

# A *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah* Analysis of the Indonesian Ulema Council's Fatwa on Interfaith Greetings within Contemporary Human Rights Discourse

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**Abstract:** The Indonesian Ulema Council's (MUI) fatwa on interfaith greetings has generated significant debate within Indonesia's religious and socio-legal landscape, particularly regarding its implications for pluralism and interreligious harmony. This study conducts a *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah*-based analysis of the fatwa within the broader discourse of contemporary human rights. Using a qualitative textual approach, it examines how the fatwa articulates the objectives of Islamic Law (*maqāṣid*), especially in balancing the protection of faith (*hifz al-dīn*) with the demands of social cohesion in a religiously diverse society. The analysis is positioned in dialogue with contemporary human rights norms, drawing selectively on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) and the Cairo Declaration on Human Rights in Islam (CDHRI) to contextualise the fatwa's normative orientation. The findings indicate that while Western human rights discourse tends to emphasise individual autonomy, freedom of expression, and the neutrality of religious symbols, Islamic human rights frameworks foreground the primacy of *Sharī'ah* in regulating religious interactions. Within this normative landscape, the MUI fatwa seeks to preserve core Islamic values while acknowledging the importance of maintaining respectful interfaith relations in a pluralistic society. Academically, this study contributes to current scholarship by demonstrating how *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah* can serve as a mediating analytical framework between Islamic legal reasoning and global human rights discourse. It offers a more nuanced understanding of how fatwas function not merely as legal pronouncements but also as instruments of socio-religious negotiation in multicultural contexts. Moreover, the study provides a conceptual bridge for integrating *maqāṣid*-based reasoning into contemporary discussions of religious freedom, tolerance, and interfaith engagement, highlighting the potential of Islamic legal theory to enrich broader human rights conversations constructively in Muslim-majority societies.

**Keywords:** Human Rights; Interfaith Greetings; *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah*; MUI Fatwa.

**Abstrak:** Fatwa Majelis Ulama Indonesia (MUI) tentang ucapan selamat lintas agama telah memunculkan perdebatan luas dalam lanskap keagamaan dan sosial-hukum di Indonesia, terutama terkait implikasinya terhadap pluralisme dan harmoni antarumat beragama. Penelitian ini melakukan analisis berbasis *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah* terhadap fatwa tersebut dalam kerangka wacana hak asasi manusia kontemporer. Dengan pendekatan kualitatif tekstual, penelitian ini menelaah bagaimana fatwa tersebut merumuskan tujuan-tujuan hukum Islam (*maqāṣid*), khususnya dalam upaya menyeimbangkan perlindungan akidah (*hifz al-dīn*) dengan kebutuhan menjaga kohesi sosial dalam masyarakat yang religiusnya beragam. Analisis ini juga ditempatkan dalam dialog dengan norma-norma hak asasi manusia modern, dengan merujuk secara selektif pada *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (UDHR) dan *Cairo Declaration on Human Rights in Islam* (CDHRI) untuk memahami orientasi normatif fatwa tersebut. Hasil kajian menunjukkan bahwa wacana hak asasi manusia versi Barat cenderung menekankan otonomi individu, kebebasan berekspresi, dan netralitas simbol-simbol keagamaan. Sebaliknya, kerangka hak asasi manusia dalam perspektif Islam menempatkan syariat sebagai rujukan utama dalam mengatur interaksi keagamaan. Dalam konteks ini, fatwa MUI tampak berupaya menjaga nilai-nilai inti Islam sekaligus mengakui pentingnya hubungan yang saling menghormati antarumat beragama dalam masyarakat plural. Secara akademik, penelitian ini memberikan kontribusi penting dengan menunjukkan bahwa *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah* dapat berfungsi sebagai kerangka analisis yang menjembatani antara penalaran hukum Islam dan wacana hak asasi manusia global. Studi ini menawarkan pemahaman yang lebih mendalam bahwa fatwa tidak hanya berperan sebagai keputusan hukum, tetapi juga sebagai instrumen negosiasi sosial-keagamaan dalam konteks multikultural. Selain itu, penelitian ini menyajikan landasan konseptual untuk mengintegrasikan pendekatan *maqāṣid* dalam diskusi kontemporer mengenai kebebasan beragama, toleransi, dan dialog antaragama, sekaligus menegaskan potensi teori hukum Islam dalam memperkaya percakapan mengenai hak asasi manusia di masyarakat mayoritas Muslim.

**Kata kunci:** Fatwa MUI; Hak Asasi Manusia; *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah*; Ucapan Selamat Lintas Agama.

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## Introduction

A fatwa is an important tool in the Islamic legal tradition that guides Muslims in their daily lives in accordance with Islamic Law. A fatwa is one of the results of scholars' *ijtihad*. The Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI), as the highest fatwa institution in Indonesia, often issues fatwas that serve as a basis and guideline for Muslims in Indonesia to obtain legal certainty for a problem they face.<sup>1</sup> These fatwas are sometimes well-received by Muslims, but others receive special attention because they are considered controversial in society. One of the fatwas that has become controversial is the one on interfaith greetings. The MUI issued this fatwa through the 8th Indonesian Fatwa Commission Ulama Ijtima, which was held on May 28-31, 2024, at the Bahrul Ulum Islamic Centre, Islamic Boarding School, Sungailiat, Bangka Belitung.<sup>2</sup> The MUI generally issues this fatwa to guide Muslims in their interactions with followers of other religions, especially regarding greetings. This fatwa sparked various responses from Muslims themselves and from the broader community with diverse religious and cultural backgrounds.<sup>3</sup>

In Indonesia's pluralistic context, where interfaith interaction is commonplace, the fatwa on interfaith greetings has significant implications. This fatwa addresses not only

theological aspects but also social and humanitarian ones.<sup>4</sup> Therefore, it is important to examine this fatwa from a broader perspective, including a review of internationally recognised Western human rights perspectives and Islamic perspectives. Human rights are a global discourse; if not adhered to, they will be marginalised in the global arena.<sup>5</sup>

Historically, the idea of human rights emerged in the international arena when the dictatorship of kings and feudal lords in France exceeded intolerable limits.<sup>6</sup> The term human rights emerged only after the French Revolution, when bourgeois figures formed a coalition with church figures to secure the rights of the people they had held since birth.<sup>7</sup> The Western perspective on human rights originated with the United Nations (UN), which adopted the "Universal Declaration of Human Rights" (UDHR) on December 10, 1948. The UDHR comprises 30 articles.<sup>8</sup> Meanwhile, the Islamic perspective on human rights is derived from the "Cairo Declaration on Human Rights in Islam" (CDHRI). CDHRI is an Islamic human rights concept formulated by the Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC) and adopted in Cairo, Egypt, on August 5, 1990, consisting of 25 articles.<sup>9</sup> As God's creatures and social beings, humans possess fundamental rights that must be respected and protected by all. The 1948

<sup>1</sup> Ansori, Mughni Labib, and Marwadi, *Dinamika Pemikiran Hukum Islam Majelis Ulama Indonesia; Studi Pembaruan Fatwa*, cet. ke-1 (Semarang: Fatawa Publishing, 2020), 5.

<sup>2</sup> Sadam and Azhar, "Pengurus Besar Pelajar Islam Indonesia Sepakat Fatwa MUI Haramkan Salam Lintas Agama," 2024, <https://mui.or.id/baca/berita/pengurus-besar-pelajar-islam-indonesia-sepakat-fatwa-mui-haramkan-salam-lintas-agama#:~:text=JAKARTA MUI.yang mengharamkan salam lintas agama>.

<sup>3</sup> Zaenal Mustakim, "Menimbang Fatwa Larangan Salam Lintas Agama: Antara Agama Dan Harmoni," *Kemenag.Go.Id*, accessed April 29, 2025, <https://kemenag.go.id/opini/menimbang-fatwa-larangan-salam-lintas-agama-antara-agama-dan-harmoni-fHX25>.

<sup>4</sup> M. Sidik Sisdiyanto, "Salam Lintas Agama Dan Harmoni

Keberagaman," *Kemenag.Go.Id*, 2024, <https://kemenag.go.id/kolom/salam-lintas-agama-dan-harmoni-keberagaman-iTBaA>.

<sup>5</sup> M. Latif Fauzi et al., *Mendialogkan HAM Syariah: Pembelajaran HAM Di Kampus*, cet. Ke-1 (Yogyakarta: Pusat Stud Islam Uinversitas Islam Indonesia, 2011), 24.

<sup>6</sup> Ismail, "Hak Asasi Manusia Menurut Perspektif Islam," *Jurnal Asy-Syir'ah* 43, no. 1 (2009): 87–113.

<sup>7</sup> Achmad Suhaili, "Hak Asasi Manusia (HAM) Dalam Penerapan Hukum Islam Di Indonesia," *Al-Bayan: Jurnal Ilmu al-Qur'an Dan Hadist* 2, no. 2 (2019): 176–93, <https://doi.org/10.35132/albayan.v2i2.77>.

<sup>8</sup> Ahmad Kosasih, *HAM Dalam Perspektif Islam* (Jakarta: Salemba Diniyah, 2003), 24.

<sup>9</sup> Kosasih, 25.

*Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR)* and the 1990 *Cairo Declaration on Human Rights in Islam (CDHRI)* stipulate various fundamental rights in a general and comprehensive manner.<sup>10</sup> The CDHRI was established in response to the emergence of the *Islamic Universal Declaration of Human Rights (IUDHR)*. The IUDHR is considered fully in line with UN human rights documents, many of which do not align with Islamic values.<sup>11</sup>

One of the hallmarks of Western human rights is its frequent emphasis on individual freedom and the right to express oneself freely. In this context, the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI) fatwa on interfaith greetings can be viewed as a restriction on religious freedom and on individuals' right to interact with adherents of other faiths. On the other hand, human rights, from an Islamic perspective, also have a strong foundation, but are often emphasised within the framework of the *maqashid Sharia*, or the objectives of Islamic Law, namely the principle of protecting religion (*hifdz al-din*), life (*hifdz al-nafs*), reason (*hifdz al-'aql*), descendants (*hifdz al-nasl*), and property (*hifdz al-māl*). This means that maintaining the purity of faith and social order is a primary value in Islamic human rights.<sup>12</sup> These differing perspectives have given rise to various interpretations and responses to the MUI fatwa. Upon closer examination, the alternative solutions proposed by *Maqashid Sharia* are more detailed than those proposed in the Declaration of Human Rights.<sup>13</sup>

In a Western perspective, according to Jan Meterson of the UN Human Rights Commission, human rights are rights inherent in every human being, without which humans cannot live as human beings. He further stated that these rights are innate, as a gift from God Almighty, not granted by humans or rulers. These rights are fundamental to human life and life in general; that is, they cannot be separated from human life.<sup>14</sup> The human rights referred to here, in a Western perspective, are those outlined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), adopted by the UN in 1948. This declaration consists of 30 articles that outline the UN General Assembly's views on the guarantee of human rights for all people.<sup>15</sup> The rights recognised as human rights, as formulated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), cover various fundamental aspects of human life and comprise 30 articles.

Human rights in Islam have been a topic of discussion for 14 centuries, as evidenced by the Charter of Medina (Mitsaq Al-Madinah). Drafted during the Prophet Muhammad's migration to Medina, this charter recognised that all groups in the city, including Jews, Christians, and Muslims, constituted one nation. This charter affirmed the recognition of human rights for all parties who agreed to it, demonstrating that Islam has recognised human rights from its very beginning. The discourse on human rights in Islam predates that of other concepts or teachings.<sup>16</sup> From the

<sup>10</sup> Sunaryo Sunaryo, "Studi Komparatif Antara Universal Declaration of Human Rights 1948 Dan the Cairo Declaration on Human Rights in Islam 1990," *Fiat Justisia: Jurnal Ilmu Hukum* 5, no. 2 (2014): 389–409, <https://doi.org/10.25041/fiatjustisia.v5no2.61>.

<sup>11</sup> Daniel Alfaruqi, "Korelasi Hak Asasi Manusia Dan Hukum Islam," *Salam: Jurnal Sosial Dan Budaya Syar-i* 4, no. 1 (2017): 62, <https://doi.org/10.15408/sjsbs.v4i1.7869>.

<sup>12</sup> Nur Asiah, "Hak Asasi Manusia Perspektif Hukum Islam," *Jurnal Syari'ah Dan Hukum Diktum* 15, no. 1 (2017): 55–66.

<sup>13</sup> Zainal Arifin Hoesein and Muannif Ridwan, *HAM Dalam Piagam Madinah*, cet. Ke-1, ed. Rahman Yasin (Jakarta: LP2-AB (Lembaga Pengembangan Pendidikan Anak Bangsa), 2018).

<sup>14</sup> Alfaruqi, "Korelasi Hak Asasi Manusia Dan Hukum Islam," 59.

<sup>15</sup> Triyanto, "Regulasi Perlindungan Hak Asasi Manusia Tingkat Internasional," *Jurnal PPKn* 1, no. 1 (2013): 2.

<sup>16</sup> Ahmad Mukri Aji, "Hak Dan Kewajiban Asasi Manusia Dalam Perspektif Islam," *Salam: Jurnal Sosial Dan Budaya Syar-i* 2, no. 2 (2015), <https://doi.org/10.15408/sjsbs.v2i2.2386>.

outset, the Prophet Muhammad implemented the principle of religious freedom, embodied in the highly heterogeneous society of Medina, as enshrined in the Medina Charter.<sup>17</sup> The discourse on human rights in Islamic studies is not new and predates the development of social science approaches to human rights in Western scholarship. Along with Muhammad's mission as a prophet and messenger, the Quran extensively discusses human rights.<sup>18</sup>

Islam, as a universal religion, provides a significant foundation for discussions on human rights.<sup>19</sup> The theme of human rights in Islam continually arises, particularly in relation to the long history of the establishment of Islam. Sheikh Syaukat Hussain classifies human rights in Islam into two categories: first, human rights granted by Islam to a person as a human being; second, human rights granted to specific individuals or groups, such as special rights for non-Muslims, women, workers, and children. This explanation leads to the search for similarities or compatibility between human rights in Islam and human rights in general. Human rights in Islam can be classified as negative rights, which grant individuals the freedom to fulfil their rights. For example, the right to life and respect for human life is affirmed in QS Al-Maidah/5:32, which states that killing one person is as if killing all of humanity. The right to protection from arbitrary punishment is found in QS Al-An'am/6:164, and QS Fathir/35:18. The right to personal security and freedom is explained in QS An-Nisa/4:58 and QS Al-Hujurat/49:6.

Furthermore, the right to freedom of religion and choosing one's beliefs based on conscience is explained in QS Al-Baqarah/2:256 and QS Al-Ankabut/29:46. The right to equality before the law can be found in QS An-Nisa/4:1, 135 and QS Al-Hujurat/49:9. The right to freedom of association and to voice protests against oppressive governments is regulated in QS Ali Imran/3:104-105, QS An-Nisa/4:148, QS Al-Maidah/5:78-79, QS Al-A'raf/7:165, and QS Ali Imran/3:110. The right to fulfil basic needs, including economic and social rights, is also regulated in the Qur'an. The right to fulfil the basic needs of human life is mentioned implicitly in QS Al-Baqarah/2:29, QS Adz-Dzariyat/51:19, and QS Al-Jumu'ah/62:10. The right to education is also regulated in QS Yunus/10:101 and QS Al-Mujadilah/58:11.<sup>20</sup>

In the Islamic world, there is a human rights declaration initiated by the OIC in Cairo on August 15, 1990. OIC members approved this declaration after 13 years of negotiations; it is called the *Cairo Declaration on Human Rights in Islam* (CDHRI). This declaration comprises 25 articles that cover individual, social, economic, and political rights. All rights and freedoms stipulated in this declaration are subject to Islamic Sharia (article 24), explicitly mentioned as the only source for clarifying each article (article 25), which consists of 25 articles in the *Cairo Declaration on Human Rights in Islam* (CDHRI).<sup>21</sup>

In relation to the interfaith fatwa issued by the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI), a study of this MUI fatwa requires serious attention. The

<sup>17</sup> Muhammad Zaini, "Hak Asasi Manusia Menurut Al-Qur'an Dan Hadis Nabi Saw," *Jurnal Ilmiah Al-Mu'ashirah* 13, no. 1 (2016): 11–21, <https://doi.org/10.22373/jim.v13i1.2351>.

<sup>18</sup> Saifullah Abdushshamad, "Perkembangan Hukum Islam Di Bidang Hak Asasi Manusia," *Al Iqtishadiyah Jurnal Ekonomi Syariah Dan Hukum Ekonomi Syariah* 4, no. 1 (2018): 61–77, <https://doi.org/10.31602/iqt.v4i1.1597>.

<sup>19</sup> Amir et al., "The Contemporary Politics of Welfare and Anxiety:

A Fiqh Siyasa Review of Indonesia's 2045 Vision," *NUSANTARA: Journal Of Law Studies* 4, no. 01 (July 2025): 30–43, <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.17353871>.

<sup>20</sup> Rusdin Muhalling, "Hak Asasi Manusia (HAM) Perspektif Hukum Islam," *Jurnal Al-'Adl* 11, no. 1 (2018): 65–67.

<sup>21</sup> Martinus Sardi, *Mengenal Hak Asasi Manusia Dalam Islam Berdasarkan Deklarasi Kairo*, 2014, 7–19.

MUI fatwa should also take into account the sociocultural context of Indonesian society.<sup>22</sup> As the country with the largest Muslim population in the world, Indonesia has become a focal point in discussions about moderate Islam. Moderate Islam is a concept that refers to an understanding of Islam that is tolerant, inclusive, and respects humanitarian principles.<sup>23</sup> Indonesia has a complex religious dynamic. Interfaith interaction is an integral part of everyday life for Indonesians. Therefore, the MUI fatwa should be seen not only as a theological decision, but also as an effort to maintain social harmony and avoid potential interfaith conflict.

Meanwhile, the article examines Human Rights from Western and Islamic perspectives, a topic previously discussed by researchers, among them a study of human rights principles that have become an integral part of Islamic treatises from early times, as reflected in the Qur'an and hadith.<sup>24</sup> Several studies highlight the recognition and protection of human rights in Islam through the *maqashid al-syari'ah* approach, which includes rights-based principles such as the rights to life, religion, family, income, and education.<sup>25</sup> In addition, other studies show that Islamic Law comprehensively regulates and protects the basic human being, unlike Western human rights perspectives, which tend to be anthropocentric. As for the Indonesian context, results of the study show that the consistent implementation of human rights principles in Islamic Law is in line with the values of substantive democracy, democracy

well as the fundamental rights of the walking man. Thus, the existing literature in a way general emphasise that there is contribution big Islamic Law regarding strengthening human rights values, both in level conceptual and in implementation in Indonesia.

Leave from studies said, research. This aim is to analyse the Fatwa of the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI) regarding interfaith in Western and Islamic human rights perspectives with the use of an approach that studies comparison, and maps human rights values in it based on the principle *maqashid Sharia*, in particular protection of religion (*hifzh al-din*), soul (*hifzh al-nafs*), intellect (*hifzh al-'aql*), descendants (*hifzh al-nasl*), and property (*hifzh al-māl*). This is expected to enrich understanding of the relationship between religious fatwas and the fundamental rights of the man in public pluralism, exploring differences and similarities between the two perspectives, and identifying points of convergence that support interfaith dialogue and harmonious social relations. In addition, research aims to provide recommendations to the MUI and religious institutions for compiling a more detailed fatwa that is adaptive to social dynamics and remains in harmony with the fundamental objectives of Sharia. Different from previous studies, which used a special approach to analyse the *salam fatwa* on interfaith use, comparing it with CDHRI and UDHR principles, to fill a gap in the study literature on fundamental human rights.

<sup>22</sup> Junaidi, "Wasekjend MUI KH Arif Fahrudin Jelaskan Proporsionalitas Toleransi Dalam Fatwa Salam Lintas Agama," 2024, <https://mui.or.id/baca/berita/wasekjend-mui-kh-arif-fahrudin-jelaskan-proporsionalitas-toleransi-dalam-fatwa-salam-lintas-agama>.

<sup>23</sup> Deden Juansa Putra, "Kontekstualisasi Islam Moderat Di Indonesia," *Relinesia: Jurnal Kajian Agama Dan Multikulturalisme*

*Indonesia* 3, no. 1 (2024): 105.

<sup>24</sup> Dahlia Haliah Ma'u, "Eksistensi Hukum Islam Di Indonesia (Analisis Kontribusi Dan Pembaruan Hukum Islam Pra Dan Pasca Kemerdekaan Republik Indonesia)," *Jurnal Ilmiah Al-Syir'ah* 15, no. 1 (2018): 14–30, <https://doi.org/10.30984/as.v15i1.471>.

<sup>25</sup> Muhalling, "Hak Asasi Manusia (HAM) Perspektif Hukum Islam," 53.

## Method

This research employs a qualitative design that combines textual analysis, *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah* analysis, and comparative human rights analysis to examine the Indonesian Ulema Council's Fatwa on interfaith greetings within contemporary human rights discourse. The study begins with the collection of primary data from the official text of the MUI fatwa, complemented by secondary sources comprising classical and contemporary writings on *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah*, Islamic jurisprudence on interfaith relations, and academic literature on human rights from both Western and Islamic perspectives. Relevant human rights instruments, including the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* and major Islamic human rights charters, are also reviewed to provide a comprehensive context for analysis. Data are gathered through an extensive literature review using reputable academic databases and authoritative Islamic legal sources.

The analysis proceeds with a detailed textual examination of the fatwa, focusing on its key concepts, scriptural references, and legal reasoning. This step includes identifying and categorising the main arguments presented in the fatwa to understand its normative direction and intended objectives. The fatwa is then evaluated through a *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah* framework that considers primary, secondary, and complementary objectives—such as the protection of religion, intellect, social harmony, public welfare, and ethical refinement. This approach allows the study to assess how the fatwa articulates Islamic legal objectives and how these objectives function within Indonesia's religiously diverse society.

Following this, a comparative human rights analysis examines how the reasoning and implications of the fatwa align with or

diverge from contemporary human rights principles, particularly those related to religious freedom, freedom of expression, and interfaith interaction. Human rights norms are compared with the *maqāṣid* findings to highlight points of convergence, potential tensions, and areas of possible reinterpretation. Finally, the results of the textual, *maqāṣid*, and human rights analyses are synthesised descriptively and analytically to provide a holistic understanding of the fatwa's significance. This integrated approach enables the research to evaluate not only the legal and ethical foundations of the fatwa but also its broader implications for interfaith relations and human rights discourse in Indonesia.

## Results and Discussions

### MUI Fatwa on Interfaith Greetings

The *Ijtima' Ulama* of the Indonesian Fatwa Commission VIII, Number 02/Ijtima' Ulama/VIII/2024, concerning *Guidelines for Interfaith Relations*, outlines several foundational principles in Islamic jurisprudence regarding interfaith interactions within social and religious contexts. The document emphasises that combining elements of different religious teachings—such as merging or blending religious greetings in the name of tolerance or moderation—is not permissible. According to this guideline, religious tolerance does not equate to theological compromise.

In Islamic teaching, the greeting "*Assalāmu 'alaikum wa raḥmatullāhi wa barakātuh*" is categorised as an act of worship (*ibādah*). Because of its devotional nature, its use must comply with Islamic legal provisions and cannot be mixed with greetings from other religious traditions. Furthermore, the fatwa declares that Muslims are prohibited from using religious greetings that contain prayer-specific meanings from other religions, as such

practices fall outside the boundaries of legitimate tolerance or religious moderation in Islam.

At the same time, the guideline provides clarity for interfaith social settings. When Muslims participate in gatherings that include followers of other religions, they may use Islamic greetings, national greetings, or neutral greetings that do not contain religious connotations—such as "Good morning." This approach allows Muslims to maintain respect, promote social harmony, and engage constructively in interreligious interactions, without compromising Islamic legal principles.

Overall, this fatwa seeks to provide a clear and authoritative framework for navigating interfaith greetings in Indonesia. It reinforces the importance of upholding Islamic legal norms while simultaneously fostering mutual respect and understanding in a pluralistic society.

### **Analysis of the MUI Fatwa on Interfaith Greetings from a Western Human Rights Perspective**

This article responds to an issue sensitive to the use of the term 'interfaith' in social and religious contexts, with a focus on the Islamic perspective in Indonesia. This fatwa confirms that merger teachings from various religions, including pronouncements on greetings, are not in accordance with draft tolerance or moderation, but rather with the true religion as seen from the Islamic perspective. Concept: This aligns with Western human rights principles that emphasise freedom of expression (Article 19 of the UDHR), subject to

the limitation that expression may violate the rights or fundamental values of individuals or other groups (Article 29 of the UDHR). Regarding human rights, the UDHR generally states that the country has an obligation to exist and to protect and guarantee the rights of individuals.<sup>26</sup> If the International Human Rights (UDHR) is more universal in nature and not limited by religion, Islamic Human Rights, as the name suggests, are defined as Islamic and their contents are adapted to Islamic Law.<sup>27</sup>

Today, human rights and democracy are crucial issues in national and state life, and protecting human rights is now a prerequisite for international cooperation.<sup>28</sup> The Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI) fatwa on greetings clarifies that, in Islam, the greeting "Assalāmu'alaikum warahmatullahi wabarakatuh" is considered a prayer of worship and must be respected within the context of Islamic Law, without being misused by incorporating elements from other religions. Underline the importance of respect for the right to religious freedom (Article 18 UDHR), but also affirm that religious expression must be in accordance with principles of justice and not harm the rights of other individuals (Articles 7 and 10 UDHR).

This fatwa also classifies the pronunciation regarding the dimensions of prayer as special to other religions as prohibited actions for Muslims, and describes a consistent approach with the protection of freedom of religion (Article 18 of the UDHR). However, the fatwa also acknowledged that, in interfaith dialogue, Muslims may use greetings that do not incorporate elements of prayer from other

<sup>26</sup> Suhaili, "Hak Asasi Manusia (HAM) Dalam Penerapan Hukum Islam Di Indonesia."

<sup>27</sup> Muhammad Faisal Hamdani, "Hukum Keluarga Islam Dalam Perspektif HAM Universal (UDHR) Dan HAM Islam (UIDHR)," *Ahkam: Jurnal Ilmu Syariah* 16, no. 1 (2016): 21–30, <https://doi.org/10.15408/ajis.v16i1.2892>.

<sup>28</sup> Sundus Serhan Ahmed, "The Evolving Role of Sustainable Development in Shaping Political Progress: A Contemporary Islamic Perspective on Human Rights and Civil Institution," *MILRev: Metro Islamic Law Review* 4, no. 1 (March 2025): 1–30, <https://doi.org/10.32332/milrev.v4i1.10128>.

religions, in line with the Spirit of cooperation and tolerance in interfaith relations promoted by international human rights. Human rights can be interpreted as rights based on being human.<sup>29</sup> Human rights are required upfront because they are part of life.<sup>30</sup> Human rights are often referred to as rights inherent in human beings from birth.<sup>31</sup> These rights are acquired and brought with them by birth or by their presence in society.<sup>32</sup> Rights are always in sight with the most basic, fundamental, and most important thing.<sup>33</sup> Human rights are natural in the sense that they are built into the body itself and are part of human life.<sup>34</sup> HAM is right: the fundamentals are inherent in humans. Because rights are not granted by a person, organisation, or country, but by Allah SWT.<sup>35</sup> Human rights (fundamental human rights) have an objectively noble purpose. It guarantees the implementation of fundamental human rights without distinction based on origin, race, skin colour, gender, national origin, language, or religion.<sup>36</sup>

There are not many human rights issues; there is a difference in his confession. Because the main thing is that all men need the protection of rights that must be owned.<sup>37</sup> Problems related to the basic man have existed

since the time of the Prophet Muhammad. Where, at that time, there is freedom in religion and politics.<sup>38</sup> Human rights (HAM) issues have been a global concern since the mid-20th century and remain a topical issue across legal, social, political, and economic events at the regional, national, and international levels.<sup>39</sup> Human rights were indeed born in the West, but this cannot be considered modern colonialism.<sup>40</sup> Although the universality of human rights principles is inherent, some Muslims are suspicious of the concept's Western origins, viewing it as an attempt to secularise Islamic Law.<sup>41</sup> Islam is perfectly aligned with the principles of human rights because human rights are the essence of Islamic teachings, linked to Islam's mission as a blessing for all creation and to protect fundamental human rights.<sup>42</sup> While theoretical debates regarding the conceptual foundations of human rights may be difficult to resolve, the undeniable fact is that international human rights are no longer the prerogative of any one nation.<sup>43</sup>

In substance, this fatwa reflects an effort to promote a deep understanding of interfaith practice in the social and religious context, as well as to emphasise the importance of

<sup>29</sup> Triyanto, "Regulasi Perlindungan Hak Asasi Manusia Tingkat Internasional."

<sup>30</sup> Muhammad Iqbal Ilmiawan et al., "Hak Asasi Manusia Dalam Perspektif Islam," *Al-Allam: Jurnal Pendidikan* 3, no. 1 (2022): 16–25.

<sup>31</sup> Eggi Sudjana, *HAM Dalam Perspektif Islam, Mencari Universalitas HAM Bagi Tatanan Modersitas Yang Hakiki* (Jakarta: Nuansa Madani, 2000), 3.

<sup>32</sup> Miriam Budiardjo, *Dasar-Dasar Ilmu Politik* (Jakarta: Gramedia Pustaka Utama, 2000), 120.

<sup>33</sup> Mhd. Abduh Saf, "Persoalan HAM Dan Hukum Islam," *Jurnal Al-Yasini* 3, no. 1 (2018): 34.

<sup>34</sup> Izul Herman Al-Baweany, "Dialektika Hak Asasi Manusia (HAM) Internasional Dengan Hukum Islam," *Legitima: Jurnal Hukum Keluarga Islam* 1, no. 1 (2018): 62–77, <https://doi.org/10.33367/legitima.v1i1.643>.

<sup>35</sup> Audina Putri et al., "Hak Asasi Manusia Dalam Perspektif Islam," *Al-Wasathiyah: Journal of Islamic Studies* 2, no. 2 (2023): 195–208, <https://doi.org/10.56672/alwasathiyah.v2i2.75>.

<sup>36</sup> Tutik Hamidah, "Hak-Hak Asasi Manusia Dalam Hukum Islam,"

*El-Harakah* 2, no. 1 (2000): 3–9, <https://doi.org/10.18860/el.v2i1.4721>.

<sup>37</sup> Reni Dian Anggraini, "Dialektika Islam Dan Hak Asasi Manusia: Antara Teosentrisme Dan Antroposentrisme," *Ijtihad* 36, no. 1 (2020): 65–74.

<sup>38</sup> M. Rezky Alsya Ananta A et al., "Hak Asasi Manusia Dalam Perspektif Hadis Dan Hukum Islam," *Gunung Djati Conference Series* 8 (2022): 129–36.

<sup>39</sup> Muhalling, "Hak Asasi Manusia (HAM) Perspektif Hukum Islam."

<sup>40</sup> Hamdan, "Hak Asasi Manusia Dalam Perspektif Hukum Islam," *Jurnal Tasamuh* 14, no. 1 (2016): 85–98.

<sup>41</sup> Alfaruqi, "Korelasi Hak Asasi Manusia Dan Hukum Islam."

<sup>42</sup> Ahmad Gaus AF et al., *Tanya Jawab Relasi Islam Dan Hak Asasi Manusia*, cet. Ke-1, ed. Irfan Abubakar and Chaider S. Bamualim (Jakarta: Center for the Study of Religion and Culture (CSRC) Universitas Islam Negeri Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta, 2014).

<sup>43</sup> Mashood A. Baderin, *Hukum Internasional Hak Asasi Manusia & Hukum Islam*, cet. Ke-2 (Jakarta: Komisi Nasional Hak Asasi Manusia, 2010), 11.

complying with the principles of Islamic Law in interactions with interfaith communities in Indonesia. Although it confirms freedom of religion (Article 18 of the UDHR), this article also emphasises that expression must be exercised with due regard for the restrictions imposed to protect public rights and interests (Article 29 of the UDHR). With this, this fatwa provides a framework of law and morals for greater understanding. Good about how to manage interfaith religious interactions in a way that is fair and respectful, in line with international human rights values that protect freedom of expression and rights to practice religion without discrimination.

### **Analysis of the MUI Fatwa on Interfaith Greetings from an Islamic Human Rights Perspective**

The MUI serves as a liaison between the ulama and the umara, working together to ensure the success of national development. It issues advice and fatwas on religious and social matters for both the community and the government, fostering Islamic brotherhood and interfaith harmony.<sup>44</sup> In this sub-chapter, an analysis is conducted to describe the official view from the Indonesian Fatwa Commission's Ijtima' Ulama Number VIII regarding the issue of interfaith in the context of social and religious issues in Indonesia. This guide, in a sense, explicitly confirms that merger teachings from various religions, including pronouncements on greetings, cannot be viewed as a form of tolerance or moderation accepted in Islam. This is in line with Western human rights principles that emphasise freedom of expression (Article 19 of the

UDHR), however, with the understanding that expression may violate rights or fundamental individual values, or those of other groups (Article 29 of the UDHR).

In the context of Islam, this fatwa confirms that the pronunciation of the greeting "Assalāmu'alaikum warohmatullohi wabarakatuh" is considered a prayer of a worship nature, which must be respected in accordance with the provisions of Islamic Law without being mixed with elements from other religions. Approach: This emphasises partisanship with the CDHRI principles, which state that all recognised rights and freedoms in Islam must be interpreted in accordance with Islamic Sharia (Article 24 CDHRI) and that Islamic Sharia is the only source for understanding every chapter of the declaration (Article 25 CDHRI).

Furthermore, this fatwa classifies pronunciation regarding dimensions of prayer as special from other religions by Muslims as prohibited acts, emphasising that such actions do not reflect the practice of tolerance or moderation, which is valid in Islam. Thus, this fatwa also provides room for Muslims to use general greetings like peace be upon you, greetings of national, or regard others in a forum involving Muslims and Muslims of other religions, if there is no mixing of elements of prayer from other religions, as a form of respect and dialogue between religions. This fatwa protects the religious identity of Muslims amidst Indonesia's plurality, without diminishing respect for adherents of other faiths.<sup>45</sup> In its fatwa, the Indonesian Ulama Council (MUI) emphasised that Islam teaches tolerance that does not involve compromise in

<sup>44</sup> Muhammad Maulana Hamzah, "Peran Dan Pengaruh Fatwa Mui Dalam Arus Transformasi Sosial Budaya Di Indonesia," *Millah: Journal of Religious Studies* 17, no. 1 (2017): 127–54, <https://doi.org/10.20885/millah.vol17.iss1.art7>.

<sup>45</sup> Michael Febrian Alani et al., "Kajian Fatwa MUI Tentang Pengucapan Salam Dalam Lintas Agama Fatwa Nomor 110/MUI/JTM/2019," *Karimah Tauhid* 4, no. 2 (2025): 1146–50.

matters of belief.<sup>46</sup>

In substance, this writing reflects business practices to promote a clear understanding of interfaith relations in Indonesia's social and religious context, while ensuring compliance with the principles of Islamic Sharia. This aligns with CDHRI values that guarantee the right to freedom of religion (Article 10 CDHRI) and prohibit discrimination based on religion (Article 6 CDHRI), with emphasis on protecting public values and interests (Article 19 UDHR).

Thus, this article not only illustrates the complexity of arranging interfaith religious interactions but also shows a serious effort to maintain a balance between freedom of expression and respect for religious values in a context of increasingly complex social pluralism. Analysis: This highlights the importance of intercultural dialogue and the development of a deep understanding of how religious values can be translated into the context of fundamental universal human rights. However, the results of this study differ from those of studies suggesting that the East Java Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI) holds the view that interfaith greetings are haram. The MUI's basis for forbidding this practice is Surah al-Baqarah, verse 42, and Surah al-Kafirun, verse 6. The MUI reasons that religions cannot be mixed; for you, it is your religion, and for me, it is my religion.<sup>47</sup>

### **Analysis of Maqashid Syariah related to the MUI Fatwa regarding Interfaith Greetings**

MUI Fatwa on saying 'regards' across interfaith contexts is a response to the dynamics of religious diversity in Indonesia.

Human Rights Context: Islamic Law examines Allah's laws governing the actions of legal subjects (*mukallaf*), derived from the Qur'an and hadith, and employs the potential of reason (*ijtihad*) through specific methods.<sup>48</sup> In the study of Islamic Law, maqashid Sharia (the objectives of Sharia) plays a fundamental role in interpreting, understanding, and applying Islamic Law in a way that remains relevant to social reality. Maqashid sharia, as formulated by Al-Ghazali and developed further by Asy-Syatibi and Jasser Auda, is oriented towards protecting the five basic principles (*al-dharuriyyat al-khams*), namely : (1) *Hifz ad-Din* (Protection of religion), (2) *Hifz an-Nafs* (Protection of soul), (3) *Hifz al-'Aql* (Protection of reason), (4) *Hifz an-Nasl* (Protection of descendants), and (5) *Hifz al-Māl* (Protection of property).

Based on an investigation of the Qur'an and the Sunnah, it is concluded that Islamic Law has formulated regulations and protections for human rights. In contrast to anthropocentric Western human rights, human rights in Islamic Law not only recognise the rights of fellow human beings but are also grounded in the fundamental human obligation to serve Allah SWT (*huququallah*). Islamic Law establishes the main principles in the protection of human rights that are significant to its objectives, namely the principles of protection of religion (*hifdz al-din*), soul (*hifdz al-nafs*), reason (*hifdz al-'aql*), descendants (*hifdz al-nasl*),<sup>49</sup> Islamic law (Sharia), and human rights must always be the concern of all groups to open wider opportunities for shared understanding and

<sup>46</sup> Athifatul Wafirah et al., "Pengucapan Salam Lintas Agama Menurut Ulama Jawa Timur," *Al-Qanun: Jurnal Pemikiran Dan Pembaharuan Hukum Islam* 23, no. 2 (2020): 238–72, <https://doi.org/10.15642/alqanun.2020.23.2.238-272>.

<sup>47</sup> Wafirah et al.

<sup>48</sup> A. Malthuf Siroj, *Hukum Islam Progresif: Antara Universalitas Dan Lokalitas*, cet. Ke-1, ed. Ahmad Zayyadi (Yogyakarta: Pustaka Ilmu, 2021), 96.

<sup>49</sup> Asiah, "Hak Asasi Manusia Perspektif Hukum Islam."

achieve progress and the protection of human rights.<sup>50</sup> Human Rights and Islamic Law both want to create justice; the only difference is the source of their decisions. Human Rights is in the name of human justice, while Islamic Law is in the name of God and justice.<sup>51</sup>

A MUI fatwa-related saying on this can be analysed to see how well he represents the principles (*maqashid*) of Sharia. The fatwa of the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI) on the use of 'regards' in interfaith contexts reflects the scholars' commitment to safeguarding the purity of Islamic teachings while also responding to the phenomenon of religious pluralism in Indonesia. From the perspective of *maqashid Sharia*, decisions can be analysed in terms of the protection of religion (*hifz ad-din*), which emphasises that worship practices in Islam are not to be mixed with other religious teachings. Use Islamic greetings, such as "peace be upon you" and "the mercy and blessings of Allah (*wabarakatuh*).". These have theological dimensions, not just greetings but rather prayers of *ubudiyah*. Therefore, this fatwa aims to ensure that Muslims remain guarded in their pure faith and worship without being mixed with elements of other religions that can cause misunderstanding in the understanding of Sharia. However, the approach here is to examine this issue in a broader context: how this fatwa affects social harmony and interfaith interactions in Indonesia.

From the angle of *hifz an-nafs* and social

harmony, this fatwa seeks to establish clear boundaries in religious interaction to avoid polemics in Muslim society. However, it is necessary to examine that, in the context of a pluralistic society, tolerance and social interaction are realities that cannot be avoided. Use of 'regards' in interfaith contexts is often not intended to mix creeds, but rather to foster communication and respect for interfaith religious practices. Thus, it is necessary to adopt a more moderate approach in implementing this fatwa so that it does not hinder efforts to build harmony and cooperation among people of different religions, which is also part of the principle of *maqashid Sharia* in safeguarding order and social welfare. Given that Islam is a moderate religion, there is a concept that defines a way of practising religion that encompasses tolerance, peace, and inclusiveness.<sup>52</sup> Moderate Islam refers to an understanding of Islam that is tolerant, inclusive, and respectful of humanitarian principles.<sup>53</sup> Characteristics of moderate Islam include an emphasis on an inclusive and tolerant understanding of religion, as well as a rejection of violence in any form as a means of achieving religious goals.<sup>54</sup> Moderate Islam mediates between two extreme Islamic tendencies: right-wing Islam and left-wing Islam. It avoids blaming each other, does not claim to be the only right one, and is willing to engage in dialogue, thus reflecting that differences are genuinely a blessing.<sup>55</sup> In other words, moderate Islam is

<sup>50</sup> Reksiana, "Hak Asasi Manusia (HAM) Dalam Islam: Telaah Terhadap Konsep Dan Dinamika HAM Di Indonesia," *Al Amin: Jurnal Kajian Ilmu Dan Budaya Islam* 4, no. 2 (2021): 229–48.

<sup>51</sup> Gasim Yamani, "HAM Dan Hukum Islam (Tinjauan Atas Penerapan Hukum Islam Di Masyarakat)," *Rausyan Fikr* 17, no. 1 (2017): 145–58.

<sup>52</sup> Rofiqi Rofiqi et al., "Moderasi Beragama : Analisis Kebijakan Dan Strategi Penguatan Di Kementerian Agama Republik Indonesia," *Ulumuna: Jurnal Studi Keislaman* 9, no. 1 (2024): 16–36, <https://doi.org/10.36420/ju.v9i1.6544>.

<sup>53</sup> Dani Sartika, "Islam Moderat Antara Konsep Dan Praksis Di

Indonesia," *Tsamratul Fikri | Jurnal Studi Islam* 14, no. 2 (2021): 183, <https://doi.org/10.36667/tf.v14i2.532>.

<sup>54</sup> Fuad Fahmi Latif, "Manajemen Pendidikan Pesantren Sebagai Pola Desiminasi Islam Moderat Di Pondok Pesantren Darul Falah Amsilati Bangsri Jepara Tahun Pelajaran 2020-2021" (Universitas Islam Nahdlatul Ulama (UNISNU) Jepara, 2021), 28–33.

<sup>55</sup> Asep Abdurrohman Abdurrohman, "Eksistensi Islam Moderat Dalam Perspektif Islam," *Rausyan Fikr: Jurnal Pemikiran Dan Pencerahan* 14, no. 1 (2018): 29–41, <https://doi.org/10.31000/rf.v14i1.671>.

characterised by balance, justice, virtue, tolerance, compassion, respect, inclusiveness, and anti-violent extremism, radicalism, and terrorism.<sup>56</sup> Moderate Islam is crucial for fostering interfaith harmony in Indonesia.<sup>57</sup> Furthermore, in efforts to foster interfaith tolerance, the government plays a crucial role in maintaining interfaith harmony.<sup>58</sup> Islamic moderation can serve as a unifying bridge for Indonesia's religious pluralism.<sup>59</sup>

From the aspect of *hifz al-'aql*, this fatwa confirms the importance of rationality in understanding the limitation between worship practices and social interactions. Islam provides its people with the freedom to interact with non-Muslims in various aspects of life, as exemplified in the Sirah of Rasulullah SAW. Rasulullah SAW himself communicated with various religious groups without losing his Islamic identity. In this case, the MUI fatwa provides clear boundaries: Islamic greetings are to be used in formal Islamic contexts, while in interfaith forums, they can be used for national or general greetings. However, the rationality of this fatwa warrants further review, given contemporary social conditions and its potential to be implemented without fostering exclusivity or excesses that hinder interfaith dialogue.

From the side of *hifz al-māl* (protection) to wealth and sustainability, this fatwa has implications for various sectors involving interaction with interfaith groups, such as

business, politics, and social. In the world of work and the global economy, interactions across interfaith religious lines are avoided, including in official meetings involving parties with different religious backgrounds. If this fatwa is implemented strictly without flexibility in the context of society, it can just create the impression that Muslims find it difficult to adapt in a pluralistic environment.<sup>60</sup> Therefore, it is necessary to have a more effective da'wah strategy contextual in educating Muslims to understand the limitations of Sharia in social interactions without sacrificing the basis of Islam.<sup>61</sup>

From the perspective of *hifz an-nasl* to future Muslim ancestry and identity, this fatwa is relevant for safeguarding Islamic identity amid global cultural influence. In the modern world, religious syncretism has become a challenge alone for Muslims, especially in maintaining original Islamic teachings for the upcoming generation. This fatwa can function as a fortress so that Muslims do not lose their identity in the current increasing pluralism. However, it is also important to ensure that young Muslims understand this fatwa in a way that is not stiff, but rather with an inclusive approach, so that they can still interact with other communities without feeling isolated in a diverse society.

Notes important things to do noticed in the realm implementation, that this fatwa's own impact on social and political needs has

<sup>56</sup> Ainusyamsi Faruq Alif, *Islam Moderat* (Bandung: Madani Institute, 2020), 20.

<sup>57</sup> Akhsin Ridho, *Handling Religious and Community Diversity to Prevent Exclusive Religious Expression in the Multireligious Community of Mojokerto, East Java, Indonesia*, 18, no. 2 (2024): 265–94, <https://doi.org/10.57060/jers.v2i01.36.2>.

<sup>58</sup> Hayu Lusianawati et al., "Tracking the Impact of Local Wisdom in Sustainable Cultural Heritage Conservation: A Bibliometric Approach," *West Science Social and Humanities Studies* 1, no. 03 (2023): 115–26, <https://doi.org/10.58812/wsshs.v1i03.251>.

<sup>59</sup> Muchammad Toha and Faizul Muna, "Moderasi Islam Dan Aliran Pemikiran Pluralisme Agama," *Journal of Education and*

*Religious Studies* 2, no. 01 (2022): 22–28, <https://doi.org/10.57060/jers.v2i01.36>.

<sup>60</sup> Muannif Ridwan et al., "Reconciliation of Human Rights, Positive Law, and Siyash Syar'iyah: An Innovative Approach to Addressing Human Rights Issues in the Contemporary Era," *MILRev: Metro Islamic Law Review* 4, no. 1 (June 2025): 463–87, <https://doi.org/10.32332/milrev.v4i1.10433>.

<sup>61</sup> Hayatuddin et al., "Moderation-Fiqh Tanzil, Fiqh Waqi', Dan Fiqh Ma'aalat: Kajian Fiqh Pada Strategi Dakwah Dalam Ayat-Ayat Jihad," *Moderation: Journal of Islamic Studies Review* 5, no. 1 (2025): 121–40.

been considered. In a pluralistic society like Indonesia, the relationship between interfaith religious groups is not only regulated by religious norms but also by state policies that guarantee freedom of religion and freedom of opinion. If this fatwa is implemented in a way that is too strict without a good understanding, then it can give the perception that Islam is a religion that is intolerant of diversity. Therefore, it is necessary to adopt a more dialogic approach to socialise this fatwa, so that Muslims understand the context more comprehensively and do not use it only as justification for rejecting interaction with followers of other religions.

### **Comparative Analysis of the MUI Fatwa with Western and Islamic Human Rights Theories**

A comparative analysis between the Fatwa of the VIII Ijtima' Ulama of the Indonesian Fatwa Commission on the use of interfaith greetings and the perspectives of Western human rights theory and Islamic human rights highlights several key dimensions.

From a Western human rights perspective, as articulated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), the main emphasis is on freedom of expression (Article 19), which guarantees every individual the right to express religious beliefs without fear of repression or discrimination. The UDHR also reinforces the right to freedom of religion (Article 18), including the right to practice one's faith without unlawful interference from the state or other actors.

Within this framework, the fatwa's rejection of interfaith greetings that mix religious elements reflects a position that, although protective of

Islamic doctrinal boundaries, still aligns with Western human rights principles—particularly the notion that freedom of expression may be limited when it potentially harms the rights, identity, or fundamental values of other individuals or groups (Article 29 UDHR).

From an Islamic human rights perspective, as outlined in the Cairo Declaration on Human Rights in Islam (CDHRI), fundamental human rights must be contextualised within the principles of Islamic Sharia (Article 24 of the CDHRI). The CDHRI affirms essential rights, including freedom of religion (Article 10), the prohibition of coercion in religious matters, and the right to seek justice (Article 19).

The fatwa issued by the VIII Ijtima' Ulama emphasises that Islamic greetings such as "*Assalāmu'alaikum wa rahmatullāhi wa barakātuh*" constitute a form of worship (*'ibādah*) and must therefore be practised in accordance with Islamic legal provisions, without being mixed with elements of other religions. This position reflects the CDHRI's principle that all rights and freedoms must conform to Sharia (Article 24). In this regard, the Islamic human rights framework prioritises safeguarding the authenticity of religion and doctrinal integrity in interfaith interactions.<sup>62</sup>

In terms of practical implementation in forums involving Muslims and followers of other religions, the fatwa permits the use of Islamic greetings, national greetings, or other neutral forms of greeting—if they do not blend elements of prayer from different religions. This approach reflects a spirit of interreligious cooperation and mutual respect, resonating with the UDHR's promotion of interfaith tolerance (Article 18) and the CDHRI's emphasis on protecting moral values and

<sup>62</sup> Fauzan Fauzan, "The Death Penalty in Legal Literature: A Study of Indonesian Law and International Human Rights," *Jurnal*

*Ilmiah Mizani: Wacana Hukum, Ekonomi Dan Keagamaan* 8, no. 1 (March 2024): 144–53, <https://doi.org/10.29300/mzn.v8i1.2758>.

public interest (Article 17).

Overall, this analysis demonstrates the complexity of interpreting and implementing human rights in the context of interfaith greetings. The Western perspective emphasises individual freedom of expression, while the Islamic human rights perspective underscores the centrality of Sharia in regulating social and religious interactions. Despite differing emphases, both frameworks share a commitment to upholding universal principles of human dignity across diverse cultural and religious contexts.

Table 1. The Comparative Analysis: MUI Fatwa – UDHR – CDHRI

Aspect	MUI Fatwa (Ijtima' Ulama VIII)	UDHR (Western Human Rights)	CDHRI (Islamic Human Rights)
Foundational Basis	Grounded in Sharia, Islamic greetings are acts of worship ( <i>'ibāda</i> )	Grounded in individual freedoms and universal human rights.	Grounded in Sharia as the primary framework.
Religious Expression	Restricted to preserve doctrinal purity; interfaith blended greetings are not allowed.	Freedom of expression (Art. 19), with permissible limitations (Art. 29).	Expression is permitted within the limits of Sharia (Art. 24).
Freedom of Religion	Islamic greetings must follow Islamic law; Muslims may not use religious greetings of other faiths.	Individuals may freely practice religion without interference (Art. 18).	Freedom of religion is recognised, but must conform to Sharia (Art. 10 & 24).
Interfaith Greetings	Mixed religious greetings are	Generally permitted if they do not violate others'	Mixing devotional elements from different

	prohibiting; only Islamic or neutral greetings are allowed.	rights.	religions is not permitted under Sharia.
Greetings in Mixed Forums	Islamic, national, or neutral greetings are allowed; blending religious elements is forbidden.	Encourages tolerance and inclusive communication.	Neutral greetings are allowed to maintain social harmony.
Ethical Orientation	Aims to protect Islamic identity while fostering respectful interfaith relations.	Prioritises individual rights and pluralism.	Emphasises religious integrity and protection of moral values.

Source: Author's Interpretation

The comparative summary illustrates that the MUI Fatwa, the UDHR, and the CDHRI approach interfaith greetings from distinct normative foundations while sharing a common concern for maintaining social harmony. The MUI Fatwa emphasises the preservation of Islamic doctrinal integrity by treating Islamic greetings as acts of worship that cannot be mixed with elements of other religions, while still permitting neutral or national greetings in pluralistic settings. In contrast, the UDHR places individual freedom at the centre, particularly through the rights to freedom of expression and religion, although such freedoms may be limited to protect the rights and identities of others. Meanwhile, the CDHRI aligns more closely with the MUI Fatwa by grounding all rights within the framework of Sharia, allowing religious expression and interfaith interaction only insofar as they do not contradict Islamic legal principles.

Together, these perspectives highlight the complex interplay between religious norms, individual liberties, and the demands of social coexistence in diverse societies.

## Conclusion

This study shows that the Indonesian Ulema Council's (MUI) fatwa on interfaith greetings can be better understood when examined through the lens of *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah* and contemporary human rights discourse. From a *maqāṣid* perspective, the fatwa primarily seeks to uphold *ḥifẓ al-dīn* (protection of religion) by ensuring that religious expressions—especially those considered part of worship—remain distinct and do not blend with rituals from other faiths. This intention reflects the normative goal of preserving Islamic identity in a religiously diverse environment. However, the analysis also highlights the importance of balancing this objective with *ḥifẓ al-nafs* and broader societal harmony. In Indonesia's pluralistic context, a rigid interpretation may create unnecessary social distance, making dialogical and educational approaches essential to ensure the fatwa is understood without generating interreligious tension.

When compared with contemporary human rights perspectives, the fatwa illustrates the differing foundations of Western and Islamic approaches to religious freedom. Western human rights frameworks, as represented in the UDHR, emphasise unrestricted individual expression, whereas Islamic human rights instruments such as the CDHRI place this freedom within the boundaries of *sharī'ah*. Despite this distinction, the fatwa does not negate interfaith respect. Instead, it permits neutral or cultural greetings in multireligious settings, showing that Islamic legal reasoning can coexist with social

pluralism while maintaining doctrinal boundaries. This study underscores the need for a contextual and adaptive understanding of fatwas so that they remain relevant in modern society. Applying *maqāṣid* principles such as *ḥifẓ al-'aql* (legal rationality) and *ḥifẓ al-māl* (social-economic stability) can help ensure that Muslims engage confidently in social and professional spaces without compromising their faith commitments. Further studies could examine how the fatwa is interpreted at the community level, including its social impact across different regions and age groups. Comparative research across Muslim-majority countries could also provide a broader picture of how interfaith greetings are regulated and practised within varied cultural, political, and legal contexts.

## CRediT authorship contribution statement

Ahmad Musadad: Conceptualization, Methodology, Writing – original draft, Supervision. Achmad Badarus Syamsi: Theoretical framework, Formal analysis, Writing – review & editing. Sibawaihi Sibawaihi: Doctrinal analysis, Legal interpretation, Writing – review & editing. Holis Holis: Data analysis, Case examination, Validation. Tri Pujiati: Investigation, Data curation, Discussion refinement. Anis Wahdati: Literature review, Methodological consistency, Editing. Afaful Ummah: Resources, Proofreading, Final revision. All authors have read and approved the final manuscript.

## Declaration of competing interest

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial, institutional, or personal interests that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

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