



# Exploring Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah in the OIC's Role in Addressing Muslim Minority Conflicts: A Case Study of Pattani, Thailand

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## Abstract

*This study examines the efforts of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) in addressing the conflict involving Malay Muslims in Southern Thailand. As the second-largest intergovernmental organization after the United Nations, the OIC plays a critical role in safeguarding Muslim interests globally, including minority Muslim communities. Focusing on the Pattani conflict, this study analyzes the application of Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah in the OIC's conflict resolution strategies, which include peaceful dialogue, humanitarian aid, and cultural recognition. The study employs a qualitative approach, using library research and document analysis to explore the OIC's interventions since the conflict's escalation in 2004. Findings reveal that the OIC's diplomatic efforts have significantly contributed to peace-building initiatives in Southern Thailand, particularly through its collaboration with Malaysia as a facilitator between the Thai Government and Malay Muslim groups. Despite ongoing challenges, the OIC continues to push for dialogue and reconciliation, underscoring its commitment to protecting the cultural and human rights of the Muslim minority while respecting Thailand's sovereignty. These efforts illustrate the OIC's broader role in promoting international peace and stability.*

**Keywords:** *Organization of Islamic Cooperation, Pattani conflict resolution, Muslim minority protection, OIC diplomatic efforts, Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah*

## Introduction

The Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) is the second-largest intergovernmental organization after the United Nations (UN), with a membership of 57 countries spanning four

continents. The OIC was established to safeguard the interests of the Muslim world, particularly by promoting international peace and harmony among various nations. The organization was formed based on the decision of a High-Level Conference held in Rabat, Morocco, on 13 Rajab 1389 Hijri (25 September 1969), following the burning of Al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem. In 1970, the first meeting of the Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers (ICFM) decided to establish a permanent secretariat in Jeddah, headed by the Secretary General. The OIC's charter, first adopted during the third ICFM in 1972, outlines organizational principles and primary objectives aimed at strengthening solidarity and cooperation among member states. The charter has since been amended to adapt to global developments (Abbas & Ahmed, 2024).

Statistically, more than 500 million Muslims live in non-Muslim countries, constituting about one-third of the total global Muslim population. In recognition of the challenges faced by these Muslim minorities, including complex social, political, and cultural dimensions, the OIC established the Department of Muslim Minorities and Communities. This department serves as a platform for the OIC to address issues affecting Muslim minorities in non-member countries. It has engaged in peace efforts such as those in Mindanao, involving the Philippine government and the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF). Additionally, the OIC has been involved in humanitarian aid efforts in Somalia and has played a role in addressing the Pattani Muslim issue in southern Thailand (Engchuan, 2020).

The Malay Muslims of Pattani, a province located in southern Thailand, are an indigenous ethnic group whose identity has been shaped by the assimilation of Islam with Malay culture. For the Pattani people, being Muslim is intertwined with being Malay, which they see as a condition of religious and cultural completeness. This fusion of Islamic religiosity, particularly the Shafi'i school of thought, with Malay ethnicity, has given rise to what is known as ethno-religious nationalism. This identity has empowered the Pattani Muslim community to resist foreign cultural influences, including Siamese culture, which is strongly supported by the Thai government. Although historically tolerant of other traditions, Pattani Muslims can become militant when their culture is threatened, triggering resistance against the Thai government (Quang & Oishi, 2016).

The resistance movements that have emerged from the Pattani community can be understood as efforts to preserve their religious identity and ethnic values. They demand an end to the discriminatory attitudes of the Thai kingdom and seek greater autonomy. In 1948, the Greater Pattani Malay Coalition (GEMPAR) was established under the leadership of Muhammad Mahayyidin. Over the following decades, other independence-oriented groups emerged, such as the Pattani United Liberation Organization (PULO), the National Front for the Liberation of Pattani (BNPP), and the National Revolutionary Front (BRN). Additionally, various movements such as the Tabligh Jama'ah, Wahhabi fundamentalist movements, and student groups also

played significant roles, advocating for religious, nationalist, and cultural principles in their struggle (Liow, 2004).

The Pattani conflict reached its peak in April 2004, with heightened tensions across southern Thailand. These resistance organizations significantly contributed to strengthening the insurgency, leading to more intense, targeted, and coordinated attacks against the Thai government. Violence expanded to public spaces, causing significant civilian casualties. After one such attack, militants retreated to the Krue-Se Mosque, considered the holiest mosque by the Muslim community in Pattani. The presence of militants in the mosque prompted the Thai government to authorize military action, leading to widespread criticism and further escalating the conflict (Lehr, 2018).

Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah is a fundamental strategy employed by the OIC in addressing the Pattani conflict. The principles of Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah, which include the protection of life (hifz al-nafs), religion (hifz al-din), intellect (hifz al-aql), progeny (hifz al-nasl), and property (hifz al-mal), form the ethical framework guiding the OIC's efforts to ensure justice and welfare for the Pattani Muslim community. This approach is not limited to resolving political and military disputes but extends to humanitarian and cultural dimensions, including the recognition of religious and social rights. The OIC actively promotes peaceful dialogue and encourages the Thai government to grant religious freedom and respect the cultural identity of Pattani Muslims as essential steps toward a sustainable resolution of the conflict (Budiana, Dermawan, & Djuyandi, 2020).

The protection of intellect (hifz al-aql) is a key element in the OIC's strategy through Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah. The OIC supports increasing access to education for the Muslim community in Pattani as part of a long-term solution to improve their socio-economic conditions. By providing adequate education, the OIC aims to empower the Pattani Muslim community so that they can actively participate in societal development without losing their cultural and religious identity. Education is also used as a tool to prevent extremism and radicalism by instilling moderate and tolerant Islamic values. In this regard, the OIC plays a crucial role in safeguarding the intellectual capacity of the Pattani community through enhanced educational access and intellectual capacity building (Çinar, 2021).

In addition to the protection of intellect, Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah also encompasses the protection of wealth (hifz al-mal) and lineage (hifz al-nasl). The OIC encourages economic development in the Pattani region to ensure that the Muslim community enjoys equitable economic rights. Through humanitarian aid and economic support, the OIC seeks to assist the Pattani community in improving their standard of living after years of conflict. The protection of lineage is another priority for the OIC, particularly through policies that support family welfare,

education, and health, ensuring the sustainability of future generations of Pattani Muslims (Dusuki & Abdullah, 2024).

Overall, Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah serves as the foundational framework for the OIC's strategy in addressing the Pattani conflict. Through a holistic approach grounded in Sharia principles, the OIC focuses not only on political conflict resolution but also on the recovery and empowerment of the Pattani Muslim community across various facets of life. The OIC's commitment to promoting peaceful dialogue, providing humanitarian aid, and recognizing cultural rights in accordance with Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah highlights the organization's dedication to advocating for the rights of Muslim minorities globally (Dusuki & Abdullah, 2024). Given the above context of the OIC's role and function as an international organization, as well as the dynamic issues faced by the Pattani Muslim community in Southern Thailand, it is important to further explore how the OIC implements Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah in addressing the Pattani Muslim issue. This approach offers deeper insights into how Sharia principles are applied in the context of conflicts involving Muslim minorities and how the OIC's efforts can contribute to achieving a fair and lasting solution. Therefore, this research aims to further examine the application of Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah in the Pattani context and how this strategy can serve as an effective conflict resolution model for Muslim communities in other regions facing similar situations.

## Methods

The methodology of this study is rooted in qualitative research, employing a case study approach to examine the Pattani conflict and the application of Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah within the Organization of Islamic Cooperation's (OIC) conflict resolution strategies. This approach is chosen to provide an in-depth analysis of the OIC's methods, with a particular focus on peaceful dialogue, humanitarian aid, and cultural recognition (Hamdan et al., 2021). By utilizing qualitative methods, the research aims to capture the complex and multidimensional aspects of the conflict, as well as the ethical and cultural factors that inform the OIC's interventions. Data for this research were collected from a variety of sources, including official OIC documents, resolutions, reports, and statements related to the Pattani conflict. Additionally, secondary sources such as scholarly articles, books, and policy analyses were reviewed to contextualize the OIC's actions within the broader framework of Islamic jurisprudence and international conflict resolution.

To analyze the application of Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah in the OIC's strategies, this study employed thematic analysis, focusing on identifying and interpreting key principles of Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah such as the preservation of life, religion, intellect, lineage, and property within the OIC's approach to conflict resolution. The research also examines how these principles are reflected in the OIC's strategies, including the promotion of peaceful dialogue, the provision of

humanitarian assistance, and the recognition of cultural rights in the Pattani region. Through this analytical framework, the study aims to assess the effectiveness and relevance of the OIC's approach in achieving a sustainable resolution to the Pattani conflict while adhering to Islamic ethical principles.

## **Results and Discussion**

### ***Understanding the Malay-Muslim Ethnic Conflict in Southern Thailand***

The attack on two monks at Wat Rattananupab Temple in Su Ngai Padi District, Narathiwat Province, was part of a series of assaults carried out by the Barisan Revolusi Nasional (BRN) rebel group. This incident followed attacks on a school and hospital on January 8, 2019 (Al Jazeera, 2019). These violent acts are part of a protracted conflict in Southern Thailand, encompassing the provinces of Yala, Pattani, and Narathiwat. The roots of this conflict can be traced back to the historical incorporation and assimilation of these provinces into the Thai state. The provinces of Pattani, Yala, Narathiwat, and several districts in Songkhla, such as Chana, Na Thawi, Sabayoi, Sadao, and Thepa, were once part of the Patani Kingdom (Patani Darussalam), which existed from 1390 until 1902. The Patani Kingdom was a tributary state of the Siamese Kingdom under an indirect rule system, allowing local sultans to govern as long as they paid tribute to Siam (Moller, 2011, p.8). Tensions escalated in 1909 with the signing of the Anglo-Siamese Treaty, marking the beginning of Siam's centralization and annexation of Patani. Local elites gradually lost their power, which further diminished under forced assimilation policies in the 1930s led by Prime Minister Plaek Phibulsongkhram, who pushed an ultra-nationalist pan-Thai agenda.

These assimilation policies banned minority languages in government offices, replacing them with Thai as the national language, and promoted Buddhism as the national religion. This led to the suppression of Islam and Islamic law in Southern Thailand, as well as the forced adoption of Thai names (Melvin, 2007). The first rebellion occurred in 1946 with the formation of the Patani People's Movement (PPM), led by Haji Sulong, who called for autonomy and respect for the culture and religion of the former Patani Kingdom. After Haji Sulong's disappearance, other rebel groups emerged, such as the Greater Patani Malay Association (GAMPAR), and the struggle has continued to this day due to the failure to fully address demands for autonomy (Melvin, 2007).

Numerous analyses have been conducted to understand the causes of the separatist movements and the Malay-Muslim autonomy struggle in Southern Thailand. Some studies point to factors such as Malay primordialism (Wichaidit, 2018), poverty and social inequality (Firmansah, 2019), and the influence of Muslim identity and Islamism (Croissant, 2007; Melvin, 2007). However, these explanations have certain limitations. For instance, the rise in income levels in Yala and Narathiwat after 2004 did not prevent further attacks (Abuza, 2011; Chalk, 2008), and there is no clear reason why Satun Province, which also has a majority Muslim and

Malay population, has not experienced violent conflict. This raises the question: why does violent conflict between Malay Muslims and Thai Buddhists persist in Southern Thailand?

A deeper analysis suggests that the conflict is rooted in the interests of local Pattani elites, who use Malay ethnic and Islamic identity as a basis for mass mobilization. The success or failure of the state in accommodating local elites through established institutions significantly affects the dynamics of the conflict. Therefore, instrumentalist, constructivist, and institutionalist approaches cannot be viewed in isolation; they must be understood as interconnected processes influencing one another. In this context, rebel leaders often come from the local elite, and they utilize ethnic and religious identity as tools to achieve political objectives. The Siamese assimilation policies that stripped power from Pattani's sultans and restricted religious and cultural freedoms triggered resistance. Local autonomy granted during Prime Minister Prem Tinsulanonda's era in the 1980s helped suppress the conflict, but the abolition of institutions such as SBPAC and CPM-43 by Thaksin Shinawatra in the early 2000s reignited the conflict. This underscores the crucial role institutions play in managing local interests.

#### ***Efforts of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation in Addressing the Pattani Muslim Issue***

The peak of the conflict in Southern Thailand occurred in 2004, marked by the attacks on the Krue Se Mosque and the violent incident in Tak Bai, Narathiwat. On April 28, 2004, the Thai military attacked the Krue Se Mosque in Pattani, killing a group of people suspected of being rebels. Then, on October 25, 2004, the violence in Tak Bai resulted in the deaths of 86 members of the Pattani Muslim community and the arrest of 1,300 individuals. These events sparked significant controversy, including allegations of excessive force, harsh methods, and human rights violations (Funston, 2010). The then Secretary-General of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), Prof. Ekmeleddin İhsanoğlu, strongly condemned the incidents that claimed the lives of many members of the Muslim community. He asserted that the Thai government must guarantee the rights of Muslim minorities in the country and treat Pattani Muslims equally with other Thai citizens without discrimination. Moreover, he emphasized the importance of peaceful dialogue between the Thai government and Pattani Muslims while ensuring that Thailand's sovereignty, dignity, and integrity are respected.

The OIC's criticism received a positive response from the Thai government. They dispatched a delegation led by Nissai Vejajiva and a special envoy of the Thai Minister of Foreign Affairs, Dr. Surakiart Sathirathai, to meet with the OIC Secretary-General on March 5, 2005. This visit was an initiative by Thailand in response to the OIC's concerns about the situation in Southern Thailand (Sharqieh, 2012). During the meeting, the Thai delegation explained the background of the violence in the southern region and the steps the government had taken to restore stability. Regarding the incidents at Krue Se and Tak Bai, the government had formed a

fact-finding team and implemented corrective actions, including disciplinary measures against those involved and compensation for the victims. The delegation also affirmed the strong commitment of the Thai government to promote peace and harmony by addressing economic, educational, and social issues in the region.

The OIC Secretary-General appreciated the information conveyed and promised to relay it to the OIC member countries. He emphasized that the OIC would respect Thailand's sovereignty, would not support any separatist actions, and deplored the killing of innocent people, regardless of their religious beliefs. Additionally, he expressed the OIC's readiness to expand cooperation and assistance in the Thai government's efforts to enhance the economic welfare of the Muslim community in the south (Askew, 2010). He also highlighted the importance of completing the independent investigation related to the violent incidents of 2004. During this meeting, he accepted an invitation from the Thai Minister of Foreign Affairs to visit Thailand before the OIC Foreign Ministers' Conference in Sana'a, Yemen, at the end of June 2005 (Organization of Islamic Cooperation, 2005).

The OIC accepted the invitation in 2005, marking their official involvement in conflict resolution efforts in Southern Thailand. The visit aimed to directly observe the conditions of the Malay Muslim community in the region. The OIC delegation was led by Ambassador Syed Qasim Al-Masri and included experts and relevant officials. The findings from their observations were presented at the Foreign Ministers' Conference in Sana'a. The OIC delegation was granted access to government offices in Southern Thailand to facilitate their observations and overcome obstacles in negotiations. The goal was to ensure that Muslims in the southern region could enjoy their rights as citizens and to halt violent actions by security forces against Muslim citizens. In this way, the delegation supported peace and stability efforts while respecting Thailand's sovereignty and territorial integrity. Al-Masri affirmed that necessary measures would be taken to punish those involved in violence and to provide compensation to the victims. He also emphasized the OIC's presence to prevent future violations or violent acts involving the Muslim community in Thailand. The Thai government expressed its commitment to fully cooperate with the OIC in seeking solutions to the problems faced by Muslims in Southern Thailand and improving their quality of life (Ramcharan, 2018).

In the framework of conflict resolution, the OIC delegation collected facts and concluded that the unrest was not rooted in religious discrimination but rather in cultural neglect in the south. This neglect triggered the conflict in Southern Thailand. Therefore, Al-Masri emphasized the importance of the Thai government allowing the Malay Muslim community to develop their culture and language. After the visit, the OIC Secretary-General continued to monitor the situation in Southern Thailand. However, the conflict had not fully subsided. On October 18, 2005, the OIC issued a statement of concern, emphasizing the need for immediate peaceful

dialogue to convey the positive aspirations of the people of Southern Thailand, so they could preserve their cultural identity and manage local affairs as guaranteed by the Thai government (Chalermripinyorat, 2020). He also reiterated the importance of respecting human rights, especially in Southern Thailand.

The Thai government responded positively. In a press conference in November 2006, the OIC Secretary-General welcomed the constructive steps taken by Prime Minister Surayud Chulanod, who committed to achieving peace and justice through negotiations for the issues in Southern Thailand. The Prime Minister apologized to the Southern Thai Muslim community for the mistakes made by the previous government, which resulted in many casualties. He also initiated investigations into missing persons since the 2004 riots and expressed willingness to reinstate the Southern Province Administrative Council (Organization of Islamic Cooperation, 2006).

Observing these policies, the OIC Secretary-General was optimistic about finding a peaceful solution to the conflict in Southern Thailand. He expressed the OIC's readiness to contribute in any possible way to achieve the desired peace and reaffirmed the willingness to cooperate with Thailand to build security and stability in the south. In 2007, the Thai government officially invited the OIC Secretary-General, İhsanoğlu, to visit Thailand. The visit took place from April 30 to May 1, 2007, during which he met with high-ranking Thai officials, including Prime Minister General Surayud Chulanod; National Security Council Secretary-General Sonthi Boonyaratglin; Minister of Foreign Affairs Nitya Phibulsongkram; and Minister of Home Affairs Dr. Surin Pitsuwan. He also visited the Islamic Center of Thailand Foundation and held discussions with representatives from the Muslim community.

In discussions with the Thai government, the Secretary-General conveyed the OIC's deep concerns over the situation in the southern region. He advised accelerating the ongoing accountability process as a means to build trust with the Malay Muslims and to grant them greater responsibility over their own affairs within the scope of the Thai constitution. Based on his advice, the Thai government reaffirmed its commitment to resolving the issues occurring in the south.

The OIC delegation also requested the provision of educational facilities in the region by including Islamic subjects in the curriculum and allowing Muslims to apply Sharia law in family (civil) matters. Additionally, the Secretary-General asked the Thai government to announce a general amnesty for those involved in violence in the south. At the end of the meeting, both the OIC and the Thai government praised each other and decided to deepen cooperation. They expressed concern over the violent conflict that had resulted in many deaths, both Muslim and non-Muslim, and emphasized that violence should not be used as a tool to solve problems (Organization of Islamic Cooperation, 2007).



In addressing the Pattani Muslim issue, the OIC not only sought cooperation with the Thai government to find solutions for Southern Thailand but also attempted to involve Malay Muslim groups in the peace process in 2009. The OIC's engagement with these groups began with the Pattani United Liberation Organization (PULO). PULO President Al Haj Abu Yasir Fikri was invited to the OIC Secretariat. PULO conveyed that the conflict stemmed from the abolition of the Pattani Malay Sultanate by Thailand in 1902 and the lack of recognition of the Malay ethnic identity. They proposed six solutions, including international intervention, granting special status to the southern region, recognition of the Malay ethnicity and language, acknowledgment of Islamic law, conducting a referendum under international supervision, and initiating dialogue with all liberation groups. After hearing PULO's perspectives, the OIC issued recommendations in May 2009 in Damascus, Syria. The OIC expressed concern over the lack of progress in the Thai government's commitments and planned to engage member countries with strong ties to Thailand to help implement the agreements (Pattani Independence News Agency, 2009).

Malaysia, as an OIC member country close to Thailand, then acted as a facilitator. This process led to Thailand agreeing to dialogue with the National Revolutionary Front (BRN) in 2013. The first meeting involving Malaysia took place on June 8, 2009, where both countries agreed to enhance cooperation for peace through education, employment, and entrepreneurship (Funston, 2010). The OIC continued to reaffirm its commitment through various resolutions, including Resolution No. 1/37-MM in 2010, emphasizing the importance of dialogue, cultural recognition, and economic and social development in the south (Organization of Islamic Cooperation, 2010). However, the conflict persisted, marked by explosions in Yala and Narathiwat in 2012 that resulted in casualties and injuries. The OIC again regretted these acts of terror and reiterated its prohibition of actions that kill innocent people, cause numerous victims, and lead to economic losses. It emphasized expanding cooperation with Thailand, an observer state in the OIC, to create peace and tranquility in the southern border provinces (Organization of Islamic Cooperation, 2012).

On July 6, 2013, the OIC Secretary-General met with Thai Prime Minister Yingluck Shinawatra in Istanbul. Other high-ranking Thai officials attended, including Deputy Prime Minister Surapong Tovichakchaikul and the Minister of Foreign Affairs. The discussion focused on the situation in Southern Thailand and the relationship between the government and the Muslim communities in the region. The Prime Minister expressed the government's willingness to engage positively with the OIC on issues in the southern border provinces and emphasized the desire to secure peace and stability.

Additionally, the Prime Minister informed that the government was in the process of lifting the legal emergency status in the southern region. Progress had also been made in education,

with the establishment of schools and religious learning centers serving the local population in early 2013. She reiterated the government's desire to be involved in a peaceful solution to Southern Thailand's problems and hoped for OIC support in the peace process. The government had also made an agreement with liberation groups for a ceasefire during Ramadan.

The Secretary-General thanked the Prime Minister for her goodwill. The OIC encouraged Thai authorities to accelerate the ongoing confidence-building measures and to address the root causes of the problem through a comprehensive approach. The OIC welcomed these steps as progress and reaffirmed its readiness to support confidence-building, dialogue, and economic development in the region through various agencies of the Islamic Development Bank (IDB). The OIC emphasized its position in supporting all peaceful initiatives that guarantee human rights and foster mutual understanding, dialogue, and cooperation for the advancement of all Thai society (Organization of Islamic Cooperation, 2013).

Following this meeting, the OIC issued Resolution No. 1/40-MM in 2013 during the 40th meeting of the Council of Foreign Ministers in Conakry, Republic of Guinea. In points 14 to 16 of the resolution, the OIC:

1. Commended the efforts of the Secretary-General, the Thai government, and representatives of the Southern Thai Muslim population, providing them the opportunity to manage their internal affairs, preserve their culture, language, and religion, and manage natural resources without neglecting the country's constitution and territorial integrity.
2. Welcomed the signing of the General Consensus on the Peace Dialogue Process between the Thai government and representatives of the BRN on February 28, 2013. This call for dialogue represents the Southern Thai Muslims based on a clear program to understand all issues concerning Islam.
3. Appealed to the Thai government to do its utmost and expand dialogue to achieve justice and a permanent solution to the problem, in accordance with the 2007 press release (Organization of Islamic Cooperation, 2013).

In 2013, Malaysia again acted as a facilitator between the Thai government and the BRN. The BRN made five demands to the Thai government, including recognition as representatives of the Southern Thai Muslims, appointing Malaysia as a mediator rather than a facilitator, involving ASEAN countries, the OIC, and NGOs in the peace process, recognition of the existence and sovereignty of the Pattani Malay nation, and the release of all Pattani fighters from prison (McCargo, 2014).

The OIC's efforts continued until 2015 with the issuance of Resolution No. 1/42, which supported the continuation of the peaceful dialogue process with Malaysia as a facilitator and encouraged both parties to take confidence-building measures in initiating the dialogue (Organization of Islamic Cooperation, 2015). Considering developments since 2005, where the OIC succeeded in opening communication channels with conflicting parties, it can be said that the role and function of the OIC as an international organization have been achieved. Meetings between the OIC and the Thai government received positive responses, and liberation groups like PULO were also involved. By appointing Malaysia as a facilitator, positive changes began to emerge. The OIC continued to monitor the ongoing conflict, issued resolutions, and emphasized the importance of cultural and linguistic freedom for the Southern Thai Muslim community. The organization also supported every action taken by the Thai government in seeking peace, demonstrating its commitment to resolving the Pattani Muslim issue in Southern Thailand.

### ***Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah in Addressing Conflict***

The Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) is committed to promoting good and avoiding harm, or in Islamic terms, known as "attracting benefit and repelling harm" (*jalb al-maṣālifi wa dar' al-mafāsidi*). This principle aligns with *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah*, the higher objectives of Islamic law, which aim to protect and preserve human well-being. In addressing the conflict in Pattani, Southern Thailand, the OIC applies this principle to achieve peace and justice for the Muslim community in the region.

*Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah* emphasizes five key objectives that must be safeguarded: protection of religion (*fiifz al-dīn*), life (*fiifz al-nafs*), intellect (*fiifz al-'aql*), lineage (*fiifz al-nasl*), and property (*fiifz al-māl*) (Dwiono, Ja'far, & Haryadi, 2024). In the context of the Pattani conflict, the OIC's efforts to protect religion are evident through its advocacy for the Thai government to respect religious freedom. The OIC underscores the importance of recognizing the Malay-Muslim cultural and religious identity, enabling the Muslim community in Pattani to practice their faith without restrictions or discrimination.

In its effort to protect life, the OIC strongly condemns all forms of violence and human rights violations occurring in Pattani. The organization calls for an end to repressive actions and demands accountability for perpetrators of violence. By promoting peaceful dialogue between the Thai government and the Muslim Pattani groups, the OIC seeks to prevent further bloodshed and protect the lives of civilians, ensuring that stability and security can be restored. Safeguarding intellect is another crucial aspect of the OIC's mission (Budiana et al., 2020; Çinar, 2021). The organization supports increased access to education for the Muslim community in Pattani by encouraging the Thai government to include Islamic studies and the Malay language in school curricula. Furthermore, the OIC advocates for the establishment of educational

institutions and learning centers that cater to the specific needs of the local community. Through education, the OIC aims to empower the people of Pattani so they can actively contribute to social and economic development (Dusuki & Abdullah, 2024).

To protect lineage, the OIC strives to ensure that future generations in Pattani can live in a peaceful and prosperous environment. By facilitating reconciliation and encouraging long-term solutions, the OIC seeks to create conditions that support the growth and stability of families and society. This effort includes urging the Thai government to end the state of emergency in the region and replace it with a more humane and inclusive approach (Mahfudz, 2023). In terms of protecting property, the OIC encourages the Thai government and the international community to improve the economic well-being of the Muslim community in Pattani. The OIC advocates for economic development programs, job creation, and infrastructure investment in the region. By reducing poverty and economic inequality, the OIC hopes to address one of the root causes of the conflict and promote sustainable peace.

Overall, the OIC's approach to handling the conflict in Pattani reflects a strong commitment to Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah. By focusing on the protection of religion, life, intellect, lineage, and property, the OIC seeks to achieve peace and social justice for the Muslim community in Pattani (Jamilah & Abdullah, 2023). This approach is implemented while respecting the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Thailand, with the aim of finding solutions that are acceptable to all parties and contribute to regional stability as a whole.

## Conclusion

the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC)'s efforts to resolve the conflict in Pattani, Southern Thailand, are firmly rooted in the principles of Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah, which seek to promote the greater good and prevent harm. The OIC's focus on protecting religion, life, intellect, lineage, and property demonstrates a comprehensive approach to conflict resolution that aligns with the fundamental objectives of Islamic law. By advocating for religious freedom, condemning violence, promoting education, ensuring future generations' well-being, and supporting economic development, the OIC plays a pivotal role in striving for peace and justice in the region. The OIC's actions reflect a commitment to resolving the long-standing Pattani conflict in a way that respects the cultural and religious identity of the Muslim community while simultaneously upholding the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Thailand. Through peaceful dialogue, collaboration with the Thai government, and international advocacy, the OIC aims to facilitate a balanced and just resolution to the Pattani issue.

Despite the significant role of the OIC in addressing the Pattani conflict, several areas warrant further exploration. Future research could examine the long-term impact of the OIC's interventions on both the Muslim community in Pattani and Thailand's broader social and

political landscape. Specifically, the effectiveness of educational initiatives and economic development programs spearheaded by the OIC could be assessed in terms of their contribution to reducing poverty and social inequality, which are key drivers of conflict. Additionally, comparative studies could be conducted to analyze the OIC's conflict resolution strategies in other Muslim minority regions facing similar challenges. Such research could offer insights into best practices and innovative approaches that can be applied in different contexts. Lastly, an in-depth investigation into the role of local actors, including religious leaders, civil society organizations, and the youth, could provide a clearer understanding of how grassroots efforts align with or diverge from the OIC's broader objectives. These research avenues would contribute to a more nuanced understanding of how Islamic principles of conflict resolution, as embodied in Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah, can be operationalized in modern peacebuilding efforts across the Muslim world and beyond.

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