

Eco-Theological Insights on The Sasi Tradition: Analyzing Environmental Ethics and Sanctions Through Fiqh al-Bi'ah and Islamic Criminal Law

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DOI: 10.29240/jhi.v10i1.9412		
Received: 09-01-2024	Revised: 20-01-2025	Accepted: 22-03-2025
Cite this article:	Islamul Haq, Sudirman L, Muhammad Majdy Amiruddin (2025). Eco-Theological Insights on the Sasi Tradition: Analyzing Environmental Ethics and Sanctions through Fiqh al-Bi'ah and Islamic Criminal Law Approach. Al-Istinbath : Jurnal Hukum Islam, 10(1), 58-80 Doi : 10.29240/jhi.v10i1.9412	

Abstract

Environmental preservation is a crucial issue that continues to receive attention, especially amid growing concerns about environmental degradation caused by human activities. This study aims to examine the implementation of the *sasi* mechanism by the people of Negeri Iha, Seram Island, and Ambon and to analyze the cultural significance of the *sasi* system regarding the concepts of *Fiqh al-Bi'ah* and Islamic criminal law. Using an empirical approach with qualitative methods, this research explores how the *sasi* mechanism contributes to community welfare and its relevance to *Fiqh al-Bi'ah*. The findings reveal that the implementation of the *sasi* tradition is managed by customary institutions with the authority to determine when *sasi* is enforced or lifted. There are two forms of traditional natural resource management in Negeri Iha: *sasi laut* (marine *sasi*) and *sasi darat* (land *sasi*). The study also shows that the *sasi* tradition's rules, goals, and punishments are similar to those in *Fiqh al-Bi'ah*. Both try to get the most suitable things done while doing the least environmental *harm*. Furthermore, violations of the *sasi* tradition are subject to customary sanctions, including physical punishment, fines, or spiritual consequences, such as the belief that violations could bring curses or illness as divine retribution. This research provides valuable insights into the harmony between the *sasi*

tradition and the principles of *Fiqh al-Bi'ah* in preserving nature and maintaining the balance between humans and their environment.

Keywords: *Fiqh Al Bi'ah, Islamic Criminal Law, Sasi.*

Introduction

The world faces a deepening environmental crisis amid rapid modernization and globalization, further exacerbating natural degradation.¹ The loss of biodiversity, pollution, and excessive exploitation of natural resources have heightened the urgency of environmental conservation.² Local communities, especially in Indonesia, continue to rely on indigenous wisdom to maintain ecological balance, as seen in the *Sasi* tradition of Maluku and Papua.³ Research indicates that community involvement is crucial for the successful and sustainable management of natural resources. However, modernization and economic exploitation pose significant threats to its preservation.⁴ This underscores the importance of integrating local values with legal frameworks to ensure environmental sustainability.

Fazlun Khalid, a Muslim scholar and founder of the Islamic Foundation for Ecology and Environmental Sciences (IFEES), has long emphasized the importance of making environmental conservation a central concern for Muslims. He believes that environmental education should be a priority in Islam.⁵ Many other scholars share similar views, including Seyyed Hossein Nasr (2003), Yusuf Qaradawi (2006), Mustafa Abu Sway (2005), Ziauddin Sardar (1985), Mawil Izzi Deen (1992; 1997), and Alie Yafie (2006). They argue that Islam provides a comprehensive framework for promoting environmental consciousness. However, Islamic jurisprudence (*Fiqh*) has remained relatively stagnant in systematically addressing the environmental crisis. *Fiqh al-Bi'ah*, which should serve as a conceptual framework for tackling environmental issues, has not yet been methodologically and structurally developed. As a result, many Muslim communities continue to rely on theological doctrines that associate natural

¹ Peter Christoff and Robyn Eckersley, *Globalization and the Environment* (Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2013).

² Ram Lakhan Singh and Pradeep Kumar Singh, 'Global Environmental Problems', *Principles and Applications of Environmental Biotechnology for a Sustainable Future*, 2017, pp. 13–41.

³ Nadia Putri Rachma Persada, Fachruddin M Mangunjaya, and Imran S L Tobing, 'Sasi Sebagai Budaya Konservasi Sumber Daya Alam Di Kepulauan Maluku', *Jurnal Ilmu Dan Budaya*, 41.59 (2018).

⁴ Yuling Zhang and others, 'How Important Is Community Participation to Eco-Environmental Conservation in Protected Areas? From the Perspective of Predicting Locals' pro-Environmental Behaviours', *Science of the Total Environment*, 739 (2020), p. 139889.

⁵ Fazlun Khalid, 'Islam and the Environment—Ethics and Practice an Assessment,' *Religion Compass*, 4.11 (2010), pp. 707–16.

⁶ Fazlun M Khalid and Joanne O'Brien, *Islam and Ecology* (Cassell, 1992).

disasters with divine will without highlighting human negligence as a contributing factor.⁷

Aside from the religious perspective, culture also plays a crucial role as a societal control mechanism for environmental conservation. A common viewpoint is that local cultural contexts significantly influence environmental preservation, making it essential for governments to prioritize and support the existence of local traditions.⁸ Various sources suggest that local community participation plays a crucial role in the success of environmental conservation efforts.⁹

Indigenous communities in Indonesia have long practiced environmentally friendly management of natural resources based on local wisdom.¹⁰ For example, in western Indonesia, *Ngalan Agung* in Sumatra regulates fish conservation to preserve water resources.¹¹ In central Indonesia, particularly in Bali, the *Wig-Wig* system is used for forest conservation management.¹² In North Kalimantan, the Dayak Kenyah people utilize sacred forests to protect their natural environment.¹³ Meanwhile, in eastern Indonesia, the *Sasi* tradition is widely practiced across Maluku and parts of Papua to regulate resource use and ensure sustainability.¹⁴

The *Sasi* tradition is a natural resource management system that enforces restrictions on harvesting certain natural products at specific times and locations. It is considered a tradition because *Sasi* represents an idea, belief, or

⁷ Fachruddin Majeri Mangunjaya and Jeanne Elizabeth McKay, 'Reviving an Islamic Approach for Environmental Conservation in Indonesia,' *Worldviews: Global Religions, Culture, and Ecology*, 16.3 (2012), pp. 286–305.

⁸ Richard B Peterson and others, 'Seeing (and Doing) Conservation through Cultural Lenses,' *Environmental Management*, 45.1 (2010), pp. 5–18.

⁹ Lisa M Campbell and Arja Vainio-Mattila, 'Participatory Development and Community-Based Conservation: Opportunities Missed for Lessons Learned?', *Human Ecology*, 31.3 (2003), pp. 417–37.

¹⁰ Trinovianto G R Hallatu, I D Palittin, and M Chairul Basrun Umanailo, 'Culture and Religion in Sasi Tradition', in *Proceedings of the International Conference on Industrial Engineering and Operations Management*, 2019, pp. 984–90.

¹¹ Tukiman Taruna Siswadi and Hartuti Purnaweni, 'Kearifan Lokal Dalam Melestarikan Mata Air', *Jurnal Ilmu Lingkungan*, 9.2 (2011), pp. 63–68.

¹² E C Wood, G Gray Tappan, and Amadou Hadj, 'Understanding the Drivers of Agricultural Land Use Change in South-Central Senegal,' *Journal of Arid Environments*, 59.3 (2004), pp. 565–82.

¹³ Anau Njau and others, 'Local Wisdom Practices of Dayak Indigenous People in the Management of Tana'ulén in the Kayan Mentarang National Park of Malinau Regency, North Kalimantan Province, Indonesia,' *Russian Journal of Agricultural and Socio-Economic Sciences*, 91.7 (2019), pp. 156–67.

¹⁴ Sakina Safarina Karepesina and Edi Susilo, 'Kabupaten Maluku Tengah Existence of Customary Law in Protecting the Conservation of Sasiin Haruku Central', *Jurnal ESCOFim*, 1.1 (2013), pp. 25–41.

practice from the past that is symbolically transmitted with specific meanings to a community or society. As a form of local wisdom and an integral part of the indigenous culture in Maluku, *Sasi* aims to protect and sustain natural resources for future generations.¹⁵ They have collectively agreed to enforce *Sasi* laws to safeguard natural resources and ensure the sustainable benefits of nature for the people of Maluku. *Sasi* management's primary goal is to balance nature, humans, and the spiritual realm. Any violation of *Sasi* is met with consequences, including spiritual repercussions and social sanctions imposed by the community.¹⁶

However, amid the waves of modernization and globalization, the *Sasi* tradition faces various challenges.¹⁷ One of the main challenges is how this tradition can survive in an era that increasingly prioritizes exploiting natural resources for economic gain.¹⁸ Additionally, the *Sasi* tradition is often overlooked or deemed less relevant due to its lack of a formal legal foundation. This is a significant concern, especially when viewed through Islamic law, such as *Fiqh al-Bi'ah*, which emphasizes environmental conservation, and Islamic criminal law, which focuses on justice in enforcing sanctions.

The analysis of *Fiqh al-Bi'ah* can enhance our understanding of how local traditions like *Sasi*, despite lacking a formal legal foundation within the state's legal system, remain relevant within the framework of Islamic law. Viewing *Sasi* through the lens of *Fiqh* allows us to recognize the alignment between its values and Islamic principles on environmental stewardship and just, balanced social relations. Linking *Sasi* with *Fiqh al-Bi'ah* is crucial for providing a stronger legal foundation to address the challenges of modernization and resource exploitation. It also offers a deeper religious perspective on the tradition, reinforcing environmental conservation and sustainable resource management within communities while preserving local social and cultural values.

Additionally, violations of *Sasi* law are seen as disruptions to ecological harmony and transgressions against the community's spiritual and social values.¹⁹ Therefore, two types of sanctions are imposed on those who violate *Sasi* law. First, spiritual sanctions involve beliefs in supernatural consequences, such as illness, crop failure, or other misfortunes perceived as divine punishment for

¹⁵ Hallatu, Palittin, and Umanailo.

¹⁶ Ary Wahyono, *Hak Ulayat Laut Di Kawasan Timur Indonesia* (Media Pressindo, 2000), h. 56.

¹⁷ Jolanda Woersok and Ricardo Freedom Nanuru, 'Hidup Bersama Dalam Perbedaan Berbasis Kearifan Lokal Di Ohoidertawun Dan Relevansinya Bagi Masyarakat Kei', *Jurnal Ilmiah Religiosity Entity Humanity (JIREH)*, 6.2 (2024), pp. 254–71.

¹⁸ Khomsinnudin Khomsinnudin and others, 'Modernitas Dan Lokalitas: Membangun Pendidikan Islam Berkelanjutan', *Journal of Education Research*, 5.4 (2024), pp. 4418–28.

¹⁹ Reimon Supusesa, 'Eksistensi Hukum Delik Adat Dalam Perspektif Pembaharuan Hukum Pidana Di Maluku Tengah', *Mimbar Hukum-Fakultas Hukum Universitas Gadjah Mada*, 24.1 (2012), pp. 41–54.

violating sacred norms. Second, social sanctions typically include fines, warnings, community ostracism, or other customary punishments agreed upon by the community. These sanctions serve as a deterrent and a means to instill respect for tradition and environmental preservation. In Islamic law, maintaining ecological balance is emphasized as a trust (*amanah*) given by Allah to humankind. In this context, violations of the *Sasi* tradition that harm the environment or deplete natural resources can be seen as breaches of this divine trust, necessitating sanctions to uphold social justice.

This study aims to examine the *Sasi* tradition by focusing on its inherent values and the sanctioning mechanisms it employs. By doing so, it seeks to contribute theoretically and practically to understanding local traditions as part of environmental conservation efforts and enforcing just legal principles. Through this research, a deeper understanding of how indigenous wisdom, such as *Sasi*, can contribute to the framework of Islamic law and environmental preservation is expected to emerge.

So far, research on the *Sasi* tradition has been mostly limited to political, institutional, and economic perspectives. For example, studies such as "The Dynamics of Sasi Laut Practices in Local Economic and Political Transformations" by Arif Satria and Ahmad Mony, "Institutional Changes in Traditional Marine Resource Management: A Case Study of *Sasi* Practices in Kaimana, West Papua" by Ratna Patriana et al., and "Collective Economic Models Through *Sasi* Contract and *Sasi* Negeri Culture in the Maluku Islands" by Maryam Sangadji primarily focus on the economic, institutional, and political aspects of *Sasi*. However, these studies have yet to explore *Sasi* from the perspective of *Fiqh al-Bi'ah* (Islamic environmental jurisprudence) and Islamic criminal law, leaving a significant gap in understanding its legal and religious dimensions.

Research on the *Sasi* tradition and its connection to *Fiqh al-Bi'ah* and Islamic criminal law remains limited. Therefore, this study aims to fill the gaps left by previous research. It seeks to provide a deeper analysis of the relevance of *Sasi* to *Fiqh al-Bi'ah*, examining its principles and the legal consequences of violations within the tradition. The discussion on the correlation between *Sasi* and *Fiqh al-Bi'ah* is expected to enhance public understanding of how the regulations within the *Sasi* tradition align with Islamic environmental jurisprudence in preserving nature and ensuring the sustainability of natural resources.

This study employs a qualitative approach, collecting data through observation, interviews, and document analysis. Direct observation was conducted to examine the implementation of the *Sasi* tradition in Negeri Iha. Interviews were carried out in multiple sessions with traditional leaders, religious figures, and community members to ensure comprehensive data collection.

Formal interviews were scheduled in advance, while informal discussions were conducted spontaneously to gain deeper insights into the practice of *Sasi*. Additionally, relevant documents such as books, journals, and news articles on *Sasi* and environmental preservation from the perspectives of *Fiqh al-Bi'ah* and Islamic criminal law were analyzed to support the research.

This study adopts an ethnographic approach to gain a deeper understanding of the *Sasi* tradition. This approach helps explore how indigenous values within the *Sasi* align with Islamic teachings, particularly in terms of environmental conservation and social responsibility. The collected data is analyzed interpretatively and categorized based on relevance to the research questions. The analysis aims to identify and contextualize each finding, ensuring a comprehensive understanding of the tradition. The results are presented in narrative form, supported by relevant interview excerpts to depict the *Sasi* tradition and its connection to *Fiqh al-Bi'ah* and Islamic criminal law.

Discussion

The Sasi Cultural Mechanism carried out by the People of Iha Island, Seram Island, Ambon

The study conducted by Asrul and colleagues reveals that *Sasi* plays a crucial role in environmental management, both in terms of the natural environment and the social environment. Its sustainability and benefits contribute to sustainable development, ensuring environmental empowerment is maintained, and future generations can enjoy natural resources. Von Benda-Beckmann stated that *Sasi* signifies the relationship between humans and their environment.²⁰

Pattinama and Patti Perony stated that *Sasi* conserves natural resources and the environment, educates and shapes the attitudes and behaviors of the community, and ensures the fair distribution of *Sasi* yields among all members of society.²¹ Therefore, *Sasi* must be preserved and upheld as a cultural value. Additionally, the *Sasi* institution provides opportunities for other living organisms to reproduce, maintain quality, and increase population numbers.²²

The implementation of *Sasi* in Negeri Iha continues to this day. This tradition is consistently preserved because local culture is crucial in addressing

²⁰ Panel dalam Meilane Sahetapy, 'Potensi Kearifan Lokalsasi Biodiversity laut Di Maluku Dalam Penguatan Pembelajaran SAINS', in *Prosiding Seminar Nasional Pendidikan Biologi*, 2018, pp. 864–70.

²¹ Hallatu, Palittin, and Umanailo.

²² Dahlan Etlegar, 'Peran Lembaga Adat Sasi Dalam Pengelolaan Sumberdaya Dusun Di Negeri Allang Kecamatan Leihitu Barat, Kabupaten Maluku Tengah', 2013. H. 12.

various societal issues and maintaining social harmony.²³ The continued existence of *Sasi* in Negeri Iha today reflects the community's commitment to preserving and upholding this tradition to protect the sea and forests from irresponsible exploitation.²⁴

The implementation of the *Sasi* tradition in Negeri Iha is supervised and coordinated by the local customary institution, the Dewan Adat, commonly called Saniri Nagri. This institution has the authority to make decisions regarding the enforcement of *Sasi*.²⁵ *Saniri Negeri* is a customary institution at the village or *negeri* level, consisting of traditional leaders, religious figures, and representatives from each clan (*soa*). It functions as a legislative body responsible for making decisions that are implemented by the community. Additionally, all significant matters to be carried out by the *Raja* must receive approval from *Saniri Negeri*. If Saniri Negeri rejects a program proposed by the *Raja*, it cannot be executed. *Saniri Negeri* also supervises, ensuring that all jointly established decisions are correctly implemented.²⁶

The initiation of the *Sasi* tradition in *Negeri Iha* is marked by the *Tutup Sasi* meeting, which signifies the enforcement of a prohibition on harvesting the designated plants. The *Tutup Sasi* ceremony is conducted through the *Saniri Negeri* (customary council meeting). Following this, signs indicate the implementation of *Sasi*—young coconut leaves are tied in the sea for *Sasi Laut* (marine *Sasi*) and on trees for *Sasi Darat* (land *Sasi*).²⁷ These signs indicate the areas where *Sasi* is enforced or the boundaries of the restricted zones. Once the *Sasi* period ends, a *Buka Sasi* (lifting *Sasi*) ceremony is held through the *Saniri Negeri*, during which all *Sasi* markers are removed, signifying that the restrictions are no longer in effect. After the *Buka Sasi* ceremony, the owners can harvest their mature crops.

²³ Eva Moy Wonley, Fredy Leiwakabessy, and Stevin Melay, 'Development of Sasi Culture Based Mangrove Forest Conservation Instruction Package to Improve Ecological Knowledge of Amahai State Society, Central Maluku District,' *BIOEDUPAT: Pattimura Journal of Biology and Learning*, 1.1 (2021), pp. 32–38. <https://doi.org/10.30598/bioedupat.v1.i1.pp32-38>

²⁴ Muhammad Brillyan Alvayedo and Anna Erliyana, 'Tinjauan Hukum Kedudukan Dan Keterlibatan Kearifan Lokal Masyarakat Adat Maluku Berupa Sasi Dalam Pengelolaan Lingkungan Hidup', *JISIP (Jurnal Ilmu Sosial Dan Pendidikan)*, 6.3 (2022). <https://doi.org/10.58258/jisip.v6i3.3220>

²⁵ Eddy Mantjoro, 'Traditional Management of Communal-Property Resources: The Practice of the Sasi System,' *Ocean & Coastal Management*, 32.1 (1996), pp. 17–37. <https://doi.org/10.1163/15685357-01603006>

²⁶ Resa Dandirwalu, 'Church Sasi: Beyond Religion Boundaries Study of Religious Anthropology,' in *International Conference on Religion and Public Civilization (ICRPC 2018)* (Atlantis Press, 2019), pp. 164–67. <https://doi.org/10.2991/icrpc-18.2019.30>

²⁷ H L Sospelisa, 'Sasi Lompa: A Critical Review of the Contribution of Local Practices to Sustainable Marine Resource Management in Central Maluku, Indonesia', in *IOP Conference Series: Earth and Environmental Science* (IOP Publishing, 2019), CCCXXXIX, 12013. <https://doi.org/10.1088/1755-1315/339/1/012013>

The stages of implementing *Saniri Negeri* for the closing and opening of *Sasi* are as follows: One or two days before *Saniri Negeri*, the *Kepala Kewang* (head of *Kewang*) announces a public notice to all community members. This allows the people to prepare for their needs during the *Sasi* closure period. On the designated *Sasi* closure day, the *Kewang* holds a traditional meeting (*Saniri Negeri*) with the entire community. After the meeting, the *Kewang* initiates the beating of the *Tifa* drum at the mosque, signaling the official start of *Sasi*. At that moment, the *Kewang* and their assistants begin their duties as *Sasi* enforcers. The forests and seas are then officially declared off-limits. The duration of the *Sasi* period is typically determined by the *Raja* (village leader) based on mutual agreement with the community.²⁸

*"The implementation of Sasi in Negeri Iha begins with Saniri Negeri or a traditional council meeting to establish the Sasi closure, which means the prohibition on harvesting natural resources takes effect," said Pikahulan (a traditional leader). "Markers are placed in the sea and on land to indicate the restricted areas, and once the Sasi period ends, an opening ceremony is held to lift the prohibition." He added that the Raja (village leader) determines the duration of Sasi based on a mutual agreement with the community.*²⁹

During the *Sasi* period, the forest must be preserved. While the community is allowed to enter the forest, they are strictly prohibited from harvesting *Sasi*-protected plants. Even if fruits from these plants fall to the ground, no one is allowed to take them. If someone is in an urgent situation and needs to harvest *Sasi*-protected resources, they must first seek permission from the *Kewang*, the *Sasi* enforcer. Once the *Sasi* period ends, a *Saniri Negeri* meeting will be held to lift the restrictions officially.

In Negeri Iha, both land and marine *Sasi* are practiced. Land *Sasi* includes coconut *Sasi* and nutmeg *Sasi*, which aim to prevent premature harvesting before the designated season. These areas are marked to inform the community that they are under *Sasi* protection. As for marine *Sasi*, restrictions are placed on fishing in designated areas. However, an exception is made for those who win the fishing rights through an auction. The auctioned fishing areas in Negeri Iha are leased for IDR 500,000, paid to the *Negeri* (village administration). Those who catch fish in the restricted area must share a percentage of their catch with the auction winner.³⁰

A portion of the *Sasi* proceeds in Negeri Iha is allocated to the village treasury and managed effectively for the community's benefit. These funds are used to pay the salaries of Quran teachers, support mosque administrators, and

²⁸ Karno Batiran and Ishak Salim, 'A Tale of Two Kewangs: A Comparative Study of Traditional Institutions and Their Effect on Conservation in Maluku,' *Forest and Society*, 4.1 (2020), pp. 81–97. <https://doi.org/10.24259/fs.v4i1.8186>

²⁹ Pikahulan, interview, Negeri Iha, August 08, 2024.

³⁰ Sostenes Chaterina Dias, 'Studi Antropologi-Teologi "Ritus Arumbai Raja" Di Ullath-Saparua Anthropology-Theology Study of" Rite Arumbai Raja" in Ullath-Saparua'.

provide financial assistance to underprivileged residents. Beyond serving as a form of local wisdom in preserving natural resources, the *Sasi* tradition also plays a crucial role in fostering social welfare and strengthening community solidarity in Negeri Iha.

The King (Raja) of Iha stated, "*A portion of the Sasi proceeds is allocated to the village treasury and managed properly for the benefit of the community. We use it to pay the salaries of Quran teachers, support mosque administrators, and assist underprivileged residents. The Sasi tradition preserves nature and serves as a source of welfare for the people of Negeri Iha.*".³¹

The *Sasi* tradition teaches people about the management and preservation of natural resources. Implementing *Sasi* involves protecting, managing, and avoiding destruction, refraining from indiscriminate logging, allowing natural resources to thrive in their habitat, and preserving them as a source of livelihood. Conservation efforts can be carried out by cultivating natural resources contributing to the community's well-being.

The Cultural Relevance of Sasi and Fiqh al Bi'ah

In Islam, environmental preservation is addressed in *fiqh al-bi'ah* (Islamic environmental jurisprudence). There are two forms of *fiqh al-bi'ah* implementation in Muslim-majority countries today. The first is implementation through the constitution, where Islamic law (including *fiqh al-bi'ah*) serves as a source of legislation. This approach requires that all laws enacted by the state, including environmental laws, must align with *Shariah*.³² Second, the implementation of *fiqh al-bi'ah* is non-binding. This form of implementation establishes and enforces "legal" obligations, but in practice, it is not legally binding under a country's laws. In this approach, the enforcement of these obligations depends on the local Muslim community itself or is based on the customs of the local Muslim population.³³

The values of *Fiqh al-bi'ah* implementation are also embedded in the *sasi* tradition in Negeri Iha, Seram Island. In Islam, the environment is divided into two categories: dynamic (living), which includes humans, animals, and plants, and static (non-living), which consists of two aspects. First, the entire universe was created to benefit humankind and fulfill human needs. In *fiqh al-bi'ah*, all creations in the universe have two specific functions: a religious function, which serves as evidence of Allah's existence, and a social function, which serves

³¹ Interview with Muhammad Zain Amahoru, King of Negeri Iha, Maluku, August 08, 2024.

³² Frank E Vogel and Nathan J Brown, *Shari'a Politics: Islamic Law and Society in the Modern World* (Indiana University Press, 2011).

³³ Shazny Ramlan, 'Implementing Islamic Law to Protect the Environment: Insights from Singapore, Malaysia, and Indonesia,' *Asia Pacific Journal of Environmental Law*, 23.2 (2020), pp. 202–30. <https://doi.org/10.4337/apjel.2020.02.05>

humanity and other creatures, with the ultimate goal being *maslahah* (public welfare).³⁴ Second, nature and everything within it will support and complement one another and cooperate in harmony, in accordance with the natural laws (*sunnatullah*) that govern the universe.³⁵

In his book *Ri'ayah al-Biah fi Syariah al-Islam*, Yusuf al-Qaradawi explains that Islam is a religion deeply concerned with environmental issues.³⁶ This is evident in classical Islamic texts, where many discussions related to environmental issues, such as in the chapters on *thabarah* (purity and cleanliness), *al-musaqat* and *muzara'ah* (contracts for land use under specific conditions), *ihya al-mawat* (revival of barren or unused land), laws on animal rights and protection, regulations on the trade and ownership of water, fire, and salt, as well as other discussions related to environmental conservation.³⁷

One of the main principles in *Fiqh al-biah* is the prohibition against environmental destruction.³⁸ Islam strictly prohibits all forms of destruction on earth, including pollution, illegal deforestation, and the uncontrolled exploitation of natural resources.³⁹ In Surah Al-Baqarah (2:11-12) and Surah Ar-Rum (30:41), Allah reminds us that the destruction occurring in the world is a consequence of human actions that fail to uphold His trust. Therefore, Muslims are commanded to take responsibility for protecting the environment and to refrain from actions that harm or threaten its sustainability.

The principle of environmental balance (*mizan*) is also strongly emphasized in *Fiqh-Fiqh al-biah*. Islam teaches that every element in the universe is created in perfect proportion, and humanity must preserve this balance.⁴⁰ Any action that disrupts this balance, such as excessive exploitation of natural

³⁴ El-Hamed & M. Sbarini, *Al-Bieah Wa Moshkelatha [The Environment and Its Difficulties]*, (Arabic Source, 1979).

³⁵ Mujiyono Abdillah, *Agama Ramah Lingkungan: Perspektif Al-Quran* (Paramadina, 2001), vi. H. 6-7.

³⁶ Muhammad Roy Purwanto Mariatul Istiani, 'FIQH BI'AH DALAM PERSPEKTIF AL-QURAN', *Jurnal At-Thullab*, 1.1 (2019), h. 32.

³⁷ Mariatul Istiani. <https://doi.org/10.20885/tullab.vol1.iss1.art2>

³⁸ Sujono Indrajati, Emawati Emawati, and Muh Azkar, 'Aktualisasi Pendidikan Fikih Lingkungan (Fiqh Al-Bi'ah) Pada Masyarakat Kawasan Hutan Desa Genggelang Kecamatan Gangga Kab. Lombok Utara', *MANAZHIM*, 5.2 (2023), pp. 644–66.

³⁹ Ansar Mangka, Amrah Husma, and Jahada Mangka, 'Pelestarian Lingkungan Hidup Dalam Pandangan Syariat Islam', *BUSTANUL FUQAHA: Jurnal Bidang Hukum Islam*, 3.2 (2022), pp. 205–21.

⁴⁰ Muhammad Ilhamuddin Arsad, Hafiz Jamaludin, and Siti Aisyah Samudin, 'Pendekatan Syariah Dalam Menggalakkan Amalan Hijau Melalui Dana Zakat: Satu Kajian Awal: Shariah Approach in Promoting Green Practices through Zakat Fund: A Preliminary Study,' *ALBASIRAH JOURNAL*, 14.2 (2024), pp. 54–67.

resources, is considered contrary to Islamic teachings.⁴¹ Therefore, the management of natural resources must be carried out with caution, considering its impact on the ecosystem and future generations.

Additionally, *fiqh al-biah* teaches the principle of sustainability in utilizing natural resources. Islam emphasizes nature's efficient and wise use to ensure these resources remain available for future generations. The preservation of biodiversity and a healthy environment is an integral part of Muslims' social responsibility.⁴² With these principles, *fiqh al-biah* guides Muslims to actively preserve the environment as a form of responsibility toward Allah and all His creations.

The principles of the *sasi* tradition align with those found in *fiqh al-biah*. The fundamental principle of *fiqh al-biah* is to promote *maslahah* (benefit) and prevent *mafsadah* (harm). This means that all human activities, including those related to environmental utilization, must consider both beneficial and harmful aspects. If an activity brings about *maslahah*, it may continue; however, if it causes harm, it must be discontinued. The *sasi* tradition, which has been passed down for generations in the community of Negeri Iha, ultimately aims to bring welfare to society. Prohibitions against cutting down trees, overexploiting natural resources, damaging marine ecosystems, and other similar restrictions reflect the values of *jalb al-maslahah wa dafu al-dar*—promoting benefit and preventing harm.⁴³

Based on observations in Negeri Iha, it was found that the residents do not struggle to meet their daily needs, relying on forest and marine resources. The people of Iha believe that the *sasi* tradition is highly effective in producing high-quality harvests and ensuring the sustainability of their local economy. Various preventive and developmental policies can be implemented to maintain environmental sustainability and support sustainable economic development. For example, prohibiting destructive practices such as coral reef bombing and overturning is crucial to protecting vulnerable marine ecosystems from irreversible damage. Additionally, restrictions on harvesting immature crops and cutting down fruit-bearing trees aim to preserve agricultural sustainability and forest conservation, which are vital natural resources.

⁴¹ Mustolikh Mustolikh and others, 'Bencana Alam Dan Etika Lingkungan Hidup Dalam Al-Qur'an', *Proceedings Series on Social Sciences & Humanities*, 6 (2022), pp. 170–76.

⁴² Ahmad Saifudin, 'Etika Lingkungan Dalam Pendidikan Agama Islam Sebagai Upaya Menumbuhkan Kesadaran Stewardship', *Sasana: Jurnal Pendidikan Agama Islam*, 2.1 (2023), pp. 103–7.

⁴³ Islamul Haq and others, 'Tadah Al-Nadzr (Reconsideration): A Critical Comparative Study between Indonesian Law and Saudi Arabian Law Perspectives (Fiqh Murafa'at)', *Al-Istinbath: Jurnal Hukum Islam*, 7.2 November (2022), pp. 311–28. <https://doi.org/10.29240/jhi.v7i2.5248>

On the development side, policies requiring auction winners to contribute funds for state development operations help strengthen administrative systems and support infrastructure funding. Equally important, enhancing the quality of key commodities like nutmeg and coconut, alongside environmental protection efforts, can boost product competitiveness, improve farmers' welfare, and safeguard natural resources. Overall, these policies contribute to both environmental conservation and sustainable economic growth.

A closer examination reveals that the *sasi* cultural functions in Negeri Iha consist of two main functions: prevention and development. These functions are presented in the following table:

Table 1: Sasi Cultural Functions

No	Theme	Code	Objective
1	Prevention Function	Coral reefs, fish	Prohibition of bombing and overturning coral reefs to protect the coral reef ecosystem.
2	Prevention Function	Nutmeg and coconut	Prohibition of harvesting immature crops before they reach the proper harvest stage.
3	Prevention Function	-	Prohibition of cutting down fruit-bearing trees or any trees in general.
4	Development Function	Auction winners	Auction winners must pay 500,000 IDR to the state treasury for operational development purposes.
5	Development Function	Nutmeg and coconut	Production of high-quality commodities and environmental protection.

Fiqh al-Biah contains teachings on how to interact with the environment. Therefore, it can be understood as a branch of knowledge that guides humans in how to treat their surroundings based on the principles, values, and norms of Islamic teachings.⁴⁴ These principles and values can be applied in the present day to address existing environmental issues.

In *Fiqh*, Islam recognizes three forms of environmental conservation. The first is conservation through *ihya*, which refers to land utilization carried out by individuals.⁴⁵ In this case, an individual designates unowned land for personal use and cultivation. Those who carry out *ihya* are entitled to own the

⁴⁴ Fitri Maghfirah and Fathayatul Husna, 'Fiqh Al-Bi'ah: Islamic Environmental Ethics In Business Development Of Seladang Café,' in *Proceedings of Malikussaleh International Conference on Law, Legal Studies and Social Science (MICoLLS)*, 2022, II, 22.

⁴⁵ Nurdeng Deuraseh, 'Earth in the Holy Qur'an: How to Protect and Maintain It?', *Jurnal Hadhari*, 2.2 (2010), pp. 73–88.

land. In the Shafi'i school of thought, anyone has the right to utilize or claim that land, even without government permission. However, Imam Abu Hanifah and Imam Malik require official government authorization for someone to legally own that land. Imam Malik further distinguishes this requirement based on the location of the land.

The second form of environmental conservation is through *iqtha'*, where the government allocates or grants specific individuals the right to utilize a piece of land. This allocation may be for ownership or use within a specified period. The third form is *hima'*, which refers to the government's designation of a specific area as a protected zone for the benefit of society. In the past, *hima'* served as grazing land for state-owned livestock. Once an area is designated as *hima'* by the government, individuals are prohibited from using it for personal gain, let alone causing damage to the area.⁴⁶

The concept of *hima'* shares similarities with the *sasi* tradition practiced in Negeri Iha. In the *sasi* tradition, certain areas are designated as restricted zones, prohibiting exploitation for a specific period to preserve ecosystems and natural resources. Both *hima'* and *sasi* aim to maintain balance between humans and nature by integrating spiritual values and social responsibility. The implementation of *hima'* in the Islamic context and *sasi* in local customs demonstrates that, despite originating from different systems, both share a fundamental principle of environmental protection for the common good.

Customary Sanctions of Sasi from the Perspective of Islamic Criminal Law

Violations of the *sasi* tradition continue to occur despite its purpose of protecting natural resources and designated areas. This tradition is enforced to maintain ecosystem balance and prevent environmental degradation within customary territories. However, the actions of some individuals who disregard these rules indicate a lack of awareness regarding the importance of environmental conservation.

Minor violations, such as operating motorized boats and littering in *sasi* zones, frequently occur, even though these actions disrupt ecological harmony. In Negeri Iha, serious offenses—such as using explosives, poison, or trawl nets to catch fish—are met with severe customary sanctions, including whipping or even expulsion from the community. Those who fish before the *sasi* period is lifted are also considered serious offenders, as their actions threaten the sustainability of marine resources.

According to local customary reports, *sasi* sanctions are designed to deter violators and educate them about the importance of environmental

⁴⁶ Lutfallah Gari, 'A History of the Hima Conservation System,' *Environment and History*, 12.2 (2006), pp. 213–28. <https://doi.org/10.3197/096734006776680236>

preservation. These sanctions reflect a combination of customary law enforcement and moral education, aiming to cultivate collective awareness of the need for environmental sustainability for future generations.⁴⁷ Sanctions imposed on individuals who violate *Sasi* regulations consist of customary and spiritual sanctions. Customary sanctions are usually physical punishment, moral reprimands, or fines. In contrast, spiritual sanctions are believed to be divine consequences from Allah, in accordance with the community's faith and beliefs. *Sasi* customary sanctions are also categorized into two types based on the severity of the punishment: minor sanctions and significant sanctions.⁴⁸

Severe sanctions may include physical punishment proportional to the severity of the violation, such as flogging and other penalties, as well as spiritual sanctions by the beliefs of the local community. An example of a minor sanction is confiscating tools used to extract *sasi*-protected resources and those taken from the *sasi* area. Another example is a fine, which is determined based on agreements made by the community. Minor sanctions can also be light physical punishments, such as cleaning the village, pulling weeds at the mosque, collecting garbage, or sweeping the entire village. Another type of punishment for *sasi* violators is spiritual punishment. The local community believes violators will be cursed and afflicted with diseases as a divine consequence. This punishment reflects the direct relationship between the community's faith in the Almighty and their prayers for protecting their natural resources.

The indigenous people believe that the prayers of religious leaders safeguard the *sasi* and bring punishment upon those who violate it. In some regions, it is believed that anyone who breaks *sasi* rules may suffer from severe and prolonged illnesses, even leading to death. These illnesses are thought to include paralysis, muteness, or sudden skin diseases.⁴⁹

"Every sasi violator will be subjected to customary or spiritual sanctions," said Rustan Magun Pikahulan. *"Customary sanctions can take the form of fines, confiscation of tools, or physical punishment such as cleaning the village, while spiritual sanctions are believed to manifest as curses or illnesses from the Almighty, and most residents believe in them, as many spiritual punishments have occurred."* He added that severe sanctions are imposed according to the level of violation, even including whipping in some cases. *"These rules have been a collective agreement to preserve nature and honor tradition."*⁵⁰

⁴⁷ M Sufi Zulkarnain, 'Studi Kebijakan Sistem Perizinan Penangkapan Ikan Di Kecamatan Pulau Haruku, Kabupaten Maluku Tengah Maluku', 2007.

⁴⁸ Martosupono M Kuwati and C Mangumbulude Jubhar, 'Konservasi Berbasis Kearifan Lokal' (Studi Kasus) Go to reference in article, (2015).

⁴⁹ T M Farneubun, 'Etnobotani Pangan Dan Obat Masyarakat Suku Kei Kampung Adat Waur Kei Besar Maluku Tenggara', *Institut Pertanian Bogor, Bogor.[Indonesian]*, 2014.

⁵⁰ Interview with Rustan Magun Pikahulan, a resident of Negeri Iha, Maluku, on August 9, 2024.

The execution of punishments begins with a decision made by the “kepala pemuda” in collaboration with the state task force. The “kepala pemuda” is the central figure in enforcing customary law. The decision to impose a punishment is usually reached through an adat (customary) deliberation involving various parties, such as community leaders and traditional elders. This deliberation ensures that the decision reflects the prevailing customary values while also considering justice for all parties involved.

Once a decision is made, the execution of flogging punishments is carried out by an executioner or a task force known as “marinyo.” These executioners are individuals responsible for enforcing punishments by customary law. They are trained to administer punishments following adat procedures, aiming not only to penalize but also to serve as a deterrent and reintegrate the offender into society in a manner acceptable to tradition.

In the process of spiritual punishment, religious leaders play a crucial role in enforcing spiritual sanctions against those who violate customary law. After a violation occurs, religious leaders hold special prayers to invoke divine punishment upon the offender as a warning for disrupting environmental preservation. The prayers seek divine protection and ensure that the violator faces appropriate consequences, which may come in the form of illness, misfortune, or other hardships. These prayers also remind the community that any action harming nature and violating the Sasi tradition not only has negative environmental impacts but also affects their social and spiritual well-being.

Spiritual sanctions in Sasi function as an additional form of punishment, which the indigenous community perceives as divine justice. Humans do not directly administer these punishments but occur through the prayers of religious leaders and the community, seeking protection for their natural resources. This belief reinforces the conviction that violators of Sasi will suffer consequences such as curses or illnesses as retribution for their actions.

“Yes, in addition to flogging, there are other physical punishments for Sasi violators, such as being kicked into the sea after being whipped,” said Asgar Selan, one of the Marinyo of Negeri Iha. *“Moreover, there are additional spiritual sanctions believed to be divine retribution, such as curses or prolonged illnesses that befall the violators.”* Asgar continued.⁵¹

From the perspective of Islamic criminal law, sanctions for violations of *sasi* can be linked to the principle of *squash* (punishment), which aims to safeguard public welfare, protect property, and ensure environmental sustainability. In Islamic criminal law, *uqubah* is categorized into several types. *Uqubah asliyah* refers to primary punishments directly prescribed by *sharia*, such

⁵¹ Interview with Asgar Selan, Marinyo of Negeri Iha, Maluku, August 9, 2024.

as *qisas* (retaliation in kind) or *hudud* (punishments explicitly defined in the Qur'an and Hadith, such as amputation for theft). Meanwhile, *uqubah badaliyah* is a substitute when the primary punishment cannot be applied, such as the payment of *diyat* (compensation). Additionally, there is *uqubah ta'zir*, a discretionary punishment determined by authorities as a preventive measure against further harm, which may include fines, flogging, or other social penalties.

Customary sanctions in the *sasi* tradition bear similarities to *uqubah ta'zir*, where punishments are imposed based on local policies and the severity of the violation. Lighter punishments, such as confiscating tools or harvested resources, pulling weeds in the mosque, or cleaning the village, are educational for offenders. On the other hand, harsher punishments, such as flogging or expulsion, resemble forms of *uqubah asliyah* in Islam, aiming to create a deterrent effect while maintaining social harmony. Moreover, the spiritual sanctions believed by the community, such as curses leading to severe illnesses or misfortunes for violators, emphasize the belief in a direct connection between preserving natural resources and divine protection.

This concept of spiritual sanctions can be compared to *uqubah ukhrawi* in Islamic criminal law, which refers to punishments administered by Allah in the Hereafter for sinful acts committed in the world.⁵² *Uqubah ukhrawi* refers to the punishment that Allah will administer in the Hereafter to those who violate Islamic law and disrupt the established order, including in the context of environmental violations. In the Qur'an, Allah warns that corruption on land and sea is a consequence of human actions (QS. Ar-Rum: 41). For violators, this *ukhrawi* punishment may take the form of torment in the Hereafter, serving as a reminder that environmental preservation is not only a social obligation but also an act of worship for which one will be held accountable before Allah.

The spiritual sanctions in the *Sasi* tradition align with the concept of *uqubah ukhrawi*, where the Indigenous community believes in divine retribution or direct punishment from the Almighty for *Sasi* violators. For instance, those who break *Sasi* regulations are believed to suffer severe illnesses such as paralysis, muteness, or chronic skin diseases. There is even a belief that persistent violators who continuously disregard *sasi* rules may face sudden death. These spiritual sanctions serve as a social control mechanism and reflect the community's belief in a direct connection between violating customary laws and divine wrath. Prayers offered by traditional leaders or religious figures to protect *sasi* areas are believed to hold spiritual power, ensuring the preservation of natural resources and the infliction of divine punishment upon violators.

In Islam, the belief in *uqubah ukhrawi* motivates believers to uphold environmental stewardship as an act of worship. This concept aligns with the

⁵² Ali Kadarisman, 'Kekerasan Dalam Rumah Tangga Dan Sanksinya Dalam Hukum Islam', *De Jure: Jurnal Hukum Dan Syari'ah*, 9.2 (2017), pp. 88–105.

responsibility of *Khilafah*, where humans are entrusted as stewards of the earth to protect and preserve nature (QS. Al-Baqarah: 30). Thus, both the spiritual sanctions in *sasi* and *uqubah ukhrawi* in Islam emphasize the importance of environmental conservation as an expression of obedience to God and a responsibility toward future generations. These two concepts reinforce the understanding that violations of customary laws and Islamic teachings have consequences in this world and carry significant repercussions in the afterlife.

Below is a comparative table between sanctions in Islamic law (*uqubah*) and sanctions in the *sasi* tradition, highlighting their differences and similarities in terms of objectives, forms of sanctions, spiritual dimensions, and protection focus:

Table 2. Comparison of *Sasi* Sanctions and Islamic Criminal Law

Aspect	Islamic Criminal Law	Sasi Traditional Sanctions
Objective	To bring about public benefit (maslahah) and prevent harm (mafsadah) by maqashid Shariah	Sustainability of environmental benefits for the continuity of life
Forms of Sanctions	Ta'zir and uqubah ukhrawi	Customary sanctions (physical, moral, fines) and spiritual sanctions (curses, misfortunes, diseases)
Purpose of Sanctions	To educate, deter, uphold justice, and prevent damage	To educate, deter, and maintain harmony between humans, nature, and spirituality
Decision-Making Process	Decisions are made by judges based on fiqh murafa'at (Islamic legal procedure)	Decisions are made through customary deliberations involving youth leaders, community task forces, traditional leaders, and village elders.
Punishments	Based on the severity of the offense (e.g., whipping, fines, or capital punishment in specific Islamic rulings)	Light sanctions (e.g., fines, confiscation of tools, community service) and severe sanctions (e.g., whipping, exile, spiritual curses)
Legal Basis	Derived from the Qur'an, Hadith, and scholars' ijtihad	Based on customary agreements and spiritual beliefs of the community
Spiritual	Uqubah ukhrawi: Divine punishment from Allah	Spiritual curses in the form of diseases, misfortunes, or

Dimension	in the afterlife for lawbreakers	calamities believed by the community
Focus of Protection	Religion, life, intellect, lineage, and wealth	Nature, ecosystem, and social harmony of indigenous communities

This comparison highlights the balanced objectives between Islamic law and the *sasi* tradition, where both focus on preventing harm and achieving public benefit (*maslahah*). However, their primary focus differs: Islamic law emphasizes *maqashid Shariah*, which protects five fundamental aspects (religion, life, intellect, lineage, and wealth), while the *sasi* tradition centers on ecological sustainability and harmony between humans and nature. The diversity in sanction forms is also evident, with Islamic law implementing a structured system, including *hudud*, *qisas*, *diyat*, and *ta'zir*. In contrast, *sasi* integrates customary and spiritual sanctions that are more flexible and based on local agreements. Additionally, the spiritual dimension of *sasi* is unique, as it involves supernatural punishments such as curses or misfortunes believed by the indigenous community. This contrasts with *uqubah ukhrawi* in Islam, which refers to divine punishment in the afterlife. Despite their different approaches, both systems share common goals: deterring violations, educating offenders, and preserving the continuity of societal values.

Conclusion

The *Sasi* tradition, managed by customary institutions such as the Customary Council (*Dewan Adat*) or *Saniri Negeri*, is fundamentally aimed at preserving natural resources, regulating their fair utilization, and preventing excessive exploitation. These principles align with the objectives of *fiqh al-bi'ah* in Islam, which seeks to maintain a balance between humans and nature while protecting the environment from destruction. In *fiqh al-bi'ah*, preserving nature is considered a divine trust (*amanah*), a concept also reflected in the *Sasi* tradition through its restrictions on excessive resource exploitation. The relevance of *Sasi* to Islamic law, particularly *fiqh al-bi'ah*, is evident in its prohibition against environmental overexploitation. Just as *fiqh al-bi'ah* regulates the use of natural resources to maintain ecological balance, *Sasi* enforces rules that limit resource extraction to specific periods. Both systems emphasize the importance of environmental preservation and sustainability for future generations, a fundamental obligation for Muslims according to *fiqh al-bi'ah*. Thus, *Sasi* not only holds cultural significance but also aligns with religious principles in Islam. Additionally, this study parallels how sanctions are applied in both systems. In the *Sasi* tradition, those who violate customary laws face physical punishment or fines. This practice resonates with the principles of Islamic criminal law (*hukum*

pidana Islam), which enforces penalties to prevent harm and maintain moral and social order. The spiritual sanctions in *Sasi*, such as curses or illnesses resulting from violating natural laws, also carry a religious dimension similar to Islamic teachings that emphasize maintaining a harmonious relationship with nature and God. Therefore, the connection between *Sasi* and Islamic law extends beyond their shared goal of environmental conservation to include the application of sanctions as a means of deterrence and moral preservation. While this study provides insight into the similarities between *Sasi* and *fiqh al-bi'ah*, it has limitations regarding empirical data regarding the effectiveness of *Sasi* sanctions in reducing violations and their impact on environmental sustainability. Furthermore, it does not explore how indigenous communities theologically understand *fiqh al-bi'ah*, even though their practices align with its principles. Nevertheless, overall, the sanctions in *Sasi*, both customary and spiritual, demonstrate a strong connection with Islamic teachings and foster collective awareness of the importance of environmental preservation.

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