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Faith-Based Ethics and Governmental Accountability: A *Fiqh Siyasah* Perspective on Water Justice (*al-'adālah al-mā'iyyah*) in Batam City

Zulfa Hudiyani[1*], **Imam Sujoko**[2]
[1]Sekolah Tinggi Agama Islam Negeri Sultan Abdurrahman, Indonesia
[2]Universitas Islam Negeri Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta, Indonesia

[*]Corresponding Author*: zulfa_hudiyani@stainkepri.ac.id*

Abstract

The water crisis in Batam City, Riau Province in 2026 highlights the complexity of water resource governance, particularly as reservoir levels declined by 2.5 meters alongside the government's spiritual response through the performance of *Salat Istisqa* (the prayer for rain). This study aims to identify water crisis governance issues through the perspective of *Fiqh Siyasah*, particularly the concepts of *wilayah, 'adl,* and *hisbah*. This qualitative research employs a case study approach by analyzing policy documents, media reports, and statements from non-governmental organizations (NGOs) during January–March 2026. The findings reveal three major tensions: emergency responses versus strategic obligations, distributive versus participatory justice, and state versus societal oversight. Furthermore, digital asymmetry undermines transparency and accountability in water governance. This study contributes the concept of *al 'adalah al-ma'īyah* based on political jurisprudence which emphasizes the principle of justice in the management, access, distribution, and conservation of water resources.

Keywords: Water Crisis, Batam City, *Fiqh Siyasah*

Abstrak

Krisis air di Kota Batam Provinsi Riau pada 2026 menunjukkan kompleksitas tata kelola sumber daya air, terutama ketika penurunan kapasitas waduk hingga 2,5 meter terjadi bersamaan dengan respons spiritual pemerintah melalui salat Istisqa. Penelitian ini bertujuan mengidentifikasi tata kelola krisis air dalam problem tersebut melalui perspektif Fiqh Siyasah, khususnya konsep wilayah, 'adl, dan hisbah. Penelitian kualitatif ini menggunakan pendekatan studi kasus melalui analisis dokumen kebijakan, pemberitaan media, dan pernyataan organisasi non pemerintah selama Januari–Maret 2026. Hasil penelitian mengungkap tiga ketegangan utama, yaitu respons darurat dan kewajiban strategis, keadilan distributif dan partisipatif, serta pengawasan negara dan masyarakat. Selain itu, asimetri digital juga memperlemah transparansi dan akuntabilitas pengelolaan air. Kontribusi penelitian ini menawarkan konsep al 'adalah al-ma'īyah berbasis fikih siyasah yang menekankan prinsip keadilan dalam pengelolaan, akses distribusi, dan konservasi sumber daya air.

Kata Kunci: *Krisis Air, Kota Batam, Fikih Siyasah*

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INTRODUCTION

In early 2026, Batam City's clean water crisis reached emergency levels. BP Batam reported that 28 areas were affected, with three major reservoirs dropping by up to 2.5 meters. By January 31, 2026, Sei Harapan Reservoir had about a month of water remaining, while Mukakuning Reservoir's level fell by 2.4 meters, and Nongsa Reservoir dropped 1.2 meters by late March 2026 (BP Batam). On February 9, 2026, Ariastuty Sirait, Deputy for Public Services at BP Batam, officially declared that Batam had entered an "emergency raw water condition" (Batam News Asia, 2026). TKP Batam (2026), a local NGO, criticized the slow government response, noting ongoing water bills despite irregular supply and tanker trucks that only served some residents. Residents in Tanjung Sengkuang endured a six-month crisis, with water flowing only four hours in the early morning (Tribunbatam, 2026), while those in Tiban Riau Bertuah experienced taps that emitted only air for an entire week (Kompas, 2026).

On March 30, 2026, the Batam City Government held a rain prayer (Shalat Istisqa) at Engku Putri Square, Batam Center. Attended by Mayor Dr. H. Amsakar Achmad, Forkopimda, and religious leaders, the event represented a spiritual effort to invoke rain during a drought expected to last until August 2026 (Diskominfo Batam, 2026; BMKG, 2026). This situation raises critical questions: Is the rain prayer a complement to structural policies or a substitute for government inaction? Does the state, as wali al-amr, fulfill its responsibilities during this prolonged crisis? Analyzing the tension between spiritual responses and state duties can be approached through the *Fiqh Siyasah* framework, which addresses ruler-citizen relationships, state authority (*wilāyah*), distributive justice (*'adl*), and public oversight (*ḥisbah*).

This study argues that a fourth limitation exists: the absence of attention to the digital age and technological hegemony in Islamic environmental governance literature. Batam's water crisis is not only ecological and infrastructural but also unfolds within an era where governance is increasingly mediated by digital platforms, data systems, and automated services. Yet, no prior study has examined how digital technologies enable or obstruct just water governance from an Islamic perspective.

This study has three interrelated aims: to analyze Batam's 2026 water policy through a Fiqh Siyasah lens with attention to digital governance; to identify the conceptual tension between Shalat Istisqa and state responsibility, including how digital messaging shapes public perception; and to formulate *al-'adalah al-ma'īyah* (water justice) as a theoretical contribution that integrates digital transparency and participatory technology. Theoretically, this study fills a gap by examining tensions between spiritual responses and public policy while introducing digital dimensions overlooked in Islamic environmentalism literature. Practically, it offers local governments evaluative tools for developing just, transparent, and technology-enabled crisis policies aligned with both constitutional mandates and Islamic governance principles

Recent research has advanced the understanding of Islamic environmental ethics. Studies on eco-Sufism in the Ammatoa community of Kajang, Bulukumba, show how Islamic principles harmonize with local conservation traditions, illustrating how indigenous

communities have historically practiced sustainable water management alongside spiritual beliefs (Tahir et al., 2025). Likewise, research on Muhammadiyah's ecological efforts in post-New Order Indonesia demonstrates its evolution into a "right-green organization" through institutional and theological reform, including creating a "fiqh of water" and participating in judicial review as a form of political advocacy (Efendi et al., 2021). Nonetheless, these studies highlight that Muhammadiyah's environmental activism primarily targets economic justice, rather than fostering ecological security and conservation initiatives (Efendi et al., 2021).

From a normative perspective, research on environmental protection that revisits Sharia directives and constitutional requirements shows that environmental harm impacts human survival, highlighting environmental protection as a vital necessity (Susanto & Iksir Gholi, 2025). The Indonesian Constitution also considers a healthy environment a fundamental right and a duty of the state, demonstrating synergy between Sharia principles and constitutional mandates (Susanto & Iksir Gholi, 2025). Additionally, studies on religious disputes in local traditions, such as the Tiban tradition in Jajar Village, Trenggalek, reveal tensions between Islamic scholars and indigenous leaders when spiritual practices clash with public policies (Styawati, 2024), providing comparative insights for analyzing *Shalat Istisqa* as a contested policy. Furthermore, the concept of "green Islamism" has been studied as a global trend where Islamist parties address environmental issues, including water supply protection, pollution reduction, and reforestation, indicating a convergence of religious and political motives in Islamic environmentalism (Karagiannis, 2022). Despite these contributions, existing studies have limitations. First, they remain at the macro-national level and have not addressed the tension between Shalat Istisqa as public policy and state obligations in *Fiqh Siyasah*. Second, they have not examined the Batam water crisis case study with current 2026 data. Third, they have not conducted an applied evaluation of regional policy from the perspectives of *wilāyah, 'adl,* and *ḥisbah* simultaneously. This research addresses these gaps.

Methodologically, this study adopts an interdisciplinary approach that bridges Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh siyasah*), public policy analysis, and digital governance studies. By integrating classical Islamic concepts (*wilayah, 'adl, hisbah*) with contemporary frameworks from disaster management (early warning systems), political ecology (distributive and participatory justice), and science and technology studies (technological asymmetry), the paper offers a holistic assessment of Batam's water crisis. This interdisciplinary lens allows the study to move beyond a purely normative Islamic legal analysis toward actionable policy recommendations that speak to both Muslim-majority governance contexts and secular public administration.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study employs a qualitative approach using a single-case holistic design to examine the Batam City Government's policy response to the 2026 water crisis, particularly the implementation of *Shalat Istisqa* on March 30, 2026, as a public policy response. Following Yin (2017) and Creswell and Poth (2017), the case study approach enables an in-depth

examination of policy dynamics within their real-life context. The research adopts a retrospective longitudinal perspective, covering January 1–March 31, 2026, to trace crisis developments, public protests, structural policy responses, and religious interventions. Data were collected through purposive sampling from three sources: 12 official government documents issued by the Batam City Government and BP Batam, 24 articles from Press Council-verified media outlets, and three statements from the TKP Batam NGO. Documents were selected based on relevance, institutional authority, and publication within the research period. Data collection involved identification, screening, extraction, and verification through source triangulation (Denzin, 2017). No human participants were involved, as the study relied exclusively on publicly accessible documentary sources.

Data analysis followed the framework method developed by Gale et al. (2013), comprising familiarization, thematic framework development, indexing, charting, and interpretation. The analytical framework was deductively constructed around three Fiqh Siyasah concepts: *wilāyah* (state authority), *'adl* (justice), and *ḥisbah* (supervision), while allowing inductive themes to emerge from the documents. Wilāyah was examined through government response timing and preventive or reactive policy measures. 'Adl was assessed through distributive justice, including water distribution and infrastructure allocation, and participatory justice, particularly community involvement and government responsiveness to public demands. Ḥisbah was analyzed through the roles of state institutions and civil society in monitoring governance and demanding accountability. Documents were coded using NVivo 14, with 20% independently reviewed by a second coder, producing a Cohen's kappa of 0.87. Credibility was strengthened through source and investigator triangulation, while dependability and confirmability were supported by an audit trail and reflexive documentation (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Several limitations should be acknowledged. First, the absence of interviews with policymakers and affected residents limits the analysis to documented public discourse. Second, reliance on publicly available documents excludes internal government deliberations and unpublished information. Third, the short interval between the crisis and data collection may have limited access to relevant documentation. Fourth, the study's temporal scope ends on March 31, 2026, excluding subsequent developments following Shalat Istisqa. Finally, the non-comparative observational design does not support causal claims. Accordingly, the findings are interpreted within the specific context of Batam's water crisis rather than as universally generalizable conclusions. Future research should incorporate interviews, extend the observation period, and employ comparative case studies to provide a more comprehensive understanding of water crisis governance.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Wilāyah al-Darūriyyah Versus *Wilāyah al-Tawfīqiyyah*

In classical *Fiqh Siyasah*, Ibn Taymiyyah (1263-1328 CE) articulates a foundational distinction between two levels of state obligation. In *Al-Siyasah al-Syar'iyyah fi Islah al-Ra'i wa al-Ra'iyyah*, he argues that the primary purpose of governance is the realization of *maṣlaḥah* (public welfare) and the prevention of *mafsadah* (corruption/damage) (Ibn

Taymiyyah, 2026; Imam Ibn Taymiyyah, n.d.). *Wilāyah al-darūriyyah* requires immediate action when basic needs, including clean water, are threatened, while *wilāyah al-tawfīqiyyah* refers to gradual optimization. Critically, Ibn Taymiyyah asserts in Al-Hisbah fi al-Islam that delaying action when harm is imminent is itself a form of mafsadah that the state is obligated to prevent (Ibn Taymiyyah, 1982).

Analysis of the Batam case reveals that reservoir depletion had been occurring gradually since late 2025. BP Batam data showed Sei Harapan Reservoir had one month of water remaining as of January 31, 2026, while Mukakuning and Nongsa Reservoirs decreased by 2.5 meters by late March 2026 (BP Batam, 2026). Despite these early warnings, significant structural responses, including contract amendments with PT Moya Indonesia and Rp141 billion for nine infrastructure projects, were only implemented in early February 2026, following public protests (Kompas, 2026a; Tribunbatam, 2026). Shalat Istisqa was held on March 30, 2026, nearly two months after structural responses began and six months after the crisis emerged (Batam News Asia, 2026). This delayed response violates Ibn Taymiyyah's principle of *wilāyah al-darūriyyah,* as the government prioritized gradual optimization over immediate emergency action, thereby inverting the proper hierarchy of state obligations.

In classical Fiqh Siyasah, the concept of *wilāyah* (authority/governance) encompasses the ruler's comprehensive responsibility over public welfare. Al-Mawardi (974-1058 CE) in *Al-Ahkam al-Sulthaniyyah* (The Laws of Islamic Governance) articulates a detailed theory of public administration, asserting that the imam (ruler) is contractually obligated to fulfill ten distinct duties toward the people, among which is the provision of basic necessities including water, food, and shelter (Mawardi, 1996). Al-Mawardi explicitly states: "*Wa min waza'if al-imam, saqy al-zari' wa al-mā' li al-ahali*" (Among the duties of the imam is the provision of water for cultivation and for the people). He further argues that failure to fulfill these fundamental duties constitutes a breach of the 'aqd al-imamah (governance contract) and can legitimately undermine the ruler's authority. Ibnu Taimiyah (1263-1328 CE) in *Al-Siyasah al-Syar'iyyah fi Islah al-Ra'i wa al-Ra'iyyah* (Sharia Governance in Rectifying Ruler and Ruled) develops a more dynamic conception of wilāyah. He argues that the primary objective of governance is the realization of *maṣlaḥah* (public welfare) and the prevention of mafsadah (damage): "*Maqsud al-wilāyah huwa islah al-din wa al-dunya alladhi huwa jalb al-mashalih wa dar' al-mafasid*" (The purpose of governance is the rectification of religion and worldly affairs, which means bringing benefits and warding off harms) (Ibn Taymiyyah, 2026). Critically, Ibnu Taimiyah distinguishes between two levels of state obligation: obligations that are *ḍarūrī* (emergency) and those that are *taḥsīnī* (complementary). *Wilāyah al-darūriyyah* requires immediate action when basic needs, including clean water are threatened, without waiting for procedural delays or symbolic alternatives.

Applying this classical framework to the Batam case, the government's delayed response constitutes a violation of *wilāyah al-darūriyyah*. The reservoir depletion data from late 2025 provided sufficient warning that basic water access was threatened. According to Ibnu Taimiyah's principle, the state should have activated emergency protocols at the first

sign of systemic shortage, not waited for protests and emergency declarations. The government's prioritization of *wilāyah al-tawfīqiyyah* (optimization through gradual infrastructure planning) over *wilāyah al-darūriyyah* (immediate emergency response) inverts the proper hierarchy of state obligations. As Ibnu Taimiyah states in Al-Hisbah fi al-Islam, delaying action when harm is imminent is itself a form of mafsadah that the state is obligated to prevent.

The digital dimension further exacerbates this wilayah failure. PT Moya's SCADA (Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition) system, implemented since 2020, is capable of real-time monitoring of water levels, flow, pressure, and quality, accessible even via mobile phone (Tribunbatam, 2020; BP Batam, 2021). This digital infrastructure could have served as an early warning system to trigger preventive action before reservoirs reached critical levels. Yet, no evidence suggests that SCADA data was used proactively by BP Batam to activate wilāyah al-darūriyyah protocols. Instead, the government waited until the emergency declaration (February 9, 2026) and public protests (January 22, 2026) before responding structurally. This represents not only a temporal delay but a digital governance failure: the technological means for prevention existed but were either ignored or used exclusively for operational efficiency rather than public welfare. As Ibn Taymiyyah warns, delaying action when harm is imminent is itself a form of mafsadah and in the digital age, possessing the tools to detect harm but failing to act constitutes an aggravated form of this violation.

Between *Shalat Istisqa* and State Accountability: A Philosophical Inquiry into Spirituality and Water Justice

Shalat Istisqa (rain prayer) is firmly grounded in the *Sunnah* and classified as a *sunnah mu'akkadah*, performed during drought to seek Allah's mercy and rain (al-Nawawi, 1990). However, Islamic worship cannot replace material and structural efforts to address water scarcity. Al-Qardhawi (2001), in *Fiqh al-Bi'ah*, emphasizes that worship should reinforce and complement material causes rather than substitute for them. He further argues that relying solely on spiritual supplication while neglecting infrastructure and preventive planning reflects a misunderstanding of the relationship between tawakkul (reliance on God) and tadbir (planning and administration). From this perspective, the Batam government's implementation of Shalat Istisqa, following months of inadequate responses and without corresponding acceleration of emergency infrastructure measures, illustrates the problematic substitution of spiritual responses for institutional responsibility. Thus, religious practices should complement, rather than legitimize the absence of, structural solutions to environmental crises.

This finding diverges from the eco-sufism model documented in the Ammatoa community of Kajang, Bulukumba, where spiritual beliefs and environmental conservation are harmoniously integrated into daily practice (Tahir et al., 2025). In the Ammatoa case, spiritual traditions function as preventive mechanisms that sustain water resources over the long term. The key difference lies in timing and integration: Ammatoa's spiritual practices are embedded in daily resource management, whereas Batam's *Shalat Istisqa* was an

exceptional event deployed after crisis had already caused significant harm. This suggests that the integration of spiritual and structural approaches requires not only the presence of religious ritual but also its proper timing and relationship to policy action. This finding is partially consistent with Karagiannis's (2022) observation that Islamist groups increasingly address water supply protection as part of their political platforms. However, the Batam case reveals a distinct dynamic: the spiritual response came from the government itself, not from civil society or opposition movements, and it occurred after, not before or during, the crisis. This suggests that state-led Islamic environmentalism may face particular challenges of credibility when citizens perceive religious ritual as a substitute for accountability.

'Adl al-Tawzī'ī Versus *'Adl al-Ta'āwunī*

Quantitative data from BP Batam (2026) showed that of 28 affected areas, water tanker truck distribution served only 21 units, with an operational effectiveness rate of 67 percent, while the ideal need was 34 units. Of 18 identified stress areas (crisis points), only 9 received priority for infrastructure projects; the remaining 9 remained under study with a 50:50 funding scheme between BP Batam and PT Moya. Resident testimonies documented in Kompas (2026) and Tribunbatam (2026) revealed differential access: residents of Tanjung Sengkuang received water only four hours in the early morning after nearly six months of crisis, while residents of Tiban Riau Bertuah received no water at all for an entire week. Regarding participatory justice, the TKP Batam NGO's demands for transparent repair timelines and compensation for water bills to affected residents were not fully accommodated by the government (LSM TKP Batam, 2026b).

In Islamic political thought, 'adl (justice) is the supreme objective of governance. Al-Mawardi in Al-Ahkam al-Sulthaniyyah dedicates extensive discussion to the muhtasib's role in ensuring equitable distribution of public resources. He states: "Al-'adl asas al-mulk wa qa'idat al-sulthan" (Justice is the foundation of governance and the pillar of authority). For Al-Mawardi, justice requires that the ruler not discriminate between subjects in the provision of public services, regardless of their region, tribe, or political affiliation.

Ibnu Qayyim al-Jauziyyah (1292-1350 CE), a student of Ibnu Taimiyah, provides the most systematic classical treatment of justice in I'lam al-Muwaqqi'in 'an Rabb al-'Alamin. He argues that all governmental policies must be evaluated against the standard of justice. As he famously states: "The Sharia is founded upon wisdom and welfare for the servants... In its entirety, it is justice, mercy, benefit, and wisdom. Every matter which abandons justice for tyranny... is not a part of the Sharia" (Ibn Qayyim, n.d., as cited in Muslim.SG, 2021). Critically for this study, Ibn Qayyim distinguishes between *'adl al-tawzī'ī* (distributive justice) the equitable allocation of resources, and what might be termed *'adl al-tasharukī* (participatory justice) the right of affected communities to be heard in decisions affecting them. He further argues that the validity of a policy depends not only on its distributive outcomes but also on the process by which it was formulated.

Al-Qardhawi (2001) in *Fiqh al-Bi'ah* applies these classical principles to contemporary environmental governance. He develops the concept of 'adl al-bi'ah (environmental justice), which he defines as *"musawah al-nas fi al-intifa' bi al-mawarid*

al-tabi'iyyah wa fi tahammul al-abb'a' al-biy'iyyah" (equality of people in benefiting from natural resources and in bearing environmental burdens) (Al-Qardhawi, 2001, p. 45). Al-Qardhawi explicitly addresses water distribution, arguing that privatized water systems (such as Batam's arrangement with PT Moya) must be structured to ensure equitable access, and that the state retains ultimate responsibility for redistributive justice when market mechanisms fail.

Applying this framework to the Batam case, the government's distribution of 21 tanker trucks to 28 areas, with some areas receiving no water at all for a week, constitutes a clear violation of *'adl al-tawzī'ī*. The prioritization of only 9 of 18 crisis points for infrastructure investment further compounds this injustice. Regarding 'adl al-ta'āwunī, the absence of formal mechanisms for community input means that the government failed to meet Ibn Qayyim's condition that justice requires subject participation. The TKP Batam NGO's demands for transparent timelines and bill compensation, represent legitimate claims that, according to classical principles, the state is obligated to address. This finding contrasts with the model of participatory environmental governance emerging from Muhammadiyah's ecological movement. Efendi, Kurniawan, and Santoso (2021) document how Muhammadiyah has engaged in judicial review as a form of political advocacy, creating institutional pathways for community participation in environmental policy (Efendi et al., 2021). In Batam, no such institutional mechanisms were visible; the TKP Batam NGO operated entirely outside formal channels, relying on media pressure and public protest. This suggests that the "fiqh of water" developed by Muhammadiyah (Efendi et al., 2021) has not yet been translated into local government practice in Batam .

This finding also differs from the constitutional synergy documented by Susanto and Gholi (2025), who demonstrate that the Indonesian Constitution positions a healthy environment as a basic right of citizens, aligning with Sharia's protection of environmental necessities (*maqashid al-dharuriyat*) . In Batam, this constitutional-Islamic alignment was not operationalized: citizens' constitutional right to a healthy environment was violated by inequitable water distribution, and the government did not invoke Sharia principles to justify redistributive action. The gap between normative alignment (Susanto & Iksir Gholi, 2025) and practical implementation is starkly visible in the Batam case .

The digital asymmetry between billing and complaint systems further violates 'adl in its participatory dimension. PT Moya's digital billing system and online payment gateways, integrated with Gojek, Shopee, Tokopedia, Dana, and LinkAja, functioned seamlessly throughout the crisis, ensuring uninterrupted revenue collection (Batamnews, 2020; BP Batam, 2021). Conversely, the SP4N-LAPOR! complaint platform, accessible via batam.lapor.go.id and SMS 1708, failed to generate timely responses (Dinas Kominfo Batam, 2026). Residents reported that after months of unaddressed complaints through formal digital channels, they were forced to resort to public protests and media pressure (LSM TKP Batam, 2026; Tribun Video, 2026). This asymmetry, efficient systems for payment but silent systems for accountability, constitutes a form of digital injustice that violates Ibn Qayyim's principle that justice requires both equitable outcomes (*'adl al-tawzī*) and inclusive processes (*'adl al-ta'āwunī*). When technology serves corporate interests but fails citizens'

right to oversight, the state as wali al-amr has neglected its redistributive and participatory obligations.

Ḥisbah al-Dawlah Versus *Ḥisbah al-Mujtama'*

Analysis of NGO statements and media coverage revealed that the TKP Batam NGO took an active role in criticizing government policy, demanding transparency, and overseeing water distribution (LSM TKP Batam, 2026b). The NGO urged the government to prepare transparent infrastructure repair timelines and provide compensation for water bills. Simultaneously, the government's internal supervisory functions, inspectorate, internal audit, and similar institutions were not publicly visible during the crisis period. BP Batam only formed a task force and reviewed the PT Moya agreement after public protests intensified and media pressure increased (Batam News Asia, 2026; Kompas, 2026a; Tribunbatam, 2026).

The institution of *ḥisbah* (accountability/supervision) has a rich history in Islamic governance. Al-Mawardi in *Al-Ahkam al-Sulthaniyyah* devotes an entire chapter to the office of the muhtasib (supervisory officer). He describes the muhtasib as "*al-rakib 'ala al-mu'amalat al-maliyyah wa al-sina'iyyah li yamna' al-ghishsh wa al-tadlis"* (the overseer of financial and commercial transactions who prevents fraud and deception) (Mawardi, 1996). The muhtasib is appointed by the ruler and possesses delegated authority to enforce public morality and market fairness. For Al-Mawardi, ḥisbah is fundamentally a state function, the ruler's responsibility to ensure that public services operate justly and that citizens are protected from exploitation.

Ibnu Taimiyah in *Al-Hisbah fi al-Islam* expands this classical conception in two significant ways. First, he argues that the *muhtasib'*s jurisdiction extends beyond markets to all public services, including water distribution: "*Wa al-hisbah tadkhul fi kull ma yata'allaq bi haqq allah min al-ibadat wa haqq al-'ibad min al-mu'amalat*" (Accountability enters into everything related to God's rights in worship and people's rights in transactions) (Ibnu Taimiyah, n.d., p. 5). Second, and most critically for this study, Ibnu Taimiyah articulates the principle that ḥisbah is a collective obligation (fard kifayah): if the state-appointed muhtasib fails to perform his duties adequately, the obligation transfers to capable members of the community. He states: "*Idha 'ajaza al-muhtasib al-mu'ayyan 'an al-qiyam bi al-hisbah, wa wajada man huwa aqdar 'alayha, fa 'ala al-muslimin an yuwakkilu man yaqum biha"* (If the appointed supervisor is incapable of performing accountability, and someone more capable is found, then the Muslims must appoint someone to perform it) (Ibnu Taimiyah, n.d., p. 12). This principle provides the classical justification for civil society oversight when state institutions fail.

Al-Qardhawi (2001) in *Fiqh al-Bi'ah* applies Ibnu Taimiyah's principle to contemporary environmental governance. He argues that environmental ḥisbah is a binding obligation on both state and civil society: "*Al-riqabah 'ala al-biy'ah laysat ijtihadiyyah bal hiya mulzimah li al-dawlah wa al-mujtama'"* (Environmental oversight is not optional but binding on both state and society) (Al-Qardhawi, 2001, p. 112). Al-Qardhawi further distinguishes between *ḥisbah rasmī* (formal/state oversight) and *ḥisbah ghayr rasmī* (informal/civil

society oversight), arguing that the latter becomes obligatory when the former is absent or ineffective, exactly the situation in Batam .

Applying this framework to the Batam case, the absence of visible state supervisory institutions (inspectorate, internal audit) during the crisis represents a failure of *ḥisbah al-dawlah.* According to Al-Mawardi's conception, the Batam government should have had a functioning *muhtasib*-equivalent monitoring water distribution and PT Moya's performance. The fact that BP Batam only formed a task force after public protests intensified indicates that state supervision was reactive rather than proactive, precisely the kind of failure Ibnu Taimiyah identifies. Consequently, the TKP Batam NGO's assumption of the supervisory role is not only justified but, according to Ibnu Taimiyah's fard kifayah principle, obligatory. The NGO acted as the capable community members who stepped in when the state-appointed overseers proved inadequate. However, as Al-Qardhawi notes, ḥisbah ghayr rasmī lacks formal legal authority and depends on media pressure and public opinion, a significantly weaker form of oversight than state-sanctioned ḥisbah.

This finding also diverges from the institutionalized environmental advocacy documented by Efendi, Kurniawan, and Santoso (2021) in Muhammadiyah . Where Muhammadiyah has developed formal mechanisms, including legal advocacy and judicial review to enforce environmental accountability, Batam's civil society lacked such institutional resources. This suggests that the effectiveness of *ḥisbah al-mujtama'* depends heavily on the organizational capacity and legal recognition of civil society actors, conditions that were not fully met in Batam.

al-ʻadālah al-māʾīyah: toward a Normative Theory of Water Justice in Contemporary Islamic Political Thought

The three tensions converge on a central finding: Batam's water crisis response was characterized by delayed action (*wilāyah* failure), inequitable distribution (*'adl* failure), and weak oversight (*ḥisbah* failure). These failures are interconnected. Based on these findings and classical doctrines (Al-Mawardi, Ibnu Taimiyah, Ibnu Qayyim, Al-Qardhawi), this study reformulates *al-ʻadālah al-māʾīyah* in contemporary *Fiqh Siyasah* as comprising three irreducible dimensions: First, *wilāyah al-darūriyyah* (emergency responsiveness): Following Ibnu Taimiyah's distinction between *ḍarūrī* and *taḥsīnī* obligations, the state must act preventively, not waiting for crises to reach emergency levels. Al-Mawardi's ten duties of the imam include water provision as a ḍarūrī obligation. Second, *'adl al-tawzīʿī wa al-taʿāwunī* (distributive and participatory justice): Following Ibnu Qayyim, justice requires both equitable outcomes and inclusive processes. Al-Qardhawi's 'adl al-bi'ah provides the contemporary framework. Third, *ḥisbah al-dawlah* (effective state supervision): Following Al-Mawardi and Ibnu Taimiyah's fard kifayah principle, the state must maintain functioning oversight. When state supervision fails, civil society supervision (*ḥisbah al-mujtama'*) becomes obligatory.

When these three dimensions are satisfied, spiritual responses like Shalat Istisqa can serve as meaningful complements. When they are not, they risk being perceived as substitutes for accountability, precisely the error Batam committed. Returning to the original

research questions posed in the introduction: Is *Shalat Istisqa* a complement to structural policies or a substitute for government inaction? Drawing on Al-Qardhawi's framework, the findings indicate that in the Batam case, Shalat Istisqa functioned more as a substitute than a complement. The prayer was held after the crisis had already persisted for months, after structural responses had begun (but were insufficient), and without accompanying acceleration of preventive infrastructure projects. The government's emphasis on spiritual response, in the absence of adequate structural action, violates Al-Qardhawi's principle that worship cannot substitute for material causes.

Does the state present itself as *wali al-amr* fulfilling its obligations? According to Al-Mawardi's contractual theory of governance, the state fails this standard. The *wali al-amr* (ruler) has the obligation to provide for basic needs and prevent harm before such harm occurs. The Batam government's reactive posture, acting only after protests and emergency declarations, does not meet this standard. The state presented itself as responding to crisis rather than governing preventively, a distinction with significant implications for legitimate authority in Islamic political thought.

Several limitations warrant consideration. First, the study relied exclusively on public documents, government announcements, media reports, and NGO statements without interviews with policymakers or affected residents. It captures documented public discourse, not internal decision-making. An alternative explanation is that internal deliberations occurred earlier than public documents suggest but were not disclosed. Second, the timeframe (January-March 2026) ends at *Shalat Istisqa*. Post-March 30 developments, including potential infrastructure acceleration following public criticism are not analyzed. It is possible the spiritual event catalyzed subsequent structural action, but no such acceleration was evident in available documents. Third, measurement of 'adl relied on available quantitative data (21 fleets for 28 areas, 9 of 18 priority points) that are inherently imprecise. Resident testimonies provide qualitative validation but are not systematically sampled. An alternative explanation is that logistical constraints, road conditions, water source locations, tanker capacity, necessitated observed patterns, not deliberate discrimination.Fourth, as a single-case study, generalizability is limited. Batam's unique governance as a special economic zone managed by BP Batam may not apply to cities with different administrative arrangements.

Despite these limitations, the findings have important theoretical implications. First, classical concepts (*wilāyah, 'adl, ḥisbah*) remain analytically powerful for evaluating governance crises but require operationalization into measurable indicators, which the three tensions provide. Second, the study contributes to Islamic environmentalism literature by showing that spiritual responses (*Shalat Istisqa*) and structural responses are not inherently in tension, but become so when the state uses the former to excuse the latter. This qualifies the eco-sufism model (Tahir et al., 2025) by demonstrating that spiritual-environmental integration requires proper timing and institutional embedding. Third, the study reveals a gap between classical Fiqh Siyasah doctrines and local-level implementation in Indonesia. While Al-Mawardi, Ibnu Taimiyah, Ibnu Qayyim, and Al-Qardhawi provide clear standards, Batam shows these standards have not transformed local government practice.

Practically, this study provides actionable recommendations. First, establish early warning systems with automatic triggers for preventive action, operationalizing Ibnu Taimiyah's *wilāyah al-darūriyyah*. Second, publish real-time water distribution data by area, operationalizing Ibnu Qayyim's 'adl. Third, create formal community input mechanisms for water policy decisions, operationalizing participatory justice. Fourth, strengthen internal oversight institutions so they function visibly during crises, operationalizing Al-Mawardi's ḥisbah before civil society must step in.

The Batam water crisis of 2026 is not an isolated anomaly but a harbinger of challenges facing archipelagic Indonesia under climate change. This study addresses an urgent problem: How should Muslim-majority governments balance spiritual and structural responses? What does just water governance look like from an Islamic perspective? Drawing on Al-Mawardi, Ibnu Taimiyah, Ibnu Qayyim, and Al-Qardhawi, this study answers that just water governance *al-ʻadalah al-maʼīyah* requires three simultaneous conditions: preventive state action (wilāyah al-darūriyyah), equitable and participatory distribution (*ʼadl al-tawzīʻī wa al-taʻāwunī*), and effective state supervision (*ḥisbah al-dawlah*). When any condition is absent, spiritual responses risk becoming legitimation for state inaction. Batam confirms that their absence leads to crisis escalation, public protest, and eroded state legitimacy.

The larger issue is the relationship between religion and governance. When governments invoke religious symbols, citizens may ask: Is this authentic spiritual leadership or political theater? *Fiqh Siyasah* provides conceptual resources to answer this by specifying wali al-amr obligations. This study operationalized those obligations for water governance. The confirmed proposition, drawing on Al-Qardhawi's distinction between worship and material causes is that spiritual responses cannot substitute for structural justice. The disconfirmed proposition is that Shalat Istisqa alone constitutes adequate state response. For Batam's citizens and Muslim communities facing environmental crises worldwide, this distinction matters profoundly.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the clean water crisis in Batam in 2026 reflects a reactive water governance failure that has yet to prioritize distributive justice. From the perspective of Fiqh Siyasah, the government's response, including the implementation of Salat Istisqa on March 30, 2026, was not accompanied by adequate structural measures. Although normatively recognized as a sunnah muʼakkadah, spiritual practices cannot replace the state's obligation to ensure the availability and equitable distribution of clean water. This study identifies three conceptual tensions: *wilāyah al-ḍarūriyyah* and *wilāyah al-tawfīqiyyah, ʻadl al-tawzīʻī* and *ʻadl al-taʻāwunī, ḥisbah al-dawlah* and *ḥisbah al-mujtama*ʻ. Based on these findings, the study formulates the concept of *al-ʻadālah al-māʼīyah* (water justice), which integrates the state's preventive responsibilities, distributive justice, community participation, and public oversight.

The contribution of this study is the extension of *al-'adālah al-mā'īyah* (water justice) into the context of digital governance. Water justice requires not only equitable physical distribution but also real-time transparency of water availability data, responsive complaint platforms, and participatory technologies that support public oversight (*ḥisbah al-muwāṭin*). Accordingly, this study recommends establishing early warning systems, publishing water distribution data, institutionalizing community participation, and strengthening digital accountability. Theoretically, this research enriches Islamic environmental studies by integrating digital justice into water resource governance. Future research should empirically examine the application of *al-'adālah al-mā'īyah* across different regions, particularly climate-vulnerable archipelagic areas, and evaluate the effectiveness of digital technologies in enhancing transparency, public participation, and accountability in water resource management.

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