

Executive Summary

Contemporary frameworks for peacebuilding have had mixed results throughout the world. Most are at best agnostic on the issue of religion. But in many Muslim majority parts of the world, religion plays an essential role in politics. To increase the prospects of sustainable, culturally sensitive peace, there is a need to proactively use Islamic principles in solutions to conflicts in these parts of the world.

The *Guide to Peacemaking Using Islamic Principles* is the first published guide aimed at international peace practitioners that deliberately focuses on Islamic principles. The guide focuses on the first principles of *Maqasial al-Sharia*, the Quran, Prophetic Tradition, and the Last Sermon.

It is in line with the *UN Guidance for Effective Mediation* and international normative standards on how to negotiate an end to violence.

The seven principles

The Guide shows how, at the centre of the Islamic tradition of peacebuilding are seven intrinsic principles that can be applied to modern day situations:

- Unity – the idea that God is One (tawhid). It is a key philosophical and organising principle and fountainhead in Islam.
- Peace – the name of the faith. Islam has peace as its root, and peace (salaam) constitutes the key greeting in human interaction.
- Diversity – of people and opinion (ikhtilaf). It is regarded as a blessing, rather than a negative characteristic.
- Justice – is both non-negotiable and intrinsic to bearing witness for God (qist or adl). It is comprehensive and non-discriminatory, akin to Western notions of fairness or equity.
- Mercy – the primary attribute of God. It is the critical mission of the Prophet (as in rahma).
- Dignity – the core ingredient in the human construction. It constitutes the karam, or dignity of the soul.
- Balance – being centred is the default of the Muslim because the umma is described as moderate (wasata).

The seven principles that make up Islam's ecosystem of peacemaking form part of a wider system of belief and thought within the Islamic tradition. At the centre of this tradition stand the *maqasid al-sharia* or foundational intents, values, purposes, and objectives of the law of Islam.

Over the centuries, Islamic thinkers, and scholars of all schools of Islamic jurisprudence have identified six intents of the *maqasid al-sharia* to help structure and govern community life and which can be applied to peacebuilding.

- From the Preservation of Offspring derives Rights of the Family (Tahir ibn al Ashur)
- From the Preservation of Mind derives the Right to Knowledge and Access to Information
- From Protection of Honour derives Human Dignity and Human Rights (Yusufal-Qardawi)
- From the Preservation of the Soul derives the Right to Freedom and Choice of the human being
- From the Protection of Religion derives the Right to Freedom of Belief (al-Ashur)
- From the Preservation of Wealth derives the Right to Pursue Human Development including access to education.

While controversial to some, these uses of the *maqasid al-sharia* may help the international conflict resolution practitioner counter arguments that human rights and democracy are Western concepts or are fundamentally un-Islamic.

Applied outcomes

On gender inclusion:

In discussions on reframing women's roles, international conflict resolution practitioners should emphasise a return to an examination of the original texts (Quran and Sunna), where there are abundant positive examples of women's roles. These are the divine scriptures and ought to carry much weight with religious practitioners. Based on these texts, it could be possible to speak against restrictive and harmful gender and cultural norms.

Interpretations that account for the higher intent of the *maqasid al-sharia* and the seven principles can be used to help frame re-interpretations of current gender norms and perspectives on women's leadership in political and religious life. The consideration of *maqasid* can also be useful in identifying unconscious cultural biases and misogynistic interpretations.

On resolution:

There may be a duty under Islam to accept transitional arrangements if they prevent harm, provide a working peace, hold out the possibility of realising justice, and through this promote the unity of Islam over the long term. Compromise is not negative in Islam, especially when it is connected to principles such as justice or the greater good (maslahah). An example of this can be seen in the Prophet's compromises during the Treaty of Hudaibiya in the interest of greater peace and security.

The Guide demonstrates how parties to conflict, seemingly ideologically or culturally polarised, can still find points of convergence between Islamic modes of peacebuilding and universal norms, as articulated in UN instruments as well as the Arab Charter on Human Rights. This Guide focuses its attention on finding ways to help the international conflict resolution practitioner to engage constructively with Islamic principles while deploying contemporary peacemaking methods to enhance their sustainability and sense of local ownership.

The Guide draws upon four years of theoretical and practical work by the [International Norms Project](#), developed by [the London School of Economics and Political Science](#) in partnership with [the Folke Bernadotte Academy](#) and [Uppsala University](#). The guide has been stress-tested on several occasions in the Muslim World, and the research engaged a variety of academics, Islamic scholars, Muslim political leaders, local stakeholders, as well as international and local peace practitioners.