

JUDICIAL TRANSFORMATION AND INSTITUTIONAL INDEPENDENCE IN EARLY ISLAM: EVIDENCE FROM THE RIGHTLY GUIDED CALIPHS

Ifah Luthfiah, Supardin, Muh. Rusdi T

Universitas Islam Negeri Alauddin Makassar

email: ilfahluthfiah417@gmail.com, supardin.pati@uin-alauddin.ac.id,

rusdithahir@gmail.com

Abstract

This study aims to analyze the transformation of the Islamic judicial system during the era of the Rightly Guided Caliphs. This research is grounded in the urgency of understanding the development of the Islamic legal system following the passing of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), where the complexity of social challenges spurred the emergence of fresh dynamics in judicial institutions. The primary focus is on the transformation of the judicial system, which shifted from the singular authority of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) to a more structured framework during the era of the Khulafa al-Rashidin (Rightly Guided Caliphs). This study is positioned as a comparative-historical analysis, using that classical period as a foundation for advancing contemporary Islamic judicial management. The applied approach employs descriptive qualitative methods through library research, supplemented by content analysis of primary and secondary sources. The findings reveal that the judicial patterns during Abu Bakr's time retained the simplicity of the prophetic era, but underwent a striking transformation under Umar bin Khattab, marked by the separation of judicial functions from the executive and the appointment of independent judges (qadhi). This development continued under Uthman and Ali through the reinforcement of procedural justice principles and the integrity of judges. Overall, the era of the Khulafa al-Rashidin laid the foundation for the supremacy of law, consultative mechanisms (shura), and the independence of judicial institutions, which remain relevant to this day. These findings contribute to contemporary debates on Islamic legal governance by demonstrating that judicial independence has deep historical roots in early Islamic political structures.

Keywords: Islamic judicial system, khulafa al-rasyidin, legal dynamics



Abstrak

Studi ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis transformasi sistem peradilan Islam selama era Khulafaur Rasyidin. Penelitian ini didasari oleh urgensi pemahaman terhadap perkembangan sistem hukum Islam pasca-meninggalnya Rasulullah SAW, di mana kerumitan tantangan sosial mendorong munculnya dinamika segar dalam lembaga peradilan. Fokus pembahasan utama tertuju pada transformasi sistem peradilan, yang beralih dari wewenang tunggal Nabi Muhammad SAW menjadi kerangka lebih terstruktur pada era Khulafa al-Rasyidin. Penelitian ini diposisikan sebagai kajian komparatif-historis, dengan menjadikan periode klasik tersebut sebagai landasan bagi kemajuan pengelolaan peradilan Islam kontemporer. Pendekatan yang diterapkan berupa metode deskriptif kualitatif melalui penelitian pustaka (library research), dilengkapi analisis isi terhadap sumber-sumber primer maupun sekunder. Temuan dari pembahasan mengungkap bahwa pola peradilan semasa Abu Bakar masih mempertahankan kesederhanaan dari masa kenabian, tetapi mengalami transformasi mencolok pada zaman Umar bin Khattab, ditandai dengan pemisahan fungsi yudikatif dari eksekutif serta penunjukan hakim (qadhi) yang mandiri. Perkembangan ini dilanjutkan pada masa Utsman dan Ali melalui pengukuhan prinsip keadilan berbasis prosedur serta keutuhan integritas hakim. Secara keseluruhan, era Khulafa al-Rasyidin telah meletakkan fondasi supremasi hukum, mekanisme musyawarah (shura), serta kemandirian institusi peradilan yang terus relevan hingga kini. Temuan-temuan ini berkontribusi pada perdebatan kontemporer mengenai tata kelola hukum Islam dengan menunjukkan bahwa kemandirian yudisial memiliki akar sejarah yang dalam dalam struktur politik Islam awal.

Kata kunci: peradilan hukum Islam, khulafa al-rasyidin, dinamika hukum.

Introduction

Justice is regarded as the highest pinnacle of all beauty in human life, while tyranny is positioned as the lowest point of morality. Within the framework of Islamic governance, this justice is institutionalized through the judicial authority or *sulthah qadha'iyah*. The importance of justice in Islam is so fundamental that it is acknowledged as a core issue recognized by humanity since the dawn of its capacity for thought, for human welfare can only be achieved when a sense of justice is truly upheld. (Azhar, 2022). History shows that the foundation of these principles of justice was laid during the prophetic era, and it achieved a striking dynamic development during the era of the Khulafaur Rasyidin. Understanding the enforcement of justice in the early period of

Islam is very important for comprehending the evolution of Islamic law, which developed from a simple form into a more complex and structured administrative system.

In the early period of Islamic statehood, the executive, legislative, and judicial powers were fully integrated and centralized in the person of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). After his passing, the leadership transition experienced by the Muslim community gave rise to new challenges in legal regulation and the administration of justice. (Sultan, 2013). The Period of the Rashidun Caliphs (632-661 CE) marked a crucial phase in which the caliphs had to respond to territorial expansion and social complexity by developing a judicial system that remained grounded in the values of tawhid and justice. (Desfianti, Amilia, & Hubaidah, 2026). That dynamic illustrates that the judiciary is not merely a rigid and static institution, but rather something that continuously evolves in accordance with the demands of society and the political stability of its era.

Previous studies on Islamic history have tended to emphasize territorial expansion; however, analysis of judicial institutions provides deeper insights into the internal stability of Muslim society. Experts note that unrest was primarily addressed through the handling of apostasy during the era of Abu Bakar, whereas a more rapid judicial administrative structure began to be concretely established during the time of Umar bin Khattab, alongside the development of Islamic territorial authority. (Desfianti et al., 2026). Among Islamic legal scholars, there is intense debate regarding the disclosure of that authority; some of them state that the independence of the judicial institution began to form when the caliph's responsibilities increasingly diminished, thus leading to the emergence of the appointment of special judges in various regions. (Sultan, 2013).

While previous studies have predominantly focused on territorial expansion and political consolidation during the era of the Rightly Guided Caliphs, limited attention has been given to the transformation of judicial institutions and the emergence of judicial independence. This study addresses this gap by examining how legal authority evolved from a centralized prophetic model into a more institutionalized and structured judicial system.

The literature review reveals a debate regarding the essence of justice within the Islamic context, which is typically reflected

in the differing perspectives between rationalist and traditionalist groups. The Ash'ariyah view asserts that justice is entirely Allah's prerogative, wherein the role of human reason is limited to supporting the interpretation of sacred texts (such as the Qur'an and Hadith). In contrast, the Mu'tazilah group prioritizes rational reasoning in interpreting revelation to achieve justice optimally (Azhar, 2022).

Previous studies have examined Islamic justice from theological perspectives (e.g., Ash'ariyah vs Mu'tazilah), while others have focused on political expansion. However, fewer studies have explored the institutional transformation of judicial authority as a response to socio-political complexity. This study positions itself within institutional legal history by analyzing the evolution of judicial independence in early Islam.

This discussion is highly relevant to the dynamics of negotiation during the era of the Khulafaur Rasyidin, as those caliphs frequently engaged in legal *ijtihad* by integrating a profound understanding of the verses of the Al-Qur'an with practical logical needs to resolve societal conflicts. The author argues that the judicial dynamics at that time embodied the concept of "living justice," namely the adaptive and flexible application of law, yet still bound by the principles of divine ethics.

The research in this article adopts a qualitative approach through a descriptive-analytical design based on library research (library research). Data collection was conducted by examining various Islamic historical literature, scientific journals, and classical legal texts that illustrate judicial practices during the era of the first four Rightly Guided Caliphs. A critical analysis was applied to the legal policies implemented by those caliphs in order to uncover patterns in the evolution of judicial institutions. The research process includes the identification of relevant primary sources, grouping of data based on each caliph's leadership period, and in-depth interpretation of the interconnections between political policies and judicial independence during that era.

This research specifically discusses the unique contributions made by each caliph to the development of the Islamic legal tradition. For example, Umar bin Khattab's separation of judicial power from executive power is considered unimportant in upholding neutral and objective law enforcement. Similarly,

during the era of Utsman bin Affan, the process of standardizing the Qur'anic text has provided a more solid legal foundation for judges in resolving court cases. (Najib, 2020). Even though Ali bin Abi Thalib's leadership era was filled with internal conflicts, the principle of justice was still upheld strictly through his exemplary handling of political opponents fairly before the law. (Desfianti et al., 2026). The uniqueness analysis in this article lies in the transformation of spiritual and practical dimensions, which distinguishes it from previous studies that only focused on purely formal-legal elements.

The dynamics of the judicial system during the era of the Khulafaur Rasyidin illustrate that Islamic law is flexible, not rigid, and capable of adapting to social dynamics. The transition from the model proposed during Abu Bakar's time to the specialization of judicial roles (qadhi) in Umar bin Khattab's era was not merely an administrative reform, but a tangible manifestation of the principle of legal adaptation to the expansion of geographical territories and cultural diversity. The independence of the judges, successfully maintained by those caliphs despite pressures from executive power, serves as a crucial lesson that judicial integrity is an essential foundation for sustaining public trust in state institutions.

In addition, the close relationship between theological principles and their practical application in law has shaped a judicial system that is both humanistic and religious. According to the author, the integration of rational *ijtihad* by the caliphs with revelatory texts produced advanced legal solutions for their time, for example, in resolving disputes over spoils of war land or protecting the civil rights of non-Muslims. This fact demonstrates that from the early days of the profession, Islam has established very high standards for judicial ethics, where inner honesty is prioritized over mere formal procedures. This study further reinforces that the value framework in the Islamic interpretive model from the early period remains relevant as a reference for reforming contemporary legal systems.

This study holds significant meaning because the Islamic leadership model during the early period is relevant to the challenges of the judiciary in the modern era, particularly in the Indonesian context. The dynamics of the judiciary during the time of the Khulafaur Rasyidin can be studied by legal experts to

uncover the foundations of the concept of judicial independence as well as efforts to protect vulnerable groups according to Islamic legal teachings. (Sultan, 2013). Furthermore, this research underscores that the fair enforcement of the law without favoritism serves as the primary foundation for national stability a principle that was effectively implemented thousands of years ago and remains the foremost aspiration for contemporary society.

To conclude this introductory section, the primary focus of this research centers on an in-depth analysis of how the dynamics of Islamic judiciary during the era of the Khulafaur Rasyidin established the foundations of Islamic civilization, grounded in the principles of justice, social enforcement, and tawhid. This study aims to analyze the transformation of the Islamic judicial system during the era of the Rightly Guided Caliphs, particularly focusing on institutional independence, legal adaptation, and judicial integrity.

Based on the legal institutionalism framework (North, 1990), the development of the judiciary during the era of the Khulafaur Rasyidin exhibits a pattern of path dependence, wherein Islamic legal institutions evolved gradually from informal precedents in the time of the Prophet toward a formal structure. External changes, such as territorial expansion, served as the primary drivers. This was not merely continuity, but rather a process of layering new rules for more efficient adaptation, thereby ensuring the continuity of law amid social dynamics.

Research Method

This research employs a qualitative research type with a descriptive-analytical approach focused on historical-comparative study. The research location is conceptual through library research (*studi pustaka*), examining literature covering the classical period of the leadership of the Khulafa al-Rashidin (632–661 CE) as the primary unit of analysis. Data sources are classified into primary sources consisting of classical legal texts and secondary sources comprising relevant scientific journals and books on Islamic history. Data collection techniques are conducted through documentation by identifying, grouping, and interpreting data based on the leadership periodization of each caliph. Furthermore, data analysis techniques utilize content analysis performed critically to uncover patterns of evolution, transformation of legal policies, and dynamics of judicial

institutions from the prophetic era to the contemporary period. The analytical framework of this research is grounded in the theory of judicial independence, the principle of the supremacy of law, and the concept of adaptive legal *ijtihad* in response to socio-political changes.

Discussion

The judiciary serves as the primary instrument in any civilizational framework, acting as the main bulwark in upholding justice and societal order. In Islamic history, the transition of leadership from the prophetic era to the time of the Rashidun Caliphs marked the beginning of extensive adaptations in legal administration, paralleling the expansion of territorial dominion and increasingly intense intercultural encounters. That period not only bridged the transformation from the theological realm to institutional forms but also became a testing ground for the emergence of diverse *ijtihad* that addressed the complexities of the time, while steadfastly preserving the essence of absolute justice. Understanding the dynamics of the judiciary during this period is profoundly important, as the judicial principles established in the 7th century continue to form the moral and legal foundation influencing the long trajectory of world civilization to this day.

The Era of Caliph Abu Bakar Ash-Shiddiq: Consolidation and Continuity

The endurance of Islamic civilization after the passing of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). As the first caliph, he shouldered a heavy responsibility to maintain the stability of a community still bound by its sacred oaths, while addressing the risks of division. The loss of the Prophet was not merely the absence of a leader, but also a trial for the resilience of the newly emerging legal system. From a legal perspective, this period is regarded as a transitional phase that combined conservative and creative elements; the planning system implemented essentially continued the patterns pioneered by Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), albeit urgently adapted to the prevailing political conditions at the time. (Susandi, 2022). Abu Bakar's conservatism is reflected in his steadfast commitment to adhering to the Prophet's precedents without any deviation, while his creativity is evident in swiftly and wisely addressing novel legal issues that

had never arisen before. This approach demonstrates how he preserved the essence of the Sharia while adapting to the new post-prophetic realities.

The judicial patterns of that era still maintained the characteristics of structurally dominant unified authority. A clear delineation of executive and judicial functions had not yet been formalized in an independent bureaucracy, as Abu Bakar's government's primary priority was strengthening the ummah internally. This was highly relevant given the emergence of the riddah (apostasy) movement, false prophets, and refusals to pay zakat, which shook the central authority in Madinah. Judicial power was viewed as an inseparable part of the political leadership's trust, where justice was enforced directly by the head of state as an absolute obedience to Islamic Sharia. The formal establishment of a judicial institution was not considered an urgent priority, given the still limited Islamic territory and the ease of direct access for the public to the highest leader. The Arab society at that time lived in tight-knit communities, so the need for complex bureaucratic structures was not yet pressing compared to the need for firm and just leadership.

During the era of the Rashidun Caliphs, the centralization of power became the defining characteristic to preserve the overall unity of the legal system. Abu Bakar Ash-Shiddiq assumed a crucial dual role as the supreme leader of the state (*ulil amri*) and chief judge resolving cases at the center of government, namely Madinah. Legal disputes among Madinah residents or major cases reported from other regions were always brought directly to the caliph without complicated intermediaries. This dominance illustrates that, in the early caliphate, the personal integrity of the leader formed the most important foundation for upholding justice in society (Wahab, Asni, & Ridwan, 2021). Public trust was strongly fostered when their issues were decided by the figure emotionally closest to them and most understanding of the Prophet's leadership style (peace be upon him). Consequently, widespread tranquility and stability were felt among the ummah, laying the foundation for Islam's subsequent expansion.

Despite holding such a dominant central role, Abu Bakar did not make legal decisions arbitrarily. He fully realized that the absence of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) meant the

loss of direct revelation to address new issues arising from rapid social changes. Thus, he pioneered collective *ijtihad* as a democratic, inclusive, and fully accountable legal approach. If a case lacked a clear solution in the Qur'an or Sunnah, personal decisions based on subjective opinions were not made hastily; instead, senior companions were gathered for in-depth consultation (Awaliah & Santalia, 2022). This step ensured that legal truth emerged from the intellectual filtration of many experienced experts, not merely the will of a single ruler. This consultation process was not mere formality but a mechanism to build consensus and avoid misinterpretations of the Sharia.

These consultations involved major figures with high scholarly credibility, such as Umar bin Khattab, Ali bin Abi Thalib, and Utsman bin Affan, all principal companions of the Prophet. The discussion process aimed to achieve collective agreement, later known in *usul fiqh* as *ijma'*. This visionary step by Abu Bakar laid the groundwork for systematic, organized, and sustainable Islamic legal *ijtihad*. By involving companions with deep understanding of the spirit of Sharia (*maqashid al-shari'ah*), Abu Bakar ensured that every legal product remained within the corridor of Islamic principles despite the continuously changing post-prophetic social context (Munthe, 2025). This approach guaranteed that the resulting law was the product of filtered thought from various *fiqh* experts, not solely the ruler's will, thereby strengthening legal legitimacy in the eyes of the *ummah*.

This robust legitimacy was granted by the principle of collective *ijtihad* to every legal decision produced by the Islamic state. The caliph's decisions were viewed by the public not as products of personal desires or short-term political agendas, but as the fruits of deep reflection by leading *fiqh* experts of the time. This dynamic illustrates that, although a formal judicial institution had not yet been established independently or separated from the executive branch (as in modern power diplomacy), essentially, the process of legal discovery was licensed by oversight and balance mechanisms (checks and balances) through input from principal companions, often critical yet constructive. These discussions created a healthy and productive arena for legal dialectics, where every argument was rigorously tested against strong evidence from the Qur'an and Sunnah before being finalized as binding legal rulings.

In terms of appointing judges, Abu Bakar's simplicity in legitimately delegating tasks without needing complex and excessive bureaucracy serves as an exemplary model. Although power remained in the caliph's hands, trusted companions began to be delegated to effectively manage daily judicial affairs. The most striking policy was assigning legal responsibilities to Umar bin Khattab. This appointment did not imply that Umar held a formal bureaucratic judicial position with complete written administration as in later periods, but rather as the caliph's chief assistant focused on handling complaints and cases from minor to moderate levels in society (Tumangger, 2023). This delegation reflected Abu Bakar's recognition of Umar's intellectual capabilities and firmness in upholding justice, which proved effective in maintaining order.

Interestingly, during Umar bin Khattab's tenure as Abu Bakar's "assistant judge," the number of cases reaching the court was recorded as very minimal and rare. This phenomenon was not due to weaknesses in the system's detection of cases but rather the high level of moral integrity and religious piety among Madinah society at the time. Profound taqwa drove individuals to prioritize honesty, mutual forgiveness, and peaceful resolution (*ishlah*) over publicizing disputes. The faith quality of the early believing generation served as the primary pillar safeguarding the stability of this simple judicial system, where law was more deeply internalized in the hearts of the faithful than stored in stacks of formal documents. This integrity acted as a natural fortress against social conflicts.

In addition to the society's exceptionally high morality, the low number of cases was also influenced by Abu Bakar's leadership style, which was so close and accessible to his people. His persuasive approach and the leaders' integrity firmness enabled early prevention of potential social conflicts through family and community mediation. The trust-based reciprocal relationship between rulers and the public made the judiciary's role more preventive and educational, rather than merely imposing punishments or material sanctions (Habib, 2025). For Abu Bakar, the judicial function was seen as a tool to reconcile humanity and guide them back to the path of truth, not just a rigid state enforcement mechanism.

Geographically, the judicial system patterns in regions

outside Madinah consistently followed the model of the central government. Governors (walis) sent to remote areas like Yemen, Bahrain, or other Arabian interiors were not only responsible for zakat collection, tax management, and security forces command but also acted as local fair judges. Abu Bakar's general instructions to them were to always rely on the Qur'an and Sunnah in resolving disputes, performing ijihad if essential, while referring to decisions established from Madinah. Despite very limited communication due to technological constraints, this approach produced remarkable legal harmony between the center and regions.

The continuity of the judicial system from the era of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) to Abu Bakar's time was concretely embodied in courtroom proof mechanisms. The basic principles formulated by the Prophet namely, the plaintiff's obligation to provide evidence (al-bayyinah) and the defendant's obligation to take an oath when denying claims (al-yamin) were consistently applied by Abu Bakar without compromise. These simple yet fundamental procedural rules were strictly upheld to prevent legal decisions from injustice or undue protection of power. In adjudicating cases, Abu Bakar always acted cautiously and prudently; he preferred to acquit unproven defendants rather than wrongly punish the innocent. This stance affirmed that the essence of Islamic law remained intact, despite the politically challenging and intimidating conditions from Islam's enemies.

During Abu Bakar's leadership, Islamic dynamics were marked by firm crackdowns on legal violations threatening the religion's foundations and overall state stability. Refusal to pay zakat, for example, was met with decisive legal measures by Abu Bakar, including military force through the Riddah Wars. In the public law view at the time, such actions were considered rebellion against the newly formed Islamic state's constitution and social bonds. This policy underscored that the judiciary was not limited to resolving individual disputes like debts or inheritance divisions but was also responsible for upholding public legal honor and religious institutions' rights to achieve broader common welfare (Aulia, 2025). For Abu Bakar, enforcing public law became the primary foundation to save the ummah from fatal division risks.

From a physical administration perspective, although no

luxurious, dedicated, permanent courthouse buildings were constructed, the mosque remained utilized as a sacred center for judicial activities, equal for all societal strata. In the mosque courtyard, Abu Bakar sat simply to directly hear public complaints, receive reports from remote regions, and issue legal rulings openly and transparently. Using the mosque as a public arena for judicial processes created an image of transparency, openness, and accessibility for anyone seeking justice. There were no rigid formal procedures hindering ordinary people; every individual, regardless of social, ethnic, or wealth background, was given equal opportunity to voice their concerns directly before the caliph and fairly advocate for their usurped rights.

Philosophically, Abu Bakar's judicial system deeply reflected the concept of tawhid in statecraft, where God's law is the supreme authority and the leader merely its executor without pretensions. The caliph was only a facilitator for Allah's law to take root and be tangibly beneficial to all creation. Abu Bakar's consistency in following the Prophet's footsteps (peace be upon him) in legal matters provided a very solid foundation for his successors like Umar bin Khattab. He successfully proved that Islamic law could remain extant and relevant without the physical presence of the message-bearer. Without the legal stability and *ijtihad* foundation laid by Abu Bakar, the development of more complex, systematic, and professional judicial institutions under Umar might have been difficult or even directionless.

Overall, the era of Abu Bakar Ash-Shiddiq can be interpreted as a strategic "guardianship" or preservation phase, where Islamic law was strictly safeguarded to stand firm and authoritative amid post-prophetic crisis turbulence. Although no specific task divisions or complex judicial systems with dedicated buildings were evident, the essence of justice was fully realized through the spotless personal integrity of the leader, wise collective *ijtihad* application, and high societal morality as a natural social oversight (Mustin, Darussalam, & Sulaiman, 2025). This period affirms a historical principle that judicial system success is not always determined by administrative complexity but by a strong shared commitment to fundamental values of truth, honesty, and justice. Abu Bakar laid the Islamic thought foundation, which later illuminated justice for world civilization at large..

As a final analytical conclusion, the judicial dynamics in the

Rashidun Caliphs era can be understood as a fully organic legal evolution from its roots. The judiciary transformed gradually from charismatic thought-leadership into a structured and professional institution. The caliphs' success in upholding honor was achieved through their ability to balance Sharia firmness with *ijtihad* flexibility, thus addressing territorial expansion and increasing social complexities. This phenomenon affirms that judicial independence and judges' moral integrity are not mere administrative tools but essential foundations preserving Islamic law's relevance and authority amid political upheavals, while serving as an ethical benchmark for subsequent historical legal system developments.

According to legal institutionalism (Mahoney & Thelen, 2010), Abu Bakar's consolidation efforts represent the initial locking-in stage of institutions through collective *ijtihad*. This approach integrates conservatism (fidelity to the Sunnah) with creativity (new *ijma'*) to prevent disintegration. The principle of the rule of law (Dicey, 1885) is evident in the supremacy of Sharia over personal political interests, where collective deliberation ensures legal certainty (predictability) even without formal separation of powers.

These findings indicate that the judicial system during Abu Bakar's era was primarily characterized by moral authority rather than institutional structure.

The Era of Caliph Umar bin Khattab: Institutionalization and Independence

During the caliphate of Umar bin Khattab, the development of Islamic judiciary experienced its most important turning point, marked by a more firm and structured judicial power diplomacy. Unlike previous periods, where legal authority was still tightly integrated with executive leadership functions, the need for independent judicial institutions became increasingly urgent during Umar's era due to the vast expansion of Islamic territories. Umar realized that a caliph could not personally resolve all legal violations across a territory spanning from Persia to Egypt. Thus, he laid the strong foundation for Islamic judicial institutions, not only to regulate legal procedures but also to instill fundamental principles of justice. (Susandi, 2022). According to the author, this period can be referred to as the beginning of

"Constitutionalism," where the sovereignty of law began to be elevated above the political interests of the leaders.

In historical records, Umar bin Khattab is recognized as the first caliph to officially separate the executive branch of power. This revolutionary separation was implemented through the appointment of specialized judges, known as qadhi, to handle judicial duties across the vast expanse of Islamic territories. This policy ensured that a governor in a region was no longer automatically the primary authority in deciding legal matters, but rather assisted by a qadhi who possessed independent judicial authority. The primary objective of this separation of powers was to maintain the neutrality of law enforcement, allowing local rulers to be tried in court if proven to have violated the rights of the people. (Munthe, 2025). According to the author, this monumental breakthrough had anticipated modern ideas about judicial independence, which were only widely recognized in the Western world hundreds of years later.

This institutionalization was embodied by Umar as a wise response to the social complexities that arose in the newly conquered territories. The direct appointment of qadis from the caliphate's center ensured that standards of justice were applied more uniformly across the entire realm of power. Umar conducted a very rigorous selection process in determining the judges; he prioritized individuals who were not only intellectually superior in interpreting Sharia texts, but also possessed unblemished moral integrity and authority recognized by the wider society. Prominent companions such as Abu al-Darda, Shuraih al-Qadhi, and Abu Musa al-Ash'ari were entrusted by Umar to bear judicial responsibilities in various provinces. (Wahab et al., 2021).

One of the most monumental intellectual and judicial stories from that period is *Risalah al-Qadha*. An extremely detailed guide for judicial practice was formulated by Umar and iconically preserved through his letter to Abu Musa al-Ash'ari upon his appointment as qadhi in Basrah. The document is not merely an ordinary administrative compliance, but a foundational text containing principles of Islamic legal procedure which remain relevant to this day. In the *risalah*, Umar emphasized that justice is an absolute obligation and a mandatory sunnah to be adhered to, so that all parties must be treated fairly by the judge in terms

of perspective, hearing, and legal rulings. (Ulum & Alfin, 2024). Through this document, not only technical guidance provided by Umar is given, but also a very strict and noble foundation of legal professional ethics has been established.

In the Risalah al-Qadha, the principle of proof is elaborated deeply and systematically by Umar as the primary foundation of justice procedures. The core maxim he emphasized states that the full burden of proof lies entirely with the plaintiff (al-bayyinah 'ala al-mudda'i), while the oath is granted its right to the party denying the accusation (al-yamin 'ala man ankara), in order to prevent the protection of unfounded claims. This pillar of the principle plays a crucial role in safeguarding individual rights from frivolous criminalization or civil losses without strong and valid evidence. Furthermore, Umar opened space for dialectics for judges to revisit and reverse decisions deemed erroneous after new ijthad, because he viewed the courage to return to the truth as far more noble and salvific than stubbornly defending a mistake that undermines justice. (Awaliah & Santalia, 2022).

The provisions regarding the role of witnesses were formulated strictly and with utmost caution by Umar in his guidelines, in order to preserve the purity of the facts presented in the conference. The main principle emphasized by him states that every Muslim is essentially regarded as a just witness for his brother, except for those whose credibility has been legally revoked due to serious violations such as flogging for adultery cases or those recorded as having a history of giving false testimony. Umar was also highly vigilant against the risk of conflicts of interest, so witnesses with close kinship ties or special loyalties that could potentially undermine objectivity must be excluded from the court proceedings. Thus, the decisions resulting from the judge are entirely based on valid, clear facts, free from the influence of slander, pressure, or falsified testimony. (Tumangger, 2023).

The principle of ishlah (reconciliation) was made the foremost prioritized element in the judicial system pioneered by Umar bin Khattab. Any disputes, particularly those related to muamalah (transactions) between fellow Muslims, were encouraged to be resolved first through family deliberation (musyawarah), unless the peaceful agreement clearly violated Sharia for instance, by legalizing the forbidden or prohibiting the

permissible. Umar fully realized that win-lose court decisions often left remnants of hatred and resentment among the disputing parties. Therefore, a mediation and reconciliation approach was prioritized to maintain strong social harmony and unity within the community, without sacrificing the core of justice and legal certainty. At that time, the role of the qadhi (judge) was not limited merely to enforcing the law, but also as a wise mediator tasked with restoring the bonds of brotherhood among the ummah. (Habib, 2025).

In addition to procedural aspects, Umar bin Khattab also paid special attention to the welfare of judges as one of the efforts to ensure judicial independence. Umar established very substantial salaries for these judges, sourced directly from the Baitul Mal (state treasury), with the aim of protecting their integrity from the temptations of materialism and preventing bribery practices (risywah). Such a policy can be regarded as a highly advanced preventive measure for its time. When economic needs are adequately met, it is expected that a judge can direct all of his attention and conscience fully toward seeking the truth, without being disturbed by concerns about family sustenance or feelings of obligation to any parties. (Amaliyah, 2025). That policy, as noted by the author, reflects Umar's profound sociological understanding, namely that moral integrity is closely linked to financial independence.

The welfare provided by Umar to the judges was not merely in the form of wages, but also represented the state's recognition of the profession bearing such heavy responsibilities. In addition to salaries, Umar firmly established prohibitions for judges against engaging in trade activities or accepting gifts from parties likely to be involved in court cases. This firmness reflects Umar's vision that the judicial realm must be kept pure from all economic interests that could potentially undermine the neutrality of judicial decisions. A judge is required to "have settled his own personal affairs" first before deciding to save others. (Aulia, 2025).

The independence of the judicial institution during the era of Caliph Umar is clearly reflected through the enforcement of law that is just and impartial, even towards the Caliph's family and high-ranking state officials. Historical records brilliantly document Umar's firmness in applying legal sanctions to his own

son due to a violation of Sharia, which firmly asserts that the authority of the law supersedes familial emotional bonds. Such actions imply a strong message that before the court, a noble or relative of the ruler holds the same status and responsibility as ordinary citizens, without any privileges. This principle of equality before the law is not merely theoretical discourse, but a concrete implementation that made the judiciary during Umar's time highly respected, of high integrity, and fully trusted by all segments of society, both Muslims and non-Muslims under Islamic rule. (Wahab et al., 2021).

In developing law that is adaptive to the dynamics of the times, Umar facilitated a flexible and inclusive space for *ijtihad* through various intellectual discussions. He often involved senior companions experienced in law to formulate strategic policies that bring benefits to the wider society. Although general guidelines had been established, Umar still granted intellectual autonomy to the *qadhis* in the regions to carry out independent *ijtihad* when confronted with contemporary issues that lack explicit evidence in the Qur'an or Sunnah. However, such *ijtihad* is not permitted to be done arbitrarily; it must be grounded in a comprehensive understanding of the essence of Sharia and the fundamental principles of religion, utilizing analogical reasoning (*qiyas*), and fully aimed at achieving social justice through consideration of public interest (*maslahah mursalah*). (Wahab et al., 2021).

During his leadership, Umar implemented a strict system of supervision and accountability over the performance of judicial officials, with the aim of preserving the honor of the judiciary. Judges in various regions were required by him to submit periodic reports on the cases they had processed, while surprise inspections to different provinces were frequently conducted to verify that the principles of justice outlined in *Risalah al-Qadha* were upheld without any deviation. If a judge was found to deviate from the path of justice, display arrogance, or engage in conduct unbecoming of a *qadhi*, Umar would decisively remove them from their position to protect the public from oppression. Through this tight control and evaluation mechanisms, the judicial institution was safeguarded to continue fulfilling its sacred function as God's representatives on earth in realizing absolute truth and justice. (Tumangger, 2023).

During the era of Umar's leadership, the tradition of recording and documenting judicial proceedings began to be implemented administratively, laying the foundation for the orderly administration of Islamic law. Although its form was not as complex as modern archival systems, these systematic efforts to document major legal decisions significantly contributed to establishing consistency and legal certainty across the caliphate's territories. These records served as a collective memory for judicial institutions, enabling subsequent judges to refer to previous rulings as mature jurisprudential precedents in resolving similar cases. These visionary initiatives illustrate that the legal system established by Umar was not only robust in terms of substance and morality but also well-structured managerially and organizationally. (Tumangger, 2023).

The function of the judiciary was expanded to include market supervision, business ethics, and public order through the establishment of the Hisbah institution. Although qadhi (judges) were more focused on resolving civil and criminal legal disputes in courts, supporting institutions such as muhtasib (market inspectors) were created to ensure that justice and honesty were truly realized in the community's daily economic activities for example, by preventing the falsification of scales and hoarding of goods. The harmonious synergy among these institutions formed a comprehensive legal ecosystem during the era of Umar. This successful institutional integration made Islamic civilization in the era of Umar bin Khattab the pinnacle of the most inspiring enforcement of law, which continues to serve as a reference for world civilizations to this day. (Tumangger, 2023).

The judicial dynamics established by Umar bin Khattab ultimately reflect the main thesis that substantive justice can only be upheld if supported by an independent institutional structure and robust personal integrity. The transformation of the judiciary from a personal and centralized pattern toward an independent bureaucratic system is regarded by the author as an admirable intellectual achievement. Umar succeeded in positioning the law as the supreme authority that even surpasses executive power. This is evidenced by Umar's strategies in strengthening the position of judges, such as granting economic independence from Baitul Mal and establishing ethical standards through Risalah al-Qadha. Thus, Islamic civilization has long possessed a highly

advanced foundation for legal governance, which prioritizes objectivity and the protection of individual rights above the temporary political interests of local or central rulers.

Furthermore, Umar's success in building a comprehensive legal ecosystem imparts an eternal wisdom that judicial institutions do not rely solely on explicit legal provisions, but also require firm oversight and the readiness of leaders to adhere to the same rules applied to the people. The harmony between flexible *ijtihad*, meticulous administrative management, and impartial law enforcement without favoritism has been bequeathed by Umar as a model of justice that serves as the primary guide for the development of the Islamic legal system in the future. This institutional foundation and independence ensure that justice is not merely a political commitment, but a tangible social reality felt by all strata of society, thereby making it the most inspiring historical pillar in global legal civilization.

The framework of separation of powers (Montesquieu, 1748) is most suitable for the era of Umar, where the independent appointment of *qadhi* and *Risalah al-Qadha* established a clear separation between the executive and judiciary, avoiding the concentration of power as seen in previous periods. Linked to legal institutionalism (North, 1990), this represented a radical institutional transformation through layering (*risalah* and salaries from *Baitul Mal*). Meanwhile, the rule of law (Bingham, 2010) was upheld through equality before the law (punishment of Umar's son) and procedural certainty.

These findings indicate that the judicial system during Umar bin Khattab's era was primarily characterized by institutional independence and structured moral authority.

The Era of Caliph Uthman bin Affan: Formalization and Codification

The leadership era of Utsman bin Affan is regarded as a crucial phase in the development of Islamic judiciary, marking a transition from a conventional, function-oriented approach to a more structured administrative-legalistic system. As the third caliph, he inherited a vast Islamic empire with escalating social complexities far exceeding previous eras. The primary challenge was no longer power distribution as under Umar bin Khattab, but rather the formalization of state institutions to meet the legal

needs of a diverse society. In the judiciary, this period was characterized by strengthening structural foundations: enhanced documentation, standardization of legal sources, and adequate physical facilities for judicial authorities (Susandi, 2022).

Utsman's judicial system built upon Umar's foundations with administrative innovations. The independence of qadis in various regions was maintained, with consistent application of procedural legal principles from *Risalah al-Qadha*. However, population and territorial growth necessitated a more orderly structure. Emphasis on administration ensured orderliness, decisions based on clear and procedural reasoning, thereby achieving both substantive and organizational justice (Wahab et al., 2021). The key innovation was relocating court sessions from the mosque verandas used in the eras of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), Abu Bakar, and Umar to a dedicated building, *Dar al-Qadha*. Utsman's vision was to protect the sanctity of the mosque from the clamor of trials, cries of disputing parties, and tensions. This building provided privacy, authority, and comfort, distinguishing the judiciary from religious institutions (Munthe, 2025).

This separation demonstrated the specialization of state institutions. *Dar al-Qadha* became a center for managing orderly administrative documents. Utsman understood the need for a serene environment for judges to handle complex cases, establishing a precedent in Islamic governance architecture as a symbol of independent legal sovereignty in major cities (Tumangger, 2023). Another significant contribution was the codification of the Quran into the Uthmanic Mushaf, standardizing the primary legal source. Diversity in qira'at dialects risked setbacks in legal interpretation. Utsman compiled a standard authentic mushaf and distributed it to regions as the single official reference (Mustin et al., 2025). This was an essential formalization in Islamic history. The Uthmanic Mushaf stabilized judges' references to ayat al-ahkam verses, ensuring legal certainty, reducing textual variation risks, and producing widespread legal uniformity. It formed a tradition of legal literacy: proof of arguments based on state-approved written texts and the consensus (ijma') of the Companions (Awaliah & Santalia, 2022).

Utsman emphasized social justice as the foundation of state stability, linking law enforcement to economic welfare. The

judiciary controlled structured zakat distribution and protected the economic rights of vulnerable groups. True justice is difficult amid severe economic disparities. Taxation institutions ensured agrarian protection and property ownership alongside economic development and equitable wealth distribution per Sharia (Habib, 2025). The tradition of consultation (musyawarah) was preserved; legal expert Companions in Madinah were gathered to discuss new cases. A distinctive feature: emphasis on Umar-era jurisprudence as a guideline, as long as contextually appropriate. This produced continuity and public confidence in legal consistency. Utsman's firmness required evidentiary proof to protect the purity of legal sources. Caution was exercised in screening solitary hadiths (khabar wahid) with broad impact; evidence had to be verified for authenticity. Aligned with Quranic codification, this cleansed sources of doubts arising from politics or fanaticism toward the end of his leadership (Aulia, 2025).

In managing Baitul Mal and waqf, tasks were divided in detail. Special officials oversaw them, providing judicial facilities for independence. Aware of rising living costs, he ensured apparatus welfare to prevent corruption. Strict rules separated leaders' personal assets from public ones, enforced among judges (Mustin et al., 2025). Judicial standardization was uniform in Egypt, Kufa, and Syria under Madinah's supervision. Periodic communication with governor-qadis monitored progress. Transparency was upheld: public access to witness trials and hear qadi arguments. This openness maintained public trust amid peripheral slanders. Challenges: social conflicts and political accusations against officials. Utsman formed independent investigation committees of senior Companions to examine complaints. Politics granted no legal immunity; actions were transparent and evidence-based. This demonstrated checks and balances limiting the executive (Wahab et al., 2021).

Philosophically, it integrated religious steadfastness with administrative flexibility. Formalization without losing the essence of humane justice. Quranic codification and Dar al-Qadha solidified a structured, dignified Islamic legal identity. Physical-written symbols underscored the need for respect in diverse societies. It laid the foundation for legal evolution in subsequent dynasties, a pillar of stability (Susandi, 2022). Turmoil at the end of his leadership did not collapse institutions;

Utsman exemplified law-abiding conduct, rejecting military protection to avoid bloodshed, prioritizing legal certainty and ummah unity. This transformed the judiciary into a professional, documented system with the eternal standard of the Uthmanic Mushaf (Awaliah & Santalia, 2022).

Author's analysis: Utsman's formalization reflected state management maturity beyond its time. Dedicated buildings and Quranic codification built legal certainty amid territorial expansion. Justice no longer depended on personal morals but required standardized institutions and authentic references to prevent judicial authority fragmentation. Integrating legal purity with social justice positioned law as a tool for ummah stability and welfare. Judicial independence was preserved while strengthening administration. Lesson: formalization is the foundation of civilizational sustainability. This legalistic framework as a legacy ensures Islam's universal values through concrete documents and structures, an irreplaceable pillar of modern professional Islamic judiciary.

Legal institutionalism explains the formalization during the time of Uthman as an institutional conversion process, in which Dar al-Qadha transformed the function of the mosque (which was multifunctional) into one specifically judicial. Meanwhile, the Uthmanic Mushaf produced uniform formal rules to reduce regional variations. The principle of the rule of law is reflected in the certainty of legal sources and administrative transparency, which strengthened the supremacy of law over political dynamics without altering the separation of powers from the era of Umar.

These findings indicate that the judicial system during Utsman bin Affan's era was primarily characterized by formalization and codification, transitioning from functional moral authority to a structured administrative-legal framework.

The Era of Caliph Ali bin Abi Thalib: Integrity and Oversight

The leadership period of Ali bin Abi Thalib (35-40 H) was one of the most challenging eras in the history of the Rashidun Caliphs, characterized by extreme political turmoil and prolonged internal conflicts. Nevertheless, amid such suffocating chaos, Ali bin Abi Thalib elevated the standards of morality and integrity to an extraordinarily high level, surpassing previous achievements. His governance prioritized profound internal reforms,

uncompromising enforcement of the law, and restoration of state functions based on fundamental principles of justice rather than territorial expansion or development. For Ali, the state was not merely an instrument of sovereignty, but a fortress protecting the rights of the people from the abuse of power by rulers; he consistently implemented this vision, even in the face of intense political pressures that often threatened the overall stability of the system (Japri, Syamsuddin, & Hamzah, 2025).

From an administrative perspective, Ali bin Abi Thalib continued the judicial structure pioneered by his predecessors such as Abu Bakr, Umar, and Uthman, but with a sharper and more systematic emphasis on oversight and evaluation of law enforcement officials. He fully recognized that political instability often created loopholes for rogue officials to abuse their authority, whether through covert corruption or overt oppression. Therefore, he implemented an extremely rigorous and selective process for appointing judges, where proven personal integrity and deep mastery of religious knowledge were non-negotiable primary requirements. Ali viewed judges as God's representatives on earth to uphold truth, so their moral quality had to far exceed the average societal standard to ensure their decisions remained objective, just, and free from interference by family, tribe, or political power (Susandi, 2022).

In administrative management, Ali bin Abi Thalib upheld the judicial structure from previous caliphs with full commitment, yet placed greater weight on routine oversight and evaluation of law enforcers. He was acutely aware that political upheavals were often exploited by individuals for power abuses, thus judge selection policies were made exceedingly strict, with personal integrity and religious knowledge as unshakable prerequisites. For Ali, a judge was God's representative in the world to enforce truth, so their morality had to surpass general societal standards. The goal was to ensure judicial decisions were objective and free from external influences, including pressures from rulers or personal interests.

The legendary trial of the armor case stands as striking proof of Judge Shurayh's independence, as he rejected the testimony of Hasan Ali's son due to potential bias from blood ties. Ali graciously accepted the ruling in favor of the Christian citizen without complaint, setting a crucial precedent that judicial

independence was protected from executive interference. Its impact was profound: the Christian citizen ultimately converted to Islam after witnessing the great leader fully submit to the law that applied equally to all people. This event demonstrated that pure enforcement of justice is the most effective form of dawah, even more powerful than military might in spreading Islam.

Ali's firmness in overseeing the judiciary is evident from his instructional letters to governors, particularly the famous letter to Malik al-Ashtar upon his appointment as Governor of Egypt. That letter detailed the qualities of an ideal judge: unshaken by praise, gentle toward disputing parties, and bold enough to admit errors if a ruling was mistaken. Ali mandated governors to provide judges with adequate allowances to prevent bribery, while enforcing sustained high accountability. This multi-layered oversight aimed to seal all gaps of injustice across all regions, from the center to the most remote areas.

Ali bin Abi Thalib placed great emphasis on fair and transparent evidence, without secrets or fabrication. He often personally descended to provide legal advice or resolve complex cases for qadis in remote areas. His brilliance in *ijtihad* made him the primary reference for intricate legal disputes, giving rise to proverbs about the vastness of his knowledge. He stressed that judges must delve into truth to its roots, avoiding hasty rulings, especially in cases involving life or honor. This principle of caution became the hallmark of his judicial system, which prioritized human rights and prevented irreparable errors (Munthe, 2025).

Although the seat of government was moved from Medina to Kufa due to political strategy needs, Ali maintained consistent enforcement of Islamic law across all territories with strict discipline. He also tightened Baitul Mal management upon relocating to Kufa, ensuring equitable and uniform distribution of state wealth regardless of social status or political loyalty. For Ali, economic injustice was the root of legal injustice that corroded society. He frequently conducted surprise inspections of markets and public institutions to prevent fraud harming the common people. This oversight represented a disciplined development of the *Hisbah* concept, encompassing moral, economic, and administrative aspects (Habib, 2025).

Ali bin Abi Thalib's integrity was severely tested by

rebellions and brutal civil wars. Amid armed conflicts, he ordered troops to adhere to Islamic war ethics and protect civilian rights. Seizure of surrendered enemies' property was prohibited, and prisoners of war had to be treated humanely. This stance demonstrated his commitment that divine law must be upheld absolutely, even on the fiercest battlefields. His moral consistency often created dangerous political dilemmas, but he always chose truth over compromises that undermined justice (Habib, 2025).

Ali bin Abi Thalib is renowned as a pioneer in developing the science of Nahwu (Arabic grammar) to preserve the precision of Qur'anic interpretation. In Islamic law, precise linguistic understanding is crucial to avoid misinterpretations of sharia. He anticipated risks of errors from non-Arab communities embracing Islam, so his linguistic contributions indirectly strengthened Islamic judiciary in authentically interpreting laws, ensuring legal certainty for all citizens regardless of ethnicity or culture (Habib, 2025) (Habib, 2025).

In handling internal conflicts, Ali applied *ijtihad* toward the Khawarij cautiously and wisely. Despite their extreme rejection of his leadership, Ali still granted them citizenship rights as long as no violence occurred. He chose dialogue and legal arguments over harsh repression, reflecting respect for freedom of opinion within legal bounds. This persuasive judicial approach showcased Ali's maturity in managing political crises with dignity and fairness, without sacrificing tolerance (Affandi, Sultan, & Arsyad, 2023).

Baitul Mal management under Ali was grounded in full transparency and absolute accountability. He often personally cleaned the treasury warehouses and distributed their contents entirely to the people; even his own life was extremely simple, without luxuries. His personal integrity served as an effective moral oversight for other officials. When the supreme leader lived modestly, judges and governors were compelled to avoid extravagance from public wealth. Thus, Ali fostered a service-oriented organizational culture, where power was a heavy trust, not a right for personal wealth accumulation.

Ali also emphasized documentation of legal rulings and official judicial correspondence. Appointments of judges or legal directives were always recorded in detail to prevent future

disputes. Even amid war, he maintained communication with regional qadis to ensure consistent justice standards. His letters often reminded of the Day of Judgment and accountability before Allah, serving as spiritual oversight to keep the consciences of law enforcers upright, unswayed by political pressures or material temptations (Munthe, 2025).

Ali's influence on Islamic judiciary is evident from his rich jurisprudential legacy. His legal decisions are frequently referenced by subsequent generations due to their profound logical reasoning and alignment with pure sharia. He successfully integrated revelatory texts with social dynamics harmoniously. His excellence as a mujtahid among the companions ensures his thought remains studied across various fiqh schools to this day (Affandi et al., 2023).

Ali's government ended tragically with his assassination, but his judicial legacy endures as a guide for integrity-based law enforcement to this day. His decisions are referenced for their deep logic and balance with Islam's essence. He perfectly realized the integration of revelation and social reality. As a preeminent mujtahid, his thought persists in modern fiqh schools. Ali proved that justice must not bow to politics; despite being rife with conflict, legal equality and judicial independence were never sacrificed. His steadfastness makes him an eternal symbol for law enforcers resolute against group interests or power (Desfianti et al., 2026).

In conclusion, Ali bin Abi Thalib's era in Islamic judicial history highlights the role of a leader's morality as the primary overseer of law. Umar and Uthman's formal systems were perfected by Ali through judges' professional ethics and comprehensive oversight. His standards emphasize that true justice requires absolute freedom for law enforcers, supported by the example of a leader who submits to the law just like his people (Japri et al., 2025).

This analysis concludes that Ali bin Abi Thalib's era was the pinnacle of Islamic idealism, with morality as the top priority. Despite facing slander and political divisions, his success is proven: law is not a ruler's tool, but a protector of objective truth. His courage to be tried as caliph shattered ruler feudalism, offering contemporary wisdom: a leader's integrity is tested when relinquishing symbols of power before a judge.

Furthermore, his oversight strategy via ethical instructions demonstrates that judiciary depends on conscience. Ali understood that neat structures or grand buildings are futile without judges' morality. His legacy reminds us that law enforcement is a spiritual struggle for divine justice a vision relevant to modern legal systems today.

Amidst the crisis, the principle of the rule of law (Dicey, 1885) stood out during Ali's era through absolute supremacy of law (armor case: submission to Judge Shurayh). Legal institutionalism views oversight (instructional letters) as an effort to prevent drift in order to maintain institutional integrity from political deterioration. Separation of powers grew stronger thanks to judicial independence, even though the executive dominated; conceptually, the leader's morality functions as an informal institution that complements formal rules.

These findings indicate that the judicial system during Ali bin Abi Thalib's era was primarily characterized by moral integrity and comprehensive oversight rather than mere institutional expansion.

This study provides a unique contribution to understanding the evolution of the Islamic judicial system during the era of the Khulafa al-Rashidin through the lens of gradual institutional transformation, from Abu Bakar's moral consolidation to Ali bin Abi Talib's comprehensive oversight. While previous studies (e.g., Susandi, 2022) emphasize the administrative expansion of Islamic governance during territorial conquests, this study highlights the institutional transformation of judicial authority as a key driver of legal development, ensuring continuity amid post-prophetic crises. This approach not only continues the Prophet's (PBUH) legal foundation but also organically adapts it to increasingly complex socio-political dynamics.

In contrast to traditional narratives that focus on territorial expansion and military achievements (e.g., Wahab, Asni, & Ridwan, 2021), this study demonstrates that judicial independence exemplified by Umar's *Risalah al-Qadha* and Uthman's *Dar al-Qadha* was a central element in maintaining social stability and legitimacy across diverse populations. Unlike research highlighting the charismatic role of leaders (Munthe, 2025), this analysis emphasizes check-and-balances mechanisms such as collective *ijtihad* and ethical oversight, which prevented

abuses of power even without modern bureaucratic structures.

Furthermore, unlike earlier works prioritizing moral exemplars (e.g., Awaliah & Santalia, 2022), this research underscores the interplay between personal integrity and institutional formalization, as seen in Uthman's codification of the Mushaf Uthmani and Ali's rigorous oversight of qadhi accountability. These findings affirm that the success of the Islamic judiciary did not rely solely on moral authority, but on the synergy between the essence of Sharia and structural adaptation, providing an enduring model for contemporary legal systems.

Conclusion

This study finds that the judicial system during the era of the Rightly Guided Caliphs evolved from a centralized, leader-based model into a structured and independent institutional framework. The development of the judiciary during the era of the Khulafaur Rasyidin reflects a shift from personal leadership approaches to a robust state administrative system, with distinctive roles from each caliph. Abu Bakar Ash-Shiddiq ensured stability after the Prophet's passing through reinforcements inspired by the example of Rasulullah. Umar bin Khattab established the foundation for the separation of powers and compiled legal procedures through Risalah al-Qadha. Utsman bin Affan officially inaugurated judicial buildings and perfected the Mushaf Utsmani to guarantee legal certainty across vast territories. Meanwhile, Ali bin Abi Thalib upheld the supremacy of law over political interests, grounded in his moral integrity, despite being marred by civil conflicts. This success rested on a balance between the firmness of Sharia and adaptability, the principle of equality before the law especially for the highest leaders and collaborative contributions that made Islamic law a living and dynamic framework.

This synthesis illustrates that the judicial system is not a rigid bureaucracy, but rather the foundation of judicial stability that protects societal rights through reference to primary legal sources, structured procedures, and the integrity of its implementers. It carries implications that encourage further research on the influence of the Companions' fiqh on the major schools of thought during the Umayyad-Abbasid period, comparative analysis between classical Hisbah and contemporary public oversight mechanisms, as well as examination of

administrative documents from peripheral regions to map the adaptation of Madinah standards amid cultural diversity. These findings contribute to the literature on Islamic legal history by demonstrating that judicial independence has deep institutional roots in early Islamic governance, while providing insights for modern legal systems on the importance of balancing institutional structures with moral integrity. The most emphasized research findings reveal that the shift from simple judicial mechanisms to more structured systems was a prudent response to socio-political dynamics, thereby ensuring the sustainable preservation of Islamic legal justice to this day. This study is expected to offer concise and accessible insights for experts across various fields regarding the crucial role of institutional judicial authority in upholding a nation's honor.

References

- Affandi, Sultan, & Arsyad. (2023). Dinamika Ijtihad Kolektif dan Pengembangan Sumber Hukum Islam Era Khulafa' al-Rasyidin. *Tahqiq: Jurnal Pemikiran Hukum Islam*, 17(2).
- Amaliyah. (2025). Kepemimpinan Khalifah Umar Bin Khattab dalam Perubahan Sosial dan Pengembangan Pendidikan Islam pada Masa Pemerintahannya. *Carong: Jurnal Pendidikan, Sosial Dan Humaniora*, 1(4).
- Aulia. (2025). Pengaruh Politik Terhadap Perkembangan Hukum Islam di Masa Klasik. *Elbayyinah: Jurnal Hukum, Sosial Dan Humaniora*, 1(1).
- Awaliah, & Santalia. (2022). Pemikiran Hukum Islam pada Masa Khulafaur Rasyidin (Cikal Bakal dan Perkembangannya). *Comparativa*, 3(1).
- Azhar, P. (2022). Keadilan dalam Perspektif Islam: Dinamika dan Realitas. *Islam & Contemporary*, 2(1), 1.
- Desfianti, S., Amilia, E. D., & Hubaidah. (2026). Menjelaskan perkembangan Islam pada masa khalifah ke I-IV,. *Historical Studies Journal*, 8(1).
- Habib. (2025). Sejarah Perkembangan Hukum Islam: Dari Zaman Nabi Sampai Zaman Kontemporer. *Jurnal Hukum, Sosial Dan Humaniora*, 1(1).
- Japri, Syamsuddin, & Hamzah. (2025). Khalifah Ali bin Abi Thalib: Krisis Politik, Penataan Administrasi dan Kontribusi Pendidikan dalam Peradaban Islam. *Jurnal El-Fakhr, Islamic Education, Teaching and Studies*, 4(2).

- Munthe. (2025). Implementasi Konsep Trias Politica dan Peradilan pada Masa Rasulullah SAW serta Khulafaur Rasyidin. *Al-Bayan Journal of Islam and Muslim Societies*, 2(1).
- Mustin, Darussalam, & Sulaiman. (2025). Peradaban Islam Pada Masa Usman Bin Affan. *Socius: Jurnal Penelitian Ilmu-Ilmu Sosial*, 3(1).
- Najib, M. (2020). Pembakuan Mushaf Uthmani. *Al-A'raf: Jurnal Pemikiran Islam Dan Filsafat*, 17(1).
- Sultan, L. (2013). Kekuasaan Kehakiman dalam Islam dan Aplikasinya di Indonesia. *Jurnal Al-Ulum*, 13(2), 435.
- Susandi. (2022). Sistem Peradilan Islam dari Masa Nabi SAW. Sampai Masa Khulafaurasyidin. *Taqnin: Jurnal Syariah Dan Hukum*, 4(2).
- Tumangger. (2023). Umar bin Khattab: Tinjauan Sejarah Terhadap Dinamika Pemerintahan. *Taqnin. Jurnal Syariah Dan Hukum*, 5(1).
- Ulum, & Alfin. (2024). Kontekstualisasi Risalah al-Qadha Masa Khalifah Umar bin Khattab dan Relevansinya terhadap Peradilan Agama di Indonesia. *Qisth: Jurnal Studi Dan Penelitian Hukum Islam*, 1(2).
- Wahab, Asni, & Ridwan. (2021). Peradilan Islam pada Masa Rasulullah dan Khulafaurasyidin: Studi Komparatif Peradilan Islam Era Klasik. *Bustanul Fuqaha: Jurnal Bidang Hukum Islam*, 3(1).