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Qur'anic Conflict Verses: Comparative Madhhab Analysis and Integrative Hermeneutics of Contemporary Radicalization

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Abstract
Qur'anic conflict verses remain contested in debates over Islamic legal interpretation and contemporary radicalization. However, existing scholarship has insufficiently integrated classical madhhab jurisprudence with contextual hermeneutics to explain how legal reasoning establishes the grounds and limits of armed fighting. This study examines Qur'anic conflict verses through a comparative analysis of Hanafi and Shafi'i jurisprudence and develops an integrative hermeneutical framework for interpreting their legal and ethical implications. Using qualitative library research, it combines thematic analysis of selected Qur'anic verses, close reading of classical tafsir and fiqh texts, and comparative analysis of juristic arguments. The analysis focuses on the legal grounds for fighting, the relationship between textual evidence and historical context, restrictions on the use of force, and debates over abrogation, including interpretations of the so-called sword verse. The proposed framework integrates four dimensions: textual analysis, historical contextualization, comparative madhhab reasoning, and ethical evaluation. It conceptualizes decontextualized interpretation as a potential pathway through which selective readings may be used to legitimize ideological positions, rather than treating this relationship as an empirically established causal mechanism. The study's principal contribution is to connect classical juristic disagreement with contextual Qur'anic interpretation in a framework that makes legal reasoning and interpretive constraints explicit. This approach offers a basis for more systematic comparative Islamic legal research and may inform religious education and scholarly responses to reductive interpretations of conflict verses. Its applicability to contemporary radicalization discourse requires further examination against documented interpretive practices and relevant empirical evidence.
Keywords: Integrative Hermeneutics; Conflict Verses of the Qur'an; Contemporary Radicalization.

Introduction

The interpretation of Qur'anic verses concerning armed fighting continues to raise important questions about legal authority, religious difference, and the legitimate use of

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force. Contemporary discussions often alternate between an expansive reading of fighting commands and an exclusively defensive interpretation. Neither position adequately represents the diversity of Qur'anic contexts and classical juristic reasoning. The primary texts contain conditional commands, treaty provisions, restrictions on transgression, recognition of protection and distinctions among populations. Classical Muslim jurists transformed these materials into a detailed body of law concerning the initiation and conduct of warfare, public authority, non-combatants, agreements, prisoners and the termination of hostilities. Their conclusions must be reconstructed within the conceptual vocabulary and historical legal order in which they were produced before being evaluated in relation to modern legal and ethical questions (Al-Dawoody, 2017; Afsaruddin, 2013). Accordingly, this study focuses on selected *Ḥanafī* and *Shāfiʿī* juristic arguments while recognizing the diversity of opinions within the wider Sunni legal tradition.

A foundational distinction in this debate concerns *jihād,* a term encompassing broader forms of religious striving, and *qitāl,* which refers to armed fighting in the passages examined. Equating the terms erases both non-military forms of striving and the specific legal questions attached to combat. Conversely, reducing all fighting passages to moral exhortation overlooks the historically operative rules that Muslim jurists developed. Afsaruddin (2013) documents the plurality of early meanings associated with *jihād* and martyrdom. Work on Islamic humanitarian law likewise demonstrates the importance of distinguishing grounds for resorting to force from rules governing conduct after fighting has begun (Al-Dawoody, 2017). This distinction is important for comparative jurisprudence because the legal grounds for initiating conflict must be examined separately from the restrictions governing its conduct.

Existing scholarship has substantially developed contextual and ethical readings of the Qur'anic passages on *jihād* and *qitāl*, but has paid comparatively less attention to the legal reasoning underlying disagreements between classical *madhhabs*. Studies of *jihād* and *qitāl* verses in Indonesia emphasize historical setting, freedom of belief and ethical restraint (Amin & Akmal, 2021; Ruslan, 2022; Wahab et al., 2023). Interpretive work influenced by Abdullah Saeed connects contextualization with the hierarchy of Qur'anic ethico-legal values (Farid et al., 2023; Saeed & Akbar, 2021; Siddiq, 2021). Bakar et al. (2025) compare Hamka and Quraish Shihab, while Taufik et al. (2025) examine institutional counter-narratives in Indonesian thematic exegesis. Despite these contributions, the relationship between classical legal classification, protection of non-combatants, treaty obligations, and the interpretive rules used to reconcile apparently conflicting passages requires further analysis.

Other studies have examined the public presentation of *jihād* and the influence of exegetical genres on the interpretation of conflict-related passages. Studies of the non-

military meanings of *jihād* and the politicization of Qutb's *tafsīr* show how the chosen exegete, genre and conceptual vocabulary can change the question that a text is asked to answer (Arsyad, 2019; Amdahurifky et al., 2022; Hamzah, 2018). Research on Q. 4:94 makes the juridical importance of verifying the status of persons especially salient (Fuadiah et al., 2025; Said et al., 2026). Comparative work on Qur'anic translation further warns that a claim about the connotations of a verse may actually concern the translator's lexical choices rather than the full Arabic interpretive tradition (Rifai et al., 2024; Rosi et al., 2025). These findings provide relevant contextual insights, although they address distinct levels of interpretation. Exegesis, translation, Islamic law and political reception can be placed in dialogue only when each is identified as a separate object of inquiry. Accordingly, claims concerning the positions of premodern jurists are examined against identifiable passages in primary legal sources.

A systematic mapping of 267 Indonesian publications on legal Qur'anic exegesis identified cross-*madhhab* comparison and critical hermeneutics among recurrent research gaps (Amir et al., 2026). That result concerns the distribution of published research, not the frequency of particular juristic positions in medieval texts. Demircigil (2025) further distinguishes the interpretive tasks of *tafsīr* and *fiqh*, underlining why exegetical explanations and legal rulings should be traced as related but non-identical forms of reasoning. Recent case studies of Q. 2:190–193 focus on the occasions and context of revelation (Munir et al., 2025), while genealogical research traces changing meanings attributed to *qitāl* across exegetical periods (Has et al., 2024). These contributions clarify the historical and textual problems but do not replace a source-by-source comparison of the legal premises deployed by the selected *Ḥanafī* and *Shāfiʿī* jurists.

Contemporary Qur'anic hermeneutics has also been informed by the approaches of Fazlur Rahman, Abdullah Saeed, and Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd (Saeed, 2006; Sulaiman, 2023; Umair & Said, 2023). Discussions of power and knowledge explain how interpretive authority may be institutionalized and contested, but neither a Foucauldian frame nor the invocation of 'context' determines the meaning of a juristic rule on its own (Poorghorban, 2023). A legal comparison cannot substitute theoretical preference for a reconstructed argument. It must ask which text is being interpreted, what relevant distinction the jurist makes and what inferential step leads to a specified legal consequence. The present study therefore examines the inferential relationship between scriptural evidence and specific legal rulings, including their subjects, conditions, and exceptions. The distinction between a reading as an interpretive resource and a juristic conclusion is likewise central to Harvey's (2017) study of *Ḥanafī* legal epistemology; his research concerns variant readings rather than conflict verses and is used here for methodological comparison only.

Studies of Islamic law governing warfare help reconstruct legal reasoning within its doctrinal and historical setting. Al-Dawoody (2015) analyzes al-Sarakhsī's treatment of armed force, while Al-Dawoody (2017) distinguishes grounds for fighting from protection during hostilities. Salaymeh (2021) cautions against translating premodern protected categories into a supposedly identical contemporary definition of civilians, and Essawti (2023) further explores *Ḥanafī* restrictions on warfare. These contributions make a specifically comparative exegetical inquiry possible but do not themselves demonstrate how Q. 9:5 and 9:29 function within the distinct arguments of al-Sarakhsī, al-Kāsānī, al-Jaṣṣāṣ and al-Shāfiʿī. This study accordingly reconstructs these inferential steps before proposing a contemporary evaluative procedure. Wardani et al. (2025) identify disagreements among classical schools concerning the theological justifications of warfare, whereas Fikriyati and Fawaid (2022) examine protection of non-combatants in five Indonesian works of *tafsīr*. These studies support distinguishing the grounds of force from rules governing its conduct.

The significance of this gap extends to contemporary debates on the ideological use of religious texts. Research identifies diverse psychological, organizational and political pathways through which ideological commitments develop (Larsen, 2020; McCauley & Moskalenko, 2017; Orsini, 2023). Selectively cited religious texts can function as justificatory resources, but a textual study alone cannot establish that a particular verse caused violent action. Similarly, the existence of a tradition of restrictive exegesis does not demonstrate that exposure to such exegesis prevents violence. For this reason, the present study examines the interpretive claims employed in radicalization discourse rather than treating radicalization as a behavioral outcome measurable through classical legal texts. It considers the potential interpretive mechanisms by which legal qualifications may be omitted while respecting the evidentiary limits of documentary legal research. Wagemakers (2024) additionally warns against conflating non-violent Islamist political projects with violent extremist movements, making terminological precision essential when assessing claims about radicalization.

Against this background, the study addresses three questions. First, how do the linguistic and intertextual contexts of Q. 2:190–193, 8:39, 9:5, and 9:29 shape the interpretation of commands concerning fighting? Second, how do selected *Ḥanafī* and *Shāfiʿī* jurists construct and qualify rulings on the grounds for fighting, protected persons, and treaty relations? Third, how can these findings be incorporated into an integrative hermeneutical framework for assessing contemporary interpretations? The article argues that a valid reading must jointly establish textual warrant, historical scope, legal reasoning and ethical-legal limits. Its theoretical contribution lies in specifying an operational framework for comparative interpretation, while its application to contemporary

radicalization discourse remains a matter of analytical relevance rather than empirical verification.

Methods

This study employed qualitative documentary research combining doctrinal legal analysis, close Qur'anic interpretation and comparative *fiqh*. Its object was the construction of legal meaning in selected *Ḥanafī* and *Shāfiʿī* texts, not the attitudes or conduct of contemporary respondents. No interviews, surveys, focus-group discussions or field observations were undertaken. References to empirical radicalization studies are therefore treated as previously published evidence about discursive practices, not as primary field data collected for this article. The research distinguishes the historical explanation of a juristic rule from the separate question of its present legal or ethical applicability.

The primary Qur'anic corpus comprised Q. 2:190–193, 8:39, 9:5, and 9:29. The verses were selected for their direct relevance to the legal grounds, scope, and restrictions of armed fighting and their prominence in classical exegetical and juristic discussion. Other passages—particularly Q. 2:256, 4:90, 4:94, 8:61, 9:4, 9:6, 9:7, 9:12–13, 22:39–40, 47:4 and 60:8–9—serve as contextual controls, not as additional cases yielding equally detailed comparisons. This distinction between primary and supporting passages establishes the boundaries of the corpus and avoids treating every cited verse as an equally analyzed case. The study does not attempt to inventory all conflict-related verses or infer statistical patterns from their distribution.

The primary legal materials were al-Sarakhsī's *al-Mabsūṭ* (vol. 10, *Kitāb al-siyar*, *Bāb muʿāmalat al-jaysh maʿa al-kuffār*); al-Kāsānī's *Badāʾiʿ al-ṣanāʾiʿ* (*Kitāb al-siyar*, section on persons who may or may not be killed); al-Jaṣṣāṣ's *Aḥkām al-Qurʾān* (commentary on Q. 9:29 and *jizyah*); and al-Shāfiʿī's *al-Umm* (*Kitāb al-ḥukm fī qitāl al-mushrikīn*, including sections on captives and *amān*). Al-Ṭabarī and al-Qurṭubī were examined on Q. 9:5 and its surrounding stipulations, with Ibn Rushd used as a comparative secondary witness to the doctrinal tradition. These are purposively selected textual loci, not an exhaustive inventory of either school. Digital transcriptions were used to locate and cross-check passages; page numbers are given only when the identified edition supports them.

Analysis proceeded in five operations. First, the unit of comparison was a specified Qur'anic clause or juristic passage, identified by author, work and chapter. Second, the passages were coded for the basis of the fighting rule, the persons to whom it applies, exceptional protections, treaty and safe-conduct provisions, public authority, and the legally recognized condition for stopping force. Third, like legal questions were compared across *Ḥanafī* and *Shāfiʿī* sources; differences between combat, capture, and political

settlement were not collapsed into a single question. Fourth, claims of *naskh* were distinguished from *takhṣīṣ* and context-dependent application by consulting classical exegetical arguments. Fifth, the four-dimensional procedure was tested against Q. 9:5 and 9:29. A conclusion was retained only if supported by its identified textual warrant; otherwise its limits are stated explicitly.

Interpretive credibility was strengthened through source triangulation and negative-case analysis. The legal claims attributed to al-Sarakhsī were compared with al-Kāsānī; statements concerning Q. 9:29 were examined against both al-Jaṣṣāṣ and al-Shāfiʿī; and broad claims about Q. 9:5 were checked against al-Ṭabarī and al-Qurṭubī. Differences between an author's position, a later doctrinal formulation and a statement about an entire school were kept explicit. The analysis also separated descriptions of classical public law, modern legal requirements and ethical evaluation, avoiding the assumption that the three are identical.

The analysis also examined counterexamples that might qualify or contradict an initial interpretation. When a proposed generalization conflicts with an adjacent verse, a protected category in a juristic passage or a recognized treaty condition, the claim is either narrowed or the tension is reported rather than silently resolved. For example, Q. 9:5 is not classified as unrestricted merely because its central imperative is forceful, and Q. 2:190 is not transformed into a total history of Islamic war merely because it includes a restrictive condition. This procedure helped limit selective use of evidence and avoid conclusions driven by predetermined contemporary positions. Within this design, integration refers to the systematic examination of textual, historical, juristic, and ethical-legal constraints while recognizing their distinct evidentiary functions.

Result and Discussion

A bounded Qur'anic corpus: commands, restrictions and treaty contexts

The analysis of Q. 2:190 indicates that its command concerning fighting is accompanied by a prohibition against transgression. The imperative therefore occurs in a construction that includes both an object and a limit. The adjacent verses address the movement of fighting in relation to expulsion, persecution and the cessation of hostility, while Q. 22:39–40 associates permission to fight with wrong suffered and expulsion. Read together, these passages limit the grounds for fighting and do not establish religious difference alone as sufficient authorization to attack individuals. That result, however, is not identical to a historical claim that all later jurists regarded every possible war as responsive only to an immediately preceding attack. Such an inference would shift without argument from the scope of one verse to the entire classical doctrine of warfare (Siddiq, 2021; Ruslan, 2022; Al-Dawoody, 2017). A focused analysis of al-Qurṭubī on Q. 2:190–193

similarly emphasizes the need to connect legal meanings to the verses' circumstances of revelation rather than treating these statements as context-free rules (Munir et al., 2025).

The phrases *ḥattā lā takūna fitnah* in Q. 2:193 and 8:39 add an important semantic and legal problem. *Fitnah* is neither a self-interpreting synonym for modern persecution nor uniformly reducible to unbelief in every transmitted explanation. Al-Ṭabarī records interpretive traditions that must be distinguished from subsequent juristic inferences (al-Ṭabarī, 2001). The analytical issue is thus twofold: what meaning the commentator considers textually and historically justified, and what further premise a jurist employs when translating that meaning into a general rule of public law. A reading that equates *fitnah* exclusively with oppression should explain classical counter-evidence; a reading that equates it exclusively with religious difference must likewise address surrounding restrictions. The finding is a controlled range of interpretations, not a predetermined defensive or expansionist result (Siddiq, 2021; Jafar & Amrullah, 2019). The longer history of shifts in exegetical emphasis is described by Has et al. (2024); this genealogical observation does not establish a uniform legal position across *Ḥanafī* and *Shāfiʿī* authors.

The surrounding sequence of Q. 9:5 is essential to identifying its legal objects. Q. 9:4 preserves treaties with parties who observe their commitments, Q. 9:6 guarantees protection and safe conveyance to a person seeking refuge, and Q. 9:7 requires continued treaty fidelity. Al-Ṭabarī explicitly rejects the inference that the expiration of the specified period licenses killing every polytheist, citing continuing agreements as a counterexample (al-Ṭabarī, 2001, commentary on 9:4–7). This does not establish that every jurist interpreted the fighting command in a narrowly defensive sense; it establishes that the command is not hermeneutically self-sufficient. The apparent severity of Q. 9:5 must be read together with the precise beneficiaries of exceptions, the historical treaty setting and the contested debate over *naskh*.

Q. 9:29 is juridically distinct from Q. 9:5. The text addresses fighting a specified category of People of the Book until a *jizyah* settlement is established; it does not make conversion the sole named means of terminating hostilities. Neither does this permit a modern reader to describe the classical arrangement simply as neutral taxation. Al-Jaṣṣāṣ reads the verse as a legal basis for taking *jizyah* and elaborates its differentiated confessional and political significance in *Aḥkām al-Qurʾān* (vol. 4, *Bāb akhdh al-jizyah min ahl al-kitāb*). Al-Shāfiʿī similarly distinguishes idolaters, from whom he does not accept *jizyah* in the cited formulation, from belligerent People of the Book, whose payment changes their protection and legal treatment (al-Shāfiʿī, 1990, *Kitāb al-ḥukm fī qitāl al-mushrikīn*). The text therefore cannot support a universal demand for religious conversion, but its historical conception of political subordination also cannot be replaced without argument by the modern principle of equal citizenship. Contemporary discussion of the

relationship between classical *jizyah* and modern minority rights is similarly differentiated rather than uniform (Wagemakers, 2024); such debate does not determine what al-Jaṣṣāṣ or al-Shāfiʿī originally meant.

Taken together, the four principal passages indicate that the interpretation of conflict verses requires several distinct grammatical and legal operations. A reader must identify the referent of a conditional or reciprocal command, decide whether an apparently general instruction is contextually specified, and determine whether an outcome clause defines cessation of warfare, political settlement or religious adherence. Treating every occurrence of *qitāl* as the same kind of rule suppresses these differences. It also obscures the distinction between the Qurʾān's discourse and the later juridical machinery constructed from Qurʾān, *Sunnah*, treaty practice and juristic analogy. The comparative method adopted here keeps those levels analytically related but separate; that separation is necessary for both historical fidelity and a responsible contemporary application.

Ḥanafī and *Shāfiʿī* reasoning: the ground of liability and limits of participation

A more directly comparable passage occurs in al-Sarakhsī's treatment of military encounters in *Kitāb al-siyar*. When discussing an army's duty to convey the Islamic summons before fighting a population not previously addressed, al-Sarakhsī contrasts the juristic rationale of his school with that attributed to an opponent: *al-qitāl ... li-l-muḥārabah*, rather than *li-l-shirk* (al-Sarakhsī, 1993, vol. 10, *Bāb muʿāmalat al-jaysh maʿa al-kuffār*, p. 30). The point appears in a dispute about notice, inviolability and legal liability, so the formulation cannot simply be converted into a claim that all *Ḥanafī* warfare was defensive in the modern sense. It does, however, supply an explicit *Ḥanafī* inferential contrast concerning the ground of fighting, rather than requiring the argument to be reconstructed indirectly from a discussion of apostasy.

Al-Kāsānī provides an important internal check. In *Badāʾiʿ al-ṣanāʾiʿ*, he distinguishes persons ordinarily outside the class of those capable of fighting from those considered *ahl al-qitāl*, while allowing that participation, advice or military direction may change the treatment of a normally exempt person. His categories are not equivalent to proof that a person actually participated in a specific hostile act. Indeed, he allows historically broad liability for some persons considered eligible to fight even when no individual fighting has been established (al-Kāsānī, 1986, vol. 7, *Kitāb al-siyar*, *Faṣl fī bayān man yaḥill qatlu-hu*). Consequently, the *Ḥanafī* emphasis on *muḥārabah* requires a distinction between the rationale of the rule, presumed military capacity and actual participation. This qualification prevents the mistaken binary that *Ḥanafī* jurists targeted only actual attackers while *Shāfiʿī* jurists targeted all non-Muslims.

Al-Shāfiʿī's *al-Umm* supplies a comparative argument about both the initiation of fighting and the legal treatment of persons captured. In *Kitāb al-ḥukm fī qitāl al-mushrikīn*, he cites Q. 9:5 when discussing fighting idolaters and Q. 9:29 when distinguishing People of the Book who may remain under a *jizyah* arrangement. His reasoning also differentiates adult male enemies from women and minors and allocates specified decisions on captives to the *imām* (al-Shāfiʿī, 1990, *Kitāb al-ḥukm fī qitāl al-mushrikīn*; sections *Fī al-saby* and *Al-saby yuqtal*). These propositions establish neither unrestricted violence nor an absolute individual right to implement classical public law. They do indicate that adult male enemy status could have legal consequences beyond documented personal combat, whereas the jurist expressly recognizes protected categories and institutional decision-making.

The strongest comparison therefore concerns how each jurist moves from a legal category to the permissibility of fighting. Al-Sarakhsī expressly distinguishes belligerence from unbelief in an argument concerning the legal ground of force; al-Kāsānī shows that this premise operates through classifications of capacity and participation; and al-Shāfiʿī derives distinct consequences from the status of idolaters, belligerent People of the Book and adult male enemies. The difference is neither that one school endorses purely reactive violence nor that the other rejects all restraints. Their doctrinal settings also differ: initiation of warfare, rules of targeting and treatment after capture are related but non-identical legal questions. A sound comparison states the operative legal question before comparing the answers (Al-Dawoody, 2015; Essawti, 2023).

Restrictions on women and children constitute an important convergence, but their doctrinal bases and exceptions warrant scrutiny. Al-Kāsānī excludes a wider group, including some infirm persons and secluded religious figures, while recognizing categories of effective military assistance; al-Shāfiʿī forbids deliberate killing of women and minors in the relevant passages and recognizes differentiated treatment of prisoners. These sources do not support collapsing every person outside the battlefield into a single, transhistorical civilian class. Nor may historically recognized categories of legal vulnerability be treated as permission for indiscriminate contemporary violence. Salaymeh (2021) demonstrates why civilian protection under modern international humanitarian law must be evaluated on its own terms, rather than projected uncritically onto premodern jurisprudential distinctions. Comparative research on Indonesian exegesis confirms that protection of non-combatants and restrictions on warfare methods deserve separate attention from justifications for initiating war (Fikriyati & Fawaid, 2022).

A final comparison concerns public authorization and cessation. Al-Shāfiʿī's legal discussion assumes decisions over prisoners and the treatment of political groups by the *imām*; the *Ḥanafī* corpus likewise concerns institutional warfare rather than autonomous coercion by individuals. Both bodies of law treat protected status and termination as

matters of legal classification and procedure. Yet Q. 9:29 also shows substantive asymmetry: the historically accepted *jizyah* outcome does not establish equal confessional status in the classical polity. The comparison therefore documents constraints without idealizing medieval law, and preserves the essential distinction between reasons for using force, permissible conduct during conflict and political conditions for ending hostilities (Al-Dawoody, 2017; Essawti, 2023).

Table 1. Comparative legal findings grounded in identified classical passages

Analytical question	*Ḥanafī* sources	*Shāfiʿī* source	Comparative finding
Ground of fighting	al-Sarakhsī relates *qitāl* to *muḥārabah* in a dispute over summons and inviolability	al-Shāfiʿī differentiates polytheists and belligerent People of the Book under Q. 9:5 and 9:29	Different legal warrants; neither reduces to a single unconditional school-wide rule
Persons eligible for force	al-Kāsānī distinguishes *ahl al-qitāl* and ordinarily excluded persons; capacity may matter without actual fighting	*al-Umm* treats adult male enemy status differently from women and minors	Not simply actual aggression versus religious identity
Protected persons	Women, children and several others excluded, subject to the jurist's detailed participation rules	Women and children protected; specific captivity rules distinguish adult men	Common protection, different subcategories and exceptions
Treaty and settlement	al-Jaṣṣāṣ recognizes *jizyah* and its hierarchical political implications	*al-Umm* explicitly associates People of the Book with *jizyah* as a legal cessation condition	Neither verse automatically requires universal conversion
Authority and present scope	Classical *siyar* assumes a public order and established legal categories	The *imām* determines specified prisoner and settlement matters	Historical public law cannot become private contemporary permission

Table 1 compares like legal questions across identifiable chapters rather than treating the schools as homogeneous positions. It establishes a qualified contrast in the ground of fighting and the classification of adult enemy men, alongside common restrictions on protected persons and a shared presumption of public legal authority. Importantly, the table does not imply that the *Ḥanafī* category *ahl al-qitāl* means actual fighting in every instance, or that al-Shāfiʿī allowed the intentional targeting of women and

children. The doctrinal distinction concerns the juridical warrant and its exceptions, not an unqualified opposition between peaceful and violent schools.

General commands, treaty protections and the limits of abrogation

The designation *āyat al-sayf* is not itself evidence that Q. 9:5 legally cancels every earlier command emphasizing restraint. A claim of *naskh* needs a specified earlier ruling, demonstrable incompatibility, and a defensible sequence of revelation. *Takhṣīṣ*, by contrast, narrows the persons or cases governed by a general text; contextual differentiation permits distinct commands to govern distinct political situations. These are not interchangeable explanations. Classical exegesis preserves significant disagreement, including opinions that broad fighting commands abrogate earlier permissions for patience and opinions that wartime verses and prisoner regulations remain operative together (al-Qurṭubī, 1964, commentary on 9:5; Burton, 1985). Recent discussions of gradual legislation and conflicting commands likewise caution against treating an asserted chronology as a substitute for an argument (Chalik et al., 2025; Muna, 2026). Recent research documents variation in how classical exegetes apply *naskh* (Adhani et al., 2025), while Azhary et al. (2026) explicitly prioritize harmonization and contextual evaluation over premature declarations of abrogation. These studies are contemporary methodological comparisons, not positions attributed retrospectively to every classical exegete.

Al-Ṭabarī's treatment of the treaty sequence is especially significant. In his discussion of Q. 9:4, he distinguishes those who had broken an agreement from those whose agreements had not been violated, then directly rejects the suggestion that Q. 9:5 requires every polytheist to be killed regardless of treaty status (al-Ṭabarī, 2001, commentary on 9:4–7). This is a positive exegetical finding, not merely a modern contextual preference. Verse 9:6 simultaneously supplies a distinct protection for an individual seeking safety. A claim that Q. 9:5 automatically abrogates these provisions would therefore need to answer direct evidence within the same sequence. It cannot obtain the conclusion by isolating the imperative from the surrounding *sūrah*.

Al-Qurṭubī records a different configuration of disagreement. In explaining Q. 9:5 and Q. 47:4, he reports views that one passage abrogates the other and the alternative that both are operative; he favors their continued operation, noting the Prophet's differing treatment of captives (al-Qurṭubī, 1964, commentary on 9:5). This dispute concerns wartime detention, release and related permissions, not simply whether peaceful relations in all cases were annulled. The exegetical record thus contains both broad abrogation claims and internal qualifications, demonstrating why it is methodologically misleading either to deny the existence of maximalist classical readings

or to treat them as the only historically defensible position. The modern dispute over 'peace' and 'sword' verses must identify precisely which legal relation is contested (Luthfiyah & Khuluq, 2024).

Q. 9:29 raises a related but separate question. It does not use the same addressees or termination clause as Q. 9:5: the explicit *jizyah* outcome establishes a differentiated political-legal arrangement for the relevant People of the Book. Al-Jaṣṣāṣ discusses the verse as a basis for imposing *jizyah* and relates the arrangement to broader juridical and theological assumptions, while al-Shāfiʿī distinguishes the legal position of belligerent People of the Book from that of idolaters (al-Jaṣṣāṣ, n.d., vol. 4, pp. 282–299; al-Shāfiʿī, 1990). A rigorous comparison need not erase the inequity of premodern confessional subordination. It should distinguish such historical description from a current legal justification, since the operative authority, law of citizenship and treaty obligations have changed.

The relevant controls are wider than chronological sequence. Q. 4:94 requires verification in cases of uncertain status, Q. 8:61 addresses an inclination toward peace, and Q. 60:8–9 describes justice and fair treatment toward persons not engaged in hostility. These passages have different immediate settings; their significance is not that every rule of classical *siyar* can be retroactively interpreted as a modern individual right. Rather, they rebut the unsupported proposition that the Qurʾān authorizes an undifferentiated attack on religious outsiders. The distinction among specification, coexistence and abrogation must be supported by the exegete's stated reasoning and by a defined legal question (Siddiq, 2021; Abdelnour, 2023).

The resulting finding is a differentiated landscape of classical interpretation. Al-Ṭabarī gives explicit interpretive weight to treaty continuity in the immediate context of Q. 9:5; al-Qurṭubī preserves competing abrogation claims while preferring coexistence of particular prisoner-related rules; and the *fiqh* sources translate different scriptural clauses into distinct categories of public law. This is more informative than simply asserting that 'sword verses' are either universally abrogating or wholly harmless. The proposed integrative approach uses these disagreements as traceable evidence and specifies the narrow question each argument answers, while declining to turn modern ethical agreement into a purported consensus of medieval exegetes (Burton, 1985; Chalik et al., 2025; Muna, 2026). Pratama and Hakim (2025) illustrate a recent maqāṣid-based attempt to reconstruct conflict verses as a response to extremist appropriation; the present inquiry differs by retaining medieval legal asymmetries even when they complicate a uniformly defensive narrative.

An integrative hermeneutical procedure and two worked applications

Based on the comparative findings, this study proposes an integrative hermeneutical procedure comprising four interconnected dimensions. Dimension one is textual control: identify the relevant Arabic clause, lexical alternatives, grammatical scope, addressees, conditions and immediate relations among verses. Dimension two is historical and intertextual control: assess what can reasonably be established about circumstances of revelation, treaty relationships, related Qur'anic evidence, Prophetic practice and reported historical developments. Dimension three is comparative *madhhab* reasoning: reconstruct how each selected jurist moves from evidence to legal classification, distinguishing personal attribution, school transmission and later interpretation. Dimension four is ethical-legal evaluation: test whether the proposed present use respects protections, authority, proportionality, justice, current legal obligations and the limits of historical analogy. Each dimension performs a distinct analytical function, allowing textual interpretation and legal evaluation to be connected without treating all forms of evidence as interchangeable. The procedure also reflects Demircigil's (2025) caution that juristic exegesis lies at the intersection of textual interpretation and legal systematization, which must not be collapsed into a single interpretive operation.

This procedure addresses a limitation of general integrative approaches by specifying how interpretive claims are assessed at successive stages of analysis. Here, the first two dimensions establish what the scripture can plausibly be taken to address; the third explains how classical jurists constructed and disputed legal consequences; and the fourth assesses what a contemporary reader may responsibly infer. The sequence is intended as an analytical procedure rather than as a universal theory of Qur'anic meaning. New contextual information may lead to returning to the text or juristic record, but any revision must be stated and supported. A discourse analysis of selective quotation is possible as a cross-cutting diagnostic, yet without a contemporary discourse corpus it is not presented as an independently executed empirical method.

Table 2. Four-dimensional interpretive audit and minimum evidence

Dimension	Question	Evidence required	Unacceptable shortcut
Textual	What does the verse say, to whom and subject to what limits?	Arabic wording, syntax and contiguous verses	Isolating one imperative from its exceptions
Historical and intertextual	Which conflict, treaty or legal situation is identifiable?	Context with warranted historical claims and other relevant verses	Assuming one episode explains all times

Comparative legal	Which jurist derived what ruling, and by which argument?	Identified primary passages and differentiation of school positions	Attributing one opinion to an entire *madhhab*
Ethical-legal	What follows, and what does not follow, for present claims?	Protection, public authority, proportionality and lawful jurisdiction	Converting medieval public law into private permission

Application to Q. 9:5 begins with its forceful imperative and its conditional termination clause. Textual control does not soften this wording but requires it to be read beside 9:4, 9:6–7 and 9:12–13. The historical-intertextual stage identifies the treaty relationships and distinct guarantees of safety. At the comparative stage, al-Ṭabarī's rejection of indiscriminate extension to treaty-holders supplies an identifiable exegetical counterexample, while al-Kāsānī's protected-person categories and al-Shāfiʿī's treatment of women, children and public authority show that a general command was not understood to eliminate every legal differentiation. The resulting judgment is therefore determinate: a claim authorizing any private actor to attack an individual solely because the person is non-Muslim fails the treaty, protected-person and institutional-authority tests. This conclusion does not require pretending that all premodern interpretations were exclusively defensive; it shows where an unrestricted modern inference outruns its textual and juristic warrants.

The *naskh* check produces a further result. Al-Qurṭubī records conflicting opinions about Q. 9:5 and prisoner regulations, whereas al-Ṭabarī identifies ongoing obligations within the treaty sequence. A universal repeal claim is therefore not a direct quotation from a unanimous exegetical tradition. It is a contested construction that must identify its exact earlier object, later authority, and reason for excluding coexistence or specification. The contribution of the model is to make this burden of proof explicit. It does not declare a later Qur'anic command ineffective merely because its language appears difficult for contemporary readers.

Application to Q. 9:29 yields a different legal profile. Textually, the verse specifies People of the Book and makes *jizyah* a named condition for ending the relevant fighting, rather than religious conversion as its sole outcome. Historically, it belongs to the public law of relations among differentiated political and religious communities. At the *Ḥanafī* legal stage, al-Jaṣṣāṣ treats *jizyah* as a recognized settlement while also articulating its hierarchical and disciplinary character; al-Kāsānī's classification of persons eligible for fighting supplies a separate conduct-related limit. At the *Shāfiʿī* stage, al-Shāfiʿī identifies belligerent People of the Book as a category from whom *jizyah* may be accepted and states that payment prevents further killing or coercion to adopt another religion. The contrast is not a disagreement over whether the verse contains *jizyah* but a difference in juristic

elaboration and scope. The final ethical-legal assessment distinguishes this historical settlement from modern citizenship and IHL: the verse neither requires universal conversion nor authorizes individuals to exact taxes or exercise force in contemporary society (al-Jaṣṣāṣ, n.d.; al-Shāfiʿī, 1990; Salaymeh, 2021).

Taken together, the cases produce two non-identical outcomes. Q. 9:5 is constrained by demonstrable treaty continuity, asylum and protected-person qualifications; Q. 9:29 presupposes a distinct historical settlement involving religiously differentiated public status. A model that merely translates both verses into the same generic message of peace would erase the very legal differences that comparative jurisprudence should explain. The four-dimensional procedure instead makes a legal assertion defeasible at each stage: missing context, misattributed juristic authority, conflation of protected categories, or an unsupported transfer of historical public law to private action requires the claim to be revised or rejected. This is a methodological contribution, not a claim that exegesis alone determines contemporary violence.

Contemporary radicalization discourse: relevance and evidentiary limits

Empirical research on extremist media documents selective scriptural citation without permitting a monocausal account of radicalization. Frissen et al. (2018) examined the Qur'anic references in fifteen issues of *Dabiq*, while Spier (2018) studied citation patterns in its first fourteen issues. Jacoby (2019, 2024) further examined how these magazines employed Qur'anic material and classical interpretive authority to construct in-group and out-group claims. Such studies provide an independently documented discursive setting for the present legal analysis, but their corpus findings are not recoded here and are not proof that any single verse causes violence. McCauley and Moskalenko (2017) distinguish radicalization of opinion from action, while Larsen (2020) and Orsini (2023) highlight organizational and psychological processes. The present contribution is limited to testing the documentary legitimacy of interpretive claims. Recent Indonesian studies discuss Qur'anic interpretations of *jihād* and their appropriation in extremist justifications (Amir et al., 2025; Irfanda, 2022). Their normative and legal arguments do not themselves establish an empirically measured pathway from interpretation to violent behaviour. This study therefore evaluates documented claims rather than assigning causal effects to scriptural interpretation.

Jacoby's (2024) documentary analysis supplies a concrete instance of the problem that the present framework is designed to assess. Across *Dabiq* and *Rumiyah*, he records sixteen citations of Q. 9:5, seven of which omit the latter portion concerning repentance; Q. 9:6, with its protection for a person seeking refuge, appears only twice. These counts belong to Jacoby's published corpus, not to new data collected here. Their significance lies

in the asymmetry between frequently quoted fighting language and rarely quoted nearby qualifications, rather than proof that the cited verse independently produces violence. Applied to such a documented claim, the four-dimensional framework asks whether a quotation is complete, whether binding treaties and refuge are considered, how the cited juristic ruling addresses protected persons, and what recognized institution could lawfully implement the asserted rule. Frissen et al. (2018) and Spier (2018) independently confirm the wider relevance of selective referencing practices, while Taufik et al. (2025) examine institutional counter-discourse in Indonesia.

These findings suggest several implications for the teaching and public interpretation of Qur'anic conflict verses. First, pedagogical materials can replace isolated injunctions with comparative reading that makes conditionality and disagreement visible. Second, teachers can distinguish scriptural text, scholarly interpretation, institutional decision and current law, reducing the risk that participants mistake an exegetical possibility for an individually executable command. Third, the historical analysis supplies a more credible response to ideological absolutism than asserting that classical Islamic law knew no meaningful disagreement or no forms of historically offensive warfare. It is precisely a candid account of juristic diversity, restraint and historical difference that permits rigorous critique of selective readings. These proposals represent potential educational applications rather than interventions evaluated in this study (Afsaruddin, 2013; Saeed & Akbar, 2021).

This article offers a bounded comparison, not a comprehensive history of either school. Although al-Kāsānī and al-Jaṣṣāṣ extend the original primary-source base, later *Shāfiʿī* doctrinal developments and the full manuscript histories of the cited texts are outside the present corpus. The analysis is sufficient to identify specific differences in juristic premises and shared constraints, but not to declare a unitary doctrine for every *Ḥanafī* or *Shāfiʿī* authority. The study also does not independently code modern propaganda, test reception among readers or measure prevention effects. These delimitations qualify the scope of the proposed framework rather than undermining its use as a documentary legal audit.

Further research could examine the proposed framework using a systematically selected corpus of contemporary sermons, digital religious content, and ideological publications. Such a study should define selection and sampling procedures, code whether a quotation includes nearby restrictions, document intercoder agreement, and distinguish generic rhetorical radicalism from explicit legitimation of violence. It could then test whether an educational intervention changes interpretive judgments without assuming that changed judgments predict behavioral outcomes. Historical-juristic studies and empirical studies would thus complement each other while preserving methodological

boundaries. Until those data exist, the contribution of the present study remains an evidence-based legal and hermeneutical audit framework.

Contemporary ethical-legal assessment must be analytically separate from classical doctrine. The historical categories of women, children, monks, adult men and captives do not correspond one-to-one to current international humanitarian law classifications, as Salaymeh (2021) demonstrates. Modern obligations concerning distinction, humane treatment and the prohibition of unlawful attacks apply through the contemporary legal systems governing the relevant conflict; their validity is not dependent on whether the same terminology appears in a medieval text. Comparative IHL scholarship documents both shared restraints and material differences (Al-Dawoody & Murphy, 2019; Al-Dawoody & Thynne, 2024; Al-Dawoody & Rodenhäuser, 2026). The framework therefore reconstructs the classical position first, then asks whether a modern claim has legal authorization and how persons protected under current law must be treated. A general Qur'anic citation does not replace those institutional and legal requirements. The gulf between a premodern confessional settlement and modern minority-rights claims is illustrated in contemporary scholarship on non-violent political Islam as well (Wagemakers, 2024).

Finally, the findings underline the need to distinguish the study of religious interpretation from the assessment of individual participation in political violence. The pathways described in scholarship on global radicalism and root causes include political opportunity, group dynamics, experienced injustice and organizational networks, not solely interpretive disagreement (Mahfud et al., 2018; Larsen, 2020; McCauley & Moskalenko, 2017). A scriptural argument may supply a vocabulary of justification while remaining insufficient to explain why one audience rejects violence and another embraces it. The present model can detect missing contextual and legal qualifications in an argument; it cannot identify an individual as a threat, classify an entire school as radical or predict an act of violence. This restraint is a positive feature of the research design because it keeps claims proportional to the material actually examined.

Conclusion

The comparative analysis demonstrates that the selected Qur'anic fighting passages cannot be reduced either to an unrestricted command against religious outsiders or to a uniform defensive doctrine affirmed by all premodern jurists. *Ḥanafī* jurists al-Sarakhsī and al-Kāsānī emphasize belligerence and legal capacity in different contexts, while al-Shāfiʿī distinguishes adult male enemy status and the differentiated legal consequences of Q. 9:5 and 9:29. Al-Jaṣṣāṣ elaborates the legal and hierarchical meaning of *jizyah*. These positions are not a simple opposition between two homogeneous schools.

Across the selected texts, rules about who may be fought, who is protected, how agreements operate and who may exercise coercive authority remain analytically distinct.

The four-dimensional hermeneutical procedure makes these distinctions reviewable through textual examination, historical and intertextual controls, comparison of attributed legal arguments, and separately stated contemporary ethical-legal assessment. Applied to Q. 9:5, it identifies treaty and asylum provisions that an unrestricted interpretation must explain; applied to Q. 9:29, it identifies a historically specific *jizyah* settlement rather than a universal conversion requirement. The main contribution is therefore a transparent way of testing legal claims, not an empirically demonstrated means of preventing radicalization. Its limits include the selective classical corpus and reliance on previously published empirical studies for the modern discourse context. Future work should extend the *Shāfiʿī* comparative record and systematically apply the framework to contemporary reception data.

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The authors declare no competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have influenced this work.

Declaration of the use of AI

The authors declare that ChatGPT (OpenAI) was used solely for language refinement, improving the readability of selected sentences, and assisting with transliteration. All intellectual contributions, research findings, interpretations, and conclusions remain the sole responsibility of the authors.

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