



# ISLAMIC POLITICAL ECONOMY IN FOREST RESOURCE MANAGEMENT: AN ANALYSIS OF DEFORESTATION AND ILLEGAL LOGGING IN INDONESIA

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## Abstract :

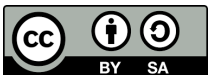
Indonesia, with its rich tropical forests, faces serious threats from deforestation and illegal logging, impacting both the environment and society. This article analyzes the problems of deforestation and illegal logging in Indonesia through the lens of Islamic political economy. By examining the ecological and socio-economic impacts, as well as weaknesses in forest governance, this research offers solutions based on Islamic values. The concepts of ownership (milkiyyah) as a trust (amanah), the principle of public interest (maslaha), and the role of humans as vicegerents (khalifah) on earth serve as the ethical foundation. Empirical data reveal an alarming rate of deforestation, even within legal concession areas. Proposed solutions include fair law enforcement, community-based oversight (hisbah), Islamic environmental education, local economic empowerment, public policies based on maslaha, and the utilization of Islamic financial instruments such as green sukuk. This article concludes that the deforestation crisis is not merely a technical issue, but also an ethical and spiritual crisis demanding comprehensive transformation based on Islamic teachings to achieve sustainable forest management.

**Keywords :** Islamic Political Economy, Deforestation, Illegal Logging, Forest Management, Indonesia.

## INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is renowned as one of the world's richest countries in terms of biodiversity, possessing tropical forests that play a crucial role in global ecological balance and domestic livelihood sustainability. In 2020, Indonesia still retained approximately 94 million hectares of natural forest (Badan Pusat Statistik, 2021). However, this natural wealth continues to face serious threats from the rapid pace of massive deforestation and illegal logging, which have caused highly detrimental environmental and social impacts.

The issue of deforestation is not merely the loss of forest cover; rather, it is a direct trigger for various natural disasters, such as flash floods and landslides, which frequently devastate regions across Indonesia. The appearance of logs during flood events, particularly in Sumatra, serves as a strong indicator of uncontrolled illegal logging activities. Reports indicate that the deforestation rate in Sumatra during the 2021-2022 period reached 39,899.9 hectares, an alarming figure that exacerbates ecosystem vulnerability (Indonesia Forest Watch, 2023). Ironically, approximately 60% of this total forest loss occurred within concession areas that are legally mandated to be managed under



principles of sustainability and strict oversight (World Resources Institute & Global Forest Watch, 2022). This condition highlights the weaknesses in the existing forest monitoring and governance systems, where concession permits are often misused for short-term economic gains without considering environmental impacts and public interest (maslaha).

Therefore, a holistic and ethical approach is required to address this issue, specifically through the lens of Islamic political economy. This approach offers a framework of values and sustainable solutions rooted in the principles of Islamic environmental ethics.

Problem Statemen : 1. How do the ecological impacts of deforestation and illegal logging affect ecosystem balance from the perspective of Islamic environmental ethics, considering the concept of ownership (milkiyyah) and the human role as vicegerents (khalifah) on earth? 2. What are the socio-economic impacts of deforestation on communities, and how does Islam view the equitable distribution of natural resources and public interest (maslaha) in forest resource management? 3. How can solutions based on Islamic values be implemented to address deforestation and illegal logging in Indonesia to prevent natural disasters, by integrating Islamic principles into forest management policies and practices?

## **RESEARCH METHOD**

This research employs a qualitative approach using literature review and conceptual analysis methods. Data were collected from various sources, including government reports, scientific journals, non-governmental organization publications, as well as primary and secondary religious texts related to Islamic political economy and environmental ethics.

The analytical framework is based on three main aspects: Ecological Aspect: This involves analyzing forest ecosystem degradation and biodiversity loss, and their correlation with the increasing frequency and intensity of natural disasters. This analysis is integrated with the perspective of Islamic environmental ethics, particularly the concept of ownership (milkiyyah) and the human role as vicegerents (khalifah) on earth (QS. Al-Baqarah [2]: 30).

Socio-Economic Aspect: This examines the negative impacts of deforestation on indigenous and local communities, including the loss of livelihoods, infrastructure damage, unequal distribution of natural resources, and the increased economic burden resulting from disasters. Islamic perspectives on the justice of natural resource distribution and public interest (maslaha) in forest management serve as the foundation for this analysis (Siddiqi, 2001; Mirakhor & Askari, 2017).

Ethical-Religious Aspect: This discusses violations of Islamic environmental ethical values, including the concept of trust (amanah), the principle of public interest (maslaha), and the human role as vicegerents (khalifah) who are supposed to safeguard nature (Hasan, 2010; Muhaimin, 2012).

Subsequently, empirical data concerning deforestation and illegal logging

in Indonesia will be presented and analyzed within the theoretical framework of Islamic political economy. From this analysis, solutions based on Islamic values will be proposed to address these issues.

## **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

Empirical Conditions and Data on Deforestation in Indonesia, despite ongoing conservation efforts, empirical evidence indicates that deforestation and illegal logging remain serious challenges in Indonesia. According to reports from the Ministry of Environment and Forestry of Indonesia, the country's net deforestation rate for the 2019–2020 period reached 115.4 thousand hectares (KLHK, 2021). Although a declining trend had been observed in preceding years, this figure remains a significant concern. Incidents of forest degradation and their associated impacts continue to be documented, particularly in Sumatra.

A tangible manifestation of this issue can be observed in recurrent floods and landslides across various regions of Sumatra, often accompanied by large volumes of timber debris. For instance, flash floods in Pesisir Selatan, West Sumatra, as well as in several districts in Jambi and Riau, are frequently characterized by accumulations of logs, indicating upstream illegal logging activities. This phenomenon is not merely coincidental but represents a direct consequence of forest cover loss within watershed areas (DAS), as also reported by Indonesia Forest Watch (2023).

In terms of law enforcement, the government, through KLHK and related authorities, has undertaken various measures. Within a certain period, at least 11 legal entities (both corporate and individual actors) were identified and prosecuted for activities contributing to forest cover disturbance, including illegal logging and encroachment (KLHK, 2023). Nevertheless, the magnitude of the problem necessitates more comprehensive and integrated interventions.

On the other hand, forest and land rehabilitation (RHL) programs continue to be implemented. KLHK has set a rehabilitation target of 217.9 thousand hectares for 2024 (KLHK, 2023). Over the past decade, the average annual rehabilitation has reached approximately 230 thousand hectares (KLHK, 2024), reflecting a strong commitment alongside persistent challenges in restoring ecological functions. These data underscore that the rate of degradation often outpaces recovery efforts, thereby requiring more effective and value-based preventive strategies.

Conceptual Framework of Islamic Political Economy, Islamic political economy provides a comprehensive theoretical framework for understanding and addressing environmental crises, grounded in several fundamental concepts:

The Concept of Ownership (Milkiyyah) in Islam, Islam teaches that ultimate ownership of all resources in the universe belongs to Allah SWT (Qur'an, Al-Hadid [57]: 7). Humans act merely as trustees (amanah holders) of natural resources (Mawdudi, 1984). Consequently, forest management must be carried out responsibly not as an absolute right to exploit resources, but as a

form of accountability before the Creator.

The Principle of Al-Maslaha (Public Interest), *maslaha* represents a central principle in Islamic jurisprudence, emphasizing the promotion of welfare and the prevention of harm for humanity and the environment (Chapra, 2008). In the context of deforestation, illegal logging clearly contradicts this principle, as it damages ecosystems, threatens livelihoods, and contributes to disasters. Therefore, forest governance policies must prioritize long-term public benefit over short-term gains for a limited number of actors.

The Concept of *Khilafah fil Ard* (Vicegerency on Earth) and Stewardship, humans are appointed as vicegerents (*khalifah*) on earth, implying a role as stewards and caretakers rather than exploiters of nature (Qur'an, Al-Baqarah [2]: 30). This responsibility includes maintaining ecological balance, protecting biodiversity, and ensuring that natural resources remain available for future generations (Palmer, 1992).

Islamic Political Economy Theory on Natural Resource Management, Islamic political economy emphasizes the integration of spiritual, ethical, and material dimensions in economic activities. Natural resource management must avoid *israf* (excess) and *tabdzir* (wasteful expenditure), as well as *fasad* (destruction) (Qur'an, Al-A'raf [7]: 56; Al-Isra' [17]: 26–27). Forests should be managed collectively for public benefit rather than exploited for narrow private interests.

The Principle of Sustainability in Islamic Perspective, Sustainability constitutes a core element of Islamic environmental ethics. The preservation of nature for future generations is emphasized through prohibitions against environmental destruction and encouragements to plant and nurture trees. Islam advocates for responsible utilization that does not compromise the earth's regenerative capacity and its ability to sustain life in the long term (Hasan, 2010).

Table 1: Comparison between Conventional and Islamic Approaches in Forest Management

Aspect	Conventional Approach (General)	Islamic Political Economy Approach
<b>Philosophical Foundation</b>	Anthropocentrism, oriented toward profit and economic growth.	Theocentrism, grounded in ethics, trust ( <i>amanah</i> ), and public welfare ( <i>maslaha</i> ).
<b>Primary Objective</b>	Utilization of natural resources for maximum profit and efficiency.	Conservation ( <i>hifdz</i> ), sustainability, and distributive justice.
<b>Concept of Ownership</b>	Private or state ownership rights for exploitation and control.	Ultimate ownership belongs to Allah; humans act as trustees ( <i>milkiyyah</i> ).
<b>Role of Humans</b>	Dominators, exercising control over nature with freedom to exploit.	<i>Khalifah</i> (stewards/ caretakers) of the Earth with moral responsibility.
<b>Priority</b>	Short-term economic gains, GDP growth, and industrialization.	Long-term public welfare ( <i>maslaha</i> ), ecological balance ( <i>mizan</i> ), and social justice.
<b>Solution Mechanisms</b>	Regulation, carbon markets, technological solutions, administrative sanctions.	Just law enforcement, <i>hisbah</i> supervision, moral education, Islamic financial instruments, and community empowerment.

Ecological Impact Analysis of Deforestation and Illegal Logging from the Perspective of Islamic Environmental Ethics, massive deforestation and illegal logging in Indonesia have resulted in severe ecological degradation, which, from the perspective of Islamic environmental ethics, constitutes a grave violation of the divine trust (amanah) bestowed by Allah SWT. Humans, as khalifah fil ard (vicegerents on Earth), bear the responsibility to maintain ecological balance (mizan) rather than disrupt it (Qur'an, Ar-Rum [30]: 41). The loss of forest cover particularly in concession areas that are supposed to be managed responsibly directly contributes to soil erosion, biodiversity loss, and microclimatic changes. This is evidenced by the recurring presence of large timber debris in flash floods, indicating a failure to preserve watershed areas as integral components of forest ecosystems. Such practices contradict the concept of tawhid, which emphasizes the unity of creation and the interdependence of all living beings; damage to one part inevitably affects the entire system. Furthermore, unchecked forest exploitation represents israf (excess/wastefulness) and fasad (destruction), both explicitly prohibited in Islam, as they disregard the rights of nature and future generations.

Socio-Economic Impact Analysis of Deforestation and Illegal Logging and the Issue of Distributive Justice in Natural Resource Management in Islam, the socio-economic impacts of deforestation and illegal logging are profoundly detrimental, particularly for indigenous and local communities who depend on forest ecosystems. Forest degradation leads to the loss of traditional livelihoods, triggers land conflicts, and damages infrastructure due to natural disasters. From the perspective of Islamic political economy, such practices represent a form of distributive injustice and violate the principle of al-maslaha (public interest).

The economic benefits accrued by a small number of corporations or individuals through forest exploitation are disproportionate to the extensive losses borne by society at large, both materially and immaterially. The failure of the concession system where a significant proportion of forest loss occurs within legally designated areas reflects a breach of trust (amanah) and non-compliance with principles of justice in resource governance.

Islam emphasizes equitable wealth distribution and prohibits the concentration of resources in the hands of a few. Therefore, the monopolization of forest resources by large corporations, without regard for local welfare, is inconsistent with Islamic values (Siddiqi, 2001). The state, as the holder of authority, bears the responsibility to ensure that forest governance is oriented toward the welfare of the entire المجتمع (ummah), rather than the short-term interests of particular groups.

Value-Based Islamic Solutions to Address Deforestation and Illegal Logging, addressing deforestation and illegal logging requires comprehensive solutions that integrate Islamic values into both policy frameworks and implementation strategies. This approach emphasizes just law enforcement, community empowerment, and policies that prioritize sustainability and public welfare.

Justice-Oriented Law Enforcement and Supervision, firm, transparent law enforcement free from corruption and collusion is essential. Fair sanctions must be imposed on perpetrators of environmental crimes, whether corporate or individual, in accordance with Islamic principles of justice. Strengthening community-based supervision through hisbah can empower local and indigenous communities as frontline guardians of forest ecosystems. The concept of hisbah encourages individuals and communities to uphold amar ma'ruf nahi munkar (enjoining good and forbidding evil), including in environmental protection.

Education and Empowerment of Local Communities, Islamic environmental education (Tarbiya Islamiyah) should be integrated into both formal and non-formal education systems. Instilling awareness of humanity's responsibility as khalifah from an early age can shape behavior and foster a culture of sustainability. Furthermore, resource redistribution and local economic empowerment are crucial to preventing monopolization. Granting local communities sustainable forest management rights through social forestry schemes or equitable community-based concessions aligns with Islamic principles of wealth distribution and provides incentives for forest conservation.

Public Policy Based on Maslaha and Sustainability and the Utilization of Islamic Financial Instruments, governments must formulate policies that explicitly prioritize public welfare (maslaha) and ecological sustainability over short-term economic gains. This includes imposing moratoria on new permits, reassessing existing concessions, and providing incentives for sustainable forestry practices.

In addition, Islamic financial instruments such as zakat, waqf, and green sukuk can be mobilized to fund forest rehabilitation, conservation initiatives, and community-based green economic development. These instruments enable the allocation of financial resources toward projects that generate long-term positive impacts for both the environment and society.

**Table 2: Summary of Deforestation Impacts and Proposed Islamic-Based Solutions**

Impact Category	Key Impacts	Proposed Islamic-Based Solutions
<b>Ecological</b>	- Ecosystem degradation and biodiversity loss	- Justice-based law enforcement ( <i>qisas</i> -oriented fairness)
	- Increased natural disasters (floods, landslides)	- Strengthening <i>hisbah</i> -based supervision
	- Microclimate change and soil degradation	- Conservation as a mandate of <i>khalifah</i>
	- Violation of <i>mizan</i> and <i>tawhid</i> principles	- Prohibition of <i>fasad</i> and <i>israf</i>
<b>Socio-Economic</b>	- Loss of livelihoods for indigenous/local communities	- Local economic empowerment and resource redistribution
	- Land conflicts and unequal resource	- Public policy based on <i>maslaha</i>

Impact Category	Key Impacts	Proposed Islamic-Based Solutions
	distribution	
	- Increased vulnerability and economic burden	- Utilization of <i>zakat</i> , <i>waqf</i> , and green <i>sukuk</i>
	- Violation of <i>al-maslaha</i> and distributive justice	- Protection of indigenous community rights
<b>Ethical-Spiritual</b>	- Neglect of human role as <i>khalifah fil ard</i>	- Islamic environmental education ( <i>Tarbiya Islamiyah</i> )
	- Violation of trust ( <i>amanah</i> ) over natural resources	- Strengthening ecological responsibility awareness
	- Wastefulness ( <i>israf</i> ) and destruction ( <i>fasad</i> )	- Emphasizing ethical values in resource governance

## CONCLUSION

The Islamic political economy analysis of deforestation and illegal logging in Indonesia reveals that this environmental crisis is fundamentally a manifestation of the failure to uphold the divine trust (*amanah*) entrusted by Allah SWT to humanity as *khalifah fil ard* (vicegerents on Earth). The ecological impacts such as ecosystem degradation and biodiversity loss as well as the socio-economic consequences in the form of inequality and community suffering, fundamentally contradict the principles of *milkiyyah* (trust-based ownership), *al-maslaha* (public interest), and the obligation to preserve ecological balance (*mizan*).

The persistently high rate of deforestation, including within concession areas, highlights weak monitoring systems and law enforcement mechanisms that fail to uphold justice and sustainability.

The Islamic political economy approach offers a comprehensive value-based framework and set of solutions. The concept of ownership as a trust (*amanah*) requires responsible forest management rather than unlimited exploitation. The principle of public welfare (*maslaha*) directs policies toward long-term well-being for both humanity and the environment. Meanwhile, the role of humans as *khalifah* mandates stewardship rather than destruction. The implementation of value-based solutions ranging from just law enforcement, community-based monitoring, environmental education, local economic empowerment, to public policies oriented toward *maslaha* and the utilization of Islamic financial instruments represents a critical pathway toward sustainable forest resource management.

Thus, the deforestation crisis in Indonesia is not merely a technical issue but also an ethical and spiritual crisis that demands a comprehensive transformation grounded in Islamic teachings.

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