

Wudu in the Anthropocene: Reclaiming Ṭahārah–Najāṣah as an Islamic Epistemology of Pollution in Indonesia's Environmental Fatwas, 2011–2023

Supriyanto^{1*}, Kholid Mawardi², Zein Muchamad Masykur³
Universitas Islam Negeri (UIN) Prof. K.H. Saifuddin Zuhri Purwokerto,
Indonesia

Corresponding Author: Supriyanto supriyanto@uinsaizu.ac.id

ARTICLE INFO

Keywords: Sustainable Development Goals, Islamic Philosophy, Environment, Ṭahārah–Najāṣah Epistemology, Indonesian Fatwa Discourse

Received : 13, July

Revised : 19, August

Accepted: 30, September

©2026 Supriyanto, Mawardi, Masykur : This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the [Creative Commons Atribusi 4.0 Internasional](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/).



ABSTRACT

This study asks whether an older, more granular epistemic resource within classical fiqh – the doctrine of ṭahārah–najāṣah (ritual purity and impurity), with its finely graded taxonomy of contamination (najis mukhaffafah, mutawassīṭah, and mughallaḏah) – has likewise been mobilised. Using directed qualitative content analysis of the complete corpus of MUI's five national environmental fatwas issued between 2011 and 2023 (on environmentally sound mining, endangered-species conservation, waste management, forest and land fires, and general environmental protection), this study finds that all five rely exclusively on maqāṣid-based reasoning (khalīfah, amānah, maṣlaḥah, dar' al-mafāsid) and that none invokes technical ṭahārah–najāṣah vocabulary, despite its structural affinity with the graded, threshold-based logic of contemporary pollution governance. Building on this empirical finding, the study proposes fiqh al-ṭahārah al-bī'iyah (environmental purity jurisprudence) as a complementary, embodied register that could translate abstract maqāṣid principles into graded, everyday ritual practice aligned with SDG 6, 12, 13, 14, and 15.

INTRODUCTION

In July 2024, Indonesia's Minister of Environment and Forestry announced that the country generated 69.9 million tonnes of household and municipal solid waste in 2023, and that little more than two-thirds of it — 66.28 percent — had been captured by any formal management system (Rahmawati, 2024). A decade earlier, a widely cited quantitative model of land-based marine debris had already placed Indonesia second only to China among the countries contributing plastic waste to the world's oceans (Jambeck et al., 2015). These figures describe more than a logistical failure; they describe a slow-moving ecological and moral crisis in the world's largest Muslim-majority nation — one that intersects daily, and literally, with the ritual life of a population for whom cleanliness before prayer (*ṭahārah*) is a devotional obligation performed several times a day.

It is this intersection — between a national pollution crisis and a devotional tradition organised, in extraordinary technical detail, around the classification and removal of impurity — that motivates the present study. Since 2011, Majelis Ulama Indonesia (MUI), the country's semi-official council of religious scholars, has issued a series of national fatwas addressing environmentally sound mining (Fatwa No. 22/2011), the conservation of endangered species (Fatwa No. 4/2014), waste management (Fatwa No. 41/2014), the criminal prohibition of forest and land burning (Fatwa No. 30/2016), and, most recently, general environmental protection and climate change (Fatwa No. 86/2023). Together these five documents constitute Indonesia's most authoritative corpus of formal Islamic environmental law, cited by government agencies, environmental non-governmental organisations, and religious educators alike as evidence that Islamic teaching underwrites, rather than competes with, the state's environmental and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) agenda (Mangunjaya & McKay, 2012; UN General Assembly, 2015).

A growing body of scholarship has examined how these and comparable fatwas construct their religious-legal authority. Almost without exception, that scholarship reaches for a single conceptual key: *maqāṣid al-sharīʿah*, the higher objectives of Islamic law, and in particular the argument — developed by contemporary theorists such as Auda (2008) and traceable to classical discussions of *maṣlaḥa* (Opwis, 2010) — that environmental preservation (*ḥifẓ al-bīʿah*) should be recognised as an extended objective alongside the five classical necessities of religion, life, intellect, lineage, and property (Kamali, 2003). Indonesian applications of this move are numerous and increasingly sophisticated: Ramsah et al. (2026) read the forest-fire fatwa through a reconceptualised *ḥifẓ al-bīʿah*; Khuluq and Asmuni (2024) argue for its elevation to a free-standing objective in light of climate change; Al Asy'ari et al. (2025) and Rojihisawal et al. (2025) integrate Fatwa No. 86/2023 with Auda's systems approach; and Halilah et al. (2026) build an entire “*Maqāṣid Ecological Justice Framework*” from the same conceptual family. Beyond formal fatwas, Muizudin (2025) shows grassroots Muslim environmentalists in Banten invoking *khalifah* and *amānah* to resist a geothermal project, while Hidayat (2023) traces the

diffusion – and limits – of Islamic eco-theological narratives in Indonesian climate discourse.

This maqāṣid consensus is intellectually productive, but it is also, this article argues, incomplete – and incomplete in a specific, previously undocumented way. Classical fiqh contains a second, much older body of doctrine that is, on its face, even more obviously about pollution than maqāṣid theory: the law of ṭahārah (ritual purity) and najāsah (ritual impurity). Centuries of juristic elaboration produced an intricate taxonomy that grades impurity by severity and prescribes proportionate remedies – najis mukhaffafah (minor impurity, remedied by sprinkling), najis mutawassīṭah (moderate impurity, remedied by washing until three sensory properties disappear), and najis mughallazah (severe impurity, remedied by a prescribed seven-fold washing sequence) – alongside an entire jurisprudence of water quality, sufficiency, and reuse built around wuḍū' (ablution), ghusl (ritual bathing), and istinjā' (post-elimination cleansing) (Katz, 2002; Reinhart, 1990). Structurally, this is a graded classification-and-remediation system strikingly analogous to the threshold-and-treatment logic of modern environmental science, and it is rehearsed by practising Muslims not occasionally, in a courtroom or a legislature, but bodily, several times each day. Yet, so far as this study's cross-fatwa search can determine, no MUI environmental fatwa mobilises this vocabulary at all.

This article therefore poses three linked questions. First, which uṣūl al-fiqh (legal-theoretical) concepts actually underwrite the dalīl (evidentiary) sections of Indonesia's five national environmental fatwas issued between 2011 and 2023, and how do their substantive rulings map onto specific SDG targets? Second, to what extent, if any, do these fatwas draw on the classical ṭahārah-najāsah vocabulary as a parallel or supplementary epistemic resource? Third, granting a confirmed absence, what would be gained – and what risks would be incurred – by deliberately theorising a complementary register, here termed fiqh al-ṭahārah al-bī'iyah (environmental purity jurisprudence), that translates macro-legal maqāṣid principles into the graded, embodied idiom of everyday ritual practice?

Answering these questions matters for three reasons. Empirically, no published study has yet analysed MUI's environmental fatwas as a single, cumulative corpus using one consistent coding frame; existing work examines one or two fatwas at a time (e.g., Ramsah et al., 2026, on two fire-related fatwas). Theoretically, identifying a specific, nameable absence in a well-studied textual tradition is a modest but genuine contribution to the epistemology of Islamic environmental law, one that complicates the assumption that maqāṣid theory is the only, or the most pedagogically effective, Islamic vocabulary available for environmental ethics. Practically, if the everyday ritual register is indeed under-mobilised, then fatwa-drafting bodies and religious educators may be missing a resource arguably better suited than maqāṣid abstraction to translating SDG targets – on water (SDG 6), consumption (SDG 12), climate (SDG 13), marine life (SDG 14), and terrestrial ecosystems (SDG 15) – into the granular, repeated, bodily practice through which most believers actually encounter their religion.

The remainder of the article proceeds as follows. Section 2 situates the study within the literature on Islamic environmental ethics, the maqāṣid turn, and theories of ritual purity, and develops the study's dual-register conceptual framework. Section 3 details the directed qualitative content-analysis design and the five-fatwa corpus. Section 4 reports the coding results. Section 5 discusses the theoretical and practical implications of these findings and proposes the fiqh al-ṭahārah al-bī'iyah framework, while acknowledging its limits. Section 6 concludes.

THEORETICAL REVIEW

Islamic Environmental Ethics and the Maqāṣid Turn

Contemporary Islamic environmental ethics emerged as a recognisable field of scholarship in the final decades of the twentieth century, propelled by the conviction – most influentially articulated by Nasr (1996) – that the ecological crisis is at root a crisis of the modern desacralised worldview, and that recovering a theocentric cosmology in which nature is a locus of divine signs is a precondition for genuine environmental reform. Izzi Dien (2000) and the contributors to Foltz et al.'s (2003) landmark edited volume *Islam and Ecology: A Bestowed Trust* extended this metaphysical argument into more applied legal and ethical registers, cataloguing Qur'anic and hadith material on stewardship (khilāfah), trusteeship (amānah), balance (mīzān), and the prohibition of excess (isrāf) and waste (tabdhīr). Gade's (2019) more recent synthesis, *Muslim Environmentalisms*, documents how these classical themes have been institutionalised – unevenly, and often in tension with state and market actors – across the contemporary Muslim world, including Indonesia.

Read together, this literature converges on a single register: environmental protection is warranted because it serves maṣlaḥa, avoids mafsada (harm), and fulfils the trust (amānah) of khilāfah. It is a register of the general and the discursive – of principles invoked in fatwa preambles, academic papers, and policy advocacy. What has not been asked, in this otherwise rapidly maturing literature, is whether Islamic law's other great classificatory system for contamination – one concerned not with general principles but with the minutely graded, sensorially verifiable, and ritually repeated management of impurity – has been drawn upon at all.

The Forgotten Register: Ṭahārah-Najāsah as an Embodied Pollution Epistemology

Long before maqāṣid theory reached its contemporary systematised form, classical Sunni jurisprudence had already produced one of the most granular legal taxonomies of contamination in any pre-modern textual tradition: the law of ṭahārah (purity) and najāsah (impurity). Katz's (2002) intellectual history of this body of law, *Body of Text*, traces how, over the first four centuries of Islam, jurists progressively systematised an enormous range of scriptural and practical material into a coherent doctrinal architecture in which every substance, and every degree of contact with it, receives a specific classification and a specific, proportionate remedy. The resulting three-tier taxonomy remains standard in fiqh manuals used throughout Indonesia's pesantren system: najis mukhaffafah

(minor impurity – for example, the urine of a male infant who has not yet been weaned – requiring only that water be sprinkled over the affected area); najis mutawassīṭah (moderate impurity, the largest category, requiring washing until the substance's colour, odour, and taste have all disappeared); and najis mughallazāh (severe impurity – for example, contact with a dog – requiring seven washings, one of which must use earth or its equivalent). Around this taxonomy of contamination sits an equally elaborate jurisprudence of purification and water: the conditions under which water itself remains fit for purification (mā' ṭahūr) or becomes disqualified (musta'mal or mutanajjis), and the ritual sequences of wuḍū' (ablution before prayer), ghusl (full ritual bathing), and istinjā' (cleansing after elimination) that structure a practising Muslim's day.

The anthropologist Mary Douglas (1966) offered, in *Purity and Danger*, an influential comparative account of what such systems accomplish: pollution beliefs, she argued, are not primitive misunderstandings of hygiene but symbolic technologies for imposing order on an otherwise ambiguous world, defining dirt as “matter out of place” within a total cosmological classification. Read alongside Douglas's general theory – used here purely as a heuristic, comparative lens rather than as a claim about Islamic law specifically – the najāsah taxonomy appears not as a ritual curiosity but as a culturally specific instance of exactly the kind of graded threshold-and-remediation reasoning that modern environmental regulation also depends upon: maximum contaminant levels, remediation protocols scaled to contamination severity, disposal-versus-treatment decisions. The structural resemblance is, of course, not identity: najāsah classifications track ritual validity for worship, not toxicological risk, and collapsing the two without qualification would commit a category error this article addresses directly in Section 5. But the resemblance is close enough, and the tradition rich enough, that its complete absence from Indonesia's formal environmental fatwas – if confirmed – would constitute a genuine and previously undocumented epistemic gap.

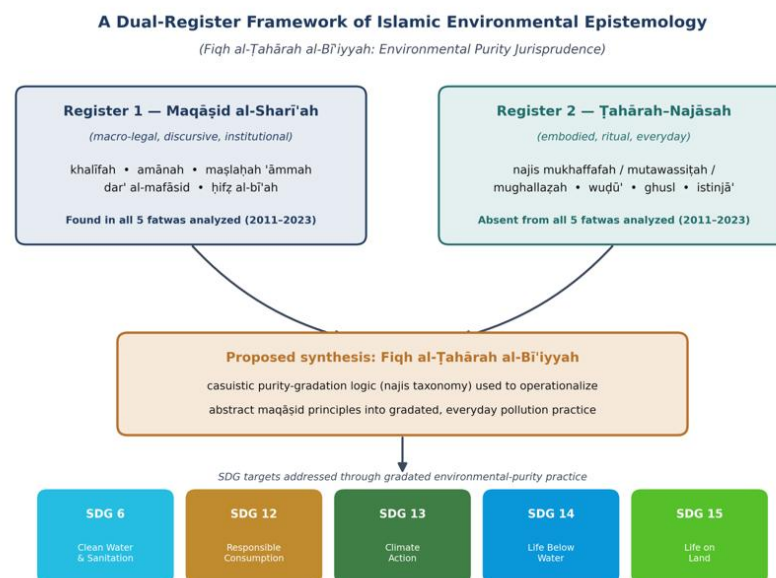
Sustainable Development Goals and Islamic Legal-Ethical Discourse

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (UN General Assembly, 2015) frames the environmental crisis through seventeen interlocking goals, five of which bear directly on the substantive content of the fatwas examined here: SDG 6 (clean water and sanitation), SDG 12 (responsible consumption and production), SDG 13 (climate action), SDG 14 (life below water), and SDG 15 (life on land). Because the SDGs are a globally negotiated, secular policy framework, an important strand of Islamic scholarship has sought to demonstrate their compatibility with, or even anticipation by, Islamic ethical-legal principles – both to legitimate the SDGs for religious publics and to assert Islamic epistemology's continuing relevance to global policy discourse. Al-Jayyousi (2012) makes this case most systematically, arguing that concepts such as mīzān (balance), khilāfah (stewardship), and waqf (endowment) constitute an indigenous sustainability paradigm that long precedes, and need not be derived from, its Western policy articulation.

Fatwas occupy a distinctive institutional position within this project: unlike academic argument, a fatwa is meant to be directly action-guiding for millions of lay Muslims, mediated through mosques, religious schools, and, increasingly, social media. This gives fatwas a peculiar dual character relevant to the present study — they are simultaneously elite legal-theoretical documents, drawing on *uṣūl al-fiqh* reasoning intelligible mainly to trained jurists, and mass communicative instruments intended to alter the behaviour of ordinary believers. This duality is precisely where the *maqāṣid/ṭahārah* distinction developed in this article becomes consequential: a fatwa can be doctrinally impeccable in its *maqāṣid* reasoning while remaining pedagogically inert if it fails to connect that reasoning to registers of practice, such as ritual purity, that lay Muslims already inhabit bodily and repeatedly.

A Dual-Register Conceptual Framework

Synthesising Sections 2.1-2.3, this study proposes a dual-register conceptual framework, summarised in Figure 1. Register 1, the *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* register, is macro-legal, discursive, and institutional: it operates through fatwa preambles, academic commentary, and policy advocacy, and is organised around *khalīfah*, *amānah*, *maṣlaḥa 'āmmah*, *dar' al-mafāsid*, and *ḥifẓ al-bī'ah*. Register 2, the *ṭahārah-najāsah* register, is embodied, ritual, and everyday: it operates through the graded *najis* taxonomy and the practices of *wuḍū'*, *ghusl*, and *istinjā'*, and is enacted bodily multiple times each day by practising Muslims rather than invoked occasionally in legal argument.



Source: Developed by the authors (2026) from the qualitative content analysis reported in Section 4, synthesising Nasr (1996), Izzi Dien (2000), Foltz et al. (2003), Auda (2008), Katz (2002), Reinhart (1990), and UN General Assembly (2015).

Figure 1. A proposed dual-register conceptual framework of Islamic environmental epistemology.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study employs directed qualitative content analysis (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005) of primary legal-religious texts, a design suited to research questions that ask not what people believe or do, but what a defined body of authoritative text says, and does not say. Directed content analysis begins with existing theory and prior research — here, the *maqāṣid* literature reviewed in Section 2.1 — to generate initial deductive coding categories, while remaining open to unanticipated, inductive codes emerging from the material itself, in this case the *ṭahārah-najāsah* search reported in Section 2.2 (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005; Elo & Kyngäs, 2008). This design is consistent with, and extends, the qualitative library and document-research approach already used to analyse individual MUI fatwas (Khuluq & Asmuni, 2024; Ramsah et al., 2026), but departs from prior studies by analysing the complete corpus of national environmental fatwas as a single dataset coded with one consistent scheme, rather than treating one or two fatwas as an illustrative case.

No interviews, surveys, or other human-subject data collection were undertaken. This choice follows directly from the object of inquiry: the research questions concern the epistemic content of a bounded, publicly available corpus of authoritative texts, not the beliefs or behaviour of a sample of individuals, and the texts themselves therefore constitute the appropriate primary data — a textual and legal-hermeneutic analogue to the document-analysis and netnographic strategies increasingly used in Islamic studies where structured interviewing is either infeasible or not the most valid way of answering the research question.

Data Corpus

The corpus comprises the complete population, not a sample, of national-level environmental fatwas issued by MUI's *Komisi Fatwa* (Fatwa Commission) between 2011, when the first dedicated environmental fatwa was issued, and September 2026, when data collection for this study was completed. Five fatwas met this criterion, summarised in Table 1: Fatwa No. 22/2011 on environmentally sound mining; Fatwa No. 4/2014 on the conservation of endangered species; Fatwa No. 41/2014 on waste management; Fatwa No. 30/2016 on the prohibition and control of forest and land burning; and Fatwa No. 86/2023 on environmental protection and management. No eligible national environmental fatwa was excluded; provincial and international (non-Indonesian) fatwas were excluded by design, since the study's scope is Indonesia's national religious authority.

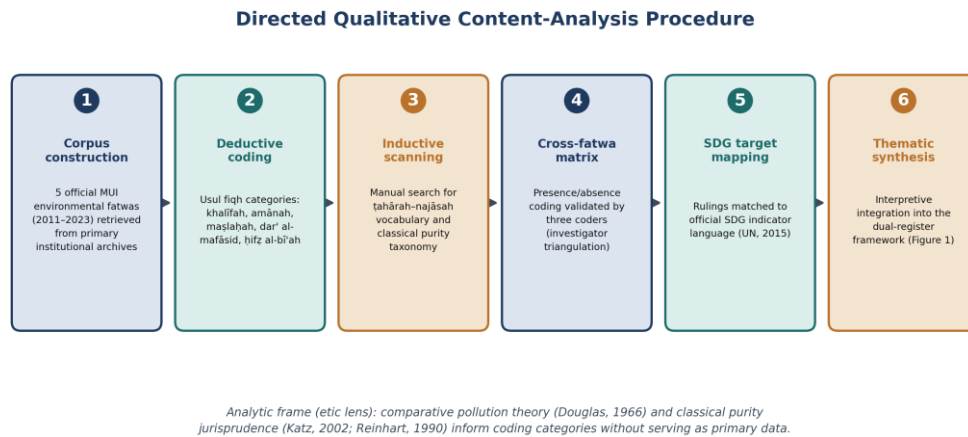
Table 1. Profile of the Five MUI Environmental Fatwas Analyzed (2011–2023)

No.	Fatwa Number	Title (English Translation)	Date Issued	Primary Environmental Issue	Primary SDG(s)
1	No. 22/2011	Environmentally Sound Mining	26 May 2011	Extractive industry; land and water contamination	SDG 15; SDG 6
2	No. 4/2014	Conservation of Endangered Species for Ecosystem Balance	22 January 2014	Biodiversity loss; wildlife trafficking	SDG 15; SDG 14
3	No. 41/2014	Waste Management to Prevent Environmental Damage	7 November 2014	Municipal and household solid waste	SDG 12
4	No. 30/2016	The Law on Forest and Land Burning and Its Control	27 July 2016	Forest and land fires; transboundary haze	SDG 15; SDG 13
5	No. 86/2023	Protection and Management of Environmental Life	2023	General environmental protection; climate change	SDG 13 (cross-cutting)

Note. Titles are the authors' English translation of the official Indonesian titles. Source: Compiled by the authors (2026) from official fatwa documents (Majelis Ulama Indonesia, 2011, 2014a, 2014b, 2016, 2023) archived at fatwamui.com, cross-validated against the secondary academic sources cited in Section 3.3.

Coding Scheme and Analytical Procedure

Each fatwa's substantive rulings were then separately mapped onto the SDG targets they most directly address, using the official target language published in the 2030 Agenda (UN General Assembly, 2015) as the deductive frame for this second coding pass. Coding results were compiled into a cross-fatwa matrix (Table 2) and an SDG-mapping table (Table 3), which were then interpreted thematically to develop the comparative synthesis presented in Table 4 and Figure 1.



Source: Developed by the authors (2026), adapting the directed content-analysis procedure of Hsieh and Shannon (2005) and Elo and Kyngäs (2008) to the fatwa corpus described in Section 3.2.

Figure 2. Directed qualitative content-analysis procedure applied to the five-fatwa corpus.

RESULTS

Profile of the Fatwa Corpus

Table 1 (Section 3.2) summarises the five fatwas constituting the study corpus. The corpus spans twelve years (2011–2023) and addresses five distinct environmental domains: extractive industry, biodiversity, solid waste, fire and land-use, and, in the most recent fatwa, environmental protection and climate change in general terms. All five fatwas were issued by the same institutional body (MUI's *Komisi Fatwa*) using the same generic doctrinal apparatus — a preamble citing Qur'anic verses, hadith, and *qawā'id fiqhiyya* (legal maxims), followed by numbered *ketentuan hukum* — which supports treating them as a coherent, internally comparable corpus rather than five unrelated documents.

The Dominance of the Maqāṣid Register

Table 2 reports the cross-fatwa coding matrix. Four of the five fatwas explicitly invoke *khalīfah*, most commonly through Q.S. al-Baqarah [2]: 30 (“Indeed, I will make upon the earth a *khalīfah*”) or its cognate in Q.S. Hūd [11]: 61, and all five invoke at least one variant of the harm-prevention maxim *al-ḍarar yuzāl* or *dar'u al-mafāsīd muqaddam 'alā jalb al-maṣāliḥ* (“preventing harm takes precedence over securing benefit”), typically paired with the hadith formula *lā ḍarara wa-lā ḍirār* (“there shall be no harm nor reciprocation of harm”). *Maṣlahah 'āmmah* (public welfare) appears, explicitly or embedded within a legal maxim, in four of the five fatwas as the condition under which an otherwise permissible activity — mining, land-clearing — remains lawful. The prohibition of *isrāf/tabdhīr* (waste and excess) appears explicitly only in the waste-management fatwa (No. 41/2014), where it grounds the classification of littering and discarding reusable goods as *ḥarām* (forbidden), citing Q.S. al-Isrā' [17]: 27 (“Indeed, the wasteful are brothers of the devils”).

The term *ḥifẓ al-bī'ah* itself, as a named technical *maqāṣid* category, is confirmed verbatim only in secondary academic commentary on Fatwa No. 86/2023 (Al Asy'ari et al., 2025; Rojihisawal et al., 2025); the four earlier fatwas instead operationalise the underlying concept through the more scripturally proximate vocabulary of *khalifah*, *amānah*, and the corruption (*fasād*) verses (Q.S. al-A'rāf [7]: 56; al-Rūm [30]: 41; al-Qaṣaṣ [28]: 77) rather than naming it as a technical term of art — an observation consistent with Khuluq and Asmuni's (2024) argument that *ḥifẓ al-bī'ah* remains, formally, an extension still undergoing doctrinal consolidation rather than a long-settled objective.

The endangered-species fatwa (No. 4/2014) additionally draws on a distinct sub-literature concerning animal welfare and rights, citing Q.S. al-An'ām [6]: 38 ("There is no creature on earth... except that they are communities like you") and the hadith of the woman condemned for confining a cat without feeding it (*Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*), alongside named classical authorities — Ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī, al-Shirbīnī, Ibn Qudāma, and al-'Izz ibn 'Abd al-Salām — invoked to establish that animals possess enforceable legal rights. This is the corpus's clearest instance of drawing on a specialised classical sub-tradition beyond generic *maqāṣid* maxims — yet even here, the sub-tradition invoked is animal-rights fiqh, not *ṭahārah-najāsah*.

Table 2. Presence of Uṣūl al-Fiqh / Maqāṣid Concepts and Ṭahārah-Najāsah Vocabulary Across the Five Fatwas

Concept	22/2011	4/2014	41/2014	30/2016	86/2023	Total (of 5)
Khalifah (stewardship)	✓	✓	✓	—	✓ ^s	4
Amānah (trust)	—	✓	—	—	✓ ^s	2
Maṣlaḥa 'āmmah (public welfare)	✓	✓	✓	✓	—	4
Dar' al-mafāsīd / lā ḍarar (harm prevention)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓ ^s	5
Tabdhīr / isrāf (waste, excess)	—	—	✓	—	—	1
Ḥifẓ al-bī'ah (named technical term)	—	—	—	—	✓ ^s	0 / 1 ^s
General "kebersihan" hadith (adjacent, non-technical)	—	—	~	—	—	0 / 1~
Ṭahārah-najāsah technical vocabulary (najis grades, wuḍū', ghusl, istinjā')	—	—	—	—	—	0

Note. ✓ = explicit textual or scriptural basis identified in the retrieved primary fatwa document. ✓^s = coded from secondary academic analysis of the fatwa (Al Asy'ari et al., 2025; Rojihisawal et al., 2025) because a complete primary-source file of Fatwa No. 86/2023 could not be independently retrieved during data collection (Section 3.3; Section 5.5). ~ = adjacent, general (non-technical) reference only. — = no evidence identified. Source: Authors' coding (2026) based on official fatwa texts (Majelis Ulama Indonesia, 2011, 2014a, 2014b, 2016, 2023) and, for Fatwa No. 86/2023, secondary academic analysis.

The Absence of the Ṭahārah-Najāsah Register

Applying the inductive search protocol described in Section 3.4 to the full text of all five fatwas returned no instance of *najāsah*, *najis*, *mukhaffafah*, *mutawassīṭah*, *mughallazah*, *wuḍūʻ*, *ghusl*, *istinjāʻ*, or *mutanajjis*, whether as a technical legal term or as an explicit analogy. The single closest approach occurs in the waste-management fatwa (No. 41/2014), whose second *ketentuan hukum* obliges every Muslim to “*menjaga kebersihan lingkungan*” (maintain environmental cleanliness), supported by the widely cited hadith formula that “Allah is good and loves goodness, He is clean and loves cleanliness,” and by the hadith describing the removal of harmful objects from a public path as an act of charity (*Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*) or as “a branch of faith” (*al-Tirmidhī*). These citations invoke the general Indonesian-Arabic semantic field of cleanliness (*kebersihan/nazāfah*), which is doctrinally and etymologically adjacent to *ṭahārah*, but at no point does the fatwa cross into the technical register of ritual purity law: there is no reference to the *najis* taxonomy, no discussion of water sufficiency or requalification, and no citation of classical purification manuals or their jurists – in clear contrast to the extensive named classical citation observed for animal-rights fiqh in Fatwa No. 4/2014 (Section 4.2).

Applying the conservative coding rule specified in Section 3.4 – counting only technical fiqh vocabulary, not lay usage of “clean/pure” – this general hadith on cleanliness was coded as adjacent to, but not evidence of, Register 2 mobilisation, and appears as a partial entry in Table 2 rather than full presence. Under this conservative rule, *ṭahārah-najāsah* Register 2 vocabulary is confirmed absent, in its technical form, from all five fatwas in the corpus (0/5 full presence; 1/5 adjacent, general reference).

This finding should not be read as a claim that Indonesian Islamic scholarship is wholly unaware of the connection: as reviewed in Section 2.2, Wan Zahari et al. (2022) explicitly analyse ablution-water reuse from a fiqh perspective, demonstrating that jurists are capable of, and interested in, extending purity law to environmental-engineering questions when the object of analysis – reused *wuḍūʻ* water – sits literally inside the domain of *ṭahārah* law. What the present corpus shows is that this connection has not yet been extended upward into the register of general, national-level environmental fatwa-making that addresses mining, waste, fire, and biodiversity at the scale this study examines. The gap, in other words, is not a gap in Islamic legal capacity but a gap in this specific corpus's discursive practice – precisely the kind of gap a directed content analysis is designed to surface, and precisely the kind that is amenable to remedy through future fatwa drafting (Section 5.4).

Mapping Fatwa Rulings onto the SDGs

Table 3 maps each fatwa's core rulings onto the SDG targets they most directly address. Fatwa No. 41/2014 (waste management) aligns most directly with SDG 12 (responsible consumption and production), particularly Target 12.5 on substantially reducing waste generation through prevention, reduction, recycling, and reuse – a close match to the fatwa's own ruling that recycling reusable waste is *wājib kifāya* (a communal obligation). Fatwa No. 22/2011

(environmentally sound mining) and Fatwa No. 30/2016 (forest and land fires) both align with SDG 15 (life on land) and, given fire's role in transboundary haze and greenhouse-gas emissions, with SDG 13 (climate action); the mining fatwa additionally touches SDG 6 through its concern with watercourse contamination from extractive waste. Fatwa No. 4/2014 (endangered species) aligns most directly with SDG 15 (Target 15.5, halting biodiversity loss) and, for aquatic species among the fatwa's illustrative examples, SDG 14 (life below water). Fatwa No. 86/2023, as the most general and recent instrument, is framed explicitly around climate mitigation (SDG 13), but its broad protection-and-management mandate is, by design, cross-cutting across all five focal SDGs.

No fatwa in the corpus explicitly cites SDG language or numbering – unsurprising, since none but the most recent was drafted after the 2030 Agenda had entered public policy discourse in Indonesia. The mapping in Table 3 is therefore the authors' analytic reconstruction of substantive alignment, not a claim about the fatwa drafters' own stated intent.

Table 3. Mapping of Fatwa Rulings onto Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) Targets

Fatwa	Core Ruling (Summary)	Primary SDG	Illustrative SDG Target (UN, 2015)	Secondary SDG(s)
No. 22/2011	Mining is permitted only if environmentally sound and non-harmful; damaging mining is <i>ḥarām</i> .	SDG 15	Target 15.1 – conservation of terrestrial ecosystems	SDG 6
No. 4/2014	Protecting endangered species is <i>wājib</i> ; killing or trafficking them is <i>ḥarām</i> absent justified necessity.	SDG 15	Target 15.5 – halt biodiversity loss	SDG 14
No. 41/2014	Littering is <i>ḥarām</i> ; waste management and recycling are <i>wājib</i> / <i>wājib kifāya</i> .	SDG 12	Target 12.5 – reduce waste through prevention, reduction, recycling, reuse	SDG 6; SDG 14
No. 30/2016	Intentional, damaging forest/land burning is <i>ḥarām</i> ; prevention and control are <i>wājib</i> .	SDG 15	Target 15.2 – halt deforestation	SDG 13
No. 86/2023	General environmental destruction is <i>ḥarām</i> ; climate-change mitigation is an obligation.	SDG 13	Target 13.2 – integrate climate measures into policy	SDG 6; SDG 12; SDG 14; SDG 15

Note. SDG target language is paraphrased from the official 2030 Agenda (UN General Assembly, 2015). The mapping is the authors' analytic reconstruction based on the substantive content of each fatwa's *ketentuan hukum*, not a citation appearing in the fatwa text itself. Source: Authors' analysis (2026).

Toward a Dual-Register Framework

Table 4 consolidates the results of Sections 4.2–4.4 into a structured comparison of the two registers defined in Section 2.4. The *maqāṣid* register is

textually dominant, institutionally authoritative, and pitched at the level of general principle; the *ṭahārah-najāsah* register is textually absent from this corpus but operationally embodied, in the sense that its underlying practices – *wuḍūʿ*, cleanliness before prayer – are performed by the fatwas' own lay audience multiple times daily regardless of whether the fatwas mention them. This asymmetry – a register that is textually present but experientially remote, alongside a register that is experientially proximate but textually absent – is the empirical basis for the theoretical argument developed in Section 5: that the two registers are not competitors but potential complements, and that their deliberate integration, rather than continued exclusive reliance on Register 1 alone, may better serve the fatwas' own stated aim of shaping everyday Muslim environmental behaviour in line with the SDGs.

Table 4. Comparative Dimensions of Two Islamic Environmental Epistemic Registers

Dimension	Register 1 – Maqāṣid al-Sharīʿah	Register 2 – Ṭahārah-Najāsah
Locus of authority	Institutional (Komisi Fatwa, academic commentary)	Personal and embodied (individual worshipper)
Primary mode	Discursive and argumentative	Ritual and procedural
Temporal rhythm	Occasional (fatwa issuance, sermons)	Repeated – minimum five times daily, before each prayer
Underlying logic	Largely binary (ḥalāl/ḥarām, wājib/not) balancing benefit against harm	Graded taxonomy (mukhaffafah / mutawassīṭah / mughallaḏah) with proportionate remedy
Presence in the five fatwas (2011–2023)	Dominant – present in all five (Table 2)	Absent – confirmed 0/5 technical instances (Table 2)
Pedagogical accessibility to lay Muslims	Requires abstraction (maṣlaḥa-mafsada balancing)	Intuitive – already embodied and sensorially verifiable
Proposed contribution to synthesis	Institutional legitimacy and policy register	Graded, everyday enactment register

Note. Source: Developed by the authors (2026) from the results reported in Sections 4.2–4.4. The two registers are proposed as complementary rather than competing (Section 5), synthesised as *fiqh al-ṭahārah al-biʿiyyah* in Figure 1.

DISCUSSION

Why the Absence Matters: Register, Scale, and Everyday Practice

The finding reported in Section 4.3 – a complete absence of technical *ṭahārah-najāsah* vocabulary across twelve years and five fatwas – might initially seem unremarkable: mining, forest fires, and species conservation are not, on their face, purity questions in the technical *fiqh* sense, and jurists cannot be faulted for not forcing an analogy where none is doctrinally required. Yet three considerations suggest the absence is consequential rather than merely unsurprising.

First, scale of enactment. *Maqāṣid* reasoning, however doctrinally sound, is disseminated through channels — fatwa documents, sermons summarising fatwa content, academic commentary — that reach the Indonesian Muslim public intermittently and abstractly. *Ṭahārah* practice, by contrast, is enacted by the same public bodily, at minimum five times daily, before each obligatory prayer. A pedagogical resource already embedded in this frequency of practice arguably carries more potential for habituating SDG-relevant behaviour — conserving water during *wuḍūʿ*, correctly classifying and segregating different types of household waste — than a resource that must be freshly recalled from occasional exposure to fatwa content.

Second, the granularity mismatch. *Maqāṣid* reasoning in this corpus operates almost entirely at the level of binary permissibility: an activity is either *ḥalāl* or *ḥarām*, *wājib* or not, depending on whether it causes *ḍarar* or serves *maṣlaḥa*. This binary logic sits awkwardly with environmental reality, in which contamination is rarely binary — a litre of greywater, a kilogram of organic waste, and a barrel of tailings sludge are not equally harmful, yet a purely *maqāṣid*-based fatwa has limited internal vocabulary for expressing that difference in severity, short of drafting entirely new administrative categories from scratch. The *najis* taxonomy, precisely because it was built to grade contamination severity and prescribe proportionate remedies, already contains a ready-made grammar for exactly this kind of graded reasoning — a grammar that could, in principle, be extended analogically, not literally, to grade environmental contaminants and prescribe correspondingly graded, ritually inflected remedies.

Third, epistemic completeness. A tradition that has spent centuries refining the sensory, procedural, and material criteria by which contamination is identified and removed, and that requires its adherents to internalise and enact this reasoning as a condition of valid worship, cannot accurately be described as lacking the conceptual resources for environmental epistemology. Its absence from the fatwas examined here is therefore better described as a discursive choice — whether deliberate, or, more plausibly, an unreflective inheritance of the *maqāṣid* paradigm dominant in the wider scholarly literature reviewed in Section 2.1 — than as a doctrinal limitation.

Theorising Fiqh al-Ṭahārah al-Bīʿiyyah

Building on this analysis, this article proposes *fiqh al-ṭahārah al-bīʿiyyah* (environmental purity jurisprudence) as a deliberately theorised synthesis, illustrated in Figure 1, rather than a wholesale replacement of *maqāṣid*-based eco-fiqh. The proposal has three components.

First, analogical — not literal — extension of the *najis* severity gradient to environmental contaminants. Just as classical *fiqh* distinguishes *mukhaffafah*, *mutawassitah*, and *mughallazah* impurity by the remedial effort each requires, a *fiqh al-ṭahārah al-bīʿiyyah* framework would classify environmental contaminants — for instance, biodegradable organic waste, mixed municipal waste, and hazardous industrial or medical waste — along an analogous severity gradient, each requiring a correspondingly graded remedial practice: composting, sorting and recycling, and specialised containment and treatment, respectively. This is

explicitly an analogical and pedagogical device rather than a claim that plastic waste literally invalidates prayer; conflating the two registers without this caveat would commit exactly the category error flagged in Section 2.2, and the authors emphasise it here to forestall misapplication by future fatwa drafters or educators who might adopt this framework uncritically.

Second, ritual re-anchoring of water stewardship. The existing, if narrow, jurisprudence on *musta'mal* ablution-water requalification (Wan Zahari et al., 2022) could be generalised into a broader *fiqh al-ṭahārah al-bī'iyah* principle: that stewardship of water quality and quantity is not merely a *maṣlaḥa*-based inference from general environmental concern, but a direct extension of the *ṭahārah* obligations a Muslim already undertakes multiple times daily. Practically, this reframing licenses – arguably requires – religious educators to teach water-conservation practices, such as reduced ablution water flow and greywater reuse for non-ritual purposes, as literally continuous with, rather than merely compatible with, the *fiqh* of ablution, directly serving SDG 6.

Third, embodied pedagogy for mass *da'wah*. Because *ṭahārah* is taught to every Muslim child from an early age as a precondition of valid worship, embedding environmental content within *ṭahārah* pedagogy – in *madrasah* curricula, pre-marital religious counselling, and Friday-sermon materials – reaches audiences and achieves habituation that abstract *maqāṣid* argument, disseminated mainly through fatwa documents and academic commentary, cannot easily match. This is consistent with, and would help address, the diffusion limits Hidayat (2023) documents for existing eco-theological narratives.

These three components are proposed as a research and policy agenda, not as a claim that this article has itself produced a validated pedagogical intervention; Section 5.5 addresses this and other limitations directly. The contribution at this stage is conceptual and diagnostic: to show, through systematic content analysis, that the resource exists, that it is absent from the relevant corpus, and to specify concretely how it could be mobilised without collapsing the doctrinal distinction between ritual validity and environmental harm.

Positioning within the Literature

The findings and framework developed here are complementary to, rather than a correction of, the *maqāṣid*-centred literature reviewed in Section 2.1. Ramsah et al. (2026), Khuluq and Asmuni (2024), Al Asy'ari et al. (2025), Rojihisawal et al. (2025), and Halilah et al. (2026) all persuasively demonstrate that *maqāṣid* reasoning can and should be extended to environmental questions; none of these studies asks the register question posed here, because none sets out to test the corpus against a second, independent epistemic resource. This article's distinctive contribution is therefore not to displace the *maqāṣid* consensus, but to show, empirically, that it is not the only available resource, and to specify what a second resource would look like in practice.

The findings also extend, in an unexpected direction, the grassroots literature on Indonesian Muslim environmentalism. Muizudin's (2025) SAPAR movement mobilises *khalifah* and *amānah* discursively, but also enacts distinctively embodied religious practices – *tahlilan* (communal remembrance gatherings) and *istighotsah*

(collective supplication) — as forms of ecological protest, suggesting that at the grassroots level, embodied ritual practice is already doing some of the pedagogical work this article argues formal fatwas are not yet doing. This raises the possibility, beyond this study's document-analysis scope but worth flagging for future research (Section 5.5), that *fiqh al-ṭahārah al-bi'īyyah* may already exist informally, in practice, ahead of its formal articulation in fatwa texts — precisely the kind of gap between elite legal text and lay religious practice that qualitative fieldwork, rather than document analysis, would be needed to confirm.

Practical and Policy Implications

For MUI's *Lembaga Pemuliaan Lingkungan Hidup dan Sumber Daya Alam* (LPLHSDA, the Institute for the Restoration of Environment and Natural Resources), the findings suggest a concrete drafting recommendation: future environmental fatwas, and implementing guidance for the five fatwas examined here, could explicitly incorporate *ṭahārah-najāsah* vocabulary as a supplementary *dalīl* alongside existing *maqāṣid* citations, particularly for waste- and water-related rulings where the doctrinal fit is closest. For religious-education curriculum designers, the findings suggest that units on *ṭahārah*, already compulsory across Indonesian Islamic schooling, offer an underused curricular entry point for environmental content — potentially more durable than stand-alone environmental-education units, because it attaches new content to an already-mandatory, already-habituated practice. For *khaṭīb* (Friday sermon deliverers), whose sermons on environmental care already draw on general cleanliness hadith, the findings suggest a specific opportunity to extend that material into the technical *najis*-gradation vocabulary as a rhetorically vivid device for explaining why some waste — organic — is less consequential than other waste — hazardous or medical — a distinction lay audiences may find more intuitively graspable through familiar purity-gradation language than through abstract *maṣlaḥa-maḥsada* balancing.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This article set out to determine which epistemic resources underwrite Indonesia's national environmental fatwas, and whether one specific, doctrinally rich resource — the classical law of *ṭahārah* and *najāsah* — numbers among them. Using directed qualitative content analysis of the complete corpus of MUI's five national environmental fatwas issued between 2011 and 2023, the study confirms that all five rely exclusively on *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* reasoning, and that none draws on the technical vocabulary of ritual purity and impurity, despite the latter's structural affinity with the graded, threshold-based logic of contemporary pollution governance and despite its unusually intimate, embodied presence in the daily life of the fatwas' own intended audience.

This finding contributes, first, the first systematic cross-fatwa content analysis of Indonesia's national eco-*fiqh* corpus, extending a literature that has so far analysed individual fatwas in isolation (Ramsah et al., 2026; Khuluq & Asmuni, 2024; Al Asy'ari et al., 2025). Second, it contributes a specific, previously undocumented epistemic gap in an otherwise well-studied textual tradition, complicating the implicit assumption that *maqāṣid* theory exhausts the Islamic

conceptual resources available for environmental ethics. Third, it contributes *fiqh al-ṭahārah al-bi'īyyah*, a deliberately theorised – and deliberately qualified – conceptual bridge between ritual law and sustainability practice, offered as a research and drafting agenda rather than a finished doctrine.

FURTHER STUDY

Future research could broaden the analysis by examining environmental fatwas from other Muslim-majority countries to compare how Islamic concepts of *ṭahārah* and *najāsah* are interpreted in addressing contemporary pollution and environmental challenges. Further studies may also investigate how these theological and jurisprudential concepts are translated into environmental policies, community practices, and public awareness in Indonesia. Researchers could additionally explore other Islamic environmental concepts, such as *khalifah*, *mīzān*, and *amānah*, to develop a more comprehensive Islamic epistemology of environmental responsibility. Comparative studies involving Islamic scholars, environmental organizations, policymakers, and local communities could also provide deeper insights into the practical relevance of Islamic environmental ethics in the Anthropocene.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The authors would like to express their sincere gratitude to the scholars, institutions, and sources that contributed to the development of this study. The authors also appreciate the support and valuable insights provided by all parties involved in examining Islamic environmental thought and Indonesia's environmental fatwas. Their contributions were essential to the completion of this research.

REFERENCES

- Al Asy'ari, M. K. H., Fiddini, M., & Wicaksono, S. (2025). Integrasi Fatwa MUI No. 86 tahun 2023 dengan konsep maqasid syariah Jasser Auda: Model wakaf hutan sebagai strategi konservasi dan mitigasi pemanasan global di Indonesia. *Jurnal Pemuliaan Lingkungan Hidup dan Sumber Daya Alam*, 1(1).
- Al-Jayyousi, O. R. (2012). *Islam and sustainable development: New worldviews*. Gower Publishing.
- Auda, J. (2008). *Maqasid al-Shari'ah as philosophy of Islamic law: A systems approach*. International Institute of Islamic Thought.
- Douglas, M. (1966). *Purity and danger: An analysis of concepts of pollution and taboo*. Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- Elo, S., & Kyngäs, H. (2008). The qualitative content analysis process. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 62(1), 107–115. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1365-2648.2007.04569.x>

- Foltz, R. C., Denny, F. M., & Baharuddin, A. (Eds.). (2003). *Islam and ecology: A bestowed trust*. Harvard University Press, Center for the Study of World Religions.
- Gade, A. M. (2019). *Muslim environmentalisms: Religious and social foundations*. Columbia University Press.
- Halilah, H., Mubarak, M. Z., Hasanah, T., & Syamsuni, S. (2026). Reconstructing Islamic ecological jurisprudence in Indonesia: A Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah framework for climate resilience and environmental justice. *ASEAN Journal of Islamic Studies and Civilization*, 3(1), 71–93. <https://doi.org/10.62976/ajisc.v3i1.2029>
- Hidayat, M. (2023). Islamic eco-theology: Religious narratives in the climate crisis in Indonesia. *Bulletin of Indonesian Islamic Studies*, 2(2), 197–212. <https://doi.org/10.51214/biis.v2i2.678>
- Hosen, N. (2004). Behind the scenes: Fatwas of Majelis Ulama Indonesia (1975–1998). *Journal of Islamic Studies*, 15(2), 147–179. <https://doi.org/10.1093/jis/15.2.147>
- Hsieh, H.-F., & Shannon, S. E. (2005). Three approaches to qualitative content analysis. *Qualitative Health Research*, 15(9), 1277–1288. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1049732305276687>
- Izzi Dien, M. (2000). *The environmental dimensions of Islam*. Lutterworth Press.
- Jambeck, J. R., Geyer, R., Wilcox, C., Siegler, T. R., Perryman, M., Andrady, A., Narayan, R., & Law, K. L. (2015). Plastic waste inputs from land into the ocean. *Science*, 347(6223), 768–771. <https://doi.org/10.1126/science.1260352>
- Kamali, M. H. (2003). *Principles of Islamic jurisprudence* (3rd ed.). Islamic Texts Society.
- Katz, M. H. (2002). *Body of text: The emergence of the Sunnī law of ritual purity*. State University of New York Press.
- Kementerian Lingkungan Hidup dan Kehutanan Republik Indonesia. (2024). *Sistem Informasi Pengelolaan Sampah Nasional (SIPSN): Capaian kinerja pengelolaan sampah 2023 [Data set]*. <https://sipsn.menlhk.go.id/>
- Khuluq, M. K., & Asmuni, A. (2024). Hifz al-Bi'ah as part of Maqashid al-Shari'ah and its relevance in the context of global climate change. *Indonesian Journal of Interdisciplinary Islamic Studies*, 7(2). <https://doi.org/10.20885/ijiis.vol7.iss2.art3>
- Krippendorff, K. (2019). *Content analysis: An introduction to its methodology* (4th ed.). Sage Publications.

- Majelis Ulama Indonesia. (2011). Fatwa Majelis Ulama Indonesia Nomor 22 Tahun 2011 tentang pertambangan ramah lingkungan. Komisi Fatwa MUI.
- Majelis Ulama Indonesia. (2014a). Fatwa Majelis Ulama Indonesia Nomor 4 Tahun 2014 tentang pelestarian satwa langka untuk menjaga keseimbangan ekosistem. Komisi Fatwa MUI.
- Majelis Ulama Indonesia. (2014b). Fatwa Majelis Ulama Indonesia Nomor 41 Tahun 2014 tentang pengelolaan sampah untuk mencegah kerusakan lingkungan. Komisi Fatwa MUI.
- Majelis Ulama Indonesia. (2016). Fatwa Majelis Ulama Indonesia Nomor 30 Tahun 2016 tentang hukum pembakaran hutan dan lahan serta pengendaliannya. Komisi Fatwa MUI.
- Majelis Ulama Indonesia. (2023). Fatwa Majelis Ulama Indonesia Nomor 86 Tahun 2023 tentang perlindungan dan pengelolaan lingkungan hidup. Komisi Fatwa MUI.
- Mangunjaya, F. M., & McKay, J. E. (2012). Reviving an Islamic approach for environmental conservation in Indonesia. *Worldviews: Global Religions, Culture, and Ecology*, 16(3), 286–305.
- Muizudin, M. (2025). Rejecting geothermal projects: Muslim environmentalism in the SAPAR movement for ecological justice and sustainable natural resources. *Studia Islamika*, 32(3), 521–552. <https://doi.org/10.36712/sdi.v32i3.46663>
- Nasr, S. H. (1996). *Religion and the order of nature*. Oxford University Press.
- Opwis, F. (2010). *Maṣlaḥa and the purpose of the law: Islamic discourse on legal change from the 4th/10th to 8th/14th century*. Brill.
- Rahmawati, D. (2024, July 16). Menteri KLHK: Jumlah timbunan sampah nasional 69,9 juta ton di 2023. *detikNews*. <https://news.detik.com/berita/d-7441226/>
- Ramsah, M., Dakhoir, A., & Rahmiati, P. (2026). Reconceptualizing Hifz al-Bī'ah within Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah: An Islamic environmental jurisprudence analysis of forest and land fires in Kalimantan. *Mir'ah: Family Law and Legal Culture*, 3(1), 20–34. <https://doi.org/10.23971/mirah.v3i1.560>
- Reinhart, A. K. (1990). Impurity/no danger. *History of Religions*, 30(1), 1–24. <https://doi.org/10.1086/463212>
- Rojihisawal, F., Robbani, A. S., & Firdausy, H. (2025). Peran Fatwa MUI No. 86/2023 dalam mewujudkan kemakmuran ekologis: Analisis prinsip

Maqāṣid al-Syarī'ah. *Jurnal Pemuliaan Lingkungan Hidup dan Sumber Daya Alam*, 2(2).

UN General Assembly. (2015). Transforming our world: The 2030 agenda for sustainable development (A/RES/70/1). United Nations. <https://sdgs.un.org/2030agenda>

Wan Zahari, W. A. M., Subri, I. M., Rahman, A. A., Kirin, A., & Ismail, F. H. (2022). Recycling ablution water (wudu') using membrane water treatment: A study from fiqh halal perspective. *JURIS (Jurnal Ilmiah Syariah)*, 21(2), 173–182. <https://doi.org/10.31958/juris.v21i2.6867>