



MAZAHIBUNA: Jurnal Perbandingan Mazhab

Volume 8 Number 3 December 2026; 547-568

P-ISSN: 2685-6905; E-ISSN: 2685-7812

DOI: 10.24252/mazahibuna.vi.64606

<http://journal.uin-alauddin.ac.id/index.php/mjpm>

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Ibn Kathīr's *Qirā'āt* (Qur'anic Readings) and the Jurisprudence of *Fidyah* (Expiatory Compensation) in Brunei's Fatwas

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[Received: January 13, 2026] [Reviewed: April 26, 2026] [Revised: August 24, 2026] [Accepted: September 23, 2026]
[Published: October 11, 2026]

How to Cite:

Japar, A. F., Kurniawan, C. S., Dollah, S. R., Abdelgelil, M. F. M., & Husain, M. Z. (2026). Ibn Kathīr's *Qirā'āt* (Qur'anic Readings) and the Jurisprudence of *Fidyah* (Expiatory Compensation) in Brunei's Fatwas. *Mazahibuna: Jurnal Perbandingan Mazhab* 8 (2): 547-568. <https://doi.org/10.24252/mazahibuna.vi.64606>

Abstract

This study examines how Qur'anic *qirā'āt* (readings), particularly the reading attributed to Ibn Kathīr, inform al-Shāfi'i jurisprudential interpretations of *fidyah* (expiatory compensation) and their articulation in the official fatwas of Brunei Darussalam. Although previous studies have examined *qirā'āt* and *fidyah* separately, their intersection in madhhab-based legal reasoning and contemporary fatwa formulation remains underexplored. Focusing on the expression *fid-yatun ta'āmu* in Qur'an 2:184, this study investigates its interpretation within the al-Shāfi'i school and its reflection in Brunei's fatwa framework. Using qualitative document analysis, the study examines selected Qur'anic commentaries, authoritative al-Shāfi'i legal texts, and official Bruneian fatwas concerning *fidyah*. The findings indicate that Brunei's fatwas generally reflect al-Shāfi'i jurisprudential reasoning, particularly regarding *fidyah* as a food-based obligation for individuals who are unable to fast under legally recognized circumstances. The analysis further demonstrates that Qur'anic reading traditions provide a linguistic and interpretive basis for understanding the relevant verse, while the al-Shāfi'i madhhab mediates the translation of scriptural interpretation into practical legal rulings. Brunei's fatwa framework subsequently contextualizes these rulings within contemporary religious administration. This study contributes to Islamic legal scholarship by illustrating how *qirā'āt* can function as interpretive resources in madhhab-based jurisprudence and contemporary fatwa formulation. It also highlights Brunei Darussalam as a case for examining the continuity and institutional application of the al-Shāfi'i madhhab in contemporary Muslim societies.

Keywords: Ibn Kathīr; *Qirā'āt*; al-Shāfi'i Madhhab; *Fidyah*; Brunei Fatwas.



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Introduction

The Qur'an, regarded as the *kalam* of Allah, was revealed to the Prophet Muhammad PBUH through the Angel Jibril and transmitted to Muslims via *mutawātir* narration. One of the key areas of scholarly discussion within Qur'anic studies is the concept of the seven *huruf*, which has been interpreted in various ways by classical *ulama*. Although debates exist over the precise meaning of *iştilah* regarding the seven *huruf*, scholars largely agree that it does not correspond to the seven famous *qirā'āt* of the seven imams, as these *qirā'āt* emerged later in history (Ibn al-Jazarī, n.d.). The selection of the seven *qirā'āt*, by contrast, is based on the quality, validity and authenticity of the narration traced through the *ṣahabah* and successive generations, ensuring the Qur'an's accurate recitation (Sabri, 2016).

This topic is particularly significant because the study of *qirā'āt* extends beyond mere recitation; it intersects with *tafsir*, *fiqh*, *aqidah*, and linguistics, demonstrating its foundational role in Islamic scholarship. Moreover, historical recognition of *qurra'* by prominent *madhhab* imams, such as Imam Abu Hanifah, Imam Malik, and Imam al-Shafi'i, highlights how regional and scholarly preferences shaped the canonical selection of *qirā'āt* (Al-Dhahabi, 1995). For instance, Imam al-Shafi'i's adoption of *qirā'āt* Ibn Kathir rooted in Mecca where he studied the Qur'an illustrates the intersection of geography, scholarship, and jurisprudential methodology in shaping Qur'anic recitation practices (Al-Razi, 2015).

Recent scholarship has increasingly examined *qirā'āt* as an interpretive and juristic resource rather than only as a discipline of recitational transmission. Melchert cautions against reducing the relationship between canonical readings and Islamic law to a simple causal model, while Abdul Jalil shows that classical exegetes evaluated variant readings through linguistic, syntactic, and scholarly criteria. Other recent studies likewise demonstrate that *qirā'āt* diversity can shape *tafsir* and *istinbat al-hukm* and that variant readings continue to function as evidentiary resources in *madhhab*-based legal reasoning (Jalil, 2022; Melchert, 2022; Mustofa, 2023; Zahari & Mohamad, 2024).

Despite these advances, the specific relationship between Ibn Kathir's reading of Qur'an 2:184, al-Shafi'i *fidyah* doctrine, and its institutional articulation in Brunei's official fatwas remains insufficiently examined. Existing discussions tend to address *qirā'āt* and legal interpretation at a general level, or to discuss *fidyah* primarily as a *fiqh* and *maqasid* issue, without tracing the analytical sequence from variant reading to linguistic *tawjih*, juristic reasoning, and contemporary fatwa application. This study addresses that gap by integrating *qirā'āt* studies, comparative *fiqh*, and official fatwa documents within a single analytical framework.

Accordingly, the study addresses three questions: (1) how do the accepted readings of Qur'an 2:184, especially Ibn Kathir's reading, shape the semantic understanding of *fidyah* and *miskin*; (2) how are these meanings related to al-Shafi'i juristic reasoning on the

form, amount, and distribution of fidyah; and (3) how are these juristic positions articulated in Brunei's official fatwas? The study does not assume that a variant reading automatically generates a distinct legal ruling. Instead, it examines *qirā'āt* as an interpretive resource that may support, delimit, or illuminate juristic reasoning within the broader methodology of the madhhab.

Methods

This study employed a qualitative documentary research design combining descriptive, linguistic-interpretive, comparative *fiqh*, and fatwa analysis. It did not involve fieldwork, surveys, or interviews. The primary materials were organized into three bodies of sources: (1) authoritative works on the seven and ten *qirā'āt*, *tawjih al-qirā'āt*, and the linguistic analysis of Qur'an 2:184; (2) classical and contemporary tafsir and *fiqh* works dealing with *fidyah*, especially al-Shafi'i jurisprudence, with comparison to other madhhabs where analytically necessary; and (3) official Brunei fatwa publications concerning *fidyah* and delayed *qada'* of Ramadan fasting. Recent academic studies were used to situate the analysis within contemporary scholarship.

Sources were selected using four criteria: direct relevance to the *qirā'āt* of Qur'an 2:184 or the law of *fidyah*; recognized authority within the relevant discipline; verifiability of the attribution of a reading or juristic position; and relevance to the official application of *fidyah* in Brunei Darussalam. The documentary review identified recurring *fidyah* rulings across Brunei fatwa publications, including the 1970–1971, 1983, 1997, 2007, and 2008 volumes. Because several fatwas reproduce substantially similar rules, the analysis uses representative cases rather than repeating the full corpus. The selected cases were chosen to represent distinct analytical functions: the basic relationship between *qada'* and *fidyah*, the form of *fidyah* and annual multiplication for unjustified delay, and the operational calculation of long-term accumulated *fidyah*.

Data were collected through systematic documentary reading and classified under three interconnected domains: *qirā'āt*, *fiqh*, and fatwa application. For the *qirā'āt* domain, the study identified the relevant variants in the expressions "*Fidyatun ṭa'āmu*" and "*Miskīn / masākīn*" and examined their grammatical, semantic, and *tawjih* explanations. For the *fiqh* domain, juristic discussions on the form, amount, recipient, and performance of *fidyah* were compared, with particular attention to the al-Shafi'i madhhab. For the fatwa domain, the operative rulings in Brunei documents were extracted and compared with the linguistic and juristic findings.

The analysis proceeded in four stages. First, descriptive analysis identified the relevant *qirā'āt* and their transmission. Second, linguistic and interpretive analysis examined the grammatical and semantic implications of each reading. Third, comparative *fiqh* analysis related those implications to juristic positions on *fidyah*. Fourth, fatwa analysis

compared the *qirā'āt* and fiqh findings with the official Brunei rulings, particularly regarding the form and amount of *fidyah*, delayed *qada'*, recurring *fidyah*, and payment practices.

Analytical validity was strengthened through source triangulation: variant readings were checked across more than one *qirā'āt* or *tawjih* source, juristic propositions were compared across established fiqh works, and the resulting legal patterns were verified against official fatwa texts. A central analytical principle was to distinguish the semantic contribution of *qirā'āt* from the legal ruling produced through *ijtihad*. The study therefore does not infer that a difference in reading automatically produces a different rule; it evaluates how a reading contributes to meaning and how that meaning is incorporated into a broader juristic methodology.

Result and Discussion

Qirā'āt of Imam al-Shafi'i

1. Definition *Qirā'āt*

In *lughah* (language) the word *qirā'āt* is the plural form of *qira'ah* meaning 'reading'. It is derived from the root 'Qara'a-Yaqra'u-Qirā'āt-Qur'an', which signifies reading and gathering. According to Ibnu al-Athir, anything that has been read is considered gathered. This term is also used because it encompasses stories, commands, prohibitions, promises, threats, verses, and chapters, all gathered. Imam al-Razi similarly stated that reading a book means gathering and combining its contents ([Himmad et al., 2023](#)).

From an etymological point of view, the word *qirā'āt* is a *jama'* of *qirā'ah* which comes from the root word *qara'a*, through which the words *al-Qur'an* and *al-Qira'ah* were born (al-Fayruz Abadi, t.t). The two words have two meanings, the first being *Al-Jam'u wa Al-Dhammu* (to gather and combine) which is to gather and combine stories, rulings, verses and surahs. Second: *al-Tilawah* (reciting) i.e. uttering written sentences. *Tilawah* is also called *qira'ah* because the sounds of letters are combined into one in the mind to form the sentences to be spoken ([Zakariya, 1994](#)).

From the point of view of terminology, the scholars have different views in defining the meaning of *qirā'āt*. A prominent scholar in this field, he states that *qirā'āt* is the study of how Qur'anic words are pronounced and their variations, attributing each reading to the Imam who narrated it ([Himmad et al., 2023](#)). According to Ibn al-Jazari, *qirā'āt* is a discipline that discusses the method or procedure of reciting the words of the Qur'an and the difference in the pronunciation of the words is attributed to the person narrating. Ibn al-Jazari also explained the meaning of *al-muqri'* i.e. a person who is proficient in *qirā'āt* and narrates it to others orally ([Ibn al-Jazari, n.d.](#)). Through this explanation, we can understand that *qirā'āt* is a knowledge that is narrated and conveyed through *talaqqi mushafahah*.

According to al-Zarkashi in al-Burhan, the meaning of *qirā'āt* is the difference between several utterances of the revelation of the Qur'an in the writing of letters or in the method of pronunciation, either in *takhfif* (reciting without *tashdid*), *tathqil* (reciting with *tashdid*) and so on (Al-Zarkashi, 2001). On the other hand, al-Zarqani is of the opinion that *qirā'āt* is a sect chosen by one of the imams of the Qurra' that has similarities and differences with each other, whether it is similarities in terms of *riwayah* (Al-Diba', 1999) and *tariq* (Al-Diba', 1999) or differences in terms of reading and condition (Al-Zarqani, 2003). According to al-Qastalani, *qirā'āt* is a knowledge that discusses matters agreed upon by scholars and disputed in the Qur'an related to the question of *lughah*, *i'rab* (Anwar, 2014), *hadhf*, *ithbat* (Manzur, 2000), *fasl*, *wasl* (Al-Fayruzabadi, n.d.) and so on which are all obtained through narration (Al-Qastalani, n.d.).

On the other hand, Manna' al-Qattan gives the meaning of *qirā'āt* which is almost equal to the opinion put forward by Al-Zarqani earlier, which is one of the schools of Qur'an pronunciation chosen by one of the imams of *qirā'āt* which is different from the others (Al-Qattan, 1996). Al-Suyuti is of the opinion that *qirā'āt* is the difference that occurs among the seven or ten others of the *qurra'* or other and the agreement on *turuq* recitation and narration (Al-Suyuti, 2003).

After examining all the above definitions of *qirā'āt*, there are three things that are often mentioned in the definitions presented. First, *qirā'āt* is a knowledge that discusses the method of reciting the words of the Qur'an or the form of reciting (pronounced) its conditions. This includes the difference between *usul al- qirā'āt* and *farsh al-huruf* (Isma'il, 2011). Second, the school of pronunciation of the Qur'an is chosen and assigned to one of the imams of the Qurra' who is different from the others. Third, the method of reciting the words of the Qur'an is accepted through the agreement of the narration path.

2. The wisdom of the variety of *qirā'āt*

Scholars of *qirā'āt* have outlined some of the wisdom that results from the variety of *qirā'āt* readings. The wisdom can be seen from various angles and impacts. For example, the impact of the diversity of *qirā'āt* on Muslims in general is to make it easier for the *ummiyy* to read the Qur'an. With the descent of *qirā'āt*, this variation also makes it easier for the *huffaz* to recite the *kalam* of Allah because words that have many faces will be easier to memorize and easier to understand (Al-Qattan, 1996).

The diverse *qirā'āt* also served as a medium for the unification of the 'Arab community at the beginning of the preaching of the Prophet PBUH who was known for living in a racist and tribal atmosphere (Isma'il, 1999). The variety of *qirā'āt* in the Qur'an has also placed Muslims in a special place compared to the previous *ummah* where the books of the previous *ummah* were revealed with only one letter. The concept of *talaqqi* used in reciting the Qur'an also shows the advantages of Muslims over *ummah* from other religions (Al-Qudah et al., 2001).

The wisdom of the diversity of *qirā'āt* can also be seen from the point of view of its role in assisting the *mujtahid* in the interpretation of the law. As Ibn al-Jazari said that the descent of the Qur'an with seven letters is a role to explain a law such as *qirā'āt* Sa'ad bin Abi Waqas which explains that the meaning of brotherhood in the verses related to the issue of inheritance is brothers and sisters, or to bring together two different rulings such as in the issue of menstruation, or as a source of evidence for the two sharia rulings such as in the matter of ablution, or as a translator for disputed rulings such as in the matter of *kaffarah* oaths, or as an explanation for matters that may still be global or vague in other *qirā'āt* as in the matter of the Friday prayer command (Ibn al-Jazari, n.d.).

3. *Qirā'āt* Imam al-Shafi'i

Imam al-Shafi'i was a scholar who was very famous for his breadth of knowledge in the field of fiqh, so much so that the Egyptians called him *Qadi al-Shari'ah* since his arrival in Egypt in 199 AH. Basically, the madhhab al-Shafi'i was formed from two *mazhab*, namely the *Mazhab Ahl-al-Hadith* and the *Mazhab ahl-al-Ra'yi*. The formation of madhhab al-Shafi'i based on the fiqh of Imam al-Layth, one of the teachers of Imam al-Shafi'i who is famous as an *Ulama* who took the middle path between *Mazhab Ahl-al-Hadith* and *Mazhab Ahl-al-Ra'yi* (al-Sharqawi, 2000). In the field of *qirā'āt*, Imam al-Shafi'i is a great figure in this field. Al-Mubarrad said: "May Allah bless Al-Shafi'i, indeed he is one of the most poetic, the most civilized, and the most knowledgeable about the Qur'an." (al-'Asqalani, 1986).

As explained earlier, in the recitation of the Qur'an, Imam al-Shafi'i read with *qirā'āt* Ibn Kathir. Al-Razi narrated that Imam al-Shafi'i said: "I once recited the Qur'an to Isma'il bin Qistantin and he was a scholar of Mecca in his time, and he (Isma'il) said: "I used to recite the Qur'an to Shibil bin 'Ibad and Ma'ruf bin Mishkan," and they (Shibil and Ma'ruf) said: "We used to recite the Qur'an to 'Abd Allah bin Kathir, Then he (Ibn Kathir) said: "I used to recite the Qur'an to the Mujahid." Then he (Mujahid) said: "I once read the Qur'an to Ibn 'Abbas," then he (Ibn 'Abbas) said: "I once read the Qur'an to Ubay bin Ka'ab" and he (Ubay) said: "I once read the Qur'an to Prophrt Muhammad PBUH (Al-Razi, 1986). Ibn Al-Badhish in *al-Iqna' Fi al-Qirā'āt al-Sab'a* also narrated that Imam al-Shafi'i once recited the Qur'an to Al-Qist, then al-Qist once recited the Qur'an to Shibil, then Shibil once recited the Qur'an to Ibn Kathir, then Ibn Kathir once recited the Qur'an to 'Abd Allah bin al-Sa'ib bin Abu al-Sa'ib al-Makhzumi companion of Rasulullah PBUH (Ibn al-Badhish, 1403).

The study found that Imam al-Shafi'i not only read with the *qirā'āt* of Ibn Kathir, but he was also one of the narrators of the *qirā'āt*. This statement is proven by al-Hudhali, the author of the book *al-Kamil Fi al-Qirā'āt*. According to al-Hudhali, he (al-Hudhali) took the *qirā'āt* of Ibn Kathir from one of the disciples of Imam al-Shafi'i who narrated the *qirā'āt* of Ibn Kathir from Imam al-Shafi'i, namely Muhammad bin 'Abd Allah bin 'Abd al-Hakam (Al-Hudhali, 2007).

“I (al-Hudhali) took *qirā'āt* from Abu Muhammad ‘Abd Allah bin Muhammad Al-Jablani Batnis. Abu Muhammad ‘Abd Allah bin Muhammad al-Jablani Batnis said: He took *qirā'āt* from ‘Abd al-Baqi bin ‘Ayn al-Fazzal from Muhammad bin Ahmad bin Hamdan from Muhammad bin ‘Abd Allah bin ‘Abd al-Hakam. Muhammad bin ‘Abd Allah bin ‘Abd al-Hakam said: It was narrated to us that Muhammad bin Idris al-Shafi’i, al-Kazizi, Sufyan and Muslim bin Khalid took *qirā'āt* from Isma’il bin ‘Abd Allah Al-Qist from Ibn Kathir” (Al-Hudhali, 2007).

The Role of *Qirā'āt* in Fiqh and its Implications

1. The Importance of *Qirā'āt* in Fiqh Interpretations

Qirā'āt of the Qur'an are often utilized as a basis for interpreting verses, particularly in fiqh-oriented exegesis. These *qirā'āt* frequently influence the outcomes of jurists' intellectual endeavors. The Qur'an itself is considered the word of God revealed to Prophet Muhammad through *mutawatir* transmission, while *qirā'āt* refers to the manner of recitation or pronunciation. Although these two terms appear distinct, they are fundamentally inseparable, much like two sides of a coin. The Qur'an cannot be read without *qirā'āt*, implying that *qirā'āt* inherently part of the revelation itself (Muttaqin, 2016).

2. Traditional Use of *Qirā'āt* in Legal and Theological Contexts

Classical exegetes have historically employed various *qirā'āt* in their interpretations of the Qur'an. However, their tendency has been to predominantly use *qirā'āt* in the exegesis of legal (fiqh) and theological verses. This indicates a strong historical connection between *qirā'āt* and the development of Islamic jurisprudence (Muttaqin, 2016).

In conclusion, the *qirā'āt* of the Qur'an are integral to its interpretation, especially in fiqh, where they shape legal reasoning. *Mutawatir qirā'āt* are considered part of the divine revelation and should be treated as primary sources for understanding the Qur'an. Historically, classical scholars have frequently applied *qirā'āt* to legal and theological texts, underscoring their significance in Islamic jurisprudence (Muttaqin, 2016).

Fatwa in Brunei Darussalam

Fatwa in its general sense within Islamic law, refers to an Islamic ruling provided by a religious law specialist on a specific issue. It is an opinion given by a recognized authority, based on sound evidence, that informs others about the rules of Shariah without being binding. Historically, *fatwa* has been considered a noble task, often seen as taking over the position of the Prophet in providing Islamic rulings when needed (Lahsasna, 2011).

1. Background of the Establishment of the Brunei Darussalam Fatwa Institution

The Mufti and the Fatwa Institution are very important in an Islamic country. Its role in determining or establishing Islamic law as a guide to the life of Muslims is undeniable. Especially in a world that is constantly developing and bringing with it new problems and issues faced by the Muslim community. Before Brunei Darussalam had a mufti, questions related to the law were referred to religious scholars, teachers, *imams* or mosque officer (Juned, 1998).

The appointment of the Mufti for the first time was held during the time of al-Marhum Sultan Haji Omar Ali Saifuddien Sa'dul Khairi Waddien, the 28th Sultan and Yang Di Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam. This can be seen in His Majesty's letter to the Chief Minister of Brunei dated 24 January 1961, regarding the importance of the role of Ulama in dealing with *fatwas* for Brunei. The *warkah* reads, among others:

"It is very difficult for what we have experienced, if there is a problem that is related to Islam, if an Islamic country that formalizes the religion of Islam which is recognized as holy does not have a scholar who will really be in charge of burdening or caring either in giving fatwas and elaborating rules and laws and others for the benefit of the people of Brunei and the state."

The importance of the position of Government Mufti is also in accordance with the requirements of the the Law of Brunei Chapter Religious Council and Kadis Court Chapter 77 On 1 April 1962, Al-Marhum Sultan Haji Omar Ali Saifuddien approved the appointment of Awg Haji Ismail bin Omar Abd Aziz (later known as Yang Dimuliakan Pehin Datu Seri Maharaja Dato Seri Utama Dr Haji Ismail bin Omar Abdul Aziz) as the Government Mufti for three years until 31 March 1965. On 8 March 1967, the late Pehin was allowed to serve again as the Mufti of the Government until he returned to *rahmatullah* on 3 February 1993 (Juned, 1998).

On 1 January 1989, for the first time Brunei Darussalam had a Deputy Mufti of the Government. This position is held by His Excellency Pehin Tuan Imam Dato Paduka Seri Setia Ustaz Haji Awang Abdul Aziz bin Juned (now His Excellency Again Respected Pehin Datu Seri Maharaja). Then, on 1 September 1994 until now, Dato Paduka Seri Setia Ustaz Haji Awang Abdul Aziz bin Juned was appointed as the Government Mufti to replace the vacancy of the Government Mufti (Juned, 1998).

The Fatwa institution in Brunei Darussalam has undergone three stages of adaptation in terms of administration. The stages are as follows: (Al-Hadaf, 1997)

2. Administration of the Department of Religious Affairs

In the early stages, the Fatwa Institution was one of the divisions in the Ministry of Religious Affairs. In terms of administrative responsibilities, Mufti at that time was under the Principal Officer of Religious Affairs (*Pengetua Pegawai Hal Ehwal Agama*). Meanwhile, in terms of legal responsibilities, the Mufti is under the Brunei Islamic Religious

Council (*Majlis Agama Islam Brunei*). The Fatwa Institution carries out its functions and duties in fatwa affairs, libraries, sermon censorship, film, publications, the Legal Committee of the Brunei Islamic Religious Council (*Jawatankuasa Undang-Undang Majlis Agama Islam Brunei*) and the Judicial Committee of the Brunei Islamic Religious Council (*Jawatankuasa Kehakiman Majlis Agama Islam Brunei*).

3. Administration of the Ministry of Religious Affairs

On 21 October 1986, the Department of Religious Affairs was approved by His Majesty Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Mu'izzaddin Waddaullah, Sultan and Yang Di Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam to be upgraded to the Ministry of Religious Affairs. The Fatwa institution is placed under the Department of Sharia Affairs, Ministry of Religious Affairs (*Jabatan Hal Ehwal Syari'ah, Kementerian Hal Ehwal Ugama*). In terms of administrative responsibilities, it falls under the Director of Sharia Affairs (*Pengarah Hal Ehwal Syari'ah*), while in terms of legal responsibilities, it falls under the Brunei Islamic Religious Council. At this stage, the Fatwa Institution is divided into three branches: Fatwa Preparation Branch (*Cawangan Penyediaan Fatwa*), Reference Branch as well as Censorship and other services (*Cawangan Rujukan serta Penapisan dan perkhidmatan yang lain*).

4. Department of the Government Mufti

By order of His Majesty the Sultan and Yang Dipertuan of Brunei Darussalam, the Prime Minister's Department informed the establishment of the Government Mufti Department. With the establishment, *Jabatan Mufti Kerajaan* was no longer under the Ministry of Religious Affairs but became a separate department under the Prime Minister's Department on 7 November 1994. The Government Mufti is directly responsible to His Majesty Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Mu'izzaddin Waddaullah, Sultan and Yang Di Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam, in disbursing anything related to his duties as Government Mufti without going through anyone.

5. Fatwa Issuance Procedure

The procedure for issuing *fatwa* that runs nowadays is usually based on questions from the public on any matter about Sharia Law that is submitted in person, sending letters or through communication mediums such as phone calls and emails. However, the answer to the problems raised through the above-mentioned medium is more in the form of legal consultation only. To deal with queries that require the official issuance of fatwas, the Government Mufti will be assisted by the Deputy Government Mufti, *Istinbat* Officers and Research Officers to discuss and resolve the matter and then issue a fatwa on the matter. Once the fatwa is ready, it will be sent directly to the fatwa applicant with the signature of the Government Mufti ([Maidin, 2011](#)).

6. Basis for Determination of Fatwa

The basis of the determination of *fatwa*, in addition to referring to the main sources in the production of *syara'*, the determination of *fatwa* should be in accordance with the

opinion of the *fuqaha* in *Mazhab Shafi'i* by prioritizing *Qawl Mu'tamad* (Juned, 1998). As stipulated in the Law of Brunei Chapter Religious Council and Kadis Court Chapter 77, 43 (1):

“(1) In making and issuing any ruling in manner hereinbefore provided the Majlis and the Legal Committee shall ordinarily follow the orthodox tenets of the Shafeite sect:

Provided that, if it is considered that the following of such orthodox tenets will be opposed to the public interest, the Majlis or the Legal Committee may, unless His Majesty shall otherwise direct, follow the less orthodox tenets of the Shafeite sect:

Provided further that, if it is considered that the following of either the orthodox or the less orthodox tenets of the Shafeite sect will be opposed to the public interest, the Majlis or the Legal Committee may, with the special sanction of His Majesty, follow the tenets of any of the 3 remaining sects as may be considered appropriate, but in any such ruling the provisions and principles to be followed shall be set out in full detail and with any necessary explanation.” (Islamic Religious Council and Kadi Courts Act Term 77, n.d.)

The provisions of the above act explain the priority of *madhhab Shafi'i* in issuing *fatwas* compared to another *madhhab*. However, *madhhabs* other than *madhhab al Shafi'i* are still adopted when matters related to public interest occur.

If there is a need, the *Mufti* will refer to the views of certain experts subject to their respective fields of knowledge as well as their respective needs related to the issues being addressed. The expertise is to provide input to the *Mufti* in his task of determining a law that is proposed. The *fatwa* issued is not based on the opinion of most of the officials concerned or is the "Voice of Democracy". The *Mufti* determines what he thinks should be an answer based on the *Nas-Nas* and the *Qawl* of the Ultimate *Ulama* (Juned, 1998).

The legal basis for the Prescription of Fidyah

Fidyah is a sharia ruling that originates from the divine command of Allah *subhanahu wa ta'ala*. It represents a form of ease (*rukhsah*) for Muslims who are unable to fast due to legitimate reasons (*uzur syar'i*). This provision reflects Allah's desire to simplify worship and not burden His servants, especially those who face difficulties in observing the Ramadan fast (Tarantang et al., 2021).

The Almighty Allah says:

[Observing Saum (fasts)] for a fixed number of days, but if any of you is ill or on a journey, the same number (should be made up) from other days. And as for those who can fast with difficulty, (e.g. an old man, etc.), they have (a choice either to fast or) to feed a Miskin (poor person) (for every day). But whoever does good of his own accord, it is better for him. And that you fast, it is better for you if only you know.

Explanation of the Qirā'āt of the Ten Qurra' regarding the legal basis of Syariat Fidyah

Nāfi', Abū Ja'far, and Ibn Dhakwān read the word *fidyah* as *ṭa'āmu*, i.e., without *tanwīn* on the word *fidyah* (Ibn Malik, n.d.), while the letter *mīm* in the word *ṭa'āmu* is read with *kasrah* as *ṭa'āmi*, and the word *miskīn* is read in the plural form, *masākīn* (Mustapai & Zain, 2012). Meanwhile, Ibn Kathīr, Abū 'Amr, 'Āṣim, Ḥamzah, al-Kisā'ī, Ya'qūb, and Khalaf recite the word *fidyah* as *fidyatun ṭa'āmu*, i.e., with *tanwīn* on the word *fidyah*. The letter *mīm* in the word *ṭa'āmu* is read with *raf'*, while the word *miskīn* is read in the singular form (*mufrad*) (Mustapai & Zain, 2012). Another narrator of *qirā'āt*, Ibn 'Āmir, through Hishām, reads the phrase as *fidyatu ṭa'āmu*. In the word *miskīn*, Hishām reads the plural form, *masākīn* (Ibn al-Jazarī, n.d.).

Based on the description of the *qirā'āt* of the ten *qurrā'* above, this study finds that Ibn Kathīr, who was also an authority in the Qur'ānic reading associated with Imām al-Shāfi'ī, reads the phrase as *fidyatun ṭa'āmu*. In other words, Ibn Kathīr's *qirā'āt* places *tanwīn* on the word *fidyatun*, while the letter *mīm* in the word *ṭa'āmu* is read with *raf'*, and the word *miskīn* is read in the singular form (*mufrad*).

1. Tawjīh al-Qirā'āt

a. Tawjīh al-Qirā'āt: Fidyatu Ṭa'āmi

Al-Mahdawī, in *Sharḥ al-Hidāyah*, explains that the *qirā'āt* reading *fidyatu ṭa'āmi* indicates that *fidyah* is not necessarily given in the form of *ṭa'ām* (food) (Al-Zuhayli, 2004), but may also be given in a form other than *ṭa'ām*, provided that it constitutes the staple food of a country (Al-Mahdawī, 1995).

b. Tawjīh al-Qirā'āt: Fidyatun Ṭa'āmu

According to Abū Zur'ah, the *qirā'āt* that reads the phrase as *fidyatun ṭa'āmu* conveys the meaning *al-ṭa'āmu huwa al-fidyah*, meaning that *fidyah* consists of food (Zur'ah, 2001). Al-Mahdawī also explains that this reading indicates that *fidyah* can only be given in the form of food (Al-Mahdawī, 1995).

The analysis of Ibn Kathīr's *qirā'āt*, which reads *fidyatun ṭa'āmu*, indicates an emphasis on the specific form of *fidyah*, namely food rather than money. This differs from the Ḥanafī madhhab, which allows greater flexibility by permitting payment according to monetary value. In the context of Brunei, the adoption of the al-Shāfi'ī position demonstrates the seriousness of the Fatwa Institution in maintaining the *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah*, particularly *ḥifẓ al-naḥs* (the protection of human life and the survival of the poor) and *ḥifẓ al-māl* (the protection of wealth and economic stability concerning food).

c. Tawjīh al-Qirā'āt: Masākīn

Makkī, the author of *Al-Kashf 'An Wujūh al-Qirā'āt al-Sab' Wa-'Ilaluhā Wa-Ḥujajuhā*, explains that the *qurrā'* who read the word in the plural form, *masākīn*, indicate that when many people are unable to fast, they are obliged to provide *fidyah* by feeding poor people (Makki, 1984). Ibn Jarīr al-Ṭabarī, on the other hand, maintains that the *qirā'āt* reading

masākīn indicates that a person who is unable to fast for an entire month must pay *fidyah* by feeding poor people for that month. This interpretation is further supported by a narration from al-Ḥasan, who stated that the required provision consists of feeding poor people for a month (Ibn al-Jazarī, n.d.). According to Abū Ḥayyān, the *qirā'āt* reading *masākīn* indicates that a person who is unable to fast must provide *fidyah* to poor people for the number of days on which the person does not fast (Abu Hayyan, 1993).

d. *Tawjīh al-Qirā'āt: Miskīn*

The *qirā'āt* reading *miskīn* means feeding one poor person for each day on which a person does not fast. This interpretation is attributed to Abū 'Ubayd, as quoted by al-Qurṭubī, al-Farrā' in *Ma'ānī al-Qur'ān*, and Abū Ḥayyān in *Al-Baḥr al-Muḥīṭ* (Al-Qurtubi, 2007).

In conclusion, the *qirā'āt* reading *miskīn* in the singular form (*mufrad*) emphasizes individual responsibility: a Muslim must provide food for at least one poor person for each day of missed fasting. Conversely, the plural reading *masākīn* (*jam'*) emphasizes the social dimension by allowing *fidyah* to be distributed among a larger number of poor people.

2. *Hujaj al-Qirā'āt*

a. *Hujjat al-Qirā'āt: Fidyatu Ṭa'āmi*

Abū 'Alī al-Fārisī explains that the grammatical function of *iḍāfah* in the verse concerning *fidyah* falls under the category of *iḍāfat ba'ḍ ilā kull* (attributing a part to a whole). Other examples include *khātamu jadīdin* (an iron ring) and *thawbu khazzin* (a garment made of silk-blend fabric), in which the construction does not diminish the intended meaning (Abu 'Alī Al-Farisi, 2007). According to Ibn Abī Maryam, this construction is called *iḍāfat ba'ḍ ilā kull* because the word *ṭa'ām* is more general than the word *fidyah*. Therefore, the word *fidyah* is connected to the word *ṭa'ām* through this grammatical construction (Ibn Abi Maryam, 1993). Abū Zur'ah explains that *fidyah* is a *maṣḍar* derived from the verb *fadaytu*, as illustrated in the expression *fadaytu ṣawma hādhā al-yawmi bi-ṭa'āmi miskīnin, afdaituhu fidyatan*, meaning, "I compensate for today's fast by feeding a poor person." In this context, *ṭa'ām* refers to the food provided as compensation for an unfulfilled fast (Zur'ah, 2001). According to Abū Ja'far al-Ṭabarī, the most accurate *qirā'āt* is the reading *fidyatu ṭa'āmi* (Ibn al-Jazarī, n.d.).

b. *Hujjat al-Qirā'āt: Fidyatu Ṭa'āmu*

This *qirā'āt* is read as *fidyatu ṭa'āmu* because the grammatical position (*i'rāb*) of *fidyah* in the verse is that of *mubtada'* (the subject of a nominal sentence) (Ash-Syarkani, 2002), the grammatical position of *ṭa'āmu* is that of *badal* (a substitute or appositive) (Ash-Syarkani, 2002) or *atf bayān*, a grammatical construction in which a word clarifies the meaning of the preceding word (Khalawih, 1979).

c. *Hujjat al-Qirā'āt: Masākīn*

The *qurrā'* who read the phrase using the plural form *masākīn* argue that this reading corresponds to the plural construction in the preceding verse, namely *wa-'alā*

alladhīna, meaning “and upon those who...” (Makki, 1984). Just as Allah subhānahu wa-ta'ālā explains the ruling concerning those who do not fast for a number of days through the phrase *ayyāman ma'dūdāt*, which uses a plural construction, the word *masākīn* should likewise be read in the plural form according to this *qirā'āt* (Zur'ah, 2001). The *qirā'āt* reading *masākīn* also explains the ruling that *fidyah* must be provided for the days of Ramaḍān fasting that have not been fulfilled (Khalawih, 1979).

d. *Hujjat al-Qirā'āt: Miskīn*

The *qurrā'* who read the word *miskīn* in the singular form (*mufrad*) base their interpretation on the words of Allah subhānahu wa-ta'ālā concerning those who accuse chaste women and fail to produce four witnesses, for whom the prescribed punishment is eighty lashes.

Abū 'Alī al-Fārisī explains that this verse does not mean that the punishment of lashing is divided among those who are punished. Rather, everyone receives eighty lashes. The same principle applies to the verse concerning *fidyah*: every person who does not fast is required to provide food for a poor person (Abu 'Ali Al-Farisi, 2007).

The *qirā'āt* reading *miskīn* also reflects the grammatical principle that an indefinite noun (*ism nakirah*) may convey a plural or collective meaning without requiring the explicit use of a plural form. Furthermore, this reading corresponds to the word *fidyah*, which is also singular in form (*mufrad*), even though the total amount of *fidyah* may accumulate from many individuals. The singular reading *miskīn* is also attributed to Ibn 'Abbās and most of the *qurrā'* (Makki, 1984).

According to Ibn 'Abbās, the phrase *wa-'alā alladhīna yuṭīqūnahu fidyatun ṭa'āmu miskīn* means that those who are able to fast but do not do so must feed a poor person half a *ṣā'* of wheat as compensation for each day of fasting that they have missed (Al-Fayruz Abadi, 2011). Ibn Jarīr al-Ṭabarī preferred the singular reading *miskīn* because the singular form may function as a substitute for the plural form, whereas the plural form cannot necessarily substitute for the singular form (Al-Tabari, 2008).

According to Abū Zur'ah, the singular reading *miskīn* encompasses the ruling concerning a person who misses one day of fasting as well as the ruling concerning a person who misses fasting throughout an entire month. In contrast, the plural reading *masākīn* specifically explains the ruling concerning missed fasting throughout an entire month (Zur'ah, 2001).

Analysis of the Implications of the Qirā'āt Miskīn and Fidyatun Ṭa'āmu for Fiqh

a. Definition of *Fidyah*

According to Ibn Manẓūr, linguistically, the word *fidyah* derives from the root letters fā', dāl, and a weak letter. This root produces expressions such as *fadaytuhu fidā'an wa-fidā'an wa-iftadaytuhu*, referring to property or something similar given to release a prisoner or free someone from a difficult situation (Manzur, 2000). This meaning is

illustrated in the words of Allah subhānahu wa-ta'ālā: “And We ransomed him with a great sacrifice.” In terminology, *fidyah* refers to a substitute or compensation that frees a *mukallaf* (a person legally accountable under Islamic law) from a difficulty or obligation for which they are responsible (Al-Jurjani, n.d.).

b. Definition of *Miskīn*

According to 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Juzayrī, jurists differ in their definitions of *miskīn*. In the Ḥanafī and Mālikī madhhabs, a *miskīn* is described as someone who possesses nothing and is even more needy than a *faqīr*. In contrast, according to the al-Shāfi'ī and Ḥanbalī madhhabs, a *miskīn* is someone who possesses lawful property or has employment that provides only half or more of their living needs but remains insufficient to meet those needs fully (Al-Juzayri, 2003).

c. Form of *Fidyah*

According to Wahbah al-Zuhaylī, the jurists agree that the *ṭa'ām* mentioned in the verse concerning *fidyah* refers to the staple food of a particular community or nation (Al-Zuhayli, 2004). However, the *fuqaha* have different views in requiring the payment of *fidyah* with the value of the currency.

In *Fiqh al-Zakāh*, Yūsuf al-Qaradāwī explains that Imām Mālik, Imām al-Shāfi'ī, and Imām Aḥmad do not permit the payment of *fidyah* according to monetary value. These three imams argue that such a practice contradicts the Sunnah of the Prophet Muḥammad PBUH. Meanwhile, Imām Abū Ḥanīfah holds a different view, permitting payment according to monetary value. This position is based on reports from 'Umar ibn 'Abd al-'Azīz and al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī, who permitted the payment of *zakāt al-fiṭr* in the form of several dirhams (Al-Qardawi, 1973).

Method of *Fidyah* Implementation

In terms of the implementation of *fidyah*, there are differences of opinion among the imams of the madhhabs. According to Imām Abū Ḥanīfah, *fidyah* must be given to a poor person, provided that the provision is distributed continuously and sufficiently to cover the number of days of fasting missed (Al-Shawkani, 2007). The method of implementation differs slightly according to the views of Imām Mālik, Imām al-Shāfi'ī, and Imām Aḥmad. According to these scholars, *fidyah* does not have to be given to only one poor person; rather, it may be distributed among several poor people according to the number of days of fasting missed (Ibn Hajar Al-Haytami, 2006; Qudamah, 1997; Rushd, 2012). his study finds that both methods of implementation are consistent with the meaning of the singular *qirā'āt* (*mufrad*) in the phrase *miskīn* (a poor person).

The imams of the madhhabs also differ in determining the amount of *fidyah* that must be given. The details are as follows:

1. The 'ulamā' of the Ḥanafī madhhab hold that the required *fidyah* for each obligatory fast (*farḍ*) missed is half a *ṣā'* of *burr* (wheat grain) or one *ṣā'* of another staple food (Al-Shawkani, 2007).
2. The 'ulamā' of the Mālikī and Shāfi'ī madhhabs hold that the required *fidyah* for each obligatory fast (*farḍ*) missed is one *mudd* of food, equivalent to the measure used by the Prophet Muḥammad PBUH (Al-Dardir, n.d.; Al-Sharbini, 1997). The book *Fatāwā* of the Lajnah Dā'imah explains that the Prophet's *mudd*, according to a contemporary measurement cited in that source, is approximately three kilograms (Al-Dawish, 1996).
3. The 'ulamā' of the Ḥanbalī madhhab hold that the required *fidyah* for each obligatory fast (*farḍ*) missed is one *mudd* of *burr* (wheat) or half a *ṣā'* of dates or *sha'ir* (barley, traditionally used in breadmaking) (Qudamah, 1997).

In conclusion, this study finds that the *qirā'āt* of Imām al-Shāfi'ī, transmitted through Ibn Kathīr, which reads the phrase *fidyatun ṭa'āmu*, has important implications for the legal understanding of *fidyah*. This reading emphasizes food as the form of compensation for missed fasting. The significance of this interpretation extends beyond linguistic analysis to broader social and sharī'ah considerations. It highlights the objectives of *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah*, particularly *ḥifẓ al-naḥs* (the protection of human life, including the nutritional needs of the poor) and *ḥifẓ al-māl* (the protection of wealth). In contrast to the Ḥanafī madhhab, which permits payment in monetary value, the Shāfi'ī approach emphasizes providing staple food directly to eligible recipients.

The difference between the singular *qirā'āt* (*muḥrad*), *miskīn* (a poor person), and the plural *qirā'āt* (*jam'*), *masākīn* (poor people), demonstrates the flexibility of Islamic jurisprudence in determining how *fidyah* may be distributed. The singular reading emphasizes individual responsibility to provide *fidyah* for each day of fasting missed, while the plural reading highlights the broader possibilities for distributing it among multiple poor people. This diversity in Qur'ānic readings is not merely a linguistic variation; it also provides interpretive space for *ijtihād* in formulating *fatwā* policies that balance individual obligations with wider social benefits.

Analysis of the Fatwa of the Mufti of the Brunei Government on the Question of Fidyah

Questions concerning *fidyah* recur across Brunei's published *fatwā* literature. Rather than reproduce each text, the analysis groups the material into representative cases selected according to the methodological criteria stated above: substantive distinctiveness, continuity across publication periods, and relevance to the relationship between *qirā'āt* and *fiqh*.

Three case clusters are examined. The first concerns the basic obligations of *qada'* and *fidyah*, as well as liability after death. The second concerns the annual multiplication of *fidyah* and the distinction between food and monetary payment. The third, drawn from

the 2008 fatwā volume, demonstrates how these principles are operationalized through a multi-year calculation. This structure makes the sample analytically representative while avoiding duplication of nearly identical rulings.

1. Representative Case 1: Fatwa Series 8/1971 and 1997

Questions about fasting *fidyah*.

Fatwa of the Mufti of the Brunei Government:

Whoever abandons an obligatory fast, whether the fast of Ramaḍān, a vow (*nadhr*), or expiation (*kaffārah*), because of a valid excuse (*'udhr*), and is unable to make up the fast (*qaḍā'*) because of a continuing illness until death, has not sinned, and no *fidyah* is obligatory upon that person. Second, whoever delays *qaḍā'* despite being able to fulfil the obligation and dies before completing it must have two *mudd* deducted from their estate (*tarikah*) for each day. One *mudd* accounts for the expiration of the period allowed for *qaḍā'*, while the other accounts for the delay. Third, whoever fails to make up missed Ramaḍān fasts despite being able to do so and without a valid excuse (*'udhr*) until the following Ramaḍān must make up the missed days and pay *fidyah* for each day left unfulfilled. The prescribed rate of *fidyah* is one *mudd*, equivalent in the cited source to 15 *tahil* or 566.991 grams, for each missed day. The *fidyah* is to be given to a poor person (*faqīr*), and multiple *mudd* may be required for the same recipient according to the number of days missed (Ismail bin Omar Abd Aziz, 1996; Juned, 1998).

2. Representative Case 2: Fatwa Series 52/1983 and 2007

Fidyah fasting that has been abandoned for several years.

Fatwa of the Mufti of the Brunei Government:

If a missed fast is not made up (*qaḍā'*) before the time for making it up expires, namely, when the following Ramaḍān arrives, it becomes obligatory to pay *fidyah* in addition to performing *qaḍā'*. The required amount is one *mudd* for each missed day of fasting. According to the *aṣaḥḥ* (more authoritative) opinion, *fidyah* is multiplied from year to year if the missed fast has not been made up and the *fidyah* for the preceding year has not been paid. A person who delays *qaḍā'* despite being able to fulfil the obligation and then dies before completing it must have two *mudd* deducted from their estate (*tarikah*) for each missed day. One *mudd* accounts for the expiration of the period allowed for *qaḍā'*, while the other accounts for the delay. It is worth noting that, according to the al-Shāfi'ī madhhab (madhhab al-Shāfi'ī), *fidyah* is not valid if paid solely through its monetary equivalent. However, as *irshād* (guidance) rather than a formal fatwā, it is permissible for someone wishing to pay *fidyah* in money to follow the Ḥanafī madhhab (madhhab al-Ḥanafī) through *taqlīd* (adherence to another juristic opinion) (Ismail bin Omar Abd Aziz, 1996; Juned, 1998).

3. Representative Case 3: Multi-Year Delayed Qaḍā' (Fatwa 2008)

The 2008 fatwā examines a case in which eight days of Ramaḍān fasting were missed annually from 1971 to 1998. It affirms that the obligation of *qaḍā'* does not lapse while the person remains capable of performing it. When a subsequent Ramaḍān arrives before *qaḍā'* has been completed without a valid excuse, *fidyah* is added and, according to the position adopted in the fatwā, accumulates from year to year. The calculation presented in the fatwā totals 232 days of *qaḍā'* and 2,235.6564 kilograms of rice as accumulated *fidyah* (Abdul Aziz bin Juned, 2010).

Two qualifications are particularly relevant to this analysis. First, if the delay in *qaḍā'* results from a continuing valid excuse, such as prolonged illness, the additional *fidyah* for delay is not imposed, although the underlying obligation of *qaḍā'* remains. Second, the document notes that the monetary value of *fidyah* varies according to the type of rice used as the staple food. These details show how Brunei's fatwā practice translates the al-Shāfi'ī position into an administratively calculable procedure while preserving distinctions between culpable delay, continuing valid excuses, and the underlying obligation of *qaḍā'*.

Implications of Ibn Kathīr's Qirā'āt for Fidyah Reasoning in Brunei's Fatwās

The relationship identified in this study is one of interpretive congruence rather than simple causation. Ibn Kathīr's reading provides linguistic support for meanings of *fidyah* and *miskīn*, while the binding details concerning the amount, delayed *qaḍā'*, recurring *fidyah*, liability involving the estate (*tarikah*), and the permissibility of following another madhhab are determined through al-Shāfi'ī juristic methodology and the institutional rules governing fatwā in Brunei. This distinction is important because recent scholarship cautions against treating *qirā'āt* as an automatic generator of legal rules (Melchert, 2022).

1. Form of Fidyah

With respect to the form of *fidyah*, Ibn Kathīr's reading of *fidyatun ṭa'āmu* supports a semantic interpretation in which food constitutes the explanatory content of *fidyah*. This is consistent with the al-Shāfi'ī position adopted in Brunei, where official fatwās prescribe staple food, operationalized as rice, rather than treating cash as the default equivalent. Nevertheless, the 2007 fatwā distinguishes the formal al-Shāfi'ī ruling from an *irshād* (guidance) that permits *taqlīd* (following another juristic opinion) by adopting the Ḥanafī madhhab for those who wish to discharge *fidyah* through monetary payment. The fatwā evidence therefore demonstrates both doctrinal continuity and a controlled mechanism for flexibility.

2. Implementation and Distribution of Fidyah

With respect to implementation and distribution, the singular reading *miskīn* supports a day-specific relationship between the unperformed fast and a poor recipient,

while the plural reading *masākīn* accommodates the collective dimension of distribution. Brunei's fatwās operationalize this within al-Shāfi'i fiqh by calculating *fidyah* for each missed day and maintaining the obligation of *qada'* separately from the additional *fidyah* arising from unjustified delay. The worked example in the 2008 fatwā further demonstrates that administrative calculation is not merely incidental; it translates juristic rules into a concrete quantity of staple food over an extended period.

The primary policy implication is the need to distinguish legal substance from administrative delivery. The Brunei fatwas consistently preserve the al-Shāfi'i requirement of staple food while also acknowledging, through *irshād*, the possibility of Hanafi *taqlid* for monetary payment. Accordingly, any contemporary payment channel should state clearly which juristic basis is being applied and what ultimately reaches the beneficiary. This approach is consistent with recent research on *maqasid*-oriented fatwa development in Brunei, which emphasizes that contemporary flexibility should remain anchored in disciplined legal reasoning and authoritative sources (Muda et al., 2024).

Second, digitalization can be used to improve access and accuracy without collapsing the distinction between a digital payment channel and the legal form of *fidyah*. Comparable research on digital zakat administration shows that technology can facilitate access, transparency, and fulfilment of religious obligations when it is incorporated within a clear sharia governance framework. For *fidyah*, a digital platform could therefore be designed to display the applicable madhhab basis, number of missed days, whether delay was excused or unexcused, the applicable *mudd* or rice equivalent, and the resulting distribution mechanism. Where the Shāfi'i position is applied, an electronic collection mechanism could be structured, subject to the approval of the competent fatwa authority, as an agency arrangement for purchasing and distributing the prescribed staple food rather than assuming that the transfer of money itself constitutes *fidyah* (Maulida et al., 2024).

Third, the 2007 and 2008 fatwas show that long-term delayed *qada'* can generate complex calculations. A standardized official calculator or table, accompanied by explanatory notes on recurring *fidyah* and exceptions for continuing valid excuses, would reduce public misunderstanding and improve consistency. The 2008 example is particularly useful because it demonstrates the cumulative calculation over several decades and simultaneously confirms that *fidyah* does not extinguish the original *qada'* obligation.

Finally, the *maqasid* dimension should be framed as a supporting evaluative consideration rather than a substitute for the textual and madhhab basis of the ruling. Food-based *fidyah* has an evident welfare dimension because it directs a basic necessity to eligible recipients, but claims concerning food security or broader development goals should be presented as contemporary implications of the ruling, not as the direct legal

cause of the ruling. This distinction strengthens the analytical precision of the article and keeps the relationship between *qirā'āt*, *fiqh*, *maqasid*, and fatwa methodologically clear.

Conclusion

This study demonstrates that *qirā'āt* can contribute meaningfully to *fiqh* reasoning without functioning as an autonomous or mechanical source of every legal detail. In Qur'an 2:184, Ibn Kathīr's reading of *fidyatun ṭa'āmu* and the singular form *miskīn* provides semantic support for the food-based and day-specific dimensions of *fidyah*. However, the broader rules applied in Brunei—including the requirement of one *mudd* of staple food, the continued obligation to perform *qaḍā'*, additional *fidyah* for unjustified delays, the annual multiplication of *fidyah* under the adopted juristic position, and the limited *irshād* permitting *taqlīd* of the Ḥanafī school for monetary payment—are articulated primarily through al-Shāfi'ī juristic methodology and the institutional practices of the Government Mufti. The representative fatwas issued in 1970–1971 and revisited in 1997, in 1983 and 2007, and in 2008 demonstrate both continuity in the substantive legal position and an increasingly explicit approach to administrative calculation.

For Brunei's fatwa institution, four practical implications emerge from this analysis. First, fatwas should explicitly distinguish between semantic support derived from *qirā'āt* and legal rules established through *madhhab* jurisprudence. Second, public guidance should clearly differentiate the obligation of *qaḍā'* from the various forms of *fidyah*. Third, official calculation tools should standardize the treatment of delayed *qaḍā'*, recurring *fidyah*, and continuing valid excuses. Fourth, any digital payment facility should clearly disclose whether its mechanism follows the Shāfi'ī position of distributing staple food or relies on an explicitly identified application of *taqlīd* of the Ḥanafī school to permit monetary payment. Future research could extend this *qirā'āt*–*fiqh*–*fatwa* framework to *zakāt al-fiṭr*, *kaffārah*, and other areas of Islamic worship across fatwa institutions in the Malay-Muslim world.

Conflict of Interest Statement

The authors declare that they have no competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have influenced the research, authorship, or publication of this paper.

Declaration of the use of AI

The authors acknowledge the use of ChatGPT and Grammarly to improve the readability, grammar, and language quality of this manuscript.

Funding Statement

This research received no specific funding from any public, commercial, or not-for-profit funding agency.

Credit of Author Statement

Aleya Fatehah Japar contributed to conceptualization, methodology, project administration, investigation, and writing – original draft preparation. **Cecep Soleh Kurniawan** was responsible for supervision, formal analysis, validation, and writing – review and editing. **Sri Rahayu Dollah** contributed to data curation, investigation, and resources. **Mohamed Fathy Mohamed Abdelgelil** contributed to formal analysis and visualization. **Muhammad Zakir Husain** contributed to formal analysis and visualization. Nabilah contributed to resources, investigation, and writing – review and editing. All authors reviewed and approved the final version of the manuscript for publication.

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