

CONTROVERSY OVER SOUND SYSTEM RULES IN PLACES OF WORSHIP: A FIQH REVIEW

Abdul Hakim

STAI Imam Syafi'i Cianjur
Email: abdulhakim.92@yahoo.com

Abstrak: Pengeras suara merupakan perlengkapan yang sangat penting keberadaannya dalam tempat ibadah. Hanya saja, Sebagian masyarakat merasa terganggu dengan penggunaan pengeras suara yang berlebihan dan dengan volume yang terlalu keras. Penelitian dalam artikel ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui butir-butir aturan mengenai pengeras suara di masjid dan musala, mengetahui posisi fikih terhadap butir-butir aturan tersebut dan mengetahui relevansi aturan tersebut untuk diaplikasikan dalam kehidupan masyarakat di Indonesia. Penelitian dalam artikel ini merupakan penelitian kualitatif menggunakan metode studi pustaka. Pendekatan yang digunakan adalah analisis konten. Sumber data dalam penelitian ini adalah Surat Edaran Menteri Agama tahun 2018, Instruksi Dirjen Bimmas Islam tahun 1978, Surat Edaran Menteri Agama tahun 2022, buku-buku fikih mu'tabarab dan jurnal-jurnal ilmiah yang relevan. Penelitian dalam artikel ini menemukan bahwa aturan penggunaan pengeras suara yang dikeluarkan oleh Menteri Agama tidak bertentangan dengan fikih. Penolakan sebagian masyarakat terhadap aturan ini salah satunya disebabkan karena mereka tidak membaca secara lengkap aturan tersebut dan mempelajarinya dari sudut pandang fikih. Untuk memberlakukan aturan tentang penggunaan pengeras suara di masjid perlu adanya sosialisasi dan komunikasi dengan baik antara pihak pemerintah dengan masyarakat. MUI menghimbau agar implementasi aturan pengeras suara masjid hendaknya tidak digeneralisir dan memperbatikan kearifan lokal serta tidak kaku dalam penerapannya.

Kata Kunci: Polemik, Pengeras Suara, Surat Edaran

Title: Controversy Over Sound System Rules in Places Of Worship: A Fiqh Review

Abstract: Loudspeakers is an essential equipment in places of worship. It is just that some people feel disturbed by the excessive use of loudspeakers and volumes that are too loud. The research in this article aims to find out the rules regarding loudspeakers in mosques and prayer rooms, the position of fiqh regarding these rules, and the relevance of these rules to be applied in people's lives in Indonesia. The research in this article is qualitative research using the literature study method. The approach used is content analysis. The data sources in this study are the 2018 Minister of Religion Circular Letter, the 1978 Instruction of the Director General of Islamic Community Guidance, the 2022 Minister of Religion Circular Letter, mu'tabarab fiqh books, and relevant scientific journals. The research in this article found that the rules for using loudspeakers issued by the Minister of Religion are consistent with fiqh. Part of the community's rejection of this rule is because they have yet to read the regulation thoroughly and studied it from a fiqh point of view. To enforce the rules regarding loudspeakers in mosques, it is necessary to socialize and communicate well between the government and the community. MUI urges that the implementation of mosque loudspeaker rules should not be generalized and pay attention to local wisdom and not be rigid in its application.

Keywords: Polemic, Loudspeaker, Circular



INTRODUCTION

Loudspeakers hold great significance in mosques and prayer rooms.¹ They are essential for disseminating Islamic teachings within the community.² Almost every mosque and prayer room (*mushala*) rely on loudspeakers to announce the call to prayer (*adzan*) and conduct various religious activities, including *tablilan* and *pengajian*. However, excessive volume and continuous loudspeaker use can cause specific individual discomfort.³

Jusuf Kalla once criticized the activities of the *tarhim*, which were seen as disturbing the peace, labeling it as “noise pollution.” As the Chairman of the Indonesian Mosques Council (*Dewan Masjid Indonesia: DMI*), Jusuf Kalla urged all mosque administrators not to wake people up an hour earlier.⁴ In 2012, Budiono, the former Vice President of the Republic of Indonesia, and Jusuf Kalla appealed to mosques to adjust the volume of their speakers.⁵

To maintain harmony among community members and to ensure peace, order, and comfort, it is necessary to establish a Circular Letter (*Surat Edaran: SE*) that regulates the use of loudspeakers.⁶ The Minister of Religion explained to journalists that the volume of mosques and *mushala* speakers must be regulated for the sake of community harmony, maximizing benefits, and minimizing disturbances. With mosques and *mushala* located approximately every 100 to 200 meters, simultaneous loudspeakers would create disturbances, similar to the simultaneous barking of dogs around a residential complex.⁷ The Circular Letter and the Minister of Religion’s statement, both of which stirred controversy, led to various demonstrations in Central Jakarta and Karawang, West Java.⁸

Previously, the Minister of Religion, through the Director General of Islamic Community Guidance (*Direktorat Bimas Islam*), issued an instruction in 1978 concerning loudspeakers in mosques, *langgar*, and *mushala*. Subsequently 2018, the Minister of Religion

¹ Didik Riyanto and Munaji Munaji, “IbM Darusalam Janti Slahung Mosque Loudspeakers,” *Journal of Community Dedication* 2, no. 1 (2018): 31.

² Circular Letter Number SE. 05 of 2022 concerning Guidelines for Using Loudspeakers in Mosques and Mushala, 2022, 1.

³ Rosmala, “Public Perceptions About the Phenomenon of Using Limiting Loudspeakers for Mosques in Kubang Jaya Village, Siak Hulu District, Kab. Kampar,” *Scientific Journal of Communication Communique* 4, no. 2 (2022): 45–47.

⁴ Panshaiskpradi Panshaiskpradi, “Audience Reception Regarding Tarhim,” *Communications: Journal of Communication Studies* 2, no. 2 (2019): 180.

⁵ Riyanto and Munaji, “IbM Loudspeaker at Darusalam Janti Slahung Mosque,” 31.

⁶ Circular Letter Number SE. 05 of 2022 concerning Guidelines for Using Loudspeakers in Mosques and Mushala, 1.

⁷ Yaqut Cholil Qoumas, “Regulations for Mosque Loudspeakers, This Said the Minister of Religion Yaqut Cholil,” *Youtube.Com*, last modified 2022, accessed June 9, 2022, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wzkRcb9F7iw&t=148s>.

⁸ Muhammad Nursam, “After the Dog Barking Analogy, Demonstrations Asking Minister of Religion Yaqut to Retreat Echoes, PA 212 Prepares Bigger Action,” *Fajlar: Online News Portal* (Makassar, February 25, 2022), accessed June 8, 2022, <https://fajar.co.id/2022/02/25/tail-analogy-barking-dog-demonstration-asking-menag-yaqut-backward-meggema-pa-212-prepare-action-bigger/>.

issued a circular letter regarding implementing the 1978 the instruction of *Bimas Islam*. The Circular also faced public criticism, as many believed the government was regulating the call to prayer by reducing its volume. Numerous protestors attacked the Twitter account of Lukman Hakim Saifuddin, who served as the Minister of Religion back then.⁹

Based on the explanation mentioned earlier, it is imperative to assess SE No. 05 of 2022 to ascertain compliance with guidelines issued by the Ministry of Religion on using loudspeakers with *fiqh* principles. Is this Circular Letter applicable and pertinent to Indonesian society in practice?

Numerous articles have discussed the topic of loudspeakers in mosques. One such article titled “*Communication and Motives for Utilizing Mosque Loudspeakers in Depok District, Yogyakarta*” highlights that mosques in the Depok sub-district employ external loudspeakers not only for the *adzan* but also for broadcasting Qur’anic recitation cassette, *sholawatan*, *dzikir*, and public announcements. However, these activities (apart from the call to prayer) should conform to the loudspeaker usage policy.¹⁰

Another article on the same subject, authored by Perdana Putra Pangestu and titled “*Urban Social Harmonization: Assessing the Likelihood of Conflict Surrounding Mosque Loudspeaker Regulations During the Pre-Dawn Meal Tradition*,” elaborates that the utilization of mosque loudspeakers frequently leads to tensions in a diverse society, as it disturbs public tranquility. People have voiced concerns regarding violations of their rights, such as disturbances to toddlers, the presence of unwell individuals, and the presence of non-Muslim residents.¹¹

Rosmalia’s article, titled “*Public Perceptions Regarding the Phenomenon of Mosque Loudspeaker Usage in Kubang Jaya Village, Siak Hulu District, Kab. Kampar*,” reveals that the people of Kubang Jaya Village have never had issues with loudspeaker usage at the mosque, as long as the volume is adjusted according to necessity. The community expresses discontent when restrictions are imposed on loudspeaker usage in mosques.¹²

This article examined specific points mentioned in the Circular Letter issued by the Ministry of Religion in 2022 and analyzed them from a *fiqh* perspective. The research aims to determine the regulations concerning loudspeakers in mosques and prayer rooms, explore the *fiqh* standpoint on these regulations, and assess the applicability of these rules in the lives of Indonesian individuals.

⁹ Alen Manggola, "Communication and Motives for the Use of Toah in the Depok District Mosque in Yogyakarta," *JOPPAS: Journal of Public Policy and Administration Silampari* 1, no. 2 (2020): 49–50.

¹⁰ Manggola, "Communication and Motives for the Use of Toah in the Mosque, Depok District, Yogyakarta," 48–55.

¹¹ Perdana Putra Pangestu, "Urban Social Harmonization: Study of the Probability of Conflict in the Tradition of Waking Up Sahur Over the Regulation of Mosque Loudspeakers," *Research Journal* 15, no. 1 (2021): 149–168.

¹² Rosmala, "Public Perceptions About the Phenomenon of Using Limiting Loudspeakers for Mosques in Kubang Jaya Village, Siak Hulu District, Kab. Kampar," 45–55.

METHOD

The research discussed in this article employed a qualitative research methodology through the literature study technique. The content analysis served as the chosen approach. The data for this study were derived from a Circular Letter issued by the Minister of Religion with the reference number: B.3940/DJ.III/HK.00.7/08/2018, as well as the Director General of Islamic Community Guidance Instructions with the reference number: KEP/D/101/1978, Minister of Religion Circular Letter with the reference number: SE. 05 of 2022, mu'tabarah fiqh books, and relevant scientific journals.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Rules for Using Loudspeakers in Indonesia

In 1978, the Instruction of the Director General of Islamic Community Guidance was released under Number: KEP/D/101/1978, addressing the request for loudspeaker usage in Mosques, *Langgar*, and *Mushalla*. Subsequently, in 2018, Circular Letter Number: B.3940/DJ.III/HK.00.7/08/2018 was issued, emphasizing the implementation of the 1978 Instruction of the Director General of Bimas Islam. The government's decision to establish regulations on loudspeakers in places of worship was motivated by valid reasons. The issuance of this regulation was prompted by numerous public inquiries and requests, urging the government to establish guidelines regarding loudspeakers promptly. The Minister of Religion disclosed that this policy was adopted due to the numerous requests from various cosmopolitan cities with heterogeneous populations.¹³

According to Instruction Number: KEP/D/101/1978 by the Director General of Bimas Islam, external loudspeakers are exclusively permitted for the call to prayer during the five daily prayers, recitation of the Qur'an 15 minutes before the Fajr and Friday prayers, recitation of the Al-Qur'an 5 minutes prior to the call to prayer for Zuhur, Asar, Maghrib, and Isya, as well as the announcement of the Takbir for Eid al-Fitr and Eid al-Adha. Conversely, internal loudspeakers are utilized to implement the five daily prayers, dawn lectures, prayers, *dzikir*, Friday sermons, *tarhim*, *tadarrus* Ramadhan, and Islamic preachings.¹⁴

Subsequently, on February 18, 2022, the Ministry of Religion of the Republic of Indonesia issued a Circular Letter that governs the use of loudspeakers in mosques and *Mushalla*. This Circular is identified as SE. 05 of 2022 encourages the public to utilize it as a

¹³ Manggola, "Communication and Motives for Using the Toah of the Mosque, Depok District, Yogyakarta," 50.

¹⁴ *Instructions of the Director General of Islamic Community Guidance. Number: KEP/D/101/1978 Concerning Demands for the Use of Loudspeakers in Mosques, Langgars, and Mushallas* (Indonesia, 1978).

guideline for regulating loudspeakers in mosques and prayer rooms. The Minister of Religion also urges compliance with the regulations outlined in the circular letter.¹⁵

Rules for the use of loudspeakers in Muslim Countries

Before Indonesia, several Muslim-majority countries like Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and Bahrain had implemented regulations regarding using loudspeakers in places of worship. In 1949, Egypt enacted Law No. 45 of 1943, which governs the usage of loudspeakers. This law was established by the Masyayikh Council and the People's Representative Council, and it received the endorsement of the Egyptian king. Among the provisions is the prohibition of loudspeaker usage in public or private areas, residences, or gatherings, be it temporary or permanent, unless prior authorization is obtained from the governor or directorate.¹⁶ Generally, this regulation restricts loudspeakers in places of worship or other locations. Any usage of loudspeakers elsewhere necessitates permission from the local government.

In 2020, Ministry of Waqf of Egypt introduced a new regulation prohibiting external speakers, except for the call to prayer. *Iqamah* and prayers should be conducted with or without loudspeakers, depending on the circumstances and the availability of adequate amplification.¹⁷

On Sunday (May 23, 2021), Saudi Arabia's Ministry of Islamic Affairs issued a circular that limits the usage of external loudspeakers in mosques solely for the call to prayer and *iqamah*. Minister of Islamic Affairs, Abdul Lathif Al Sheikh, emphasized that the loudspeaker volume should be one-third of its maximum capacity. Legal action will be taken against anyone who violates this regulation. Previously, in 2019, the Ministry had established rules to regulate the calls to prayer and prayers through external loudspeakers during Ramadan. These rules included limitations on the number of external loudspeakers (up to four) and restrictions on the volume level (limited to the fourth level).¹⁸

The State of Bahrain introduced the Decree of Law No. (11) in 1999 to regulate the installation and usage of loudspeakers. Among the directives established by Isa bin Salman Al Khalifa, the Emir of Bahrain, is the prohibition of installing or employing loudspeakers in public or private spaces, including modes of transportation, unless prior permission is obtained from the relevant security area director. The sound emitted from loudspeakers

¹⁵ Circular Letter Number SE. 05 of 2022 concerning Guidelines for Using Loudspeakers in Mosques and Mushala, 4.

¹⁶ "Qānūn Raqm 45 Li Sanah 1949," *Al-Waqā'i' Al-Mishriyyah: Jaridah Rasmiyyah Li Al-Hukūmah Al-Mishriyyah*, April 4, 1949, 2.

¹⁷ Ali Abdurrahman, "Al-Awqāf: 'Adam Istikhdām Mukabbir Al-Shawt Al-Khārijīyyah Illā Fī Al-Adzān Faqath," *Jaridah Al-Yawm Al-Sābi': Jaridah Mishriyyah Yawmiyyah* (Giza, June 24, 2020), accessed June 10, 2022, <https://www.youm7.com/4842855>.

¹⁸ "As-Su'ūdiyyah.. Qashr Istikhdām Mukabbirāt Al-Shawt Bi Al-Masājid 'alā Al-Adzān Wa Al-Iqāmah," *Alkhaleej Online: Mauqī' Ikbbāriy Mutakhasshis Bi Al-Sya'n Al-Khalījī*, last modified 2021, accessed June 9, 2022, <http://khaleej.online/D3narx>.

should be audible only within the designated areas where their usage is permitted, except for the call to prayer and the performance of prayers. Violators of the law will face a minimum fine of one hundred dinars and a maximum fine of five hundred dinars. Repeat offenses may result in a maximum prison sentence of three months, a minimum fine of two hundred dinars, and a maximum fine of one thousand dinars, or either of the two penalties.¹⁹ The Bahraini government permits using external loudspeakers exclusively for the call to prayer and prayers. At the same time, other activities, including Qur'an recitations and other religious practices, are only allowed to utilize loudspeakers.

The Circular Letter of the Ministry of Religion Number 05 of 2022 In Jurisprudence Review

On February 18, 2022, Circular Letter No. 05 of 2022 was officially issued by the Ministry of Religion, which governs the utilization of loudspeakers in mosques and prayer rooms. The Circular Letter outlines the following procedures for the use of loudspeaker:

1. Prayer times
 - a. Subuh/Dawn
 - 1) Before the call to prayer, the Qur'an or *shalawat/tarhim* recitation may employ an external loudspeaker for a maximum duration of 10 (ten) minutes.
 - 2) Dawn prayers, *dhikr*, and dawn lectures should be conducted using internal loudspeakers.
 - b. Zuhur, Asr, Maghrib and Isha'
 - 1) Before the *adzan*, the recitation of the Qur'an or *shalawat/tarhim* can employ an external loudspeaker for a maximum duration of 5 (five) minutes.
 - 2) After *adzan* the internal loudspeakers should be used
 - c. Friday
 - 1) Preceding the *Adzan*, the Qur'an or *shalawat/tarhim* recitation may utilize external loudspeakers for a maximum period of 10 (ten) minutes.
 - 2) Internal loudspeakers should be used to deliver announcements concerning Friday officers, *infaq* announcement, Friday sermons, *dzikr*, and *du'a*.
2. External loudspeakers are used for *Adzan*.
3. Islamic preaching during Ramadan, *Takbir of Eid al-Fitr*, *Eid al-Adha*, and Islamic festivities:
 - a. The external loudspeakers during Ramadan are used for *Tarawih*, Ramadan lectures, and *tadarrus*.

¹⁹ "Marsūm Bi Qanūn Raqm (11) Li Sanah 1999 Bi Tandhīm Tarkīb Wa Istīmāl Mukabbirat Al-Shawt," *Bahrainlaw.Net*, last modified 2008, accessed June 10, 2022, <https://www.bahrainlaw.net/post1299.html>.

- b. Takbir on 1 Shawwal/10 Zulhijjah in mosques/*Mushala* may be projected using external loudspeakers until 22.00 local time, followed by internal loudspeakers.
- c. External loudspeakers may be used for Eid al-Fitr and Eid al-Adha prayers.
- d. Echoing the Takbir of Eid al-Adha on Tasyrik day from the 11th to the 13th of Zulhijjah may take place after the orderly execution of the Rawatib prayer, employing internal loudspeakers. And
- e. Ceremonies dedicated to commemorating Islamic holidays employ internal loudspeakers unless the presence of tabligh visitors exceeds the confines of the mosque/*Mushala* area, where external loudspeakers may be utilized.²⁰

The Ministry of Religion also governs the installation and usage of loudspeakers in the following manner:

1. The loudspeakers must be installed separately, distinguishing between those used externally and inside the mosque/*Mushala*.
2. It is crucial to ensure good acoustic settings for optimal sound outcomes.
3. The loudspeaker volume should be adjusted as required, with a maximum limit of 100 dB (one hundred decibels).
4. When employing loudspeakers for recording playback, attention should be given to the recording quality, timing, and proper recitation of the end of the verse, *selawat/tarhim*.²¹

Using external loudspeakers to announce the call to prayer aligns with fiqh principles. *Adḥān* is ordained to signify the commencement of prayer time and to invite and gather those who hear it to pray collectively.²² Hence, fiqh scholars assert that raising the voice during the call to prayer is a recommended practice (*sunnah*). Al-Bahuti, in his book *Kasyāf al-Qinā' 'an Matn al-Iqnā'*, mentions that it is recommended to amplify the sound as much as possible during the call to prayer since the purpose of the call is to provide information about the prayer times (*I'lām*), which can only be achieved through raising the voice.²³ Fath al-Wahhāb states that to express the *syiar*, he recommended broadcasting the prayer call within an area where its residents can hear it.²⁴

The maximum volume limit of 100 dB for external loudspeakers, whether for *Adḥān* or other purposes, also adheres to fiqh principles. The objective of using a loudspeaker for *Adḥān* is to broadcast and inform about the prayer times, both of which can still be

²⁰ Circular Letter Number SE. 05 of 2022 concerning Guidelines for the Use of Loudspeakers in Mosques and Mushala, 2–3.

²¹ Circular Letter Number SE. 05 of 2022 concerning Guidelines for Using Loudspeakers in Mosques and Mushala, 2.

²² Muhammad Ibn Ismail As-Shan'āni, *Al-Tahbīr Li Idhābi Ma'āni Al-Taisīr* (Riyadh: Maktabah ar-Rusyd, 2012), 211.

²³ Manshur Al-Bahuti, *Kasyāf Al-Qinā' 'an Matn Al-Iqnā'* (Saudi Arabia: Wizārah al-'Adl, 2008), 64.

²⁴ Zakaria Al-Anshari, *Fath Al-Wahhāb Bi Syarh Al-Manhaj* (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1994), 40.

accomplished within the volume limit of 100 dB. Particularly in Indonesia, where densely populated urban settlements are prevalent, mosques and *Mushala* are situated close to each other. Therefore, this volume limit suffices for all residents to hear the call. Sulaiman Al-Jamal explains that vocalizing the call to prayer is recommended to reach all residents. Furthermore, for syiar, the call to prayer should resonate in various locations within a broad area.²⁵ The restriction on using external loudspeakers for the call to prayer does not apply to *iqamah*, as the call to prayer is an invitation to those not physically present in the mosque/*Mushala*. In contrast, *iqamah* is an appeal to those who are already in the mosque/*Mushala*.²⁶

Through a Circular Letter, the Ministry of Religion encourages the use of internal loudspeakers for all activities following Adzan, including *Dhikr* and *Du'a*. Jurisprudence scholars elucidate that reciting *dhikr* (remembrance) aloud is preferable because it yields greater rewards, benefits those who listen, awakens the reader's heart, stimulates the mind to contemplate, involves the ear in the remembrance, dispels drowsiness, and enhances enthusiasm. However, all the merits of remembrance are subject to the condition that it is not performed to show off (*riya'*) and does not disturb individuals engaged in prayer.²⁷ Hence, using a loudspeaker for *dhikr* is more suitable to avoid disturbing individuals sleeping (including babies) or being unwell. An-Nawawi, in *Kitāb at-Tahqīq*, explains that engaging in remembrance and prayer after each prayer is recommended and should be done in a low voice (*sirr*), except for an imam who wishes to instruct the congregation in remembrance. Once they have learned, they should engage in *dhikr* in a subdued manner.²⁸

One more statement asserts that raising the voice while reciting is not considered *makruh*, except if it causes disturbance to those praying or discomforts individuals who are sleeping. Raising the voice during remembrance becomes prohibited and should be disallowed if many people are affected. If it neither disturbs nor harms, then reciting aloud during remembrance is permissible, and indeed, it is *sunnah* if the intention is for teaching and there is no fear of showing off.²⁹ Consequently, remembrance should be limited to worshipers in the mosque or prayer room to avoid causing disturbance to them.

Dhikr should be performed subduedly, enhancing its solemnity and allowing one to experience Allah SWT's presence, proximity, and awe. It is advised not to recite the remembrance loudly, as indicated in Surah Al-A'raf, verse 205: “*And remember your Lord within*

²⁵ Sulaiman Al-Jamal, *Futūḥāt Al-Wabbāb Bi Taudhīb Syarḥ Manḥaj Al-Thullāb* (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, nd), 298.

²⁶ Al-Jamal, *Futūḥāt Al-Wabbāb Bi Taudhīb Syarḥ Manḥaj Al-Thullāb*, 304.

²⁷ Abdurrahman Al-Masyhur, *Bugyah Al-Mustasyidin Fi Talkhīsh Fatawā Ba'dhi Al-'Aimmah Min Al-'Ulamā' Al-Mutaakbirin* (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1994), 79.

²⁸ Muhyiddin An-Nawawi, *Kitāb Al-Tabqīq* (Beirut: Dār al-Jīl, 1992), 219.

²⁹ Al-Masyhur, *Bugyah Al-Mustasyidin Fi Talkhīsh Fatawā Ba'dhi Al-'Aimmah Min Al-'Ulamā' Al-Mutaakbirin*, 108.

yourself with humility and in a low voice, morning and evening, and do not be among the heedless.” Al-Qurthubi explained in his commentary book, *al-Jāmi’ li Abkām al-Qur’ān*, that the verse above indicates the inappropriate nature of reciting aloud.³⁰ Ibn Kasir further clarified that the verse above indicates the recommendation of reciting dhikr in a moderate voice.³¹

As elucidated in the remembrance above, the post-prayer supplications should also be uttered in a subdued voice (*sirr*), except for an imam who wishes to educate his congregation, thus reciting them aloud. If the congregation is capable, then they should lower their voices. Al-Baihaqi and other scholars have debated the issue of maintaining a low voice in prayer, citing a hadith narrated by Al-Bukhari from Abu Musa Al-Asy’ari: “*We were with the Prophet Muhammad SAW, and upon descending into a valley, we recited the tablil and takbir loudly. The Prophet Muhammad SAW said: O people, be humble, for indeed, you are not supplicating to someone deaf or absent. He is All-Hearing and Near to you.*”³²

The utilization of external loudspeakers for reciting the Qur’an appears unsuitable, particularly in the afternoon before the midday and Friday call to prayer. This is due to the individuals around the mosque who are preoccupied with worldly affairs and thus fail to listen to and recite the Qur’an actively. Verse 204 of Surah Al-A’raf elucidated: “*And when the Qur’an is recited, then listen attentively and remain quietly engaged so that you may obtain mercy.*” An-Nasafi clarified that this apparent verse expounds on the requirement to attentively listen to and engage with the Qur’an during and outside prayer.³³ Nonetheless, Az-Zuhaili restricted the obligation of listening to the Qur’an solely to the time of Prophet Muhammad SAW. Subsequent to the demise of Prophet Muhammad SAW, the obligation to listen to the Qur’an remained applicable only when it is recited during prayers or sermons. Failing to comprehend this would impose an excessive burden on the people, necessitating their departure from their activities. The act of not listening and remaining silent when the Qur’an is recited during events is unequivocally deemed impermissible.³⁴

Fiqh jurists have explicated that if someone recites the Qur’an with such a loud volume that it disturbs someone sleeping nearby, they must lower their voice, even if the disturbed individual permits it. This is because it constitutes a complete act of disobedience without specific conditions, and the permission is usually coerced due to embarrassment. Similarly, when someone is engaged in studying or teaching, one must recite the Qur’an in a low

³⁰ Shamsuddin Al-Qurthubi, *Al-Jāmi’ Li Abkām Al-Qur’ān* (Cairo: Dār al-Kutub al-Mishriyyah, 1964), 355.

³¹ Abu Fida’ Ibn Katsir, *Tafsīr Al-Qur’ān Al-Adhīm* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-Ilmiyyah, 1419), 487.

³² Muhyiddin An-Nawawi, *Al-Majmū’ Syarh Al-Muhaddhab* (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, nd), 487.

³³ Abu al-Barakat An-Nasafi, *Madārik Al-Tanzīl Wa Haqāiq Al-Ta’wīl* (Beirut: Dār al-Kalim al-Thayyib, 1998), 528.

³⁴ Wahbah Az-Zuhaili, *Al-Tafsīr Al-Munīr Fi Al-Aqīdah Wa Al-Syari’ah Wa Al-Manhaj* (Damascus: Dār al-Fikr, 1991), 229.

voice.³⁵ Some scholars prohibit reciting the Qur'an aloud in the mosque if it disrupts individuals praying or sleeping.³⁶

Ramadan is a sacred in Islam, during which Muslims enthusiastically engage in various acts of worship, individually and collectively. Among the congregational activities performed are Tarawih prayers, recitation of the Qur'an or *Tadarus* either before Tarawih or after Tarawih. Frequently, these acts of worship are conducted using external loudspeakers. However, some individuals find themselves disturbed by the excessive usage of loudspeakers, such as reciting the Qur'an through external loudspeakers until late at night, disturbing their sleep, or commencing before dawn, prior to three in the morning. Circular No. 05 of 2022, issued by the Minister of Religion, effectively regulates the activities during Ramadan in mosques or prayer rooms, ensuring more outstanding organization and minimizing disturbances to the surrounding community.

Tadarus Al-Qur'an during Ramadan in the mosque or prayer room necessitates using a loudspeaker. The individuals prepared to listen attentively are a select group who desire to recite within the mosque or prayer room. Others outside the mosque engage in different forms of worship or have specific activities that prevent them from being ready to listen carefully to the Qur'an. Consequently, they cannot fulfill the directive of QS al-A'rāf verse 204, which mandates attentive listening and silence during the recitation of the Qur'an, as expounded upon by Imam An-Nasafi.³⁷ Thus, internal loudspeakers should be employed when reciting the Al-Qur'an during Ramadan, as only those present within the mosque are prepared to listen attentively. On the other hand, individuals outside the mosque are occupied with their concerns, particularly those attending to infants or experiencing illness. This issue is further exacerbated when individuals employing external loudspeakers possess poor vocal quality, and their recitations deviate from the rules of tajwid and *makbarijul huruf*.

The implementation of Tarawih prayers should also utilize internal loudspeakers as there is no need for the surrounding community to listen through external loudspeakers. The mosque attendees must listen to the imam's recitation and movements during congregational prayers. On the other hand, local individuals who cannot go to the mosque due to old age or difficulties do not require a comprehensive auditory experience of the Tarawih prayer from beginning to end. Similarly, Ramadan lectures should employ loudspeakers intended for the worshipers at the mosque, as those who intend to listen to the lectures will go to the mosque rather than stay home. Therefore, using external loudspeakers for Ramadan lectures

³⁵ Al-Masyhur, *Bugyah Al-Mustarsyidin Fi Talkhish Fatawā Ba'dhi Al-'Aimmah Min Al-'Ulamā' Al-Mutaakhirin*, 79.

³⁶ Zainuddin Al-Malibari, *Fath Al-Mu'īn Bi Sharh Qurrah Al-'Ain Bi Mubimmāt Al-Dīn* (Beirut: Dār Ibn Hazm, 2010), 209.

³⁷ An-Nasafi, *Madārik Al-Tanzīl Wa Haqāiq Al-Ta'wīl*, 528.

undoubtedly disturbs individuals who are occupied with their affairs or have other reasons for not wanting to listen.

Minister of Religion Circular Letter No. SE. 05 of 2022 primarily aims to ensure that loudspeakers do not disrupt public peace, order, and harmony among citizens. Disturbance to others is harm that must be eliminated.³⁸ As stated in the fiqh rule, “*ad-darār yuzāl*” (harm must be removed). This rule is one of the five fundamental fiqh rules, derived from the hadith of Prophet Muhammad (SAW), “*lā ḍarara wa lā ḍirār*,” which essentially emphasizes the prohibition of causing harm or engaging in actions that bring harm.³⁹

The provisions outlined in the Circular follow the fiqh as mentioned above rule. This rule minimizes the non-essential use of loudspeakers, as it can potentially disrupt areas where diverse communities comprising various sects and religions reside, such as regions outside Java where most of the population is non-Muslim.

Routine activities such as post-prayer remembrance, recitation of the Qur'an during Ramadan, and month-long Tarawih prayers could disrupt the surrounding community. On the other hand, significant events like Islamic holiday commemorations, the Takbir of Eid al-Fitr and Eid al-Adha on the eve of Eid, and other activities that occur once or at specific moments are generally accepted and understood by the community, making the use of external loudspeakers less problematic. Nonetheless, using external speakers should not be excessive as it may still cause interference. The takbir on the nights of Eid al-Fitr and Eid al-Adha should cease by 22:00, considering that some people need to rest, sleep, put their children to bed, or maybe unwell.

External speakers must be appropriately managed to avoid disturbing the surrounding community, as individuals have the right to live in peace without undue disturbance. Respecting neighbors' rights and refraining from causing harm to them are integral aspects of a Muslim's moral code, as Prophet Muhammad (SAW) emphasized in a hadith narrated by Muslims: “*Whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day should not harm their neighbors. Whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day should honor their guests. And whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day should speak words of goodness or remain silent.*”⁴⁰

The Circular issued by the Minister of Religion in 2022 faced resistance from specific individuals. Some mosques and prayer rooms disregarded the guidelines and did not enforce the rules. KH Asrorun Niam Sholeh, Chairman of the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI) for Fatwa, emphasized that the implementation of mosque loudspeaker regulations should not

1. ³⁸ Circular Letter Number SE. 05 of 2022 concerning Guidelines for Using Loudspeakers in Mosques and Mushala,

³⁹ Abdullah Al-Lahji, *Idhāb Al-Qawā'id Al-Fiqhiyyah* (Kuwait: Dār al-Diyā', 2013), 77.

⁴⁰ Abu al-Husain Muslim ibn al-Hajjaj, *Sahih Muslim* (Beirut: Dār Ihyā' al-Turāts al-'Arabī, nd), 68.

be uniform and inflexible but rather consider local customs and wisdom. Established procedures agreed upon within a particular area can serve as a general foundation.⁴¹

Generally, people do not find the call to prayer, and the sounds emanating from the mosque bothersome. However, Bahar Lubis opposed the limitations imposed on mosque loudspeakers, such as time and volume restrictions. According to him, the residents have been living harmoniously without objections to using mosque loudspeakers.⁴²

In response to the controversy surrounding loudspeaker regulations, Evi Muafiah, the Chancellor of IAIN Ponorogo, highlighted that the widespread discussion arises because people solely rely on media accounts of responses and opinions. Evi believes that the lack of literacy among the public and their failure to read and comprehend the regulations appropriately contribute to polemics. Consequently, he encourages the public to enhance their literacy skills before engaging in discussions to prevent unnecessary disputes.⁴³

Effective communication between the government and the community is crucial to ensure widespread acceptance of the Minister of Religion's Circular and its utilization as a guideline for loudspeaker usage. Initially, communication efforts can involve engaging extension workers who have thoroughly reviewed the Circular to convey its contents and intentions regarding loudspeaker regulations to the mosque committees. By effectively disseminating information through these extension workers, the takmir can better understand the advantages of adhering to these rules in maintaining the sustainability of the mosques.⁴⁴

CONCLUSION

The regulations on loudspeaker usage set by the Minister of Religion typically align with fiqh principles. Some individuals oppose these regulations because they have yet to read and study them from a fiqh perspective thoroughly. To effectively enforce these rules in mosques, fostering good communication and socialization between the government and the community is essential. MUI emphasizes the need for a nuanced approach to implementing the rules on mosque loudspeakers, considering local customs and avoiding rigid enforcement.

⁴¹ Sadam Al-Ghifari and Fakhruddin, "Regarding Mosque Rules, MUI: Their Implementation Must Pay Attention to Local Wisdom," *Indonesian Ulema Council*, last modified 2022, accessed June 28, 2022, <https://mui.or.id/berita/33731/about-rules-toa-mosque-mui-implementation-must-pay-attention-to-local-wisdom/>.

⁴² Rosmala, "Public Perceptions About the Phenomenon of Using Limiting Loudspeakers for Mosques in Kubang Jaya Village, Siak Hulu District, Kab. Kampar," 51–52.

⁴³ Evi Muafiah, "The Use of Loudspeakers in Crowded Mosques is Debated, Here's the Response of the Chancellor of IAIN Ponorogo," Public Relations of the *Ponorogo State Islamic Institute*, last modified 2022, accessed July 2, 2022, <https://iaiponorogo.ac.id/2022/02/25/the-use-of-loudspeakers-in-mosque-crowded-debate-begini-response-rector-iaiponorogo/>.

⁴⁴ Manggola, "Communication and Motives for Using the Toah of the Mosque, Depok District, Yogyakarta," 51.

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