FROM MEDINA TO NORTHERN NIGERIA: RECLAIMING ISLAMIC PRINCIPLES FOR 21ST-CENTURY CONFLICT RESOLUTION

Shehu Hashimu
Department of Peace, Security and Risk-Disaster Management
Umaru Ali Shinkafi Polytechnic, Sokoto
shehuhashimu67@gmail.com

Mathias Jarikre PhD
Department of Peace Studies and Conflict Resolution
National Open University Abuja

Bayo T. Asala PhD
Department of Peace Studies and Conflict Resolution
National Open University Abuja

Abstract

In the contemporary "poly-crisis" era, Northern Nigeria faces an existential threat from ethno-religious polarization, rural banditry, and insurgent ideologies. Contemporary secular-liberal peacebuilding models in Northern Nigeria have faced challenges in securing grassroots legitimacy, this study argues that a return to indigenous Islamic jurisprudential heritage offers a superior roadmap for stability. This paper critically examines the This research critically examines the Medina Model (622 CE), framed here as an early inclusive social contract—and its historical adaptation within the Sokoto Caliphate (1804 CE) to propose a tripartite synthesis for modern Nigeria.The study utilizes a qualitative multi-disciplinary methodology, integrating historical hermeneutics with legal comparative analysis between the Maqasid al-Sharia (Higher Objectives of Islamic Law) and the 1999 Nigerian Constitution. Grounded in Galtung's Theory of Positive Peace and the Islamic variant of Social Contract Theory (Mithaq), the research identifies three immutable pillars for conflict de-escalation: Tawhid al-Insaniyya (Oneness of Humanity), Karama (Human Dignity), and 'Adl (Absolute Justice).Findings demonstrate that the "Sharia-Secular" tension in Nigeria is largely terminological; when the state protects life and property, it fulfills the Maqasid. Furthermore, empirical reviews of Sulh (restorative justice) in states like Adamawa and Kaduna reveal higher long-term resolution rates compared to retributive litigation. The paper concludes by proposing a strategic implementation roadmap that theologizes constitutional citizenship as a modern Mithaq.It also recommends the formal integration of traditional rulers as "Guardians of the Covenant," and advocates for a "Functional Sharia" focused on public interest (Maslaha). This study proves that peaceful coexistence in Northern Nigeria is not a departure from heritage, but a reclamation of it.

Keywords: Medina Charter, Sokoto Caliphate, Mithaq, Positive Peace, Maqasid al-Sharia, Northern Nigeria.

INTRODUCTION

The twenty-first century is increasingly characterised by what international relations theorists term a "poly-crisis"—a simultaneous intersection of geopolitical conflict, ideological polarization, and the erosion of social cohesion. While contemporary peace-building frameworks have historically relied on secular-liberal models of governance, there is a recent scholarship has increasingly examined.the social sciences of the role of "Religious Peacebuilding" in providing sustainable, culturally resonant solutions to global instability (Abu-Nimer, 2025). Within this context, the Medina Model—the pluralistic governance established by the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) in the seventh century—emerges not merely as a historical artifact, but as a sophisticated framework for modern pluralistic governance. The central pillar of this model is the Mithaq al-Madina (Constitution of Medina), a document that arguably represents the world's first inclusive social contract. Scholars such as Steven (2025), Kent (2019),Shehu (2022), Afsarudiin (2023) suggests that the Constitution established a "civic-religious","religious liberty", "religious pluralism"hybrid state that successfully integrated diverse religious and tribal factions into a single, functional political body based on the principle of equal citizenship. This paper argues that the Islamic principles of 'Adl (Justice) and Karama (Human Dignity) provide a robust foundation for Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) that transcends the limitations of "negative peace"—defined simply as the absence of violence—and moves toward a "positive peace" rooted in systemic equity (Galtung (2013) cited in Sachedina, 2024). Furthermore, this study critically examines how classical concepts such as Sulh (amicable settlement) and Tahkim (arbitration) can be recontextualized to address 21st-century challenges, including interfaith tensions and state-building in post-conflict zones. The Maqāṣid al-Sharīʿah is a critical issue in this study because the context ofMaqāṣid al-Sharīʿah is classically structured around the protection of five core essentials (al-Darūriyyāt al-Khamsah): Religion (Dīn), Life (Nafs), Intellect (ʿAql), Progeny (Nasl), and Property (Māl). Contemporary academic discourse emphasizes that these objectives, as articulated by classical scholars like Al-Ghazali and Al-Shatibi, fundamentally aim at Maṣlaḥah (public welfare) and the prevention of harm (Razi, 2026). This philosophy connects seamlessly with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which prioritizes human well-being, environmental stewardship, and social justice. Researchers note that while the UN SDGs provide a comprehensive roadmap for development, Maqāṣid provides the "normative legitimacy" and ethical motivation required to ensure these goals are pursued with integrity (Razi, 2026; Harahap et al., 2023).

The relationship between Maqāṣid and peace and security—specifically SDG 16 (Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions)—is a primary focus of recent scholarship. Institutional Accountability such as "Shariah screening" for investments and Islamic governance models promote transparency and accountability. By prohibiting illicit practices like gambling or fraud, these instruments serve as mechanisms for building strong, ethical institutions, directly supporting SDG 16.6 (Jan et al., 2021). Maqāṣid offers a substantive approach to justice that transcends mere procedural compliance. By prioritizing the "protection of life" (Ḥifẓ al-Nafs),

this framework actively rejects aggression and supports reconciliation, providing a spiritual foundation for preventing conflict and fostering sustainable peace (Razi, 2026). In non-theocratic but religiously vibrant contexts, leaders increasingly integrate values like Amānah (trust) and ʿAdl (justice) into public administration. This creates a "micro-foundation" of faith-driven leadership that fosters transparency, equity, and pluralism, which are essential for maintaining social peace in diverse societies (Riskawati, 2025).

Modern scholars that include Harahap et al., (2023), Suryandari, (2026), Ibrahim, (2026) are moving beyond theoretical discourse toward "applied policy" frameworks. Current research emphasizes three specific avenues for operationalizing this alignment. 1) Islamic financial mechanisms (e.g., Zakat, Waqf) are increasingly analyzed as tools for poverty alleviation (SDG 1) and economic equity (SDG 10), effectively channeling capital toward projects that fulfill both religious and global development objectives. Da'wah (Islamic outreach/educational) institutions are being transformed into strategic actors that integrate Maqāṣid-based management frameworks to advance quality education (SDG 4) and institutional integrity (SDG 16). Recent studies by Shehu (2026), Lamido (2026) demonstrate that Islamic legal principles—when interpreted through a Maqāṣid lens—support justice (al-ʿAdl), equality (al-Musāwah), and human dignity (Karāmah al-Insān), providing a strategic basis for advancing gender equality (SDG 5) within Muslim-majority communities.

Modern globalism is frequently critiqued for its implicit reliance on Western epistemologies that prioritize material growth and individualistic rights. Scholars argue that this model of globalism often results in "normative imposition," where development strategies ignore the ethical ontologies of non-Western societies (Razi, 2026; Yahaya, 2026). The rise of digital globalism poses a specific challenge to the preservation of the intellect. Algorithms and AI-driven platforms, which constitute the infrastructure of modern global commerce and discourse, often operate without religious or cultural filters. Modern globalism has not eliminated conflict; it has transformed it into "new wars"—conflicts involving non-state actors, digital misinformation, and systemic economic instability. In the context of Northwest Nigeria, for instance, globalist influences (economic pressures, globalized security threats, and digital propaganda) often exacerbate local fissures (Arikewuyo-Ajumobi, 2026). The scholarly consensus is that global security frameworks (like those found in SDG 16) are most effective when they partner with local, faith-based mediation mechanisms. By recognizing that peace in local contexts is often grounded in religious identity, the global community can leverage Maqāṣid to foster more resilient and localized security solutions (Razi, 2026). The critical discourse points to a shift from procedural globalism (following UN rules for the sake of international approval) to substantive integration (implementing development goals because they are morally mandated by Maqāṣid).

By aligning the Maqasid al-Sharia (Higher Objectives of Islamic Law) with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 16 (Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions), this research demonstrates that Islamic principles are not an obstacle to modern globalism, but a vital catalyst

for regional security (Kamali, 2024). Ultimately, this paper seeks to prove that the transition from mere "tolerance" to "active mutual flourishing" is achievable through a reclaimed understanding of the Medina Model, offering a roadmap for coexistence in an increasingly fragmented world. In part of West Africa, Northern Nigeria in particular, the failure of imported Western-centric governance models to resolve deep-seated communal animosities has led to a renewed interest in indigenous and faith-based frameworks (Kamali, 2024).

Nigeria, as Africa's most populous (NPC, 2006) and religiously diverse nation, stands at the centre of this struggle. Northern Nigeria, in particular, has faced decades of strain from the Boko Haram insurgency, rural banditry, and farmer-herder disputes. This dismisses resource scarcity and political marginalization as "framing" devices to elevate the preferred "Social Contract" framing. This is theoretical cherry-picking without engaging with the robust political economy literature on Nigerian conflict.

Historically, this region was the site of the Sokoto Caliphate, a 19th-century reformist state that successfully adapted the Medina Model to manage a pluralistic society (Yandaki,1998). Leaders like Sheikh Usman danFodio emphasized 'Adl (Justice) as the primary legitimacy of the state. However, modern interventions in the North often focus on "Negative Peace"—the mere absence of violence—while ignoring the restorative and sacred nature of the Mithaq (Covenant) that once governed these lands. This paper argues that the path to stability in Northern Nigeria lies in the tripartite synthesis of Medinan pluralism, Sokoto's administrative justice, and the modern Nigerian legal framework. It posits that the 1999 Constitution can be theologized as a modern Mithaq, transforming civic duties into religious obligations. By reclaiming this heritage, the Nigerian state can move from retributive litigation to restorative harmony, providing a model for peaceful coexistence that is locally rooted and globally relevant.

This study is necessitated by the urgent need to move from retributive litigation to restorative harmony in Northern Nigeria. By theologising the 1999 Constitution as a modern Mithaq, this research provides a framework to integrate Sulh (amicable settlement) into the formal judicial system, reducing the burden on courts. A de-radicalisation tool that uses the "Civic Ummah" concept to challenge insurgent ideologies and a tripartite synthesis of Medinan pluralism, Sokoto administrative justice, and modern Nigerian law, proving that Islamic heritage is compatible with democratic stability.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Despite the deep historical roots of Islamic pluralism in Northern Nigeria, contemporary peacebuilding efforts remain heavily reliant on retributive, state-centric legal mechanisms that lack grassroots religious legitimacy. State-centric peacebuilding in Nigeria Northern primarily relies on formal institutional frameworks, often emphasizing military, judicial, and administrative interventions. However, contemporary scholarship like Loreta (2010), Jasmin (2010), Charles (2007) and Galtung (2010) argues that these top-down approaches often

overlook the "lived realities" of conflict-affected populations. While the state utilizes military force (the Nigerian Armed Forces) and formal judiciary systems to maintain order, research suggests these tools are often reactive (Emmanuel, 2025). Studies indicate that while military task forces may provide temporary stability, they frequently struggle to build long-term trust because they are seen as distant from local grievances. Furthermore, the reliance on adversarial court systems for community disputes is often criticized for failing to facilitate genuine reconciliation, as they prioritize punitive outcomes over restorative ones (Lamidi, 2021).

There is a growing academic consensus that the "state monopoly" on peacebuilding is insufficient in Nigeria's complex, pluralistic landscape. Recent research highlights that non-state actors, including NGOs and community associations, have emerged as pivotal entities that bridge the gap between state security and local needs. Their role is increasingly studied as a necessary check and partner to traditional state-centric models (Ibrahim, 2026). Traditional rulers—such as emirs and district heads—are identified as essential mediators who possess the "deep-rooted influence" required to facilitate community-level dialogue and reintegration (Emmanuel, 2025). Emerging studies, for instance, Shehu (2022), Elisha (2022), Dawood (2022) emphasize that peace is most sustainable when state institutions partner with faith-based organizations and local leadership. This creates a "hybrid" architecture that is more culturally legitimate and responsive to the structural roots of violence, such as poverty and systemic inequality.

This has resulted in a widening gap between constitutional law and communal values, leading to the failure of secular judicial systems to resolve "farmer-herder" conflicts, as the settlements often lack the moral "buy-in" of the parties involved. The exploitation of religious narratives by extremist groups to justify exclusionary violence, due to a lack of a clear, state-backed theological counter-narrative based on the Medina Model. The marginalisation of traditional and religious authorities (Emirs and Clerics) who, despite possessing the most social capital, are excluded from the formal "Social Contract" of the 1999 Constitution.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Conceptual Review

Mithaq (Covenant/Sacred Social Contract): In the context of Northern Nigeria, Mithaq transcends the modern secular definition of a "treaty" or "memorandum of understanding." According to the theoretical conceptual review of Mithaq (covenant), the concept is defined as a foundational instrument that establishes the terms and conditions of human existence, governing both the vertical relationship between the divine and the human, and the horizontal relationships within society (Rane, 2023). Within Islamic legal and political theory, Mithaq—often associated with the term 'ahd—serves as a sacred commitment that elevates social obligations to the level of divine mandates, prioritising principles such as justice ('adl), trustworthiness (amāna), and the fulfilment of promises (wafāʾbi'l-ʿahd) (Rane, 2023).

The theoretical framework for Mithaq is deeply rooted in the Maqāṣid al-Sharīʿah (higher objectives of the law), which posits that such covenants are designed to protect essential human interests, including dignity, lineage, and social welfare (Rane, 2023). Scholars emphasize that the Mithaq is not merely a legalistic contract but a "sacred covenant" (mithaqghalizh) that functions as a moral and spiritual framework for governance and inter-group relations (Busriyanti, 2025). This conceptualisation provides a structure for pluralism and coexistence, as famously illustrated by the Mithaq al-Madinah (Constitution of Medina), which established a socio-political order that recognised and protected the rights of diverse religious and cultural groups (Nabi, 2025). In modern academic discourse, this theoretical review serves to bridge the gap between classical jurisprudential texts and contemporary needs for social harmony, framing the Mithaq as a timeless mechanism for managing conflict and ensuring institutional accountability in multicultural societies (Nabi, 2025).

According to the sociological functional analysis of Mithaq, the concept is examined as an operational "social technology" that facilitates group cohesion, regulates power dynamics, and manages inter-communal friction within a pluralistic society. Rather than focusing on its theological origin, this perspective evaluates how the Mithaq functions as a practical mechanism to mitigate conflict and maintain institutional stability (Ullah, 2025).Within this framework, the Mithaq is viewed as a structural instrument that converts abstract religious morality into concrete social norms. It effectively lowers the cost of cooperation among diverse societal actors by institutionalising mutual trust and accountability (Farhana, 2025). In contexts of fragility or social fragmentation, the Mithaq performs a vital corrective function: it creates a shared normative space that transcends parochial interests, thereby fostering a collective identity essential for sustainable peacebuilding (Bakti, 2026).

Sociological studies further highlight that the functional power of the Mithaq lies in its capacity for "adaptive institutionalisation." When applied as a social contract, it enables the integration of traditional governance models with modern civil requirements, allowing communities to navigate complex crises—such as banditry or communal riots—by reinforcing the sanctity of shared agreements as the ultimate safeguard against social anarchy (Bakti, 2026; Ullah, 2025). Thus, the Mithaq serves as a primary driver of social capital, transforming a fractured polity into a resilient, cohesive, and rule-bound community.

Unlike a secular contract, which is often transactional and enforceable only by state coercion, a Mithaq is a "tripartite bond" involving the parties and the Divine. In Islamic thought, violating a Mithaq is not just a legal breach but a spiritual transgression. Afsaruddin (2023) argues that the Mithaq al-Madina established a Civic Ummah where the bond of citizenship (Mu'ahada) was as legally binding as the bond of faith. Sachedina (2024) posits that the Mithaq framework allows for "differentiated integration." In Northern Nigeria, this means Christians and Muslims are not merely "tolerated" but are covenanted partners with a mutual religious obligation to protect one another's sanctity. This provides a stronger foundation for coexistence than secular laws, which are often viewed with scepticism in traditional Northern communities.

Maqasid al-Sharia (The Higher Objectives of Law): The Maqasid framework serves as the "Key Performance Indicator" (KPI) for peaceful coexistence. Historically, the Maqasid focused on five essentials: Din (Faith), Nafs (Life), 'Aql (Intellect), Nasl (Progeny), and Mal (Property). A critical modern interpretation by Kamali (2024) suggests that "Protection of Faith" (Hifz al-Din) in a pluralistic society like Nigeria must be (Shehu,2024) interpreted as the protection of freedom of religion for all, not just Muslims. Sanusi (2024) argues that any policy in Northern Nigeria—whether it concerns land use in farmer-herder disputes or anti-banditry laws—must be measured by its ability to protect Nafs (Life) and Mal (Property). If a law fails to protect the life of a non-Muslim farmer or the property of a Muslim herder, it is, by definition, a failure of Sharia objectives. This shifts the focus from "literalist" law to "outcome-based" justice.

Positive vs. Negative Peace (’Adl and Ihsan): The distinction between "Negative" and "Positive" peace is where Islamic ethics meet modern Peace and Conflict Studies. Negative Peace is not the mere absence of active violence (e.g., a ceasefire in the Middle Belt). In Islamic terms, this is a "stagnant truce" that lacks moral depth. Positive Peace is defined by the presence of ’Adl (Absolute Justice) and Ihsan (Social Excellence/Compassion). Abu-Nimer (2025) argues that Northern Nigeria has often settled for "Negative Peace," which allows grievances to fester underground. True Islamic coexistence requires Positive Peace, where systemic injustices (marginalization, poverty, land rights) are addressed through ’Adl. Furthermore, Ihsan goes beyond the law; it is the "extra mile" of forgiveness and communal service that heals the psychological scars of conflict. Abba & Usman (2025) note that without Ihsan, a legal settlement remains fragile and prone to collapse at the next provocation.

The scholarly discourse surrounding the Medina Model has shifted toward viewing the seventh-century framework as a prototype for modern pluralism. Recent research by Afsaruddin (2023) emphasizes that early Islamic governance was built upon civic contractually rather than religious hegemony, a sentiment echoed by Ahmad and Muhammad (2025), who demonstrate the legal relevance of the Medina Charter to contemporary multi-religious states.

"COMMUNICATION AND CONSENSUS-BUILDING IN ISLAMIC GOVERNANCE"

The study of "Communication and Consensus-Building in Islamic Governance" suggests a model of statecraft where the legitimacy of power is derived not from top-down imposition, but from the continuous, active, and sincere engagement between the leader and the governed. This change in basic assumptions—from commanding to consulting—is what elevates governance from simple administration to a holistic system of peacebuilding. In the Prophetic methodology, the primary tool of statecraft was language—specifically, language used to create alignment among disparate social groups. It also characterised by a governance structure that remained physically and psychologically accessible to all members of the community. Governance was not conducted from a distance; it was embedded in the daily lives of the citizens. This proximity ensured that communication was not filtered through layers of bureaucracy, which often distort truth and create resentment. By being accessible, the leadership could identify potential conflicts

before they manifested as violence, allowing for "preventative communication" that addressed grievances at the nascent stage.

The integration of communication and consensus-building in Islamic governance is rooted in the Prophetic methodology of Shūrā (consultation), which emphasizes collective decision-making, inclusivity, and transparent dialogue. Contemporary research identifies these strategies as critical frameworks for modern political stability and conflict mitigation (Busari, 2025; Naz, 2025). Shūrā (consultation) is often misunderstood as merely a request for advice. In a functional sense, it was a rigorous process of "consensus-seeking." It functioned as a feedback loop where the leader acted as the facilitator of a collective intelligence process. The methodology involved. This model functioned through several layers of communication. The Prophetic methodology of governance is defined by the principle of Shūrā, which mandates that leadership should not be autocratic but rather consultative, involving a feedback loop between the governors and the governed (Naz, 2025). Shūrā serves as an inclusive governance system that encourages participatory decision-making. By engaging diverse stakeholders, leaders can integrate varied perspectives, ensuring that policies are both just (‘adl) and broadly accepted (Busari, 2025).Prophetic communication is grounded in principles such as sidq (honesty), amānah (trustworthiness), tablīgh (delivering truth), and faṭānah (intelligence) (Tanjung& Abdullah, 2025). These qualities facilitate a communication environment where information is transparent, thereby reducing the potential for misunderstanding and slander

Recent scholarship highlights that Prophetic communication strategies are highly effective in modern conflict resolution, as they move beyond mere mediation to foster deeper social harmony.The identification of Hadith-based communication models, such as the use of qaulanlayyina (gentle speech), act as a dialogical mechanism to de-escalate tension (Abdullah, 2025). When conflicts arise, these frameworks encourage flexible mediation and rehabilitative communication, which are essential for maintaining stability in pluralistic societies (DarmansyahSiagian, 2025).The fact that Islamic conflict resolution traditionally utilizes Tahkeem (arbitration) and Sulh (conciliation). Sulh is particularly significant as it seeks to establish common ground between parties characterized by mutual respect and justice, rather than simply imposing a settlement (Ahmad, n.d.).

Contemporary researchers argue that the Prophetic governance model remains relevant for modern Muslim-majority states facing challenges such as political corruption and social polarization.The institutionalization of ethics through mechanisms like Shūrā provides a check on power. By incorporating consultative panels into formal government structures, modern states can improve accountability and public trust (Busari, 2025; Naz, 2025).Some scholars suggest that the consultative nature of Shūrā shares fundamental similarities with democratic principles, such as representative participation and the rule of law. However, they emphasize that Islamic governance adds a transcendental moral layer, where ethical accountability is seen as a duty to both the community and the divine (Busari, 2025; Thielicke-Witt, 2025).

The methodology of the Prophetic period is increasingly identified through its focus on "consensus-building," with Hidayatullah et al. (2023) highlighting these communication strategies as vital for conflict mitigation. Further exploration of the "Civic Ummah" by Al-Karboly (2025) distinguishes between theological belonging and political citizenship, while An-Na'im (2024) explores the synergy between traditional Sharia and the modern social contract. In the realm of human rights, Sachedina (2024) posits that the concept of human dignity (Karama) provides a universal basis for rights that predates Western liberal human rights theories. This aligns with the work of Kamali (2024), who maps the Higher Objectives of Islamic Law (Maqasid al-Sharia) directly to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, particularly regarding peace and justice. The cultural philosophy of peace is further explored by Wani (2023), who identifies the greeting Salam as a foundational social ethicis one of the attributes of Allah' names that is "Ya-Salam"."*Salam*" is also one of the names of Jannah (Paradise) and the inhabitants of paradise will greet each other with '*Salam*'

The Quran says:

> *For them will be a House of Peace with their Lord, He will be their friend, because they practiced righteousness". (Q: 6:127).*
>
> *Their salutation on the Day they meet Him will be "Peace" and He has prepared for them a generous Reward. (Q:35.44).*

It is both a greeting— "As-SalamuAlaikum" (Peace be upon you)—and a divine attribute of Allah: As-Salam (The Source of Peace). Salam represents a holistic state of well-being that reflects spiritual, social, and moral harmony (Ali, 1991).The greetings "As-SalamuAlaikum" in Islam hold deep theological and ethical significance, serving as foundations for peacebuilding and religious harmony. The term reflects peace as a divine principle and moral responsibility that transcends social boundaries, encouraging believers to foster unity, reconciliation, and mutual respect. Scholars like Yusuf Ali (2001) and Abu-Nimer (2003) argue that Salam transcends verbal expression; it represents a commitment to living peacefully with oneself, others, and God. Abu-Nimer explains that this Qur'anic call for complete peace challenges believers to reject conflict and hostility in all its forms, promoting societal stability. By framing peace as an essential part of faith, Islam establishes an ethical obligation for Muslims to become ambassadors of peace within diverse and pluralistic societies.

The Qur'an places significant emphasis on reconciliation as a means to achieve peace, even with perceived adversaries:

"And if they incline to peace, then incline to it [also] and rely upon Allah." (Qur'an 8:61).

This verse demonstrates Islam's commitment to peace as a proactive approach. Tafsir scholars such as Ibn Kathir (1372) interpret this command as a divine encouragement for Muslims to embrace peace and negotiation, rejecting unnecessary violence. In contemporary

scholarship, Esposito (2020) reinforces this understanding, highlighting Islam's preference for peaceful resolution over conflict, a principle applicable in modern conflict-ridden contexts like Northern Nigeria. In multi-religious societies experiencing intercommunal tensions, such as Northern Nigeria, the Qur'an's call for reconciliation can serve as a foundation for interfaith dialogue. Muslim communities can actively engage in peacebuilding efforts that prioritize mutual respect, open communication, and trust-building with Christian neighbours

While Ali (2024) examines the intersection of Fiqh and international law through the sanctity of treaties. Modern scholarship has also sought to reclaim terminology; Sattar (2023) re-centers"Jihad" as a spiritual and social struggle (Jihad al-Nafs) rather than a military endeavour. Theological mandates for dialogue are anchored in the work of Abu-Nimer (2025), who identifies a robust but often overlooked tradition of nonviolence in classical texts. Bakar (2024) explores the concept of "Mutual Recognition" (Li-ta'arafu) as a divine mandate for proactive interfaith engagement, while Abdullah and Mazahir (2023) provide a textual framework for "Unity in Diversity." Education serves as a primary vehicle for these ideals, with Muttaqo et al. (2025) investigating "Religious Moderation" (Wasatiyyah) as a tool against extremism and Idris et al. (2023) reviewing how Islamic humanism shapes global social responsibility.

Finally, the ethics of conflict resolution are analyzed by Yasin-Alsys (2025), who identifies "Relational Restoration" as the goal of Prophetic mediation. Ismail (2025) compares classical Sulh (Reconciliation) with modern mediation techniques, while Huda (2024) addresses the challenges of implementing these ethics in a digital age of misinformation. This is supported by Mazahir's (2023) work on the "Ethics of Disagreement" and Wahab's (2025) documentation of a global shift among the Ulama toward a peace-centric jurisprudence.

THE MEDINA MODEL IN CONTEMPORARY SCHOLARSHIP

The Al-Aqaba Pledges: The legal foundation of the Medina Model was laid through the Pledges of Aqaba, which served as the "pre-constitutional" framework for the new state.The Medina Model (622 CE) represents a seminal shift in political science and Islamic jurisprudence. It was birthed as a deliberate sociological intervention designed to remedy the endemic socio-political chaos of pre-Islamic Yathrib—a city-state then characterised by fractured hegemony and the absence of a centralised legislative authority (Hamidullah, 1975; Al-Sukkari, 2023).Prior to the Prophet's arrival, Yathrib was defined by tribal anarchy. The social fabric was woven through Asabiyyah (narrow tribal solidarity), which prioritised clan loyalty over abstract justice. This culminated in the War of Bu'ath, a protracted conflict between the Aws and Khazraj tribes. The lack of a neutral arbiter meant that every grievance escalated into a generational vendetta, rendering the city-state a "failed state" in modern political parlance (Ibn Hisham, n.d.). The leaders of Yathrib invited the Prophet (PBUH) to assume the role of a neutral arbitrator and sovereign leader, shifting the movement into a "Civico-religious" entity with the mandate to govern.

The Mithaq al-Madina (The Charter of Medina): Often cited as the first written constitution for a multi-religious state, the Mithaq replaced tribalism with a system of contractual citizenship. The Charter replaced blood ties with a Civic Contract. Loyalty shifted from the clan to the Law, and injustice was to be opposed even if the perpetrator was a kinsman (Hamidullah, 1975). Clauses 2 and 25 established a pluralistic polity, stating that the Jews and the Believers formed "one community" (UmmahWahidah), each maintaining their respective religions (Ibn Hisham, n.d.). This academically distinguishes the Ummah as a political community of diverse faiths. Clause 37 mandated a unified military strategy, requiring all signatories to defend the city against external aggression, inextricably linking the survival of the minority to that of the majority. The Mithaqgranted Jewish and pagan tribes the right to follow their own laws while upholding their civic duties to the state (Sachedina, 2024).

Critical Interpretation: From Tribalism to Universalism: In the context of the Northern Nigerian "poly-crisis", the Medina Model provides a robust critique of exclusionary nationalism. It demonstrates that the Islamic "State" was founded not on the erasure of "The Other," but on their legal inclusion and protection. This historical precedent provides legitimacy to the modern Nigerian Constitution, showing that "One Nigeria" is religiously compatible with the values of the Sokoto Caliphate, where leaders like Usman danFodio similarly emphasised ’Adl and the protection of Ahl al-Dhimma (Abba & Usman, 2025).

ISLAM SOCIAL CONTRACT THEORY

The theoretical framework of this paper rests upon three immutable pillars of Islamic jurisprudence. When applied to the Northern Nigerian "poly-crisis"—characterized by ethno-religious tension, insurgency, and resource competition—these pillars provide a normative roadmap for de-escalation and social cohesion.

The Oneness of Humanity (Tawhid al-Insaniyya): Islam posits that all humans share a common origin, effectively dismantling the foundations of racial or ethnic superiority—a primary driver of conflict in the North. In a region where identity politics often pit Hausa, Fulani, Kanuri, and various minority ethnic groups against one another, the concept of Tawhid al-Insaniyya serves as a corrective. It reclassifies diversity not as a source of friction, but as a "divine intentionality" designed for mutual recognition (Ta’aruf). As established in the Quran (49:13):

"O mankind, indeed We have created you from male and female and made you peoples and tribes that you may know one another. Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you" (Quran 49:13).

This pillar directly challenges the "indigene-settler" dichotomy in Nigeria that fuels land disputes. If humanity is one, then the right to life and livelihood is universal, transcending tribal or linguistic affiliations (Sachedina, 2024; Shehu,2024).

Human Dignity (Karama): In Islamic jurisprudence, Karama is an inherent right granted by God to every human being, regardless of faith, gender, or social status. Protecting the life, property, and honour of others is not merely a civic duty but a religious obligation. The Quran says:

> *"And We have certainly honoured the children of Adam and carried them on land and sea and provided for them of the good things and preferred them over much of what We have created in (marked) preference" (Quran 17:70).*

The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) stated: *"None of you [truly] believes until he loves for his brother that which he loves for himself"* (Sahih Bukhari, Hadith 13; Sahih Muslim, Hadith 45). In areas affected by banditry and insurgency, re-establishing the sanctity of Karama is essential. Respecting the dignity of non-combatants and religious minorities in states like Kaduna or Plateau is a direct application of this principle (Afsaruddin, 2023).

Justice and Equity (’Adl): Peace in Islam is examine not as the absence of war, but as the presence of justice. Islam mandates justice even toward those for whom one might feel deep animosity. As stated in the Quran (5:8):

> *"O you who have believed, be persistently standing firm for Allah, witnesses in justice, and let not the hatred of a people prevent you from being just. Be just; that is nearer to righteousness" (Quran 5:8).*

Much of the "farmer-herder" conflict is rooted in a perceived lack of ’Adl regarding grazing routes and crop compensation. Equity (Qist) requires that resources and legal protections be distributed fairly. By applying ’Adl, mediators ensure that settlements are not just temporary truces but equitable resolutions that address the economic survival of both parties (Kamali, 2024).

Historical Frameworks for Pluralism: The Constitution of Medina and the Covenant of Najran serve as the historical "gold standard" for Northern Nigeria. These documents prove that an Islamic administration can coexist with, and protect, non-Muslim citizens.The Prophet (PBUH) granted protection to the Christians of Najran, stating: "*To the Christians of Najran and its neighbouring territories, the security of God and the pledge of His Prophet are extended for their lives, their religion, and their property"* (The Covenant of the Prophet Muhammad with the Christians of the World).This provides historical legitimacy to the modern Nigerian Constitution, showing that "One Nigeria" is religiously compatible with the values of the Sokoto Caliphate and the Borno Empire, which historically managed diverse populations.

Redefining Jihad and Dialogue: It is vital to distinguish the Greater Jihad (internal struggle against greed and tribalism) from the Lesser Jihad (defensive action).1**)** Greater Jihad which was based on the Hadith where the Prophet (PBUH) told returning soldiers: *"You have returned from the lesser jihad to the greater jihad... the struggle of the servant against his desires"* (Bayhaqi,

Kitab al-Zuhd).2) Ethical Codes of Lesser Jihad according to Abu Bakr al-Siddiq (RA), following Prophetic instruction, commanded: *"Do not kill women or children, or an aged, infirm person. Do not cut down fruit-bearing trees. Do not destroy an inhabited place"* (Muwatta Malik, Book 21, Hadith 10). Insurgent groups such as Boko Haram in Northern Nigeria routinely violate these sacred prohibitions.

Husn al-Mujadala (Gracious Dialogue): The term Husn (best/most beautiful) implies that dialogue is not merely a verbal exchange but an aesthetic and ethical performance. According to Quran:

> *"And do not argue with the People of the Scripture except in a way that is best, except for those who commit injustice among them, and say, 'We believe in that which has been revealed to us and revealed to you. And our God and your God is one; and we are Muslims (in submission) to Him.'" (Quran 29:46)*

In the context of the Northern Nigerian interfaith committees, this verse provides a specific methodology. Common ground over polemics here is to emphasize shared revelation ("Our God and your God is one") shifts the focus from theological disputes to shared ethical values. The verse acknowledges that dialogue is suspended or altered when dealing with those who "commit injustice." In Nigeria, this distinguishes between peaceful adherents of other faiths and those who use religion to perpetrate violence or marginalization. This serves as a mandate for the Nigeria Inter-Religious Council (NIREC). It moves the dialogue from "passive tolerance" to "proactive partnership," framing the Christian neighbour not as a theological rival but as a co-believer in a shared moral order (Sachedina, 2024).

Rahma (Mercy) (The Ansar Model for IDP Integration): The Prophet (PBUH) was described as Rahmatanlil-'Alamin—a mercy to all of existence, not just to Muslims. Khilafa (Stewardship) indicating addressing desertification in the North. "*The world is green and beautiful, and Allah has appointed you His stewards over it"* (Sahih Muslim, Hadith 2742).When applied to the humanitarian crisis in Borno, Yobe, and Adamawa states, this principle transforms the treatment of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs). As established in the Quran *"And We have not sent you, (O Muhammad), except as a mercy to the worlds." (Quran 21:107)*. Historically, the Prophet (PBUH) paired each Meccan immigrant (Muhajir) with a local Medinan helper (Ansar) in a bond of brotherhood (Mu'akhah) (Sahih Bukhari, Hadith 2292). This was an expression of Rahma that effectively decentralized the refugee crisis by making the host community primary stakeholders in the displaced person's welfare. In Northern Nigeria, community leaders must be evaluated by their Rahma. A leader who ignores the plight of IDPs, regardless of their ethnic or religious background, fails the primary objective of the Prophetic mission. Mercy manifests in the institutionalization of Zakat and Waqf to provide dignified livelihoods for the displaced, ensuring they are integrated into the social fabric rather than languishing in disenfranchised camps where they are vulnerable to extremist recruitment (Abu-Nimer, 2025).

Khalifah (Stewardship): The concept of Khalifa (Stewardship/Trusteeship) establishes that human beings do not "own" the earth but hold it in trust for the Creator. This is the ultimate "Green Mithaq" for the Sahelian region. The desertification of the Far North is not merely a geographic event; it is a failure of stewardship. When the land is degraded, the herder is forced southward, leading to violent friction with farming communities. The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) said: *"The world is sweet and green, and verily Allah is making you to succeed each other as stewards (Khulafa) in it; and He is seeing how you will acquit yourselves."* (Sahih Muslim, Hadith 2742)**.** According toKamali (2024a), Kamali (2024b), the protection of the environment is an extension of Hifz al-Nafs (Protection of Life). If the land dies, the people die. This hadith provides the theological justification for massive reforestation projects (The Great Green Wall) and sustainable water management. By framing environmental protection as a religious duty (Fard), Northern governors can mobilize the populace more effectively than through secular policy alone. It addresses the "farmer-herder" crisis at its ecological root, fulfilling the duty of Khilafa to ensure the land remains "sweet and green" for future generations.

MAQASID AL-SHARIA AND MODERN GOVERNANCE

The application of the Medina Model in Northern Nigeria is best understood through the intellectual and political reform movement of the early 19th century. Sheikh Usman danFodio did not seek to create a new system; rather, he sought to restore the "Medinan ideal" in the Central Sudan (modern-day Northern Nigeria). Before the 1804 Jihad, the Hausa states were characterized by fragmented leadership and "un-Islamic" practices such as heavy, unjust taxation and the oppression of the poor. Dan Fodio’s primary antecedent was the Prophetic mandate for 'Adl (Justice).Just as the Prophet (PBUH) moved to Yathrib to resolve the Aws-Khazraj conflict, Dan Fodio’s movement sought to provide a central, just authority to replace the warring Hausa kingdoms.In his work Bayan Wujub al-Hijra, Dan Fodio explicitly cited the Medina Model to justify the creation of a state based on the "protection of the five essentials" (Maqasid al-Sharia). A critical historical antecedent for peaceful coexistence in the North is how the Sokoto Caliphate managed religious diversity.Following the Medina Model, the Caliphate established the status of Ahl al-Dhimma (protected people) for non-Muslim communities (often referred to as Maguzawa or neighbouring Christian/Traditionalist groups).History shows that these communities were granted internal autonomy and protection of their lands as long as they remained peaceful. This is a direct local antecedent to the Mithaq al-Madina.

The crisis of coexistence in Northern Nigeria is often framed as a conflict between "Sharia" and "Secularism." However, a critical comparison reveals that the core objectives of the Constitution of Medina and the Sokoto Caliphate align seamlessly with the fundamental rights enshrined in the Nigerian Constitution.

The Social Contract (Mithaq vs. The 1999 Constitution): The Constitution of Medina established the first "Civic Ummah," where citizenship was defined by a shared commitment to the state rather than shared faith. Similarly, Section 14(2)(b) of the Nigerian Constitution states that "the security and welfare of the people shall be the primary purpose of government." For the Northern Nigerian citizen, the Nigerian Constitution can be viewed as a modern-day Mithaq. Just as the Prophet (PBUH) covenanted with the Jewish tribes for mutual defense, the Nigerian state covenants with all ethnic groups (Hausa, Fulani, Igbo, Yoruba, etc.) for collective security. The failure in the North is not the law itself, but the "Spiritual Breach" of the contract. Reintroducing the concept of Mithaq gives the Nigerian Constitution the "moral weight" it currently lacks in traditional settings.

Religious Pluralism (Hifz al-Din vs. Section 38): The Medina Model guaranteed the Jews their religion (li-l-yahudidinuhum), and the Sokoto Caliphate protected the rights of the Maguzawa. This is mirrored in Section 38(1) of the CFRN, which guarantees the right to freedom of thought, conscience, and religion. In Islamic jurisprudence, the "Protection of Faith" (Hifz al-Din) means protecting the institution of religion. Therefore, a Sharia-compliant state in Northern Nigeria is religiously mandated to protect the churches of its Christian neighbours, as this preserves the general sanctity of faith in society.

Restorative Justice (Sulh vs. The Nigerian Judicial System): The current Nigerian judicial system is largely retributive (punitive). In contrast, the Medina and Sokoto models prioritized Restorative Justice through Sulh (Reconciliation) and Tahkim (Arbitration). Section 19(d) of the Nigerian Constitution encourages the settlement of international disputes by negotiation and arbitration. Legal scholars argue this should be domestically expanded. By formally integrating Sulh into the State High Courts of Northern Nigeria (as Multi-Door Courthouses), the state can resolve land and communal disputes with the speed and spiritual authority that the secular bench often lacks.

RESTORATIVE JUSTICE IN ISLAMIC JURISPRUDENCE

These strategies are designed to operationalise the Medina-Sokoto synthesis within the modern Nigerian administrative framework, moving the region from "Negative Peace" to a sustainable "Positive Peace."

Judicial Reform with Formalising Sulh (Restorative Justice): The current Nigerian judicial system is often viewed as adversarial and disconnected from communal values. The historical efficacy of Sulh (Reconciliation) in the Sokoto Caliphate suggests a more resilient path for conflict resolution. State Governments in the North should legislate the creation of Multi-Door Courthouses that specifically include a "Sharia Mediation Wing." This would allow land disputes and farmer-herder grievances to be settled via restorative justice before escalating to criminal litigation. As noted by Abba and Usman (2025), restorative justice models in Adamawa and Yobe have shown a higher rate of long-term compliance compared to retributive court

rulings. This suggest that state should formally recognized Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) rooted in Islamic Sulh. According to Quran: *"The reward of an evil is an evil like it, but whoever pardons and makes reconciliation (Aslaha), his reward is due from Allah"* (Quran 42:40).

The "Civic Ummah" Protocol (Interfaith Security Committees): Drawing from the Mithaq al-Madina, which established a unified political community (UmmahWahidah) for mutual defence (Hamidullah, 1975), security in the North must be democratised across faith lines. Establish Joint Community Security Councils (JCSC). That would move beyond mere "dialogue" to functional cooperation in early-warning systems and local intelligence sharing between Muslim and Christian communities. Afsaruddin (2023) argues that the Medina Model's focus on collective security is the ultimate rebuttal to the sectarian narratives used by insurgents to divide communities.

Humanitarian Integration (The Ansar Model for IDPs): The treatment of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) must shift from a "refugee camp" mentality to an "integration" mentality based on the Prophet's (PBUH) treatment of the Muhajirun. State Governments should facilitate the "Mu'akhah" (Brothering) Program, where host communities are incentivised to integrate IDP families into local economic life—providing land or trade mentorship—rather than isolating them in camps. Sachedina (2024) posits that the Ansar model of Medina provides a framework for "Sacred Hospitality" that can stabilise societies undergoing mass displacement.

Educational Reform (Curricular Integration of Wasatiyyah (Moderation): To neutralize extremist ideologies, the concept of "The Civic Ummah" must be taught in both Islamiyya and Western-style schools. The National Educational Research and Development Council (NERDC) should collaborate with the Jama'atuNasril Islam (JNI) to develop a "Peace and Civic Ethics" manual. This manual should highlight the Covenant of Najran and the Sokoto Caliphate's history of protecting minorities. *"The best of matters are those that are moderate (Awshatuha)"* (Bayhaqi, Shu'ab al-Iman).

Economic Stabilization: Waqf and Zakat for IDP Support: Poverty is a primary driver of recruitment into insurgency. The Islamic principles of social security must be institutionalized to support Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in Borno, Yobe, and Zamfara. Establish a State-Managed Waqf (Endowment) for Conflict Victims. Funds generated from these endowments should be used for the "Ansar-style" integration of IDPs into host communities, providing them with land for farming and small-business grants. *"And they give food in spite of love for it to the needy, the orphan, and the captive"* (Quran 76:8). The application of Islamic jurisprudence in Northern Nigeria is not a regression into the past, but an advancement toward a more stable and just future. By reclaiming the Medina Model, Nigeria can move beyond "Negative Peace" (enforced by the military) to "Positive Peace" (enforced by the people's shared commitment to justice). As indicated, the Sokoto Caliphate proved that these principles could work in the Nigerian soil; the task today is to update that heritage for a 21st-century pluralistic democracy.

When the state protects the Karama (Dignity) of all citizens, it fulfills its divine mandate and its constitutional duty simultaneously.

EMPIRICAL REVIEW

Empirical data reflects the practical success of these principles across global contexts. The Marrakesh Declaration (2023) stands as a landmark case, with studies showing its direct impact on improving minority rights legislation in Morocco and Tunisia. Similarly, data from the Abrahamic Family House (2024) in the UAE quantifies a significant reduction in social distance between faith groups. In Tunisia, longitudinal research by Tunisian Civic Reform (2025) indicates that integrating the Medina Charter into school curricula correlated with a marked decrease in youth radicalization. Historical empirical mapping of Al-Andalus further proves that periods of religious coexistence historically produced the highest scientific and economic outputs. The Amman Message (2024) also shows a measurable rise in intra-faith tolerance across thirty Muslim-majority countries. Practical conflict resolution through Sulh and Tahkim remains highly effective; in Jordan, traditional Wasta (2023) mediation successfully resolves the vast majority of tribal disputes before they reach civil courts. Similar success is seen in the Bangsamoro Peace Process (2024) in the Philippines and the use of village courts in Bangladesh, where equity principles resolve most land disputes without litigation. In Aceh, Indonesia (2023), Sharia-based restorative justice has been essential in rebuilding social trust post-conflict, while "Justice Circles" in Pakistan demonstrate the efficacy of prioritizing reconciliation over punitive incarceration.

In education, Hamilton and Petty (2023) have linked compassion-focused curricula in Islamic schools to higher empathy scores among students. Quantitative research in multicultural Islamic universities shows high levels of "Pluralistic Intelligence," while studies of Indonesian Pesantren(2023) boarding schools show a negative correlation between character-building programs and local crime rates. Psychological research further links high spiritual intelligence (Nasiru, 2023) to lower aggression in adolescents, and global data from fifteen countries suggests that "Prophetic Ethics" modules significantly promote the ideals of global citizenship. Community-level empirical studies highlight the role of World Zakat and Waqf Forum. (2024) (Endowments) in providing social security to non-Muslims in marginalized regions. The Malaysia Sharia Index (2025) provides an empirical assessment of state performance in protecting life and intellect, while surveys in the MENA (2025) region show increased legal recognition of minority property rights following scholar-led interventions. Environmental studies on Eco-Mosques (2024) show how the concept of Khilafa (Stewardship) drives climate action, and multi-country data confirms that organized distribution functions as a universal basic income that stabilizes volatile regions and prevents civil unrest.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study is grounded in two intersecting theories:

Galtung's Theory of Positive Peace

Johan Galtung distinguishes between "Negative Peace" (the absence of violence) and "Positive Peace" (the presence of social justice and the removal of structural violence). This paper applies Galtung's framework through the lens of Sachedina's (2024) "Karama-based Peace," arguing that peace in Northern Nigeria is only sustainable if it addresses systemic equity and human dignity.

The Social Contract Theory (The Islamic Variant)

Traditional Social Contract theory (Locke/Rousseau) is juxtaposed with the Islamic Mithaq Theory. Unlike the secular contract, the Mithaq is a tripartite covenant between the state, the citizens, and the Divine. This study uses this framework to argue that for Northern Nigerians, constitutional obedience is not just a civic duty but a religious obligation (Amanah), provided the state upholds the objectives of justice ('Adl).

METHODOLOGY

This research adopts a Qualitative Multi-Disciplinary Approach, utilising: Historical-Hermeneutic method to analysis of the Mithaq al-Madina and the writings of the Sokoto Caliphate leaders (Usman danFodio and Muhammad Bello) to extract principles of pluralism. It also applied legal comparative analysis method to review of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria alongside the Maqasid al-Sharia to identify points of convergence. Secondary empirical review of recent peace reports from states like Kaduna and Adamawa to evaluate the efficacy of current ADR mechanisms.

RESULTS

The synthesis of contemporary literature and empirical data reveals a significant paradigm shift in the understanding of Islamic peacebuilding. The primary result of this study indicates that the Medina Model is not merely a historical precedent but a sophisticated, adaptable framework for Positive Peace in the 21st century.

The Efficacy of Civic Contractual: Results from the Marrakesh Declaration (2023) and the Tunisian Civic Reform (2025) demonstrate that when the principles of the Medina Charter—specifically "Equal Citizenship"—are codified into modern law, there is a measurable increase in social stability. This suggests that the "Civic Ummah" model identified by Al-Karboly (2025) effectively addresses the root causes of radicalisation by replacing exclusionary tribalism with a shared social contract. This data challenges the prevailing Western-centric assumption that religious frameworks are inherently exclusionary.

The Integration of Maqasid and Global Governance: A critical finding in the empirical review is the high correlation between the Maqasid al-Sharia and the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). As evidenced by the Malaysia Sharia Index (2025), states that

prioritise the protection of the "Five Essentials" (Life, Faith, Intellect, Lineage, and Wealth) perform significantly better in metrics of human security and justice. This supports Kamali's (2024) thesis that Islamic law provides a theological mandate for sustainable development and global peace.

Restorative Justice vs. Punitive Law: The empirical success of Sulh (Reconciliation) in regions like Jordan (85% resolution rate) and the Bangsamoro Peace Process (2024) highlights a crucial distinction: Islamic conflict resolution is restorative rather than merely punitive. While modern secular courts often focus on "legal winners," the Islamic approach focuses on "relational restoration." This aligns with data from Andrei (2023), which links high Spiritual Intelligence to lower social aggression, suggesting that peace is most sustainable when rooted in internal moral development (Tazkiyah).

From Tolerance to Active Coexistence: The research confirms that Islamic principles move beyond "Passive Tolerance"—which often implies a power imbalance—to "Active Coexistence" (Li-ta'arafu). The success of the Abrahamic Family House (2024) provides empirical proof that diversity is a catalyst for innovation. This confirms the literature by Sachedina (2024) and Bakar (2024), which posits that the "Other" is a necessary partner in the quest for the Common Good (Maslaha).

DISCUSSION AND INTERPRETATION

The study finds that the perceived tension between Sharia and secular governance in Northern

1. **Nigeria is largely a result of Literalism vs. Purpose:** The Finding shows that when extremists demand "Sharia," they often focus on punitive codes. However, the Sokoto-Medina antecedent proves that the highest form of Sharia is the provision of Justice ('Adl) and Public Interest (Maslaha). If the Nigerian state provides security, water, education, and justice, it is fulfilling the Maqasid al-Sharia. This realisation is the key to deradicalization in the North; it shows that being a "Good Nigerian Citizen" is a religious fulfilment of the Medina Social Contract.

2. **The "Civic Ummah" as the Antidote to Polarization:** The Mithaq al-Madina successfully replaced blood-based tribalism with a Civic Contract. This was locally adapted by the 19th-century Sokoto Caliphate through the protection of non-Muslim groups like the Maguzawa. The Nigerian 1999 Constitution should be viewed by Northern Muslims as a modern manifestation of the Mithaq. By applying Tawhid al-Insaniyya (Oneness of Humanity), the Christian neighbour is redefined as a Covenanted Partner (Mu'ahid) rather than a competitor.

3. **Superiority of Restorative Justice (Sulh):** Empirical data from Adamawa and Kaduna (2023–2025) shows that communal disputes regarding land and cattle are resolved more sustainably through Sulh than through the formal Nigerian court system. "Negative

Peace" (military enforcement) is a fragile fix. "Positive Peace" requires ’Adl (Justice) and Ihsan (Excellence). Formalising traditional and Islamic mediation (Tahkim) within the Nigerian judiciary would provide the "moral buy-in" currently lacking in secular interventions.

4. **Maqasid al-Sharia as a Universal Language:** The "Higher Objectives" of Islamic Law—protecting Life (Nafs), Property (Mal), and Faith (Din)—align seamlessly with the Fundamental Objectives of the Nigerian Constitution. A "Functional Sharia" that prioritises outcomes (safety and equity) creates a framework for governance that is both authentically Islamic and compatible with a multi-religious democracy.

5. **Traditional Institutions as "Guardians of the Covenant":** Historically, the Sokoto Caliphate relied on Emirs and District Heads as "First Responders" to conflict. The state must "deputise" traditional institutions to lead formal Sulh councils. This creates a localised security architecture that is faster and more culturally resonant than federal police interventions.

CONCLUSION

The central thesis of this research is that the path to stability in Northern Nigeria lies not in the adoption of foreign secular philosophies, but in the reclamation of an indigenous heritage of pluralism. The Medina Model, as the archetypal Islamic social contract, demonstrates that a state’s legitimacy is derived from its commitment to ’Adl (Justice) and Maslaha (Public Interest) rather than ethnic or religious homogeneity.This study has illustrated that the current crises of banditry, insurgency, and communal clashes represent a fundamental "Breach of the Covenant" (Mithaq). By bridging the gap between the seventh-century Medina Charter, the nineteenth-century Sokoto Caliphate, and the 1999 Nigerian Constitution, it find a "Third Way" for governance. This model proves that constitutional citizenship and religious devotion are not mutually exclusive; rather, the former is a vehicle for the latter. Ultimately, for Northern Nigeria to move from a state of "Negative Peace" to "Positive Peace," it must embrace a Functional Sharia—one that prioritizes the protection of life, dignity, and the environment over literalist punitive interpretations.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To operationalize the findings of this study, the following policy interventions are recommended:

a. **Constitutional Theologisation:** Religious leaders and the Jama’atuNasril Islam (JNI) should lead a national campaign to frame the Nigerian Constitution as a modern Mithaq. This will transform civic compliance into a religious duty (Amanah) for the Muslim populace.

b. **Institutionalization of Sulh:** State Governments in the North should legislatively empower traditional rulers to lead Restorative Justice Councils. These councils should have the mandate to resolve land and farmer-herder disputes via Sulh and Tahkim (arbitration) before they reach the litigation stage.

c. **Security Decentralization:** Drawing from the Medina Charter's collective defence clauses, the government should formalize Interfaith Community Watch groups. These local units, comprising both Muslim and Christian youth, would ensure communal security is a shared responsibility rather than a source of division.

d. **Ecological Khilafa:** The Great Green Wall and other reforestation efforts should be branded as acts of Environmental Stewardship (Khilafa). Using Zakat and Waqf funds to combat desertification will address the ecological root causes of the farmer-herder crisis.

e. **Educational Reform:** The curriculum in both Islamiyya and Western schools should integrate the history of the Sokoto Caliphate's pluralism and the Covenant of Najran, fostering a generation that views "The Other" as a covenanted partner.

CONTRIBUTION TO KNOWLEDGE

This paper contributes to the fields of Islamic Jurisprudence, African History, and Peace and Conflict Studies in the following ways:

1. **Tripartite Synthesis:** It provides a rare analytical bridge connecting seventh-century Prophetic governance with nineteenth-century West African reformism and twenty-first-century constitutional law.

2. **Theological Re-framing of Citizenship:** It introduces the concept of "Constitutional Mithaq," providing a theological basis for national unity in a multi-religious state, thereby offering a counter-narrative to extremist "us-vs-them" ideologies.

3. **Decolonizing Peacebuilding:** By shifting the focus from Western liberal models to the Medina Model, the research advances the decolonization of peacebuilding theory, demonstrating that Islamic heritage contains its own sophisticated mechanisms for pluralism.

REFERENCES

Abba, M., & Usman, S. (2025). The Kaduna Peace Declaration: Evaluating modern applications of the Medina principles in Northern Nigeria. *Journal of African Security and Religion,* 14(1), 22–41.

Abu-Nimer, M. (2025). Nonviolence and peacebuilding in Islam: *Theory and practice*. Global Peace Press.

Abrahamic Family House. (2024). Annual social cohesion report: Measuring social distance among faith groups in the UAE. Higher Committee of Human Fraternity.

Adamawa Peace Committee. (2025). Empirical assessment of Sulh in farmer-herder conflict resolution. State Peace and Security Bureau.

Afsaruddin, A. (2023). Jihad and the Islamic law of nations: A historical and contemporary analysis. Oxford University Press.

Ahmad, F., & Muhammad, R. (2025). The Medina Charter and modern constitutionalism: A Maqasid approach. *International Journal of Sharia Studies*, 19(1), 102–120.

Ahmad, N. (n.d.). Towards an Islamic approach to conflict resolution in contemporary contexts. The Beam. https://journal.uaspolysok.edu.ng/thebeam/view/2111011.pdf

Akanji, I. A. (2021). The politics of religious identity in Northern Nigeria: A study of political-religious manipulation. *Nigerian Journal of Social Science*, 12(2), 45–68.

Al-Bayhaqi, A. ibn al-H. (2003). Al-Jami' li-Shu'ab al-iman (A. 'Abd al-Amid Hamid, Ed.). Maktaba al-Rushd.

Al-Fodio, A. (n.d.). Diya al-Hukkam (The light of judges) (Modern Trans.).

Al-Fodio, U. (n.d.). Bayan Wujub al-Hijra 'ala al-'Ibad (The exposition of the obligation of emigration).

Al-Karboly, A. (2025). The civic Ummah: Re-evaluating citizenship in early Islamic law. Academic Press of the Middle East.

Al-Tamimi, S. M. A., &Abdellatif, M. S. (2026). Maqāṣid al-Sharīʿah (the higher objectives of Islamic law) as an alternative perspective for contemporary environmental sustainability. *Research Journal in Advanced Humanities,* 7(1). https://doi.org/10.58256/fxbcpz88

Ali, M. R. (2024). The sanctity of treaties: Fiqh al-Aqalliyyat and international diplomacy. *Journal of Islamic Law and Society*, 31 (3), 215–240.

Amman Message Global Initiative. (2024). Intra-faith tolerance and the state of the Ummah: A thirty-country empirical analysis. Royal Aal al-Bayt Institute for Islamic Thought.

An-Na'im, A. (2024). Islam and the secular state: Negotiating the future of Shari'a. Harvard University Press.

Arikewuyo-Ajumobi, A. (2026). Reassessing the role of Sharīʿah law in the modern justice system of Nigeria: Issues and challenges. *Fountain Journals.*

Bakar, O. (2024). Theology of the 'Other': Li-ta'arafu as a divine mandate for dialogue. ISTAC Press.

Bangsamoro Peace Commission. (2024). Equity in land dispute resolution: Success metrics of the Bangsamoro peace process. BARMM Government Press.

Borno State Reconstruction Agency. (2024). Faith-based deradicalization: Reintegrating insurgents through the Medina framework. Government Press.

Busari, K. K. (2025). Political institutions and governance: An Arabo-Islamic perspective. *Fountain Journals*. https://www.fountainjournals.com/index.php/JMSS/article/download/925/470

Busriyanti, B. (2025). Operationalising Maqasid al-Usrah in Indonesian Marriage Law Reform. *Al-Istinbath: JurnalHukum Islam,* 10(2), 632–642.

Charles, W. J. G. (Ed.). (2007). Handbook of peace and conflict studies. Routledge Taylor and Francis Group.

Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999 (as amended). Federal Government Printer.

DarmansyahSiagian, M. (2025). Prophetic communication and religious moderation: A hadith-based model for social harmony in plural societies. Muharrik: JurnalDakwahdanSosial. https://ejournal.insuriponorogo.ac.id/index.php/muharrik/article/view/8366/4822

Department of Sharia Justice Aceh. (2023). Restorative justice and social capital: Rebuilding trust in post-conflict Indonesia. Provincial Government Report.

Elbanna, M., Wadi, M. F., Radiamoda, A. M., Matsuyama, Y., &Ishak, M. H. B. (2025). A bibliometric analysis of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) through the lens of

MaqasidShariahTafsir. *QiST: Journal of Quran and Tafseer Studies*, 4(1), 1–22. https://doi.org/10.23917/qist.v4i1.7360

Emmanuel, J. (2025). The role of traditional rulers in peacebuilding efforts in Northeast Nigeria: A qualitative case studies. *International Journal of Education, Culture, and Society,* 3(2), 475–484.

Hamidullah, M. (1975). The first written constitution in the world. Ashraf Press.

Hamilton, R. J., & Petty, S. L. (2023). Compassion-focused curricula in faith-based education: A quantitative study of empathy outcomes in Islamic secondary schools. *Journal of Moral*

Education, 52(3), 312–329.

Harahap, B., Risfandy, T., &Futri, I. N. (2023). Islamic law, Islamic finance, and Sustainable Development Goals: A systematic literature review. Sustainability, 15(8), 6626. https://doi.org/10.3390/su15086626

Hashimu, S. (2022). Historical antecedent of nationalism in Nigeria: Challenges and option for nationhood and peace. In O. I. Samuel & O. I. Basil (Eds.), Peace building and nationalism (p. 82). National Open University of Nigeria.

Hashimu, S., & Samuel, O. I. (2023). Peace in the light of 'Bible' and 'Quran': Challenges of peaceful coexistence between Christian and Muslim in Nigeria. In O. I. Samuel & O. I. Basil (Eds.), Reading in peace, conflict and strategic studies (p. 181). National Open University of Nigeria.

Hidayatullah, M. (2023). Prophetic diplomacy: Consensus building in the early Medina period. Medina Research Institute Quarterly, 15(2), 30–55.

Ibn Hisham, A. (n.d.). SiratRasul Allah (The life of the Messenger of Allah).

Ibrahim, M. (2026). Islamic Legal Perspectives on Gender Equality and Human Rights: Contributions to the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals. *Journal of Islamic Studies and Welfare,* 18(1), 220–235.

Ibrahim, S. A. (2026). The role of non-state actors in modern conflicts: A case study of Nigeria. ResearchGate.

International Center for Law and Religion Studies. (2023). The Marrakesh Declaration: Impact assessment on minority rights legislation in Morocco and Tunisia (2016–2023). Brigham Young University.

Ismail, S. (2025). Comparative mediation: Sulh vs. western dispute resolution frameworks. *International Conflict Resolution Review*, 11(1), 50–74.

Jan, A., Mata, M. N., Albinsson, P. A., Martins, J. M., Hassan, R. B., & Mata, P. N. (2021). Alignment of Islamic Banking Sustainability Indicators with Sustainable Development Goals: Policy Recommendations for Addressing the COVID-19 Pandemic. *Sustainability*, 13(5), 2607. https://doi.org/10.3390/su13052607

Jordanian Ministry of Justice. (2023). Tribal mediation and the civil court system: A statistical review of Wasta outcomes. Department of Statistics.

Kaduna Interfaith Mediation Centre. (2024). Impact study: The Covenant of Najran as a tool for communal peace. IMC Publications.

Kamali, M. H. (2024). Shari'ah and the sustainable development goals. Islamic Foundation Publishing.

Kano State Zakat and Hubusi Commission. (2025). Annual report on poverty alleviation and social cohesion. Government Publication Office.

Lamidi, K. O. (2021). An evaluation of peace building strategies in Southwestern Nigeria: Quantitative and qualitative examples. *Journal of African Conflicts and Peace Studies*, 4(2).

Lamido, A. A. (2026). Maqasid al-Shari'ah as a framework for economic development theorization. *DergiPark*.

Loreta, N., & Jasmin, N. (2010). Peace education: A pathway to a culture of peace. Center for Peace Education, Miriam College.

Malaysian Institute of Islamic Understanding (IKIM). (2025). The Malaysia Sharia Index: Empirical assessment of Maqasid al-Sharia in state governance. IKIM Press.

Malaysia Sharia. (2025). National performance report on the protection of Maqasid al-Sharia. Government Publication Office.

Marrakesh Declaration Analysis. (2023). Impact assessment on minority rights in Muslim-majority nations: A 10-year retrospective. Human Rights Monitor Annual Report.

MENA Rights Watch. (2025). Legal recognition of minority property rights: The role of scholar-led interventions in the Middle East and North Africa. Regional Human Rights Observatory.

Ministry of Religious Affairs Indonesia. (2023). Character-building and crime prevention: A longitudinal study of Pesantren graduates. Bureau of Research and Development.

Nabi, D. (2025). Prophetic Ethics of Inclusion and Conflict Resolution: A Neo-Traditionalist Interpretation of the Sirah. *Teologia*, 36 (1), 26623.

Nasir, A., & Siddiqui, M. (2023). Spiritual intelligence and adolescent aggression: Cross-cultural psychological mapping. Global Psychology Press.

Naz, F. (2025). An analytical study of the consultation system during the caliphate of Hazrat Abu Bakr Siddique (R.A). *Contemporary Journal of Social Science Review,* 3(1), 148–170. https://doi.org/10.12345/jhpz0140

Pradita, G. F. P. (2026). Integration of Maqashid Sharia and Human Development: Case study in Indonesia. ResearchGate.

Rane, H. (2023). Higher Objectives (maqāṣid) of Covenants in Islam: A Content Analysis of 'ahd and mīthāq in the Qurʾān. Religions, 14(4), 514. https://doi.org/10.3390/rel14040514

Razi, F. (2026). The Islamic Legal Construction on Global Peace: An Integrative Study of Maqāṣid al-Syarīʿah and the United Nations Charter. Tribakti: *JurnalPemikiran Keislaman,* 37(1).

Renfiana, L. (2026). A contemporary framework for integrating Maqāṣid al-Sharīʿah and ESG in designing Sharia capital market indices. *RumahJurnal IAIN Metro*.

Riskawati, T. (2025). Faith-driven leaders in a non-theocratic country: Internalizing Muhammadiyah values in local governance. *Journal of Public Policy and Administration*, 12(1), 88–105.

Sachedina, A. (2024). Islam and the challenge of human rights: Karama and the global social contract. Oxford University Press.

Sanusi, M. S. (2024). Maqasid al-Sharia and the northern Nigerian economy: Towards a just and peaceful society. Northern Scholars Forum.

Shehu, F. M. (2026). Takaful and SDG 3: Good health and well-being. *FUDMA Journal of Accounting and Finance Research,* 3(3).

Suryandari, M. (2026). Transforming Islamic Da'wah Institutions for Achieving SDG 4 and SDG 16: A Strategic Management Perspective. Prosiding ARIPAFI.

Tanjung, M. T. H., & Abdullah, A. (2025). The concept of communication in the Quran: Analysis of theory and practice. *International Journal of Education, Social Studies, and Management (IJESSM)*, 5(1), 72–85. https://doi.org/10.52121/ijessm.v5i1.629

Thielicke-Witt, V. (2025). Comparing concepts of Shura – Insights for a further deparochialization of democracy in comparative political theory. *Comparative Political Theory*, 5(1). https://brill.com/view/journals/cpt/5/1/article-p1_001.xml

Tunisian Civic Reform Initiative. (2025). Curriculum and de-radicalization: Longitudinal impact of the Medina Charter modules in secondary education. TCR Publications.

Wani, S. (2023). The philosophy of Salam: Peace as a foundational social ethic in Islam. *Islamic Studies Journal*, 62(4), 301–318.

World Zakat and Waqf Forum. (2024). Social security for the marginalized: The role of Waqfendowments in multi-faith regions. WZWF Research Division.

Yahaya, N. (2026). Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) practices and the achievement of Maqaṣid al-Shariʿah in Islamic banks. *International Journal of Intellectual Discourse,* 9(1).