



Qur'anic Critique of Exploitative Anthropocentrism: Exegesis of Verses on Land and Nature in the Context of Raja Ampat Mining

Ismail^{1*}, Mokhamad Sukron²

¹²UIN Profesor Kiai Haji Saifuddin Zuhri Purwokerto

Corresponding Author: ¹ismailhusain@uinsaizu.ac.id, ²mokhamadsukron@uinsaizu.ac.id

Article History:

Submitted:
2025-05-02

Accepted:
2025-07-15

Published:
2025-07-31

Abstract

This article explores the ethical foundations of the Qur'an in addressing ecological degradation resulting from mining activities in protected areas, with particular attention to the case of nickel extraction in Raja Ampat. Employing a thematic and contextual hermeneutical approach, this library-based study analyzes four key Qur'anic verses (Hūd [11]: 61, Al-Baqarah [2]: 30, Ar-Rūm [30]: 41, and Ar-Raḥmān [55]: 7-9) which articulate the notions of land, human trusteeship (khalifah), corruption (fasād), and ecological balance (mizān). The analysis finds that classical anthropocentric interpretations often overlook ecological responsibility and fail to confront systemic exploitation. By integrating perspectives from contemporary Islamic eco-theology and the objectives of Islamic law (maqāṣid al-sharī'ah), the study reinterprets these verses as a theological critique of extractive capitalism and as a foundation for an ethical framework centered on environmental justice. It concludes that the Qur'an offers a critical discourse against ecological destruction and calls for a prophetic shift in tafsir towards sustainability, justice, and the preservation of creation. This research contributes to the development of an interdisciplinary ecological hermeneutics within Islamic scholarship, offering timely relevance to the climate and ecological crises of the 21st century.

Keywords: Qur'anic hermeneutics, ecological justice, thematic exegesis, mining ethics, Raja Ampat, Islamic environmentalism.

1. Introduction

The Raja Ampat archipelago in West Papua is recognized as one of the world's highest centers of marine and terrestrial biodiversity. It is home to more than 600 varieties of coral reefs and approximately 1,800 species of fish, earning its status as a UNESCO Global Geopark, which primarily

relies on ecotourism and traditional fisheries for its livelihood.¹ However, nickel mining exploration has threatened the sustainability of this region: trial mining permits have expanded to cover more than 22,400 hectares between 2020 and 2024, with 494 hectares already entering the exploitation phase.² This expansion has caused deforestation of up to 550 hectares on Manuran, Gag, and Kawe Islands, along with sedimentation that endangers coral reef health.³

In response, the Ministry of Environment and Forestry and the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources (ESDM) have revoked four mining permits (PT Anugerah Surya Pratama, PT Mulia Raymond Perkasa, PT Kawei Sejahtera Mining, and PT Nurham) and temporarily suspended the operations of PT Gag Nikel as of June 5, 2025, due to violations of environmental impact assessments (AMDAL), although PT Gag Nikel itself continues to operate outside the geopark zone.⁴ Nevertheless, independent reports from organizations such as Greenpeace and TrendAsia caution that such revocations may be temporary, as similar incidents have occurred on other small islands without sustained law enforcement.⁵ Heavy metal pollution, sedimentation, and the decline of fishery and ecotourism productivity are direct consequences of extractive activities in the area.⁶

These impacts have drawn criticism from religious scholars and academics alike. Ulil Abshar Abdalla, Chairman of the Nahdlatul Ulama Executive Board (PBNU), stated that mining holds potential *maslahah* (public benefit) for the nation but must be conducted responsibly: “mining is beneficial... what is harmful is bad mining.”⁷ His remarks underscore the ethical dilemma between economic utility and ecological damage. Conversely, academic and environmental activist figures such as Iqbal Damanik, Greenpeace, and local communities have condemned the practice as a form of “structural crime” and a driver of systemic ecological degradation.⁸ Public opposition has reached 95%, with accusations that the government is spreading “hoaxes” to obscure the actual environmental damage occurring on the ground.⁹

This context illustrates a growing tension between extractive economic narratives and conservative ecological discourses. In light of these circumstances, an active Qur'anic understanding, employing *tafsir mawdū'i* (thematic exegesis) and contextual hermeneutics, is urgently needed to critique classical anthropocentric interpretations that often portray humans as absolute rulers over nature, neglecting their ecological responsibilities.¹⁰ Verses such as Al-Baqarah [2]: 30 (regarding the human role as *khalīfah* on earth) and Ar-Rūm [30]: 41 (“corruption has appeared on land and sea due to what human hands have wrought”) are particularly relevant for re-framing the human-nature relationship within the context of mining exploitation in Raja Ampat.¹¹

¹ Data UNESCO: lebih dari 600 jenis karang & 1.800 spesies ikan; istilah “UNESCO Global Geopark” menunjukkan perlindungan global

² Auriga Nusantara via Surabaya FMIPA Unesa, “ekspansi tambang hampir tiga kali lipat dalam lima tahun, lebih dari 22.400 ha izin tambang, 494 ha sejak 2020–2024,” Surabaya (2025).

³ Greenpeace Indonesia: deforestasi 550 ha di tiga pulau, sedimentasi yang menutup karang.

⁴ TrendAsia, 24 Juni 2025: empat IUP dicabut, operasi Gag Nikel ditangguhkan; Energy News, 10 Juni 2025: penangguhan PT Gag Nikel; BU BusinessTimes & Mongabay: bahkan Gag Nikel tetap punya izin.

⁵ TrendAsia: “Public outcry halted... yet other islands and indigenous people still under threat”; + izin reaktivasi terjadi di tempat lain.

⁶ Nexus3 & Sea People di Weda Bay: limbah mengandung logam berat, sedimentasi, penurunan perikanan.

⁷ Kompas.tv, 12 Juni 2025: “penambangan itu bermanfaat... yang tidak baik adalah bad mining,” Ulil Abshar.

⁸ Iqbal Damanik: structural crime; aktivis Greenpeace: tambang adalah penghancuran hidup.

⁹ Kompas: 95% sentimen negatif, tuduhan “hoaks” pemerintah justru memicu krisis legitimasi.

¹⁰ Al-Ṭabari, *Jāmi' al-Bayān*, 13:167–168: tafsir klasik menekankan kekuasaan manusia.

¹¹ QS. Al-Baqarah: 30; QS. Ar-Rūm: 41: “kerusakan... adalah akibat tangan manusia.”

By addressing the case of Raja Ampat contextually, this study seeks to offer a Qur'anic critique of exploitative anthropocentrism embedded in classical tafsir. This approach serves as a contribution to reconstructing an Islamic ecological theology that positions the human being as a trustee (*khalīfah*) with moral responsibility rather than a conqueror of nature. It aligns with the objectives of Islamic law (*maqāṣid al-sharī'ah*), which emphasize environmental protection (*ḥifẓ al-bi'ah*) as one of the essential goals of the Shari'ah, for the well-being of present and future generations.¹²

2. Literature Review

Ecological discourse in Islamic scholarship has developed significantly over the past two decades, in tandem with the global rise in environmental awareness. However, there remains a notable scarcity of literature that explicitly connects Qur'anic exegesis with the issue of mining in ecologically sensitive areas such as Raja Ampat. Existing studies are predominantly normative or theoretical and have not yet advanced toward a critical engagement with resource exploitation through contextual interpretations of the Qur'an.

1) Islamic Ecotheology: Roots and Development

The idea of Islamic ecological ethics is grounded in the understanding that the Qur'an presents nature as a sacred creation of God, with humanity serving solely as trustees (*khalīfah*). Fazlun Khalid, a pioneer of Islamic ecotheology, argues that modern ecological imbalance stems from spiritual dislocation and materialism, and that Islam offers a cosmological value system that demands sustainability and balance (*mīzān*).¹³ Similarly, Mawil Izzi Dien articulates that the fundamental Islamic principles concerning the natural world involve responsibility, equilibrium, and prohibition of corruption (*fasād*).¹⁴ Both thinkers emphasize that Islamic ethics concern not only humans but also other creatures and the wider web of life.

Nevertheless, their approaches remain largely normative-ethical and have yet to systematically integrate classical and contemporary tafsir scholarship on environmental themes. In other words, there remains a disconnect between Islamic environmental ethics and Qur'anic exegetical discourse in both academic and traditional pesantren (Islamic boarding school) settings.

2) Critique of Anthropocentric Tafsir

Several studies have shown that dominant classical tafsir is underpinned by an anthropocentric paradigm, wherein humans are positioned as absolute rulers over nature, with little attention paid to ecological responsibility. For instance, in *Tafsir al-Ṭabarī*, the verse regarding humanity as *khalīfah* on Earth (Q. Al-Baqarah: 30) is interpreted as a divine privilege granting humans the authority to manage and dominate the Earth.¹⁵ Likewise, al-Qurṭubī's tafsir emphasizes divine commands to subdue nature but fails to consider the intrinsic rights of the environment.¹⁶

¹² Fazlun Khalid, *Islam and the Environment* 38–40; Izzi Dien, *Environmental Dimensions* 115–117: maqāṣid Qur'ani mencakup keseimbangan, keterikatan, dan tanggung jawab ekologis.

¹³ Fazlun Khalid, *Islam and the Environment* (London: Ta-Ha Publishers, 2002), 38–40.

¹⁴ Mawil Y. Izzi Dien, *The Environmental Dimensions of Islam* (Cambridge: Lutterworth Press, 2000), 115–117.

¹⁵ Al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmi' al-Bayān fī Ta'wīl Āy al-Qur'ān*, ed. Aḥmad Shākir (Beirut: Dār al-Ma'ārif, 2001), 1:231–234.

¹⁶ Al-Qurṭubī, *Al-Jāmi' li Aḥkām al-Qur'ān*, (Cairo: Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣriyyah, 1967), 1:308.

Critiques of this paradigm have emerged from contemporary Muslim thinkers such as Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd and Mohammed Arkoun. In *Mafhūm al-Naṣṣ*, Abu Zayd proposes that sacred texts be read contextually and historically to avoid frozen literalist readings that can be socially and ecologically harmful.¹⁷ Arkoun, on the other hand, advocates for a critical reassessment of the traditional exegetical legacy, which often preserves a dominative relationship with the environment.¹⁸

3) Mining in the Perspective of Islamic Law and Ethics

Islamic jurisprudential discussions on mining (*istighlāl al-ma'ādin*) remain largely anchored in classical *fiqh* discourses that focus on ownership rights and state authority (*ṣulṭān al-wālī*), without adequately addressing contemporary ecological concerns. Some scholars consider mining to be permissible (*ḥalāl*) as long as it is authorized by the state and generates public benefit (*maṣlaḥah*).¹⁹ However, this legalistic stance is susceptible to legitimizing environmentally destructive extractive practices, particularly when ecological accountability and the rights of affected communities are neglected.

Despite the ecological sensitivity of regions like Raja Ampat, there is a dearth of *tafsir*-based studies that critically engage with mining as a form of structural exploitation. Key Qur'anic concepts such as land (*al-arḍ*), natural wealth (*anfāl, rawāsī*), and corruption (*fasād*) have yet to be explored in connection with real-world cases of environmental degradation. This absence underscores the need for a thematic reinterpretation (*tafsir mawḍū'ī*) of relevant verses within contemporary ecological contexts.

4) The Need for a Contextual Ecological Exegesis

The development of ecological approaches to Qur'anic interpretation, often referred to as eco-theological *tafsir*, is a relatively recent phenomenon. Scholars such as Othman Llewellyn and Irfan A. Omar have advanced frameworks grounded in *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah*, expanding the traditional objectives of Islamic law to include environmental preservation (*ḥifẓ al-bi'ah*) as an essential goal.²⁰ This epistemological shift is particularly relevant amid global challenges such as climate change, deforestation, and destructive mining practices. By integrating the values of sustainability and ecological justice into Qur'anic exegesis, this emerging body of scholarship seeks to bridge the gap between classical interpretive traditions and the urgent demands of the 21st century.

3. Method

This research is a library study aimed at exploring the meanings and messages of the Qur'an concerning environmental issues, particularly in the context of mining exploitation in the conservation area of Raja Ampat. The primary focus is on analyzing verses that address land (*al-arḍ*), natural resources, and ecological degradation (*al-fasād*) through a thematic exegesis approach (*al-tafsir al-mawḍū'ī*) combined with contextual hermeneutics.

¹⁷ Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd, *Mafhūm al-Naṣṣ: Dirāsah fī 'Ulūm al-Qur'ān* (Casablanca: al-Markaz al-Thaqāfī al-'Arabī, 1990), 45–48

¹⁸ Mohammed Arkoun, *Rethinking Islam: Common Questions, Uncommon Answers* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1994), 97–101.

¹⁹ Wahbah al-Zuhaylī, *Al-Fiqh al-Islāmī wa Adillatuh*, vol. 6 (Damaskus: Dār al-Fikr, 2005), 4422–4427.

²⁰ Irfan A. Omar, "Islam and Ecology: Theology, Justice, and Ethics," in *Religion and Ecology in the Public Sphere*, ed. Celia Deane-Drummond and Heinrich Bedford-Strohm (London: T&T Clark, 2011), 152–165.

The thematic tafsir method (*al-tafsīr al-mawḍūʿī*) is chosen because it allows the organization of Qurʾanic verses, scattered across different surahs, into a single systematic thematic inquiry, namely, the theme of land and the environment. This method facilitates a holistic reading of a particular theme by structuring the understanding of verses from their semantic layers to context and finally to an integrated construction of meaning.²¹ This approach has been widely applied in contemporary tafsir studies to address current socio-ethical issues such as ecology, gender justice, and human rights.²²

In addition, contextual hermeneutics is employed to interpret these verses by considering their historical background (*asbāb al-nuzūl*), the socio-cultural structures of classical Arab society, and the realities of present-day ecological crises. This hermeneutical approach draws upon the thought of Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd, who proposes that the Qurʾan should be read dynamically, considering the dialectic between text, context, and the reader.²³ In this study, the approach is used to respond to ecological challenges by actualizing Qurʾanic ethics in a transformative manner.²⁴

The primary sources of this study are Qurʾanic verses related to land, environment, natural wealth, and ecological corruption. In addition to the Qurʾan, several classical tafsir works are examined, including:

- 1) *Jāmiʾ al-Bayān* by al-Ṭabarī,
- 2) *Al-Jāmiʾ li Aḥkām al-Qurʾān* by al-Qurṭubī,
- 3) *Al-Tafsīr al-Kabīr* by Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī.

The classical tafsir is analyzed to reveal how dominant paradigms of the past conceptualized the relationship between humans and nature. Alongside these, contemporary tafsir works are also utilized, such as:

- 1) *Tafsīr al-Maṣbah* by M. Quraish Shihab,
- 2) *Al-Tafsīr al-Mawḍūʿī* by al-Zarqānī, dan
- 3) Contemporary Islamic ecological thought represented by Fazlun Khalid and Mawil Izzi Dien.

Secondary sources include scholarly journals, environmental reports, news coverage, and research findings on mining in Raja Ampat, sourced from both government agencies (e.g., KLHK, ESDM) and NGOs (e.g., Greenpeace, Auriga, TrendAsia).

Data are analyzed through three stages:

- 1) Inventory of Qurʾanic verses concerning land and ecological degradation;
- 2) Thematic classification based on concepts of *khalīfah*, ecological trusteeship, corruption (*fasād*), and balance (*mīzān*);
- 3) Contextual interpretation by comparing classical understandings with contemporary meanings informed by empirical realities in Raja Ampat.

²¹ Muḥammad Ḥusayn al-Dhahabī, *Al-Tafsīr wa al-Mufasssīrūn*, vol. 2 (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 2000), 7–10.

²² M. Quraish Shihab, *Membumikan Al-Qurʾan* (Bandung: Mizan, 1999), 51–53.

²³ Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd, *Mafhūm al-Naṣṣ: Dirāsah fī ʿUlūm al-Qurʾān* (Casablanca: al-Markaz al-Thaqāfī al-ʿArabī, 1990), 41–45.

²⁴ Abdullah Saeed, *Interpreting the Qurʾan: Towards a Contemporary Approach* (London: Routledge, 2006), 66–72.

This analytical technique aligns with the qualitative-interpretative approach in Qur'anic studies, as discussed by Musthafa Dasuki and Rudianto, who emphasize the importance of linking the meaning of verses to the historical and sociological conditions of the reader.²⁵

4. Result and Discussion

Qur'anic Verses on Land, Natural Resources, and Ecological Corruption

The Qur'an positions nature as an integral part of the divine order. The earth, seas, skies, plants, and animals are referred to as the signs of God (*āyāt kauniyyah*), each carrying moral and spiritual messages. As ecological crises intensify—such as the case of nickel mining in Raja Ampat—these verses provide a critical foundation for building a Qur'anic-based environmental ethic.

One of the key theological foundations regarding the relationship between humans and the earth is found in Q.S. Hūd [11]: 61, where Allah states:

هُوَ أَنشَأَكُم مِّنَ الْأَرْضِ وَاسْتَعْمَرَكُمْ فِيهَا

“And to Thamūd We sent their brother Salih. He said: ‘O my people, worship Allah; you have no deity but Him. He is the One Who brought you forth from the earth and made you dwell therein...’”²⁶

This verse emphasizes that humanity was created from the earth and entrusted with the mandate to cultivate it, not to destroy it. The concept of *isti'mār* (cultivation) here implies ecological responsibility. Thus, mining activities that result in soil degradation and ecosystem destruction, such as those occurring on Kawe and Gag Islands, stand in opposition to this divine trust.

Similarly, Q.S. Al-Baqarah [2]: 30 states:

إِنِّي جَاعِلٌ فِي الْأَرْضِ خَلِيفَةً

“And when your Lord said to the angels, ‘Indeed, I will make upon the earth a successive authority (khalifah)...’”²⁷

This verse underscores that humans are not absolute rulers over nature but rather God's trustees, tasked with maintaining the earth's balance and justice. Mining practices that devastate ecosystems contradict the essence of khalifah, which requires stewardship and care for all creation.

In Q.S. Ar-Rūm [30]: 41, there is a stern warning:

ظَهَرَ الْفَسَادُ فِي الْبَرِّ وَالْبَحْرِ بِمَا كَسَبَتْ أَيْدِي النَّاسِ لِيُذِيقَهُمْ بَعْضَ الَّذِي عَمِلُوا لَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْجِعُونَ

“Corruption has appeared throughout the land and sea by [reason of] what the hands of people have earned, so He may let them taste part of [the consequence of] what they have done, that perhaps they will return [to righteousness].”²⁸

²⁵ Musthafa Dasuki dan Rudianto, “Metodologi Penafsiran Kontekstual dalam Studi Al-Qur'an dan Tafsir,” *Jurnal Studi Ilmu-ilmu Al-Qur'an dan Hadis* 16, no. 2 (2015): 249–250

²⁶ Kementerian Agama Republik Indonesia, *Al-Qur'an dan Terjemahannya (Edisi Penyempurnaan 2023)* (Jakarta: Lajnah Pentashihan Mushaf Al-Qur'an, 2023), 227.

²⁷ Kementerian Agama Republik Indonesia, *Al-Qur'an dan Terjemahannya*, 44.

²⁸ Kementerian Agama Republik Indonesia, *Al-Qur'an dan Terjemahannya*, 406.

This verse vividly describes contemporary ecological conditions: marine pollution, deforestation, and biodiversity loss. All these represent *fasād fī al-arḍ* (corruption on earth) attributed to human actions. It carries a moral warning and social consequences for humanity's ecological negligence.

Finally, Q.S. Ar-Raḥmān [55]: 7–9 presents a fundamental principle of cosmic balance:

وَالسَّمَاءَ رَفَعَهَا وَوَضَعَ الْمِيزَانَ ۖ أَلَّا تَطْغَوْا فِي الْمِيزَانِ ۚ وَأَقِيمُوا الْوَزْنَ بِالْقِسْطِ وَلَا تُخْسِرُوا الْمِيزَانَ ۙ

“And the heaven He raised and imposed the balance, that you not transgress within the balance. And establish weight in justice and do not make deficient the balance...”²⁹

The concept of *mīzān* (balance) is central to the Qur’anic ecological worldview. Resource exploitation that exceeds the earth’s carrying capacity is considered a violation of this divine balance (*mīzān ilāhī*). Therefore, all forms of development and resource extraction must adhere to principles of balance and ecological justice.

Collectively, these four verses form the theological foundation for re-reading environmental issues from the perspective of divine revelation. In the case of mining in Raja Ampat, these verses serve not only as spiritual guidance but also as a prophetic call to reconfigure human–nature relations within a framework of trust (*amānah*), responsibility, and sustainability.

Thematic Analysis of Ecological Verses: Land, Stewardship, and Degradation in the Context of Raja Ampat Mining

The relevant verses concerning land, environmental degradation, and resource management can be inventoried as follows:

No	Surah dan Ayat	Tema Utama
1	QS. Hūd [11]: 61	Land as the origin and mandate of cultivation
2	QS. Al-Baqarah [2]: 30	Human stewardship (<i>khalīfah</i>) on earth
3	QS. Ar-Rūm [30]: 41	Ecological corruption caused by human acts
4	QS. Ar-Raḥmān [55]: 7–9	The principle of cosmic balance (<i>mīzān</i>)

These verses collectively provide the Qur’anic textual foundation for constructing an environmental ethic, which, in the contemporary context, can serve as a framework for evaluating exploitative practices such as nickel mining in Raja Ampat. The above verses may be grouped according to the following core ethical principles:

- The Ethics of Stewardship – Q.S. Al-Baqarah [2]: 30
This verse affirms humanity’s status as *khalīfah* (vicegerent) on earth, which does not imply absolute dominion but a role as responsible caretakers. Stewardship includes protecting nature, rather than exploiting it in ways that harm ecological integrity.
- The Ethics of Cultivation and Responsibility – Q.S. Hūd [11]: 61
Here, God declares that humanity is “created from the earth” and “entrusted to cultivate it” (*wa ista’marakum fīhā*). This verse articulates a fundamental concept of ecological trusteeship, demanding a sustainability-oriented approach to natural resource management.

²⁹ Kementerian Agama Republik Indonesia, *Al-Qur’an dan Terjemahannya*, 521.

- c. The Ethics of Preventing Corruption – Q.S. Ar-Rūm [30]: 41
This verse contains a stern warning about the corruption (*fasād*) on land and sea caused by human actions. It prohibits excessive exploitation that disrupts the harmonious ecological order established by God.
- d. The Ethics of Balance – Q.S. Ar-Raḥmān [55]: 7–9
The concept of *mīzān* underscores that all creation exists in balance, and humanity must not disrupt it. This principle forms the basis of ecological justice, where resource use must respect environmental thresholds.

Contextual Interpretation: The Relevance of Verses on Land and Corruption to the Mining Issue in Raja Ampat

Environmental issues in Islam are not confined to the domain of classical fiqh but have a strong foundation in the Qur'an, which addresses the cosmological and ethical relationship between humanity and nature. In the context of ecological crises caused by mining expansion in Raja Ampat, a rereading of Qur'anic verses such as Q.S. Hūd [11]: 61, Q.S. Al-Baqarah [2]: 30, Q.S. Ar-Rūm [30]: 41, and Q.S. Ar-Raḥmān [55]: 7–9 becomes highly relevant for reconstructing exegetical paradigms toward a Qur'anic eco-theology.

- 1) Land as a Trust and Space of Life: Q.S. Hūd [11]: 61
This verse states that Allah has created humankind from the earth and entrusted them with its cultivation (*ista'marakum fīhā*). The verb *ista'mara* in the form of *istifāl* implies an active command to build, preserve, and sustain the earth.³⁰ In al-Qurṭubī's exegesis, cultivating the earth (*isti'mār*) is interpreted not only in the physical sense but also spiritually and socially, meaning ensuring the fair continuity of all God's creatures.³¹
However, mining practices in Raja Ampat, which have resulted in deforestation of hundreds of hectares and marine biodiversity contamination, clearly violate the principle of *isti'mār*.³² Fazlun Khalid describes such forms of development as epistemological deviation, where human progress is detached from ethical responsibility toward creation.³³ Within the framework of contemporary *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah*, environmental preservation is included as one of the primary objectives of Islamic law, as it supports the fundamental right to life for all beings.³⁴
- 2) Stewardship as Ecological Responsibility: Q.S. Al-Baqarah [2]: 30
This verse narrates God's decision to appoint humankind as *khalīfah* (vicegerent) on earth. Some classical commentators, such as al-Ṭabarī, interpret *khalīfah* as a successor to previous generations endowed with the authority to manage the earth.³⁵ However, this approach tends to justify power without explicitly addressing the ecological responsibilities attached to such authority.

³⁰ M. Quraish Shihab, *Tafsir al-Misbah*, vol. 5 (Jakarta: Lentera Hati, 2002), 502.

³¹ Al-Qurṭubī, *Al-Jāmi' li Ahkām al-Qur'ān*, vol. 9 (Cairo: Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣriyyah, 1967), 134.

³² Auriga Nusantara, "Ekspansi Tambang di Raja Ampat," *Policy Brief*, Mei 2025, 3–5.

³³ Fazlun Khalid, *Signs on the Earth: Islam, Modernity and the Climate Crisis* (Oxford: Islamic Foundation, 2010), 51.

³⁴ Jasser Auda, *Maqasid al-Shariah as Philosophy of Islamic Law* (London: IIIT, 2008), 121.

³⁵ Al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmi' al-Bayān*, ed. Aḥmad Shākir (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 2001), 1:231–233.

Conversely, in contextual exegesis, *khalifah* is understood as a representation of divine values in earth management, which includes maintaining ecological balance.³⁶ Abdullah bin Bayyah stresses that humanity's vicegerency must be accompanied by *adab* (ethical conduct) toward nature, rather than mere domination of resources.³⁷ In the case of Raja Ampat, mining activities that ignore the voices of indigenous communities and degrade marine ecosystems are far from fulfilling this *amānah* of stewardship, and instead reflect ecological *istikbār* (arrogance).³⁸

3) *Fasād* as a Qur'anic Critique of Structural Exploitation: Q.S. Ar-Rūm [30]: 41

This verse asserts that ecological degradation is the direct result of human actions. According to Ibn 'Āshūr, the term *fasād* encompasses the collapse of ecological systems and the erosion of justice in human and non-human relations.³⁹ The verse also conveys a principle of moral causality—that nature responds to human behavior.

The mining activities in Raja Ampat illustrate a form of structural *fasād*: resource exploitation by mining companies backed by state interests, yet at the expense of local communities and the environment.⁴⁰ Heather Eaton notes that such degradation is not merely ecological but also spiritual, as it signifies humanity's loss of awareness of its place within the community of creation.⁴¹ In Islamic tradition, this corresponds to a breach of the *'ahd ilāhī* (divine covenant) between humanity and God concerning the earth.⁴²

4) *Mīzān* and Ecological Justice: Q.S. Ar-Raḥmān [55]: 7–9

The principle of *mīzān* (balance) outlined in this verse calls upon humanity to uphold the order of creation. Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī explains that *mīzān* extends beyond physical scales to include social, political, and ecological equilibrium.⁴³ Karen Armstrong similarly observes that balance, across all religious traditions, is a form of cosmic justice, the violation of which leads to disorder.⁴⁴

Mining operations that disregard the ecological carrying capacity—such as large-scale land clearing and marine pollution—constitute violations of *mīzān*. These practices not only harm nature but also trigger social inequalities and agrarian conflicts, as reported in studies by the Indonesian Forum for the Environment (WALHI) on mining activities in Papua.⁴⁵

5. Conclusion

This study has examined the ecological dimensions of the Qur'an, focusing on verses that address land, natural resources, and ecological balance, specifically Q.S. Hūd [11]: 61, Q.S. Al-Baqarah [2]: 30, Q.S. Ar-Rūm [30]: 41, and Q.S. Ar-Raḥmān [55]: 7–9, through a thematic-contextual approach. By critically analyzing these verses in the light of nickel mining activities in the conservation area of

³⁶ A. Mun'im Sirry, "Green Hermeneutics: Islamic Scripture and Environmental Ethics," *Journal of Qur'anic Studies* 22, no. 1 (2020): 46.

³⁷ Abdullah bin Bayyah, *Ṣinā'at al-Fatwā wa Fiqh al-Aqalliyyāt* (Jeddah: Maktabah al-Imām Malik, 2007), 255.

³⁸ Irfan A. Omar, "Ecological Responsibilities in the Qur'anic Worldview," *Islamic Studies* 44, no. 2 (2015): 157.

³⁹ Ibn 'Āshūr, *Al-Taḥrīr wa al-Tanwīr*, vol. 21 (Tunis: Dār Sahnūn, 1997), 107.

⁴⁰ TrendAsia & Greenpeace, *Tambang dan Kepunahan Iklim di Tanah Papua* (Jakarta: 2024), 17.

⁴¹ Heather Eaton, *Ecology and Religion: Ecofeminist Perspectives* (New York: Peter Lang, 2005), 23.

⁴² Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *Man and Nature: The Spiritual Crisis in Modern Man* (Chicago: ABC International, 1997), 83.

⁴³ Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, *Al-Tafsīr al-Kabīr*, vol. 30 (Beirut: Dār Iḥyā' al-Turāth al-'Arabī, 1999), 148.

⁴⁴ Karen Armstrong, *The Case for God* (New York: Knopf, 2009), 291.

⁴⁵ WALHI Papua, "Ekonomi Ekstraktif dan Konflik Sosial: Studi Kasus di Tambang Gag," *Laporan Riset Lapangan*, 2023, 5–9.

Raja Ampat, the research underscores the Qur'an's explicit rejection of destructive exploitation and its call for a paradigm of environmental stewardship grounded in justice, sustainability, and spiritual accountability.

The concept of *isti'mār* (constructive cultivation) in Q.S. Hūd [11]: 61 reflects a divine mandate that humanity must actively protect, sustain, and nurture the earth. It is not merely a call to material development but a holistic vision of moral, ecological, and spiritual well-being. This concept challenges extractive economic models that prioritize profit over ecological integrity and community welfare. In line with Fazlun Khalid's eco-theological perspective, the separation of technological progress from ethical responsibility constitutes a profound epistemological and spiritual deviation. Thus, the Qur'an offers a counter-narrative to anthropocentric models that have contributed to today's global environmental crisis.

The notion of *khalīfah* (vicegerency) articulated in Q.S. Al-Baqarah [2]: 30 further reinforces the idea that human beings are trustees rather than absolute sovereigns over nature. Classical interpretations often emphasized human authority, yet a contextual reading reveals that this vicegerency implies a covenant of responsibility toward all forms of life. In the case of Raja Ampat, mining practices that ignore the rights of indigenous communities and undermine the region's ecological integrity starkly contradict this mandate. This calls for a renewal of tafsir that links human agency with ecological ethics, ensuring that dominion is reinterpreted as custodianship rather than exploitation.

The warning against *fasād* (corruption and destruction) in Q.S. Ar-Rūm [30]: 41 is particularly relevant in analyzing the structural nature of contemporary ecological crises. Here, the Qur'an explicitly attributes environmental degradation to human actions, thus rejecting narratives that treat ecological disasters as random or purely natural occurrences. In the context of mining activities, this verse resonates as a critique of systemic exploitation that sacrifices both social justice and ecological balance. It also underlines the moral causality embedded within the Qur'anic worldview: human transgression disrupts the harmony of creation, which in turn leads to consequences that affect humanity itself.

Finally, Q.S. Ar-Raḥmān [55]: 7–9 emphasizes *mīzān*, or divine balance, as the foundation of ecological and cosmic order. Mining practices that exceed environmental carrying capacity violate this principle and undermine the interdependent relationships within ecosystems. As Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī and contemporary scholars alike suggest, *mīzān* is not only a physical or natural equilibrium but also a broader moral and social principle that demands fairness, sustainability, and moderation in all human interactions with the environment.

This research contributes to the emerging discourse on Qur'anic eco-theology by integrating classical and contemporary tafsir with critical ecological perspectives. It demonstrates that the Qur'an, far from being silent on environmental issues, provides both normative guidelines and spiritual insights that can inform modern environmental ethics. Moreover, the study emphasizes the need to reorient Qur'anic exegesis toward interdisciplinary approaches that engage with environmental science, development ethics, and the rights of indigenous and marginalized communities.

The case of Raja Ampat serves as a critical reminder that Qur'anic teachings must not remain confined to personal morality but must also inform collective resistance against exploitative development models. In this sense, tafsir becomes not only an academic exercise but also an ethical and political praxis—a means of advocating for the earth, the vulnerable, and future generations.

The Qur'anic narrative invites believers to recognize that the earth itself, as stated in Q.S. Al-Zalzalah [99]: 4, bears witness to all human actions. Therefore, the “voice of the earth” must be integrated into Islamic thought and praxis, shaping a living tafsir that responds to the moral and ecological challenges of our time.

Reference:

- Armstrong, Karen. *The Case for God*. New York: Knopf, 2009.
- Auriga Nusantara. “Ekspansi Tambang di Raja Ampat.” *Policy Brief*, Mei 2025.
- Auda, Jasser. *Maqasid al-Shariah as Philosophy of Islamic Law: A Systems Approach*. London: International Institute of Islamic Thought, 2008.
- Bin Bayyah, Abdullah. *Ṣinā'at al-Fatwā wa Fiqh al-Aqalliyyāt*. Jeddah: Maktabah al-Imām Malik, 2007.
- Eaton, Heather. *Ecology and Religion: Ecofeminist Perspectives*. New York: Peter Lang, 2005.
- Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī. *Al-Tafsīr al-Kabīr*. Vol. 30. Beirut: Dār Iḥyā' al-Turāth al-'Arabī, 1999.
- Greenpeace Indonesia dan TrendAsia. *Tambang dan Kepunahan Iklim di Tanah Papua*. Jakarta: TrendAsia & Greenpeace, 2024.
- Ibn' Āshūr, Muḥammad al-Ṭāhir. *Al-Taḥrīr wa al-Tanwīr*. Vol. 21. Tunis: Dār Sahnūn, 1997.
- Khalid, Fazlun. *Signs on the Earth: Islam, Modernity and the Climate Crisis*. Oxford: Islamic Foundation, 2010.
- Kementerian Agama Republik Indonesia. *Al-Qur'an dan Terjemahannya (Edisi Penyempurnaan 2023)*. Jakarta: Lajnah Pentashihan Mushaf Al-Qur'an, 2023.
- Nasr, Seyyed Hossein. *Man and Nature: The Spiritual Crisis in Modern Man*. Chicago: ABC International, 1997.
- Omar, Irfan A. “Ecological Responsibilities in the Qur'anic Worldview.” *Islamic Studies* 44, no. 2 (2015): 145–161.
- Quraish Shihab, M. *Tafsir al-Misbah: Pesan, Kesan dan Keserasian al-Qur'an*. Vol. 5. Jakarta: Lentera Hati, 2002.
- Sirry, A. Mun'im. “Green Hermeneutics: Islamic Scripture and Environmental Ethics.” *Journal of Qur'anic Studies* 22, no. 1 (2020): 31–52.
- Tempo.co. “Tambang Nikel Ancam Surga Ekologi Raja Ampat.” *Tempo*, 24 Mei 2025. <https://www.tempo.co>.
- Ṭabarī, Abū Ja'far Muḥammad ibn Jarīr al-. *Jāmi' al-Bayān fī Ta'wīl Āy al-Qur'ān*. Edited by Aḥmad Muḥammad Shākir. Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 2001.
- WALHI Papua. “Ekonomi Ekstraktif dan Konflik Sosial: Studi Kasus di Tambang Gag.” *Laporan Riset Lapangan*, 2023.

