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DISASTER, MEMORY, AND *MAQĀṢID*: REREADING THE PHARAOH STORY IN THE CONTEXT OF THE TRAGEDY OF SUMATERA

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Abstract

The flash floods and landslides in Aceh, North Sumatra, and West Sumatra demonstrate that hydrometeorological disasters are not solely natural phenomena but also cumulative consequences of upstream ecological degradation, including deforestation and peatland damage, compounded by governance failures. This study aims to analyze these disasters through a *maqāṣidī* interpretation of the Qur'anic story of Pharaoh to reveal the normative and political dimensions of leadership negligence. Employing a qualitative literature-based method, the study conducted hermeneutic analysis, thematic identification, and synthesis of primary and secondary sources concerning Qur'anic narratives, ecological conditions, and disaster policies. The findings reveal three principal points. First, "Pharaohistic" patterns of leadership, characterized by absolutism, the normalization of structural violence, and narrative manipulation, are reflected in political decisions that disregard public safety. Second, delays in declaring national disaster status aggravated emergency response and contributed to secondary fatalities by constraining the mobilization of resources and essential services. Third, effective disaster prevention and recovery require the integration of evidence-based ecological interventions,

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including upstream ecosystem restoration, a moratorium on land conversion, and peatland management, with policy reform, institutional accountability, and local community participation. The study concludes that disaster mitigation and reconstruction should be situated within the framework of *maqāṣid al-sharīʿah*, particularly *ḥifẓ al-nafs*, as a normative benchmark for governmental legitimacy and responsibility. Without structural ecological and governance reforms, similar disasters are likely to recur. These findings contribute to ecological Islamic studies by connecting Qur'anic narratives of oppressive leadership with contemporary disaster governance and imply the need for risk-based emergency declarations, upstream ecosystem rehabilitation, and transparent accountability mechanisms.

Keywords: Disaster Governance; Ecological Degradation; *Ḥifẓ Al-Nafs*; *Maqāṣid Al-Sharīʿah*; Sumatra Disasters

INTRODUCTION

The flash floods and landslides that have struck Aceh, North Sumatera, and West Sumatera in recent weeks have turned villages into places of mourning: homes swept away and destroyed, identity documents lost, and photographs of children contaminated by mud—memories that will one day demand answers to one big question: where was the country when we drowned? (BNPB, 2025). This event is more than just a natural event; it has brought public safety, government responsibility, and social resilience back into the public spotlight. Official data shows the devastating impact. Government records and media reports indicate thousands of deaths, hundreds missing, and hundreds of thousands displaced, living in damp tents with frequently delayed aid supplies (BBC, 2026). These numbers are more than just statistics: they represent families displaced by the loss of livelihoods, orphans, and severed social networks—realities that demand a swift and coordinated response.

Scientific analysis shows that these disasters did not occur in a vacuum. Researchers and environmental agencies highlight chronic vulnerability factors, such as massive deforestation on the slopes of the Barisan Mountains, degradation of upstream ecosystems, and peat drainage, which reduces the land's ability to retain rainfall. When upstream ecosystem functions are disrupted, the intensity and frequency of floods and landslides increase, demonstrating a causal link between environmental degradation and extreme disaster events (Wasis, 2025). Academic findings, including reports from researchers at

Gadjah Mada University and monitoring by environmental agencies, confirm the correlation between upstream forest degradation and increased hydrometeorological risk. This suggests that these floods and landslides have policy roots—namely, weak spatial and natural resource management—and are not simply inevitable variants of natural events (Nugroho, 2025). Therefore, prevention requires evidence-based ecological and governance interventions.

From a policy and financing perspective, the government estimates substantial reconstruction needs: estimates reach over 51 trillion rupiah (approximately 3.1 billion USD) for the affected provinces alone. This figure underscores the multidimensional nature of losses—material, social, and institutional—and highlights the significant resource requirements for recovery (Indira, 2025). However, financing capacity and budget allocation must be accompanied by a risk-based reconstruction plan, accountability, and community participation to avoid becoming merely a temporary expense.

Moral and normative discourses are also relevant in interpreting this tragedy. By using religious narratives—for example, the figure of Pharaoh who turned a deaf ear to the suffering of the people—we can critique forms of power that prioritize legitimacy and short-term interests over public safety. If the *maqasid al-shari'ah* emphasize *hifẓ al-nafs* (protection of life) as the primary objective, then public governance practices that ignore scientific warnings and risk management constitute an ethical contradiction that must be addressed.

Previous research relevant to this topic includes studies that integrate catastrophic narratives in the Qur'an with the reality of contemporary disasters, particularly through the *maqāṣidi* interpretation framework. First, Siregar and Siregar (2026) in the article "Sumatera Floods 2025: Reflections of *Maqāṣid Syarī'ah* in Forest Management and the Economic Consequences of Exploitation" empirically show that the major floods in Sumatera are not merely natural phenomena, but rather the result of accumulated deforestation and environmental governance failures that violate the main *maqāṣid* principles, especially ***ḥifẓ al-nafs*** (soul), *al-māl* (property), and *al-nasl* (generation). Second, Luthfiah (2020) in her thesis "Natural Disasters in the Perspective of Quranic Interpretation (Analysis of Scientific Interpretation)" offers a scientific interpretation approach to the stories of previous communities struck by disasters, asserting that the Quranic narratives about destroyed communities can be read as historical-scriptural precedents that align with contemporary scientific findings.

Third, a meta-analysis by Ali (2025) of international studies confirms that community responses to natural disasters are strongly influenced by self-efficacy, subjective norms, and received information, not simply risk perception or emotional trauma, which can be a psycho-social basis for a *maqāṣidi* reading of collective responses in the Sumatera tragedy. Fourth, an experimental study by Jiang D et al. (2021) entitled "Do People Become More or Less Materialistic during Disasters?" found that disaster experiences can actually reduce materialism through the mechanisms of gratitude and mortality salience, which are relevant to the moral message in the story of Pharaoh about the dangers of arrogance and worldly attachments. These four studies together provide a normative, empirical, and psycho-social basis for reading the Sumatera tragedy through the *maqāṣidi* interpretation of the story of Pharaoh, where disasters are not only natural disasters, but also reflections of ethical, structural, and spiritual failures in resource management and humanitarian response.

This paper arises from a combination of emotional concern and scientific urgency: empirically, patterns show that careless ecological interventions and delayed emergency responses increase the impact of disasters. Normatively, any policy that values life less than political or economic considerations violates the fundamental principle of the state's protection of its citizens. Therefore, prevention and reconstruction approaches must prioritize life safety through integrated, evidence-based policies. Ultimately, there is a clear policy choice: let this tragedy fade into the narrative of a disaster, or turn it into a momentum for structural transformation—spatial planning reform, environmental law enforcement, upstream function restoration, and an early warning system that involves local communities. Humanity demands more than emergency aid. It demands ongoing responsibility. If Pharaoh was a historical warning, then our responsibility now is to ensure that people's safety becomes the compass of every public policy.

METHODS

The researchers in this study used a qualitative approach with library research, aiming to examine the disaster phenomenon in Sumatera through the lens of the *maqāṣidi* interpretation of the story of Pharaoh in the Qur'an. This approach was chosen because the research focus is on understanding the meaning, context, and relevance of the sacred text to socio-religious realities, rather than quantitative measurements. Within this framework, the

researchers act as the primary instrument, conducting in-depth interpretation of relevant textual and contextual sources (Creswell, 2013; Moleong, 2014).

The data sources in this study consist of two categories: primary and secondary sources. Primary sources include the Qur'an and its translations, as well as classical and contemporary commentaries that discuss the story of Pharaoh using the *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* approach. Secondary sources include scientific journals, books, articles, and reports related to the disaster in Sumatera, disaster management theory, and literature on social interpretation and disaster theology. Data collection was conducted using documentation techniques through systematic searches in academic databases (Rosidah et al., 2023; Sugiyono, 2013).

Data analysis was conducted descriptively and analytically using an inductive approach, drawing general conclusions from specific findings obtained from the literature. The analysis process included theme identification, comparison between sources, and hermeneutical interpretation to connect the narrative of Pharaoh with the dynamics of the disaster in Sumatera, Indonesia. Through this technique, the research seeks to produce a critical reading that not only explains the meaning of the text but also offers an ethical-theological perspective in responding to the disaster as a collective test requiring spiritual and social reflection.

RESULTS

The Story of Pharaoh in the Qur'an: Negligent Leadership Patterns

The Quran presents Pharaoh not merely as a historical figure, but as a recurring pattern of leadership across time. Pharaoh becomes a typology of power that has lost its human orientation: politically strong and symbolically solid, yet morally fragile. Pharaoh's story is not concentrated in a single surah, but recurs in various contexts (Mubarak et al., 2025). The presence of this narrative seems to emphasize that this pattern of power is always relevant to reread when governments or rulers distance themselves from the suffering of the people.

In QS. al-Qaṣaṣ [28], Pharaoh is depicted as a ruler who consciously created social inequality and normalized structural violence (Mubarak et al., 2025):

إِنَّ فِرْعَوْنَ عَلَا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَجَعَلَ أَهْلَهَا شِيَعًا يَسْتَضْعِفُ طَائِفَةً مِّنْهُمْ يُذَبِّحُ أَبْنَاءَهُمْ وَيَسْتَحْيِي نِسَاءَهُمْ

Meaning: "Indeed, Pharaoh had acted arbitrarily on the earth and divided its people into groups; he oppressed a group of them, slaughtering their sons and sparing their women." (QS. al-Qaṣaṣ [28]: 4)

This verse shows that Pharaoh's power was not neutral. He consciously managed society with a policy of divide and rule (divide et impera), A strategy known in modern political science as a mechanism of social control through fragmentation. The oppression carried out by the Pharaohs was not spontaneous, but systemic and institutionalized. Violence was even normalized as an instrument of state stability (A'la, 2014).

Contemporary social science refers to this pattern as structural violence, a condition in which political structures and public policies indirectly produce mass suffering. This term emphasizes that violence is not always physical or direct; it is embedded in social mechanisms that restrict access to basic needs and life opportunities.

Within this framework, the figure of Pharaoh is not simply seen as "evil" in an individual moral sense. He serves as a symbol of a state that has failed to fulfill its fundamental responsibilities: protecting citizens and ensuring justice. Such institutional failures produce systemic inequality and vulnerability (Rahmat, 2025). This type of leadership does not necessarily require overt cruelty to operate. By allowing injustice to persist—through policies of neglect or exclusion—suffering continues without direct intervention, making its effects appear natural while in fact structural.

This pattern of neglect becomes increasingly clear in QS. al-Nāzi'āt [79], when Pharaoh not only oppressed, but also manipulated the language of power:

فَقَالَ أَنَا رَبُّكُمُ الْأَعْلَىٰ

Meaning: "Then he said, 'I am your most high God." (QS. al-Nāzi'āt [79]: 24)

This statement is not merely a theological claim, but a political declaration. Pharaoh positions himself as the center of truth, the sole authority that cannot be criticized. In modern power theory, it is similar to authoritarian absolutism, when the state monopolizes meaning, truth, and direction in the lives of its citizens; language is used not to serve, but to subjugate. The greatest danger of this type of leadership is the loss of structural empathy. When the ruler positions himself as "the highest," the people's suffering is perceived as a nuisance, not

a trust (Susmoro, 2022). It explains why Pharaoh never really responded to the cries of the Children of Israel—because in the logic of his power, the voice of the people had no epistemic value.

QS. al-Zukhruf [43] adds another important dimension: the manipulation of public consciousness:

فَاسْتَخَفَّ قَوْمَهُ فَأَطَاعُوهُ

Meaning: "So, Pharaoh influenced his people, so they obeyed him." (QS. al-Zukhruf [43]: 54)

This verse shows that Pharaoh did not rule alone; he was supported by a society whose conscience was weakened. *Istikhaff* (lightening/emptying reason) demonstrates the process of propaganda, disinformation, and the normalization of injustice. In political communication studies, this aligns with the concept of manufactured consent, namely how power shapes public agreement through controlled narratives.

Thus, Pharaoh is a symbol of a system, not just an individual. He embodies a power that ignores suffering, normalizes violence, and manipulates language to maintain legitimacy (Effendi, 2018). The Qur'an does not tell the story of Pharaoh simply to condemn the past, but to expose the mechanisms of power that recur throughout human history. Therefore, classical and contemporary commentators emphasize that Qur'anic stories are paradigmatic. Ibn ʻĀshūr called them *al-qaṣaṣ al-hādiyah*, stories that provide social and political guidance. Meanwhile, modern thinkers such as Nasr Ḥāmid Abū Zayd view the narrative of Pharaoh as an open text that must be read contextually to uncover power relations in contemporary reality (Hidayah & Zulfadli, 2024).

Thus, Pharaoh is not merely a name in a *mushaf*; he serves as a mirror for any leadership that loses its humanitarian orientation. His figure reveals how authority can transform from a protector into a source of oppression when power is positioned above human values. When the suffering of the people is equated with mere statistics, the faces of the wounded become invisible in bureaucratic calculations. The language of power then serves to mask social wounds—rhetoric that smooths reality so that domination appears normal and unwavering. Empathy is replaced by the pursuit of false stability; power prioritizes fragile order over living justice. Here, Pharaoh reappears, not as a single individual, but as a system: a network of policies, discourses, and practices that maintain inequality and diminish humanity.

Thus, Pharaoh is not merely a name in a *mushaf*; he serves as a mirror for any leadership that loses its humanitarian orientation. His figure reveals how authority can transform from a protector into a source of oppression when power is positioned above human values. When the suffering of the people is equated with mere statistics, the faces of the wounded become invisible in bureaucratic calculations. The language of power then serves to mask social wounds—rhetoric that smooths reality so that domination appears normal and unwavering (Alexander, 2018). Empathy is replaced by the pursuit of false stability. Power prioritizes fragile order over living justice (Hoffman, 2014). Here, Pharaoh reappears, not as a single individual, but as a system: a network of policies, discourses, and practices that maintain inequality and diminish humanity.

The Absence of National Disaster Status in Sumatera as a Leadership Crisis

When Sumatera sank, what was most painful was not just the rushing water, but the silence of the decisions. As houses collapsed, logistical access was cut off, and people survived under tarpaulins, the state chose to remain silent on the most crucial issue: declaring the disaster a national disaster. This silence was not neutral; it had real consequences for the response and safety of citizens.

State silence in situations of mass suffering is a political stance. When authorities are reluctant to take formal steps—activating resources, opening aid channels, or mandating national coordination—rescue and mitigation efforts are hampered. As a result, the vulnerability of communities increases and the burden on victims becomes heavier. In the Quranic tradition, the model of power that stands by or allows injustice to persist is often criticized. The figure of Pharaoh is depicted not simply as a direct perpetrator of massacres, but as the administrator of an oppressive system—a power that undermines social order by allowing oppression to continue without the daily shedding of blood (Megawati et al., 2026).

It is why silence in the context of mass suffering can be read as a dangerous form of neglect. Citing the warnings of religious texts and the lessons of history, we are reminded that the state's response to disaster is not merely an administrative matter (Effendi, 2018). It is a moral and political choice that determines the fate of many lives:

إِنَّ فِرْعَوْنَ عَلَا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَجَعَلَ أَهْلَهَا شِيَعًا

Meaning: "Indeed, Pharaoh had done arbitrarily on earth and divided its people." (QS. al-Qaṣaṣ [28]: 4)

This pattern of *'uluw* (arbitrariness) is particularly relevant today. In the Sumateran context, the people's suffering is not solely the result of extreme rainfall, but rather the accumulated ecological damage caused by elite policies: deforestation, land conversion, peat drainage, and the exploitation of living space in the name of investment—or even personal gain. Environmental data shows that Sumatera has lost millions of hectares of forest cover in the past two decades—one of the fastest rates in the world—with a direct impact on increasing flooding and landslides. It is not nature's fault. It is governance's fault (Azizah, 2025).

But the ecological damage wasn't enough. What turned this tragedy into a humanitarian crisis was the political unwillingness to declare it a national disaster (Sarekat Hijau Indonesia, 2025). This status designation is not an administrative symbol; it determines the scale of resource mobilization, the speed of aid distribution, and the full involvement of the state. When the status is withheld, aid becomes partial, slow, and not massive. The consequences are fatal: people die not only from being buried by landslides, but also from hunger, cold, and disease in refugee camps (Cousins, 2018).

Scientifically, this phenomenon is known as secondary disaster mortality—deaths that occur not directly as a result of the disaster but as a result of failures in response and aid distribution. Disaster literature notes that after the initial event, factors such as delayed evacuations, interrupted health services, failed water supplies, and disruptions in logistics chains lead to a surge in preventable deaths. Empirical research shows a correlation between slow institutional responses and increased post-disaster mortality; the more fragmented the response system, the greater the risk of loss of life during the recovery phase (Purnawan et al., 2025). Data also shows that the vulnerability of social and health infrastructure exacerbates this effect because local capacity to withstand shocks is already low to begin with.

The most affected groups are those who are structurally vulnerable: children, the elderly, people with disabilities, and low-income families. They face barriers to accessing assistance, both due to difficult geographic locations and uneven information. Furthermore, resource allocation priorities often do not reflect the critical short-term medical and nutritional needs of these groups. Consequently, mortality rates among vulnerable groups increase not only due to the physical conditions following a disaster, but also due to the system's failure to target timely and appropriate interventions.

The key question that arises then touches on the political dimension: why are elites reluctant to call this tragedy a national disaster, and why is the response often delayed or half-hearted? The answer is multifaceted: there are calculated political risks that consider the government's image and potential criticism, budgetary concerns that make opening emergency funds politically costly, and fear of the implications of legal and administrative liability. In this context, decision-making tends to be guided by the logic of short-term political stability, rather than humanitarian urgency. Public suffering is perceived as a burden that can be postponed or minimized rhetorically to maintain political control.

Normatively, this dynamic reflects a more fundamental phenomenon: when power prioritizes its own survival over its mandate to citizens, the resulting policies and structures can result in avoidable deaths. Rhetorical comparisons with the character of Pharaoh in the Quranic tradition emphasize not just direct repressive action, but the creation of systems that systematically produce injustice and death. Therefore, preventing secondary disaster mortality requires not only technical capacity—logistics and medical—but also institutional engineering: transparency, accountability, and leadership that prioritizes protecting lives as a political priority, not a burden to be minimized for the sake of image.

يُذَبِّحُ أَبْنَاءَهُمْ وَيَسْتَحْيِي نِسَاءَهُمْ

Meaning: “He slaughtered their sons and left their women alive.” (QS. al-Qaṣaṣ [28]: 4)

In the *maqasidi* interpretation, "slaughter" is not always literal. It can mean taking away the opportunity for life, blocking access to safety, and allowing suffering to continue. So, when people die of starvation in refugee camps, die of hypothermia, die because aid never arrives—how is that different from Pharaoh's structural violence? The difference is only in the method, not the consequences. Modern political science calls this condition necro politics—power that determines who deserves to live and who is left to die through policy and negligence (Rahmawati & Sulistyowati, 2022). When the state chooses not to be fully present, it is making a life-and-death decision. And that decision, consciously or not, always favors the elite, not the people.

Within the framework of the *maqasid al-syari'ah* (objectives of Islamic law), the most fundamental failure is not merely administrative negligence, but rather a betrayal of the very objectives of sharia. *Ḥifẓ al-nafs*—protection of the soul—occupies a primary position in the

hierarchy of objectives of sharia (Hariyadi et al., 2022; Irwan, 2021). The state and its apparatus are obligated to prioritize the safety of the people as a non-negotiable priority. When policies, procedures, or bureaucratic attitudes lead to delayed responses or the neglect of clear threats, this is more than a technical flaw (Dekker, 2018): it signals a normative failure to translate the values of sharia law into public governance.

Leadership failures that result in mass death or suffering due to administrative negligence undermine the moral legitimacy of rulers. Political legitimacy, from an Islamic perspective, is based not only on formal power but also on the ability and commitment to uphold the *maqasid* (protection of life, property, religion, intellect, and posterity). By ignoring the urgent need to save lives, leaders practice a form of "power without responsibility" that empties the moral basis for their claims (Hanson-DeFusco et al., 2024). As a result, public trust is eroded, the social fabric is weakened, and demands for accountability become both a moral and political imperative.

Calling this practice a modern version of Pharaohism is not mere hyperbole, but rather a theological and ethical warning: the Qur'an depicts the story of Pharaoh not to glorify power, but to demonstrate the dangers of authoritarianism that disregards humanity. In the Sumatera context, the lack of national disaster status is not simply a procedural issue. It reflects a value choice—whether the state places its image and bureaucratic routine above the lives of its citizens. The test is now clear: will the nation learn from this moral history and reform governance to save lives, or will it repeat the same structural sins with a more refined administrative language?

DISCUSSION

Maqasidi's Interpretation of Leadership Indifference

There were nights when the waters fell, but what was bleaker than that was the way power turned a blind eye. The ecological disaster in Sumatera is not just a natural tragedy, but a reflection of the moral and structural failure of leadership. Reading disasters through the lens of *maqasid al-sharīʿah*—specifically *ḥifẓ al-nafs* (care of the soul) and *al-karāmah al-insāniyyah* (human dignity)—reverses the narrative: it is not the rain that justifies state inactivity, but rather the state's failure that turns the rain into a systemic killer. In this perspective, post-disaster is not only a matter of physical recovery, but also the restoration of the state's moral obligations towards the safety and dignity of citizens.

In principle, *maqasid* places life safety as a basic goal of the Shari'a; saving one life is like saving the entire people, as implied in the verses of the Qur'an and developed by the *ushuliyyin maqāsidi* tradition (Sakinah, 2022). This principle demands operational priorities: every public policy must be calibrated to prevent loss of life, reduce suffering, and restore conditions that allow life to be maintained in dignity. If the state claims moral legitimacy based on religious and humanitarian values, then failure to prevent and respond to disasters is a serious ethical inconsistency.

Empirical evidence supports this normative critique. Sumatera has experienced large-scale deforestation and land conversion over the past two decades; satellite data shows significant forest cover loss (e.g., millions of hectares in several provinces), which weakens the function of river headwaters and increases the risk of extreme runoff. The relationship between deforestation, peatland degradation, and flash floods or landslides is not simply a conceptual correlation, but a measurable ecological pattern: when water-retaining vegetation is lost, the landscape's capacity to retain rainfall is drastically reduced.

The impacts on public health are also structural and systemic. When peat burns, the release of fine particulate matter (PM2.5) and toxic gases leads to a surge in respiratory and cardiovascular diseases, as well as premature mortality. National and regional health studies and reports show that short- and long-term exposure to fire smoke is associated with thousands of hospitalizations, tens of thousands of premature deaths per year, and a chronic disease burden that exacerbates socioeconomic vulnerability (Putra & Tumoro, 2025). In other words, poor land management is collectively costing lives and quality of life.

The political decision to delay or avoid declaring a national disaster has real practical consequences. Declaring an emergency provides rapid access to budgets, logistics, search and rescue teams, and health and food programs that can prevent secondary post-disaster deaths from infectious diseases, malnutrition, and hypothermia (Hanisah, 2025). When the state response is fragmented or hampered by political-budgetary calculations, victims who could have been saved become victims in vain—an operational failure that is also a moral failure when measured through the *maqāsid* (Islamic principles).

Maqāsid analysis provides an interpretive framework for understanding why elites are often slow to act: priorities based on political stability, image, and short-term economic interests often trump the obligation to protect lives. Al-Shāṭibī and the developers of *maqāsid* emphasized that law and policy must pursue *maṣlaḥah* (the public interest) (Maulana et al.,

2024). If a policy results in systemic harm—for example, normalizing risk through permissive land permits—then it contradicts the very purpose of sharia.

This normative approach must be linked to accountability mechanisms. Demanding accountability is not merely a matter of moral rhetoric, but also about strengthening oversight institutions: independent audits of land conversion permits, transparency of company permit data, and public litigation mechanisms that enable victims or affected communities to claim compensation and rehabilitation. Without effective accountability instruments, claims of *maṣlaḥah* remain formal narratives with no impact on the ground (Qutieshat et al., 2026).

At the operational policy level, *maqāsid* demands simultaneous action: declaring a state of emergency when necessary, delivering coordinated aid (food, clean water, health services, safe evacuation), and providing emergency health services to address the impacts of post-disaster haze and disease. These interventions must be accompanied by real-time data and inter-agency coordination to ensure resources are directed to the most severely affected areas quickly, efficiently, and equitably.

To break the cycle of recurring disasters, long-term policies must focus on upstream restoration and prevention: ecosystem-based reforestation, peat restoration, a moratorium on sensitive land conversion, strict regulation of extractive industries, and incentives for agroforestry practices that maintain ecological buffers. These measures are not simply environmental conservation, but rather investments in protecting the collective well-being—a long-term implementation of the *maqāsid*. Policy changes must be accompanied by a transformation of democratic governance: local community participation in land-use planning, recognition of customary land rights, and compensation mechanisms for those impacted by extractive projects (German et al., 2014). Leadership that is responsive to the needs of the people and respects human dignity will narrow the gap between *maqāsid* norms and everyday governance practices.

From the perspective of *maqāsid al-sharīʿah*, leadership that ignores the *ḥifẓ al-nafs* and *al-karāmah* not only commits a policy error but also violates a fundamental moral imperative. If the goal of sharia is to prioritize the protection of life, then delaying action that could save lives is a political sin that demands structural correction, not mere condolences. Sumatera demands more than sympathy. Its people demand real, sustainable, and *maqasid*-based responsibility.

CONCLUSION

The results of this study indicate that flash floods and landslides in Sumatera are not simply natural phenomena, but rather the cumulative consequences of upstream ecological damage (deforestation, peatland degradation) and governance failures that hindered a rapid and coordinated response. By applying the *maqāṣidī* framework to the Pharaonic narrative, the study confirms that the neglect of life safety (*ḥifẓ al-nafs*) by public authorities constitutes a normative and political failure that exacerbates the impact of the disaster. Therefore, mitigation and reconstruction efforts must combine evidence-based ecological interventions (upstream restoration, land conversion moratorium, peat management), policy reform and institutional accountability, as well as local community engagement and rapid emergency declaration mechanisms to prevent secondary mortality. The implementation of these measures is not only technical but also normative, making the protection of life a primary measure of government legitimacy.

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