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Domestic Violence as a Criminal Offense: A Comparative Analysis from the Perspectives of the Indonesian Penal Code and Islamic Criminal Law

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Abstract: Domestic violence constitutes a serious violation of human rights and poses a significant threat to the integrity of the family structure. In the context of Indonesian law, domestic violence is regulated under Law No. 23 of 2004 concerning the Elimination of Domestic Violence, which provides legal protection for victims of abuse within the household. However, the Indonesian Penal Code (Kitab Undang-Undang Hukum Pidana or KUHP) also governs acts of violence, albeit without explicitly categorizing domestic violence as a distinct criminal offense. From the perspective of Islamic criminal law, domestic violence is similarly regarded as a violation of individual and familial rights. Islam strictly prohibits acts of domestic abuse, considering them incompatible with the principles of compassion, justice, and responsibility. Islamic law provides various sanctions for perpetrators of domestic violence, including hudūd, ta'zīr, or alternative resolutions that prioritize mediation and familial reconciliation. This study employs a normative and comparative approach to analyze domestic violence as a criminal offense under the Indonesian Penal Code and Islamic criminal law. The findings reveal fundamental differences in terms of legal approach, sanctions, and procedural mechanisms. While the Penal Code emphasizes physical violence with imprisonment as the primary sanction, Islamic criminal law prioritizes the restoration of family relationships through restorative justice frameworks.

Keywords: Criminal Offense, Domestic Violence, Islamic Criminal Law

Introduction

Marriage from the Islamic perspective, is a sacred bond known as *mithaqan ghalizan*, a solemn covenant intended to establish a harmonious, compassionate, and tranquil family life. This notion is emphasized in the Qur'an, Surah Ar-Rum verse 21, which states that God created spouses so that human beings may find serenity and affection in them (TafsirWeb, n.d.). In the context of Indonesia's positive law, marriage is regulated under Law Number 1 of 1974, wherein Article 1 defines marriage as a physical and spiritual bond between a man and a woman to form a happy and everlasting family based on the belief in the One Almighty God (Undang-Undang No. 1 Tahun 1974 tentang Perkawinan, 1974).

However, social realities reveal that the noble objectives of marriage are frequently undermined by the occurrence of domestic violence (*kekerasan dalam rumah tangga*, KDRT), which has become a critical legal and social issue. Law Number 23 of 2004 on the Elimination of Domestic Violence defines KDRT as acts of violence against family membersparticularly womencausing physical, sexual, psychological suffering, and/or neglect within the domestic sphere (Undang-Undang No. 23 Tahun 2004 tentang Penghapusan Kekerasan dalam Rumah Tangga, 2004). The stigmatization of women as objects of violence and the dominance of men within household structures are closely linked to deeply rooted patriarchal socio-cultural constructions. rom a human rights standpoint, the state affirms that all forms of violence, including domestic violence, constitute violations of human dignity. This is reinforced by Article 28G paragraph (1) of the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia, which guarantees the protection of the self, family, dignity, and sense of security of every citize (Undang-Undang Dasar 1945).

Empirical data indicate a continual rise in domestic violence cases in Indonesia. According to the Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection (KemenPPPA), in 2024, more than 17,000 cases of KDRT were reported, marking a 32.15% increase compared to 2019 (Anak, 2024). Similarly, the National Commission on Violence Against Women (Komnas Perempuan) reported that approximately 60–70% of violence cases against women originate from within the household (Perempuan, 2022-2023). Non-governmental organizations such as

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the Katalis Foundation have also documented an increase in domestic violence victims reporting their cases to authorities over the past two years (Foundation, 2022-2023). Fundamentally, Islam rejects all forms of domestic violence. Islamic teachings strongly emphasize compassion (rahmah), justice, and mutual consultation in resolving family conflicts (Aftab et al., 2024; Berte & Mahamid, 2023; Chowdhury, 2023; Istratii et al., 2024; Sharifnia et al., 2024). According to Maqashid al-Shariah, the five principal objectives of Islamic law are the protection of religion, life, intellect, progeny, and wealth all of which are threatened by the occurrence of domestic violence (Al-Ghazali). The Qur'an in Surah An-Nisa verse 19 explicitly prohibits coercive treatment toward women and underscores the importance of kind companionship. Likewise, the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) stated: "Do not strike the face, do not revile, and treat your wives with kindness (HR. Muslim) (Rumaysho.com, 2018).

The complexity of this issue increases when examined through the dual legal systems in force in Indonesia namely, the secular Criminal Code (KUHP) and Islamic criminal law rooted in moral and Shariah-based values. The KUHP primarily addresses physical violence through punitive sanctions such as imprisonment, whereas Islamic criminal law places emphasis on the restoration of relationships through restorative justice and familial reconciliation (Nasution, 1985). Therefore, this article aims to analyze how domestic violence is constructed as a criminal act within both the KUHP and Islamic criminal law frameworks. This study employs a normative approach and comparative legal analysis to identify points of convergence and divergence between the two systems, as well as their respective contributions to the development of a more holistic and equitable legal policy particularly in safeguarding women within the institution of marriage.

Methods

This study employs a normative juridical approach combined with a descriptive qualitative method, focusing on the analysis of legal norms contained in statutory regulations, court decisions, and legal doctrines relevant to the criminal act of domestic violence (KDRT). The data utilized are qualitative in nature and obtained through a literature review, encompassing primary legal materials (Law No. 23 of 2004, the Indonesian Criminal Code [KUHP], the Qur'an, Islamic Criminal Law, and *Maqasid al-Shariah*), secondary legal materials (books, journals, theses, NGO reports, court decisions, and mass media sources), and tertiary legal materials (legal dictionaries and encyclopedias). The data were analyzed using a descriptive-analytical technique to examine and interpret the legal provisions forming the basis for resolving the issues addressed in this research.

Results and Discussion

Sanctions for Domestic Violence in the Perspective of Positive Law and Islamic Criminal Law

In the dynamics of social life, human interaction is inseparable from the potential for conflict. This aligns with Heraclitus's view that conflict is an inherent aspect of human social existence, whereby disputes inevitably arise wherever interaction occurs. One form of dispute receiving particular attention is interpersonal violence within the domestic sphere. According to Soetandyo, violence constitutes a deliberate act intended to inflict suffering upon individuals who are socially weaker, whether through physical or non-physical means. Within the framework of Indonesia's positive law, violence is regulated under Articles 351–356 of the Indonesian Criminal Code (*KUHP*), which narrowly conceptualizes violence as physical assault. This provision is further expanded in Article 356 of the *KUHP*, which prescribes a one-third increase in penalties when the act is committed against a parent, wife, or child. However, such a provision implicitly suggests that perpetrators of domestic violence are predominantly men (husbands), as reflected in Article 356 paragraph (1) of the *KUHP*, which positions the husband as the potential legal subject of violent acts.

The paradigm of law as a system for allocating social values necessitates equality in the imposition of legal sanctions without discrimination based on gender, race, or religion. From an Aristotelian perspective on justice, the distribution of legal values should be free from gender bias. Nevertheless, certain provisions such as Article 31 and Article 34 paragraph (1) of Law No. 1 of 1974 on Marriage, which stipulate that "the husband is the head of the family and the wife is the homemaker" reveal a preference for traditional male roles. This stereotype has been criticized by feminist thinker Simone de Beauvoir, who argued that the concept of motherhood serves as an obstacle to women's emancipation in the public sphere. The enactment of Law No. 23 of 2004 on the Elimination of Domestic Violence marked a significant turning point in addressing the dominance of patriarchal discourse. This legislation broadened the scope of violence beyond the physical dimension to include psychological, sexual, and neglect-based forms of abuse within the household. Article 1 paragraph (1) of this law defines domestic violence as "any act against a person, especially a woman, that results in physical, sexual, psychological suffering, and/or household neglect." This reflects an inclusive approach in which the perpetrator is not limited to men.

The expansion of the concept of violence is further evident in Article 5(b) of the Domestic Violence Elimination Law, which incorporates psychological violence as detailed in Article 7—namely, acts that cause fear, loss of self-confidence, and psychological suffering. Sexual violence is addressed in Article 8, while household neglect is regulated under Article 9. This differs from the KUHP approach, which defines assault in abstract terms as any act causing pain or suffering. The enumerative approach in the Domestic Violence Elimination Law specifies acts in concrete terms, whereas the KUHP leaves the interpretation of assault to criminal law theory and judicial practice. This has led to a partial shift from *delik materil* (material offenses) to *delik formil* (formal offenses) in certain provisions, although constitutive consequences remain a relevant consideration.

With regard to sanctions, the KUHP prescribes imprisonment as the principal penalty, while fines apply only to minor offenses (Article 352 paragraph 1). Under the Domestic Violence Elimination Law (UU Penghapusan KDRT), both fines and imprisonment constitute principal penalties. This approach reflects an emphasis on victim recovery rather than solely on the punishment of offenders. As illustrated in the case decision No. 411/Pid.Sus/2014/PN Bgl, the defendant was sentenced to two months' imprisonment with a four-month probation period, along with a fine as a substitute for court costs. Law No. 23 of 2004 stipulates that perpetrators of physical violence may be subject to a maximum prison sentence of five years and/or a fine of up to IDR 15,000,000.00 (Fikri, 2021). Meanwhile, in Islamic criminal law, physical violence against family members falls under the category of jarimah qishash, a criminal act for which the punishment is determined proportionally to the injury or harm inflicted. If the perpetrator's actions cause severe injury, the sanction may take the form of qishash (retaliatory punishment) or diyat (monetary compensation). Psychological violence, sexual violence, and household neglect, on the other hand, are categorized as jarimah ta'zir, namely criminal acts for which the penalties are determined by the judge based on considerations of public interest (maslahah). Ta'zir punishments may take the form of reprimands, fines, imprisonment, or banishment (Yani Andriyani, 2023). From the perspective of Islamic law, acts of violence committed by a husband against his wife whether physical or psychologicalconstitute a deviation from the principle of mu'asyarah bil ma'ruf (kind and respectful companionship) in marital life and represent a violation of the magasid al-shari'ah, particularly in safeguarding life (hifz al-nafs) and protecting honor (hifz al-'ird) (Yani Andriyani, 2023).

Therefore, both positive law and Islamic criminal law share the same fundamental objective in regulating domestic violence, namely to provide maximum protection for victims while imposing fair sanctions on perpetrators. Although their approaches differ positive law being more rigid in its normative structure, and Islamic criminal law prioritizing flexibility and the values of *maslahah* (public interest) both are grounded in the principle of substantive justice. In the context of Islamic law, it is affirmed that "all forms of domestic violence, whether physical, psychological, sexual, or economic, constitute serious violations that will be subject to sanctions both in this world and in the hereafter through the mechanisms of *kaffarat* or *ta'zir* (Kadarisman, 2024). This approach reflects the restorative dimension of Islamic law, particularly in cases

where *qishash* cannot be applied, as it is further stated that "Islamic law offers *diyat* or *ta'zir* as more humane forms of justice for female and child victims (Inggit Arifah, 2023).

Moreover, emphasizing the protective values embedded in the *maqasid al-shari'ah* is essential, as it provides an ideal framework for family protection and the prevention of religion-based violence (Ashari, 2024). n positive law, protection-oriented approaches are developed through the imposition of criminal sanctions; however, these often encounter challenges in implementation. As noted by Qhori, criminal sanctions for psychological domestic violence tend to be lenient and fail to produce a deterrent effect on perpetrators (Qhori Annissa Nur Hawa, 2024). Consequently, integrating the protective spirit of *maqasid al-shari'ah* into positive legal regulations becomes an ideal strategy for ensuring substantive justice, as it is further emphasized that "the resolution of domestic violence must be grounded in justice, compassion, and victim recovery, in line with the original spirit of Islamic law itself" (Hanapi, 2024).

In positive law, protection-oriented approaches are generally operationalized through the imposition of criminal sanctions aimed at deterring perpetrators and ensuring public safety. These mechanisms, codified in statutory provisions, rely on formal processes such as investigation, prosecution, and sentencing to deliver justice. However, their effectiveness often encounters practical challenges, particularly in cases of psychological domestic violence. As highlighted by Qhori Annissa Nur Hawa (2024), criminal sanctions for such offenses tend to be lenient, with penalties that fail to generate a genuine deterrent effect on offenders. This shortcoming can undermine the victim's sense of justice, as the legal process may appear more punitive in form than protective in substance, thereby diminishing public trust in the legal system's capacity to safeguard vulnerable family members. Consequently, integrating the protective spirit of maqāṣid al-sharī'ah into positive legal regulations emerges as an ideal strategy for ensuring substantive and holistic justice. Such integration would not merely align the moral and spiritual imperatives of Islamic law with the procedural rigor of positive law but would also address gaps in victim protection and offender accountability. In this regard, it has been emphasized that "the resolution of domestic violence must be grounded in justice, compassion, and victim recovery, in line with the original spirit of Islamic law itself." This approach advocates for a legal framework that is both repressive toward perpetrators and restorative toward victims, ensuring not only the cessation of violence but also the healing of relationships, the empowerment of survivors, and the strengthening of the family as a foundational social institution.

The Relevance of Domestic Violence Handling in the Criminal Code of Islamic Criminal Law

In Islamic criminal law, the handling of domestic violence (DV) is grounded in the fundamental principle of maqāSid al-sharī'ah, which encompasses the five primary objectives of the Sharia: the protection of religion (hifz al-dīn), life (hifz al-nafs), intellect (hifz al-'aql), lineage (hifz al-nasl), and property (hifz al-māl). In the context of domestic violence, two objectives hold particular significance namely, the protection of life and lineage. Domestic violence, whether physical, psychological, or sexual, is regarded as an act that contravenes the principles of justice and compassion, which form the ethical foundation of familial relationships in Islam. The Qur'an underscores the importance of marital interaction based on the principle of mu'āsharah bil ma'rūf (kind and respectful companionship), as articulated in Surah al-Nisā' verse 19: "And live with them [vour wives] in kindness." This verse affirms that family relationships must be preserved in a harmonious atmosphere marked by mutual respect, rather than by coercion or violence. Consequently, both physical and psychological abuse perpetrated by a husband against his wife, or vice versa, constitutes a violation of moral norms and legal provisions in Islam. In this regard, perpetrators of domestic violence may be subject to ta'zīr a discretionary punishment determined by the judge in accordance with the severity of the offense and the socio-cultural context of the community.

In the effort to realize equitable legal protection for victims of domestic violence (DV), it is essential to establish an integration between positive law and Islamic law, allowing each to complement the other. From an Islamic perspective, domestic violence is regarded not only as a moral transgression but also as an act that contravenes the principles of Sharia. Jumni Nelli and Mhd. Syahrizan affirm that "domestic violence stands in contradiction to the principles of Islam, which emphasize the protection of religion, life, intellect, lineage, and property" (Syahrizan,

2025) all of which constitute the essence of $maq\bar{a}$ \dot{s} id al-shari al. This is reinforced by Bismar Siregar and colleagues, who state that " $maq\bar{a}$ \dot{s} id al-shari al, through the principles of \dot{h} if al-iy al-iy

On the other hand, the positive law approach, as embodied in Law No. 23 of 2004, has indeed accommodated various forms of violence, including psychological abuse. However, questions remain regarding the effectiveness of its enforcement. Frisnia Sengkey observes that "psychological abuse is often addressed relatively lightly, as the maximum criminal sanction is three years' imprisonment or a fine of nine million rupiah" (Sengkey, 2024) which in practice does not always serve as a deterrent to perpetrators. This observation aligns with the findings of Qhori Annissa Nurhawa and her team, who note that "criminal sanctions for psychological abuse tend to be lenient and have yet to provide a deterrent effect for perpetrators (Qhori Annissa Nur Hawa, 2024) further underscoring the urgency of reforming the sanction system to be more responsive to the suffering of victims.

The urgency of harmonizing the values of positive law with the principles of Islamic law is emphasized by Kartika Yusrina and Ramdani Wahyu, who assert that "violence against children and women is in contradiction with both positive law and Islamic Sharia" (Sururie, 2024) his statement highlights a point of convergence between the two legal systems in rejecting all forms of domestic violence. Therefore, uniting the spirit of justice inherent in Islamic law with the normative firmness of positive law constitutes a strategic step toward ensuring substantive and equitable legal protection not only for victims but also for the sustainability of the family institution. In this context, merging the normative rigor of positive law, which functions as the state's coercive instrument for formal justice enforcement, with the moral spirit and substantive justice values of Islamic law becomes a critically important strategy. Such an integrative approach can create a legal protection model that is not only repressive toward perpetrators but also restorative and transformative for victims and the family as a whole. Islamic law, through the principles of magāSid al-sharī'ah, offers a framework oriented toward maSlahah (public benefit) and restoration, while positive law provides certainty and enforceability through structured legal institutions. Hence, the synthesis of the two is expected to produce a legal system that addresses violence not only at a normative level but also actively rebuilds just and harmonious social relations within the family and the wider community. When compared substantively, the Criminal Code (Kitab Undang-Undang Hukum Pidana, KUHP) and Islamic criminal law demonstrate strong relevance in handling domestic violence cases, albeit through different approaches. The KUHP, as Indonesia's positive law, emphasizes legal certainty through formal mechanisms such as reporting, investigation, and sentencing, all systematically regulated. Victim protection mechanisms are also accommodated in various forms, including witness protection, provision of safe houses, legal assistance services, and psychological support. The aim of this approach is to deter perpetrators while ensuring the fulfillment of victims' rights within the juridical sphere.

Conversely, Islamic criminal law classifies domestic violence as an act falling within the category of $jar\bar{\imath}mah$, either $qi\$\bar{a}\$-diy\bar{a}t$ or $ta'z\bar{\imath}r$, depending on the form of the act and its impact on the victim. This approach prioritizes comprehensive protection through the values of $maq\bar{a}\$id$ al- $shar\bar{\imath}'ah$, which encompass the safeguarding of life, property, honor, and lineage. From the Islamic perspective, forms of violence including physical, psychological, and economic abuse are regarded as serious violations of the principles of justice within the family (Maisaro, 2024). Accordingly, despite having different structures and legal sources, both the KUHP and Islamic criminal law share the common objective of preventing violence, protecting victims, and upholding justice within the household (Imam Alfurqan, 2025).

In contrast to the approach adopted in positive criminal law, which prioritizes formal and legalistic aspects, Islamic criminal law places greater emphasis on substantive justice, compassion within the family, and resolution through consultation ($musy\bar{a}warah$) and mediation. In Islamic thought, domestic violence is not merely viewed as a legal violation but also as a form of moral decay and relational harm that undermines family harmony. Consequently, sanctions against perpetrators of domestic violence under Islamic law are not always directed towards physical punishment or strict penal measures but instead fall within the domain of $ta'z\bar{i}r$ a form of punishment left to the discretion of the judge or competent authority based on the specific circumstances of the case. This flexibility allows consideration of the psychological, social, and

emotional dimensions of the relationship between perpetrator and victim, ensuring that the legal process does not terminate merely in retribution but also seeks relational restoration. When reconciliation is not possible, Islamic law provides for the lawful dissolution of marriage (talaq) as a last resort. In this way, Islamic criminal law is oriented not only towards punishment but also towards repairing family relations through rehabilitation or, where necessary, legitimate separation.

By contrast, the Criminal Code (Kitab Undang-Undang Hukum Pidana, KUHP), as a product of state positive law, offers a clear legal structure and certainty. Its focus lies in the enforcement of criminal law through the stages of reporting, investigation, trial, and sentencing, serving as a means of comprehensive public protection. This approach is essential for creating a deterrent effect, maintaining public order, and ensuring that perpetrators of violence receive proportionate sanctions. However, its formalistic nature often leaves limited room to consider the preservation of family unity or the psychological recovery of victims. Recognizing the strengths of each legal framework, an integrative approach that combines the KUHP with Islamic criminal law can offer a more comprehensive and equitable strategy for addressing domestic violence. The Kitab Undang-Undang Hukum Pidana (KUHP) constitutes a definitive statutory apparatus for the prosecution and sanctioning of domestic violence perpetrators, conferring procedural certainty and the coercive capacity of the state necessary to uphold public order and protect individual rights. Through its institutionalized stagesreporting, investigation, prosecution, adjudication, and sentencing the KUHP operationalizes legal accountability and deterrence by prescribing clear legal standards and proportionate penal consequences. Such formalization is instrumental in ensuring that acts of domestic violence are recognized and treated as offences against both the person and the social order, thereby fulfilling the state's duty to provide predictable and enforceable remedies.

Complementarily, Islamic criminal law contributes normative and remedial dimensions that enrich the legal response with ethical, spiritual, and socio-communal considerations. Grounded in the maqāṣid al-sharī ʿah, this orientation prioritizes the preservation of life, lineage, intellect, religion, and property, and frames legal responses in terms of holistic welfare (maṢlaḥah). The discretionary domain of taʿzīr enables contextually sensitive adjudication that can balance retributive imperatives with rehabilitative and reconciliatory measures, including mediated settlement, moral reform of the offender, and mechanisms for victim restoration. Accordingly, Islamic criminal law emphasizes not only cessation of harm but also the restoration of relational equilibrium within the family. An integrative jurisprudential model that synthesizes the KUHP's procedural rigor with the substantive, restorative ethos of Islamic criminal law yields a more comprehensive paradigm for addressing domestic violence. This hybrid framework secures legal accountability through formal criminal mechanisms while simultaneously creating institutional space for restorative interventions aimed at repairing interpersonal relations and rebuilding the family as a primary social institution. In praxis, such synergy advances dual objectives: it enforces sanctions sufficient to protect public interest and deter recidivism, and it promotes rehabilitative and restorative outcomes that attend to victims' recovery and the reconstitution of familial harmony thereby contributing to both juridical justice and social resilience.

Conclusion

The criminal act of domestic violence carries highly serious legal implications in both the context of Indonesian criminal law and Islamic criminal law. Under the *KUHP*, domestic violence may be subject to criminal sanctions according to the type and degree of violence committed. In contrast, Islamic criminal law offers solutions that prioritize reconciliation and the restoration of family relationships. Therefore, strengthening law enforcement and providing continuous public education on the importance of building harmonious and violence-free families are imperative. Both legal systems hold relevance in addressing domestic violence but employ different approaches. In this regard, the *KUHP* focuses more on the enforcement of positive law through strict and procedural punishments for perpetrators, whereas Islamic criminal law prioritizes the principles of compassion and justice within the family, offering solutions through rehabilitation, divorce (*khul'*), or *ta'zir*.

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