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Religious Tolerance among Muslim NGOs in Humanitarian Missions during the Aceh Floods from a Qur'anic Perspective

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Abstract

The devastating floods that struck Aceh in late 2025 not only generated a large-scale humanitarian crisis but also reactivated latent tensions between universal humanitarian solidarity and local religious sensitivities. The presence of interfaith humanitarian actors in a region characterized by the formal implementation of Islamic law positioned humanitarian assistance within a social arena marked by complex ethical negotiations. This article examines how local Muslim NGOs interpret and practice interfaith solidarity by drawing upon the Qur'an as a living and contextual ethical framework. Employing an interpretive qualitative approach with socio-ethical analysis, the study is based on in-depth interviews, limited field observations, and the examination of secondary disaster-related data. The findings reveal that Qur'anic ethics, as enacted by Muslim NGOs, does not function as a fixed set of normative prescriptions; rather, it operates as a form of negotiated ethics continuously shaped through interactions among sacred texts, lived humanitarian experiences, and Aceh's socio-religious environment. Interfaith solidarity is understood as a religious obligation that affirms a universal commitment to human dignity while maintaining clear ethical boundaries against the instrumentalization of humanitarian aid for non-humanitarian agendas. This study contributes to the growing scholarship on interfaith humanitarianism and Islamic ethics by offering empirical insights from a Muslim-majority context characterized by heightened religious sensitivity. It further enriches contemporary understandings of humanitarian practice as a reflective, socially embedded, and contextually negotiated ethical process.

Keywords: Qur'an, Muslim NGOs, Interfaith Humanitarianism, Religious Tolerance, Aceh, Flood Disaster

Abstrak

Banjir dahsyat yang melanda Aceh pada akhir tahun 2025 tidak hanya menimbulkan krisis kemanusiaan berskala besar, tetapi juga menghidupkan kembali ketegangan laten antara solidaritas kemanusiaan universal dan sensitivitas keagamaan lokal. Kehadiran aktor-aktor kemanusiaan lintas agama di wilayah yang ditandai dengan penerapan syariat Islam secara formal menempatkan bantuan kemanusiaan dalam ruang sosial yang sarat dengan negosiasi etis yang kompleks. Artikel ini mengkaji bagaimana organisasi non-pemerintah (NGO) Muslim lokal memaknai dan mempraktikkan solidaritas lintas agama dengan menjadikan Al-Qur'an sebagai kerangka etika yang hidup dan kontekstual. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif interpretatif dengan analisis sosio-etis. Data diperoleh melalui wawancara mendalam, observasi lapangan terbatas, serta telaah terhadap berbagai data sekunder terkait bencana. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa etika Al-Qur'an yang diwujudkan oleh NGO Muslim tidak berfungsi sebagai seperangkat aturan normatif yang kaku, melainkan sebagai bentuk etika yang dinegosiasikan secara terus-menerus melalui interaksi antara teks-teks suci, pengalaman kemanusiaan yang dialami secara langsung,

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dan lingkungan sosial-keagamaan Aceh. Solidaritas lintas agama dipahami sebagai kewajiban keagamaan yang menegaskan komitmen universal terhadap martabat manusia, sekaligus mempertahankan batas-batas etis yang jelas terhadap upaya pemanfaatan bantuan kemanusiaan untuk kepentingan non-kemanusiaan. Penelitian ini berkontribusi pada perkembangan kajian mengenai kemanusiaan lintas agama dan etika Islam dengan menghadirkan temuan empiris dari konteks masyarakat mayoritas Muslim yang memiliki tingkat sensitivitas keagamaan yang tinggi. Selain itu, penelitian ini memperkaya pemahaman kontemporer tentang praktik kemanusiaan sebagai proses etis yang reflektif, melekat dalam realitas sosial, dan senantiasa dinegosiasikan sesuai dengan konteks yang melingkupinya.

Kata Kunci: *Al-Qur'an, NGO Muslim, Kemanusiaan Lintas Agama, Toleransi Beragama, Aceh, Bencana Banjir.*

A. Introduction

The devastating floods that struck Aceh and other parts of Sumatra in late 2025 precipitated a large-scale humanitarian crisis, resulting in hundreds of fatalities and the displacement of hundreds of thousands of residents, according to official data released by Indonesia's National Disaster Management Agency (BNPB).[1] Beyond the immediate humanitarian emergency and the urgent need for relief assistance, however, the disaster also reactivated longstanding tensions between universal humanitarian solidarity and local religious sensitivities. The arrival of interfaith humanitarian actors—including Buddhist organizations such as Tzu Chi Foundation, which provided permanent housing assistance for affected communities,[2] and Christian church networks that mobilized emergency relief efforts introduced a complex ethical dynamic within a region historically, politically, and normatively regarded as a "sharia space." In this context, humanitarian assistance cannot be understood merely as a technical response to human suffering.[3] Rather, it operates within a socially and morally contested arena shaped by ongoing negotiations over religious identity, moral authority, and the boundaries of social tolerance.[4]

Recent scholarship on religious tolerance in Islam has largely developed through normative-textual approaches that emphasize Qur'anic principles of moderation, coexistence, and justice. Studies by scholars such as Toha Andiko,[5] Fauziah Nurdin,[6] and Bayumi Nasrul Hoir[7] have highlighted the Qur'an's ethical foundations for interreligious

[1] Badan Nasional Penanggulangan Bencana, 'Dashboard Penanganan Darurat Bencana Banjir Dan Longsor Sumatera 2025', 2025 <https://gis.bnpb.go.id/bansorsumatera2025/>.

[2] Admin (Pemerintah Aceh) Kominsa, 'Yayasan Buddha Tzu Chi Bangun 1.000 Rumah Untuk Korban Bencana Aceh', 2025 <https://diskominfo.acehprov.go.id/berita/kategori/pemerintah-aceh/yayasan-buddha-tzu-chi-bangun-1000-rumah-untuk-korban-bencana-aceh>.

[3] Habibi, 'GP Ansor Aceh: Isu Missionaris Pascbencana Jangan Ganggu Kerukunan Di Negeri Syariat Islam', *Dialeksis*, 2026 <https://dialeksis.com/polkum/gp-ansor-aceh-isu-misionaris-pascabencana-jangan-ganggu-kerukunan-di-negeri-syariat-islam/>.

[4] Sioe Mey and Tri Astuti, 'Contextual Evangelism among Muslim Refugee Communities: A Case Study of Sudanese International Church in Amman, Jordan', *Shift Key: Jurnal Teologi Dan Pelayanan*, 15.2 (2025), pp. 74–86.

[5] Toha Andiko, Isna Mutia, and Nazaryani Nazaryani, 'THE RULING ON WISHING MERRY CHRISTMAS TO NON-MUSLIMS: AN ANALYSIS OF M. QURAISH SHIHAB'S INTERPRETATIONS', *Jurnal Ilmiah Al-Mu'ashirah: Media Kajian Al-Qur'an Dan Al-Hadits Multi Perspektif*, 21.1 (2024), pp. 139–52.

[6] Fauziah Nurdin, 'Moderasi Beragama Menurut Al-Qur'an Dan Hadist', *Jurnal Ilmiah Al-Mu'ashirah: Media Kajian Al-Qur'an Dan Al-Hadits Multi Perspektif*, 18.1 (2021), pp. 59–70.

[7] Bayumi Nasrul Hoir, 'Thematic Tafsir Study: Religious Moderation in the Qur'an and Hadith', *Bulletin of Islamic Research*, 1.4 (2023), pp. 341–56.

relations, particularly its emphasis on moderation, peaceful coexistence, and mutual respect among religious communities.[8] Parallel to this body of literature, research on interfaith humanitarianism has primarily focused on universal humanitarian principles,[9] organizational governance, and the effectiveness of cross-faith collaboration,[10] especially within religiously diverse societies.[11] Existing studies have examined how interfaith initiatives facilitate social cohesion, strengthen humanitarian networks, and contribute to collaborative disaster response across religious boundaries.

Meanwhile, scholarship on Muslim NGOs and disaster response has predominantly concentrated on Islamic philanthropy,[12] institutional capacity,[13] and the contribution of faith-based organizations to post-disaster recovery and community resilience.[14] Despite these valuable contributions, a significant gap remains within the existing literature. Studies on Qur'anic ethics and religious tolerance have generally remained at the normative and textual level, whereas empirical investigations of Muslim humanitarian actors have tended to prioritize organizational performance and humanitarian outcomes. Consequently, limited attention has been devoted to understanding how Qur'anic ethical principles are actually interpreted, negotiated, and operationalized by Muslim actors when confronting humanitarian crises characterized by complex moral dilemmas and heightened religious sensitivities, such as those found in Aceh. It is precisely this intersection between normative Islamic ethics and lived humanitarian practice that remains insufficiently explored and which this study seeks to address.

Against this backdrop, the present study examines how Muslim NGOs engaged in post-flood humanitarian operations in Aceh interpret and enact Qur'anic ethics as a lived and contextually embedded framework for humanitarian action. Particular attention is given to how Muslim humanitarian actors understand, practice, and negotiate interfaith solidarity amid competing humanitarian imperatives, local socio-political pressures, and persistent concerns regarding religious harmony. Rather than treating humanitarian assistance as a purely technical response to disaster, this study approaches it as a reflective ethical practice through which actors continuously deliberate upon moral obligations, communal expectations, and religious commitments.

This article argues that Qur'anic ethics, as manifested in the humanitarian practices of Muslim NGOs, does not operate as a fixed set of normative prescriptions applied in a straightforward manner. Instead, it functions as a dynamic form of negotiated ethics, emerging through ongoing interactions among scriptural values, lived humanitarian experiences, and the socio-religious realities of Acehnese society. The central proposition

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[8] Wasisto Raharjo Jati and others, 'From Intellectual to Advocacy Movement: Islamic Moderation, the Conservatives and the Shift of Interfaith Dialogue Campaign in Indonesia', *Ulumuna*, 26.2 (2022), pp. 472–99.

[9] A R Nurdin and others, 'Forum Kerukunan Umat Beragama In Aceh: Strategies, Roles and Barriers in Maintaining Interfaith Harmony', *Ulumuna*, 25.2 (2021), pp. 306–28.

[10] Muh Syaifudin and Abdullah Affandi, 'Christian Engagement with The Qur'an in Egypt: A Sociological and Phenomenological Study of Interreligious Tolerance and Social Coexistence', *Jurnal Ilmiah Al-Mu'ashirah: Media Kajian Al-Qur'an Dan Al-Hadits Multi Perspektif*, 22.2 (2025), pp. 441–58.

[11] Ahmad Subakir, 'The Socio-Historical Study of Interfaith Harmony Forum (FKUB) and Its Contribution to the Creation of Religious Harmony in Kediri', *Journal of Islamic Studies and Civilization*, 3.1 (2025), pp. 45–58.

[12] Muhammad Riza Nurdin, 'Islamic Faith-based Organisations and Their Role in Building Social Capital for Post-disaster Recovery in Indonesia', *Disasters*, 48 (2024), p. e12635.

[13] Rahmat Firdaus and others, 'The Role of Islamic Philanthropy in Disaster Relief in Indonesia and Japan', *Asian Journal of Muslim Philanthropy and Citizen Engagement*, 1.1 (2025), pp. 35–51.

[14] Nurdin, 'Islamic Faith-based Organisations and Their Role in Building Social Capital for Post-disaster Recovery in Indonesia'.

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advanced here is that religious tolerance within Muslim humanitarian action is inherently contextual and conditional. While grounded in Qur'anic principles of human dignity, justice, and compassion, its practical expression is continuously shaped by historically contingent social boundaries, collective memories, and local moral expectations. By advancing this perspective, the study seeks both to address an important gap in the existing literature and to offer a conceptual contribution to contemporary debates on Qur'anic ethics, Islamic humanitarianism, and faith-based humanitarian practice.

The theoretical framework of this study is structured around three interrelated concepts: religious tolerance, interfaith humanitarianism, and Qur'anic ethics. Together, these concepts provide an analytical lens through which Muslim NGOs can be understood not merely as technical providers of humanitarian assistance, but as ethical actors operating within a complex arena of value negotiation, moral reasoning, and social legitimacy.

Within Islamic thought, religious tolerance is commonly understood as the recognition and acceptance of the existence of religious others, aimed at fostering peaceful coexistence and mutual respect without requiring the abandonment of one's own theological commitments.[15] Existing scholarship has largely approached this issue through normative-textual frameworks, interpreting Qur'anic teachings on coexistence, justice, and the prohibition of religious coercion as the principal foundations of interreligious engagement. While such approaches have been instrumental in establishing the theological legitimacy of tolerance, they frequently assume conditions of social stability and pay limited attention to crisis situations in which competing moral obligations generate practical dilemmas and ethical uncertainty.

From an analytical perspective, religious tolerance may be understood as operating across several interconnected dimensions. The first is normative tolerance, which functions primarily at the level of doctrine, theological discourse, and scriptural interpretation.[16] The second is socio-practical tolerance, manifested through everyday interactions, civic engagement, and forms of non-ritual cooperation, including humanitarian action.[17] The third is institutional tolerance, reflected in the official positions, policies, and organizational practices adopted by religious institutions.[18] Taken together, these dimensions suggest that tolerance is neither singular nor static, but rather layered, relational, and context-dependent. Nevertheless, much of the existing literature continues to conceptualize tolerance as an ideal normative condition, rather than as an ongoing process of negotiation shaped by social pressures, historical memories, and situational constraints.

The second concept underpinning this study is interfaith humanitarianism, which refers to humanitarian practices involving actors from different religious traditions who collaborate on the basis of shared humanitarian principles such as humanity, neutrality, and impartiality.[19] Scholarship in this field has predominantly focused on institutional arrangements, governance structures, and the effectiveness of cross-faith collaboration in

[15] Haruna Zagoon-Sayeed, 'Tolerance and Peace Building: An Islamic Perspective', *Ghana Journal of Religion and Theology*, 12.1–2 (2022), doi:10.4314/gjrt.v12i1-2.8.

[16] Wiwik Endahwati, 'Kajian Ayat-Ayat Al-Quran Tentang Toleransi Beragama', *An-Nafah: Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Keislaman*, 2.1 (2022), pp. 41–52.

[17] Dwi Rahayu Nurmiati and others, 'Governing Interfaith Solidarity: How YAKKUM Institutionalizes Cross-Faith Humanitarian Action in the 2022 Cianjur Earthquake', *Harmoni*, 24.2 (2025), pp. 343–60.

[18] Subakir, 'The Socio-Historical Study of Interfaith Harmony Forum (FKUB) and Its Contribution to the Creation of Religious Harmony in Kediri'.

[19] Esther Möller and Johannes Paulmann, 'The Dynamics of Humanitarianism, Religion and Politics in the Middle East, 1860s-1960s: Introductory Remarks', *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, 2025, doi:10.1080/13530194.2023.2233221.

disaster response and humanitarian intervention.[20] Within this body of literature, religion is generally understood as a source of moral motivation and social capital that enhances the reach, legitimacy, and sustainability of humanitarian initiatives. However, religious identities are often treated in largely functional and ahistorical terms, with limited attention paid to the contested ethical meanings that emerge within specific socio-religious contexts.[21]

Analytically, interfaith humanitarianism may be distinguished into two broad orientations. The first is a universalist approach, which seeks to minimize the public expression of religious identity in order to preserve the neutrality of humanitarian space and maintain broad-based inclusivity.[22] The second is a faith-based approach, which acknowledges religious identity as an important source of ethical commitment, moral reasoning, and humanitarian practice while remaining aligned with globally recognized humanitarian principles.[23] Although these approaches have contributed significantly to the development of interfaith humanitarian scholarship, they have largely been formulated within relatively pluralistic social settings where religious diversity is institutionally normalized. As a result, they often overlook contexts characterized by heightened religious sensitivities, historical suspicions, and strong communal boundaries, where the negotiation of humanitarian cooperation may involve considerably more complex ethical and social dynamics. Consequently, local forms of resistance, moral contestation, and boundary-making frequently remain underexamined within the broader literature on interfaith humanitarian action.[24]

The third concept informing this study is Qur'anic ethics. Rather than viewing ethics solely as a set of prescriptive norms, this perspective understands ethical principles as values that are lived, interpreted, and continually negotiated within social practice. From this standpoint, the Qur'an is approached not merely as a repository of doctrinal injunctions but as an ethical horizon whose meanings emerge through the dynamic interplay of scriptural texts, lived experience, and historical context. Qur'anic ethics therefore extends beyond the realm of abstract doctrine, functioning instead as a framework for moral reasoning and decision-making in concrete social situations.[25]

Analytically, the manifestations of Qur'anic ethics may be differentiated into three interconnected forms. The first is ethics as doctrine, which emphasizes fidelity to textual prescriptions and the authoritative interpretation of scripture.[26] The second is ethics as practice, which highlights the translation of Qur'anic values into everyday social action and collective engagement.[27] The third is ethics as negotiation, whereby believers actively

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[20] S. Jaya Krishna and Johanan Asirvatham Daniel, 'Impact of Culture on Humanitarian Operations: Review and Insights', *SCMS Journal of Indian Management*, 2021.

[21] Robin Bush, 'Muhammadiyah and Disaster Response: Innovation and Change in Humanitarian Assistance', in *Natural Disaster Management in the Asia-Pacific: Policy and Governance* (Springer, 2014), pp. 33–48.

[22] Stacey Gutkowski and Craig Larkin, 'Spiritual Ambiguity in Interfaith Humanitarianism: Local Faith Communities, Syrian Refugees, and Muslim-Christian Encounters in Lebanon and Jordan', *Migration Studies*, 9.3 (2021), doi:10.1093/migration/mnab024.

[23] Sarah Haggar, 'Apolitical Humanitarianism? Neoliberal Governance and Bordering in a Transnational Interfaith Organization', *Migration and Society*, 7.1 (2024), doi:10.3167/ARMS.2024.070107.

[24] Andiko, Mutia, and Nazaryani, 'THE RULING ON WISHING MERRY CHRISTMAS TO NON-MUSLIMS: AN ANALYSIS OF M. QURAISH SHIHAB'S INTERPRETATIONS'.

[25] Umma Farida, 'Religious Tolerance in the Quran and Sunnah and the Importance of Its Application in Indonesiaالتسامح الديني في ضوء القرآن والسنة وأهمية تطبيقه في اندونيسيا', *ESENSIA: Jurnal Ilmu-Ilmu Ushuluddin*, 20.1 (2019), pp. 95–117.

[26] Hoir, 'Thematic Tafsir Study: Religious Moderation in the Qur'an and Hadith'.

[27] Ahmad 'Ubaydi Hasbullah, *Ilmu Living Qur'an-Hadis: Ontologi, Epistemologi, Dan Aksiologi*, Cetakan-2 (Yayasan Wakaf Darus-Sunnah, 2019).

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interpret, weigh, and apply Qur'anic principles when confronted with empirical dilemmas, competing obligations, and situational constraints.[28] In this latter form, ethical judgment is neither entirely predetermined by textual authority nor wholly detached from it; rather, it emerges through an ongoing process of engagement between religious commitments and lived realities.

Despite its analytical significance, this negotiated dimension of Qur'anic ethics remains relatively underexplored within studies of Muslim NGOs and interfaith humanitarian action. Existing scholarship has generally focused either on doctrinal formulations of Islamic ethics or on the practical outcomes of faith-based humanitarian initiatives, leaving insufficient room for examining how Muslim actors navigate ethical tensions, interpret religious obligations, and reconcile competing moral demands in contexts marked by crisis, diversity, and social sensitivity. It is within this underexamined space that the present study locates its primary conceptual intervention.

Taken together, the principal limitation of the existing literature lies in the persistent separation between normative Qur'anic scholarship, empirical studies of Muslim NGO practices, and analyses of ethics as a lived and socially embedded process. Research on religious tolerance has tended to remain idealized and abstract, while studies of interfaith humanitarianism frequently overlook theological complexity and the significance of local socio-religious sensitivities. As a result, Muslim NGOs are often reduced either to instruments of religious moderation policies or to technical providers of humanitarian assistance. This study seeks to address this gap by offering an integrated analysis of Qur'anic ethics as a negotiated framework through which Muslim humanitarian actors navigate interfaith engagement in the context of disaster response in Aceh.

Accordingly, the study is guided by the following overarching question: How do Muslim NGOs in Aceh interpret, enact, and negotiate Qur'anic values in the practice of interfaith humanitarianism during the response to the 2025 Aceh floods? To address this broader inquiry, three subsidiary questions are examined: (1) How do Muslim humanitarian actors understand religious tolerance and interfaith solidarity in disaster settings? (2) How are Qur'anic values operationalized in everyday humanitarian practices and decision-making processes? (3) What ethical boundaries are negotiated when Muslim NGOs interact and collaborate with humanitarian actors from different religious backgrounds in Aceh?

The empirical focus of this study is the ethical orientations and humanitarian practices of local Muslim NGOs directly involved in post-disaster relief operations following the 2025 Aceh floods. Particular attention is paid to their perceptions, interactions, forms of collaboration, and areas of tension in relation to interfaith humanitarian actors. Aceh was selected as the research site because of its distinctive socio-religious characteristics. As a region marked by the formal implementation of Islamic law, a historical legacy of resistance to external religious missions, and a documented experience of both interreligious solidarity and religious contestation during periods of crisis, Aceh offers a uniquely significant setting for examining the relationship between faith, humanitarianism, and ethical negotiation. Consequently, the object of analysis is not confined to NGOs as institutional entities. Rather, it is conceived as an ethical arena in which Qur'anic values, universal humanitarian principles, and local socio-religious sensitivities are continuously interpreted, contested, and negotiated in practice.

This study adopts a qualitative research design grounded in a constructivist epistemological framework.[29] The qualitative approach was selected because the objective

[28] Gutkowski and Larkin, 'Spiritual Ambiguity in Interfaith Humanitarianism: Local Faith Communities, Syrian Refugees, and Muslim-Christian Encounters in Lebanon and Jordan'.

[29] John Cresswell, 'Qualitative Inquiry & Research Design: Choosing among Five Approaches.', 2013.

of the study is not to measure levels of tolerance or evaluate the effectiveness of humanitarian assistance, but rather to explore the meanings, ethical reasoning, and moral dilemmas experienced by Muslim humanitarian actors engaged in interfaith humanitarian action. Such an approach is particularly suitable for examining how religious values are interpreted, negotiated, and enacted within complex social settings characterized by uncertainty and ethical contestation.

Primary data were collected through in-depth semi-structured interviews with representatives of four Muslim NGOs actively involved in the 2025 Aceh flood response. Participants included senior organizational leaders and field volunteers who possessed direct experience in humanitarian decision-making and operational activities. To ensure confidentiality and protect organizational identities, the participating organizations are anonymized as NGO-A, NGO-B, NGO-C, and NGO-D. These organizations represent diverse institutional profiles within Aceh's humanitarian landscape. NGO-B is a relatively new local humanitarian organization that experienced significant organizational expansion during the 2025 flood response. NGO-C is an Islamic philanthropic institution actively engaged in emergency relief distribution and community recovery initiatives. NGO-D is an established humanitarian organization with approximately seven years of operational experience in Aceh. The inclusion of organizations with differing institutional histories and capacities enabled a richer understanding of how ethical considerations are negotiated across diverse humanitarian settings.

Secondary data consisted of relevant academic literature, humanitarian reports, official statements issued by religious organizations, and local as well as international media coverage related to the disaster response. The triangulation of these sources provided important contextual insights and strengthened the analytical interpretation of interview data. By combining multiple forms of evidence, the study seeks to develop a contextually grounded understanding of humanitarian practice without reducing complex social realities to statistical generalizations.

The participants in this study consisted of key actors from local Muslim NGOs who were directly involved in the flood response. They included NGO board members, field coordinators, senior volunteers, organizational leaders, and finance officers from different organizations. Participants were selected through purposive sampling based on two principal criteria: direct involvement in humanitarian decision-making processes and experience interacting with interfaith humanitarian actors during relief operations. Given the sensitivity of the topic and the need to ensure participant safety and confidentiality, all identities were anonymized. Consequently, the analysis focuses on ethical patterns and reflective narratives rather than individual attribution.

The research was conducted in two stages. The first stage involved contextual mapping through the examination of official documents and media reports in order to understand the socio-religious dynamics that emerged following the floods. The second stage consisted of field data collection through semi-structured interviews designed to explore the experiences, dilemmas, and ethical justifications articulated by Muslim NGO actors. Throughout the research process, particular attention was given to ethical sensitivity and procedural caution, considering the vulnerability and complexity of the post-disaster context.

Data were analyzed using a reflexive thematic analysis approach. The analytical process involved data transcription, initial coding, identification of key ethical themes, and the examination of relationships between field practices and the study's conceptual framework. Emergent themes—including solidarity, the boundaries of tolerance, suspicions of missionary activity, and ethical legitimacy—were subsequently interpreted in dialogue with scholarship on humanitarian studies and Qur'anic ethics. The purpose of the analysis

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was not to verify theological norms, but rather to examine how Qur'anic values were enacted as lived ethics within a context of crisis. In this sense, the methodological approach functioned not merely as a technical instrument for data collection and analysis, but also as an epistemic framework for connecting empirical findings with the article's broader conceptual argument.

B. Result and Discussion

Humanitarian Solidarity and Interfaith Cooperation in Disaster Response

One of the organizations interviewed in this study (hereafter referred to as NGO-A) is a national Islamic humanitarian organization with extensive experience in disaster response across various regions of Indonesia. Having operated for more than two decades, the organization has been involved in numerous humanitarian missions and maintains representative offices in many parts of the country. When the major floods struck Aceh in late 2025, NGO-A deployed assessment teams, field volunteers, and logistical assistance to several affected areas. According to the informants, one of the primary challenges they encountered was not merely the distribution of aid itself, but the management of social trust amid the presence of multiple humanitarian actors representing different religious backgrounds.[30]

In several flood-affected locations, NGO-A observed that humanitarian assistance was delivered simultaneously by Islamic organizations, government agencies, local community groups, and non-Muslim faith-based organizations. This situation created a complex environment of interaction.[31] On the one hand, the urgent needs of affected communities required rapid coordination and collaboration among humanitarian actors.

"*In general, people are not concerned about who comes to provide assistance. What matters is that the aid is genuinely intended for humanitarian purposes. The issue that usually concerns local communities is whether the assistance is delivered promptly and responds to the actual needs of disaster victims*."[32]

On the other hand, some members of the community continued to express sensitivity regarding the possibility that humanitarian assistance might be accompanied by religious agendas. A volunteer from NGO-A explained:

"*Aceh has a strong social and religious character. For that reason, we always maintain communication with community leaders and local authorities. People generally accept any organization as long as there are no activities perceived as carrying agendas beyond the humanitarian mission*."[33]

In this context, NGO-A functioned as a social mediator, bridging humanitarian needs and local community expectations. Prior to distributing assistance, volunteers coordinated with village authorities, community leaders, and local religious figures to ensure that all humanitarian activities were understood as neutral humanitarian actions. LA, a senior representative of NGO-A, explained that such communication was often more important than the assistance itself because it significantly influenced the extent to which local communities accepted the various actors operating in the field.

"*From the very beginning, we sought to build trust with the community. Our team conducted assessments together with local residents, explained the mechanisms of aid distribution, and ensured that every stage of the process could be accounted for. In our experience, transparency and communication are far more important than the amount of*

[30] Interview with Z, Aceh, 2026.
[31] Interview with LA, Aceh, 2026.
[32] Interview with Z, Aceh, 2026.
[33] Interview with Z, Aceh, 2026.

assistance delivered. Challenges often emerge when aid is perceived as a means of influencing people's beliefs or advancing interests unrelated to the needs of disaster survivors. When assistance is provided solely for humanitarian purposes and delivered in a professional manner, communities are generally quite receptive."[34]

This experience indicates that humanitarian action in Aceh requires not only logistical capacity but also the ability to navigate social sensitivities and build public legitimacy through sustained dialogue and communication.

More complex experiences were reported by NGO-B, NGO-C, and NGO-D, three local Muslim organizations with different institutional characteristics yet equally involved in the 2025 Aceh flood response. NGO-B is a relatively young organization whose activities prior to the disaster primarily focused on social assistance, rice distribution for underprivileged households, educational support, and community-based philanthropic initiatives. When the floods struck, the organization launched an emergency fundraising campaign with a relatively modest target. Within only three to four days, however, the amount of donations received had exceeded the original target.

"*Initially, we launched the fundraising campaign with a fairly modest target because we were aware of our limited organizational capacity. However, within three to four days, the donations received had already surpassed our initial target. This situation required us to operate more professionally, from volunteer management and aid documentation to reporting mechanisms for donors*."[35]

This development compelled the organization to transform rapidly from a small philanthropic community initiative into a humanitarian actor responsible for managing assistance on a considerably larger scale.

According to the informant, the growing volume of donations generated new demands for transparency, accountability, and professional aid management. The organization began preparing more detailed financial reports, strengthening volunteer coordination, and maintaining more intensive communication with donors.

"*As the scale of assistance expanded, we realized that donor trust could not be sustained solely through good intentions. We began producing more detailed reports, strengthening field coordination, and learning from more experienced humanitarian organizations about how assistance should be managed in a transparent and accountable manner*."[36]

At the same time, NGO-B established partnerships with several larger Islamic humanitarian organizations that possessed extensive experience in disaster response. Through these interactions, its leaders acquired new knowledge regarding aid governance, field coordination mechanisms, and the management of inter-organizational relationships during emergency situations.

NGO-C, meanwhile, exhibited a different institutional profile. Prior to the floods, the organization had been actively engaged in social da'wah activities and mosque-based community empowerment programs. When the disaster occurred, its volunteer network, previously dedicated to educational and community development initiatives, was rapidly mobilized for humanitarian response efforts. NGO-C volunteers participated in community needs assessments, logistical distribution, community kitchen operations, and assistance programs for vulnerable groups across several evacuation sites.

According to the informant, the most significant challenge was not the distribution of aid itself but maintaining public trust amid the simultaneous presence of numerous

[34] Interview with NA, Aceh, 2026.
[35] Interview with MHS, Aceh, 2026.
[36] Interview with MHS, Aceh, 2026.

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humanitarian actors. On several occasions, volunteers received questions from local residents regarding the identity and background of certain organizations involved in relief operations.

"*In terms of aid distribution, we can generally manage it effectively. The greater challenge is maintaining public trust. Because many organizations arrive at the same time, residents occasionally ask who a particular organization is and what its background may be. We usually explain that, in an emergency situation, the most important priority is the safety and well-being of those affected. As long as assistance is provided sincerely and professionally, the identity of the organization should not be the primary concern*."[37]

Such situations required volunteers to emphasize that the immediate priority was the protection, relief, and recovery of affected communities rather than the institutional identities of those delivering assistance.

Another perspective emerged from NGO-D, an organization with longer experience in philanthropic activities and local disaster response initiatives. The organization frequently served as an intermediary between affected communities and various assistance networks operating from outside the region. According to the informant, one of the recurring challenges in the field was maintaining a balance between openness to humanitarian assistance and community sensitivities regarding the possibility of non-humanitarian agendas accompanying such aid.

"*Because we have been involved in philanthropic and disaster-response activities in Aceh for quite a long time, we often act as a bridge between affected communities and assistance coming from outside the region. Not every organization that arrives is familiar to local residents, so we try to facilitate communication to ensure that aid can be received positively*."[38]

The three organizations also encountered the reality that disaster response efforts involved not only Muslim NGOs but also a variety of humanitarian actors representing different religious backgrounds. According to the informants, the presence of interfaith organizations was generally not considered problematic as long as their activities remained focused on the needs of disaster victims and were not accompanied by attempts to influence the religious beliefs of local communities. In practice, volunteers primarily interacted at the level of technical coordination, including the allocation of distribution areas, the exchange of information regarding field needs, and efforts to prevent duplication of assistance. One informant explained that organizations were generally evaluated on the basis of their conduct and contribution in the field rather than solely on their religious identity.

Nevertheless, all three organizations consistently emphasized the existence of ethical boundaries that should not be crossed. Humanitarian cooperation was accepted insofar as it remained within the humanitarian sphere, operated transparently, and respected the socio-religious norms of Acehnese society. For this reason, communication with religious leaders, village authorities, and local communities formed an essential component of their humanitarian strategy. Through these mechanisms, NGO-B, NGO-C, and NGO-D sought to maintain two commitments simultaneously: openness toward universal humanitarian solidarity and fidelity to the Qur'anic values that constitute the moral foundation of their organizations. The experiences of these organizations suggest that tolerance in humanitarian work does not emerge as an abstract principle applied automatically in practice. Rather, it unfolds through an ongoing process of negotiation involving the needs of disaster survivors, religious values, community perceptions, and the changing realities of the field.

[37] Interview with NA, Aceh, 2026.
[38] Interview with M, Aceh, 2026.

The 2025 Aceh floods generated a large-scale humanitarian crisis that required the involvement of a wide range of humanitarian actors. Official data from the National Disaster Management Agency (BNPB) recorded more than a thousand fatalities, hundreds of thousands of displaced persons, and extensive damage to residential infrastructure and public facilities.[39] In this context, humanitarian assistance was provided not only by government agencies and local Muslim NGOs but also by interfaith actors, including non-Muslim faith-based organizations that contributed housing support, logistical assistance,[40] and emergency relief.[41]

The presence of interfaith actors within Aceh's humanitarian landscape generated social dynamics that were not entirely neutral.[42] Although the needs of disaster survivors were urgent and universal,[43] the distribution of assistance took place within a social context that has long drawn a clear distinction between humanitarian aid and activities perceived as religious missions. Secondary data and local media reports indicate that segments of the community actively monitored the forms, symbols, and methods associated with incoming assistance, particularly when it was provided by non-Muslim organizations.[44] This suggests that the acceptance of humanitarian aid was shaped not only by the urgency of need but also by ethical and cultural perceptions regarding the actors delivering such assistance.

Negotiating Qur'anic Ethics in Interfaith Humanitarianism

The relationship between the scale of the humanitarian crisis and the interfaith response reveals a latent tension between universal humanitarian imperatives and local socio-religious boundaries. On the one hand, emergency conditions created opportunities for extensive collaboration among humanitarian actors. On the other hand, Aceh's historical and socio-religious sensitivities shaped social mechanisms that distinguish between assistance perceived as "purely humanitarian" and aid considered capable of disrupting religious harmony. This dynamic constituted the empirical context within which Muslim NGOs navigated interfaith humanitarian engagement with considerable caution.[45]

Interview data from Muslim NGO actors indicate that humanitarianism is understood primarily as an effort to restore the dignity of disaster survivors regardless of their religious background. Informants emphasized that their involvement in the flood response included direct needs assessments, needs-based aid distribution, and continuous efforts to preserve the dignity of aid recipients. Interfaith solidarity was described as an unavoidable reality of humanitarian practice, in which organizations representing different religious traditions pursue shared humanitarian objectives, albeit through different symbols, narratives, and

[39] Bencana, 'Dashboard Penanganan Darurat Bencana Banjir Dan Longsor Sumatera 2025'.

[40] Kominsa, 'Yayasan Buddha Tzu Chi Bangun 1.000 Rumah Untuk Korban Bencana Aceh'.

[41] Admin (PGI), 'Gereja Bersama Jaringan Lembaga Kemanusiaan Terus Salurkan Bantuan Dan Layanan Psikososial Bagi Korban Bencana Banjir Dan Longsor', *Pgi.or.Id*, 2025 <https://pgi.or.id/news/warta-pgi/gereja-bersama-jaringan-lembaga-kemanusiaan-terus-salurkan-bantuan-dan-layanan-psikososial-bagi-korban-bencana-banjir-dan-longsor-251>.

[42] Admin Dinas Syariat Islam, 'Cegah Pengaruh Misionaris, Pemerintah Aceh Perkuat Peran Dai Perbatasan Pascabencana', *Dsi.Acehprov.Go.Id*, 2026 <https://dsi.acehprov.go.id/berita/kategori/berita/cegah-pengaruh-misionaris-pemerintah-aceh-perkuat-peran-dai-perbatasan-pascabencana>.

[43] Admin Diskominsa, 'Wagub Aceh Minta Bantuan Banjir Tak Ditahan, Helikopter Disiagakan Untuk Wilayah Terisolir', *Diskominsa Aceh*, 2025 <Wagub Aceh Minta Bantuan Banjir Tak Ditahan, Helikopter Disiagakan untuk Wilayah Terisolir>.

[44] Habibi, 'GP Ansor Aceh: Isu Missionaris Pascbencana Jangan Ganggu Kerukunan Di Negeri Syariat Islam'.

[45] Michael Barnett and Janice Stein, *Sacred Aid: Faith and Humanitarianism* (Oxford University Press, 2012).

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moral vocabularies.[46] For all informants, the Qur'an served as the primary ethical foundation guiding humanitarian action.[47] Senior representatives from the participating Muslim NGOs consistently referred to Qur'anic principles as the basis of their humanitarian engagement. One informant stated:

"*The principle of ta'āwun (mutual assistance) in Surah al-Mā'idah, the teachings of Surah al-Mā'ūn, and the verses at the beginning of the fourth juz' concerning spending from what one loves, together with the overarching value of raḥmatan lil-'ālamīn (mercy to all creation), are all internalized in our humanitarian activities*."[48]

Similarly, another informant referred to overlapping Qur'anic foundations, stating:

"*Wa ta'āwanū 'alā al-birri wa al-taqwā* (cooperate in righteousness and piety) and *lan tanālū al-birra ḥattā tunfiqū mimmā tuḥibbūn* (you will never attain true righteousness until you spend from what you love) constitute guiding principles for our organization and for the donors whom we refer to as *muhsinin*."[49]

The informants consistently referred to the same Qur'anic verses as the primary foundation for the ethical principles guiding their humanitarian missions, particularly Qur'an 5:2 (al-Mā'idah):

وَتَعَاوَنُوْا عَلَى الْبِرِّ وَالتَّقْوٰىۖ وَلَا تَعَاوَنُوْا عَلَى الْاِثْمِ وَالْعُدْوَانِۚ وَاتَّقُوا اللّٰهَۗ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ شَدِيْدُ الْعِقَابِ

"Cooperate with one another in righteousness and piety, and do not cooperate in sin and transgression. And fear Allah; indeed, Allah is severe in punishment."[50]

The informants also referred to Qur'an 3:92 (Āl 'Imrān) as another important ethical foundation for humanitarian action:

لَنْ تَنَالُوا الْبِرَّ حَتّٰى تُنْفِقُوْا مِمَّا تُحِبُّوْنَۗ وَمَا تُنْفِقُوْا مِنْ شَيْءٍ فَاِنَّ اللّٰهَ بِهٖ عَلِيْمٌ

"You will never attain true righteousness until you spend from that which you love. Whatever you spend, Allah is fully aware of it."[51]

The understanding of *ta'āwun 'alā al-birr wa al-taqwā* (cooperation in righteousness and piety) as a moral obligation to assist others in acts of goodness without being restricted by exclusive group affiliations finds support in the interpretation of Abū Ja'far al-Ṭabarī. Drawing on the explanation attributed to Ibn 'Abbās, al-Ṭabarī argues that the command to cooperate is general in scope, provided that such cooperation remains within the framework of righteousness and piety (Qur'an 5:2). On the basis of this interpretation, Muslim NGOs possess a normative foundation for adopting an inclusive approach to humanitarian action, extending assistance to anyone in need as long as such cooperation does not lead to sin, transgression, or injustice.[52] Together, these two verses constituted the primary Qur'anic horizon through which the participating Muslim NGOs understood and justified their humanitarian engagement. Consequently, the interview data revealed no tendency toward religious exclusivism in the provision of assistance. Rather, humanitarian aid was understood in universal terms, extending beyond confessional boundaries and directed toward human need without restrictive qualifications.[53]

[46] Interview with HA, Aceh, 2026.
[47] Interview with HA, Aceh, 2026.
[48] Interview with HA, Aceh, 2026.
[49] Interview with MHS, Aceh, 2026.
[50] *Al-Qur'an Dan Terjemahannya* (Kementerian Agama Republik Indonesia, 2019).
[51] *Al-Qur'an Dan Terjemahannya*.
[52] Abū Ja'far Muḥammad ibn Jarīr Al-Ṭabarī, *Tafsir Ath-Thabari*, ed. by Aḥmad 'Abd al-Razzāq Al-Bakrī and others, Vol. 8.
[53] Interview with MHS, Aceh, 2026.

Although interfaith solidarity was widely accepted in practice, the interviews also revealed the existence of ethical boundaries that Muslim NGO actors consistently sought to maintain. Humanitarian cooperation was considered acceptable insofar as it was not accompanied by attempts at religious conversion or forms of assistance perceived as vehicles for implicit religious propagation. Informants emphasized that interfaith collaboration became more comfortable and sustainable when religious identity remained a matter of personal background rather than an instrument within humanitarian practice. In this respect, humanitarian ethics was not understood as requiring the abandonment of religious identity. Rather, it involved the careful regulation of religious expression in order to preserve social trust and maintain the integrity of humanitarian engagement.

The relationship between field experience and ethical boundaries indicates that interfaith solidarity operates within a selective and conditional framework. Acceptance of humanitarian cooperation was not absolute; rather, it depended largely on public perceptions of the intentions and practices of humanitarian actors. In this context, Muslim NGOs functioned as ethical mediators whose role extended beyond the distribution of assistance. They were also responsible for managing social perceptions and fostering public trust to ensure that humanitarian aid could be received without generating religious tensions or social conflict.[54]

One of the patterns that emerged consistently across the interviews was the clear distinction drawn between forms of interfaith cooperation considered legitimate and practices perceived as inappropriate or problematic. Informants explained that Acehnese communities were generally able to distinguish between interfaith NGOs that operated professionally and solely for humanitarian purposes and actors suspected of pursuing non-humanitarian agendas. In the latter case, community responses were typically expressed through social mechanisms such as reporting concerns, seeking clarification, and engaging in dialogue with local leaders rather than through direct confrontation.[55]

The findings from these cases indicate that the legitimacy of humanitarian assistance in Aceh depends heavily on social trust. Transparency, accountability, and conformity with local socio-cultural norms emerged as key factors shaping the acceptance of humanitarian aid. Muslim NGO actors, particularly those with extensive experience in humanitarian and disaster-response activities, played an important role in bridging interfaith cooperation with local socio-religious structures through consultation, sustained communication, and the management of ethical risks.[56]

The relationship between the case studies, interview data, and secondary sources further demonstrates that interfaith humanitarian practice in Aceh extends beyond a purely technical undertaking. Rather, it constitutes a socially embedded process characterized by continuous negotiation.[57] The success or failure of humanitarian cooperation depends largely on the ability of humanitarian actors to maintain a balance between humanitarian urgency, religious sensitivities, and public trust. These findings suggest that humanitarian action in contexts marked by heightened religious sensitivities requires ethical capacities that go beyond the mere implementation of operational procedures.[58]

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[54] Katherine Marshall, 'Bridging the Divide in the Field of Humanitarianism and Development', *United Nations Alliance of Civilizations (UNAOC). Washington DC: Georgetown University*, 2012.

[55] Interview with HA and MHS, Aceh, 2026.

[56] Interview with LA, Aceh, 2026.

[57] Khatereh Eghdamian, 'Religious Identity and Experiences of Displacement: An Examination into the Discursive Representations of Syrian Refugees and Their Effects on Religious Minorities Living in Jordan', *Journal of Refugee Studies*, 30.3 (2017), pp. 447–67.

[58] Nurmiati and others, 'Governing Interfaith Solidarity: How YAKKUM Institutionalizes Cross-Faith Humanitarian Action in the 2022 Cianjur Earthquake'.

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Based on the field findings, Muslim NGOs in Aceh following the 2025 floods implemented Qur'anic ethical principles in an inclusive manner within their humanitarian activities.[59] These organizations provided assistance to affected communities regardless of religious affiliation, reflecting Qur'anic and Prophetic teachings concerning charity, compassion, and responsibility toward humanity. This form of lived ethical practice involved collaboration across community boundaries and engagement with actors from different faith backgrounds, contributing to the development of new forms of social capital, both bonding and bridging, among disaster-affected populations.[60]

Beyond the provision of material assistance, the NGOs also emphasized social recovery and community reconstruction. Such efforts are consistent with scholarship highlighting the importance of community resilience and institutional partnerships in post-disaster recovery processes.[61] At the core of these humanitarian practices was a commitment to addressing human needs through values of justice, compassion, and universal mercy. This commitment was reflected, for example, in the distribution of zakat-based assistance according to levels of need rather than religious affiliation, thereby ensuring that humanitarian support remained responsive to the realities faced by disaster survivors.[62]

These findings both converge with and diverge from previous scholarship. For example, Khafagy (2020) argues that Islamic faith-based organizations interpret religious teachings in contextual and flexible ways, a pattern that is similarly reflected in the practices of Acehnese NGOs, which adapt Qur'anic values to local social realities. Likewise, Nurdin (2024) highlights the crucial role of local facilitators and cultural sensitivity in post-disaster recovery, a finding that is consistent with the strategies adopted by Acehnese NGOs, particularly their engagement with village leaders, religious figures, and local community structures.[63]

In the context of interfaith humanitarianism, Gutkowski and Larkin (2021) identify forms of "spiritual ambiguity" that may emerge when religious communities collaborate across faith boundaries.[64] The findings of the present study similarly underscore the need for a nuanced approach to interfaith engagement. However, the Acehnese case exhibits a distinctive dynamic shaped by its Muslim-majority context, in which NGOs frame interfaith cooperation primarily through a commitment to universal humanitarian values grounded in Islamic ethical principles.

The findings also support longstanding arguments that Islamic teachings encourage generosity and assistance beyond confessional boundaries. They further resonate with Tania's (2024) observation that the Indonesian model of disaster response often integrates religious values with sustainable humanitarian and recovery efforts.[65] The principal difference lies in the contextual setting. While international studies frequently emphasize obstacles to interfaith cooperation or concerns related to evangelistic approaches, the NGOs

[59] Jamal Krafess, 'The Influence of the Muslim Religion in Humanitarian Aid', *International Review of the Red Cross*, 87.858 (2005), pp. 327–42.

[60] Nurdin, 'Islamic Faith-based Organisations and Their Role in Building Social Capital for Post-disaster Recovery in Indonesia'.

[61] Jauharatul Maknuniah, Sutrisno Sutrisno, and Teguh Arafah Julianto, 'Peacebuilding and Humanitarian Crises: The Role of Islamic Humanitarianism in Indonesia's Conflict Resolution and Disaster Response', *ASEAN Journal of Islamic Studies and Civilization (AJISC)*, 2.1 (2025), pp. 117–33.

[62] Riham Ahmed Khafagy, 'Faith-Based Organizations: Humanitarian Mission or Religious Missionary', *Journal of International Humanitarian Action*, 5.1 (2020), doi:10.1186/s41018-020-00080-6.

[63] Khafagy, 'Faith-Based Organizations: Humanitarian Mission or Religious Missionary'.

[64] Gutkowski and Larkin, 'Spiritual Ambiguity in Interfaith Humanitarianism: Local Faith Communities, Syrian Refugees, and Muslim-Christian Encounters in Lebanon and Jordan'.

[65] Basma Tania and others, 'How Humanitarian Islam Fosters Peace: The Perspective of Nahdlatul Ulama', *El Harakah: Jurnal Budaya Islam*, 26.1 (2024), pp. 171–203.

examined in this study generally adopted positions characterized by neutrality, cross-sector collaboration, and a primary focus on humanitarian objectives. In this respect, humanitarian engagement was framed not as a vehicle for religious competition, but as an expression of shared concern for human welfare.

Reflection on these findings suggests that the observed practices represent broader social realities in Aceh, where religious values and local historical experiences remain deeply embedded in collective life. For example, one Acehnese community leader recalled that "our ancestors were once refugees,"[66] invoking a historical memory that continues to shape empathy toward displaced persons and disaster survivors today. Interviews with Acehnese religious scholars likewise emphasized that Muslims are bound by a moral obligation to assist those who suffer regardless of their social or religious background,[67] illustrating the extent to which Qur'anic values have been internalized in everyday humanitarian practice. The field data also highlight the importance of local social capital. The involvement of village facilitators, community leaders, and *dayah* authorities in the distribution of humanitarian assistance, as similarly noted by Nurdin (2024), demonstrates the significance of local customs, religious traditions, and community-based leadership in facilitating effective recovery processes.[68] Taken together, these findings reflect a synergy between Islamic teachings and Acehnese local wisdom, not merely as an abstract ideal but as a lived reality manifested through compassion, solidarity, and collective responsibility in the aftermath of disaster.

The theoretical and practical implications of these findings are considerable. At the theoretical level, the concept of "negotiated Qur'anic ethics" receives empirical support and contributes to the broader literature on interfaith humanitarianism by demonstrating how religious norms may be interpreted and enacted in context-sensitive ways while remaining responsive to universal humanitarian needs.[69] In this respect, the findings reinforce the view that religious ethics and humanitarian principles need not be understood as competing frameworks but may function in mutually reinforcing ways within disaster-response settings. The study also suggests that the Indonesian experience offers valuable insights into how religious values can be integrated into humanitarian action, emergency response, and peace-oriented initiatives.[70]

From a practical perspective, the findings underscore the importance of inclusive humanitarian policies. One example concerns the development of disaster-related zakat guidelines that enable assistance to be distributed on the basis of humanitarian need across diverse communities.[71] The findings further highlight the importance of strengthening human resource capacity and coordination frameworks that actively involve religious leaders, local authorities, and community-based actors in order to cultivate public trust and enhance the effectiveness of humanitarian interventions. These observations are broadly

[66] Firdaus Yunus and others, 'Rejection of Rohingya in Aceh: The Role of Ulama and Tolerance in Acehnese Society', *Jurnal Ilmiah Peuradeun*, 13.3 (2025), pp. 1669–92.

[67] Yunus and others, 'Rejection of Rohingya in Aceh: The Role of Ulama and Tolerance in Acehnese Society'.

[68] Nurdin, 'Islamic Faith-based Organisations and Their Role in Building Social Capital for Post-disaster Recovery in Indonesia'.

[69] Maknuniah, Sutrisno, and Julianto, 'Peacebuilding and Humanitarian Crises: The Role of Islamic Humanitarianism in Indonesia's Conflict Resolution and Disaster Response'.

[70] Rahmawati Husein, Bachtiar Dwi Kurniawan, and Nawang Kurniawati, 'Humanitarian Diplomacy in Action: Examining Muhammadiyah as a Model for Faith-Based Organizational Engagement', *Jurnal Hubungan Internasional*, 13.1 (2024), pp. 1–16.

[71] Amelia Fauzia and Kaja Borchgrevink, 'Transnational Zakat Management: Transformations in the Humanitarian Sector', *Muslim Humanitarianism Review*, 2.1 (2025).

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consistent with existing scholarship emphasizing the importance of collaboration between faith-based institutions and local communities in disaster management.[72]

Several factors help explain the patterns identified in this study. First, religious factors play an important role, as Qur'anic values concerning justice, compassion, and care for others provide a normative framework for humanitarian engagement. This was evident in the statements of local religious scholars who emphasized the moral obligation to assist anyone in need. Second, historical and cultural factors contribute significantly to the formation of collective solidarity. Aceh's historical experience as a place of refuge, as reflected in local historical narratives, continues to foster empathy toward vulnerable populations and disaster survivors. Third, institutional capacity constitutes an important enabling factor. The presence of major Islamic organizations and humanitarian institutions provides organizational resources, experience, and disaster-response methodologies that support effective humanitarian action. Finally, cultural sensitivity and local social capital play a crucial mediating role. The involvement of village facilitators, community leaders, and local religious authorities helps ensure that humanitarian assistance is delivered in ways that remain consistent with local norms and expectations. Collectively, these interrelated factors—religious values, historical memory, institutional capacity, and local social capital—help explain why Muslim NGOs in Aceh adopted the humanitarian approaches identified in this study.

In light of these findings, several directions for future policy, practice, and research may be proposed. From a practical perspective, government agencies, zakat institutions, and humanitarian organizations may consider developing more inclusive disaster-response guidelines, including mechanisms that allow humanitarian assistance to be distributed on the basis of need across diverse communities. Humanitarian NGOs and other stakeholders could also strengthen interfaith dialogue and collaborative partnerships, in line with calls within the international literature for more nuanced cross-faith approaches capable of fostering trust and enhancing the effectiveness of humanitarian interventions.

At the theoretical level, the concept of negotiated Qur'anic ethics warrants further exploration. Future studies may examine the perspectives of interfaith aid recipients, investigate how beneficiaries perceive religiously motivated humanitarian action, or undertake comparative analyses across different national and cultural settings. Such research would contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of how religious values shape humanitarian practice in diverse contexts and could further expand contemporary discussions on the relationship between faith, ethics, and humanitarianism.

As climate-related disasters become increasingly frequent across many parts of the world, the integration of religious values into humanitarian policy and practice, together with efforts to strengthen networks of trust across communities, is likely to remain an important area of scholarly inquiry and practical engagement. The findings of this study suggest that these dimensions deserve continued attention from policymakers, humanitarian practitioners, and researchers alike.

C. Conclusion

This study demonstrates that interfaith humanitarian practices undertaken by Muslim NGOs in Aceh following the 2025 floods cannot be understood merely as the implementation of universal humanitarian standards or as a technical response to crisis. The central finding that distinguishes this study from previous scholarship is that Qur'anic ethics

[72] Warren Dodd and others, 'The Contributions of Religious Leaders in Addressing Food Insecurity during the COVID-19 Pandemic in the Philippines: A Realist Evaluation of the Rapid Emergencies and Disasters Intervention (REDI)', *International Journal of Disaster Risk Reduction*, 86 (2023), p. 103545.

operates as a form of negotiated ethics—a dynamic and context-dependent normative framework that is continuously interpreted and enacted through humanitarian practice. Rather than positioning universal humanitarian values and religious commitments as opposing principles, Muslim NGOs understood universal humanitarian concern as a direct expression of Islamic theological and ethical obligations. Within the Acehnese context, where religious sensitivities remain particularly significant, the effectiveness of humanitarian action depended largely on the ability of humanitarian actors to balance humanitarian urgency, religious integrity, and local social trust.

This study nevertheless has several limitations. First, it focuses primarily on the experiences of Muslim NGOs and does not directly capture the perspectives of non-Muslim aid recipients or humanitarian actors from other religious traditions. Second, the geographical focus on Aceh—with its distinctive historical, cultural, and religious characteristics—limits the broader generalizability of the findings to other Muslim contexts. Future research may therefore develop comparative studies across regions or countries to assess the applicability of the concept of negotiated ethics within different socio-religious settings. Further studies should also explore the perspectives of interfaith beneficiary communities and examine power relations within humanitarian practice in order to develop a more comprehensive and multidimensional understanding of Islamic ethics in disaster response and humanitarian assistance.

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