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## **Women's Participation In Peacebuilding: A Contemporary Islamic Jurisprudential Perspective**

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**Abstract**

Despite its importance, women's participation in peacebuilding processes in many Islamic societies, including Afghanistan, still faces social, cultural, and structural obstacles. This research examines whether women's participation in peace processes is justifiable and necessary from the perspective of contemporary Islamic jurisprudence. The study employs a qualitative, analytical approach and draws on Quranic verses, contemporary Islamic jurisprudential perspectives, and academic sources on peacebuilding. The findings show that women's participation can help reduce violence, strengthen social justice, increase social cohesion, and build trust within society. The study also demonstrates that the fundamental objectives of Sharia, such as the preservation of life, the achievement of justice, and the promotion of the public interest, are compatible with women's active role in peacebuilding. This research concludes that women's participation in peace processes is not only legitimate but also necessary, and that their exclusion contradicts the fundamental principles of Islamic law in contemporary contexts worldwide.

**Keywords:** Islamic law, Peacebuilding, Women's participation, Gender and peace, Contemporary Ijtihad, Sharia law.

## Introduction

The experience of protracted conflicts shows that peace requires the active participation of all segments of society, including women, not merely the cessation of violence. In recent years, women's role in peacebuilding has gained attention as an effective factor in building trust, reducing violence, and strengthening social solidarity.<sup>1</sup> However, in many Islamic societies, women's participation in this arena has often been discussed within the framework of jurisprudential interpretations and has sometimes been accompanied by restrictions.<sup>2</sup> Their participation refers to their active role in peace processes, including both informal engagement and social leadership.

Peacebuilding in this study is understood as a gradual social process aimed at achieving justice and preventing conflict. In Islamic sources, concepts such as reforming the nature of nature, justice, and the preservation of human life have been proposed as fundamental goals of Sharia. Contemporary Islamic jurisprudence, as the analytical framework of this research, follows an *ijtihad* approach in which the fixed principles of Sharia are considered alongside the changing realities of today's societies. This approach, by emphasizing the objectives of Sharia and the public interest, provides an opportunity to reexamine the role of women in peacebuilding and to assess the legitimacy of their participation.<sup>3</sup>

Contemporary peacebuilding literature shows that women's participation helps improve negotiations and sustain peace. Research emphasizes that their presence increases attention to social justice and local needs. This presence also helps rebuild relationships. As a result, the peace process goes beyond a focus on security issues. In contemporary Islamic thought, peacebuilding is a gradual process of reforming social relations. This process, which emphasizes the public interest, considers women's participation both legitimate and necessary.

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<sup>1</sup> United Nations Security Council, *Resolution 1325 (2000): Women, Peace and Security* (United Nations, 2000), [https://undocs.org/S/RES/1325\(2000\)](https://undocs.org/S/RES/1325(2000)).

<sup>2</sup> Mohammad Hashim Kamali, *Principles of Islamic Jurisprudence*, 3rd edition (Islamic Texts Society, 2003).

<sup>3</sup> Yusuf al-Qaradawi, *Fiqh Al-Maqasid al-Shari'ah* (2006).

Research on peace processes shows that women's participation can bridge the gap between formal negotiations and social realities, bringing the peace process closer to society's real needs. Because of their extensive community connections and active presence at the local level, women can convey the demands of marginalized groups to formal peace processes, thereby strengthening the inclusiveness and accountability of agreements. Also, the presence of women in various stages of peace, from negotiation to implementation, can reduce the likelihood of a return to conflict and help consolidate peace in the long term. From this perspective, women's participation serves as a bridge between formal peace structures and society's real needs and plays an important role in achieving sustainable peace.<sup>4</sup>

From an Islamic perspective, peacebuilding is a social and moral process that aims to preserve life, achieve justice, and prevent corruption. These principles are presented in Islamic texts as the foundations of social order and consider participation in achieving peace to include all members of society. Contemporary Islamic thought, emphasizing the goals of Sharia and the public interest, considers peacebuilding a dynamic process appropriate to the circumstances of the time. Accordingly, women's participation in dialogue, mediation, and social leadership can be legitimized as part of a collective effort for justice and social stability. Therefore, the link between peacebuilding and women's participation is not at odds with Sharia but rather aligns with its overall goals.<sup>5</sup>

In Islamic thought, peacemaking is emphasized as a collective responsibility to maintain social order and prevent violence. The Holy Quran explicitly prioritizes improving human relations over conflict. As stated in verse 9 of Surah Al-Hujurat, "If two groups of believers fight, make peace between them," this verse prioritizes reconciliation and mediation

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<sup>4</sup> Thania Paffenholz, *Making Women Count – Not Just Counting Women: Assessing Women's Inclusion and Influence on Peace Negotiations* (Geneva, 2016). <https://www.inclusivepeace.org/publications/making-women-count-not-just-counting-women/>.

<sup>5</sup> Jasser Auda, *Maqasid Al-Shariah as Philosophy of Islamic Law: A Systems Approach* (International Institute of Islamic Thought, 2008).

over continued violence.<sup>6</sup> Also, in verse 114 of Surah An-Nisa, the Holy Quran includes reforming people among the desirable deeds and social good, and introduces it as equal to other good deeds.<sup>7</sup>

This Quranic emphasis on social reform and peace provides a framework in which the active participation of social actors, including women, in dialogue, mediation, and the reduction of social tensions is not only permitted but also desirable. From this perspective, the role of women in peacebuilding can be analyzed and evaluated as part of achieving the overall goals of Sharia: justice, the preservation of human life, and the prevention of social corruption.

Considering the developments in Islamic societies and contemporary challenges in the field of peace and conflict, this research aims to examine women's participation in peacebuilding within the framework of contemporary Islamic jurisprudence; a framework that, with an *ijtihad* approach, focuses on the connection between the fixed principles of Sharia and changing social realities. This research aims to show that, based on contemporary jurisprudence's emphasis on the purposes of Sharia, including achieving justice, preserving human life, and ensuring the public interest, women's social and political participation in peace processes can be considered legitimate and even necessary.

This research shows that women's participation in social affairs and conflict resolution is rooted in Islamic tradition. Ultimately, the goal of this research is to provide an analytical framework that, drawing on contemporary Islamic jurisprudence, enables understanding and explanation of women's roles in peacebuilding in today's Islamic societies.<sup>8</sup>

This research, adopting an analytical and conceptual approach, examines women's participation in peacebuilding in the context of the connection between contemporary Islamic jurisprudence and contemporary peace and security literature. The research focuses on

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<sup>6</sup> The Holy Quran, 49:9.

<sup>7</sup> The Holy Quran, 4:114.

<sup>8</sup> Muhammad Akram Nadwi, *Women Around the Messenger of Allah* (Islamic Book Trust, 2007.).

analyzing theoretical and normative frameworks to explain and evaluate the role of women in peace processes, without being limited to any specific geographical context.<sup>9</sup> There remains a significant gap in linking this literature to the normative frameworks of contemporary Islamic jurisprudence. The majority of research either focuses on international and secular approaches or deals with jurisprudential issues without a systematic connection to peacebuilding.

This disconnect has led to a failure to examine the capacities of contemporary Islamic jurisprudence to explain, coherently, the legitimacy and effectiveness of women's participation in peacebuilding. Therefore, there is a need for an analytical framework that can engage the peace and security literature with modern approaches to Islamic jurisprudence in a constructive dialogue and address this research gap.<sup>10</sup>

The importance of this research lies in examining the role of women in peacebuilding from the perspective of contemporary Islamic jurisprudence and showing its relevance to contemporary issues of peace and security. This research can contribute to a better understanding of the place of women's participation in Islamic societies.<sup>11</sup> This article also includes selected case studies to illustrate how women's participation in peacebuilding operates in specific Islamic contexts.

### **1. Research Questions**

- 1- Why is women's participation in peace necessary and legitimate in contemporary Islamic law?
- 2- How have women contributed to peacebuilding in modern Islamic contexts?

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<sup>9</sup> Laura J. Shepherd, "Women, Peace and Security: From Rhetoric to Practice," *International Political Science Review*, 2016.

<sup>10</sup> Reşit Haylamaz, *Aisha: The Wife, The Companion, The Scholar* (Tughra Books, 2013).20-40, accessed December 22, 2025.

<sup>11</sup> Abdullahi Ahmed An-Na'im, *Islamic Law and the Challenges of Modernity* (Edinburgh University Press, 2004.).

## Methodology

This research study employs a qualitative, analytical approach to examine women's participation in peacebuilding from the perspective of contemporary Islamic jurisprudence. This study is based on a doctrinal and interpretive analysis of primary and secondary sources. Primary sources include relevant verses of the Holy Quran on justice, peace, and social responsibility, as well as classical and contemporary jurisprudential works.<sup>12</sup> Secondary sources include scientific research articles, academic books, and reports of international institutions in the field of peacebuilding and gender.

The selection of sources was based on their relevance to the research question, their scholarly credibility, and their role in contemporary discussions of Islamic jurisprudence and peacebuilding. Furthermore, this research uses a qualitative case study approach, focusing on selected cases in Muslim societies, particularly Afghanistan, which faces serious peace challenges and specific socio-political conditions.<sup>13</sup> The analytical method in this research is interpretive and thematic, examining key concepts such as public interest, justice, and social responsibility in relation to women's participation in peace processes.<sup>14</sup> This study acknowledges certain limitations, including reliance on secondary sources, a lack of specific empirical data in some areas, and the difficulty of generalizing the results to all Islamic societies.

## Results and Discussion

The findings of this study indicate that women's participation in peacebuilding is consistent with the fundamental objectives of Sharia, including the preservation of life and justice. The principle of public interest and the concept of collective responsibility (fard

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<sup>12</sup> Auda, *Maqasid Al-Shariah as Philosophy of Islamic Law: A Systems Approach*.

<sup>13</sup> United Nations Security Council, *Resolution 1325 (2000): Women, Peace and Security*.

<sup>14</sup> Auda, *Maqasid Al-Shariah as Philosophy of Islamic Law: A Systems Approach*.

kifayah) provide a jurisprudential basis for women's participation in peace processes. Contemporary Islamic jurisprudence, through *ijtihad*, has enabled the reinterpretation of social roles and legitimizes women's participation. Empirical evidence suggests that women play an effective role in reducing violence, mediating, and strengthening social cohesion. However, the main obstacles are more rooted in cultural and political factors, and the Afghan experience shows that excluding women undermines the sustainability of peace.

### **1.1 Jurisprudential and legal foundations for the necessity of Women's participation in peacebuilding in contemporary Islam**

In contemporary Islamic jurisprudence, women's participation in peacebuilding is consistent with the fundamental goals of Sharia, particularly the preservation of life, justice, and social order. Jasser Auda emphasizes that achieving these goals requires the participation of all members of society. Therefore, excluding women from peace processes undermines the realization of these goals.<sup>15</sup> Abdullah Ahmed An-Naim, focusing on the challenges of contemporary Islamic societies, argues that Islamic jurisprudence must respond to social realities and reinterpret social roles in light of justice and the needs of the time. This perspective transforms women's participation in peacebuilding from a social demand to a legal and moral obligation.<sup>16</sup> This jurisprudential view is rooted in the Holy Quran's emphasis on peace and collective responsibility in resolving conflicts.

﴿وَإِنْ طَائِفَتَانِ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ اقْتَتَلُوا فَأَصْلِحُوا بَيْنَهُمَا﴾

And if two factions among the believers fight, then make peace between them.<sup>17</sup>

In addition, the principle of public interest in contemporary Islamic jurisprudence provides a crucial basis for explaining the necessity of women's participation in peacebuilding. Mohammad Hashem Kamali explains that when social participation advances public interests

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<sup>15</sup> Auda, *Maqasid Al-Shariah as Philosophy of Islamic Law: A Systems Approach*.

<sup>16</sup> An-Na'im, *Islamic Law and the Challenges of Modernity*.

<sup>17</sup> The Holy Quran, Surah al-Hujurat, 49:9.

and prevents harm, restricting it lacks sufficient jurisprudential justification. Accordingly, women's participation in peacebuilding, especially in conflict-affected societies, can be understood as part of realizing the public interest.<sup>18</sup> This understanding of the public interest is also reflected in the Quranic emphasis on cooperation to realize social good.

﴿ لَا خَيْرَ فِي كَثِيرٍ مِنْ نَجْوَاهُمْ إِلَّا مَنْ أَمَرَ بِصَدَقَةٍ أَوْ مَعْرُوفٍ أَوْ إِصْلَاحٍ بَيْنَ النَّاسِ ۗ وَمَنْ يَفْعَلْ ذَلِكَ ابْتِغَاءَ مَرْضَاتِ اللَّهِ فَسَوْفَ نُؤْتِيهِ أَجْرًا عَظِيمًا.﴾

There is no good in much of their secret talks, excepting him who enjoins charity or what is right or reconciliation between people, and whoever does that, seeking Allah's pleasure, soon We shall give him a great reward.<sup>19</sup>

Finally, the concept of Fard Kifayah in Islamic jurisprudence provides a clear framework for understanding the necessity of women's participation in peacebuilding. Wael B. Hallaq argues that collective responsibilities in Islam respond to societal needs and can adapt to changing circumstances. If achieving peace and preventing violence depend on women's participation, it becomes part of fulfilling collective responsibility.<sup>20</sup> Kamali further explains that contemporary Islamic jurisprudence, by recognizing the dynamics of social roles, enables women to actively contribute to maintaining social order and justice, thereby reinforcing the necessity of their participation in peacebuilding.<sup>21</sup>

## **1.2 The sharia Legitimacy of Women's participation in peacebuilding through contemporary Ijtihad**

In contemporary Islamic jurisprudence, the legitimacy of women's participation in peacebuilding can be understood through ijtihad grounded in the objectives of Sharia. Ibn Ashur emphasizes that Islamic law aims to serve public interests and establish social justice.

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<sup>18</sup> Mohammad Hashim Kamali, *Shari'ah Law: An Introduction* (Oxford: Oneworld Publications, 2008).

<sup>19</sup> The Holy Quran, Surah al-Nisa (4):114.

<sup>20</sup> Wael B. Hallaq, *Shari'ah, Law and Modernity* (Cambridge University Press, 2009).

<sup>21</sup> Mohammad Hashim Kamali, *Islamic Jurisprudence: An International Perspective* (Islamic Texts Society, 2001).

Therefore, actions that promote these goals are religiously justified. Accordingly, women's participation in peacebuilding is considered legitimate when it contributes to reducing violence and improving social relations.<sup>22</sup> Wahba Zuhayli further emphasizes that Islamic rulings should be interpreted to address society's real needs, thereby supporting women's active role in peacebuilding.<sup>23</sup>

﴿وَالْمُؤْمِنُونَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتُ بَعْضُهُمْ أَوْلِيَاءُ بَعْضٍ يَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَيَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَيُقِيمُونَ الصَّلَاةَ وَيُؤْتُونَ الزَّكَاةَ وَيُطِيعُونَ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ أُولَئِكَ سَيَرْحَمُهُمُ اللَّهُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ﴾

This verse establishes the shared moral and social responsibility of believing men and women promoting societal reform, providing a Qur'anic basis for women's participation in peace-related and conflict-prevention activities through contemporary *ijtihad*.<sup>24</sup> Although the verse does not explicitly address peacebuilding, it affirms shared responsibility in social reform, which can be extended to peacebuilding. While the verse does not explicitly address peacebuilding, it affirms the shared responsibility of women and men in social reform, a responsibility that contemporary *ijtihad* extends to peacebuilding activities.

Furthermore, contemporary *ijtihad*, by emphasizing the principle that rulings change with time and place, provides a basis for legitimizing new social roles. Yusuf al-Qaradawi argues that many historical restrictions on women's social participation arose from custom and the specific circumstances of the time, rather than from definitive texts of the Sharia. From this perspective, contemporary *ijtihad* can legitimize women's participation in peacebuilding by reinterpreting these limitations.<sup>25</sup> Tariq Ramadan, emphasizing Islamic ethics and social responsibility. He considers women's participation in public activities as part of a moral commitment to achieving justice and peace.<sup>26</sup>

<sup>22</sup> Ibn Ashur, Muhammad al-Tahir, *Maqasid Al-Shariah al-Islamiyyah* (Dar al-Salam, 2006).

<sup>23</sup> Wahbah al-Zuhayli, *Usul al-Fiqh al-Islami*, vol. 2 (Dar al-Fikr, 1986).

<sup>24</sup> Holy Quran, Surah al-Tawbah (9): 71.

<sup>25</sup> Yusuf al-Qaradawi, *Fiqh al-Awlawiyyat* (Dar al-Shuruq, 1996).

<sup>26</sup> Tariq Ramadan, *Radical Reform: Islamic Ethics and Liberation* (Oxford University Press, 2009).

Finally, contemporary Islamic jurisprudence, relying on the principle of “permissibility in social affairs,” provides a clear framework for the legitimacy of women’s participation in peacebuilding. Zuhayli explains that in the realm of social interactions, the principle is permissibility unless there is an apparent reason for prohibition. Given the lack of a definitive text prohibiting women's participation in peacebuilding, contemporary ijtehad may consider it legitimate.<sup>27</sup> Furthermore, Ibn Ashur emphasizes that any jurisprudential interpretation that weakens justice or increases social harms is incompatible with the spirit of the Sharia; an analysis that establishes the legitimacy of women's participation in peacebuilding within the framework of contemporary ijtehad.<sup>28</sup>

### **1.3 Patterns and Experience of Women’s Contribution to Peacebuilding in Modern Islamic Contexts**

In contemporary Islamic societies, patterns of women's participation in peacebuilding have been shaped mainly at the social and local levels. Social Islamic research shows that women in many Islamic contexts have played an important role in reducing tensions and preventing the escalation of conflict. They contribute through mediation, social activities, and strengthening family solidarity. Analyzing these experiences, Fatima Mernissi shows that women's participation in the public sphere, especially in times of crisis, has often been informal yet effective, helping create spaces for dialogue and reconciliation.<sup>29</sup> Complementing this perspective, research on women and peace in Muslim societies shows that these informal roles have gradually become recognized as patterns of participation.<sup>30</sup>

At the local level, contemporary experiences show that women in some Islamic societies have also participated in peacebuilding at institutional and official levels. Studies on Muslim women's participation in post-conflict reconstruction show that women are active in

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<sup>27</sup> Wahbah al-Zuhayli, *Athar Al-Harb Fi al-Fiqh al-Islami* (Dar al-Fikr, 1998).

<sup>28</sup> Ibn Ashur, Muhammad al-Tahir, *Al-Tahrir wa al-Tanwir* (Dar al-Tunisiyya, 1984).

<sup>29</sup> Fatima Mernissi, *Islam and Democracy: Fear of the Modern World* (Perseus Books, 2002).

<sup>30</sup> Zahra Ali, “Women, Islam and Peacebuilding,” *Journal of Peacebuilding & Development* 8, no. 2 (2013).

social councils, civil society organizations, and peace initiatives. Their presence has helped place social and humanitarian issues on the peace agenda. By examining the experiences of women in contemporary Islamic societies, Asma Lamrabet emphasizes that women's participation in these arenas is often based on a moral understanding of peace, justice, and social responsibility.<sup>31</sup> In this regard, reports show that women's participation strengthens the link between religious values and practical peacebuilding needs.<sup>32</sup>

Finally, historical contemporary experiences in Islamic societies indicate that patterns of women's participation in peacebuilding have been diverse and tailored to cultural and social contexts. Research on Muslim women in conflict contexts shows that, in addition to their social roles, women have contributed to knowledge transmission, peace education, and the preservation of collective memory. Emphasizing the moral activism of Muslim women, Amina Wadud considers their participation in peacebuilding as part of their religious and social responsibility.<sup>33</sup> Complementing this analysis, comparative studies on women and peace in Islamic societies show that these experiences are diverse. However, they indicate women's strong capacity to play an effective role in peacebuilding.<sup>34</sup>

#### **1.4 Structural Barriers and Enabling Capacities for Women's Participation in Peacebuilding**

One of the structural obstacles to women's participation in peacebuilding is traditional and restrictive perceptions of gender roles. These are often rooted in social custom rather than in the definitive texts of Sharia. Wahbah Zuhayli clarifies that many restrictions on women's social participation are the product of cultural and historical interpretations. They should not be considered fixed religious rulings. In practice, these perceptions can limit women's access

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<sup>31</sup> Asma Lamrabet, *Women and Islam: The Quest for Equality* (Islamic Book Trust, 2015).

<sup>32</sup> United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), *Women's Roles in Peacebuilding in Muslim Contexts* (2011).

<sup>33</sup> Amina Wadud, *Qur'an and Woman* (Oxford University Press, 1999).

<sup>34</sup> Chad Haines Yasmin Saikia, *Women and Peace in the Islamic World: Gender, Agency and Influence* (I.B. Tauris, 2014).

to areas of dialogue, mediation, and decision-making.<sup>35</sup> In completing this analysis, Muhammad Tahir bin Ashour emphasizes that whenever social structures act in ways that hinder the realization of justice and the public interest, it will be necessary to review them from the perspective of Sharia, thereby showing that these structural obstacles lack binding Sharia support.<sup>36</sup>

Alongside these barriers, there are also critical enabling capacities within the Islamic framework that can strengthen women's participation in peacebuilding. Tariq Ramadan emphasizes that women and men share social responsibility in achieving peace and justice. He stresses the necessity of women's active participation in addressing social challenges. From this perspective, values such as human dignity, justice, and moral responsibility are capacities that can serve as a basis for women's participation in peacebuilding.<sup>37</sup> In this regard, research shows that religious, educational, and civil institutions can support women's participation in peacebuilding by reinterpreting Islamic teachings.<sup>38</sup>

Finally, contemporary experience shows that the interaction between reforming legal structures and strengthening social capacities can decisively increase women's participation in peacebuilding. By emphasizing the distinction between religion and religious understanding, Abdulkarim Soroush proposes rethinking restrictive social structures and underscores the role of collective reason in reforming them. This approach can help reduce structural barriers to women's participation.<sup>39</sup> Complementing this perspective, comparative studies on women and peace in Muslim societies show that strengthening institutional, educational, and legal capacities increases women's participation in peacebuilding.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> Wahbah al-Zuhayli, *Athar al-Harb fi al-Fiqh al-Islami* (Dar al-Fikr, 1998).

<sup>36</sup> Ibn Ashur, Muhammad al-Tahir, *Maqasid Al-Shariah al-Islamiyyah*.

<sup>37</sup> Tariq Ramadan, *Radical Reform: Islamic Ethics and Liberation* (Oxford University Press, 2009).

<sup>38</sup> United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), *Women's Roles in Peacebuilding in Muslim Contexts*.

<sup>39</sup> Abdolkarim Soroush, *Reason, Freedom, and Democracy in Islam* (Oxford University Press, 2000).

<sup>40</sup> Azza Karam, *Women, Islam and Peacebuilding: Structural Challenges and Opportunities* (Oxford University Press, 2015.). <https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199731640.013.0012>.

## **Case Study 1: Aisha (RA) as a Normative Islamic Model of Women's Participation in Peacebuilding**

Aisha (may God be pleased with her) is known as one of the most prominent women scholars and religious authorities in Islamic history. Her role went beyond that of a family figure to that of the Prophet of Islam. According to Akram Nadwi, Aisha (may Allah be pleased with her) was one of the most important hadith narrators and a scholarly authority in Medina. Many Companions and followers turned to her for guidance on religious and social issues. This position shows that women's participation in the public sphere and leadership was accepted in early Islamic tradition. It was not considered incompatible with the principles of Sharia. Such a role, based on knowledge and social trust, contributed to the intellectual stability and cohesion of Islamic society.<sup>41</sup>

From a peacebuilding perspective, Aisha's scientific and educational activities can be seen as indirect peacebuilding. Historical sources show that she played a role in reducing intellectual tensions and preventing social divisions. Ibn Abdul Bar highlights Aisha's role in transmitting knowledge and reforming religious understanding. This helped strengthen social trust and prevent intellectual conflicts. This shows that peacebuilding in the Islamic tradition was not limited to political negotiations. It also included intellectual and moral guidance.<sup>42</sup>

In contemporary Islamic jurisprudence, Aisha's experience can serve as a model for women's participation in peacebuilding. Contemporary research on women in early Islam shows that women's participation in education, counseling, and social guidance was part of the historical reality of Islamic societies. This is consistent with the purposes of Sharia, particularly the realization of justice, the maintenance of social order, and the prevention of harm.

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<sup>41</sup> Akram Nadwi, *Al-Muhaddithat: The Women Scholars in Islam* (Interface Publications, 2007), <https://archive.org/details/Al-Muhaddithat-TheWomenScholarsInIslam>. <https://archive.org/details/Al-Muhaddithat-TheWomenScholarsInIslam>.

<sup>42</sup> Yusuf Ibn 'Abd al-Barr, *Al-Isti'ab fi Ma'rifat al-Ashab*, vol. 4 (Dar al-Jil, 1992), <https://archive.org/search.php?query=Al-Istiab+Ibn+Abd+al-Barr>.

Therefore, contemporary *ijtihād*, grounded in this Islamic model, can regard women's participation in dialogue, social mediation, and peacebuilding not only as legitimate but also as essential to achieving lasting peace in Islamic societies today.<sup>43</sup>

### **Case study 2: Women's participation in Afghan peace processes**

Peace processes in Afghanistan show that despite legal and political emphasis on women's participation, their presence in formal peace negotiations remains limited and unstable. Studies show that Afghan women, especially after 2001, have played an active role in civil and social spheres. They support war victims and help reduce local violence. But these roles have rarely been transferred to formal decision-making levels. This gap between social participation and exclusion from formal structures has been a prominent feature of peace processes in Afghanistan.<sup>44</sup>

From a structural perspective, the studies presented show that the main obstacles to women's participation in the Afghan peace process stem more from political, security, and cultural factors than from religious requirements. Widespread insecurity, patriarchal power structures, and the instrumental use of religion have limited women's participation. These factors often justify their exclusion. However, cross-sectional evidence shows that when legal and institutional frameworks for women's participation are in place, they can play a more effective role in social dialogue, civil society institutions, and local peace initiatives.<sup>45</sup>

At an analytical level, the case of Afghanistan shows that peace processes that have been shaped without the real participation of women have enjoyed less social legitimacy and have been more vulnerable to a return to violence. The sources show that women's participation

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<sup>43</sup> Muḥammad ibn Ismā'īl al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* (Dār Ṭawq al-Najāh, 2001), <https://archive.org/search.php?query=Sahih+al+Bukhari+Arabic>

<sup>44</sup> Gulab Mir Rahmany, "The Role and Participation of Women in the Afghan Peace Process," *International Journal of Multidisciplinary Educational Research* 11, no. 10(6) (2022), <http://ijmer.in/doi/2022/11.10.101>.

<sup>45</sup> Parmila Nazary, Nassir Ul Haq Wani, Ahmad Khalid, Hatam, "Women in Peace Process in Afghanistan: Meaningful Participation and Its Impact," *Kardan Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities* 3, no. 2 (2020), 17-34, accessed December 25, 2025, <https://kardan.edu.af/Research/CurrentIssue.aspx?j=KJSSH>

is not only a human rights demand but also essential for lasting peace. Therefore, the experience of Afghanistan shows that ignoring the role of women has been one of the factors contributing to the continued instability and failure of peace processes in this country.<sup>46</sup>

### **Conditional Limitations on Women's Participation and Leadership in Peacebuilding from the Perspective of Contemporary Islamic Jurisprudence:**

From the perspective of contemporary Islamic jurisprudence, women's participation and leadership in peacebuilding is generally legitimate. However, in certain circumstances, restrictions may be imposed. First, when participation seriously endangers women's lives and safety, Islamic jurisprudence prioritizes the preservation of life. In such cases, participation may be limited based on expediency. Second, roles directly related to armed conflict and military operations have traditionally been considered outside women's participation. However, this does not include civilian roles such as negotiation, mediation, counseling, and community leadership in peace processes.<sup>47</sup>

If participation in peacebuilding violates moral principles or human dignity, or creates social instability, Islamic jurisprudence permits review or restriction based on the public interest (Maslahah). However, contemporary jurists emphasize that there is no definitive text in Islamic law that generally prohibits women from participating in or leading peacebuilding. Many existing restrictions are rooted more in cultural and political structures than in jurisprudential principles. These principles emphasize justice, the preservation of life, and social stability.<sup>48</sup>

### **Conclusion**

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<sup>46</sup> Fahim Yousufi, "The Prospect of Women's Rights in the Post-Taliban-Government Peace Agreement," *Journal of International Women's Studies* 22, no. 9 (2021): 1–18. <https://vc.bridgew.edu/jiws/vol22/iss9/1>.

<sup>47</sup> Mohammad Hashim Kamali, *Principles of Islamic Jurisprudence*, 3rd ed. (Cambridge: Islamic Texts Society, 2003), 351–355.

<sup>48</sup> Jasser Auda, *Maqasid al-Shariah as Philosophy of Islamic Law: A Systems Approach* (Washington, DC: International Institute of Islamic Thought, 2008), 89–94.

This research shows that women's participation in peacebuilding is not only legitimate but also necessary from the perspective of contemporary Islamic jurisprudence. Based on the objectives of Sharia, including the preservation of life, justice, human dignity, and the public good, peace is recognized as a collective responsibility (*fard kifayah*). It therefore requires the participation of all members of society, including women. Contemporary jurisprudence, through dynamic *ijtihad* and attention to evolving social realities, offers the possibility of redefining women's social and political roles within the framework of Sharia. The research findings show that excluding women from peace processes not only lacks a solid jurisprudential basis but also conflicts with the overarching goals of Sharia, which emphasize social justice, stability, and the prevention of corruption.

The finding also indicates that women in contemporary Islamic societies have made a significant contribution to peacebuilding. Women have played an effective role at both community and institutional levels. They contribute by reducing tensions, preventing the return of violence, and strengthening social solidarity through mediation and peace education. An examination of examples such as the scholarly and social roles of Hazrat Aisha (RA) and the experiences of Afghan women shows that, although women's presence in formal negotiations has often been limited, their participation has been vital to the social legitimacy and sustainability of peace processes. Accordingly, the research concludes that sustainable peace in Islamic societies is not possible without meaningful participation by women, and that recognizing their role is not only a legal demand but also a religious and social necessity.

### **Competing Interest**

The author asserts that there is no conflict of interest in the publication of this article and the research contained in this paper.