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HARMONIZING SDG 16 ‘PEACE, JUSTICE, AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS’ WITH *MAQĀSĪD AL-SHARĪ’AH*: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

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Abstract

In contemporary society, various factors threaten global peace and security, making issues of justice, peace, and institutional strengthening pivotal in global discourse. These elements are central to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly in promoting inclusive and resilient institutions. This paper explores the role of institutional strengthening in achieving peace and justice through the lenses of both the SDGs and the principles of Maqāṣid al-Sharī’ah. The study adopts a qualitative approach, employing content analysis of relevant literature related to the SDGs and Maqāṣid al-Sharī’ah. Data analysis is conducted using descriptive and comparative methods to fulfill the study’s objectives. The findings reveal a significant alignment between the goals of sustainable development and the objectives of Islamic law (Maqāṣid al-Sharī’ah). The strengthening of political, social, and economic institutions, in accordance with the principles of Maqāṣid al-Sharī’ah, typically involves two key mechanisms: the promotion of public welfare (jalb al-manāfi’) and the prevention of harm (dar’ al-mafāsīd). Given the pressing global challenges, the latter mechanism is particularly vital. Furthermore, the concept of Islamic governance, or Siyāsah Shar’iyyah, empowers leaders to address these threats effectively within their jurisdictions. Therefore, in addition to considering the principles of Maqāṣid al-Sharī’ah, efforts to realize and promote sustainable development should also be reinforced by insights derived from Siyāsah Shar’iyyah, to forge resilient institutions capable of fostering long-term peace, justice, and societal harmony in an increasingly complex global landscape. Ultimately, this paper proposes a strategic policy framework that synthesizes Maqāṣidic principles with SDG 16 targets, offering actionable governance implications for contemporary institution-building.

Keywords: *Maqāṣid Sharī’ah, Peace, Justice, SDG 16, Siyāsah Shar’iyyah.*

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INTRODUCTION

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) represent a global consensus to address systemic governance and development challenges, aiming for a sustainable future by 2030 (Long et al., 2023). Central to the United Nations (UN) 2030 Agenda is a mission to eradicate poverty, safeguard the environment, and promote universal peace (Shahyrrar, 2024; Ghosh & Chakravarty, 2024). Building upon the Brundtland Commission's definition, sustainable development necessitates fulfilling present needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet theirs (Gram-Hanssen, 2012; Haliza, 2013b). This multidimensional balance requires an intricate integration of environmental, social, and economic pillars to ensure holistic human well-being (Zanudin et al., 2026).

Among the 17 goals, SDG 16 serves as a foundational pillar by addressing the critical necessity for peace, justice, and strong institutions. It seeks to curb corruption, violence, and organized crime while fostering participatory governance (Karl et al., 2022; Fallah & Shayyan, 2022). By upholding the rule of law through transparent public institutions, SDG 16 envisions a framework where individuals live free from fear (Md. Dali et al., 2016; UN, 2022). However, global progress remains stymied by climate emergencies, economic stagnation, and the lingering effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, leading to warnings that the 2030 Agenda faces significant risks of failure without immediate intervention (UN, 2023).

The structural integrity of SDG 16 is currently threatened by two major crises: violence and corruption. Human trafficking remains a persistent threat to global stability (Rashila & Nor Azzizan, 2013; UN, 2023b), while rampant corruption in the judiciary and law enforcement costs an estimated USD 1.26 trillion annually (World Economic Forum, 2019; Commissioner for Human Rights, 2021). These governance failures extend to public procurement, where collusive practices add billions to global costs (Bosio, 2021; Kawai & Nakabayashi, 2022; Decarolis & Giorgiantonio, 2022a). Beyond economic loss, the human cost is devastating; conflict-affected regions have seen millions of children drop out of school, leaving them vulnerable to exploitation and hindering long-term societal development (Elin et al., 2013; UNICEF, 2017).

To overcome these global failures, there is an emerging need to ground institutional frameworks in robust ethical paradigms. From an Islamic perspective, social justice is not merely a policy goal but the cornerstone of a prosperous society (Usman & Adeel, 2014). Islamic governance, rooted in the *Maqāsid al-Sharī'ah* paradigm, emphasizes justice and moral responsibility as essential pathways to *al-falāḥ* (true success) (Fakhri, 2014; Uula & Darwis, 2023). By safeguarding the five essential values: *dīn* (religion), *naḥs* (life), *'aql* (intellect), *nasl* (lineage), and *māl* (wealth or property), this paradigm aligns naturally with the core tenets of

sustainable development (Ahmad Sarkawi et al., 2008; Mahaiyadin, 2017; Harahap et al., 2023)

Therefore, this study aims to synthesize a strategic governance framework that harmonizes SDG 16 with the *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah*. By examining the tiers of *darūriyyāt* (necessities), *hājiyyāt* (complementary needs), and *taḥsīniyyāt* (embellishments), it explores how this classical Islamic framework can bolster institutional resilience and global security (al-Shalabi, 2002; Abdul Rasool, 2020). Furthermore, the research positions Islamic ethical governance as a constructive, complementary model for realizing the UN's vision of international peace and justice, leveraging selected institutional applications to offer high-level policy guidance.

METHODS

This research utilizes a qualitative, library-based methodology, integrating primary and secondary data to fulfill the study's objectives. Authoritative documents from UNESCO, UNICEF, and the UN, alongside academic studies on SDG 16, were selected for their relevance and significance. Complementary sources on *Uṣūl al-Fiqh* and *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah* were further employed to facilitate a comparative analysis from an Islamic perspective. The data were analyzed using content analysis to identify key themes, while descriptive and comparative approaches were applied to highlight conceptual parallels and distinctions. This rigorous approach ensures that the findings are impactful, contributing to academic discourse and the development of inclusive, justice-oriented policies. While fundamentally a conceptual analysis, the study contextualizes its findings through the lens of specific institutional mechanisms to demonstrate practical policy implications.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Maqāṣid Sharī'ah and the SDGs

The *Maqāṣid Sharī'ah* framework offers a complementary perspective on the SDGs' aspirations for peace, justice, and institutional development. Its core objectives (namely safeguarding religion, life, intellect, lineage, and property) serve as a comprehensive guide for achieving holistic human development (Kamali, 2008; Fares & Younes, 2021). In the context of institutional development, these objectives align with SDG 16 by promoting justice and good governance. Just as SDGs advocate for the eradication of violence, inequality, and corruption, *Maqāṣid Sharī'ah* emphasizes the need for institutions that safeguard public welfare and justice.

From the Islamic perspective, justice (*'adl*) is a fundamental principle for ensuring societal harmony and development. The *maqāṣid* approach ensures that

the *darūriyyāt* (necessities) are protected while facilitating *hājjiyyāt* (complementary needs) and *taḥsīniyyāt* (luxuries) that contribute to human flourishing (al-Ghazali, 2007). For example, in striving for economic justice, Islamic teachings promote wealth redistribution mechanisms like *zakat*, which ensures that wealth circulates within society to avoid concentration in a few hands, thus contributing to social equity, a goal echoed by the SDGs.

The SDG indicators emphasize reducing violence, ensuring accountability, and building transparent institutions by 2030 (UN, 2022). Likewise, *Maqāsid Sharī'ah* underscores the need to establish justice systems that are responsive, inclusive, and grounded in fairness. The intersection of these frameworks reveals a shared commitment to institutional integrity, social justice, and the protection of human dignity.

The Prophetic Foundations of Institutional Governance: Aligning SDG 16 with the Maqāsid Paradigm

Strengthening institutions and ensuring security are crucial pillars for societal development. Historically, these elements are deeply ingrained in Islamic governance, as demonstrated by the actions of the Prophet Muhammad when establishing social and governmental institutions upon his arrival in Medina. These foundational institutions such as mosques, markets, and military structures, served as critical components for sustainable civilization growth, in line with the core purposes of Islamic law (*Maqāsid Sharī'ah*) demonstrated by the actions of the Prophet Muhammad when establishing social and governmental institutions upon his arrival in Medina (Fadzli et al., 2026).

In Qur'anic discourse, the notion of peace (referred to as *al-amn*) is mentioned 45 times, while the term faith (*īmān*) appears over 800 times (Burhanuddin et al., 2017). This frequent emphasis on peace, trust, and security underscores their significance in Islamic governance. In the context of *Maqāsid Sharī'ah*, peace and security are classified as *maṣlaḥah darūriyyāt*: the indispensable necessities for human life, society, and state stability.

The Prophet Muhammad used the analogy of passengers on a ship (*al-Rukab al-Safīnah*) to describe the necessity of safeguarding communal welfare and preventing societal collapse. If passengers on the lower deck were to pierce the ship's hull to access water, the entire vessel would be at risk of sinking (al-Bukhari, 2001; Hesham, 2003). This allegory underlines the critical need for proactive institutional policies that prioritize collective security over individual liberties when public welfare is threatened.

Maqāsid al-Sharī'ah, referring to the higher objectives of Islamic law, constitute a normative framework that seeks to uphold human welfare (*maṣlaḥah*) and avert harm (*mafsadah*). Scholars such as 'Izzu-l-dīn 'Abd al-Salām (2002) and al-Shāṭibī (1992) have categorized these objectives into three tiers:

1. *Al-Ḍarūriyyāt* (necessities), which is crucial for survival and without which societal collapse occurs;
2. *Al-Ḥājiyyāt* (complementary needs), which facilitates comfort and ease of life, though their absence does not lead to destruction; and
3. *Al-Taḥsīniyyāt* (embellishments or luxuries), which enhance the beauty and quality of life but are not essential to its continuation.

These categorizations reflect a comprehensive understanding of societal well-being, aligning with the aims of both *Maqāṣid Sharī'ah* and the SDGs.

From an Islamic perspective, the promotion of peace and security aligns with the very etymology of Islam, derived from the root word *silm*, which signifies peace and submission. The Qur'anic verse al-Baqarah (2:126) illustrates this through Prophet Ibrahim's supplication for a secure and peaceful land, emphasizing that submission as a servant of God is the foundation for attaining societal peace. Likewise in verse al-Nūr (24:55), the Qur'an articulates a divine pledge wherein God assures believers who perform righteous deeds and worship Him without association (*shirk*) that they shall be granted security and protection from threats. This underscores that the promised stability in human life and peace (*amn*) are not merely social ideals, but divine bestowals contingent upon moral and spiritual integrity.

It is also worth noting that hadith literature reinforces this emphasis. For example, from Anas R.A, the Prophet is reported to have said, "*Feed the hungry, spread peace, speak kind words, and pray at night when people are sleeping. You will enter Paradise in peace*" (al-Bazzar, 1988). Similarly in another hadith, the Prophet assured divine reward for those who promote peace and give food to others (Ibn Hibban, 1988). These traditions collectively illustrate that peace is not only a societal responsibility but also a means to attain divine rewards.

Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah, therefore, serves as a comprehensive framework for strategic policy formulation in the institutionalization of peace and justice by advancing the safeguarding of five essential objectives, namely: religion, life, intellect, dignity, and property. From a governance and planning perspective, institutions (especially those entrusted with the administration of justice and the maintenance of security) serve as the operational mechanisms to ensure these objectives are translated into measurable policy outcomes, safeguarding both societal harmony and individual rights.

Harmonizing SDG 16 with Maqāṣid Sharī'ah

The aims of SDG 16, which encourage 'peace, justice, and strong institutions,' align closely with the tenets of *Maqāṣid Sharī'ah*. Both frameworks stress the importance of robust institutions for achieving sustainable societal welfare. In

Islamic tradition, institutional management and integrity are rooted in the principles of *Siyāsah Shar'iyyah* (Islamic Governance), which prioritize the welfare of society through the establishment of just, transparent, and accountable institutions (Atwah, 1993; Luqman & Saim, 2013; Ahmad Shukri & Rosli, 2021).

The concept of *maṣlaḥah* (public welfare), a cornerstone of *Maqāsid Sharī'ah*, extends to the regulation of institutions for both development and protection. Islamic legal tradition recognizes the authority of governing bodies to regulate societal affairs in line with public welfare, even in cases where explicit Sharia texts may not mandate specific actions (Wan Mohd Yusof et al., 2024). This flexibility allows Islamic governance to align with modern standards of institutional management, as seen in the SDGs, while remaining rooted in traditional ethical values.

Briefly, fostering peace, justice, and strong institutions is a shared goal between *Maqāsid Sharī'ah* and the SDGs. Both frameworks advocate for the development of robust institutions that safeguard societal welfare, security, and justice. For the successful realization of these goals, it is imperative that governments, civil society organizations, and relevant stakeholders forge collaborative partnerships aimed at reinforcing institutional integrity, transparency, and accountability across all tiers of governance. As Ibn 'Āshūr (1998) emphasizes, justice is a foundational principle in both governance and religion, guiding the ethical management of societal affairs.

Institutional Frameworks for Realizing Public Welfare (Maṣlaḥah)

Institutional frameworks are paramount in ensuring the administration, execution, and regulation of a country's governance, leading to just and sustainable societies. The judiciary and legislative bodies, particularly the courts, are essential in upholding justice. In line with *Maqāsid Sharī'ah*, justice ('*adl*') is a critical value that transcends race, religion, and social status (Mohamad et al., 2014; Wan Chik et al., 2018). As emphasized in the Qur'anic verse of al-Nisā' (4): 58: "*Indeed, Allah commands you to render trusts to whom they are due and when you judge between people to judge with justice. Excellent is that which Allah instructs you. Indeed, Allah is ever Hearing and Seeing*".

Hence, institutions that safeguard their citizens such as military and police forces are indispensable for the preservation of life (*hiḍḍ al-Nafs*), one of the essential objectives (*ḍarūriyyāt*) in *Maqāsid Sharī'ah*. These institutions are critical in ensuring defense, security, and safety, as these are essentials for a functioning society, enabling the fulfillment of both individual and collective responsibilities.

Islamic law (*sharī'ah*) emphasizes not only the advancement of human well-being (Mohamad et al., 2018; Shuid et al., 2018; Md. Ali et al., 2022) but also the prevention of harm. The institutionalization of military and police organizations, when aligned with *Maqāsid Sharī'ah*, is required to uphold human

dignity and rights as bestowed by Allah. Grounded in justice, truth, loyalty, and trust – these institutions form the basis of peace (*salām*) in both wartime and peacetime (Burhanuddin et al., 2017; Surwadono et al., 2018; Safiyanu, 2021). Thus, justice and institutional stability are crucial components for promoting *maṣlahah* and preventing corruption, which is antithetical to these objectives.

Institutional Mechanisms for Harm Mitigation (Dar' al-Mafāsīd)

In order to build a sustainable society, economic development must be pursued through a holistic lens, encompassing both material and spiritual dimensions, which ultimately leads to the realization of social justice (*al-'adl al-ijtimā'ī*). This vision resonates with the higher objectives of *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah*, notably the preservation of wealth (*hifẓ al-māl*). Islamic financial institutions such as the Islamic Development Bank (IDB) operating under the auspices of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), endeavour to enhance socio-economic well-being through *Sharī'ah*-compliant financial instruments that uphold principles of equity, distributive justice, and ethical stewardship (Fakhri & Hammad, 2015; ISDB, 2022).

Similarly, the role of *Maqāṣid Sharī'ah* in combating corruption cannot be understated. Corruption (*fasād*) directly undermines the ethical governance of resources and wealth distribution, which is essential for societal well-being. As a practical application of this conceptual framework, the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) serve as a critical apparatus for promoting institutional integrity and preventing corrupt practices (Manan et al., 2022; Junus et al., 2024). This demonstrates how Islamic governance elements of *dar' al-mafāsīd* are operationalized in modern national planning.

Even more so, corruption, explicitly condemned in the Qur'anic verse al-Baqarah (2:188) undermines societal trust and obstructs the realization of *maṣlahah*. From a governance and strategic planning perspective, this necessitates the integration of rigorous ethical audits and transparent oversight mechanisms within national development blueprints. Failure to operationalize these preventive measures (*dar' al-mafāsīd*) at the policy-making stage not only jeopardizes the foundational aims of *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah* but also structurally limits the achievement of SDG targets.

Synergizing Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah with Universal Human Rights Frameworks

A strong institutional framework is necessary to safeguard justice and human rights on a global scale, especially in today's interconnected world. International institutions like the UN and the OIC were created to preserve human rights, justice, and peace globally (Turan, 2022). The safeguarding of human life and dignity as enshrined in the principles of *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah* finds profound resonance with

the foundational aims of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) which was established in 1948.

Islam highlights the importance of upholding justice and human rights as part of the preservation of life and dignity. The OIC specifically remains resolutely committed to the safeguarding of Muslim rights across the globe, guided by Qur'ānic imperatives that call for the establishment of peace and the prevention of injustice. By grounding international efforts in the *Maqāsid Sharī'ah* framework, Muslim-majority nations can work towards sustainable development while upholding ethical and 'just' governance.

To sum up whole discussions, the table below illustrates the thematic harmony between SDG 16 and *Maqāsid Sharī'ah*, also highlighting how the implementation of *Siyāsah Shar'īyyah* elements are essential for transforming these shared principles into robust institutions and ethical frameworks that safeguard global peace, justice, and societal welfare.

Table 1: Comparative Matrix of SDG 16 Targets and *Maqāsid* Principle / *Siyāsah Shar'īyyah* Elements

Theme	UN Framework (SDG 16 Targets)	<i>Maqāsid</i> Principles (MP) / <i>Siyāsah Shar'īyyah</i> Elements (SSE)	Policy Guidance and Institutional Implications
Governance and Accountability	<i>Target 16.6:</i> Develop effective, accountable and transparent institutions at all levels.	<i>MP:</i> <i>Jalb al-Maṣāliḥ</i> (Attaining benefits / welfare) <i>SSE:</i> <i>Al-Ḥisbah</i> (institutional accountability and ombudsman mechanisms).	Establish independent oversight bodies to audit public administration, ensuring transparency aligns with both SDG indicators and Islamic ethical stewardship.
Justice and Rule of Law	<i>Target 16.3:</i> Promote the rule of law at the national and international levels and ensure equal access to justice.	<i>MP:</i> <i>Al-'Adl</i> (Justice) <i>SSE:</i> <i>Wilāyat al-Qaḍā'</i> (Independent and impartial judiciary).	Strengthening legislative and judicial courts to uphold justice impartially across race or religion, bridging systemic legal gaps.
Integrity and Anti-Corruption	<i>Target 16.5:</i> Substantially reduce corruption and bribery in all their forms.	<i>MP:</i> Preservation of wealth (<i>māl</i>) & harm mitigation (<i>dar' al-mafāsīd</i>). <i>SSE:</i> <i>Sadd al-dharā'i'</i> (blocking the means to evil / preventive policies).	Operationalize proactive integrity frameworks (e.g., the MACC in Malaysia) to prevent <i>fasād</i> (corruption) rather than merely punitive measures.
Peace and Security	<i>Target 16.1:</i> Significantly reduce all forms of violence and related death rates everywhere.	<i>MP:</i> Preservation of life (<i>al-naḥs</i>) <i>SSE:</i> <i>Siyāsah dākhiliyyah wa-khārijīyyah</i> (internal security and foreign diplomacy policies).	Formulate national defense and security policies that empower police and military forces to safeguard citizens' right to life and societal stability.
Socio-Economic Equity	<i>Target 16.4:</i> Significantly reduce illicit financial and arms	<i>MP:</i> <i>Al-'Adl al-Ijtīmā'ī</i> (social justice)	Deploy Shariah-compliant financial instruments (e.g., IDB frameworks) to ensure equitable

Theme		UN Framework (SDG 16 Targets)	Maqāṣidic Principles (MP) / Siyāsah Shar‘iyyah Elements (SSE)	Policy Guidance and Institutional Implications
Global Rights	Human	flows, strengthen the recovery and return of stolen assets.	<i>SSE: Siyāsah māliyyah</i> (Islamic economic policies and fiscal regulation). <i>MP: Preservation of Dignity (al-‘irḍ)</i>	wealth distribution and combat illicit financial practices.
		<i>Target 16.c:</i> Promote and enforce non-discriminatory laws and policies for sustainable development.	<i>SSE: Mu‘āhadāt dawliyyah</i> (compliance with ‘just’ international treaties / covenants).	Align national human rights policies with international frameworks (UN, OIC, UDHR) to globally safeguard human dignity without discrimination.

CONCLUSION

The realization of *Maqāṣid Sharī‘ah* is inherently connected to the strategic goals of sustainable development. The elements of *Siyāsah Shar‘iyyah* provide the state with the essential governance framework to enact actionable policies that promote *maṣlahah* and prevent *mafsadah*. In this light, strong institutions are not just a means of governance but a religious imperative and a planning necessity, contributing to the broader aims of human flourishing, peace, and justice. As the Qur’ān reminds us in al-Anfāl (8:60): “*And prepare against them whatever you are able of power...*” a command that extends beyond military preparedness to include robust legal, political, and economic institutions that safeguard the well-being of humanity.

Hence, the preservation of institutional integrity (rooted in the principle of *Maqāṣid al-Sharī‘ah*) emerges as indispensable in realizing the SDGs pertaining to peace, justice, and strong institutions. By offering a synthesized *Maqāṣidic*-governance framework, this paper provides explicit policy guidance for contemporary statecraft. The convergence between the *Maqāṣid al-Sharī‘ah* and the SDGs signifies a profound and enduring commitment to human flourishing, the mitigation of harm, and the cultivation of a just and secure societal order. Ultimately, this alignment transcends theoretical discourse, equipping policymakers with the structural and ethical imperatives needed to build resilient institutions for generations to come.

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