S. administration regarding Gaza; U.S. Muslims must exert political pressure.	<i>Ḥifẓ al-nafs, ḥifẓ al-dīn</i>
11	Continue boycotting pro-Israel companies	Calling on the <i>ummah</i> to continue boycotting pro-occupation companies, especially those supplying weapons.	<i>Ḥifẓ al-māl</i>
12	Obligation to assist Gaza with basic needs	Providing food, medicine, clothing, and fuel is obligatory even if governments prohibit it. Principle: <i>lā ṭā'ata li-makhlūq fi ma'ṣiyat al-khāliq.</i>	<i>Ḥifẓ al-nafs, ḥifẓ al-māl</i>
13	<i>Ummah</i> unity is obligatory	Muslims, especially Palestinian factions, must unite to avoid weakness. Evidence: Qs. al-Anfāl 8:46.	<i>Ḥifẓ al-nasl, ḥifẓ al-dīn</i>
14	Prayer and <i>Qunūt al-Nāzilah</i>	Muslims are called to increase prayers and <i>Qunūt al-Nāzilah</i> in both obligatory and supererogatory prayers.	<i>Ḥifẓ al-dīn, ḥifẓ al-'aql</i>
15	Expression of gratitude	Appreciating countries, institutions, and individuals who reject expulsion, provide assistance, including just Jewish voices. Ḥadīth: “ <i>man lam yashkur al-nās lam yashkur Allāh.</i> ”	<i>Ḥifẓ al-dīn, ḥifẓ al-nasl</i>

Response of the Muslim-Majority Countries

The map of Muslim-majority countries responses to the IUMS fatwa issued on March 28, 2025, shows quite sharp polarization. The group of supporting states, such as Qatar, Iran, and Turkey, provides full support for the fatwa's calls that advocate "armed *jihād*" against Israel and instructs Muslim governments to support Hamas "militarily, economically, and politically" (Foundation for Defense of Democracies, 2025). Qatar, as a state that provides tacit approval of the fatwa, is consistent with its pro-Palestine policy through humanitarian aid and strong diplomatic support. Iran is viewed as a strong supporter of this fatwa, with publications on the IUMS website stating that "Iran's victory is the defeat of the US and its allies" (MEMRI, 2025a). Turkey is also mentioned as a country supporting IUMS, in line with its pro-Palestine policy that has been consistent for years. These countries take concrete steps such as severing or limiting economic relations with Israel, supporting UN resolutions favoring Palestine, and campaigning for domestic boycotts of Israeli products.

On the opposite side, there are Muslim-majority countries that explicitly reject or ignore the IUMS fatwa. The harshest response comes from Egypt, where the Grand Mufti of Egypt, Nazir Ayyad, firmly rejects the IUMS fatwa by issuing a counter-fatwa, calling it "irresponsible" and "a violation of *sharī'ah* law" (MEMRI, 2025b). Egypt's rejection aligns with its pragmatic policy of maintaining diplomatic and economic relations with Israel, even amid the Gaza conflict escalation. Data shows that Egypt's exports to Israel in May 2024 reached \$25 million, double the same period in 2023 (Middle East Eye, 2024), while Israel-Egypt bilateral trade grew 56 percent in 2023 (Watan, 2024). The United Arab Emirates shows more extreme rejection, where UAE political analyst Salem Al-Ketbi even calls for IUMS to be designated as a terrorist organization and for decisive action to protect global security and stability (MEMRI, 2025c). The UAE also maintains its diplomatic relations by not withdrawing its ambassador from Israel and continues economic cooperation through the Abraham Accords (Foreign Policy, 2024).

Besides these two poles, states are taking ambiguous or "two-footed" positions in responding to the fatwa. Saudi Arabia becomes the most prominent example by providing humanitarian aid to Gaza through the King Salman Humanitarian Aid and Relief Centre worth \$185 million for Palestine (Arab News, 2024) and an additional \$40 million to support UNRWA operations in the Gaza Strip (UNRWA, 2024), while on the other hand continuing the process of normalizing relations with Israel through diplomatic channels, where negotiations were reportedly resumed in 2024 after being disrupted by the Gaza war (United States Institute of Peace, 2023). Jordan also shows a paradoxical attitude by withdrawing its ambassador from Israel in November 2023 as a form of protest, yet remaining involved in balanced diplomacy to stabilize relations with Israel (IISS, 2024). Even Israeli gas supplies to Egypt and Jordan actually increased by about 25% in 2023 despite brief disruptions at the beginning of the Gaza war (Foreign Policy, 2024).

The most striking contradiction is seen in economic practices that actually contradict the spirit of the fatwa. The United Arab Emirates maintains economic cooperation through the Abraham Accords even amid the Gaza conflict escalation (Atlantic Council, 2024), directly contradicting the fatwa point that affirms the prohibition of all forms of normalization with Israel (Foundation for Defense of Democracies, 2025). Similarly, Morocco continues trade agreements with Israel in defense and high technology sectors, despite triggering major domestic protests and criticism from the international pro-Palestine community. This phenomenon shows that national interests and realistic calculations in foreign policy often override commitment to moral and religious principles contained in the fatwa.

This polarization of responses reflects the complexity of international politics in the contemporary Muslim world, where transnational religious authorities like IUMS face diverse geopolitical realities. States supporting the fatwa generally have political ideologies aligned with resistance to Western hegemony and solidarity with the Palestinian liberation movement. Conversely, states that reject or ignore the fatwa tend to prioritize regional stability, strategic relations with great powers, and national economic interests. The “two-footed” phenomenon shown by several states illustrates the dilemma between domestic pressure to support Palestine and pragmatic needs to maintain diplomatic relations with Israel for broader national interests. This analysis shows that fatwa implementation in international politics heavily depends on each state's cost-benefit calculations, ultimately confirming the dominance of the political realism paradigm in foreign policy decision-making of Muslim-majority countries.

Political Realism of the Muslim-Majority Countries

The IUMS fatwa contains 15 points of normative appeals demanding collective action from the Muslim world regarding Gaza aggression, ranging from the obligation of *jihād*, prohibition of supporting the enemy, to the formation of Islamic military alliances. However, when compared with the actual actions of Muslim-majority countries, a significant gap is evident. For instance, the point about the obligation of military intervention is not implemented by the majority of states, even those directly bordering Palestine. The call for a total boycott of Israel is also not consistently followed, as a number of states continue or even expand trade relations. The point about political and military unity is also difficult to realize due to internal divisions among Muslim-majority countries. This comparison matrix shows that fatwa ideals often stop at the discourse level, without commensurate concrete implementation. This gap also highlights a practical challenge for fatwa-issuing bodies such as IUMS: how to translate absolutist moral injunctions into context-sensitive and strategic guidance that could resonate with the real constraints of modern statecraft.

The matrix also reveals that several fatwa points are responded to only partially or symbolically. For example, humanitarian aid such as medicine and food is indeed sent to Gaza, but this is not accompanied by firm policies such as severing diplomatic

relations. The point prohibiting normalization with Israel is ignored by states that have already signed peace or trade agreements. Meanwhile, the call for widespread financial *jihād* has not been institutionalized in official state policies. The appeal for ‘*ulamā*’ to speak out is also often hindered by political control over freedom of expression. As a result, responses to the fatwa are more ceremonial than substantive, widening the gap between norms and reality. Some traditionalist scholars also argue that *maqāṣid* should not be instrumentalized for realpolitik, cautioning against reducing higher objectives of *sharī‘a* to mere state interests. Addressing such critiques underscores the need for careful balance when proposing integrative approaches between normative ideals and political realities.

Furthermore, the comparison matrix indicates that only a small portion of fatwa points are consistently implemented, and even then, primarily by non-state actors, such as civil society organizations. Most Muslim-majority countries choose to respond within safe limits that do not disturb their international relations. This discrepancy between norms and reality indicates a complex foreign policy dilemma. States are faced with difficult choices between following Islamic legal ideals or maintaining domestic political-economic stability. In this context, the IUMS fatwa functions more as moral guidance than operational instructions that must be implemented. This affirms the need for in-depth analysis of factors that hinder full implementation of the fatwa.

One of the main hindering factors is domestic and regional political interests. Many governments worry that direct confrontation with Israel or Western states could trigger internal instability. Political opposition or minority groups that have trade relations with the West could exploit confrontational policies to weaken government legitimacy. Additionally, several states have binding security agreements with Israel-supporting countries, so violation of these agreements could potentially trigger sanctions or intervention. This political factor often makes state leaders take cautious positions, despite contradicting fatwa appeals.

Economic factors also constitute significant obstacles. Many Muslim-majority countries depend on trade, investment, and financial aid from Western countries that politically support Israel. A total boycott of Israel or its allies could negatively impact trade balance, capital flows, and currency stability. Energy-exporting countries, for instance, face dilemmas between fulfilling fatwa calls to cut supplies and maintaining revenue from their main markets. For countries with weak economies, the risk of losing access to markets and international aid is often viewed as greater than the moral benefits of following the fatwa. Consequently, full compliance with the fatwa becomes difficult to realize within the framework of national economic interests.

Diplomatic factors further strengthen obstacles to fatwa implementation. Many Muslim-majority countries pursue foreign policies oriented toward maintaining good relations with great powers and preserving moderate images on the international stage. Support for the confrontational IUMS fatwa could be considered contrary to

their commitments to international agreements and multilateral cooperation. Some states even use their role as conflict mediators to strengthen their diplomatic position, thus avoiding steps that could be perceived as total partisanship. In this context, the fatwa is considered too absolute to be fully adopted in modern diplomacy. This difference in diplomatic orientation further widens the gap between norms and reality in responses to Gaza aggression. At the same time, the integration of *maqāṣid* and realism could also be tested in Southeast Asian contexts. Indonesia, with its *wasatiyyah* (moderation) paradigm, and Malaysia, with its tradition of diplomatic neutrality, illustrate how Muslim-majority countries outside the Arab world frame pro-Palestine solidarity through symbolic and diplomatic means without confrontation. This regional perspective demonstrates the broader relevance of the framework beyond the Middle East.

Table 2. Compliance Matrix of IUMS Fatwa Points and Muslim-majority countries' Responses

No.	IUMS Fatwa Points	Actual Implementation	Compliance Level	<i>Maqāṣid Objective</i>
1	Obligation of <i>jihād</i> against Israel and its allies	The majority of states are not directly involved; only diplomatic statements of support	Low	<i>Ḥifẓ al-dīn, ḥifẓ al-nafs</i>
2	Prohibition of assisting the enemy militarily/logistically	Some states (e.g., UAE) continue defense or tech trade with Israel	Low	<i>Ḥifẓ al-nafs, ḥifẓ al-dīn</i>
3	Prohibition of supplying resources (oil, gas, food)	Egypt and Jordan maintain gas pipeline cooperation with Israel; Gulf states continue energy exports to allies	Low	<i>Ḥifẓ al-māl, ḥifẓ al-nafs</i>
4	Formation of the Islamic military alliance	No steps toward alliance; OIC remains rhetorical only	Low	<i>Ḥifẓ al-nafs, ḥifẓ al-dīn</i>
5	Review of agreements with Israel	Morocco and UAE expand trade & defense pacts despite protests	Low	<i>Ḥifẓ al-dīn, ḥifẓ al-māl</i>
6	Financial <i>jihād</i> to support Palestine	Qatar and Turkey provide consistent aid; Gulf elites donate privately	Medium	<i>Ḥifẓ al-māl, ḥifẓ al-nafs</i>
7	Prohibition of normalization of relations	UAE, Bahrain, Morocco deepen normalization under Abraham Accords	Low	<i>Ḥifẓ al-dīn, ḥifẓ al-nafl</i>

No.	IUMS Fatwa Points	Actual Implementation	Compliance Level	Maqāṣid Objective
8	Obligation of <i>‘ulamā’</i> to speak out	State-controlled clerics are restricted; independent scholars speak via NGOs	Medium	<i>Ḥifẓ al-dīn, ḥifẓ al-‘aql</i>
9	Political, economic, cultural, and academic boycott	Civil boycotts (e.g., the BDS movement) are active, but governments are inconsistent	Low	<i>Ḥifẓ al-māl, ḥifẓ al-dīn</i>
10	Appeal to the US government	Limited lobbying by the Arab League; minimal effect on US policy	Low	<i>Ḥifẓ al-nafs, ḥifẓ al-dīn</i>
11	Boycott of pro-Israel companies	Grassroots campaigns in Malaysia, Indonesia, and Turkey; limited state role	Medium	<i>Ḥifẓ al-māl</i>
12	Humanitarian aid to Gaza	Qatar, Turkey, and Saudi Arabia send aid, often blocked by border controls	Medium	<i>Ḥifẓ al-nafs, ḥifẓ al-māl</i>
13	Internal unity of the Muslim <i>ummah</i>	Divisions persist (e.g., Fatah– Hamas rift, GCC rivalries)	Low	<i>Ḥifẓ al-dīn, ḥifẓ al-nasl</i>
14	Prayers and <i>Qunūt al-Nāzilāh</i>	Widely performed in mosques; high in ritual form, low in political consequence	High (ritual), Low (impact)	<i>Ḥifẓ al-dīn, ḥifẓ al-‘aql</i>
15	Appreciation of international support	Statements of thanks (e.g., OIC communiqués), but limited follow-up	Medium	<i>Ḥifẓ al-dīn, ḥifẓ al-nasl</i>

Integration of *Maqāṣid al-Sharī‘a* and Political Realism

Maqāṣid al-Sharī‘a here refers to the objectives that Islamic law aims to achieve for human welfare in this world and the hereafter (Al Idrusiah et al., 2024; Kurniawan et al., 2020; Kurniawan & Zaiful, 2022; Kurniawan, 2018; Kurniawan et al., 2025; Kurniawan et al., 2025), as understood by *uṣūl al-fiqh* scholars that *maqāṣid al-sharī‘a* are “the objectives and secrets of the *sharī‘a* established by God (*al-shāri‘*) in all His laws, all of which lead to human welfare in this world and the hereafter” (Ibn ‘Ashūr, 2004, p. 165; al-Fāsī, 1993, p. 7; al-Zuḥaylī, 2011, II: 308). Within this framework, such welfare will be realized through five basic principles known as *al-darūriyyāt al-khams*, namely protecting religion (*dīn*), life (*nafs*), lineage (*nasl*), wealth (*māl*), and intellect (*‘aql*) — as also affirmed in *al-Muwāfaqāt* (al-Shāṭibī, 2005, II: 8). Contemporary

scholars such as Jasser Auda have developed this *maqāṣid* theory by incorporating new dimensions such as protection of human rights, environmental protection, and sustainable development, while emphasizing a holistic approach that considers all dimensions of *maqāṣid* integratively, not hierarchically (Auda, 2022; Audah, 2014, 2022).

In the context of the IUMS fatwa regarding Gaza, the *maqāṣid al-sharī'a* framework affirms that Muslim-majority countries' policies should be directed toward protecting the *ummah* from oppression, maintaining religious continuity, and ensuring collective security and welfare. This principle stems from the assumption that the *ummah's* interests (*maṣlaḥah 'āmmah*) must be placed above narrow political calculations. Thus, the fatwa reflects Islamic legal ideals that demand active and consistent responses to aggression. However, this ideal often confronts international political realities laden with interests and compromises, raising questions about the extent to which *sharī'* values can align with modern state interests. In this regard, fatwa-issuing bodies such as IUMS may need to adapt their language, shifting from absolutist moral imperatives toward context-sensitive and strategic guidance, so that their messages resonate more effectively with the constraints and priorities of state decision-making.

In practice, the ideals of *maqāṣid al-sharī'a* as reflected in the IUMS fatwa often clash with international political realities colored by power calculations. If *maqāṣid* emphasizes *maṣlaḥah 'āmmah* as the primary priority demanding moral consistency and partisanship with the *ummah*, then Political Realism precisely places state interests, security, and power continuity as dominant orientations (Morgenthau, 1978; Waltz, 1979). This explains why many Muslim-majority countries choose compromising steps in responding to the Gaza conflict, such as maintaining strategic relations with the United States or European Union, despite contradicting the normative appeals of the IUMS fatwa. Thus, this indicates that there is inherent tension between Islamic legal ideals oriented toward transcendent values and the logic of political realism rooted in rational calculations. Some traditionalist scholars, however, argue that *maqāṣid* should not be instrumentalized for realpolitik, warning that excessive pragmatism risks diluting the transcendent and ethical mission of the *sharī'a*. A comparable dynamic can also be observed in Aceh, Indonesia, where a heretical fatwa issued by the Ulema Consultative Council of Aceh (*Majelis Permusyawaratan Ulama Aceh/MPU*) against Salafi teachings led to communal conflict and legal contestation, illustrating how religious authority often intersects with political structures and societal interests (Mustajab & Kurniawan, 2024). Acknowledging these critiques strengthens the rigor of the integrative framework.

Nevertheless, theoretically, integration between *maqāṣid al-sharī'a* and political realism is not impossible. If *maqāṣid* emphasizes *maṣlaḥah 'āmmah* as the primary objective, then national interest, which becomes the orientation of Political Realism can be directed to align with *sharī'* principles. For instance, efforts to maintain

domestic political stability and regional security can be understood as part of *ḥifẓ al-naḥs* and *ḥifẓ al-dīn*, while economic policies oriented toward public welfare can be placed within the framework of *ḥifẓ al-māl*. This approach demands reinterpretation of national interest to encompass moral, spiritual, and humanitarian dimensions as mandated by *maqāṣid*, not merely material benefits or strategic alliances. If this can be achieved, then strategic fatwas such as those issued by IUMS do not only stop at the normative level, but can also be operationalized in foreign policies that are both realistic and ethically nuanced.

Thus, the integration of *maqāṣid al-sharīʿa* and political realism opens space for synthesis between religious norms and modern political calculations. The ideals of *maqāṣid* oriented toward *maṣlahah ʿāmmah* can serve as moral guidance that complements the rational orientation of realism in maintaining national interests. The challenge is how to interpret national interest not merely within the framework of material or strategic alliances, but also as a means of protecting religion, life, and *ummah* welfare. This integrative framework is not only relevant in the Middle East but also in Southeast Asia, where Indonesia's *wasatiyyah* (moderation) paradigm and Malaysia's tradition of diplomatic neutrality demonstrate how *maqāṣid*-realism synthesis can underpin non-confrontational yet principled support for Palestine. If this reinterpretation succeeds, then Muslim-majority countries' foreign policies can be more consistent with *sharīʿa* values while being adaptive to global political dynamics. Ultimately, such synthesis enables strategic fatwas like IUMS to not stop at the normative realm, but to be realized in practical policies that are effective and ethically nuanced.

A similar multidimensional logic can also be observed in the broader civilizational encounter between Islam and the West. Rather than being defined merely by conflict or cooperation, their relationship has historically embodied a dynamic interplay of competition, intellectual exchange, and political negotiation. As Kurniawan (2023) argues, this relationship cannot be reduced to a simple dichotomy of clash or tolerance, since both competition and collaboration have coexisted across different epochs. This historical reality further illustrates that Islam's engagement with the world—whether in jurisprudence, politics, or civilization—is inherently adaptive and multidirectional. Hence, the synthesis of *maqāṣid al-sharīʿa* and political realism may be viewed as part of this broader pattern of integration, where moral vision and pragmatic calculation interact to sustain justice and stability in a complex global order.

Conclusion

This article demonstrates that there is a quite sharp gap between the ideals of the IUMS fatwa regarding Israeli aggression in Gaza and the foreign policy practices of Muslim-majority countries. The fatwa emphasizes the obligation of *jihād*, total boycott, and formation of Islamic military alliances as strategic steps, yet the majority of

Muslim-majority countries do not implement these calls consistently. Conversely, a number of states actually strengthen economic and diplomatic relations with Israel or its allies, even amid increasing conflict escalation. This fact reveals the dominance of strategic interests such as security, domestic stability, and economic continuity compared to commitment to religious moral appeals. Thus, the IUMS fatwa functions more as normative guidance with *sharī'ah* legitimacy, but lacks binding force in the realm of state policy. This situation reflects how difficult it is to integrate Islamic legal ideals into contemporary international relations practices laden with realpolitik calculations.

Nevertheless, the findings of this article also open space for reflection that integration between *maqāṣid al-sharī'a* and Political Realism is not entirely impossible. If national interest is interpreted in line with *maṣlaḥah 'āmmah*, then political stability, regional security, and economic welfare can be positioned as part of *sharī'ah* objectives such as *ḥifẓ al-dīn*, *ḥifẓ al-nafs*, and *ḥifẓ al-māl*. This approach demands reinterpretation of national interest to be based not only on material benefits, but also to encompass moral, spiritual, and humanitarian values. Thus, strategic fatwas such as IUMS can become more relevant and applicable in guiding Muslim-majority countries' foreign policies. In this regard, synergy between fatwa institutions and political actors could take concrete forms, such as establishing joint advisory councils between *'ulamā'* and policymakers, incorporating foreign ministry input into fatwa drafting processes, or launching religious diplomacy initiatives that connect transnational Islamic authority with state diplomacy.

This article acknowledges its limitations, particularly the reliance on publicly available documents, media reports, and secondary analyses, without access to confidential policy deliberations or elite interviews. Future research could build on these findings by conducting comparative studies of fatwa implementation in non-Arab Muslim contexts, such as Indonesia, Malaysia, and Turkey, thereby expanding the scope of understanding and aligning with the regional focus of this journal.

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