Dynamics of MABIMS Criteria in Preliminary Determination of Kamariyah: Maqasid Syariah Analysis of Accuracy and Istbat Session Decisions

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Abstract
MABIMS is a method and concept in determining the initial Kamariyah and producing a decision, the Isbat session held by the Ministry of Religion plays an important role in this process where this paper will analyze the determination with a focus on the accuracy and decisions taken from the Isbat session, through the Maqasid as-Shariah approach. This research explores how the MABIMS criteria can fulfill Sharia objectives in maintaining the benefit of the people. This analysis includes an evaluation of the hisab and rukyat used, as well as their implications for the unity of Muslims in the Southeast Asia Region. The results of this research show that even though there are differences in views, the maqasid as-syariah approach can be a basis for reaching more accurate and widely accepted decisions. The method used in analyzing legally a determination made by the state, this approach is used that the initial determination of kamariyah in Indonesia is a complex process involving various aspects of law and regulation. So from the study it can be concluded that the policy of the state leader is something that has been thought about for the benefit of many people with the principle of fiqh rules, namely: tassharuf al-imam ala arra'iyyah manuthu bil mashlahah.

I. Introduction

Determining the beginning of the Hijri month plays an important role in the lives of Muslims, especially in the context of carrying out worship. The Hijri calendar, which is based on the lunar calendar, is the main reference in determining worship times such as fasting in Ramadan, Eid al-Fitr, Eid al-Adha, and the Hajj pilgrimage (Putri, 2020). The accurate determination of the beginning of the Hijri lunar month impacts not only the uniformity of religious practices but also reflects the unity and harmony of the global Muslim community.

Historically, various methods have been used to determine the beginning of the Hijri month, ranging from visual observation (*rukyah*) to astronomical calculations (*hisab*) (Rahimin et al., 2024). However, the difference in approach in this determination method often causes debate and differences in interpretation among Muslims. This is not only a challenge from a scientific perspective, but also touches on social and religious aspects. The difference in the method of determining the beginning of the qamariyah has become a complex and prolonged issue in the Islamic world. This difference occurs not only at the local level but also globally, especially for the months of Ramadan, Shawwal and Zulhijjah (Awaludin, 2022). Therefore, an in-depth study of the determination of the beginning of the Hijri month is important to provide a comprehensive solution that can be accepted by various parties.

The determination of the beginning of the lunar month was first carried out by looking directly, with the naked eye (Istianah, 2021). This is based on the hadith of the prophet

حَدَّثَنَا عَبْدُ الرَّحْمَنِ بْنُ سَلَّامٍ الْجُمَحِيُّ حَدَّثَنَا الرَّبِيعُ يَعْنِي ابْنَ مُسْلِمٍ عَنْ مُحَمَّدٍ وَهُوَ ابْنُ زِيَادٍ عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ
رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ أَنَّ النَّبِيَّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ صُومُوا لِرُؤْيَتِهِ وَأَفْطِرُوا لِرُؤْيَتِهِ فَإِنْ غُبِّيَ عَلَيْكُمْ فَأَكْمِلُوا الْعِدَّةَ

It means:

"Abdrrahman bin Salam al-Jumahi told us, al-Rabi' namely Ibn Muslim from Muhammad and he is Ibn Ziyad told us, from Abi Hurairah r.a. "Indeed the Prophet said: Fast when you see (the Moon), and break your fast when you see (the Moon). If you don't see it, then the sum of the numbers is perfect (Al-Ja'fiy, 1992).

The hadith above is understood that the context of seeing is in a direct way and it is recommended to fast, therefore most of the majority of scholars adhere to the text of the hadith with the concept of rukyah. The obligation to fast is obligatory for Muslims, not rukyah, but because the command to perform

rukyah is related to worship, the command to perform rukyat becomes one of the obligations to carry it out.

ما لا يتم الواجب الابه فهوواجب

"Something that only by doing an obligation becomes perfect, then that thing is obligatory" (Setiyawan & Suganda, 2023).”

The fuqaha have a difference of opinion regarding the issue of the moon being covered by clouds and the weather conditions at that time being covered by clouds, so in this condition some scholars are of the opinion that in order to complete the number of months (at the time of rukyat) it must be perfected to 30 days (Ardliansyah, 2022).

Determining the beginning of the Islamic month is a classic problem that has not been resolved until now. In the 70-80 era, the debate on determining the beginning of the lunar month only occurred in the two largest religious organizations in Indonesia, namely NU and Muhammadiyah, where the difference was only one day. There is another opinion that says that the difference is due to the rapid development of astronomical science in Indonesia so that many creative and innovative astronomical experts develop various methods in determining the beginning of the month (Butar-Butar, 2024). The emergence of the criteria set by the Minister of Religion of Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore (MABIMS) in determining the beginning of the Islamic month was the result of an informal meeting of Ministers of Religion throughout Southeast Asia, namely Brunei Darussalam, Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore, which was first held in 1989 in Brunei. The meeting discussed cooperation in various fields including the reckoning of rukyat between the four countries, so that a commission was formed called "Jawatan Kuasa" to carry out rukyat and Islamic taqwim in the countries of Brunei Darussalam, Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore (Wahidi et al., 2021).

In Indonesia, the Mabims criteria are better known as the hisab *imkan al-rukyat* method and began to be discussed in March 1998 by hisab and rukyat experts and representatives of Islamic mass organizations including Muhammadiyah, NU, Persis, al-Irsyad and others and resulted in a decision at a meeting on September 28, 1998, namely: (1). The criteria used in compiling the Indonesian Hijri calendar is the position of the crescent moon which according to hisab haqiqi bi tahqiq has fulfilled the implications of rukyat. (2) The criteria for rukyat imkan are the criteria of "two-three/eight, namely a minimum height of 2 degrees and a minimum angular distance between the sun and the moon (elongation) of 3 degrees or a minimum age of 8 hours. (3). Specifically for determining the beginning of the month of Ramadan, Shawwal and Zulhijjah, the criteria as mentioned above are used and supported by empirical evidence

of the sighting of the crescent. (4) Determining the beginning of the month of Ramadan, Shawwal and Zulhijjah is carried out in an isbat session led by the Minister of Religion. (5). To realize the unity of the Indonesian Hijri calendar, concrete steps are needed (Fitriyani et al., 2024). On August 14-15, 2015 or coinciding with the date of 29-30 Syawal 1436 H, with the theme "Unification of Methods for Determining the Beginning of Ramadan, Syawal and Zulhijjah by the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia with the Indonesian Ulema Council and Islamic mass organizations" for the deliberation on the unification of the beginning of the lunar month, then this activity was followed up with a meeting of astronomy experts and representatives of mass organizations on August 21, 2015 whose main agenda was to determine the criteria for the beginning of the Hijri month and would be submitted to the Indonesian Ulema Council before the 2015 congress, the result was an academic paper proposing astronomical criteria for determining the beginning of the Hijri month, namely the height of the crescent and elongation of 3 and 6.4 respectively (Karim & Mahsun, 2024).

The implementation of hisab rukyat activities carried out by government institutions and related mass organizations throughout Indonesia and the results will be submitted to officials at the Ministry of Religion, then an isbat session will be held as the final result to announce the first day of the lunar month. The isbat session is an official forum held by the Indonesian Ministry of Religion, to determine the beginning of the lunar month, and involves various parties including scholars, astronomers and representatives of religious organizations in Indonesia. In this forum, several things are done, namely: (1). Observation of the crescent moon, (2). Data, (3). Session (4). Determination (Reskiani & Subhan, 2022).

The isbat session is not something new, in fact it has been carried out along with the formation of the Indonesian Ministry of Religion on January 3, 1946 which was strengthened by the 1946 government decree No. 2/Um.7/Um.9/Um, and emphasized by Presidential Decree Number 25/1967, 148/1968, and 10/1967 concerning the regulation and determination of holidays including the determination of the beginning of the fasting month of Ramadan, Eid al-Fitr, and Eid al-Adha, which were submitted to the Indonesian Ministry of Religion. The implementation of the isbat session was carried out to obtain legitimacy and strengthen and prevent confusion in the reporting system, as well as to unite the people and eliminate differences of opinion, all must obey to eliminate differences of opinion. Upholding the principle of deliberation, respecting attitudes of differences of opinion, equality and democracy, and accepting suggestions and opinions until an agreement is reached in determining the

beginning of the kamariyah (Anam, n.d.).

The concept of *maqāṣid ash-Sharīʿah* (the objectives of the Sharia) views the entire process, from the sighting of the crescent moon (*rukyah*) to the official determination (*Isbat*) session, as a pursuit of the greater good, a central aim of Islamic law. This research seeks to answer fundamental questions regarding the accuracy of crescent moon sighting (*rukyatul hilal*) and the decision-making process for establishing the beginning of the lunar month (*kamariyah*) within the framework of *maqāṣid ash-Sharīʿah*.

Based on the above background, the research questions are as follows:

1. What are the dynamics of MABIMS (the Brunei Darussalam, Indonesia, Malaysia, and Singapore) in determining the beginning of the lunar month?
2. What are the implications of accuracy in the *Isbat* session from a *maqāṣid ash-Sharīʿah* perspective?

Extensive prior research exists on this topic. One such study, a thesis by Faizatuz Zulfa from the State Islamic University of Walisongo, Semarang, examined the *Isbat* session and the dynamics surrounding the emergence of the new MABIMS criteria for crescent moon visibility (*Neo Visibilitas Hilal MABIMS*). The study focused on the paradigm shift in the *hisab-rukyah* (calculation-observation) criteria within the context of the Indonesian Ministry of Religious Affairs' *Isbat* session. Employing a qualitative-descriptive approach with normative analysis of fatwas, official decisions, and interviews with astronomy experts and leaders of Islamic organizations, the research concluded that the new criteria enhance the accuracy of crescent moon visibility and strengthen the government's authority in determining the beginning of the lunar month. The study recommended greater consensus among MABIMS member states to ensure wider acceptance of the *Isbat* session's results and reduce discrepancies in the start date of Ramadan (Zulfa, 2023).

A second study, a dissertation by Bashori Alwi from the State Islamic University of Walisongo, Semarang, explored the historical and political processes of the *Isbat* session and the interaction between MABIMS criteria and *maqāṣid ash-Sharīʿah*. This research focused on the mechanism for determining the beginning of the Hijri month in Indonesia, from the implementation of the *imkān ur-rukyah* criteria to the neo-MABIMS era. Employing a juridical-normative approach and a historical-qualitative method, including document analysis, interviews, and participant observation, the study concluded that inconsistencies exist in the implementation of the *Isbat* session and that the integration of fiqh (Islamic jurisprudence) and astronomy is weak. The main recommendation was the establishment of an independent *hisab-rukyah*

(calculation-observation) council operating according to *maqāṣid ash-Sharīʿah* to ensure justice and legal certainty (Alwi, 2020).

The novelty of this research lies in the explicit and systematic integration of the neo-MABIMS astronomical criteria with the framework of *maqāṣid ash-Sharīʿah*. Unlike previous studies that tended to focus separately on normative aspects or technical astronomy, this research offers an evaluative approach to assess the accuracy of the *Isbat* session's results through the principles of *maqāṣid*, such as the preservation of religion (*hifẓ ad-dīn*) and intellect (*hifẓ al-ʿaql*). Furthermore, this study evaluates the effectiveness of the *Isbat* decisions based on socio-religious benefits within the context of Islamic organizational pluralism in Indonesia. Methodological innovation is also demonstrated through the use of comparative analysis across different years of the *Isbat* session and simulations of crescent moon visibility to test the coherence of the *Isbat* decisions. Therefore, this research bridges the discourse between modern Islamic astronomy and the epistemology of *maqāṣid* in a practical and applicable manner.

2. Research Method

The research method used in this study is qualitative research, aiming to gain an in-depth understanding of the process of determining the beginning of the Islamic lunar month based on the MABIMS method and how the maqasid as-syariah approach is applied in decision-making by the state. This study uses a juridical-normative and sociological approach to examine regulations, fatwas, and practices in the isbat session held by the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia. With this approach, the researcher analyzes the relationship between legal texts and social practices in the process of determining the beginning of the month involving the hisab and rukyat methods. The focus of this research is not only on the legal-formal aspects but also on the dimension of community welfare that underlies maqasid as-syariah. Thus, this research attempts to holistically examine the dimensions of Islamic law and public policy.

Data collection techniques were conducted through documentary studies of various relevant primary and secondary sources, such as official decisions from isbat sessions, MABIMS documents, fatwas from scholars, and government regulations governing the determination of the beginning of the Islamic lunar month. In addition, the researcher also used in-depth interviews with informants from among astronomy experts, officials from the Ministry of Religious Affairs, and figures from Islamic mass organizations to obtain firsthand perspectives on the implementation of the isbat session and public acceptance of its results. Participatory observation was also conducted during the isbat session to understand the dynamics of the discussions and arguments that emerged. This technique was chosen to obtain authentic data that reflects the reality

in the field. Through source and method triangulation, data validity can be improved in explaining the accuracy and welfare of the decisions made.

In data analysis, this study uses content analysis with a thematic approach to identify patterns and key issues emerging from documents and interview results. Data were analyzed qualitatively by classifying information based on themes such as the legal basis for determination, the maqasid as-syariah approach, and its impact on community unity. Interpretation was conducted by referring to the principles of maqasid as-syariah such as hifz al-din (preserving religion), hifz al-'aql (preserving intellect), and hifz al-ummah (preserving community unity). The results of the analysis aim to provide an in-depth understanding of how the determination of the beginning of the Islamic lunar month is carried out systematically and responsibly for the welfare of the community. Thus, the conclusions obtained are based on data tested through strong analytical methods relevant to the research objectives.

3. Results and Discussion

Dynamics of Mabims in the Initial Determination of Kamariyah

Determining the beginning of the Hijri month, especially for the months of Ramadhan, Syawal and Zulhijah, is carried out by NU using the rukyat method, while Muhammadiyah uses the hisab method (Mahasiswa et al., 2023). To ensure accurate rukyat, NU utilizes the science of hisab and accepts the criteria of Imkan ar-Rukyat as a support in the implementation of rukyat. The criteria of Imkan ar-Rukyat function as a tool to refute reports stating success in seeing the crescent moon. Experts agree that the crescent moon is still below or above the horizon. Therefore, the criteria of Imkan ar-Rukyat are not used to determine the beginning of the lunar month. This means that if the calculation of the crescent moon has met the criteria of Imkan ar-Rukyat, then rukyat can be carried out (Alamsyah & Ni'am, 2025). The determination of the beginning of the Hijriah month, especially for Ramadan, Shawwal and Zulhijah, is based on istikmal (Herman et al., 2025). However, NU and the government have different opinions in determining the beginning of the month. Since the formation of Lajnah Falakiyah NU in 1984, NU has had different opinions with the government in determining the beginning of the month four times (Zulfa, 2023). On the other hand, the Islamic mass organization Muhammadiyah has long used the hisab method to determine the beginning of the month, so Muhammadiyah does not apply rukyat, and the criteria used is Wujud al-Hilal (Fitriyani et al., 2024).

The Indonesian government uses the Imkan ar-Rukyat criteria, which were agreed upon by the Ministers of Religion from Brunei Darussalam, Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore (MABIMS). Therefore, this criterion is applied not only in Indonesia, but also in other Asian countries. Since 1992, the Indonesian

government has adopted the MABIMS criteria for determining the beginning of the month using Imkan ar-Rukyat (Fitriyani et al., 2024).

In the Imkan ar-Rukyat criteria, there are several provisions, namely first, the height of the moon must be at least 2° at Maghrib; second, the distance of the moon from the sun (elongation angle) at Maghrib must be at least 3°; third, the age of the moon at Maghrib must be at least 8 hours after ijtima (Karim & Mahsun, 2024). Thus, if the height of the new moon does not meet the criteria, then the requirements for the beginning of the month have not been achieved. This criterion has been applied for quite a long time in Indonesia, but agreement regarding the criteria for the beginning of the month in Indonesia is still difficult to realize. On 2 - 4 August 2016, a follow-up meeting was held regarding the muzakarah rukyat and Islamic tawwim of MABIMS member countries which was held with the main agenda of determining the criteria for the start of the Hijri month in the form of an academic text which proposed astronomical criteria for determining the start of the Hijri month 2,3,8 (old MABIMS criteria), proposed in the draft muzakarah decision with new criteria: minimum hilal height of 3 degrees and minimum elongation of 6.4 degrees. With the emergence of new criteria (Neo MABIMS), namely the height of the crescent moon 3º and elongation 6.4º. Its implementation in Indonesia began in 2022 AD, so this has become a special concern in society in determining the months of Ramadan and Shawwal 1443 (Karim & Mahsun, 2024).

In general, in determining the beginning of the lunar month, both for Ramadan, Syawal, and Zulhijah, there are often differences between the government and Muhammadiyah. This is due to differences in the criteria and concepts used. Muhammadiyah as the second largest religious organization in Indonesia with many followers, so the differences in determining the beginning of the month are more visible. Muhammadiyah still uses the Wujud al-Hilal criteria and the KHGT concept, these concepts sometimes cause differences with the government in determining the beginning of the month (Alifta, 2024). The criteria for the crescent moon consist of several things, namely: 1) Conjunction or Ijtimak, which is the meeting of the sun, earth, and moon on the same line in one synodic month (about 29 days) which occurs before sunset; 2) The moon sets after the sun, with this criterion, the first condition requires ijtimak or conjunction to occur before sunset on the 29th of the current month. Which means, if ijtimak occurs before sunset, then the conditions for starting the month have not been met. The second condition is that the crescent must set after the sun, in other words, if on the afternoon of the 29th of the current month the crescent sets before the sun, then the beginning of the month has not begun. Astronomically, this means that on the 29th, the height of the moon must have a positive value of at least 0°. So, for Wujud al-Hilal, if the height of the crescent is at least 0° or more, then the following day is

considered the beginning of a new month (Soderi et al., 2024).

In determining the beginning of the Islamic month, several criteria are considered as factors in determining the beginning of the lunar month, namely: (1) The *Ijtima'* criterion, where this criterion does not consider the position of the hilal (crescent moon). This opinion is taken from astronomical theory which states that the hilal (new moon) occurs when the sun and moon are in a state of *ijtima'* (conjunction). This theory is based on the *ijtima' qabla ghurub* criterion, namely: the beginning of the month or new moon will occur when there has been an *ijtima'* event before sunset, even if the hilal is still below the horizon or the hilal sets before the sun. Based on this result, the *ijtima'* occurs before sunset, so the evening has entered the 1st day of the new month. However, if the *ijtima'* occurs after sunset, then the evening is still the 30th day of the ongoing month. (2) The qabla al-Fajr criterion is the criterion for the change of months in the Islamic calendar if the *ijtima'* (conjunction) event occurs before dawn. If this occurs, then from dawn on that day, the first day of the new month has begun. And if *ijtima'* occurs after dawn, then the morning is still the 30th day of the ongoing month. This theory considers the position of the moon/hilal. (3) The *ijtima' qabla nishf al-nahar* criterion is the criterion for the change of months in the Islamic calendar, where if the conjunction occurs before noon, then from that day it is the 30th day of the ongoing month. The *Qabl Nishf al-Layl* criterion is the criterion for the change of months in the Islamic calendar if the *ijtima'* (conjunction) occurs before midnight. If this happens, then from that night, the 1st day of the new month has begun. Conversely, if the *ijtima'* occurs after midnight, then that night remains the 30th day of the ongoing month. (Herman et al., 2024).

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Implications of Accuracy in the Perspective of Maqashid Syariah in the Isbat Session

Keakuratan dalam Perspektif Maqashid Syariah

Accuracy in determining the initial kamariyah is very important to avoid division among Muslims, the isbat session is an official institution that has the authority to decide based on the results of rukyat and hisab, the decision made must be based on considerations from both scientific and sharia aspects. Maqasid as-syariah has the goal and purpose of Islamic law, namely to achieve the welfare of humanity, so in the context of determining the initial kamariyah, maqasid as-syariah becomes very relevant because its influence is not only on a person's worship but also on the social and cultural life of Muslims (Al Jufri et al., 2021). The initial determination of the kamariyah cannot be separated from the methods and concepts believed in by large mass organizations in Indonesia such as the concept of wujudul hilal and the concept of imkanurrukyat, where each has a different organizational principle such as Nahdhatul Ulama which applies the principle of solidarity and unity of the people in determining the initial kamariyah which is one of the principles of maqasid as-syariah, namely placing collective interests and the welfare of the people above individuals. On the other hand, Muhammadiyah is a reformist organization, more likely to highlight aspects of justice and accuracy in this determination, in line with the values of maqashid Syariah which emphasize social justice and diversity (Yustisiabel et al., 2024). These differences in views reflect the social dynamics in Indonesian society, where the diversity of interpretations of the maqashid Syariah creates various approaches to determining the beginning of the lunar month. The basic principle of Maqasid as-Syariah is a philosophical framework that underlies all laws and policies in Islam that includes several concepts of public interest, justice and the welfare of humanity. That the sharia is revealed in general without specializing in one particular field. So maqashid al-Syariah are values that become references for determining laws and values that are universal and not specific to one or two legal cases. This can be seen from the

inclusion of maqashid as-Syariah as one of the discussions of the science of ushul fiqh by Juwaini, who divides maqashid as-Syariah into three categories, namely dharuriyat (primary needs), hajiyat (secondary needs), and tahsiniyat (primary needs). According to him, the basic division of Sharia is divided into five types, namely, first, the law whose illat is understood, second, the law related to the interests of the general public, third, the law that is not related to the interests of the general public. fourth, the law that is not based on dharuriyat and interests, but is sunnah to implement it and fifth, the law that is not intended to have any purpose at all (either in the form of dharuriyat or hajiyat) (Muhazir, 2021).

Primary needs are fundamental in the needs for the benefit of the general public such as the accuracy of the determination of the beginning of the lunar month which is included in Hifz al-din or called religious protection, that the accuracy of the determination of the beginning of this lunar month ensures that Muslims can carry out worship properly. For example, after making observations and conducting a comprehensive isbat session by collecting observation data, Muslims will be able to carry out fasting with full awareness and sincerity. Then Hifz al-Nafs, namely protection of the soul, where health and safety of the soul with the accuracy of the right determination will greatly enable Muslims to prepare themselves physically and mentally to undergo fasting by following a healthy diet and not endangering health in undergoing fasting for a whole month. Hifz al-aql, protection of reason. Accuracy in determining the beginning of the lunar month greatly contributes to the understanding and appreciation of the people regarding the time and cycle of life, with the accuracy of the right determination, Muslims will plan all life activities, both from the beginning to the end (Pahutar et al., 2024).

Implications for Istbat Session Decisions

The implementation of the isbat session carried out by the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia is an effort to bring together the understanding of hisab and rukyat experts in Indonesian society, especially among scholars and experts, to discuss matters that might be considered to cause conflict in determining Islamic holy days. Thus, the BHR (Rukyat Hisab Agency) was formed on August 16, 1972, chaired by Sa'adoeddin Djambek. The isbat session began with a presentation of the results of the hisab of the beginning of the lunar month, and while waiting for the rukyat report from various places that conducted observations of the beginning of the month throughout Indonesia. The Minister of Religious Affairs then determined the beginning of the lunar month based on the hisab data from the Rukyat Hisab

Agency of the Ministry of Religious Affairs and reports of the implementation of rukyat from throughout Indonesia. Differences often occur due to the interpretation of the hadith text which is the guideline in determining the beginning of the lunar month, such as the word ro'a which means to see and is understood by followers of the rukyat school of thought, the meaning of rukyat bil fi'li (Rukyat et al., 2024), When the implementation of the situation changed due to cloudy weather or the crescent condition was covered by clouds, then the 29th of Sha'ban was perfected to 30 days (istikmal). While rukyat bil aqli (hisab), stated that the height of the crescent was above 0 degrees, so tomorrow was set as the 1st of the lunar month (Indayati et al., n.d.).

Therefore, the issue of determining the beginning of the lunar month is included in the issue of fiqh dzanny or fiqh ijtihadi infiradi (Huda, 2022). Therefore, government intervention is needed. Even at the beginning of the year on January 24, 2004, the Indonesian Ulema Council issued a fatwa, where the fatwa gave the government the authority to determine 1 Ramadan, Shawwal and Zulhijjah and all Muslims in Indonesia are required to obey the provisions of the Indonesian government regarding the Determination of the months of Ramadan, Shawwal and Zulhijjah.

As Allah SWT says in the Qur'an surah an-Nisa (4): 59

ٓ ۞ يَٰٓأَيُّهَا ٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوٓاْ أَطِيعُواْ ٱللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُواْ ٱلرَّسُولَ وَأُوْلِي ٱلۡأَمۡرِ مِنكُمۡۖ فَإِن تَنَٰزَعۡتُمۡ فِي شَيۡءٖ فَرُدُّوهُ إِلَى ٱللَّهِ وَٱلرَّسُو
لِ

إِن كُنتُمۡ تُؤۡمِنُونَ بِٱللَّهِ وَٱلۡيَوۡمِ ٱلۡأٓخِرِۚ ذَٰلِكَ خَيۡرٞ وَأَحۡسَنُ تَأۡوِيلًا ۝٥٩

The translation

O you who believe, obey Allah and obey (His) Messenger, and the ulil amri among you. Then, if you have different opinions about something, then return it to Allah (the Koran) and the Messenger (sunnah), if you truly believe in Allah and the Last Day. That is more important (for you) and the consequences are better.

In the rules of ushul fiqh, which is a strong basis regarding the position of the government/umarah, where the authority to determine the beginning of the lunar month is in the hands of the Minister of Religion as the government.

تصرف الامام على الرعية منوط بالمصلحة

It means

The priest's actions towards his people must be linked to benefit.

The above rule is specifically in the field of government which concerns the leader's policy towards his people, therefore the leader's actions must aim to provide human benefit, both attracting goodness and preventing harm to his people (Rofiq et al., 2021). Jika tindakan kebaikan pemimpinnya ditafsirkan menyalahi aturan dan kibijakan peraturan, maka dalam hal ini perlu increased

by internal deliberation in discussing the policy, because in any case the government is the voice of the people. The government must take the best policy for its people, not prioritizing groups or individuals but reflecting the universal interests of society.

then from several things, the isbat session has broad implications, the MUI fatwa and recommendations become operational standards in determining the beginning of the lunar month, the relationship between the two reflects a harmonious relationship between religious authorities and the government. Reducing the potential for division or differences in religious practices in society

From several things, the implications of the isbat session decision can be made in three factors, namely:

a. Persatuan Umat

Islam upholds the value of unity and oneness among its people, there are quite a lot of verses in the Qur'an that explain unity, among them is surah al-Hujarat (49): 10 which reads:

إِنَّمَا ٱلۡ م ؤ مِنُونَ إِ أَخۡوَ ة فَأ أَص لِ حوا۟ بَيۡنَ أَخَوَيۡ ك ٱ ّم وَٱتَّقُوا۟ ٱللَّ لَعَلَّ ك م تُ رۡحَ مُونَ ١٠

The translation

Believers are truly brothers. Therefore, reconcile (improve relations) between your two brothers and fear Allah, so that you may receive mercy (Mu'min et al., 2024).

The isbat session is an official process carried out by religious authorities to determine the beginning of the lunar month, which consists of astronomy experts, religious figures and religious organizations in taking a policy of starting the 1st as the beginning of the Hijri month, to provide benefits (maslaha) to the community who carry out worship rituals. As stated by the Director General of Islamic Community Guidance at the Indonesian Ministry of Religion, Abu Rokhmad, "the isbat session aims to determine nationally when Muslims will carry out fasting and when to end it, although several religious organizations have announced their respective schedules. This decision was taken by the government through the isbat session which is a reference for the community in carrying out fasting (Ali, 2025).

Considering the balanced role of the state and religion, the Indonesian government facilitates the Isbat Session. This does not mean that the state interferes excessively in religious affairs; on the contrary, it serves as an example and reference for Muslims in carrying out their worship. Thus, the Isbat Session is also evidence of the state's role in maintaining harmony and unity between religious communities in Indonesia (Ali, 2025). With the implementation can also reduce division, if the decision is taken collectively and recognized by the majority of the people, this can reduce tension and conflict that may arise due

to differences in determining the day. In addition, it also creates a space for dialogue and collaboration, which in turn can increase the sense of togetherness among Muslims, when all elements involved in the determination process are for the benefit of the people.

a. Justice

The isbat session recognizes various methods in determining the beginning of the lunar month, both through observation (rukyat) and astronomical calculations (hisab), so by accommodating these two methods, it will create justice for various groups of people who may have different views on how to determine the beginning of the lunar month, the involvement of elements of scholars and experts is to provide opinions and analysis that the decisions taken are the result of mature considerations and are based on scientific knowledge, thus creating a sense of justice in determining the law.

b. Legal Certainty

With the determination made, it produces an official decision that is recognized by religious authorities. This decision provides legal certainty for Muslims in carrying out worship. So with a clear decision from the religious authorities, the people will not be confused or doubtful about the time of worship. It can also minimize differences of opinion to maintain the unity of the people and avoid conflicts that may arise due to differences in determining the time of worship.

4. Conclusion

The implementation of *rukyatulhilal* is one of the methods in determining the beginning of the lunar month, which often occurs in its implementation, the accuracy in seeing the crescent of the young moon, especially when added with several factors such as location weather (light pollution) which can affect the results of *rukyat* which has the potential to cause differences in determining the beginning of the lunar month. The *isbat* session plays an important role in deciding the results of *rukyat*, gathering scholars, astronomy experts to reach an agreement, the decision does not only depend on the results of observations, but also considers astronomical data from the hisab method.

In the perspective of *maqasid* Sharia, determining the beginning of the lunar month must consider several important aspects, namely: *hifz ad-din* (maintaining religion) which demands certainty and uniformity in the implementation of worship, as well as government policies or officials who have the right to decide on something good for the benefit of society (*tassharuf al-imam ala arra'iyyah manuthu bil mashlahah*).

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